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To respond to the Great Commission by so presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that all may come to know Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord in the fellowship of His Church

[Home](#)

The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina

Statement of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of South Carolina

June 28, 2006
Irenaeus of Lyon

The Members of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of South Carolina have received with great thankfulness the clear statement from the Archbishop of Canterbury issued to the whole Communion on June 27, 2006 in which he states that disagreements over human sexuality must be settled on the basis of "Holy Scripture and Historic Teaching" and not through "social and legal" considerations. The Archbishop makes it very plain that the dignity and worth of every person is not the question under discussion. Prejudice and bigotry are clearly wrong, and must be exposed and rejected. The rhetoric of "inclusion" has, however, often been used to obscure the Communion's teaching that, on the basis of Holy Scripture, the Church cannot bless same sex unions, nor can we ordain those engaged in homosexual practice.

For this reason, the consecration of Eugene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003 created a crisis in the Communion. The election of a new Presiding Bishop who supported his consecration, and who has advocated and permitted same-sex blessings in her diocese is another painful complication. Archbishop Williams has given his conclusion that the actions of our recent General Convention have not produced a complete response to the challenges of the Windsor Report.

The Archbishop envisions a future for the Communion, through a covenant process, in which full membership will require adherence to those commonly held values found in Holy Scripture and the Sacred Tradition of the Church. Churches unable to agree to the terms of the covenant will be reduced to some kind of "affiliate" status. This work will begin immediately, but will take time for all the details to emerge. As this process unfolds, we wish clearly to number ourselves among the dioceses and parishes that seek full constituent membership in the Anglican Communion.

We also have a mandate to reassure the people of the Diocese of South Carolina that the status quo is now impossible. We have watched with great sadness as the Episcopal Church has, year after year, taken actions and adopted teachings which further and further distance it from the Faith of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are grieved that relationships have now been so strained that we are no longer in impaired, but rather broken communion. For that reason, we do hereby request of Archbishop Williams that he, in consultation with the Primates of the Communion and the Panel of Reference, speedily provide alternative Primatial oversight for the Diocese of South Carolina. In a spirit of humility, we acknowledge our own imperfection and sin. We renew our commitment to the Great Commission, to the Holy Scriptures, Creeds and Sacraments of the Church Catholic, and to the reconciliation of the Anglican Family of Churches by means of the full implementation of the Windsor Process.

Fr. M. Dow Sanderson,
President of the Standing Committee

Note: This statement was passed without dissent by the Standing Committee, meeting on June 28, 2006 at Church of the Holy Cross, Sullivan's Island.