Scottish Episcopal Church

General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church
Scottish Charity No SC015962

General Synod Office
Ground Floor West, 40 Torphichen Street
Edinburgh EH3 8JB
Tel: 0131 225 6357
Fax: 0131 346 7247
email: office@scotland.anglican.org
website: www.scotland.anglican.org

April 2026

Response to the Supplement to the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals

Preamble

1. The SEC welcomes the clarifications and the engagement with the responses submitted, including our own.

2. We recognise and acknowledge the need to reflect on and update understandings of the Anglican Communion, and to acknowledge how relationships within the Anglican Communion have shifted and changed. We remain convinced that it is important to articulate a vision of the Anglican Communion as churches in communion. Indeed, this is the definition in our own canons, where the member churches of the Anglican Communion are listed first in the category of churches which "The Scottish Episcopal Church recognises as in full communion with itself" (Canon 15.1.a).

3. We remain surprised that neither the original Nairobi-Cairo Proposals nor the supplement articulates a coherent theological view of tradition beyond 'discernment of bishops', historical or otherwise. We would also expect tradition and reason to be named alongside Scripture as sources of authority for Anglicans. We recognise the interplay between Scripture reason and tradition as an important Anglican hermeneutic.

4. We would urge that the attempt to "shed some of the baggage of colonialism while celebrating a shared theological and sacramental inheritance" include recognition of and serious engagement with the range of different ways that member churches have come into the Anglican Communion. Our original response summarised the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church and its (often complex and painful) relationship to the Church of England, which included the suppression of the SEC by the British establishment (including both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland) after the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745 with the destruction of its church buildings, the banning of its clergy, and subsequently the denial by the Church of England of the validity of SEC orders until the mid-19th century. That history, however, also includes the request to the Scottish bishops that they consecrate

Samuel Seabury in 1784 as the first Anglican bishop to serve outside the British Isles, a significant step in the establishment of the Anglican Communion.

5. The SEC's history illustrates how this particular member church chose – despite some very significant difficulties – to maintain and deepen its relationship to the Church of England and to other churches of the Anglican Communion. Long term, communion was able to transcend and reconcile these deeply broken relationships. Despite this often difficult history, the SEC is joyfully and affirmatively a member of the Anglican Communion and wishes to remain so.

Proposal 1 – definition of the Anglican Communion

6. The Supplement maintains the proposal to define the Anglican Communion without change. The issues highlighted in our previous response have not been addressed. On the basis of that response, we would suggest the following amendments to the proposed text:

> The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches which, affirming their historic connection with the See of Canterbury,(1) have chosen to enter into and remain in mutual relationship of communion with one another.(2) They have the following characteristics in common:
>
> they seek to uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are ~~generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their distinct Churches~~ founded in the holy Scriptures, nurtured by our sacramental life, and set forth in our formularies, prayer books, canons, and ecumenical agreements;(3)
>
> they are autonomous Churches, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a local expression of Christian faith, life and worship; and
>
> they are bound together through their shared inheritance, mutual service, common counsel (of the bishops and others) in conference, ~~and historic connection with the See of Canterbury~~, by which they seek interdependently, through commitment to one another and engagement with the instruments of Communion,(4) to foster the highest degree of communion possible one with another.
>
> We make this statement praying for and eagerly awaiting the time when the Churches of the present Anglican Communion will enter into full communion with other parts of the Catholic Church not definable as Anglican in the above sense, as a step towards the ultimate reunion of all Christendom in one visibly united fellowship.

(1) We believe that it would be helpful to retain a mention of the See of Canterbury in the opening section. We recognise the reasons for moving away from the language of being "in communion with the see of Canterbury" but would emphasise that the SEC canons include "the Churches in the Anglican Communion" first in the list of churches with which the SEC is in Communion (Canon 15.1.a). Other member churches may be in the same situation. Our canons thus define the Anglican Communion as churches with which the SEC is in communion.

(2) The emphasis on choice and mutual commitment is an affirmation that the shaping of the Anglican Communion was not a pre-determined process, but is the fruit of choices by the member churches.

(3) We find that this formulation, drawn from the original NCP, expresses much better the range of elements which constitute Anglicanism today. It avoids the incorrect claim (expressed in the original 1930 definition) that the BCP has been foundational for all Anglican churches, recognising that for some member churches, such as the Lusitanian Church of Portugal and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, and to some extent the SEC, the BCP has never been in regular use. It also avoids the problem that the term "the Book of Common Prayer" means different things in different contexts: thus in TEC the BCP refers to the 1979 liturgy, while in the English context it generally refers to the 1662 BCP in contrast to *Common Worship*, and in Scotland it may refer to the Scottish BCP of 1637, or sometimes to the Scottish BCP of 1929, in contrast to the SEC's 1982 or 1970 Liturgies. It avoids suggesting that the BCP remains foundational for all Anglicans, recognising the reality that many Anglicans today will never have experienced the use of a 17th-century Book of Common Prayer in worship.

(4) We would want here to emphasise that interdependence arises from mutual commitment. We also maintain that it is important to mention in the definition the expectation that member churches will engage constructively with the Instruments of Communion.

Proposal 2 – Structures of the Anglican Communion

7. We find that the revised proposals to the structures offer useful clarifications and further thinking.

8. The Proposals suggest that the 'regional primates' will have a considerably enhanced role. This makes it even more important that the five regions are reviewed and properly defined in the ACC constitution, with clarity about how the chairs of regions are selected. In particular, there will need to be clarity about the position of the chair of the Europe region (British and Irish Anglican churches) and the relationship of the holder of that position to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

9. The proposed abolition of the office of President of the ACC (which until now has been the Archbishop of Canterbury by virtue of that office) would enable an elected

lay or ordained person to be the unambiguous representative of that body as Chair, potentially amplifying the input of lay people on crucial Communion matters. We fully support this change.

10. The disparity of resources between the different regions has to some extent been acknowledged in the Supplement, but further thought needs to be given to this aspect and to how the proposed revisions to the structures of the Anglican Communion and its leadership will be funded and resourced.

Further reflections

11. In preparing this further response, members of the SEC's Faith and Order Board and its Inter-Church Relations Committee had valuable discussions about the current state of the Anglican Communion and the contribution made to our church by those who move to Scotland from elsewhere in the Communion. We believe that it is important in revising the definition of the Anglican Communion to acknowledge that should a member church choose no longer to be a part of the Anglican Communion, then it is free to leave. This does not constitute a schism, but should be understood as a recognition that a particular phase of a relationship between that church and the Anglican Communion has come to an end.

12. We believe, although with considerable sadness, that it is necessary to define the point at which a church must be recognised to have left the Anglican Communion, and to define how that decision can be made. We ask ourselves, for instance, at what point do the dioceses of such a church cease to be included in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer?

13. We would welcome guidance as to the consequences if and when a member church chooses to leave. In particular, what is the status of that church's clergy should they move to another province which remains within the Anglican Communion? Can a "safe to receive" still be requested from a church that has left the Anglican Communion? We ask for this clarification, recognising that these questions are not new, and that procedures already exist relating to the reception of members and clergy from ACNA churches and other continuing Anglican churches into Anglican Communion churches.

A note on the drafting process of this response

14. The original response of the Scottish Episcopal Church was drafted by the Inter-Church Relations Committee (ICRC) at the request of the Faith and Order Board, in consultation with the Doctrine Committee and in consultation with the former and current SEC delegates to ACC. The current delegates had participated in the briefing sessions about the Nairobi Cairo Proposals and contributed insights from those sessions.

15. This response was prepared by a subgroup of the ICRC in consultation with the former and current SEC delegates to ACC. It was discussed at and amended by the Faith and Order Board, and finalised by the ICRC in April 2026 for transmission to the ACO. Both responses will be presented to and discussed at General Synod in June 2026 and the following resolution will be proposed:

    a. This Synod strongly affirms its commitment to and membership of the Anglican Communion. It recognises that, in accordance with Canon 15.1.a., the churches of the Anglican Communion constitute the primary group of churches with which the SEC is in communion.

    b. This Synod also recognises and affirms the need to revise the definition of the Anglican Communion set out in 1930, to acknowledge the changes in the Communion and the need for the leadership of the Communion better to reflect the breadth of the Communion.

    c. While supporting these proposals in principle, this Synod requests its delegates to ACC 19 to ask for amendments to the proposals set out in the Nairobi Cairo Proposals and in the Supplement to those proposals, in accordance with the SEC responses to those proposals prepared by the Inter-Church Relations Committee at the request of the Faith and Order Board and submitted to IASCUFO in December 2025 and to the Anglican Communion Office in April 2026.

Prepared for the Scottish Episcopal Church
by the Inter-Church Relations Committee and the Faith and Order Board,
in consultation with the SEC ACC delegates.

13 April 2026