

## GENERAL CONVENTION JULY, 2009

A brief pastiche. The Secretary announced that there had been 419 resolutions submitted:

192 A resolutions  
32 B resolutions  
87 C resolutions  
108 D resolutions

We have been told that 290 pieces of legislation were completed, and 166 were not completed. For those who like to do the arithmetic these numbers don't match up, and I suspect the disparity in numbers between 419 and 456 comes from the large number of X resolutions and E resolutions (dispatch of business and rules of order), none of which appear to be included in the 419 figure above. We also had at least 20 Privilege and Courtesy resolutions, but I don't know if these are included in the count. Contrast this with my first GC in 1991 in Phoenix, where we had something like 900 resolutions filed; I have no idea how many were acted upon. Much has been done in the intervening years to reduce the number and more efficiently and effectively process them, including limiting the more verbose members of GC to introducing only three resolutions each.

In addition, currently hot topics typically produce a raft of resolutions which are fed through the committee process. These are generally reduced to one resolution which may make it to the legislative floor. A good example is D025 (noted later) which came out of some dozen or so resolutions around 2006's B033.

Which brings me to mention the committee process. Nothing comes onto the floor without having first been vetted by committee. Some committees have little to do; some have a lot. I have been privileged to sit on the Canons Committee and we never lack for things to do. In the early days of convention these committees may meet early morning, and again midday and evenings to perfect legislation for the GC floor. I personally was in committee most of the first week, as we perfected Title IV. As I had worked on this for something like nine years, it was a moment of joy to help give it birth. (Again, more later).

We are told that by the end of July, the actions of General Convention will all be posted on the legislation pages, so you can find any item you are particularly interested in. Go to [gc2009/Viewlegislation/](http://gc2009/Viewlegislation/). I have not attempted to cover everything we did at GC; if your favorite resolution is not mentioned by me, go look it up.

Clustered generally by topic, the citations that follow the resolution number are for finding the material in our General Convention notebooks. They won't mean anything to you without those books.

## ANGLICAN COMMUNION

On the last day of the 2006 General Convention, and at literally the last minute, with pleading from both the outgoing and incoming Presiding Bishops, B033 was adopted. This resolution called for Standing Committees and bishops exercising jurisdiction “to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion’. Many believed that this resolution was itself unconstitutional and uncanonical in the least, and it has continued to raise hackles ever since. In response to the many resolutions proposed to either repeal or circumvent B033, the committee put forth the following.

D025 (4, Suppl #1, pp 6-7)(adopted by voice vote in HOD)

“Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that this General Convention reaffirm the continued participation of The Episcopal Church in the Anglican Communion; give thanks for the work of the Bishops at the Lambeth Conference of 2008; reaffirm the abiding commitment of the Episcopal Church to the fellowship of churches that constitute the Anglican Communion and seek to live in the highest communion possible; and be it further

Resolved that the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and members of The Episcopal Church to the fullest extent possible in the many instruments, networks and relationships of the Anglican Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention reaffirm its financial commitment to the Anglican Communion and pledge to participate fully in the Inter-Anglican Budget; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention affirm the value of “listening to the experience of homosexual persons”, as called for by the Lambeth Conference of 1978, 1988, and 1998, and acknowledge that through our own listening the General Convention has come to recognize that the baptized membership of The Episcopal Church includes same-sex couples living in lifelong committed relationships characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention recognize that gay and lesbian persons who are part of such relationships have responded to God’s call and have exercised various ministries in and on behalf of God’s One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are currently doing so in our midst; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention affirm that God has called and may call such individuals to any ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church, which call is tested through our discernment processes acting in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention acknowledge that members of The Episcopal Church as of the Anglican Communion, based on careful study of the Holy Scriptures, and in light of tradition and reason are not of one mind, and disagree about some of these matters. “

In addition, D027 (9, Consent, 1) was concurred in both houses in adopting the “Five Marks of Mission” articulated by the Anglican Consultative Council and addressed to the Anglican Communion

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom  
To teach, baptize and nurture new believers  
To respond to human need by loving service  
To seek to transform unjust structures of society  
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Seeks to earmark these as the priorities for the 2013-2015 triennium, and

Recommits The Episcopal Church to mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ with the provinces and churches of the Anglican Communion

#### SAME SEX ISSUES

C061 (4, Suppl #1, 5) Modifying the language of Canon III, Sec.2, providing for full access to the discernment process for all persons, to include “gender identity and gender expression” in the non-discrimination categories. Adopted by HOD, but the language was deleted by HOB and HOD did not concur.

D012 (5, Daily, 4) Notwithstanding the above, HOD adopted the enactment of non-discrimination laws based on gender identity and expression, and against physical violence of any sort.

C023 ( 6, Suppl.2, 3 ) To repeal the federal “Defense of Marriage Act” defining and limiting “marriage” as only between a man and a woman. Initially adopted by HOD on a Vote by Orders (Lay 64%; Clergy 55%) but ultimately rejected by HOB and referred to Executive Council; HOD concurs.

C056 (9, Daily, 2) Initially adopted by HOB and concurred in by HOD (Lay 72%, Clergy 68.5%) Liturgies for blessings.

“Resolved, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention acknowledge the changing circumstances in the United States and in other nations, as legislation authorizing or forbidding marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian persons is passed in various civil jurisdictions that call forth a renewed pastoral presence from the Church, and for an open process for the consideration of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, in consultation with the House of Bishops, collect and develop theological and liturgical resources and report to the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, in consultation with the House of Bishops, devise an open process for the conduct of its work inviting participation from provinces, dioceses, congregations, and individuals who are engaged in such theological work, and inviting theological reflection from throughout the Anglican Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same gender marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships are legal, may provide generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of this Church be encouraged to engage in this effort.”

C 014 (10, Suppl #1, 1) HOB and HOD concur in the establishment of a task force of not more than 12 persons “consisting of theologians, pastors and educators, to identify and explore key theological and historical dimensions of marriage”, considering changing social norms, perspectives from a variety of cultures both in and beyond the Anglican Communion, and develop and design tools for theological reflection and discussion at the local level.

## ENVIRONMENT

C064 (2, Daily, 11) Endorse the Earth Charter

D014 (2, Daily, 12) Exec. Council to direct diocesan personnel to educate congregations about public environmental decisions that adversely affect the lives and health of our most vulnerable people

C070 (6, Suppl #1, 11) (Submitted by Diocese of Olympia among others) To affirm that The Episcopal Church become a signatory to the Genesis Covenant, reducing greenhouse gasses emitted by its facilities by 50% within 10 years.

D031 (9, Consent, 5) Urging US leaders to lower CO2 by 25% by 2020, and 80% by 2050

A Standing Commission on the Environment was proposed (And Bishop Rickel was to be its chair) but the Committee on Structure thought we had too many Standing Commissions and proposed a study of how to streamline that structure.

## ISRAEL-PALESTINE

B027 (7, Suppl #3, 4 et seq) Peace between Israel and Palestine. Adopted by HOD but some doubt whether HOB concurred. Some thought that on the issues of the wall, settlement, etc. it was politically pro Palestine, and rejected it on that basis.

A037 (10, Consent, 18) HOD adopted a call for prayer, especially for Advent and in Christmas season, for the wall around Bethlehem to come down

#### HEALTH AND PENSION

A138 (5, Daily, 6) Adopted a mandatory lay pension system. Pensions for lay employees have been called for for many years, but this one is mandatory. Applies to:

All employees scheduled to work a minimum of 1000 hours annually  
All domestic dioceses, parishes, missions, or other ecclesiastical organization or body subject to the authority of the Church  
Implementation after January 1, 2011 and before January 1, 2012  
Administered by Church Pension Fund

A177 (7, Daily, 5) adopted the Denominational Health Plan. Applies to

All clergy and lay employees scheduled to work 1500 hours annually  
All domestic dioceses, parishes, missions and other ecclesiastical organizations subject to the authority of the Church ( Dioceses include Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands )  
Shall “provide benefits comparable in coverage to those benefits currently provided by the domestic dioceses and parishes of this church”.  
Each diocese may make own decisions on Providers, cost sharing, and other issues  
Implementation before end of 2012

And D048 ( 6, Suppl. 2, 2 ) amid politically angry debate “directed” the Office of Governmental Relations to pursue single payer health care legislation in Congress. It passed the HOB, and was barely concurred in HOD by 50.1% to 49.9%.

#### ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH

We recognized or approved action toward relationships with

Igroja Episcopal Anglicana do Brazil  
The Episcopal Church in the Phillipines  
Anglican Church of Canada  
Anglican Church of the Central Region of the Americas  
Anglican Church of Mexico  
Dioceses of Uruguay, Peru, and Cuba  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Moravian Episcopal Dialogue  
Dialogue with Church of Sweden

And perhaps others, including the Lutheran Church of America, with which we already have a relationship.

## LESSER FEASTS AND FASTS

Some 300 or more pages of the GC Bluebook were devoted to the topic of lesser Feasts and Fasts. The vast bulk, if not all, was adopted. It may be worthy of a separate presentation.

## TITLE IV

Our book of Canons is made up of five Titles, the IVth of which deals with clergy discipline. The Church had adopted a new disciplinary code in 1994, but in use many had found it too judgmental and were finding ways around it. At the 2000 GC in Denver a Task Force was formed to take a look at the way the Church did discipline and make recommendations on how to improve it. After nine years, and a false start in 2006 which never made it to the GC floor, A185 was proposed and, ultimately, approved with barely a whimper.

I could talk for hours on Title IV, as I was one of the makers, but suffice it that it incorporates a theological and professional background into discipline, which many felt was needed. The effective date is July 1, 2011, so this diocese, and the others, have two convention cycles in which to incorporate the changes needed in our own diocesan canons.

## MISCELLANEOUS

We had a flap over the election of a new bishop for Ecuador Central. The election had been sent to the House of Bishops, after a tie in the diocesan Standing Committee, and a well known Colombian priest had been elected. Some of the Ecuador Central deputation objected loudly to not having a bishop elected from among its own clergy, and the matter was tabled until the facts could come out. As it turned out, HOD concurred in the HOB election.

The old favorite, deletion of the right to vote for retired bishops, came up again. This has been going on since at least 1991, and each convention year one house or the other votes it down. This year, by margins in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, HOD voted for it, but HOB referred it to SCCC, and HOD finally concurred. (It's a constitutional amendment, so it takes two consecutive conventions to adopt. It will continue to be around for a long time.)

We reaffirmed the tithe as the minimum standard of giving. D055 (9, Suppl. 1, 1 )

We created a new, licensed ministry of "Evangelist". A064 ( 9, Daily, 3 )

As mentioned earlier, this is not intended to be a comprehensive summary, but just touches the top of issues which might be of major significance to some of you. General Convention adopted an additional raft of what may generically be considered “motherhood and the flag” issues in the Church. Out of 290 resolutions acted upon, I have only mentioned 32. There’s a lot more.

DUNCAN BAYNE  
August, 2009