

Summaries of General Convention actions now available

August 14, 2009

[Episcopal News Service]

The 76th General Convention, meeting in Anaheim, California, July 8-17, acted on or referred every one of the 419 resolutions it considered.

Below is an unofficial, unaudited, abbreviated summary of some of the resolutions passed by both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. ENS staff culled it from the General Convention Office's searchable legislative tracking [website](#).

Meanwhile, the church's General Convention office has produced a 25-page summary of convention actions available [here](#). It includes a list of resolutions sorted by their final status; a list of resolutions that deal with the church's constitution, canons and the convention's rules of order; and lists of resolutions referred to dioceses, committees, commission, agencies and boards or church center staff; as well as a list of the appointments and elections made during convention.

The document notes that the convention office is reviewing the final language and final status of each resolution. Once that process is complete the Journal and updated Constitution and Canons will be published as the final and official records of the 76th General Convention.

Anglican Communion/Covenant

Commend communication from the February 2009 Mutual Responsibility in Mission Consultation and urge the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates Meeting to encourage ongoing gatherings of Anglican churches in the Americas and charge Executive Council to pursue the possibilities (A189*).

Commend the proposed Anglican covenant to dioceses for study and comment with dioceses reporting to Executive Council; call for the council to report to the next convention with draft legislation concerning the church's response to a covenant (D020).

Acknowledge that the baptized membership of the church includes same-sex couples living in lifelong committed relationships; recognize that gay and lesbian people in such relationships respond to God's call to ministry including ordained ministry and that this call is a mystery the church attempts to discern through the discernment processes in accordance with the Constitution and Canons; acknowledge that Christians disagree about some of these matters (D025).

Budget

Request standing commissions on structure and constitution and canons to conduct a professional comprehensive analysis of the church's budgeting process and budget (A005*).

Direct the Budgetary Funding Task Force to work on how and at what level(s) of the church its resources may be deployed most efficiently for mission (A184).

Reaffirm commitment to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals as a primary mission priority through 2015 (D019).

Adopt the Five Marks of Mission (proclaim the "good news" of the kingdom; teach, baptize and nurture new believers; respond to human need by loving service; seek to transform unjust structures of society; and strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth); recommend them as 2012-2015 mission priorities (D027).

Adopt as 2010-2012 budget/mission priorities: networking the members of the body of Christ, alleviating poverty and injustice, claiming our identity, growing congregations and the next generations of faith, strengthening governance and foundations for ministry (D052).

Adopt unified 2010-2012 budget of \$141,271,984 (D067).

Canons/Constitution

Direct the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons to review provisions of the constitution, canons and rules of order of the House of Bishops in which voting by bishops or in the House of Bishops is set forth for clarity and consistency (D081).

Amend Canon III.4.1(a) and add Canon III.4.9 to add "evangelist" to licensed lay ministers; direct the collection of resources for identifying, calling and training (A064, A065).

Amend Canon I.20 to state that the Episcopal Church has a relationship of full communion with the Northern and Southern provinces of the Moravian Church in America (A073).

Establish a mandatory lay employee pension plan and amend Canon I.8 as such (A138).

Establish a denominational health insurance plan and amend Canon I.8 as such (A177).

Revised Title IV on ecclesiastical discipline; amend titles III and V to conform (A181, A187).

Amend Article I.4 of the Constitution to change the name of the "Convocation of the American Churches in Europe" to "Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe" (B015, first reading).

Amend Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution to remove provision for the House of Deputies to consent to the ordination and consecration of bishops elected within 120 days of General Convention (B029).

Christian Formation

Adopt the Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation and encourage dioceses to formulate a strategy for lifelong Christian formation (A082, A083).

Church Calendar

Approve commemorations of Harriet Bedell, James Theodore Holly, Óscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador, Tikhon, Vida Dutton Scudder and Frances Joseph Gaudet to be entered in the Calendar of the Church Year and in future revisions of Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints (A095).

Approve for trial use the revised and additional commemorations and propers in Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints (A096, A097).

Approve principles of future revision for the church calendar (A098).

Call upon the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to add Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to the church calendar (B020).

Committees, Commissions, Agencies and Boards

Urge presiding officers to establish a group to evaluate the system of standing commissions (A035).

Direct a new strategic-planning committee to develop a 10-year plan (A061).

Charge the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church with studying how agencies relate to the church; the roles of the Presiding Bishop, chancellors and parliamentarians; the term of the Presiding Bishop; provincial structure; and the propriety of the canons being applied within the church's diversity (A127).

Direct that membership of all committees, subcommittees, task forces, panels or other bodies elected or appointed by any body or leader be publicly available within 30 days after election or appointment (D045).

Communications

Call upon the Standing Commission on Episcopal Church Communications to study communications technologies, policies and practices and propose to the next convention a strategic communication plan including consideration of naming a chief information officer; direct Executive Council to work with the church center to establish clear, strategic governance of information technology (A046, D087).

Extend the A048-2006 Task Force to recommend best practices for use when adopting new technology and making communication decisions; direct the church center to conduct an independent technology audit of the center (A047*, A050*).

Consecration of Bishops

Consent to the ordination and consecration of the Rev. Luis Fernando Ruiz Restrepo as Diocese of Ecuador Central bishop, the Rev. Lawrence Provenzano as Diocese of Long Island bishop coadjutor, the Rev. John Tarrant Diocese of South Dakota bishop coadjutor. (B023, C081, C082).

Discrimination/Civil Rights

Call for a study of diocesan processes to recruit people of color to pursue ordination and analyze how people of color are deployed (A145).

Support extension of federal anti-discrimination employment laws to include sexual orientation or gender identity and expression; commit the church not to discriminate in employment of lay employees based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; treat physical violence inflicted on the basis of gender identity or expression as a hate crime (C048, D012, D032).

Ecumenism

Adopt the Agreement Between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) (A075).

Direct the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (SCEIR) to begin full-communion dialogue with the Church of Sweden (A076).

Charge SCEIR to develop canon or policy guidelines for local ecumenical shared ministries (D016).

Education

Encourage every congregation to develop partnerships with local public schools; urge Episcopalians to give 40 hours annually supporting public education; call upon the U.S. government to support equity in public education (B025).

Environment

Ask the church to restrict use of bottled water where safe and encourage every baptized Christian to practice energy and water conservation (A045).

Urge the U.S. government to enact equitable subsidies for renewable energy; adopt a federal renewable energy standard; support federal programs worldwide that practice sound environmental stewardship (C011).

Endorse the Earth Charter; encourage dioceses, congregations, agencies and individuals to take action consonant with it (C064).

Affirm that the church become a signatory to the Genesis Covenant, committing to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from every facility it maintains by at least 50 percent within 10 years (C070).

Evangelism/Church Planting/Mission/Missionaries

Direct the Center for Evangelism and Congregational Life to create a toolkit to equip congregations and dioceses to engage in culturally appropriate evangelism and mission (A066).

Direct church center staff to work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and others to develop resources for starting congregations (A067).

Maintain a commitment to sending Episcopalians as mission partners throughout the world at current levels of approximately 75 people with adequate benefits and training (A128).

Affirm Executive Council's and the House of Bishop's commitment to implement "The Episcopal Church's Strategic Vision for Reaching Latinos/Hispanics in the United States" (D038).

Commend the "80-Cent Solution For World Mission" to support missionaries by inviting contributions of 80 cents (or the equivalent in other currencies) per year from all baptized members (D051).

General Convention

Consider for 2015 convention: Atlanta, Las Vegas, Philadelphia or Salt Lake City; consider the feasibility of using a university campus for future conventions (A003, D074).

Direct the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements to schedule time during the 2012 convention for service and evangelism in Indianapolis and create opportunities for electronic connections to let off-site individuals participate (A071*).

Health Care

Urge passage of federal legislation establishing a "single payer" universal health-care program; call for a federal law by the end of 2009 guaranteeing adequate health care and insurance for every citizen (D048, D088).

HIV/AIDS

Urge Episcopalians to talk with service providers, local health departments and other public and private resources to urge them to address rising HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases infection rates; urge dioceses and congregations to provide information about preventing such diseases (A159).

Express grief for discrepancies in care and treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS based on poverty, prejudice, racism, ignorance and the lack of visibility; urge Congress and the president to include provisions in health-care reform to cover people with pre-existing conditions (A160).

Urge provinces, dioceses, congregations and worshiping communities to include accurate and comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention in youth-education programs (A161).

Urge Executive Council to convene a domestic strategy meeting to develop a comprehensive response to the HIV/AIDS crisis (A162).

Mandate committees, commissions, agencies, boards, Episcopal Church Center staff – and strongly encourage diocesan staff and leaders and all active clergy – to take a web-based, self-directed tutorial on HIV/AIDS available at www.neac.org (A163).

Immigration

Advocate for, among other immigration issues, a return of congressional consideration and implementation of comprehensive reform (B006).

Assure fairness in immigration and specifically provide immigration equality for same-gender couples (D076).

International Concerns

Urge continued advocacy and prayer for peace with justice in Sudan and for an end to U.S. embargo against Cuba (A033, A034, D007).

Commend to Episcopalians the Diocese of Haiti's model of ministry despite natural disasters, political turmoil, economic hardship, social dislocation and environmental degradation (A036).

Urge all to pray, especially in Advent and during the Christmas season, for the wall around Bethlehem and all other barriers to come down (A037).

Urge dioceses to support Anglican Communion dioceses struggling with gang activities; urge the U.S. government and United Nations to extend international refugee conventions and national immigration norms to victims (A043).

Ask for specific actions for reconciliation in Honduras (B031).

Support legislation that extends cancellation of debt to heavily indebted impoverished countries that have not qualified under existing international agreements (D017).

Express solidarity with the Church of Pakistan and the whole Christian community in Pakistan; facilitate a visit to United States of one or more Pakistani Christians (D084*).

Liturgy

Authorize use of Rachel's Tears, Hannah's Hopes with changes (A088).

Authorize new commons for inclusion in Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints (Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2009) (A099).

Authorize continuing use of Enriching Our Worship 1-4 and direct that the texts be freely available on the Internet (A102).

Encourage dioceses, congregations and individuals to remember and support Episcopal Relief and Development during Lent through prayer and a special offering (A178).

Authorize Church Publishing Inc. and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) to study possible revision of The Hymnal 1982 (B004).

Direct SCLM, in consultation with the House of Bishops, to collect and develop theological and liturgical resources for same-gender blessings and report to the next convention (C056).

Direct SCLM to develop liturgical resources to observe the loss of a companion animal and report to the next convention (C078).

Poverty/Economic Justice

Establish a community-development initiative in Native people's communities and identify key advocacy issues with Executive Council to report to the next convention a strategic plan for establishing domestic development programs; plan to address domestic economic-justice issues (A155, C049).

Prison Ministry

Direct the program officer of Domestic Justice and Jubilee Ministries to assist dioceses in establishing

and supporting summer camps for children who have parents in prison or on parole or probation or who have experienced a parent's incarceration (C075*).

Urge all dioceses and congregations to focus on ways to minister to God's children behind bars, those returning to the community and their families and victims (D095).

Reconciliation

Urge continued participation in formal reconciliation training (A068).

Direct the Executive Council Committee on Indigenous Ministries to assess preservation of burial sites and other sacred places of indigenous peoples in countries that constitute the church (A152).

Endorse the Diocese of Oregon's commitment to partner with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to seek return of artifacts from the British Museum (B022).

Invite the church to use Lent 2010 for penitential reflection on the brokenness of the global economic order and its reformation (D018).

Repudiate and renounce the Doctrine of Discovery (the concept that Christian sovereigns and their representative explorers could assert dominion over non-Christian lands) and request that Queen Elizabeth II disavow and publicly repudiate the doctrine (D035).

Theological education

Call for ordained-ministry education to include training on addiction, its identification, practices of intervention and treatment; and cross-cultural and international experience for postulants and candidates (A079, A135*).

Direct the Standing Commission on Ministry Development to convene a task force on the formation, education and evaluation of ordained ministers (A191).

Violence

Speak out against domestic violence; covenant to pray for victims and their families; encourage all clergy and lay leaders to be trained in prevention; make such training available to others (D096).

Warfare

Commend strategies to restore trust among nations and work to alleviate conditions that led to the Iraqi war; urge all Episcopalians to support independent international relief efforts and stress nonviolent methods for conflict resolution; urge withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraq by Dec. 31, 2011; seek wisdom from sin committed in Iraq and let that wisdom inform future relationships; urge all Episcopalians to honor through prayers and actions those who serve their country and those who object to this or any wars; condemn first-strike policies (A041, A042, C051).

Youth

Call for 30 young adults (ages 18-30) from predominantly under-resourced areas across the church to make a pilgrimage to Europe for leadership training and service (D064*).

Encourage congregations to include on vestries or bishop's committees a seat for people ages 16-18 with voice and vote except as prohibited by civil law (D065).

The 2010-2012 budget does not include funding for this resolution.