

Affirms Christians of good conscience disagree**Resolution on ordination and consent process also affirms commitment to the Anglican Communion**

By the time General Convention began on July 7, more than a dozen pre-filed resolutions addressed the action of the previous General Convention (2006) that has been relished and reviled for three years: B-033. That statement of restraint impacting the election, consent, and consecration of bishops, approved in the waning hours of the 75th General Convention, opened the way for the Episcopal Church bishops to attend the Lambeth Conference in the hope of strengthening the bonds of affection across the Anglican Communion. But the Resolution B-033 threatened to leave deeply strained the bonds of affection between bishops and deputies when they gathered again in General Convention.

The World Mission Committee took up the entire package of resolutions, held open hearings, and two special sessions on the floor of the House of Deputies during which deputies paired off to discuss their personal experience following the approval of B-033 three years ago. The final result was a single resolution—D-025—that the committee recommended as the best way forward and the House of Deputies passed.

The House of Bishops discussed the matter at length, made modest amendments, and returned the legislation to the House of Deputies where D-025 was approved again. Both votes in the House of Deputies were by a 2-1 margin in the procedure of voting by orders that raises the bar beyond a simple majority.

World Mission Committee Member Ian Douglas, deputy from the Diocese of Massachusetts who has served on each of the Windsor-related task forces and committees, explained throughout General Convention that the committee had three options: repel or reaffirm B-033, strengthen the canons that cover access to ordination, or merely state the present reality of the Episcopal Church. The committee, said Douglas, chose the final option.

“I am very moved by the way the deputies on the world mission legislative committee were able to trust the process including the Committee of the Whole sessions and the legislative hearing,” said Douglas, who is also a member of Executive Council and the Anglican Consultative Council. “Based upon what we heard and experienced in these sessions, were able to come together in an effective, positive, forward-looking manner and I

by Herb Gunn

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What’s everybody talking about?**The text of B-033 (approved in 2006) and****The text of D-025 (approved in 2009)**

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 75th General Convention receive and embrace the Windsor Report’s invitation to engage in a process of healing and reconciliation; and be it further

B-033

Resolved, That this Convention therefore call upon Standing Committees and bishops with 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.

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 76th General Convention reaffirm the continued participation of The Episcopal Church as a constituent member of 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 into the highest degree of communion possible; and be it further

D-025

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

Resolved, That the 76th 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 76th General Convention affirm the value of “listening to the experience of homosexual persons,” as called for by the Lambeth Conferences 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” (2000-D039); and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th 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 76th General Convention affirm that God has called and may call such individuals, to any ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church; and that God’s call to the ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church is a mystery which the Church attempts to discern for all people which call is tested none through our discernment processes acting in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th 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 Christians of good conscience disagree about some of these matters.

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believe that the work of this committee was both faithful to and led by the Holy Spirit.”

In response to published stories citing the Archbishop of Canterbury concern stemming from reports he received about General Convention, the two presiding officers of General Convention, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and President of the House of Deputies Bonnie Anderson, issued a letter to him. The letter provided an explanation and clarification of Resolution D-025 pertaining to human sexuality issues and the Episcopal Church’s commitment to the Anglican Communion. The letter was also sent to the communion’s 38 primates.

“We understand Resolution D-025 to be more descriptive than prescriptive in nature—a statement that reaffirms commitments already made by the Episcopal Church and that acknowledges certain realities of our common life. Nothing in the resolution goes beyond what has already been provided under our Constitution and Canons for many years.”

The presiding officers emphasized that D-025 has “not repealed” Resolution B-033 that was passed in 2006. B-033 urged restraint in consenting to the consecration of bishops whose

“manner of life” might present challenges for the rest of the Anglican Communion.

Several Diocese of Michigan deputies weighed in at the conclusion of General Convention, representing the breadth of opinion on the legislation and whether it repels or merely moves beyond B-033.

“I believe that D-025 is an honest reflection of who we are in the Episcopal Church,” said Dan Appleyard, rector of Christ Church, Dearborn. “We are fully committed to being members of the Anglican Communion, engaged in the mission of bringing peace, justice and reconciliation to the world and to people near and far. It also fully articulates our commitment to the LGBT community in all orders of ministry. For me the resolution has integrity and truthfully expresses our identity as Episcopalians and Anglicans in this Province of the Communion.

“General Convention had taken significant action—perhaps a first step—to bring the Episcopal Church into the 21st century and to reverse some of its hypocrisy around the issue of full inclusion,” said Pete Ross, lay deputy and member of St. Clare’s, Ann Arbor. “I think this will go a long

way toward making our denomination more appealing to the young adults in our society who have long said, ‘You say one thing but do another.’ I would add to that that it is always difficult for an institution as large and complex as The Episcopal Church to institute change; sort of like trying to make a U-turn with the QE2 at flank speed.”

“D-025 is a clear statement of self-definition and an act of honesty and integrity,” said Brad Whitaker, deputy and rector of Christ Church, Grosse Pointe. “I believe this statement affirms our love and desire to be humble members of the Anglican Communion and says without question our recognition that one’s sexual orientation and expression thereof in a life-long relationship is not an impediment to being elected and consecrated a bishop.

“Does it repeal 2006 B-033? Perhaps not for some. Yet, even B-033 is in and of itself an ambiguous document. The passage of this statement [D-025] allows us to be who we are as well as serve as a witness of love to the world,” Whitaker said.

“Personally, D-025 gave me the individual opportunity to move beyond the painful position of voting to support B033 in 2006. I am in love with my Church and our witness to Christ’s love for the world.”

TENS cites Michigan for stewardship innovations

On Sunday, July 12, the Diocese of Michigan Stewardship Committee received an award from TENS—The Episcopal Network for Stewardship—during General Convention. The award was presented at a TENS luncheon attended by Bishop Wendell Gibbs and members of the Michigan delegation.

“In 2006, the Diocesan Stewardship Committee crafted an idea to promote the concept of tithing,” explained Pete Ross, member of the committee and a deputy to General Convention. Ross accepted the award on behalf of the committee. “Because the promotional campaign was designed to begin during Sundays during Epiphany, the committee decided to call the program ‘Which Star Are You Following?’” The project was coordinated by former Director of Stewardship Kristine Miller.

“The objective was to challenge members of congregations in the diocese to try tithing for three months,” said Ross. “Participants who identified themselves to the committee received regular e-mail or postal messages of encouragement. Perhaps 35 people took part in the program the first year and a slightly fewer amount in the second year. Those who completed a three month period of tithing received a unique, hand crafted, lapel pin cross and were invited to a dinner with the bishop called ‘Tithe One On.’”



Pete Ross (center) accepted the TENS award for the diocese