

## What are the issues of the 2006 General Convention?

General Convention will deal with several major issues:

### *Election of a new presiding bishop*

- The presiding bishop is elected by the House of Bishops. The election is confirmed by the House of Deputies. The presiding bishop's term is nine years.
- The presiding bishop is the "primate" or chief bishop of the Episcopal Church, but he or she does not have any authority to dictate to other bishops.
- The election normally takes place in a church. This election, which is closed to the public, will take place in Trinity Church, Columbus, on Sunday, June 18.
- The committee nominated:
  - The Rt. Rev. J. Neil Alexander, Bishop of Atlanta
  - The Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick Jr., Bishop of Kentucky
  - The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Bishop of Nevada
  - The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley, Jr, Bishop of Alabama
- The following bishops will be officially nominated from the floor (and will have undergone the same background checks as the committee nominees).
  - The Rt. Rev. Francisco Duque-Gomez, Bishop of Columbia
  - The Rt. Rev. Stacy F. Sauls, Bishop of Lexington
  - The Rt. Rev. Charles Jenkins, III, Bishop of Louisiana
- The new presiding bishop will be installed Nov. 4, 2006.

### The interpretation and authority of Scripture

- Anglicans look to Scripture, the traditions of the Church and our reason – the so-called three-legged stool.
- The Episcopal Church is currently debating how much weight each of those three things are given and how we interpret Scripture.

### The role of the Anglican Communion

- The Anglican Communion is a community of 38 autonomous Churches, including the Episcopal Church.
- The issue is how to balance our autonomy with our relationship with other Churches in the Communion.

These two issues came together in 2003 when the Diocese of New Hampshire elected the Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson as its bishop, and the House of Deputies and the bishops with jurisdiction consented to his consecration. Bishop Robinson is an openly gay man and has been living in a committed relationship with his partner for many years.

Since 2003, the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion have been debating:

- What are the qualifications and disqualifications for leadership in the Church?
- How do we interpret Scripture as we come to decisions in this and other matters?
- How do we balance our baptismal promise to recognize that all people are equally children of God and worthy of dignity and respect with the call of all of us to holiness and repentance?
- How do we live in community with other Churches in the Anglican Communion when our contexts for life and ministry and our views of the world are radically different?
- How do Episcopalians who deeply and faithfully hold different points of view on this issue live in community with one another?

The Archbishop of Canterbury assembled a commission representing the breadth of the Anglican Communion. This group, chaired by Archbishop Eames of Ireland, was called the Windsor Commission and produced a document known as the Windsor Report that recommended a way forward for the Anglican Communion. This report was then sent to a meeting of the primates (the bishops leading each of the 38 Anglican Communion Churches), who issued a communique on this matter.

After receiving the communiqué, the House of Bishops covenanted that bishops with jurisdiction would withhold their consent to all Consecrations of Bishops until the General Convention could act.

The Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies appointed a Special Commission to review the Windsor Report, the reactions to it from around the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion and make recommendations to the General Convention.

The Special Commission has issued a report that it will present to General Convention. To read the report, visit: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/SCECACReport.pdf>.

The Commission presented 11 resolutions for the General Convention to discuss:

1. That provision be made for persons from other parts of the Anglican Communion to serve with voice but not vote on the standing commissions of the Episcopal Church.
2. That the General Convention join the House of Bishop's March 2005 Covenant Statement apologizing for breaching the bonds of affection in the Anglican Communion.
3. That the General Convention urge nominating committees, conventions, standing committees and bishops with jurisdiction to be cautious in the nomination and election of bishops whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church.
4. That the General Convention concur with the Windsor Report in exhorting Bishops not to proceed to authorize public Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions until a broader consensus in the Anglican Communion is reached.
5. That the General Convention urge sensitive response to those who disagree with the majority, that bishops make provision for those within their dioceses who can't receive pastoral care and oversight from them and that historic diocesan boundaries and authority of diocesan bishops be respected.

6. That the General Convention urge advocacy of the Millennium Development Goals and that dioceses, parishes and individuals be urged to give at least .7% of their income to international development work.
7. That the General Convention commit to a process of listening and discernment around the Windsor Report and the issues it raises.
8. That the General Convention support the process of developing an Anglican Covenant that underscores our unity in faith, order, and common life in the service of God.
9. That the General Convention affirm its prior commitments against discrimination and for the dignity of and justice for all people.
10. That the General Convention affirm its prior statements that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens and that it instruct its offices to work for the enforcement of human rights for them.
11. That the Episcopal Church affirm that theological stances consistent with the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral not be a bar to the exercise of ministry.

In addition, the General Convention will deal with many issues that won't make the front page of the paper or CNN, but which are in many ways more far-reaching and critical to the world at large. Issues like racism, hunger, genetic testing and research, and the environment are just a few. Convention also will consider adjustments in the Canon Law of the Church and consider adopting the Revised Common Lectionary, the cycle of readings used by most Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist and other churches.

To view the complete list of resolutions filed in the Blue Book, visit:  
<http://www.episcopalarchives.org/e-archives/bluebook/>

Remember that the resolutions in the Blue Book are only those that come from the committees and commissions of the National Episcopal Church. Those resolutions that come from bishops, dioceses and deputies are not in the Blue Book. They can be filed before Convention or during the first three legislative days of the Convention.