

**WINDSOR REPORT
AND RELATED LEGISLATION
PASSED AT THE 75TH GENERAL CONVENTION**

A report to
The Diocese of West Tennessee
by
Bishop Don Johnson

Nativity of John the Baptist
JUNE 24, 2006

The Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee
692 Poplar Avenue + Memphis, Tennessee 38105

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Dear Members and Friends of The Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee.

The 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church adjourned last Wednesday afternoon at 6:00 p.m. Historic in many ways, this convention of which we were a part sought, in terms familiar to The Diocese of West Tennessee, to proclaim God's promise in Christ as good news for all people. Various choices we made will be remembered, forgotten or ignored. However, our Church has spoken, and I am proud of the work we accomplished in articulating the breadth of understanding and commitment that defines us as Episcopalians. Our choices will not please everyone, but we decided together to be responsible by being honest rather than reactive. Restraint, therefore, shows in our words. We opted for truth. Truth has the effect of clarifying ones position and letting others respond in relation to that position. I believe we spoke authentically and with compassion. Only time will tell how this truth-telling is received by the world.

To this end, I have prepared the following packet of Convention decisions concerning the Windsor Report and related domestic and foreign issues it raises for our consideration. We did much more in Convention to further the breadth of mission and ministry development opportunities we face as witnesses of Christ's good news. However, the Church Catholic and the world is receiving many differing interpretations of "why we did what we did" at Convention about the Windsor process invitation. This packet is intended to honor your intelligence and invite you to read for yourself the actual resolutions that were passed.

Correct to the extent that my record keeping during the Convention was accurate, I nonetheless caution all who read this to be careful in stating unequivocally its accuracy. We should have the official final wording of our responses in the next week or so. By that time, the Church Center should be available to clarify any remaining questions of accuracy that might arise. Interpretations will continue for much longer. In the short run, I hope this "Windsor packet" is a helpful reference. In the long run, I pray that the truth we were seeking to discern and proclaim is to God's glory for the sake of the world.

Blessings on this Feast Day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist,

The Rt. Rev. Don E. Johnson
Bishop of West Tennessee

THE CONTEXT

The Episcopal Church has been asked to respond to the “Windsor Report” of the Lambeth Commission. This request has presented The Episcopal Church with an opportunity to assess the manner and extent to which we can respond with truthfulness as we participate in the “Windsor process” into which we have been invited. Due to the polity of The Episcopal Church, our response requires concurrence by both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies, meeting in General Convention. This meant having to wait until we came together to consider, decide and speak with one voice on these matters. Many did not think we could accomplish this. However, The Episcopal Church has spoken as we promised the world that we would.

The resolutions that follow are not always the ones with which we started at the beginning of our deliberations. Some of the originally proposed resolutions do not appear at all. After being considered, they were rejected, discharged from further consideration (because they had already been acted on at a prior General Convention), or referred to a Committee for further study. The resolutions that follow, however, express the mind of The Episcopal Church as we articulated it at the end of our Convention’s debates and voting. On these we have officially spoken with one voice, and that voice has a nuanced response for the sake of honesty, not for the sake of obfuscating. Therefore, what follows is a recounting of what we actually adopted as our marching orders for the future.

Our Presiding Bishop, our Presiding Bishop-elect and all of us will have to live into and out of these statements of our resolve. I believe we sought honesty over “correctness”. Whether we are uncomfortable or pleased with these commitments before us, what follows is in fact what we said together. I am humbled to have participated in this act of mutual submission and discernment. I invite you to discern for yourself the meaning of the resolutions we have made as The Episcopal Church gathered to speak.

THE RESOLUTIONS

A-159 – Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church 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

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church is in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention join with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the primates, and the Anglican Consultative Council in making a commitment to the vision of interdependent life in Christ, characterized by forbearance, trust, and respect, and commend the Windsor Report and process as a means of deepening our understanding of that commitment; and be it further

Resolved, That as an expression of interdependence, the Presiding offices of both Houses works in partnership with the churches of the Anglican Communion to explore ways by which there might be inter-Anglican consultation and participation on Standing Commissions of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

A-160 - Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, mindful of "the repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation enjoined on us by Christ" (*Windsor Report*, paragraph 134), express its regret for straining the bonds of affection in the events surrounding the General Convention of 2003 and the consequences which followed; offer its sincerest apology to those within our Anglican Communion who are offended by our failure to accord sufficient importance to the impact of our actions on our church and other parts of the Communion; and ask forgiveness as we seek to live into deeper levels of communion one with another.

B-033 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ 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

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.

A-163 - Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the centrality of effective and appropriate pastoral care for all members of this church and all who come seeking the aid of this church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention commit The Episcopal Church to the ongoing engagement of and sensitive response to the request and need of all the people of God – in particular, but not exclusively, those who agree and those who disagree with the actions of this body, those who feel isolated thereby, and gay and lesbian persons within and without this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention recognize the agonizing position of those who do not feel able to receive appropriate pastoral care from their own bishops, and urges the members of the House of Bishops to seek the highest degree of communion and reconciliation within their own dioceses, using when requested in good faith the Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO) process detailed in the March 2004 statement of the House of Bishops, "Caring for All the Churches"; and be it further

Resolved, The 75th General Convention urge continued maintenance of historic diocesan boundaries, the authority of the diocesan bishop, and respect for the historical relationships of the separate autonomous Provinces of the Anglican Communion.

D-005 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention adopt the following statement:

The 75th General convention of The Episcopal Church declares that efforts to criminalize homosexual behavior are incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, incompatible with resolutions at successive Lambeth conferences including the 1998 Lambeth Resolution I.10, and incompatible with the Primates' statement from Dromantine which declares that the "victimization or diminishment of human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex is anathema to us. We assure homosexual people that they are children of God, loved and valued by him, and deserving of the best we can give of pastoral care and friendship."

In affirming these consistent statements we declare our opposition to the imposition of civil or criminal penalties, especially imprisonment and execution, upon gay and lesbian people and our opposition to laws anywhere in the world that specifically target and impose imprisonment for homosexual behavior, speech, or assembly of gay and lesbian people and their supporters.

and be it further,

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention commend the government of Brazil for its courageous efforts to extend the protections of the U.N.'s Declaration on Human Rights to include gay and lesbian people and that the Secretary of Convention convey this resolution to the Brazilian Ambassador to the United States and the Episcopal Primate of Brazil. We commend to their attention Lambeth 1998 I.1, which affirms and adopts the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention direct the Executive Council to monitor the progress of efforts to criminalize or decriminalize homosexuality and efforts such as Brazil's to extend the protections of basic human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the 75th General Convention convey this resolution to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, all Primates in the Anglican Communion, the President of the United States, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Secretary General of the United Nations, Anglican Observer of the United Nations, heads of state of all nations represented by Bishops and Deputies, all U.S. Senators and Representatives and the Governors of all states or territories within the pastoral jurisdiction of The Episcopal Church.

B-032 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention affirm that no resolution of the General Convention is intended to affect either the historic separate and independent status of the churches of the Anglican Communion or the legal identity of The Episcopal Church.

A-165 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church commend the Windsor Report "as offering a way forward for the mutual life of our Communion" (*Primates' Communiqué*), and as an

essential and substantive contribution to the process of living into deeper levels of communion and interdependence across the Anglican communion; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention commit The Episcopal Church to the ongoing "Windsor Process," a process of discernment as to the nature and unity of the Church, as we pursue a common life of dialogue, listening, and growth, formed and informed by the bonds of communion we share; and urges all members of this church to commit themselves to the call of greater communion and interdependent life; and be it further,

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention commend the "listening process" as recommended in the Windsor Report, "so that greater common understanding might be obtained on the underlying issue of same gender relationships" (*Windsor Report*, paragraph 135), and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention gratefully acknowledge the practical steps taken by the Anglican Communion Office to begin a formal "listening process" across the Communion, and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention commit this church to participating fully and openly in this "listening process," both at the local level and with the rest of the Communion (*ACC 13, Resolution 12*); and be it further

Resolved, That a staff person at The Episcopal Church Center be identified to forward this listening process in coordination with the cognate person for the Communion and with our Communion partners.

A-166 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, as a demonstration of our commitment to mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Anglican Communion, support the process of the development of an Anglican Covenant that underscores our unity in faith, order, and common life in the service of God's mission, and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention direct the International Concerns Standing Committee of the Executive Council and The Episcopal Church's members of the Anglican Consultative Council to follow the development processes of an Anglican Covenant in the Communion, and report regularly to the Executive Council as well as to the 76th General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention report these actions supporting the Anglican Covenant development process, noting such missiological and theological resources as the Standing Commission on World Mission and the House of Bishops' Theology Committee to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates, and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion; and that the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church report the same to the Primates of the churches of the Anglican Communion.

D-022 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church commend the leaders and members of The Episcopal Church, including Episcopal Relief and Development and program ministries of The Episcopal church, for their leadership on behalf of the Millennium Development Goals, both through public advocacy and implementation of MDG programs in the developing world; and commend dioceses, local congregations and others, like Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation and the Micah Challenge, for their support of the implementation of the MDGs in fulfillment of our Baptismal Covenant and as an expression of the hunger of this church for far deeper communion with all of God's beloved; and be it further

Resolved, That the (75th) General Convention establish the work toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as a mission priority for the coming triennium, and that each diocese, parish, mission, congregation and parishioner be urged to commit to 0.07% giving toward these goals by July 7, 2007 (07/07/07); and be it further

Resolved, That the (75th) General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget line item of no less than an additional 0.7% (circa \$900,000) of the non-government revenue of The Episcopal Church for work that supports the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability, and
8. Create a global partnership for development with a focus on debt, aid, and trade;

and be it further

Resolved, That the (75th) General Convention encourage dioceses, parishes, missions and congregations to designate the last Sunday of the Church Year, or such days as may be designated ecumenically for commendation of the MDGs, as special days of prayer, fasting and giving in The Episcopal Church toward global reconciliation and the Millennium Development Goals; and be it further

Resolved, That the (75th) General Convention request all dioceses establish a global reconciliation commission or similar body dedicated to mobilizing Episcopalians toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and be it further

Resolved, (That) the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns report to the 76th General Convention on the progress that has been achieved in implementing this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the (75th) General Convention endorse "The ONE Campaign," the U.S. movement for the MDGs, through The Episcopal Church's "ONE Episcopalian" campaign; call on all dioceses, parishes, missions, congregations and individuals to join the ONE Episcopalian campaign; and publicly endorse The ONE Campaign's call for the United States government to annually spend an additional one percent of its budget to combat global poverty and to be active advocates for the achievement of this goal.

A-010 Concurred by both Houses

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church receive and affirm "Call to Partnership," the communiqué presented to the United Nations Summit on September 13, 2005, by Anglican, Evangelical, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Reform, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and United Methodist participants in the Consultation of Religious Leaders on Global Poverty; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention acknowledge the leadership of persons in poverty and local leaders in poor communities as equal partners and not simply recipients in the global effort to alleviate the crushing burden of extreme poverty; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention urge our ecumenical and interfaith partners to affirm "Call to Partnership" and join The Episcopal Church in working across confessional lines and in partnership with governments and international

organizations to pursue the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with all available human and financial resources; and be it further

Resolved, That in receiving and affirming the communiqué, The Episcopal Church call upon governments to pursue the MDGs through:

1. significantly increased official development assistance to poor countries;
2. debt cancellation premised upon a country's need for resources to meet the MDGs;
3. fair and open trade policies that allow developing countries to compete in international markets with rich countries;
4. policies designed to alleviate structural barriers and social injustices that exacerbate the effects of poverty in the developing world; and
5. policies that promote full accountability and transparency among developing countries for the use of resources derived through foreign aid while still allowing strategies for accountability and transparency to be dictated by developing countries themselves; and be it further

Resolved, That in receiving and affirming the communiqué, the (75th) General Convention affirm the work of the Church's officers, dioceses, congregations, baptized members, and Episcopal Relief and Development in undertaking and supporting partnerships for global development in impoverished countries and calls for the expansion of this work through:

1. increased support through time and financial resources for companion relationships with dioceses and congregations in the developing world;
2. a renewed commitment to the work of Episcopal Relief and Development and other faith-based organizations that are operating successful partnerships on behalf of those living in poverty around the world; (and)
3. a commitment to regular prayer from all dioceses, parishes, missions and congregations and baptized members for an end to global poverty in all its forms.

Conclusion

We appropriately conclude our Convention report with a resolution that essentially calls us to pursue the Church's mission "as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love" (*The Book of Common Prayer*, page 855.) In this conclusion is found our next step and mission imperative for the sake of Christ and the world. To take this step is to make West Tennessee a place where God's promise in Christ is good news for all people. Let us make these words more than words as we respond with faithfulness and with the Spirit of Jesus.