



THE DAILY ENCOMPASS



GENERAL CONVENTION 2006 NEWS & COMMENTARY FROM THE AMERICAN ANGLICAN COUNCIL

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A CALL TO MISSION

The American Anglican Council (AAC) is a network of individuals (laity, deacons, priests and bishops), parishes and specialized ministries who affirm Biblical authority and Christian orthodoxy within the Anglican Communion. In response to the Lord's calling and by His grace, we commit ourselves to proclaim the Good News to every person and to reform and renew the Church of Jesus Christ. We are uniting in order to fulfill our apostolic mission and ministry, working to build a faithful Anglican witness in the Americas.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Eph. 6:10-12)

Windsor Report

REPENT + REAFFIRM + ROLLBACK

The Daily Encompass

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Resolution A161: Dead on Arrival

BY RALINDA GREGOR

Resolution A161 promises to be one of the key responses to the *Windsor Report*... if the General Convention can agree on how to word the resolution. After hours of debating and word-smithing and six days into the convention, the Special Committee tasked a subcommittee to combine resolutions A161 and A162 to streamline the approval process.

If responses to the resolution so far are any indication, it may be extremely difficult to come up with a resolution that can gain approval in both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. Speaking of the resolution as it stands, the Rev. Dr. Kendall Harmon, Canon Theologian of the Diocese of South Carolina, said, "It has all the earmarks of a resolution that was driven by consensus. It's an attempt to solve a huge crisis by committee which is a very difficult, if not a losing, proposition."

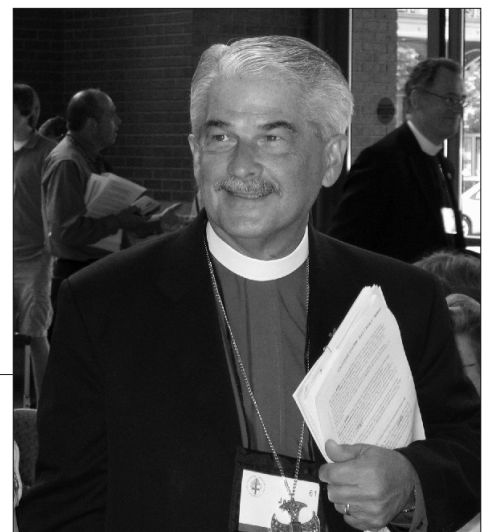
The resolution begins with a shaky start when it states, "we are obliged to urge... to refrain..." As direct as the American branch of Anglicanism has shown itself to be in its unilateral actions, it is disturbing to see the lack of conviction, accountability and enforcement implied by this statement. The *Windsor Report* asked for a moratorium, and the phrase "we won't" would suffice for compliance.

The "manner of life" that

presents a challenge to the communion should also be explicitly stated. The *Windsor Report* specifically asked for a moratorium on the consecration of bishops living in same-gender unions. This General Convention has had no problem inserting language relating to individuals' sexual identity and behavior into numerous resolutions, and it could certainly do so in its response to the *Windsor Report*.

The second and third resolves, taken together, read almost like the Department of Defense's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The resolution addresses the development and authorization of rites of same-sex blessings, although the issue has always been the practice of same-sex blessings. The third resolve provides a clever loophole by allowing for a breadth of pastoral responses, public or private—a clause that will undoubtedly be used to justify blessings of same-sex unions in parishes and dioceses. The inclusion of the phrase

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The Rt. Rev. Jack Iker, Bishop of Fort Worth, went to the floor of the House of Bishops on Monday and asked for alternative primatial oversight due to the election of Katharine Jefferts Schori as presiding bishop.

A Passion for Political Correctness?

BY ANDY FIGUEROA

Mel Gibson took a lot of criticism about possible anti-Semitic content before the release of his film *The Passion of Christ*, though most concerned voices wisely waited to see the film before judging it. However, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) voiced concerns that the movie could fuel “hatred, bigotry and anti-Semitism.” The intense sensitivity that anyone in our society might take offense at what one might say or do has led to a cultural preoccupation with political correctness that is mirrored by the Episcopal Church.

Witnessing to this preoccupation with political correctness is resolution C001, *Anti-Jewish Prejudice in Liturgical Texts*, that has been passed by both houses. The resolution states:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that the 75th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to collect and develop materials to assist members of the Church to address anti-Jewish prejudice expressed in and stirred by portions of Christian scriptures and liturgical texts, with suggestions for preaching, congregational education, and lectionary use, and to report to the 76th General Convention.

Any form of anti-Semitism is unacceptable, and we support appropriate Christian education and preaching to ensure that people are not misled into anti-Semitic thinking. However, it has been widely perceived that this resolution devalues certain core Christian Scriptures, such as the passion narrative used on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, for the sake of political correctness. Neither do our Jewish friends generally consider such Scriptures to be anti-Semitic or prejudicial to Jewish persons or interests. Furthermore, one might rightly wonder if there is a relation-

ship between the Episcopal Church's preoccupation with political correctness and its recent precipitous decline.

Ironically, given the preoccupation with political correctness evidenced by this resolution, the Episcopal Church has recently taken extremely unbalanced positions contrary to the best interests of the State of Israel that some Jews consider anti-Semitic. In an attempt to restore a better balance to the Episcopal Church's official position concerning the state of Israel, the Rt. Rev. Edward S. Little, Bishop of Northern Indiana, has submitted resolution B012, *The Episcopal Church and the State of Israel*, proposing that the Episcopal Church: recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state; recognize the right and responsibility of Israel to defend itself; make a commitment to the development of a two-state solution to the current hostilities; and reject anti-Semitism in all of its forms. The resolution's explanation addresses the unbalanced approach the Episcopal Church has taken on the Middle East:

“In recent years, virtually all General Convention resolutions concerning the Middle East—and all public policy pronouncements by Episcopal agencies—have relentlessly criticized the state of Israel, portraying the Jewish state as an oppressor nation and the Palestinian people as the victims of Israeli oppression. This unbalanced approach does not honor our traditional Anglican ability to appreciate the complexities and nuances of the tragedy in the Middle East, nor has it allowed us to serve as ministers of reconciliation.”

If the Episcopal Church is serious about anti-Semitism, and has any desire to be an honest broker in the conflict between Israel and Palestine, this resolution should be brought forward from the committee and passed by both houses without substantive change. +

Current Text of Resolution A161:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church regrets the extent to which we have, by action and inaction, contributed to strains on communion and caused deep offense to many faithful Anglican Christians as we consented to the consecration of a bishop living openly in a same-gender union. Accordingly, we are obliged to urge nominating committees, electing conventions, Standing Committees, and bishops with jurisdiction to ~~exercise very considerable~~ *caution* refrain from the nomination, election, consent to, and consecration of bishops whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion.; and be it further

Resolved, that this General Convention not proceed to develop or authorize Rites for the Blessing of same-sex unions at this time, thereby concurring with the Windsor Report in its exhortation to bishops of the Anglican Communion to honor the Primates' Pastoral Letter of May 2003; and be it further

Resolved, that this General Convention affirm the need to maintain a breadth of responses to situations of pastoral care for gay and lesbian Christians in this Church.

Resolved, that this General Convention apologize to those gay and lesbian Episcopalians and their supporters hurt by these decisions.

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“at this time” might cause one to ask the same question posed by the Rt. Rev. James M. Stanton, Bishop of Dallas: “How about an hour after this resolution passes?”

The fourth resolve is interesting for its very direct apology to the gay and lesbian community and their supporters. ECUSA would do well to express the same level of heartfelt regret to its brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion.

Without an appropriate expression of regret to the Anglican Communion for the actions taken and enforceable moratoria on consecrations and the practice of same-sex blessings, the Episcopal Church will have rejected Windsor and chosen to walk apart. +