

Dear brothers and sisters,

Thank you for the many expression of encouragement and prayer over the past two weeks. General Convention is a long, exhausting, and “stretching” experience, and your support has been both a blessing and a source of strength. The Latin term is *sine qua non* (without which not). In other words, I couldn’t do it without you and your prayers.

Your General Convention deputies - the Rev. Ben Jones, the Rev. Richard Lightsey, the Rev. Dan Martins, the Rev. Henry Randolph, the Rev. Carolyn Jones (who, as an alternate, replaced Fr. Richard during the last two days of Convention), Pam Harris, Charlotte Strowhorn, Christopher Wells, and Scott Wright - were a superb and prayerful team. It was a joy and a privilege for me to serve with them.

In my first report, written just before the opening gavel, I predicted that human sexuality would dominate General Convention’s deliberations. That turned out to be the case. Two questions were particularly pressing: Should we in some fashion overturn a resolution from the last Convention (B033) which asked for restraint in ordaining persons as bishops whose manner of life would pose a challenge to the unity of the Anglican Communion? And should we authorize liturgies for the blessing of same sex unions? These questions did not exist in isolation. The Anglican Communion itself - through the four Instruments of Communion (the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Lambeth Conference; the Anglican Consultative Council; and the Primates’ Meeting) - has asked the Episcopal Church to effect a moratorium in these areas until a new Anglican consensus emerges.

The debate surrounding these questions was both intense and respectful. Bishops and deputies listened carefully to one another as we struggled with painful and sometimes divisive issues in which no obvious middle way seemed possible. In the end, General Convention passed two resolutions regarding the questions before us.

Resolution D025 deals with the matter of ordination. While it does not directly repeal B033 from 2006, D025 clearly implies that the church has moved to a new place: “Resolved, That the 76th General Convention recognize that gay and lesbian persons who are part of such relationships [committed same-sex partnerships] 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” (*italics mine*). “Any ordained ministry” would include, of course, the ministry of bishops. I believe that this resolution in essence rejects one of the moratoria requested of us by the Anglican Communion. I do not believe that any other interpretation is possible from the plain sense of its words.

On the matter of the blessing of same-sex unions, General Convention also moved away from a Communion-requested moratorium on authorizing liturgies. Resolution C056 asks the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to “collect and develop theological

and liturgical resources” for such blessings and “report to the 77th General Convention” in 2012. The resolution goes to say that “bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same-gender marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships are legal, may provide generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this Church.” In other words, as a kind of interim step until liturgies have been formally approved by General Convention, bishops may go ahead and authorize liturgical forms for the blessing of same-sex unions. Again, this resolution clearly steps away from a Communion-requested moratorium.

Both resolutions passed with overwhelming majorities (D025, with a margin of 99-45, with two abstentions; and C056, 104-30, also with two abstentions). In both cases, I voted with the minority. I did so with sadness. Gay and lesbian Christians are beloved members of our diocese, and I am grateful to be their chief pastor. I’m profoundly aware that my vote may be painful to many of them. And so, in explaining the reason for my vote, I must also - and rightly - reaffirm my love and care for them.

The Windsor Report, a 2004 document produced by the Lambeth Commission appointed at the request of the Primates, ends with these sober words: “There remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together” (Sec. 157). I am deeply concerned that the actions of the 76th General Convention may represent a significant step in that tragic direction. The Episcopal Church, at its highest decision-making level, has turned its back on the pleas of the Anglican Communion and has pressed forward when the Communion urges restraint.

Yet I write these sober words with a sense of hope. After the vote on C056, a group of bishops, about twelve of them, gathered to write a statement in which we could together affirm our dual commitment: to remain loyal members of the Episcopal Church, obedient to its constitution and canons; and to remain at the same time loyal members of the Anglican Communion, in communion with the historic See of Canterbury. Together we drafted the Anaheim Statement, and one of our number - Bishop Gary Lillibridge of West Texas - read it to the whole House of Bishops on behalf of all of us. Our statement was received by our colleagues, particularly those who had voted in favor of D025 and C056, with respect and appreciation. So far, about 34 bishops have joined us in signing the statement. I’ve appended it to the conclusion of this report.

Many bishops told me how grateful they are that those who oppose General Convention’s actions are willing to remain engaged and to make their convictions known. Perhaps the clarity achieved at this convention, as painful as it is for those on the minority side, will help us to speak with honesty and integrity to one another, and help us as well to find a way to honor the conscience of all. I am also hopeful that a way can be found, for those dioceses of the Episcopal Church which agree to the Communion’s requests, to remain in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Rowan himself, in a letter written to Bishop John Howe in 2007, said: “Any Diocese compliant with Windsor remains clearly in communion with Canterbury and the mainstream of the Communion, whatever may be the longer-term result for others in The Episcopal Church. The organ of unity with the wider Church is the Bishop and the Diocese rather than the Provincial

structure as such." The Diocese of Northern Indiana is on record as embracing the Windsor Report and the moratoria requested of us by the Instruments of Communion. Our commitment is to say Yes to the Episcopal Church and to sharing in its life and ministry - and Yes to the Anglican Communion and a Catholic vision of worldwide, interdependent life.

Clearly, General Convention did much more than deal with human sexuality and Anglican Communion issues. Among other things, we passed a canonical change that will inaugurate a churchwide health insurance plan. Up until now, each diocese has been left on its own to negotiate health insurance for clergy and lay employees. Because the pool of employees is thus small, costs have been staggering. By making the entire Episcopal Church a single unit, we hope to bring down the cost. This will not happen overnight; but the convention's action is the first step to reversing a difficult trend.

Second, General Convention approved a sweeping revision of Title IV in the canons, the section dealing with clergy discipline. In essence, the new section provides a disciplinary process that has greater possibility of a pastoral (rather than simply a legal) response when, most painfully, discipline is required.

Third, General Convention passed a resolution calling for extensive outreach to our Spanish-speaking neighbors - outreach that would include both church planting and the strengthening of existing Hispanic congregations. Our own experience with St. Thomas', Plymouth (la Iglesia de Santo Tomas) shows us that Episcopalians can indeed do fruitful evangelistic work among Hispanics, and I am excited that the the church on a national level will be making this an important priority.

Fourth, General Convention wrestled with a significant shortfall in the Episcopal Church's budget for the next triennium - about \$23,000,000 less than what was received in the previous three years. Programs have been drastically cut, many positions eliminated at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, and a general belt-tightening is required at all levels. The Joint Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance did heroic work throughout convention in dealing with these difficult realities.

During August and early September, your General Convention deputies and I will be holding a series of regional meetings around the diocese, to give you a chance to hear from us and to ask questions. As soon as the details of those meetings have been worked out, we'll place the information on this website. Meanwhile, please join with me in praying for the church:

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one god, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, p. 528)

Yours in Christ,  
+Ed

### **Anaheim Statement, General Convention, 2009**

At this convention, the House of Bishops has heard repeated calls for honesty and clarity. As the conversation has proceeded within the House of Bishops, repeated attempts to modify wording which would have been preferable to the minority in the vote were respectfully heard and discussed, but in the end most of these amendments were found unacceptable to the majority in the House. Many in the majority believed the amendments would make the stated position of this House less honest about where they believe we are as The Episcopal Church.

It is apparent that a substantial majority of this Convention believes that The Episcopal Church should move forward on matters of human sexuality. We recognize this reality and understand the clarity with which the majority has expressed itself. We are grateful for those who have reached out to the minority, affirming our place in the Church. We seek to provide the same honesty and clarity. We invite all bishops who share the following commitments to join us in this statement as we seek to find a place in the Church we continue to serve.

We reaffirm our constituent membership in the Anglican Communion, our communion with the See of Canterbury, and our commitment to preserving these relationships.

We reaffirm our commitment to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them (BCP 526, 538).

We reaffirm our commitment to the three moratoria requested of us by the Instruments of Communion.

We reaffirm our commitment to the Anglican Communion Covenant process currently underway, with the hope of working toward its implementation across the Communion once a Covenant is completed.

We reaffirm our commitment to “continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship” which is foundational to our baptismal covenant, and to be one with the apostles in “interpreting the Gospel” which is essential to our work as bishops of the Church of God.

