

* FINAL VERSION - Concurred

Resolution: **D025**
Title: **Commitment and Witness to Anglican Communion**
Topic: **Anglican Communion**
Committee: **08 - World Mission**
House of Initial Action: **Deputies**
Proposer: **Ms. D. Rebecca Snow**

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

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 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.

EXPLANATION

This resolution provides clarification in light of the Windsor Report (2004) and subsequent discussions in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

The first resolve reaffirms resolution A159 adopted at the 75th General Convention General Convention, in 2006. While much attention has been focused on official statements and resolutions from the primates meetings, Lambeth Conference 2008, and Anglican Consultative Council meetings in 2005 and 2009, our participation in the Anglican Communion consists of a much richer tapestry of ministries and networks as well as personal relationships. Hence the second resolve encourages Episcopalians, individually and in dioceses and parishes, to build relationships with our sisters and brothers around the Anglican Communion by participation in these networks and ministries.

Another sign of the Episcopal Church's commitment to the Anglican Communion is financial. In 2007, The Episcopal Church budgeted \$661,000 for the Inter-Anglican budget, which sustains the work of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Anglican Communion offices in London. The 2007 financial report of the Anglican Consultative Council (the latest available on the Anglican Communion website) reports a total income from Inter Anglican Budget contributions as £1,134,745 (\$1,864,574.36, using 2009 currency rates). In other words, The Episcopal Church contributes a substantial portion of the Inter Anglican Budget. This resolution reaffirms our financial commitment.

Our relationships in the Anglican Communion have been tested by the question of the ordination to the episcopate of individuals living in a same-sex partnership. Resolution D-039 of the 73rd General Convention, in 2000, acknowledged that the membership of the Episcopal Church includes persons living in same-sex relationships; established an expectation that "such relationships will be 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"; and further denounced "promiscuity, exploitation, and abusiveness in the relationships of any of our members." Three years later, the 74th General Convention reaffirmed this expectation. These standards thus provide guidance for access to the discernment process for ordination to the episcopate.

The acceptance of the ministry of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons is not settled in The Episcopal Church or in the Anglican Communion. While the church continues to discern God's will in these matters, it is important to remind ourselves that sacramental theology since the time of Augustine of Hippo has affirmed that the validity of sacraments does not depend on the character of the ordained person celebrating those sacraments.