

Resolutions Before the 90th Annual Council of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

A Resolution Concerning Voting Procedures

Whereas the 90th Council of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia will have the privilege of electing:

A) One lay and one clergy member to the Standing Committee, each to serve for a term of three (3) years;

B) Two lay and two clergy (one of whom has, by tradition, been the Bishop) delegates, and two lay and two clergy alternate delegates to the Provincial Synod;

C) One lay and one clergy member to the Ecclesiastical Trial Court, each for a term of three (3) years;

Whereas each of the five (5) Convocations may submit a nominee for each of the positions; and,

Whereas it has in the past proved unduly cumbersome to elect such persons by majority vote, as the election procedures have only allowed the elimination of that person receiving the lowest number of votes per ballot; and

Whereas in order to expedite the balloting procedures, the Council has expressed its wish to reduce the number of ballots for election to such positions to not more than three (3);

Now therefore be it resolved by the 90th Council of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia as to elections among multiple nominees for Standing Committee and Ecclesiastical Trial Court; that on the first ballot there be eliminated all but the three (3) candidates for each office receiving the highest number of votes; and in the case of clergy and lay delegates to Provincial Synod, those clergy candidates receiving the most votes on the first ballot will be the three (3) clergy elected, i.e., one (1) clergy delegate and two (2) clergy alternates, and those lay candidates receiving the most votes on the first ballot will be the four (4) lay elected, i.e., two (2) lay delegates and two (2) lay alternates; and that the balloting for Standing Committee and Ecclesiastical Trial Court proceed among the three (3) remaining candidates and that on the second ballot, the one (1) candidate for each office receiving the fewest votes shall be eliminated.

Resolution: #1

From: Executive Board

Concerning: Site of Council

Whereas the 87th Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia by its resolution #1 requested the Executive Board to entertain and consider invitations from any local parish, convocation or group of parishes to host Council in 2009 or later, if it could be demonstrated that adequate facilities and services could be provided at comparable cost to existing facilities; and

Whereas such invitation(s) were to be issued by October 1 of the year preceding the Council; and

Whereas the Dispatch of Business Committee considered such an invitation from the Augusta Convocation, submitted to the Eighty-Eighth Council, for Council to be held at The Homestead Resort and Conference Center; and

Whereas the Dispatch of Business Committee has issued a report to Council delegates and made no recommendation;

Therefore be it resolved that Council hold its 91st Annual meeting at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, Virginia, on January 29, 30, 31, 2010; and that Council hold its 92nd Annual meeting at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, Virginia, on January 28, 29, 30, 2011.

Be it further resolved that the Executive Board entertain and consider invitations from any local parish, convocation or group of parishes to host Council in 2012 or later, if it can demonstrate that adequate facilities and services can be provided at comparable cost. Such invitation(s) to be issued in writing to the Executive Board by October 1 of the year preceding the Council at which the invitation will be accepted or rejected.

Resolution: #2

From: Executive Board

Concerning: Fund for Mission and Outreach

Whereas by its Resolution #8 the 73rd Annual Council established a Fund for Mission and Outreach (The "Council Endowment Fund"); and

Whereas in accordance with the establishment of

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this Fund, Council is responsible for the allocation of one half the annual earnings amounting this year to approximately \$10,000.00;

Therefore be it resolved that this 90th Annual Council of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia meeting in Roanoke on January 23, 24 and 25, 2009, allocate its share of this Fund for use of the Outreach Committee in making grants in 2009.

Resolution #3

From: Nick Moga

Concerning: The Establishment of the First Sunday of Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

Be it resolved that the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia dedicate the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and that congregations and individuals be encouraged to support Episcopal Relief & Development's life-saving work through prayer and a special offering that will help heal a hurting world; and

Be it further resolved that the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia submit the following resolution to be considered and adopted by Province III; and

Be it further resolved that the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia submit the following resolution to the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, meeting in Anaheim, California, July, 2009:

RESOLVED, the House of _____ concurring, this 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church dedicate the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and that congregations and individuals be encouraged to support Episcopal Relief & Development's life-saving work through prayer and a special offering that will help heal a hurting world.

Explanation:

In 2008, the Presiding Bishop designated the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and as an annual celebration of Episcopal Relief & Development's role in our collective mission to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

The Episcopal Church's ongoing commitment to fight poverty and disease around the world is lived out in a variety of ways. Advocacy with our

government for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is one vital way. Another is through the ministry of Episcopal Relief & Development, which, as the relief and development arm of the Episcopal Church, works globally to alleviate hunger, fight disease, and strengthen communities.

Resolution #4

Concerning: Racism, Inclusion, Diversity and Issues of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Socioeconomic Standing

From: Sharon Bryant, Max Guggenheimer, the Rev. Phyllis Hicks, Heather Ryan-Sigler, Nina Salmon, and the Rev. Michael Sullivan

Whereas the Church of Jesus Christ is called to bring liberation and peace to all; and

Whereas we, the people of the Church, are to seek justice and peace for all persons, respecting the dignity of every human being; and

Whereas Resolution D-113 of the 1991 General Convention calls us to "address racism inside our church, within society, and in our world"; and

Whereas we are instructed to work actively to "become a church committed to ending institutional and other forms of racism which necessitates the acceptance of abandonment of privilege and the sharing of power within our polity, within our society, and throughout the world" as reiterated in the General Convention of 2000, Resolution A-047 and reaffirmed in General Convention 2003, Resolution A-010; and

Whereas Resolution B-049 from General Convention 2000 requires anti-racism training of all lay and ordained leaders in the Episcopal Church; and

Whereas the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia does not currently provide an ongoing program to support understanding, inclusion, and freedom from prejudice, and malice;

Therefore be it resolved that the 90th Annual Council of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia endorse and embrace the existing diversity in our diocese.

Be it further resolved that the Bishop of Southwestern Virginia appoint a diocesan Task Force on Racism, Inclusion, and Diversity with a clergy and lay member from each convocation within the diocese whose charge will include (but not be limited to):

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- 1) opening a dialogue throughout the diocese about racism and inclusion;
- 2) providing opportunities for education about issues of culture, diversity, and inclusion as well as opportunities for engagement through training, discussion, and interaction;
- 3) making informed recommendations to the Bishop and Diocesan Council to follow through on resolutions adopted by our Diocese as well as proposing new initiatives; and

Be it further resolved that all Episcopalians in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia be encouraged to seek opportunities for education and involvement in the inclusion of all peoples.

Resolution #5

Concerning: Support for Those Studying for Ordained Ministry

From: The Rev. Deborah Hentz Hunley, The Rev. Susan Bentley, The Rev. Marion Kanour, The Very Rev. Dr. Douglas Wigner, Dr. Ann Alexander

Be it resolved that the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, at its Annual Council meeting on January 23, 24, and 25, 2009, memorialize the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church and its Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to provide funding in the coming triennium in the amount of \$100,000 in year one, \$150,000 in year two and \$200,000 in year three for the purpose of providing needs-based scholarships for Episcopal Seminarians; and

Be it further resolved that said funds be administered and distributed to needy seminarians through the existing Scholarship Program of the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (SIM), said Society having an established record of 151 years of experience in administering scholarship grants to Episcopal seminarians; and

Be it further resolved that the General Convention direct SIM to report annually to the Executive Council on this work and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the future ordained leaders of this Church and that the Executive Council, in turn, provide a full report to 77th General Convention.

Explanation:

This funding schedule is intended to bring the support from the General Convention budget to a level matching the annual grants committed by the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (\$225,000.00 for the academic year 2008-09).

Enrollment of full-time Master of Divinity students in the residential seminaries of the Episcopal Church has declined 25% over the last three academic years due at least in part to the dramatic increases in cost of seminary education, training and formation. The cost of three years of seminary can range from \$51,000 to over \$100,000, depending upon family circumstances and one's choice of seminaries.

Nationally, about half of our seminarians struggle under the burden of debt, most of which is educational debt. The average debt of those with debt in the Class of 2009 only halfway through seminary is \$44,772. Projecting these figures to graduation and ordination, the average indebtedness of new ordinands will approach or exceed \$60,000.

The high cost of seminary education and the threat of debilitating debt limits diversity among our seminary student bodies and limits the placement opportunities for ordinands to those congregations which pay better than others.

It was at the 62nd General Convention (1970) that the seminary deans and the Board for Theological Education first called for direct financial support from General Convention. This action later led to the passing of a resolution calling on parishes to commit 1% of their net budget income to the support of the seminaries of the Episcopal Church. The 1% principle was reaffirmed at several Conventions which followed. The last reported Parochial Report figures from 1999 demonstrate that such support amounted to only .0027% (barely one quarter of one percent) of the called-for support. Had support been sustained at 1.00% of net budget parish income, scholarship funds would have increased substantially and the cost of such education, training and formation would have been reduced significantly and the situation with our seminaries might be quite different.

Meanwhile, the Episcopal Church remains the only major denomination in the United States that does not have a central funding source to support seminarians in their education, training and formation.

While both the General Conventions of 2006 and 2003 called upon various stake-holding agencies of the Episcopal Church to study this issue and to make recommendations, the General Convention has yet to become part of the solution by providing any funding to support seminarians in need. Since 1789 we have consistently acted as if funding of seminaries and seminarians is someone else's problem, not our own. It is now time for the General Convention and its budget to become an active participant in the solution.