



St. Michael's by-the-Sea
Adult Forum

2009/2010

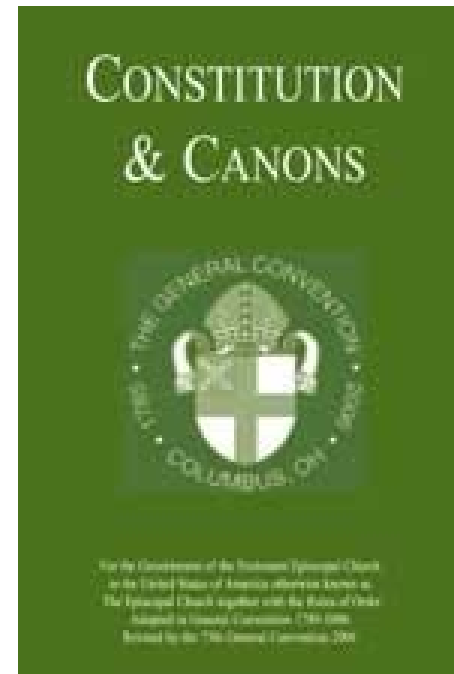
General Convention 2009

Constitution & Canons of The Episcopal Church

Constitution

Article 1 Section 1

“There shall be a General Convention of this Church, consisting of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies, which Houses shall sit and deliberate separately; and in all deliberations freedom of debate shall be allowed. Either House may originate and propose legislation, and all acts of the Convention shall be adopted and be authenticated by both Houses.”



The General Convention

- The Primary governing and legislative body of The Episcopal Church
- 1785 Philadelphia-- Initial General Convention of the Episcopal Church
- Held every three years



The General Convention

- Comprised of two houses
- House of Bishops
 - All bishops of the Episcopal Church, active and retired, are entitled to seat, voice and vote in the House of Bishops
- House of Deputies
 - Each of the Episcopal Church's dioceses (and the Convocation of Churches in Europe and the Navajoland Area Mission) is entitled to elect eight deputies, four lay persons and four priests and/or deacons, to the House of Deputies.
- Resolutions must be passed by both houses for approval.



The General Convention

- Types of Resolutions
 - “A”... submitted by CCABs (Committees, Commissions, Agencies, or Boards) of General Convention in their Report to the Convention.
 - “B”... submitted by bishops.
 - “C”... submitted by dioceses or provinces.
 - “D”... submitted by deputies.



The Road to General Convention 2009

- **1998 Lambeth Conference**
 - Resolution 1.10 upheld Scriptural and traditional teaching on marriage and human sexuality
 - Resolution 1.10 -- “This Conference...in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage.”

The Road to General Convention 2009

- **August, 2003—General Convention**
 - The House of Bishops defeated a resolution (B001) affirming the authority of Scripture and other basic elements of Christian faith
 - Both the House of Bishops and House of Deputies approved the election of a non-celibate homosexual as bishop of New Hampshire
 - Both houses approved a resolution (C051) recognizing the blessing of same-sex unions as within the bounds of our common life

The Road to General Convention 2009

- **October 2004**
 - Lambeth Commission released Windsor Report 2004; reaffirmed Lambeth 1.10 and the authority of Scripture as central to Anglican common life, and called for moratorium on public rites of same-sex blessings and moratorium on the election and consent of any bishop candidate living in a same-sex union

The Road to General Convention 2009

- **June 2006—General Convention**
 - ECUSA changed “brand” to The Episcopal Church (TEC), citing its international presence in 16 countries
 - TEC fell short of Windsor compliance. Resolution B033 called upon standing commissions and bishops 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 the communion” (“manner of life” was not defined and “exercising restraint” is not a moratorium)
 - Rejected Resolution A161 which expressed regret for consenting “to the consecration of a bishop living openly in a same-gender union”
 - Refused to consider Resolution D058 “Salvation Through Christ Alone”; one deputy who spoke against the resolution declared it “too controversial” a subject to discuss
 - Elected Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori who does not regard homosexual behavior as sinful and does not consider Jesus the one way to the Father

The Road to General Convention 2009

- **February 2007 --Tanzania Communiqué**
 - Anglican Primates reaffirmed 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 as the standard of teaching on human sexuality in the Communion
 - Called for TEC House of Bishops (HOB) to “make an unequivocal common covenant” that they will not authorize rites of blessing for same-sex unions and will confirm that a “candidate for Episcopal orders living in a same-sex union shall not receive the necessary consent” to be consecrated as a bishop. Set a deadline of September 30, 2007 for the HOB to reply.
 - Called on TEC and congregations involved in property disputes to suspend their lawsuits.

The Road to General Convention 2009

- **June 2007**

- TEC Executive Council rejected the requests of the Dar es Salaam Communiqué and the pastoral scheme, saying only General Convention can respond to those requests and questioning the authority of the Primate to impose demands on member churches which violate their *Constitutions and Canons*
- TEC Executive Council warned dioceses that changed their constitutions in an attempt to bypass the Church's *Constitution and Canons* that their actions are "null and void"
- San Diego Diocese sued three Anglican parishes for their property

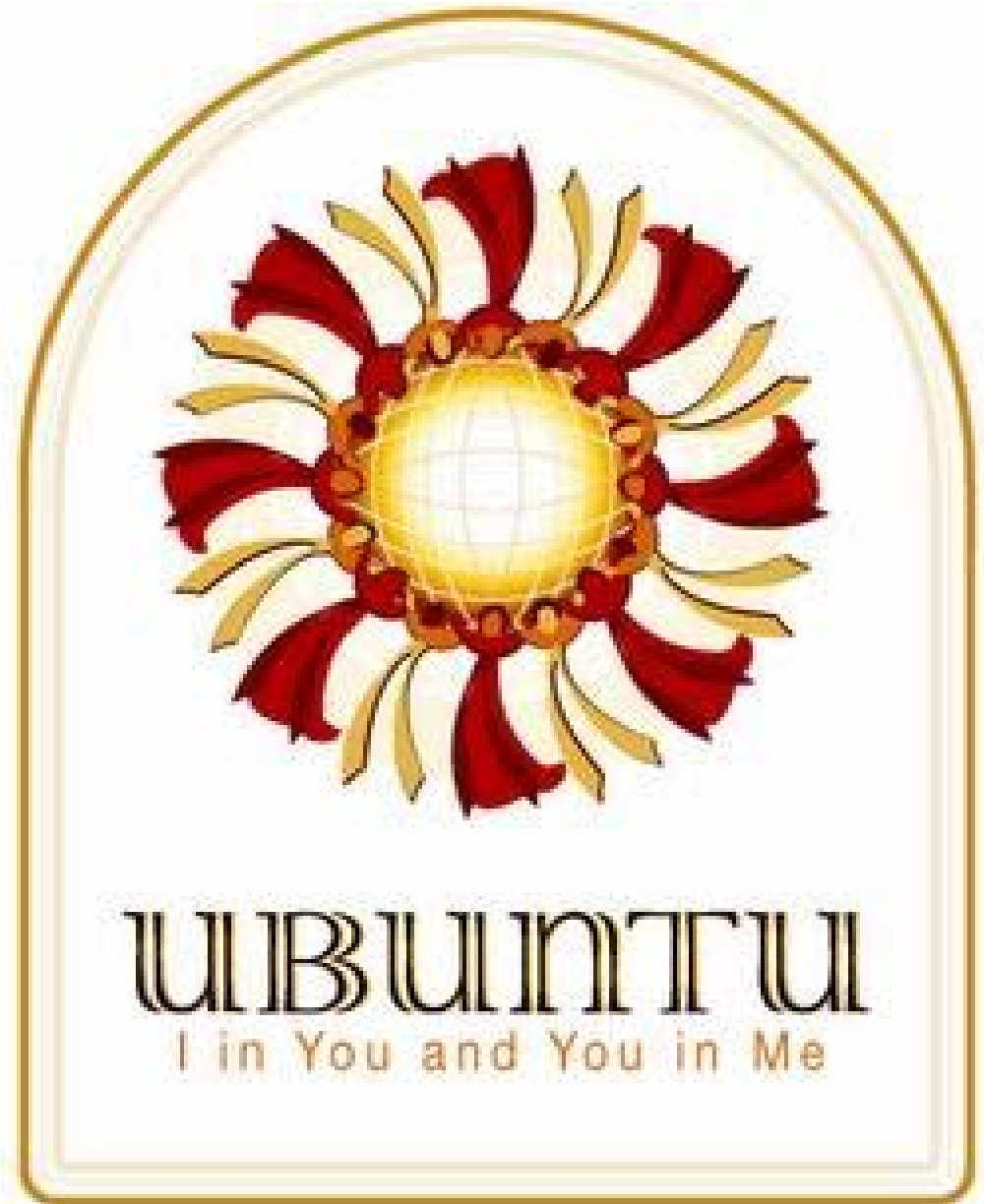
The Road to General Convention 2009

- **September 2007**

- TEC House of Bishops (HOB) responded to the Primates' Tanzania Communiqué with a pledge not to authorize public same-sex blessings and claimed that resolution B033 pertains to non-celibate gays and lesbians. The carefully worded response was not a moratorium on same-sex blessings or future non-celibate homosexual bishops and is subject to change at the next General Convention in 2009.

The 76th General Convention Anaheim, California July 2009

- Ubuntu – “Speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness.” – Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- “The Trinitarian design depicts God the Creator in the bright center, God the Son in the cross formed by the longitude and latitude lines and God the Holy Spirit, swirling around the Father and the Son. The swirl is comprised of dancing figures, male and female, with faces of many colors, who symbolize the interconnectedness of humanity.”



Day One: Presiding Bishop's Opening Address at GC 09

- No opening worship, praise, or prayer.
- Katherine Jefferts Schori denounced as “heresy” the proposition that individual believers can find salvation through Jesus Christ.
- In a wide ranging address that summarized the work before General Convention, the Presiding Bishop stated that the “crises” facing the church all had to “do with the great Western heresy that we can be saved as individuals, that any of us alone can be in right relationship with God.”
- This belief was “caricatured in some quarters by insisting that salvation depends on reciting a specific verbal formula about Jesus,” she said. This “individualist focus is a form of idolatry, for it puts me and my words in the place that only God can occupy, at the center of existence, as the ground of all being.”



Day One: Presiding Bishop's Opening Address at GC 09

“That heresy is one reason for the theme of this Convention. Ubuntu doesn't have any “I”s in it. The I only emerges as we connect – and that is really what the word means: I am because we are, and I can only become a whole person in relationship with others. There is no “I” without “you,” and in our context, you and I are known only as we reflect the image of the one who created us. ”



Romans 10.9

- “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

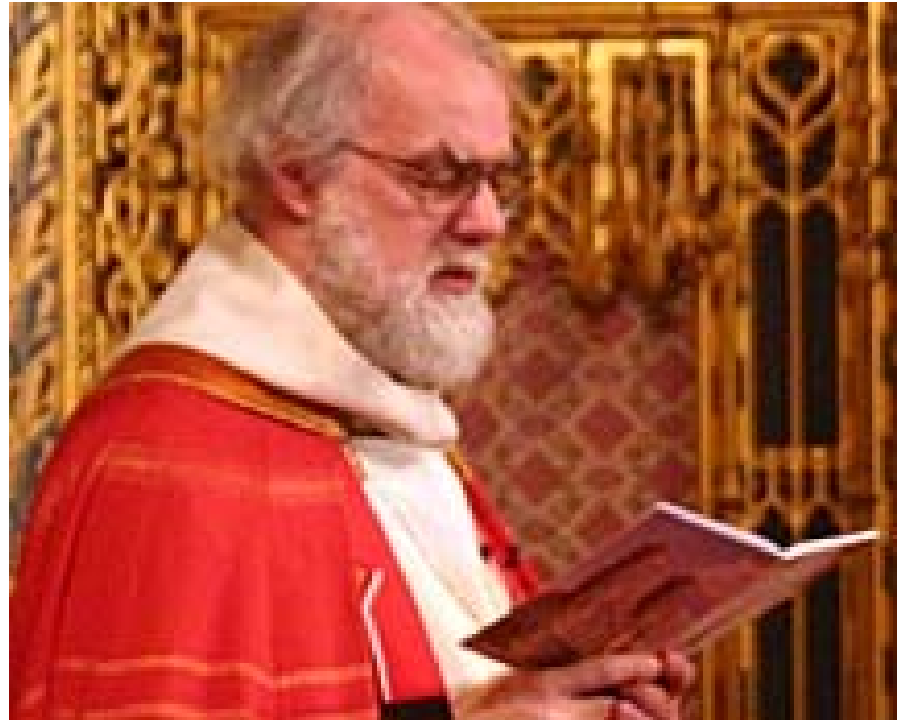
Day Two: Presiding Bishop's Sermon at Opening Eucharist

- “That is still our mission work – taking good news and rebirth and offering heart transplants to the languishing.”
- “So, how will this heart push more lifeblood out into a languishing world? Can you hear the heartbeat? Mission, Mission, Mission...”
- Languish** – “to be neglected or deprived: to undergo hardship as a result of being deprived of something, typically attention, independence, or freedom.”



Day Three: The Archbishop of Canterbury's Meditation given during the July 9th Eucharist

“Of course I am coming here with hopes and anxieties - you know that and I shan't deny it. Along with many in the Communion, I hope and pray that there won't be decisions in the coming days that could push us further apart. But if people elsewhere in the Communion are concerned about this, it's because of a profound sense of what the Episcopal Church has given and can give to our fellowship worldwide. If we - if I - had felt that we could do perfectly well without you, there wouldn't be a problem. But the bonds of relationship are deep, for me personally as for many others.”



Resolution D025: Commitment and Witness to Anglican Communion

Final Version Concurred

- *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.

Resolution C025: Liturgies for Blessings

Final Version Concurred

- *Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 76th General Convention acknowledge the changing circumstances in the United States and in other nations, as legislation authorizing or forbidding marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian persons is passed in various civil jurisdictions that call forth a renewed pastoral response from this Church, and for an open process for the consideration of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships; and be it further
- *Resolved*, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, in consultation with the House of Bishops, collect and develop theological and liturgical resources, and report to the 77th General Convention; and be it further
- *Resolved*, 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;**

Dissenting Bishops Issue 'Anaheim Statement'

- Twenty-nine bishops have endorsed affirming their desire to remain part of the Anglican Communion and Episcopal Church while being faithful to the calls for restraint made by the wider church

Dissenting Bishops Issue

'Anaheim Statement'

- reaffirmed the bishops' "constituent membership in the Anglican Communion, our communion with the See of Canterbury, and our commitment to preserving these relationships";
- reaffirmed their "commitment to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them";
- reaffirmed their "commitment to the three moratoria requested of us by the Instruments of Communion";
- reaffirmed their "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";
- reaffirmed their "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."

Bishop Mathis' Response

“I supported this resolution [do25] as a full expression of where we stand as a Church. It acknowledges that gay and lesbian persons have, and may in the future, be ordained to all orders of the Church.”

From EDSO Press Release -- The resolution affirms that ordination is available to anyone in the church through the discernment process outlined in the *Constitution and Canons* of the church

“Indeed, while some in the wider Anglican Communion are troubled by this measure, others are in accord with it. I pray that our mutual response will lead to more engagement not less, more conversation not less, more honoring of difference not less. Such a response is representative of the comprehensiveness of Anglicanism.”



A Letter to Rowan Williams from
Katherine Jefforts Schori & Bonnie Anderson.



A Letter to Rowan Williams from Schori and Anderson.

Dear Archbishop Williams,

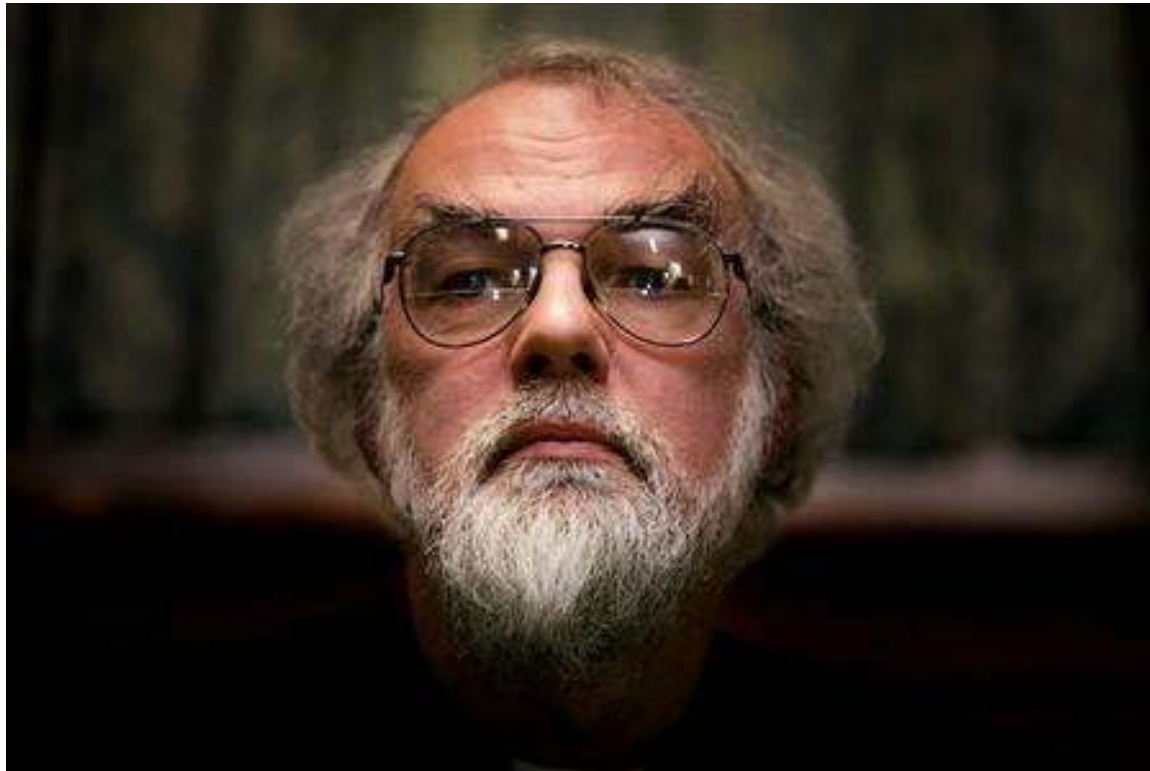
...We understand Resolution D025 to be more descriptive than prescriptive in nature—a statement that reaffirms commitments already made by The Episcopal Church and that acknowledges certain realities of our common life. Nothing in the Resolution goes beyond what has already been provided under our *Constitution and Canons* for many years.

...Some are concerned that the adoption of Resolution D025 has effectively repealed Resolution B033. That is not the case. This General Convention has not repealed Resolution B033. It remains to be seen how Resolution B033 will be understood and interpreted in light of Resolution D025.

...In adopting this Resolution, it is not our desire to give offense. We remain keenly aware of the concerns and sensibilities of our brothers and sisters in other Churches across the Communion. We believe also that the honesty reflected in this resolution is essential if indeed we are to live into the deep communion that we all profess and earnestly desire.

Communion, Covenant and our Anglican Future

Reflections on the Episcopal Church's 2009 General Convention from the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Anglican Communion.



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- “The issue is not simply about civil liberties or human dignity or even about pastoral sensitivity to the freedom of individual Christians to form their consciences on this matter. It is about whether the Church is free to recognise same-sex unions by means of public blessings that are seen as being, at the very least, analogous to Christian marriage.”
- A major change naturally needs a strong level of consensus and solid theological grounding.
- This is not our situation in the Communion. Thus a blessing for a same-sex union cannot have the authority of the Church Catholic, or even of the Communion as a whole. And if this is the case, a person living in such a union is in the same case as a heterosexual person living in a sexual relationship outside the marriage bond; whatever the human respect and pastoral sensitivity such persons must be given, their chosen lifestyle is not one that the Church's teaching sanctions, and thus it is hard to see how they can act in the necessarily representative role that the ordained ministry, especially the episcopate, requires.

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- So long as the Church Catholic, or even the Communion as a whole does not bless same-sex unions, a person living in such a union cannot without serious incongruity have a representative function in a Church whose public teaching is at odds with their lifestyle.
- If society changes its attitudes, that change does not of itself count as a reason for the Church to change its discipline.
- To accept without challenge the priority of local and pastoral factors in the case either of sexuality or of sacramental practice would be to abandon the possibility of a global consensus among the Anglican churches such as would continue to make sense of the shape and content of most of our ecumenical activity. It would be to re-conceive the Anglican Communion as essentially a loose federation of local bodies with a cultural history in common, rather than a theologically coherent 'community of Christian communities'.

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- It is my strong hope that all the provinces will respond favourably to the invitation to Covenant. But in the current context, **the question is becoming more sharply defined of whether, if a province declines such an invitation, *any elements within it will be free* (granted the explicit provision that the Covenant does not purport to alter the Constitution or internal polity of any province) to adopt the Covenant as a sign of their wish to act in a certain level of mutuality with other parts of the Communion.** It is important that there should be a clear answer to this question.
- The different needs and priorities identified by different parts of our family, and in the long run the different emphases in what we want to say theologically about the Church itself, are bound to have consequences.

Conclusion

- St. Michael's Response to General Convention will be presented at the Adult Forum on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angel
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