

General Convention Update, Wednesday, June 14

On Wednesday, the work of General Convention moved forward on all fronts. Committees are finalizing pieces of legislation and sending them to the floors of both houses, and those houses have begun their deliberation and voting. Both houses have also heard presentations from a number of representatives of groups sending greetings to deputies and bishops.

As the day started, Bishop O'Neill joined deputies and other attendees from Colorado at their morning caucus. He spoke briefly about the work that he is doing on the Special Legislative Committee responding to the Windsor Report. Deputies also provided updates from their committee work (see updates below). The day concluded with that committee's largest hearing, where over 1,000 listened for nearly three hours to passionate testimony. For more information about that hearing, please see either the ENS http://www.episcopalchurch.org/75383_75880_ENG_HTM.htm or http://www.coloradiocese.org/06_newsandevents/PDFs/gc_slc.pdf for the Colorado update

The House of Deputies elected Bonnie Anderson, a six-term lay deputy to General Convention from Michigan who is currently serving as Vice President of the House of Deputies, to succeed The Very Rev. George Werner as President of the House of Deputies. You can read more about Anderson and her election on the ENS http://www.episcopalchurch.org/75383_75873_ENG_HTM.htm.

Robert Radtke, president of Episcopal Relief and Development, addressed the House of Bishops on Tuesday, and the House of Deputies on Wednesday. He spoke to both groups about the imperative of Matthew 25 that informs all of ERD's work: to feed the hungry, care for the sick and welcome the stranger. Radtke – who revealed that the first time he gave money to ERD was in the wake of the Asian tsunami in December, 2004 – talked about the “silent tsunamis” that take the lives of children and people living in poverty every day. He also talked about the incredible growth that ERD has experienced over the past year. The organization's individual supporters have increased three-fold between 2004 and 2005, and total donations increased by 400 per cent in one year. He then told stories of individual families who ERD is helping – one family and one child at a time – through expanding its programs in areas like primary health care and poverty relief. Radtke thanked bishops and deputies for the generous support ERD receives from congregations and dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church.

Youth and Young Adults are very involved at this General Convention. The Official Youth Presence has been very evident throughout General Convention. Yesterday, the Youth Presence visited the House of Bishops, and one its members addressed the Bishops and talked about his own Christian formation. He received a standing ovation from the bishops. The Young Adult Festival also has a full schedule, and its members have been in attendance at committee hearings and in legislative sessions. Read a report on young adult activities from a Colorado attendee:

http://www.coloradiocese.org/06_newsandevents/PDFs/gc_ya_rpt.pdf.

Both houses were also greeted warmly by the Chinese Christian Church, which is non-denominational, and numbers over 20,000 members.

In news from committees having hearings and discussions:

- The Legislative Committee on Canons is working on substantial revisions to a proposed resolution that would change Title IV. For more information about Title IV and this committee's work, you can read about it on page 3 of the Convention Daily http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/615_GCD_WebFinal.pdf.
- The Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F) held a public hearing on proposed changes to the 2007- 2009 budget. For more information about that hearing, go to http://www.episcopalchurch.org/75383_75886_ENG_HTM.htm.
- The Standing Commission on Domestic Mission and Evangelism is working on resolutions that support church planting through the Office of Congregational Development. For a personal reflection from The Rev. Peter Munson on the work of that committee, go to http://www.coloradodiocese.org/06_newsandevents/PDFs/gc_dep_ref_munson_6-14.pdf.

Looking Ahead

On Thursday, the committee on Social and Urban affairs is holding public hearings on resolutions dealing with the impact of slavery, and reconciliation.

On Thursday evening, John Danforth, a former US Senator and Episcopal priest will be the key note speaker at the Presiding Bishop's Forum, titled, "Toward a Reconciled World."

Friday morning is the last scheduled hearing of the Special Legislative Committee.

On Sunday, the House of Bishops will elect the next Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

Media Coverage of General Convention

Associated Press coverage:

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,199451,00.html>

<http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EPISCOPALIANS?SITE=AZPHG&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT>

BBC coverage:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5082270.stm>

