

General Convention Update – Thursday, June 15

On Thursday, the first of the resolutions from the Special Legislative Committee was passed by the House of Deputies on a voice vote. It will likely be heard in the House of Bishops on Friday. The resolution - A159 – affirms The Episcopal Church’s “abiding commitment ... to the fellowship of the churches that constitute the Anglican Communion, and seek to live the highest degree of communion possible.” One other resolution – A166, which outlines The Episcopal Church’s support for a process to develop an Anglican covenant – will likely be heard today.

The Special Legislative Committee continues deliberations the other resolutions from the Special Commission. These deliberations have been open, held before full meeting rooms. Many of those listening with interest to the proceedings are from other provinces in the Anglican Communion. The presence of so many representatives from across the Anglican Communion – including members of the Lambeth Commission itself – shows a deepening of the conversation even here, says Bishop O’Neill, who serves on the committee.

As more resolutions come out of committee and are ready by action in either the House of Deputies or the House of Bishops, the legislative sessions were extended on Thursday, and committee meetings and hearings were fewer. Thursday did see committee hearings on resolutions that address the church’s position on the Israel/Palestine peace process, and on four resolutions that would shape actions related to reconciliation and response to slavery. More complete coverage of these hearings is available in the Convention Daily online (http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/615_GCD_WebFinal.pdf). The Joint Legislative Committee on Consecration of Bishops held further hearings on the consent to the election of the Rev. Barry Beisner as bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Northern California, and is continuing discussion today. You can see more coverage of that committee’s work, go to http://www.episcopalchurch.org/75383_19066_ENG_HTM.htm.

In other business, the House of Bishops heard debate about a resolution calling for full, Eucharistic communion with the United Methodist Church, and ultimately affirmed the resolution. It now goes to the House of Deputies for consideration. The House of Bishops also heard from the a retired bishop from northern Uganda, who shared his experience of a dire situation in northern Uganda and northeastern Uganda. He was introduced to the House by a group of three bishops who are working together to build a peace center in Uganda. As they are each day, other bishops visiting from provinces around the Anglican Communion were introduced to the House, including bishops from Guatemala, Korea, Japan and Lebanon. For additional coverage of events in the House of Bishops, go to <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ens/>.

Both houses affirmed the funding priorities presented by the Standing Commission on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F). Those priorities are: justice and peace; young adults, youth and children; reconciliation and evangelism; congregational transformation

and reaffirming the importance of partnerships with provinces of the Anglican Communion and beyond.

The day's events concluded with the Presiding Bishop's Forum, keynoted by Episcopal priest and former Republican US Senator John Danforth. Danforth called on the audience to make reconciliation the church's central ministry, and argued that The Episcopal Church is uniquely positioned to champion this ministry, as a church that has always positioned itself as "the middle way." He went on to offer practical suggestions about how The Episcopal Church could do the work of reconciliation in the world, and how that work should inform all of the discourse and the message of the church. For more complete coverage of Danforth's remarks and the other speakers at the Forum, including Dr. Jenny Plane Te Paa, Principal of Te Rau Kaikatea and a member of the Lambeth Commission on Communion, Malaika Kamunanwire, Senior Director for Marketing and Communications at Episcopal Relief and Development, Alexander Baumgarten, an International Policy Analyst in the Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church, and The Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, Bishop of Massachusetts, go to <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ens/>.

Looking Ahead

On Friday morning, Bishop O'Neill is serving as a briefing officer at the General Convention's daily press briefing.

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

Media Coverage of General Convention

CNN - Larry King Live. Several people on all sides of the discussion of the human sexuality in the Episcopal Church, including Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, appeared on Larry King Live last night. No video is posted on the Larry King site as of this morning, but it may be later in the day:

<http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/larry.king.live/>

Transcript: <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0606/15/lkl.01.html>

Associated Press Coverage (As it appears in *The Rocky Mountain News*):

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

Reuters Coverage:

http://today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=domesticNews&storyID=2006-06-15T202019Z_01_N15242584_RTRUKOC_0_US-RELIGION-EPISCOPALS.xml

http://today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-06-15T023850Z_01_N14272082_RTRUKOC_0_US-RELIGION-EPISCOPALS.xml

BBC Coverage:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5085472.stm>