

NATIONAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP

John Vanderstar, Chair; Bruce Garner, Vice-Chair; Sherry Denton, Secretary; Tim Anderson; Hisako Beasley; Kim Byham; Angela Helt; Stacy Sauls; Winnie Varghese.

Frequently joining the committees in its deliberations were: Brian Prior, Vice President of the House of Deputies, and former NAC member, and Sally Johnson, Counsel to the President of the House of Deputies.

At various meetings we heard reports from the Rt. Rev. Chris Epting on ecumenical issues; the Rev. Jim Lemler on the Mission department including the Mission Funding Task Force; Richard Parkins on immigrations issues; Maureen Shea on the Governmental Relations Office; the Rev. Brian Grieves on peace and justice issues; Mark Duffy on the church's archives; Thom Chu on youth and young adults; the Rt. Rev. George Packard on military and other chaplaincies; and Canon Bob Williams and Solange De Santis on communication issues.

SUMMARY OF WORK

As a result of NAC work, the Executive Council:

- Adopted shareholder Resolution filings from the Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, and recommended shareholder action on proxies.
- Addressed the issues of immigration and refugees including the “material support” provision of the Patriot Act, the New Sanctuary Movement, and the creation of Volunteer Refugee Program Liaisons.
- Helped organize Anti-Racism Training for Council, monitored diocesan response documenting the financial benefits received from slavery, and promoted the Service of Repentance for Slavery.
- Supported human rights for gay and lesbian persons and the granting of asylum for persecuted gay and lesbian persons. Heard Davis Mac-Iyalla, Director of Changing Attitude-Nigeria speak of oppression of gay and lesbian people by the Church and State in Nigeria.
- Urged the calculation of the “carbon footprint” of The Episcopal Church as a first step in reducing carbon emissions.
- Condemned torture and called for the closure of Guantanamo Prison.
- Urged the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast in a manner which supports racial and economic justice.
- Reviewed Jubilee programs presented for designation or re-designation.
- Commended the Domestic Poverty Summit and urged continuing focus on this priority.
- Declared that actions purporting to qualify the accession clauses in diocesan constitutions were null and void.

In its deliberations, NAC also:

- Discussed implementation of General Convention Resolution D047, requiring The Episcopal Church to book meetings in facilities which guarantee a living wage.
- Suggested that host provinces, as well as dioceses, present their ministries to the Executive Council during Council meetings.
- Discussed ways to support and help Episcopalians in dissenting dioceses.
- Participated in budget exercises and made recommendations for the 2009-2012 budget.
- Examined the role of the Executive Council in the management of the church.

76TH GENERAL CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**RESOLUTION A137 CONTINUATION OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the Task Force to Study Employment Policies and Practices in The
 2 Episcopal Church be continued for the 2010-2012 Triennium. Its work would include the following : a) further
 3 study be undertaken on how to appropriately treat Episcopal schools and institutions that are affiliated with an
 4 Episcopal congregation or diocese, but are an independent 501 I (3) organization; b) monitor (in conjunction with
 5 the Church Pension Group) the implementation of the canon on lay pensions; c) further study the unique
 6 contexts of the overseas Episcopal dioceses in light of the canon on lay pension; and d) consider any
 7 recommendations to the 77th General convention; and be it further
 8
 9 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to
 10 allocate \$15,000 for the work of the Task Force in the Triennium.

EXPLANATION

The Task Force to Study Employment Policies and Practices in The Episcopal Church was established by the Executive Council in response to Resolution A006 of the 74th General Convention in 2003. The Rev. Dr. Melford (Bud) Holland, most recently Program Officer for Discipleship and Leadership; Ordained Ministry at the Episcopal Church Center, was appointed convener of the group and remained so until his retirement. The membership consisted of representatives from various groups as set forth by Executive Council: CEPVA (Colloquium of Episcopal Professional and Vocational Associations), the Church Pension Group, the Episcopal Church Center and the Executive Council. By Resolution A125 at the 75th General Convention in 2006, the Task Force was continued.

The Task Force prepared a statement on Workplace Values in The Episcopal Church, which was approved as part of Resolution A125. Most significantly, as a result of the Church Pension Group's Comprehensive Lay Employee Study, the Task Force submitted a canon to amend the pension provisions of the church to include mandatory pension benefits for lay employees, recognizing that Resolution D165a of the 1991 Convention which called for lay pensions has not been universally or uniformly applied. The Task Force has not completed all the work that needs to be done on this vital issue, though it should complete its work in the next three years.

RESOLUTION A138 ESTABLISHING A MANDATORY LAY EMPLOYEE PENSION SYSTEM

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this Church establish a mandatory lay employee pension system for
 2 employees who are scheduled to work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually for any domestic Diocese, Parish,
 3 Mission or other ecclesiastical organization or body subject to the authority of the Church, in accordance with the
 4 following principles:
- 5 1. The lay employee pension system shall provide benefits that shall, initially, include defined benefit plan(s)
 6 and defined contribution plan(s);
 - 7 2. If a defined benefit plan is selected, the employer assessment and/or contribution shall be not less than
 8 nine (9) percent of the employee's compensation; if a defined contribution plan is selected, the employer
 9 shall contribute not less than five (5) percent of the employee's compensation and match at least four (4)
 10 percent of the employee's contributions. The Trustees of The Church Pension Fund shall have the
 11 authority to increase or decrease the assessment and/or contribution percentages required for the lay
 12 pension system;
 - 13 3. Existing defined benefit plans will be permitted to continue as long as their plan design delivers pension
 14 benefits not less than the pension benefits required by this Resolution, as determined by the plan
 15 administrator. If the plan does not provide the pension benefits required by this Resolution, such plan
 16 shall be amended to provide for such pension benefits no later than January 1, 2012.
 - 17 4. The lay employee pension system shall be designed and administered by the Trustees and officers of The
 18 Church Pension Fund; the investment managers of the system shall initially include, but not necessarily

- 19 be limited to, The Church Pension Fund and, in the case of a defined contribution plan offered to school
 20 employees, TIAA-CREF;
- 21 5. The lay employee pension system will be operated on a financially sound basis, as determined by the
 22 Trustees of the Church Pension Fund;
- 23 6. Other societies, organizations, or bodies in the Church not mandated to participate may, under the
 24 regulations of The Church Pension Fund, elect to come into the lay employee pension system;
- 25 7. No right or obligation to have assessments paid on compensation paid prior to plan participation will be
 26 part of the mandatory lay employee pension system;
- 27 8. Service in the Episcopal Church prior to plan implementation shall be recognized for vesting purposes;
- 28 9. The implementation of the mandatory lay employee pension system shall be completed no sooner than
 29 January 1, 2011 and no later than January 1, 2012; and
- 30 10. Further study be undertaken by The Church Pension Fund on the feasibility of inclusion of overseas
 31 Episcopal dioceses in the lay employee pension system and report back to the 77th General Convention;
 32 and be it further
 33

34 *Resolved*, That Canon I.8 shall be amended as follows:

35 **CANON 8: OF THE CHURCH PENSION FUND**

36 **Sec. 1** The Church Pension Fund, a corporation created by Chapter 97 of the Laws of 1914 of the State
 37 of New York as subsequently amended, is hereby authorized to establish and administer the clergy
 38 pension system, including life, accident and health benefits, of this Church, substantially in accordance
 39 with the principles adopted by the General Convention of 1913 and approved thereafter by the several
 40 Dioceses, with the view to providing pensions and related benefits for the Clergy who reach normal age
 41 of retirement, for the Clergy disabled by age or infirmity, and for the surviving spouses and minor
 42 children of deceased Clergy. *The Church Pension Fund is also authorized to establish and administer the lay employee*
 43 *pension system of the Church, substantially in accordance with the principles adopted by the General Convention of 2009,*
 44 *with the view to providing pensions and related benefits for the eligible lay employees of this Church, as well as their eligible*
 45 *beneficiaries.*

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47 **Sec. 3.** For the purpose of administering the pension system, The Church Pension Fund shall be entitled
 48 to receive and to use all net royalties from publications authorized by the General Convention, and to
 49 levy upon and to collect from all Parishes, Missions, and other ecclesiastical organizations or bodies
 50 subject to the authority of this Church, and any other organizations, or bodies in the Church which under
 51 the regulations of The Church Pension Fund shall elect to come into the pension system, assessments
 52 based upon the salaries and other compensation paid to Clergy by such Parishes, Missions, and other
 53 ecclesiastical organizations or bodies for services rendered currently or in the past, prior to their
 54 becoming beneficiaries of the Fund. *For the purpose of administering the lay employee pension system, The Church*
 55 *Pension Fund shall be entitled to collect from all Parishes, Missions, and other ecclesiastical organizations or bodies subject*
 56 *to the authority of this Church, and any other societies, organizations, or bodies in the Church which under the regulations of*
 57 *The Church Pension Fund shall elect to come into the lay employee pension system, assessments and/or contributions based*
 58 *upon the salaries and other compensation paid to eligible lay employees by such Parishes, Missions, and other ecclesiastical*
 59 *organizations or bodies.*

EXPLANATION

Resolution D165, approved by the 1991 General Convention, stated:

Require Episcopal Church Bodies to Provide a Pension Plan for Lay Employees

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That all Parishes, Missions, and other ecclesiastical organizations or bodies subject to the authority of this Church, and any other societies, organizations, or bodies in the Church which under the regulations of the Church Pension Fund have elected or shall elect to come into the pension system, shall provide all lay employees who work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually retirement benefits through participation in the Episcopal Church Lay Employees Retirement Plan (ECLERP) or in an equivalent plan, the provisions of which are at least equal to those of ECLERP.

Such participation shall commence no later than January 1, 1993. At its commencement, if the plan is a defined benefit plan, the employer contribution shall be not less than 9 percent of the employee's salary; if the plan is a defined contribution plan, the employer shall contribute not less than 5 percent and agree to "match" employee contributions of up to another 4 percent; and be it further

Resolved, That the employer may impose a minimum age of 21 years and a minimum employment period not to exceed one year of continuous employment before an employee would be eligible to participate; and be it further

Resolved, That the Trustees of The Church Pension Fund shall have authority to increase or decrease the contribution percentages required for the lay pension plan; and be it further

Resolved, That each Diocese of this Church shall implement this resolution by Diocesan Canon or appropriate resolution.

Since 1991, there have been several other Resolutions which addressed this issue. Most recently, in 2006, General Convention, in Resolution A125, said, in pertinent part:

Resolved, That the Convention authorize and request the Church Pension Group to conduct a survey of lay employees concentrating on employee demographics, the exercise of authority in the employment setting, and compensation and benefits. The Bishop or other ecclesiastical authority of each diocese shall be requested to supply relevant data for each employing unit in the diocese to the Church Pension Group. The findings of the survey and any recommendations for action, if appropriate, shall be reported to the 76th General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of Ministry Development take the lead in determining the best way to conduct a feasibility study examining whether pension benefits for lay employees should be made compulsory and be administered by a single provider. The results of said study shall be reported, along with recommendations for action, if appropriate, to the 76th General Convention. ...

The Task Force to Study Employment Policies and Practices in The Episcopal Church has conducted the requested study and has determined that the 1991 Resolution has been complied with to a substantial degree (approximately 80% of the domestic dioceses, two-thirds of congregations and 93% and 70%, respectively, of the eligible lay employees), but many hundreds of eligible employees remain uncovered and there are considerable inequities, as for example, 77% of eligible male employees are covered while only 68% of females are.

It is simply time to live up to the commitment of the church in 1991. The cost of pension coverage described in the 1991 Resolution and herein would be, on average, 6/10s of 1% of parish budgets, with the cost for the smallest congregations approximately 1%, which congregations are least likely to have eligible employees.

RESOLUTION A139 DIOCESAN RECONFIGURATION STUDY

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, the 76th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on the
- 2 Structure of the Church to undertake a study and report to the 77th General Convention on the current diocesan
- 3 configuration and suggest whether adjustments thereto would be appropriate.

EXPLANATION

Changing demographics suggest that certain dioceses are struggling to remain viable. There needs to be a comprehensive look at whether the current configuration is optimal and what might be done, with proper pastoral concern, to improve it.

RESOLUTION A140 DOMESTIC POVERTY

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention commend the Presiding Bishop for
- 2 convening a Summit on Domestic Poverty in May 2008, and calls upon the Executive Council to engage
- 3 continuing efforts in the Church to address this priority concern in the next triennium.

EXPLANATION

The Presiding Bishop's Summit on Domestic Poverty brought together Episcopalians from around the church who are working on issues of poverty, social service and social justice. The Presiding Bishop asked that we "engage this ministry in a coherent way that draws in the whole of the church in the United States." This Resolution asks that the Executive Council be responsible for developing strategies and partnerships that will facilitate this work.

RESOLUTION A141 CONTINUATION OF EC COMMITTEE ON HIV/AIDS

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention direct that the Committee on
- 2 HIV/AIDS shall continue as a committee of Executive Council.

EXPLANATION

HIV/AIDS continues to be a devastating and unique illness in the United States and through out the world. The uniqueness of the illness is the result of the ongoing stigma associated with it. HIV disease can still result in the refusal of housing, employment, and a number of ordinary public accommodation resources to those infected.

The stigma creates an atmosphere of secrecy and hiding that interferes with the testing and diagnosis of the condition and seeking medical treatment for it. Infected individuals remain reluctant to seek social and medical services in their own communities as a result of this stigma.

Infection rates are again rising in the United States particularly in the Southeastern part of the country, Province IV of The Episcopal Church. Yet a large percentage of those infected do not know they are infected due to fear of the stigma, lack of medical resources and/or the anxiety of knowing their status.

Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) and The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focus on non-domestic HIV issues. While both are admirable in their responses to HIV, they further the erroneous idea that HIV is no longer an issue in the United States. This reflects an ongoing "migration of interest and concern" about HIV to areas outside the United States even while some areas of the country have HIV seroprevalence rates comparable to sub-Saharan African countries.

To further exacerbate the problem, advances in drug treatments have created a sense that HIV disease is not just a chronic condition that can be treated with medication. Unfortunately, that sense does not take into account the high cost, side effects and a host of other factors that prevent that false sense of security a reality. The end result is continued risky behavior, often concealed, that continues to increase the infection rates.

Despite the misconception that HIV is no longer a real problem in the United States, we continue to need a resource of the church to be focused on this issue. Continuing the relationship of the Committee on HIV/AIDS with Executive Council will help address those concerns.

REPORT ON RESOLUTIONS REFERRED TO DIOCESES

75th General Convention Resolutions Referred to Dioceses for Action or Consideration

The diocesan response—from 59 of 111 reporting jurisdictions—to Resolutions referred for action or consideration after the 75th General Convention is recorded below.

RESOLUTIONS REFERRED FOR ACTION		ACTION	NO ACTION
A042	Church Planting Initiative	23	20
A077	Revised Common Lectionary	36	6
A123	Slavery and Racial Reconciliation	25	17
A156	Sexual Exploitation	35	8
D022	MDG's and the ONE Episcopalian Campaign	35	7

RESOLUTIONS REFERRED FOR CONSIDERATION		CONSIDERED	NOT CONSIDERED
A006	Triennial Survey of Congregations	15	24
A010	Affirm "Call to Partnership"	26	14
A015	Prayers for the Holy Land	34	5
A017	Fundamental Immigration Principles	24	16
A037	Evangelism	32	9
A038	Diocesan Development Initiative	23	15
A039	Reconciliation Training	24	12
A041	University Ministry	28	12
A055	UMC Eucharistic Sharing	23	16
A063	Additional Calendar Commemorations	26	13
A064	Authorize Trial Use of Commemorations	25	14
A074	Authorize Enriching Our Worship 3	34	7
A076	Alternatives to Prayer Book Burial Rites	28	12
A078	Liturgical Development and Episcopal Authority	24	17
A082	Amend Canons III.5-III.13	31	8
A101	Stewardship of Relationships	29	9
A102	Culture of Debt	22	12
A127	Restorative Justice	26	10
A129	Affirm Creation and Evolution	16	24
A132	Eliminate HIV/AIDS Stigma	26	15
A134	HIV Training	15	20
A136	Enriching Our Worship Support	34	5
A139	Celebration of Women's Ministries	30	9
A147	Church-wide Healthcare Feasibility Study	31	8
A163	Pastoral Care and Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight	30	9
A167	"Full and Equal Claim" for All the Baptized	33	8
B002	Response to Global Warming	25	11
B003	Church Pension Fund and Chaplains to the Retired	29	9
B011	Special Missionary Initiative	23	15
B018	Comprehensive Children's Policy	22	17
B035	Mind of the House: The Ministry of Reconciliation and the Relief of Global Suffering	23	14
C011	Church Responsibility in Reparations	23	17
C018	Environmental Stewardship	27	12
D018	Active Nonviolence Training	19	19
D019	Pastoral Concern for Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and their Families	36	1
D020	End the War in Iraq	26	13
D024	Gender Equality for Women in the Episcopal Church	31	10
D031	Budget Priorities	23	15
D047	Justice, Respect, and a Living Wage	26	12
D059	Child Care Facilities at General Convention	24	16