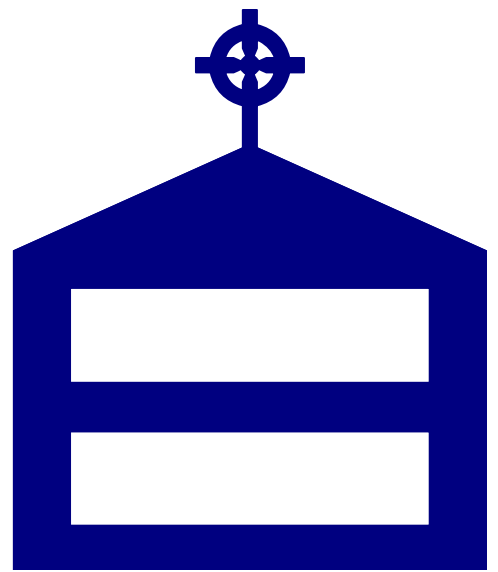


Toward a Full and Equal Claim

A Brief History of LGBT Issues
in the Episcopal Church



About the Author

This is a living document. It is updated periodically as new events occur. The original author was Kim Byham, Esq. Additional content was added by the Rev. Michael W. Hopkins. Content since 2003 was added by John Clinton Bradley.

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Integrity is a nonprofit organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] Episcopalians and our straight friends. For over 30 years, Integrity has been the leading grassroots voice for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Episcopal Church and their equal access to its rites.

To join, visit our website or mail us your check (\$75/household, \$45/individual). Contributions to support our ministry are welcome and tax deductible.



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Minneapolis 1976

At the 65th General Convention (Minneapolis, 1976), an historic resolution was passed that acknowledged and affirmed the presence of persons of homosexual orientation in the Church for the first time. Thus began a journey for the Church toward the full inclusion of gay and lesbian persons in its life and mission, and a reformed theological understanding of human sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular. It was the same Convention, moreover, that first passed a new Book of Common Prayer (a vote that was confirmed in 1979 on second reading) and opened presbyteral and episcopal ordination to women.

Resolved, that it is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God and have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church.

In many ways, the story of the next twenty plus years has been one of the Church grappling with the meaning of this Resolution and struggling to live into its vision. What at first may have appeared to some as a simple gesture of acknowledgment of presence and compassion, was taken by lesbian, gay, and bisexual Episcopalians, and their supporters, as an empowerment of their voices and lives, long hidden in the life of both church and society. For the first time in its history, the Church had spoken the name of homosexual people without condemnation. It should be no surprise that for gay and lesbian people, there was no going back. It was a Red Sea crossing experience.

The same Convention passed what was perhaps an even more radical resolution, especially for its time.

Resolved, that this General Convention expresses its conviction that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens, and calls upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality.

Already the following year, the House of Bishops, meeting in Port St. Lucie, Florida, began dealing with the consequences of the actions of the 1976 Convention. The issue of the ordination of a gay or lesbian person had come almost immediately to the fore. Among the first women ordained in 1977 was the Rev. Ellen Barrett in the Diocese of New York. Bishop Paul Moore, Jr. acknowledged that he was aware of her sexual orientation and that he did not consider it an impediment. From this point on, it was ordination that became the focal point for the homosexuality issue in the Church.

The bishops at Port St. Lucie wrote a pastoral letter to the Church that called the ordination of "advocating and/or practicing" homosexual persons "inappropriate." A resolution to "censure" Bishop Moore, however, failed.

The bishops also passed a resolution calling on all dioceses to develop committees to study "the issue of human sexuality, including homosexuality," and "for dialoguing with homosexual persons." The resolution's goal was to aid the 66th General Convention "in dealing with the issue of homosexuality." Thus another "theme" of the Church's debate over the place of gay and lesbian people in the Church was established: the confusing habit of making positive statements to gay and lesbian people (such as the 1976 Resolution) and then calling for continued study as if the issue were not yet settled. It has left gay and lesbian Episcopalians in a never-ending quandary about whether they are really "in" or not. The paternalistic language of "dealing with" also left them wondering whether or not the Church really wished their voices to be heard. Especially early on, it was clear that the Church was far more willing to talk "about" them than "with" them.

Denver 1979

The 1979 General Convention in Denver saw the ordination question become a major issue. The substance of the House of Bishop's statement in their 1977 pastoral letter was passed in the form of a resolution, which made the following three recommendations regarding persons in the ordination process:

1. *There are many human conditions, some of them in the area of sexuality, which bear upon a person's suitability for ordination;*
2. *Every ordinand is expected to lead a life which is "a wholesome example to all people" (Book of Common Prayer, pp. 517, 532, 544). There should be no barrier to the ordination of qualified persons of either heterosexual or homosexual orientation whose behavior the Church considers wholesome;*
3. *We reaffirm the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity and sexual chastity as the standard of Christian sexual morality. Candidates for ordination are expected to conform to this standard. Therefore, we believe it is not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual, or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage.*

The vote on the Resolution in the House of Bishops was 99 to 34. Immediately, 20 of the 34 signed a statement of dissent, which said, in part

We who associate ourselves with this statement are deeply conscious of, and grateful for, the profoundly valuable ministries of ordained persons, known to us to be homosexual, formerly and presently engaged in the service of this Church. Not all of these persons have necessarily been celibate; and in the relationships of many of them, maintained in the face of social hostility and against great odds, we have seen a redeeming quality which in its way and according to its mode is no less a sign to the world of God's love than is the more usual sign of Christian marriage. From such relationships we cannot believe God to be absent.

In addition, the dissenting bishops declared

Taking note, therefore, that this action of the House is recommendatory and not prescriptive, we give notice as we are answerable before Almighty God that we cannot accept these recommendations or implement them in our Dioceses ... To do so would be to abrogate our responsibilities of apostolic leadership and prophetic witness to the flock of Christ...our appeal is to conscience, and to God. Amen.

Among the signers were the Bishop of Hawaii, Edmond Browning, later presiding bishop, John Burgess, retired Bishop of Massachusetts and John Walker, Bishop of Washington, the first two African-American diocesan bishops in the Church, and Otis Charles, who, in 1993, would become the first bishop to publicly admit himself to be gay.

The same Convention also requested more dialogue on issues of human sexuality, noting that in dioceses where dialogue had already taken place, "some consensus has been reached." Despite the recommendation of the ordination resolution, this call for dialogue recognized that the Church's understanding of sexuality was changing.

We need to grow into a mature understanding of sexuality as a gift of God; and as responsible stewards, we continue in our need to be open to God's on-going revelation to us in this area, as this is made known to us through Scripture, tradition, and reason.

As in the 1977 House of Bishop's resolution, the dialogue was to include "persons of differing attitudes, professional experiences, and sexual orientation."

New Orleans 1982

The 1982 General Convention in New Orleans saw little action on gay and lesbian issues, except that the 1976 resolutions were re-affirmed.

In 1983, the House of Bishops, meeting in Spokane, Washington, first responded to the AIDS crisis, calling on the Church "to provide compassionate and practical ministry throughout the Church to all those victims who have been affected by AIDS and by any ostracism or persecution." The 1976 resolutions were cited as background for this call.

Anaheim 1985

The 1985 General Convention in Anaheim, California was significant for gay and lesbian Episcopalians. Debate centered on two proposed canonical changes:

No one shall be denied rights or status in this church because of race, color, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap or age except as otherwise specified by canon.

No one shall be denied access to the ordination process in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap or age, except as otherwise specified by canon.

The changes passed after great debate, but after Convention adjourned there was much disappointment when it was found that a clerical error had resulted in the House of Bishops failing to concur with the precise wording of amendments from the House of Deputies.

The Convention did pass a resolution that acknowledged how far the Church had yet to come in fulfilling the 1976 resolutions.

Resolved, that the 68th General Convention urge each diocese of this Church to find an effective way to foster a better understanding of homosexual persons, to dispel myths and prejudices about homosexuality, to provide pastoral support, and to give life to the claim of homosexual persons "upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral care and concern of the Church" as recognized by the ...resolution in 1976.

The 1985 Convention also responded to the AIDS crisis with the following resolution:

Resolved that this 68th General Convention of the Episcopal Church recognize with love and compassion the tragic human suffering and loss of life involved in the AIDS epidemic; ...Resolved, That it repudiates any and all indiscriminate statements which condemn or reject the victims of AIDS;...Resolved, That the Executive Council is charged with:

- 1. The development of special intercessory prayers for people affected by the AIDS crisis;*

2. *The development and funding of programs of awareness, education and prevention concerning AIDS;*
3. *The identification and funding of programs for ministry to all persons affected by AIDS...*

Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is requested to establish and lead a National Day of Prayer and healing with special intentions for the AIDS crisis, and to communicate the concerns presented in this resolution to the President of the United States urging long term, substantial federal funding for research.

The 1985 Convention was also important in its election of a new Presiding Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Edmond L. Browning, the Bishop of Hawaii, one of the signers of the 1979 statement of dissent. In a brief statement following his election, Bishop Browning declared that "in this Church there will be no outcasts," a cry that filled gay and lesbian people throughout the Church with hope.

Integrity had been present at previous General Conventions, but it was at Anaheim that the presence became efficiently organized, and part of a broader organized coalition, called "the Consultation." Some 20 volunteers were present and declared by many to be the "best dressed" delegation due to a strict dress code. At the next Convention, the volunteer team was increased to 30 and Integrity was able to track important legislation with its legislative volunteers and nerve center, even providing assistance to other groups who were not so equipped.

Detroit 1988

In 1988, General Convention met in Detroit with issues of human sexuality placed on the front burner by the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health. Its triennial report to the Church charged that it had yet to truly listen to its homosexual members. In strong language, it said

The Commission on Human Affairs and Health challenges this Church to suspend—just for a moment—the ancient judgments against our present homosexual Episcopalians and simply allow them to tell the stories of their lives.

The response was to call for more dialogue in the spirit of this message and Bishop Browning's call for a church with no outcasts. All previous statements of the General Convention were recommended for use in the dialogue. This request, because it included the 1979 resolution recommending against ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons,

prompted 23 bishops to add their names to the statement of dissent from 1979.

The 1988 Convention was probably most affected by a display of a significant portion of the Names Project Quilt in the lower level of the convention hall. Many in attendance cited this powerful witness as instrumental in the clear response made by Convention to the AIDS crisis. The resources of the National Church were put behind AIDS education programs, including distribution of the Surgeon General's Report on AIDS to every member of the Church¹ and significant support for the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition.

In addition, Convention decried the growing number of incidents of violence against gay and lesbian persons and called attention to the high suicide rates among gay and lesbian youth, directing the Youth Ministries Office of the National Church to distribute information and resources to the Church concerning this growing problem.

The House of Bishops 1990

In 1989, the Rt. Rev. John S. Spong, Bishop of Newark, ordained the Rev. Robert Williams, an openly gay man living in a relationship with another man, to the priesthood. The event garnered much publicity.

The House of Bishop, meeting in Washington, DC in the Fall of 1990, was dominated by debate over the ordination and its consequences. In particular, a resolution was put forward to disassociate from Bishop Spong and reaffirm the 1979 recommendation against such ordinations. Prior to the meeting, the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice had voted to "disassociate" itself from the ordination.

The vote was 80 to 76 in favor of the resolution, with all but one member of the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice voting against. Bishop Spong, in his speech before the House, defended himself and his diocese by pointing out the language of the 1979 Resolution: "Note the operative word is 'recommend.' The way you spell recommend is R-E-C-O-M-M-E-N-D." He also pointed out that General Convention had failed to codify the Resolution in Canon. And, in moving remarks, he said,

The way the church treats its gay and lesbian members deeply violates my conscience. It strains my life by tearing it between my loyalty to Jesus Christ, who made a habit of embracing the outcast, and my loyalty to this church, which I dearly love.

Phoenix 1991

Tensions were high going into the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Two more high-profile ordinations had taken place: one in the Diocese of Newark (of Mr. Barry Stopfel to the diaconate by the Rt. Rev. Walter Righter, Assistant Bishop) and one in the Diocese of Washington (the Rev. Elizabeth Carl to the priesthood by the Rt. Rev. Ronald Haines, Bishop). A resolution to censure both bishops was put before the House of Bishops, and the Rt. Rev. William Frey, Dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry and retired Bishop of Colorado, put forward a proposed change in the canons, requiring celibacy for all non-married clergy.

Attempts were made before Convention to set aside all sexuality resolutions. A major open hearing on sexuality issues was scheduled for Sunday evening during Convention and both Houses agreed to hold off any consideration of related resolutions until after that time. But avoidance of the issue was not to be. Tempers flared in the House of Bishops even before any sexuality-related resolutions were brought forward such that the House took the extraordinary measure of spending part of each day in Executive Session in an attempt to work out their differences in private.

This, too, was not to be. When the first sexuality-related resolution came to the floor of the House of Bishops, there was an explosion. It was a proposal to mandate the appointment of openly gay and lesbian persons to the Commission on Human Affairs, which had been charged in the past with study of sexuality issues. On amendment the language was changed to mandate "representation from the communities and groups being most affected by the agenda." The resolution passed in this form and the House of Deputies concurred. But debate in the House of Bishops focused on personal relationships. Bishop Spong accused those who opposed the measure of being guilty of "homophobic prejudice." Bishop John MacNaughton of West Texas declared his resentment of that statement, and he and Bishop Frey decried the takeover of the Commission by a "narrow gay agenda."

The Open Hearing Sunday night of Convention drew approximately 3,000 persons. 117 persons signed up to speak during the allotted two and one-half hours. First to speak were Bishop Frey and the Rt. Rev. Frederick Borsch, Bishop of Los Angeles. Both Integrity and Episcopalians United, a conservative

lobbying group within the Church, were invited to provide two speakers to follow. The Rev. Stina Pope of Atlanta and the Rev.

Walter Szymanski of Rochester were chosen. Twenty more speakers followed.

The next day, the House of Bishops spent three and one-half hours in open debate on human sexuality. At the center of it was the resolution to censure Bishops Haines and Righter, and the proposed canonical change from Bishop Frey. No vote was ever taken on the censure resolution. The Bishop's Committee on Ministry put forward a compromise resolution, affirming traditional church teaching but calling for more dialogue, recognizing that there was a discontinuity between this teaching and the experience of many in the Church. Bishop John Howe of Central Florida attempted to amend this with the language of the Frey proposed canonical change. The bishops voted against this, 93 to 85, thus leaving open the possibility of individual dioceses continuing to exercise local option in the ordination of gay and lesbian persons.

The compromise resolution ended up passing both Houses.

The 70th General Convention ...affirms that the teaching of the Episcopal Church is that physical sexual expression is appropriate only within the lifelong monogamous "union of husband and wife" ...and that this Church continue to work to reconcile the discontinuity between this teaching and the experience of many members of this body, and that this General Convention confesses our failure to lead and to resolve this discontinuity through legislative efforts. .. and that this General Convention commissions the Bishops and members of each Diocesan Deputation to initiate a means for all congregations in their jurisdiction to enter into dialogue and deepen their understanding of these complex issues ...and that this General Convention directs the House of Bishops to prepare a Pastoral Teaching prior to the 71st General Convention using the learnings from the diocesan and provincial processes and calling upon such insight as is necessary from theologians, theological ethicists, social scientists, and gay and lesbian persons.

No other resolutions regarding human sexuality passed this Convention. In one significant move, however, the House of Deputies chose to vote on the Frey canon despite it not having been reported out of the House of Bishops. The intent, in the words of the Chairperson of the Deputies' Ministry Committee, was to place "the possibilities of choices clearly before the House." The Committee recommended defeat of the canonical change. In a vote by orders, the canon was defeated. The deputies then went on to pass canonical language (again on a vote by orders) giving equal access to the ordination process "to all members of this church." The House of Bishops never voted on this change.

Perhaps the most significant change at the Phoenix Convention was the increased voice of gay and lesbian persons, both in hearings on resolutions, but also on the floor of the House of Deputies itself. In particular, Mr. Pat Waddell, a lay deputy from the Diocese of El Camino Real, and the Rev. Willa Goodfellow, a clerical deputy from the Diocese of Iowa, spoke eloquently on the House floor. In addition, gay and lesbian supportive deputies were strong in their witness. For the first time, Integrity asked individual deputies to sponsor resolutions on its behalf. Twenty resolutions resulted. Although most of these were not reported out of committee, several of them sowed the seeds of significant resolutions that would pass at the 1994 Convention.

Indianapolis 1994

The 1994 General Convention in Indianapolis met with sexuality again on the front agenda. The pre-Convention focus was on the proposed Pastoral Teaching, written in line with the 1991 Convention's desires. The Rt. Rev. Richard Grein, Bishop of New York, had chaired the Committee. The Committee had met behind closed doors and the document had survived through five drafts without being leaked, in agreement with the process set up by the House of Bishops. Prior to the Convention it was leaked, however, and 18 bishops from Province 7 wrote an "Affirmation of Traditional Church Teaching on Human Sexuality," saying that the pastoral teaching was "incapable of providing the clear guidance wanted and needed by Christian people for faithful living." By the time of Convention, 101 bishops (the majority of them retired) had signed the document.

The pastoral eventually passed the House, but not without several changes, and being re-named a "Pastoral Study Document." The document acknowledged significant disagreement and called for continued dialogue. In a series of "guidelines" at the end of the document, no actual guidelines were established. One of them included the statement that the Church should

continue in trust and koinonia ordaining only persons we believe to be a wholesome example to their people, according to the standards and norms set forth by the church's teaching.

To this, Bishop John Spong replied with "A Statement in Koinonia," offering it on the floor of the House for the record and offering other bishops the opportunity to sign it. 71 did so. The Statement declared sexual orientation in and of itself to be "morally neutral" and pledged pastoral support for gay and lesbian couples and clergy and the continued ordination of gay or lesbian people who are presented "through our regular screening process" and "called and qualified." He then moved that his Statement be appended to the Pastoral Study Document, as the Province 7 bishops' "Affirmation" had been. Rather than do so, the House stripped "Affirmation" from the Study Document altogether.

General Convention then proceeded to pass the most significant number of lesbian- and-gay-related legislation in its history. In particular, the two canonical changes first proposed in 1985 were passed, putting the term "sexual orientation" in the canons for the first time.

No person shall be denied rights, status, or an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canon.

No one shall be denied access to the selection process for ordination in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these Canons. No right to ordination is hereby established.

Gay and lesbian couples began the potential road to fuller recognition with the passage of two resolutions. The first called on civil legislative bodies, including the US Congress, to "approve measures giving gay and lesbian couples protections such as: bereavement and family leave policies, health benefits, pension benefits, real estate transfer tax benefits, and commitment to mutual support enjoyed by non-gay married couples." The other directed the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops to study the issue of Same-sex Commitment Blessings and report back to the 1997 Convention. In a compromise, however, the resolution forbid either to develop any actual rites.

The other favorable resolutions affected gay and lesbian youth and people living with HIV/AIDS. Resolution C-026a acknowledged the serious issue of youth suicide and runaway rates for young people struggling with sexual identity and called on local congregations and dioceses to educate parents on issues related to sexuality and the national church to prepare materials for youth to understand their sexuality. On the HIV/AIDS front, the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC) was endorsed and funded as the Episcopal Church's AIDS ministry, participation by congregations in the NAMES Project Quilt program encouraged, and increased funding and education called for on all levels.

Finally, and as significantly, all negative resolutions were either discharged or defeated. These would have forbidden same sex blessings and the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons.

Another highlight of the 1994 Convention was the celebration by Integrity of 20 years of ministry. This included the honoring of Integrity's Founder, Dr. Louie Crew, by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company (publishers of the Witness) with the Vida Scudder Award. The award was presented by the Suffragan Bishop of Los Angeles, Chester Talton. Dr. Crew also preached at the Integrity Eucharist, celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Bennett Sims, retired Bishop of Atlanta, who had once issued a pastoral statement calling on gay people to seek help in becoming heterosexual, but three years earlier had publicly changed his mind.

Certainly Integrity left the 1994 Convention feeling it had achieved much for which it had worked hard for twenty years. During Convention, however, an ominous sign appeared, and within six months the Church would be in deep controversy over the ordination of gay and lesbian people once again.

During the 1994 Convention it was announced that the Rt. Rev. Stewart Wood, Bishop of Michigan, was being charged with violating his ordination vows and the church's canons by ordaining a non-celibate lesbian, the Rev. Jennifer Walters, to the priesthood. The ordination had taken place immediately preceding General Convention. Charges were brought by six priests and 29 lay people in the diocese. A panel of five bishops, appointed by the Presiding Bishop, found later in the year that the charges were unfounded. The decision hinged on whether or not the 1979 resolution was mandatory or recommendatory.

The Righter Trial, 1995-1996

This decision was not to be the end. At the end of January 1995, it was announced that the canonically required ten diocesan bishops had brought a presentment against the Rt. Rev. Walter Righter, retired Bishop of Iowa, for ordaining a non-celibate gay man, Barry Stopfel, to the diaconate in 1991 (while Assistant Bishop of Newark). It was this ordination for which the House of Bishops had refused to censure Righter at the 1991 Convention. The ten bishops making the presentment were James Stanton (Dallas), Jack Iker (Fort Worth), Stephen Jecko (Florida), John Howe (Central Florida), Terrence Kelshaw (Rio Grande), William Wantland (Eau Claire), John-David Schofield (San Joaquin), James Coleman (West Tennessee), Maurice Benitez (Texas), and Keith Ackerman (Quincy).

The charges accused Bishop Righter of teaching contrary to the faith (heresy) for the ordination and his votes at several House of Bishops' meetings and General Conventions. The necessary polling of the House of Bishops produced the 25% required (by one vote) to proceed with a trial. In the end, an eight-bishop court ruled (7-1) that there was no grounds for the presentment since there was no "core doctrine" prohibiting the ordination. The 1979 resolution was ruled to be recommendatory. Only three of the eight bishops (in a separate concurrence) specifically requested that no further ordinations take place. The presenters chose not to appeal, but called on General Convention to

change the Canons to prohibit such ordinations, an action Convention had failed to do in its previous four meetings.

Later that year, based on the Righter decision, the Presiding Bishop chose not to pursue charges filed against the Rt. Rev. Allan Bartlett by members of his diocese. The charges were similar to those that had been filed against Bishop Wood. The Presiding Bishop himself was then accused of improper procedure in dismissing the charges, but the Secretary of the House of Bishops, the Rt. Rev. Arthur Williams, Suffragan Bishop of Ohio, refused to allow these to go forward.

At the end of the Righter trial, the ordination of qualified gay and lesbian persons seemed secure. Their full acceptance into the Church, through deployment and equal benefits with their heterosexual colleagues, remained a task for the future. Also unsettled remained the issue of same-sex commitments and their right to celebrate their unions in the life of the Church.

Philadelphia 1997

Prior to the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia, the Standing Liturgical Commission and the House of Bishops' Theology Committee issued the report on same-sex commitments required by the previous Convention. The Report, as expected, made no specific recommendations, but tilted enough toward the liberal end of the spectrum that three bishops (William Frey, David Ball, and Charles Duvall) issued a minority report. Perhaps the most significant words came at the Report's end.

Anglicanism's authority has consistently grown from pastoral decisions rather than ideological ones. We have decided what most faithfully cares for the life and unity of the church and its people by prayerfully responding to concrete problems and concerns of the people as they arise. In the Episcopal Church in the United States, the diocese has historically been the basic unit of the church. Thus, typically, such responses occur at the level of parish and diocese.

Six Diocesan Conventions (California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Newark, Pennsylvania, and Rochester) submitted the following resolution to Convention:

That this 72nd General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to develop, after critical study of pertinent rites already in use by faith communities, a rite or rites for the blessing of committed relationships of persons of the same sex, and to present such forms to the 73rd General Convention for inclusion in the Book of Occasional Services.

This resolution received a great deal of attention in the Social and Urban Affairs Committee, which held an open hearing early in the Convention (the same night as the Integrity Eucharist). As at the Open Hearing in 1991 in Phoenix, several thousand people gathered and heard passionate testimony from all sides of the issue, including from many Integrity members. The resolution was reported out of Committee to the House of Deputies. After debate, a vote by orders was called. Tension ran high on the floor as the count was awaited. Everyone knew it could be close. When all was said and done, the resolution failed by just one deputation.

Despite the loss, the vote sent a shock wave through the Convention as deputies, bishops, and others realized how close we had come. It was clear, the Church was preparing to approve the celebration of same-sex commitments. One southern bishop remarked to Integrity's Director of Communications, that he had to go back to his Diocese and prepare people for not "If" but "When."

Convention did approve a resolution calling on the Church Pension Fund to allow dioceses who requested it to obtain health insurance benefits for domestic partners. The resolution had been submitted by the Diocese of El Camino Real. A similar resolution regarding Pension Fund benefits was much debated in the Pension Fund Committee and on the floor of the Deputies, but failed.

The following resolution was also approved by Convention:

That this 72nd General Convention apologizes on behalf of the Episcopal Church to its members who are gay or lesbian and to lesbians and gay men outside the Church for years of rejection and maltreatment by the Church; ... That this Church repents of its sins committed against lesbian and gay people—physical, psychological and spiritual—through covert and overt action and inaction. We seek amendment of our life together and we ask for God's help in sharing the Good News with all people.

The resolution passed fairly easily with support from many conservatives. There were notable exceptions. Bishop Charles Duvall of the Central Gulf Coast informed his colleagues in the House of Bishops, "I do not feel called upon" to apologize.

At the last minute of Convention, due to hard work on the part of Integrity and friendly bishops and deputies, Convention approved a resolution calling for further study of same-sex blessings. The new Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music was directed to

.continue its study of theological aspects of committed relationships of same-sex couples, and to issue a full report including recommendations of future steps for the resolution of issues related to such committed relationships.

One of the most significant results of the 1997 Convention was what did not happen. Convention passed no prohibitive canons or resolutions following upon the Righter trial, although several had been offered. A proposed canonical bar to the ordination of gay and lesbian persons was not even reported out of Committee. At the end of the 72nd General Convention, gay and lesbian Episcopalians could say that there was no national impediment to the ordination of qualified gay and lesbian members.

The highlight of the Convention was the Integrity Eucharist, at which the Presiding Bishop, Edmond Browning, presided. It was Browning's last Convention before retirement, and Integrity joined in gratitude for his ministry. (Integrity President Fred Ellis was among the speakers at the evening gala at Convention honoring his ministry). The Rev. Canon Elizabeth Kaeton of the Oasis in the Diocese of Newark preached a stirring sermon at the Eucharist, but the most poignant moment came when Bishop Browning thanked lesbian and gay Episcopalians for their faith and witness. "Your faithfulness and courage has always been a personal inspiration to me and a blessing to the whole Church."

In his final address to Convention, Browning called on the Church "to move past using literalistic readings of the Bible to create prejudices against our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Biblical literalism may be someone's tradition, but it's not our tradition and it's time we came home to our Anglican roots."

The Convention elected as Browning's successor, the Bishop of Chicago, Frank T. Griswold, III. Bishop Griswold had been a signer of the Koinonia Statement in 1994.

Also significant at the 1997 Convention was the presence of other grassroots organizations calling for full inclusion of lesbian and gay people in the life of the Church—the Oasis ministries in the Dioceses

of Newark and California, and Beyond Inclusion, headquartered at All Saints' Church, Pasadena, California. By the end of Convention these groups, along with lesbian and gay deputies, were beginning to form a strong working relationship that would continue to effect change in the Church in the years to come.

Lambeth Conference 1998

Integrity had not had a presence at previous Lambeth Conferences, held every ten years to provide opportunity for the world's Anglican bishops to consult with one another. Prior to the 1998 Conference, however, it became clear that homosexuality would be a hot issue, and the decision was made by Integrity's Board to take the plunge into international affairs. Representing Integrity were past President Kim Byham and the Rev. Michael Hopkins, then President-elect. The Rev. Canon Elizabeth Kaeton was also present representing Oasis in the Diocese of Newark, and Bishop Otis Charles from Oasis California. British groups were also present; the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) and Changing Attitude.

American conservative groups had targeted the Lambeth Conference as a critical opportunity to change the debate. Pressure from outside ECUSA within the Anglican Communion was now seen as the greatest hope to turn back the advancement of the "gay agenda" in the Church. Major conferences were held in Kuala Lumpur and Dallas prior to Lambeth in order to mobilize support against the liberal American trend.

The new Archbishop of South Africa, Njongonkulu Ndungane was given the task of chairing Section One of the Conference, "Called to Full Humanity." One of its themes was "Human Sexuality." The subsection on human sexuality was to be chaired by Bishop Duncan Buchanan, the Bishop of Johannesburg. In consultation with the leadership of Changing Attitude, Archbishop Ndungane agreed prior to the Conference to include an opportunity for the members of his subsection to listen to gay and lesbian persons.

At the first meeting of the subsection, Bishop Buchanan's plan for a listening session was blasted by conservative members of the subsection and was cancelled. At the request of Integrity and the British groups, Bishops Ronald Haines and Jane Holmes Dixon held an open forum to replace the listening session. It was lightly attended.

The subsection on Human Sexuality struggled through what Bishop Duncan described as "much agony and a great deal of pain." Their first attempt at a report to be included in the Section One Report failed, but a second attempt was successful. The report said,

Human sexuality is a gift from God... We must confess that we are not of one mind about homosexuality... We have prayed, studied and discussed these issues, and we are unable to reach a common mind on the scriptural, theological, historical, and scientific questions which are raised. There is much we do not understand... The challenge to our Church is to maintain its unity while we seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discern the way of Christ for the world today with respect to human sexuality.

The subsection reported out no resolution for the Conference, but Bishop Buchanan filed one in order to "hold a place." This action further angered conservatives, although 80% of the subsection agreed on a version of Buchanan's text. The resolution upheld "faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman," but recognized "that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation." It assured the latter that "they are loved by God and ...Are full members of

the Body of Christ," but "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing or ordaining of those involved in same gender unions." The resolution also condemned homophobia, which Buchanan defined in a press conference as "any form of violence against people because of their orientation." He admitted that two priests in his own diocese had been murdered because they were gay.

When the day came for the plenary debate on Human Sexuality by the Conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury asked the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev. Robin Eames, to chair the Conference. Several amendments to the Resolution presented by the subsection had been offered, as well as complete substitutes.

The debate was long and ugly. One amendment called for the addition of the words, "While rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture." This amendment, proposed by the Archbishop of Tanzania, Donald Mtetemela, had not been listed among the proposals nor been seen by anyone but the chair prior to the debate. It was allowed on the floor "at the discretion of the chairman of the Session." It passed 389-190.

The resolution was also amended to say "and we commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual people." This amendment was offered by Bishop Michael Bourke, Bishop of Wolverhampton, England.

Before the final vote, the Archbishop of Canterbury rose for an "intervention." It was an extraordinary move. He acknowledged that "this has been quite a difficult and painful debate." He urged listening to continue, but said

I stand wholeheartedly with traditional Anglican Orthodoxy, see no room in Holy Scripture or the entire Christian tradition for any sexual activity outside matrimony of husband and wife, and I believe that the amended motion is simply saying what we have all held; what Anglican belief and morality stands for.

One Canadian bishop, commenting after the Conference, said, "The Archbishop of Canterbury's interventions in the process and the debate, made either out of guile or ignorance, were disgraceful."

The final vote was 526-70, with 45 abstentions. Among the abstainers was Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold.

Integrity immediately issued a statement entitled "We're Not Going Back," which said, in part,

...The chances of this resolution's positive reception by the majority of US Episcopalians are slim to none... The full inclusion of lesbian and gay ministries in the Episcopal Church will continue... The life of the Church in the US is not going to come to a halt because bishops from other parts of the world refused even to listen to the stories of their gay and lesbian brothers and sisters and even denied their existence.

Bishop Ronald Haines of Washington issued a Pastoral Statement to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans (Integrity President-elect Michael Hopkins assisted in the draft of this statement) and invited others to sign. 152 bishops (more than twice as many who voted against the resolution!), including eight primates, did so. The statement said,

We pledge that we will continue to reflect, pray, and work for your full inclusion in the life of the Church.... We call on the entire Communion to continue (and in many places, begin) prayerful, respectful conversation on the issue of homosexuality.

Among the signatories were 68 US bishops, 36 English, 9 Canadian, 8 Australian, 8 New Zealanders, 6 Scottish, 6 South African, 4 Welsh, 3 Irish, 2 Central African, and 1 each from Brazil and Japan.

One positive outcome of Lambeth 1998 was the formation of ALGA, the Alliance of Lesbian and Gay Anglicans, formed by the leadership of several organizations

Denver 2000

Several months prior to General Convention 2000, the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music issued its report. It included eight essays on various aspects of the theological issues. They offered a resolution that called for continued respectful dialogue, and

That each Diocese, under the spiritual and pastoral direction of its bishop, shall determine the resolution of issues related to same-sex relationships, including the blessing of such relationships, and the ordination of homosexual Christians.

This proposed "resolution of issues" was received with skepticism by all sides. Other resolutions presented to Convention included the full spectrum—from authorizing blessings to banning them.

Several weeks prior to Convention, the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies announced the creation of a Special Committee to take up issues of human sexuality. This was an extraordinary move, at first taken to be an attempt to stifle any efforts to move forward. The Committee was to be chaired by Bishop Arthur Williams (Suffragan of Ohio) and Ms. Rebecca Snow of the Diocese of Alaska. Other bishops on the Committee were John Howe (Central Florida), Edwin Gulick (Kentucky), James Krotz (Nebraska), John Lipscomb (Southwest Florida), and Cate Waynick (Indianapolis). Deputies included Michael Barlowe (Iowa), JP Causey (Virginia), Barnum McCarty (Florida), Sterling Newell (Ohio), and Bonnie Perry (Chicago).

As Committee 25 (as it came to be known) began to meet, however, it became apparent that they were not only determined to work hard, but also to reach some resolution. Hearings on the various resolutions before them were contentious as could be expected, including an open hearing attended by hundreds of people.

The Committee surprised everyone by proposing its own substitute resolution, D039s:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the members of the 73rd General Convention intend for this Church to provide a safe and just structure in which all can utilize their gifts and creative energies for mission; and be it further

Resolved, We acknowledge that while the issues of human sexuality are not yet resolved, there are currently couples in the Body of Christ and in this Church who are living in marriage and couples in the Body of Christ and in this Church who are living in other life-long committed relationships; and be it further

Resolved, We expect such relationships will be 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; and be it further

Resolved, We denounce promiscuity, exploitation, and abusiveness in the relationships of any of our members; and be it further

Resolved, This Church intends to hold all its members accountable to these values, and will provide for them the prayerful support, encouragement, and pastoral care necessary to live faithfully by them; and be it further

Resolved, We acknowledge that some, acting in good conscience, who disagree with the traditional teaching of the Church on human sexuality, will act in contradiction to that position; and be it further

Resolved, That in continuity with previous actions of the General Convention of this Church, and in response to the call for dialogue by the Lambeth Conference, we affirm that those on various sides of controversial issues have a place in the Church, and we reaffirm the imperative to promote conversation between persons of differing experiences and perspectives, while acknowledging the Church's teaching on the sanctity of marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That desiring to support relationships of mutuality and fidelity other than marriage which mediate the grace of God, the 73rd General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare for consideration by the 74th General Convention rites for inclusion in the Book of Occasional Services by means of which the Church may express that support.

This resolution went to the House of Deputies with the unanimous support of the Committee on the first seven resolves. The bishops split 3-3 on the eighth resolve, and the deputies supported it 5-1. The resolution was sent to the House of Deputies first.

In the morning of the seventh day of Convention, a special rule of order was adopted by the House of Deputies for consideration of D039. One hour was given for the debate, including 15 minutes of introduction and clarification by the chair of Committee 25. The Rule of Order also stipulated that the eighth resolve would be voted upon separately and only after vote was completed on the first seven. During the debate in the afternoon several members of Integrity, including President Michael Hopkins (an alternate deputy from the Diocese of Washington) spoke. This was the first time a President of Integrity had addressed the General Convention.

A vote by orders was called for on the eighth resolve only. It appeared as though conservatives had conceded the first seven, and, indeed, the voice vote to carry them was overwhelming. A vote by orders was taken on the eighth resolve to direct the SCLM to put forward a rite of blessing same-sex unions. The House recessed until the tally could be given. All knew it would be close.

Among the laity, 51 deputations voted "yes," 39 "no," with 17 divided. 54 had been needed to pass the resolve. Among the clergy, 55 deputations voted "yes," 34 "no," with 19 divided. 55 had been needed to pass. We had carried the clergy order, but not the lay. It was close again, but a bitter disappointment.

A couple hundred Integrity members and supporters gathered that evening for Eucharist in a large room of one of the hotels. Word had not entirely spread of the event, so many were missing. Those present sang songs and spoke of both their grief and hope. The President of Integrity presided. It was a holy time that few present would easily forget.

The House of Bishops took up D039sa on the next day. The Bishop of Ohio, Clark Grew, moved to restore the eighth resolve. A roll call vote was requested, the result of which was 63 ayes," 85 "no,"

and four abstentions. The loss was significant, but the point had been made that the proponents of blessings were not giving up.

The next day the House of Bishops resumed debate on the first seven resolves of D039s. Again, a roll call vote was taken. The result was a landslide in favor: 119 ayes," 19 "no," with four abstentions. Many conservatives had voted ayes."

The loss of the eighth resolve was a difficult one, but no one could deny the significance of the fact that vast majorities in both Houses had publicly recognized that relationships other than marriage existed in the church and deserved its pastoral support. A common set of ethical guidelines had been articulated as well. It was a giant step on the road to full inclusion.

The Integrity Eucharist was again a highlight of Convention. The Cathedral Church of St. John in the Wilderness was packed with some 2,000 people. Integrity President Michael Hopkins presided, surrounded by other openly gay and lesbian clergy who had been invited to concelebrate. It was a sign that we were full participants in the life and ministry of the Church.

The event was somewhat overshadowed by controversy that had arisen earlier in the day. Singer Judy Collins had been scheduled to perform at a benefit for Episcopal Relief and Development but announced she was canceling because she understood the Episcopal Church to have anti-gay policies. Integrity received the news "with sadness and regret." There had been no conversation between her and Integrity leadership.

Bishop Steven Charleston, Dean of Episcopal Divinity School, was the preacher. In a powerful sermon he declared

Brothers and sisters, I come to proclaim to you in this announcement of the Good News that we have been chosen, liberated and healed by Jesus of Nazareth that the days of our being powerless and fearful will come to an end. That justice will be ours and that moment is coming soon for I do not believe I am alone in being tired of putting up with one act of subversion and nonsense after another of an attempt to distort the Gospel of Christ claiming ownership of Jesus over against other men and women and to subvert the Gospel by turning it into an instrument of fear and coercion.

He concluded,

Judy, I wish you were here tonight, that you could see the faces that I see here in this room. If you think this church hates its brothers and sisters who are gay and lesbian, look at the men and women in this room tonight. Feel the energy and the wholeness that's among us and the healing that is rising up in the cathedral. Not just for you and I, but the whole of the Church and the whole of the Anglican community.

At the Eucharist, the announcement was also made of the formation of the first chapter of Integrity in Africa—in Uganda. It was an announcement that not only rocked the house, but the Communion as a whole.

General Convention also passed two resolutions related to hate crimes. One (D009) directed that the "Stop the Hate" campaign begun after the murder of Episcopalian Matthew Shepherd by the national Church Center continue, and that the Church continue to support hate crimes legislation around the country. The other supported "the Cambridge Accord," a document written by Bishop Charleston and

circulated among Anglican bishops decrying hate speech and violence against lesbian and gay people throughout the world.

The Convention also passed C031, requesting all clergy to inform the Boy Scouts of America of the Episcopal Church's nondiscrimination policy toward gay and lesbian persons, and request that their policy be changed. Finally, the Convention passed a resolution on "Safe Spaces" (A009), requesting the Executive Council to put forward

a formal process for congregations to identify themselves as "safe spaces" for lesbians and gays and others who understand themselves to be part of a sexual minority to tell their stories and be heard with love, and care, and assurance of appropriate confidentiality.

At a luncheon featuring guest speaker Patricia Beattie Jung, Author of *Heterosexism*, Integrity presented Dr. Pamela Chinnis with the Louie Crew Award for her years of service to the Church and to lesbian and gay Episcopalians. This was Dr. Chinnis' final Convention as President of the House of Deputies.

As in Philadelphia, members of Integrity worked closely with members of Beyond Inclusion, as well as the Oasis in the Diocese of Newark and Oasis California. By the end of Convention, preliminary plans were being made to formalize this working relationship to better ensure the passage of a blessings resolution at the 2003 Convention in Minneapolis.

Minneapolis 2003

In preparation for this convention, Claiming the Blessing was established as an intentional collaborative ministry of leading Episcopal justice organizations (including Integrity, the various Oases, Beyond Inclusion and the Episcopal Women's Caucus) in partnership with *The Witness* magazine and other individual leaders in the Episcopal Church. Claiming the Blessing and Integrity worked together as a unified team in Minneapolis. As a result, two historic outcomes occurred.

First, General Convention passed resolution C051, Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships...

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that the 74th General Convention affirms the following:

- 1. That our life together as a community of faith is grounded in the saving work of Jesus Christ and expressed in the principles of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral: Holy Scripture, the historic Creeds of the Church, the two dominical sacraments, and the historic episcopate.*
- 2. That we reaffirm Resolution A069 of the 65th General Convention (1976) that "homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church".*
- 3. That, in our understanding of homosexual persons, differences exist among us about how best to care pastorally for those who intend to live in monogamous, non-celibate unions; and what is, or should be, required, permitted, or prohibited by the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church concerning the blessing of the same.*

4. *That we reaffirm Resolution D039 of the 73rd General Convention (2000), that "We expect such relationships will be 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", and that such relationships exist throughout the church.*
5. *that, we recognize that local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions.*
6. *That we commit ourselves, and call our church, in the spirit of Resolution A104 of the 70th General Convention (1991), to continued prayer, study, and discernment on the pastoral care for gay and lesbian persons, to include the compilation and development by a special commission organized and appointed by the Presiding Bishop of resources to facilitate as wide a conversation of discernment as possible throughout the church.*
7. *That our baptism into Jesus Christ is inseparable from our communion with one another, and we commit ourselves to that communion despite our diversity of opinion and, among dioceses, a diversity of pastoral practice with the gay men and lesbians among us.*
8. *That it is a matter of faith that our Lord longs for our unity as his disciples, and for us this entails living within the boundaries of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. We believe this discipline expresses faithfulness to our polity and that it will facilitate the conversation we seek not only in The Episcopal Church, but also in the wider Anglican Communion and beyond.*

During a vote by orders in the House of Deputies, 57% of clerical deputations and 54% of lay deputations voted "Yes" to the resolution. The House of Bishop voted by voice; there is no record of how individual bishops voted.

Second, General Convention consented to the election of V. Gene Robinson—an openly gay priest in a committed same-sex relationship—as the Bishop of New Hampshire.

Just before the vote to consent was to be held in the House of Bishops, a Vermont man alleged that Robinson had "put his hands on me inappropriately every time I engaged him in conversation." A committee, chaired by the Rt. Rev. Gordon P. Scruton of Western Massachusetts, was appointed, rapidly investigated the allegation, and the next day reported that the allegation was without merit.

In the House of Deputies, 60% of bishops consented to Robinson's election. During a vote by orders in the House of Deputies, 60% of clerical deputations and 58% of lay deputations consented.

After Minneapolis 2003

In October 2003, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, appointed a commission to respond to disharmony in the Anglican Communion following General Convention's decisions—as well as the decision by Michael Ingham, the Bishop of New Westminster in Canada, to authorize rites for blessing same-sex relationships. The commission was chaired by Robin Eames, Archbishop of Ireland. The commission was variously referred to as the Eames Commission or the Lambeth Commission.

In November 2003, Gene Robinson was joyously consecrated as the Bishop of New Hampshire.

In October 2004, the Lambeth Commission released the Windsor Report, which recommended, among other things...

- that "all those involved in the processes of episcopal appointment, at whichever level, should in future in the light of all that has happened pay proper regard to the acceptability of the candidate to other provinces in our Communion."
- that "the Archbishop [of Canterbury]...exercise very considerable caution in inviting or admitting [Bishop Gene Robinson] to the councils of the Communion."
- that "the Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to express its regret that the proper constraints of the bonds of affection were breached in the events surrounding the election and consecration of a bishop for the See of New Hampshire."
- that "those who took part as consecrators of Gene Robinson should be invited to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican Communion."
- that "the Episcopal Church (USA) be invited to effect a moratorium on the election and consent to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in a same gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges."
- "a moratorium on all such public Rites [of Blessing], and...that bishops who have authorized such rites in the United States and Canada be invited to express regret that the proper constraints of the bonds of affection were breached by such authorization. Pending such expression of regret, we recommend that such bishops be invited to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican Communion."
- that "all provinces that are engaged in processes of discernment regarding the blessing of same sex unions to engage the Communion in continuing study of biblical and theological rationale for and against such unions."
- "a contribution from the Episcopal Church (USA) which explains, from within the sources of authority that we as Anglicans have received in scripture, the apostolic tradition and reasoned reflection, how a person living in a same gender union may be considered eligible to lead the flock of Christ."
- that "the Communion establish processes and structures to facilitate ongoing discussion [on issues relating to human sexuality]."
- that "any demonising of homosexual persons, or their ill treatment, is totally against Christian charity and basic principles of pastoral care."
- that "provinces...be pro-active in support of the call of Lambeth Resolution 64 (1988)...to 'reassess, in the light of... study and because of our concern for human rights, its care for and attitude toward persons of homosexual orientation.'"

In January 2005, the House of Bishops, meeting in Salt Lake City, began deliberating on the Windsor Report. The bishops expressed regret for the pain, hurt, and damage to the bonds of communion that have resulted from certain actions of the Episcopal Church, and they sought forgiveness from those

other Anglican provinces feeling disaffection for our church. However, they rejected a moratorium on the election and consecration of additional LGBT bishops and the authorization of additional diocesan policies permitting same-sex blessing.

In February 2005, two representatives of Integrity (President Susan Russell and immediate Past President Michael Hopkins)—along with representatives of other LGBT Anglican groups—met the Revd. Canon Gregory K. Cameron, Deputy Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office, in London for a conversation on practical ways in which a Communion-wide dialog on human sexuality might be moved forward.

Also in February 2005, the primates of the Anglican Communion met in Dromantine, Ireland. They issued a communiqué that...

- asked the Episcopal Church to voluntarily withdraw its members from the Anglican Consultative Council until the next Lambeth Conference.
- asked the Anglican Consultative Council to organize a hearing at its upcoming meeting to allow representatives of the Episcopal Church the opportunity to share the thinking behind the recent actions of our province.
- called for a voluntary moratorium on same-sex blessings and on the consecration of any bishop living in a same-sex relationship.

In March 2005, the House of Bishops met at Camp Allen, Texas, to consider the primates' communiqué. The bishops instituted a unilateral moratorium on the election and consecration of ALL new bishops until General Convention 2006. They also instituted a unilateral moratorium on authorizing additional rites for the blessing of same-sex blessings and pledged to personally refrain from presiding over same-sex blessing until General Convention 2006.

In April 2004, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church voted to voluntarily withdraw its representatives to the June 2005 gathering of the Anglican Consultative Council in Nottingham, England.

In June 2004, official representatives of the Episcopal Church presented "To Set Our Hope in Christ" to the Anglican Consultative Council. This report was in direct response to the Windsor Report's request for "a contribution from the Episcopal Church (USA) which explains, from within the sources of authority that we as Anglicans have received in scripture, the apostolic tradition and reasoned reflection, how a person living in a same gender union may be considered eligible to lead the flock of Christ." Integrity President Susan Russell was among the presenters.

In December 2005, Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold established a Special Commission on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. The commission was chartered to prepare a report and resolutions to enable General Convention to respond the Windsor Report and subsequent events. An Integrity board member, Sarah Dylan Breuer, served on the commission.

In February 2006, the Diocese of California announced its slate of nominees to be its next bishop. Among the candidates was a gay man (the Very Rev. Robert Taylor) and a lesbian woman (the Rev. Bonnie Perry). A third gay nominee (the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe) was nominated by petition.

In April 2006, the Special Commission on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion released its report and resolutions. While the report itself reaffirmed the full inclusion of LGBT people in the Episcopal Church, three of the resolutions themselves were deeply troubling...

- A160 called for an expression of regret for the actions of General Convention 2003.
- A161 urged dioceses to “exercise very considerable caution” in electing bishops “whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church,” and
- A162 called for an extension a moratorium on diocesan rites for same-sex blessings while affirming “the need to maintain a breadth of private responses to situations of individual pastoral care for gay and lesbian Christians in this Church.”

Columbus 2006

Integrity tracked almost 60 resolutions during General Convention 2006. Eight positive resolutions [not counting HIV/AIDS resolutions] were adopted...

- **A037**—Directed national church center staff to include “persons of various sexual orientation” in its evangelism target populations.
- **A095**—Reaffirmed the Episcopal Church’s historical support of civil rights for gay and lesbian persons; reaffirmed a call for federal, state, and local governments to provide same-sex couples with similar protections to those of married couples; and opposed federal and state constitutional amendments prohibiting same-sex civil marriage or civil unions.
- **A160**—Expressed regret for “straining the bonds of affection in the events surrounding GC2003,” apologized to those in the Anglican Communion offended by those actions, and asked forgiveness. [Integrity regarded this as a win because the original resolution contained much stronger “repentance” language.]
- **A163**—Affirmed the Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO) process. [To date, only conservative congregations with progressive bishops have requested DEPO. However, in the future, progressive congregations with conservative bishops could avail themselves of DEPO.]
- **A165**—Commended the “listening process” recommended by the Windsor Report and committed the Episcopal Church to participate in the process.
- **A167**—Reaffirmed the equality of gay and lesbian person in the church, reiterated an apology to gays and lesbians for years of maltreatment and rejection by the church, pledged to include openly gay and lesbian people on committees established to discuss sexuality issues.
- **C040**—Supported “efforts to foster methods of biblical interpretation which do not lend support to oppressive systems.”
- **D005**—Declared that criminalization of homosexual behavior is incompatible with “resolutions at successive Lambeth conferences.”

Even more importantly, on the next-to-the-last day of General Convention, the House of Deputies rejected resolutions A161 (Election of Bishops) and A162 (Public Rites of Blessing for Same-Sex Unions)—which contained explicit moratoria on official rites for same-gender blessing and additional LGBT bishops (respectively). Integrity volunteers went to bed happy that night—believing they had achieved their legislative agenda.

However, the next morning, outgoing Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold called a special joint session of both houses and introduced resolution B033...

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 75th General Convention receive and embrace The Windsor Report invitation to engage in a process of healing and reconciliation; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention therefore call upon Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction 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 communion.

Everyone was clear that “manner of life” was code for “gays and lesbians in same-gender relationships.”

Resolution B033 was first considered by the House of Bishops. An amendment to the resolution was rejected by the Presiding Bishop because it was not in the proper form. A motion for a role-call vote was ignored by the Presiding Bishop, so there is no official record of how each bishop voted on B033.

Resolution B033 then went to the House of Deputies. Incoming Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori expressed her reluctant support for the resolution—as did some LGBT and LGBT-friendly deputies. In a vote by orders, the resolution passed by more than a two-thirds majority in both orders. Strangely enough, the most-conservative and the most-progressive deputations both voted against the resolution while “the middle” voted for it.

After Columbus 2006

The passage of B033 was enormously disappointing. An unknown but significant number of the LGBT faithful left the Episcopal Church for unequivocally accepting denominations such as the United Church of Christ and the Metropolitan Community Church.

In the weeks following General Convention, chancellors and others began pointing out that B033 was a violation of Title III, Canon 1, Section 2 of the Canons of General Convention—which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in the discernment process to any order of ordained ministry.

In the year following General Convention, nine diocesan conventions passed resolutions expressing dissent or opposition to B033.

Despite the *de facto* moratorium on additional LGBT bishops, the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe was a candidate for Bishop of Newark and the Very Rev. Tracey Lind was a candidate for Bishop of Chicago. Neither was elected. We will never know for sure what influence B033 had on those elections.

Resolution B033 was not enough to satisfy conservative elements in the Anglican Communion such as Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria. In February 2007, the primates of the Anglican Communion held their annual meeting in Tanzania. Despite promising signs in the beginning of tolerance and reconciliation, at the end the primates' issued a hard-line communiqué. They demanded that the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops implement a moratorium by September 30th on same-gender blessings and additional gay or lesbian bishops—or else face the possibility of expulsion of the Episcopal Church from the Anglican Communion.

The House of Bishops met in New Orleans in late September 2007. At the request of the House of Bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury met with them to discuss the primates' ultimatum. On the last day of their meeting, after intense closed-door argument, the House of Bishops almost unanimously approved a response with the following key points...

- *We reconfirm that resolution B033 of General Convention 2006 (The Election of Bishops) calls upon bishops with jurisdiction and Standing Committees "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 communion."*
- *We pledge as a body not to authorize public rites for the blessing of same-sex unions.*
- *We commend our Presiding Bishop's plan for episcopal visitors.*
- *We deplore incursions into our jurisdictions by uninvited bishops and call for them to end.*
- *We support the Presiding Bishop in seeking communion-wide consultation in a manner that is in accord with our Constitution and Canons.*
- *We call for increasing implementation of the listening process across the Communion and for a report on its progress to Lambeth 2008.*
- *We support the Archbishop of Canterbury in his expressed desire to explore ways for the Bishop of New Hampshire to participate in the Lambeth Conference.*
- *We call for unequivocal and active commitment to the civil rights, safety, and dignity of gay and lesbian persons.*

Most LGBT Episcopalians interpreted this statement as caving in to the primates' communiqué and step backward for full inclusion.

In October 2007, the Joint Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates of the Anglican Communion reported that, in their opinion, the House of Bishops had adequately responded to the primates' communiqué.