



Perspective

United in Mission, We Turn Outward to the World

By the Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee
Bishop of Virginia

Bishop Griswold's Jubilee vision set the tone for this 73rd General Convention. In some of the most stressful legislative moments, bishops and deputies avoided (sometimes narrowly) the sort of rancorous accusations that too often have characterized General Conventions of the past.

We enter this last day of the 73rd General Convention as a church with far more that unites us than divides us. Resolutions that call us to renewed emphasis on mission have united us. The adoption of Called to Common Mission with the Lutherans has united us. Proposals that authorize flexible supplemental liturgies while maintaining the unity of the Book of Common Prayer unite us. If the Bishops concur this morning with A045 amended, the Convention will be offering supportive assistance to those three dioceses where women are not yet permitted to exercise ministries in all orders, a clear sign that the issue of women's ordination can be settled in this church without resorting to punitive measures.

The concurrence by the bishops with the deputies on the sexuality resolution is a characteristically uniting Jubilee action. Its implementation will open new doors in the Church. It is essentially a conserving document, affirming the basic values of Holy Matrimony, while asking the Church to recognize the reality of the other types of couples in our midst, and teaching that those couples, too, should reflect the traditional values associated with Holy Matrimony. The Mind of the House resolution, adopted after concurrence with the D029 substitute, commits the bishops to deepened

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Resolved

Check the tally sheet from the past 10 days, and you will find it blessedly free of wins and losses. That's the greatest victory of this General Convention. On human sexuality and an array of other issues, the Church has learned to live with disagreement. Indeed, it has grown from it.

Listen in the hallways at the Convention Center and the words that come to mind are not conflict and competition, but faithfulness, graciousness, prayerfulness and listening.

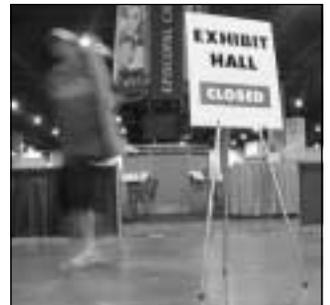
The Presiding Bishop was absolutely right in noting, after a long round of discussion over human sexuality, that the Bishops are not a divided House, but are divided on certain questions. There's a big difference.

Of course, a little legislative passive-aggressiveness can pop up occasionally—for example, when the bishops said “no thanks” to the deputies' endorsement of a stipend for the president of the House of Deputies, and when the deputies split with the bishops by voting to reaffirm the requirement for the Presiding Bishop to visit each diocese during his term. But such “back at you” skirmishes are little more than healthy bicameralism.

On the key issues, our priorities haven't changed. We began this Convention with a nine-item list ranging from provinces (fix 'em) to Called to Common Mission (affirm it) to human sexuality (deepen the discussion). We're pleased that our agenda fared well, not because we're keeping score, but because of our belief that the center is the dynamic core of our Church, full of passion and free of anger.

This Convention will send us forward in mission together. No resolution could be sweeter.

Seems we just just got started. The 73rd General Convention closes at 6 p.m. today. Will we have finished our business?



CORRECTION: In issue No. 8, July 13, we incorrectly stated Bishop Swing of California had blessed more same-sex couples than anyone in the country. What Bishop Swing said on the floor of the House was, “I have ordained more gays and lesbians than any bishop in the Episcopal Church.” Bishop Swing has never blessed a same-sex couple. We regret the error.

Recessional

You thought this day would never come. It's not that you haven't enjoyed your time in Denver. You just can't remember the last time you stayed so long in one place and saw so little of it, at least since the last General Convention. Frankly, we're all anxious to get home. At least getting out of town doesn't require forming a special committee. The following transportation options will get you from the Mile High City to the "tent city" of Denver International Airport. Bon Voyage!

Shuttle Services

Wolf Express—303/333-4000

If you didn't buy a round-trip ticket when you arrived, one-way will cost you \$15. Reservations must be made by 7 p.m. the night before departure.

Super Shuttle—303/370-1300

Kids ride free and you don't need a reservation (but you can call and make one if you want). The shuttle makes the rounds of most major downtown hotels every 15 minutes. Cost: \$17.

Cabs

Metro Cab—303/333-3333

Yellow Cab—303/777-7777

All cabs charge a flat \$43 fee to get from downtown to DIA; that's \$2.50 less than they charge going the other way. Such a deal!

Limousines

Looking for a way to spend the last of your cash advance? It's not as expensive as you think, plus you can split it among up to four riders, in some cases.

Denver Pro-Limo & Town Cars—800/959-9868; \$45

Anthony's Limo Service—303/232-1513; \$45, 1-2 passengers; \$50, 3-4 passengers

Do It Again

As a "stay-at-the-office this go 'round" previous deputy (Detroit '88, Philadelphia '97), I wanted to write from afar to say how much I've enjoyed Center Aisle as a helpful contribution to assist deputies and bishops in making prayerfully discerned decisions. Your focus on the mission and the big picture, your gracious tone, and unswerving adherence to a comprehensive middle is a voice every General Convention needs to experience.

Thanks.

The Rev. William Coyne

Archdeacon, Diocese of Western Mass.

By e-mail

Seven Resolves Will Stretch Us

John Ohmer is right on target in his piece on the effect of this legislation on many parishes, and I appreciate his thoughtful presentation.

I serve a congregation that is demographically very different—and MUCH smaller—than John's, but it represents the same mix of attitudes toward gay and lesbian couples. The congregation tries hard to be welcoming of everyone, and we have had unmarried couples of varying types worship comfortably with us. For most folks in the pews, it's not really an issue. But we also have folks for whom these seven resolves will be a real stretch. I lost a couple of family units when the current Presiding Bishop was elected, because of the local paper's portrayal of his "liberal" stance on gay issues. I have a few others who have stayed but won't give any money to the budget, because some of it will go to the national church.

Passing these seven resolves IS "doing something," and for many people in our church it really represents a quantum leap that will take time to assimilate. Thank you for an excellent column!

The Rev. Grace Cangialosi

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By e-mail

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The People Respond

Throughout Convention, Center Aisle has received and published letters from our readers around the Church. Though this is the last issue of Center Aisle, we are still interested in hearing from you. Write us at the Diocese of Virginia, 110 West Franklin St., Richmond, Va. 23220. Or you can send correspondence to centeraisle@thediocese.net. Please be sure to sign your correspondence and let us know how we can contact you.



'First, All Things are Faithful'

How Committee 25 moved from controversy to conversation

"We were holding our souls in our hands." —The Rt. Rev. John Howe, bishop of Central Florida.

"If something could be done, it was by the grace of the Holy Spirit." —Rebecca Snow, deputy from Alaska.

"I feared that we would come out as a divided church ... I would never believe we would have seen the unanimity of both the House of Bishops and House of Deputies." —The Rt. Rev. John Lipscomb, bishop of Southwest Florida.

"We kept diminishing [the] barriers." —The Rev. Bonnie Perry, deputy from Chicago.

"What moved me ... was the deep desire to see people who know they can be held despite their differences." —The Rt. Rev. Ted Gulick, bishop of Kentucky.

"We learned in the House to display stubborn, open-hearted generosity that does not assume, first, things are irreconcilable but first, all things are faithful." —The Rt. Rev. Catherine Waynick, bishop of Indianapolis.

So spoke members of the Special Committee as they reflected yesterday on their experiences over the last two weeks.

The Committee on the Church and Human Sexuality, put together just a few weeks before the start of General Convention, began its life amid controversy and distrust from some in the greater Church. After two intense weeks of testimony, meetings and crafting of the most widely watched and debated resolution in Denver, committee members felt the experience was worth it.

"I hope this has brought us to a new place for trusting one another and our leadership," Lipscomb said. "I hope this is a step forward in the trust in this Church."

"The hardest part was saying 'yes' (when the Presiding Bishop called)," said the Rt. Rev. James Krotz, bishop of Nebraska. "I had to think and pray hard ... but I said yes because I trust Frank (Griswold's) leadership."

Members spoke as well about their personal relationships within the committee.

Waynick's attention was captured when "John Howe looked at Bonnie (Perry) and said, 'Can I support your relationship (with your partner)? No. But can I support you as a person in it? Yes.'"

Perry responded to Howe, saying, "What I heard you say-

ing was ... 'I support you.' For me much of the conversation could not have happened if we hadn't had executive session and told our stories, me telling mine as a lesbian. I felt held. Having that feeling enabled me to come back, not with my defenses up but knowing I'm held up."

Committee members also spoke of how they prepared for their work.

Anticipation was the hardest part of serving on the committee, Sterling Newell, deputy from Ohio, said. "I thought it was going to be an absolute zoo. ... Committee 25 has created a new model for the Church."

"I tried to prepare myself ... by stripping away my own preferences," said Snow, co-chair of the committee. "I tried not to have an agenda, but there was a temptation to have one. I was afraid people would stop at any point along the way and say, 'I don't have to listen any more.'"

The Rt. Rev. Arthur Williams, bishop suffragan of Ohio and the other co-chair, commented on how well the committee worked. "I didn't have to focus on runaway members," he said. "Everyone was respectful toward one another. ... Someone came up to me and expressed his regret he was not able to film all of our sessions so that he was able to use it as a model of effective leadership."

The Rev. Michael Barlowe, deputy from Iowa, added, "I appreciated the very early movement of the committee toward discussing the pastoral needs of the Church rather than issues. We were able to come up with a remarkable consensus."

"It has brought the Church to amazing places," Williams said.

J.P. Causey, deputy from Virginia, talked about the importance of the hearings. "Even in the last half-hour," he said, "I picked up things in a different perspective. ... I would hear something that put a little different shade—not necessarily a

different color but a different shade [on the issue]—and that's helpful."

The Rev. Barnum McCarty, deputy from Florida, said: "Our debate was civil, respectful and we are a microcosm of how the Church can move together in great disagreement."

Presiding Bishop Griswold expressed his gratitude to the committee, saying, "I was deeply impressed by the careful and deliberate, respectful way Committee 25 attended to their work."

Added Dr. Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, "The people we called ... accepted and totally committed themselves to it. ... It worked much better than anyone had anticipated."



Members of Committee 25 met with correspondents from Center Aisle yesterday to talk about their experience serving on the special, if unusual, committee.

By Beth Magill, Lizzie Thomas, Sarah P.S. Broaddus and Lauren R. Stanley

A Resounding 'Yes'

Deputies overwhelmingly approved A045 amended, on implementing the ordination of women in Quincy, Fort Worth and San Joaquin.

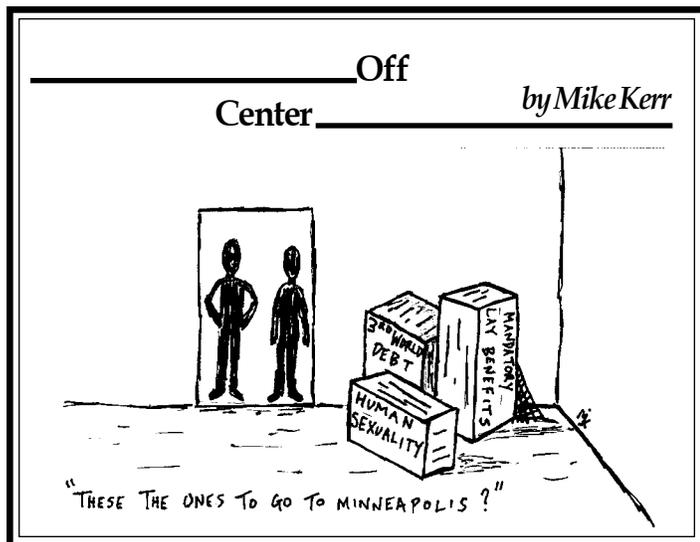
The impassioned debate was divided among supporters, who stressed that the issue was centered on obedience to the canons of the church, and opponents, who claimed that disagreement with the canons was a pastoral issue.

The final tallies made it clear that support for women in the priesthood and obedience to the canons was paramount.

The issue will be the first order of business in Bishops this morning.

Parting Shots

by Grant Pullman



Perspective *continued from front*

conversation on this issue, implying that we need to step up to our teaching role. The mood of the House of Bishops is much more attuned to mutual respect and conversation than it was three years ago, and I expect that Jubilee attitude of listening will strengthen the Church.

Bishop Griswold observed yesterday that he experienced a "very deep bond of communion [in the House of Bishops] that unites us." He contributed greatly to this Jubilee spirit. Now it's our task to go home in the same spirit in a church that is moving—and united.

Thank you for your courteous and affirmative support for Center Aisle. I am grateful to and proud of my Virginia colleagues who produced it, and to you who received it with such grace. We walk down the Center Aisle into a world to serve, accompanied by so many of you, united in service to the mission of the Church.

Thank You.



This is the ninth and final issue of Center Aisle. We've enjoyed chasing the issues and producing a daily journal of opinion, and we hope you have found it helpful, entertaining, and faithful to its mission to give cogent voice to the moderate middle ground. All nine issues will remain available on our web site at www.thediocese.net, under General Convention.