

# Presiding Bishop and HOD President explain Convention actions to Canterbury and Communion primates

By Matthew Davies

*(Episcopal News Service)* The two presiding officers of General Convention have [written](#) to Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams providing an explanation and clarification of [Resolution D025](#) pertaining to human sexuality issues and the Episcopal Church's commitment to the Anglican Communion. The letter was also sent to the communion's 38 primates.

"We understand Resolution D025 to be more descriptive than prescriptive in nature -- a statement that reaffirms commitments already made by the Episcopal Church and that acknowledges certain realities of our common life. Nothing in the resolution goes beyond what has already been provided under our Constitution and Canons for many years," wrote Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and President of the House of Deputies Bonnie Anderson.

Resolution D025 was passed on July 14 by the 76th General Convention meeting in Anaheim, California. In addition to underscoring the Episcopal Church's support of and participation in the Anglican Communion, the resolution affirms "that God has called and may call" gay and lesbian people "to any ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church."

The presiding officers emphasized that D025 has "not repealed" [Resolution B033](#) that was passed by the 75th General Convention in 2006. B033 urged restraint in consenting to the consecration of bishops whose "manner of life" might present challenges for the rest of the Anglican Communion. That challenge was widely understood to refer to gay bishops in partnered unions. The full text of the letter to Williams is available [here](#).

Jefferts Schori wrote a separate letter to the primates of the Anglican Communion -- and included a copy of the letter to Williams -- acknowledging that "with so much misinformation circulating through the press and other sources, it is crucial to me that I provide the archbishop and all of you with accurate information." Thirteen primates were present in Anaheim, the largest number ever to attend a General Convention.

Jefferts Schori told the primates that her "heart was filled with joy at seeing so many of you" at General Convention. "It is important to me that we continue to find ways to communicate with one another directly about our different cultural and ecclesial contexts, and thereby prevent any misunderstandings," she said. The full text of the letter to the primates is available [here](#).

At this General Convention, several resolutions were submitted that called for further action regarding B033. In their letter to Williams, the presiding officers explained that these resolutions fell into three categories -- "those calling for the repeal of B033; those restating or seeking to strengthen our church's nondiscrimination canons; and those stating where the Episcopal Church is today. From these options, our General Convention chose the third -- along with reaffirming our commitments to the Anglican Communion -- with the hope that such authenticity would contribute to deeper conversation in these matters."

Williams attended his first General Convention July 7-9. During a convention Eucharist, he expressed his gratitude to the Episcopal Church for its "continuing willingness to engage with the wider life of our communion." But he also expressed his hopes and prayers "that there won't be decisions in the coming days that could push us further apart. But if people elsewhere in the communion are concerned about this, it's because of a profound sense of what the Episcopal Church has given and can give to our fellowship worldwide."

In their letter to Williams, the presiding officers emphasized that in adopting Resolution D025, "it is not our desire to give offense."

The letter to Williams was hand-delivered and copies were emailed to the primates and to Anglican lay and clergy leaders on July 17, according to the Episcopal Church's Office of Public Affairs. It was also distributed to the House of Bishops and House of Deputies.

"We remain keenly aware of the concerns and sensibilities of our brothers and sisters in other churches across the communion," Anderson and Jefferts Schori wrote. "We believe also that the honesty reflected in this resolution is essential if indeed we are to live into the deep communion that we all profess and earnestly desire."