

**The 172nd Annual Convention
Diocese of Chicago
November 20-21, 2009**

Subject: The Legacy of Slavery since 1835 in the Episcopal Church in Illinois

Sponsor: Derrick Dawson, on behalf of the Anti-Racism Commission
The Diocese of Chicago's Deputies to General Convention
The Peace and Justice Committee

RESOLUTION

Resolved, that the 172nd Convention of the Diocese of Chicago affirm the action of the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (2006) in Resolution A123, which declared that the institution of slavery in the United States was a sin and which called upon The Episcopal Church to acknowledge its history of participation in this sin, its legacy and the lasting injury which it has inflicted on our society and on the Church; and be it

Further Resolved, that this 172nd Convention mandate the creation of a task force on the complicity of the Diocese of Chicago and its predecessor, the Diocese of Illinois, in the institution of slavery and in the subsequent history of segregation and discrimination and the current practices of segregation and discrimination; and be it

Further Resolved, that at the end of the Task Force's research phase, the Diocese of Chicago use the information gathered by the Task Force "as the foundation for truth telling", and when necessary, "confession, apology, forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation" (General Convention 2009 Res. A143: Reconciliation: Extension of General Convention 2006 Res. A123 to General Convention 2012); and be it

Further Resolved, that the Task Force submit reports on its work to the 2010, 2011, and 2012 Diocesan Conventions and that the Diocese of Chicago report its results of this work to the 77th General Convention (2012); and be it

Further Resolved, that the Diocese of Chicago use these reports to further its work in becoming an anti-racist institution.

EXPLANATION

The 2006 General Convention resolution, A123, "Slavery and Racial Reconciliation," called for every diocese "to collect and document during the next triennium detailed information in its community on (a) the complicity of The Episcopal Church in the institution of slavery and in the subsequent history of segregation and discrimination and (b) the economic benefits The Episcopal Church derived from the institution of slavery," and "to hold a Service of Repentance." The 2009 General Convention acted to extend this resolution through the triennium

ending in 2015. On the evening of July 9 at this year's General Convention, at a forum entitled, "A123 and A127: Facing Our Past to Shape Our Future," Deputies, Bishops and guests heard progress reports from the following four dioceses that had begun to implement A123 -- Maryland, Mississippi, New York and North Carolina. Bonnie Anderson, the President of the House of Deputies, in her remarks said the Church still participates in "voluntary amnesia to pain and oppression." The work called for in A123 is, she said, "both an academic exercise and an exercise of the heart." Dan Perry, one of the descendants of the James DeWolf family, and his wife, Constance, who were resources for the legislative committee that considered the resolutions on anti-racism, talked about their work in presenting screenings of the DVD, "Traces of the Trade," at diocesan conventions as a means of assisting dioceses in implementing A123. They stressed the need for dioceses, especially in the North, to document the complicity of The Episcopal Church not only in the institution of slavery but also in the subsequent history of segregation and discrimination. The staff of the Archives of The Episcopal Church, as part of its online exhibit, "The Church Awakens: African Americans and the Struggle for Justice," have included the resource, "Consulting the Past Through the Archival Record: A Guide for Episcopal Church Research into the Impact of Slavery on Church Life and African Americans." The final section, "The Legacies of Segregation and Discrimination," poses five questions "to allow researchers to reflect on the legacy of segregation and discrimination in their own diocese and parish." One of these questions reads as follows, "Were African American parishes treated differently from other parishes within your diocese? Were these congregations maintained as missions longer than was typical for your diocese?"

Ed Rodman in his "Open Letter to Various Leaders in The Episcopal Church on the Evolving Implementation of the 2006 General Convention Resolution A123," chastised the Church for the litany which was used at the Service of Repentance at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Philadelphia, which was "neither historically correct nor appropriately structured to acknowledge that one group of people was apologizing to another group of people who for all of the history of slavery and most of the history of the Episcopal Church have been separate and unequal." Ed Rodman then quotes Maya Angelou, "History with all of its wrenching pain cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage need not be lived again." As the Diocese of Chicago enters into this work of breaking through the clouds of historical amnesia, may one result of this work be that its history of segregation and discrimination "not be lived again."

In order to implement this resolution the sponsors suggest that the Bishop appoint the task force as mandated by this Convention to consist of ten to twelve persons equally divided between persons of color and white persons, all of whom would serve initial three year terms. The Task Force would identify Chicago area scholars, historians and researchers who under the direction of the Task Force would conduct the needed research. The Task Force would use the documentation unearthed by the team of scholars, historians and researchers as the basis for its annual reports to the next three Diocesan Conventions. The Task Force would also be involved in working closely with the Diocese regarding truth telling activities and any other activities or processes deemed necessary.

Adoption of this resolution could require modest expenditures, such as for research assistance from graduate students. The precise amount of such expenditures cannot be ascertained at this time.