

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2009  
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

**RESOLUTION NO.:** 2009-C084  
**TITLE:** A Right to Human Identity  
**PROPOSER:** Diocese of Albany  
**COMMITTEE:** National and International Concerns

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**Directly Related:** (attached)

1982-D082 Urge State Legislatures to Make Information Available to Adoptees

**Indirectly Related:**

None

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions of General Convention for the period 1976 through 2006, selecting "direct" resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. Committee members who are interested in obtaining copies of "indirectly related" resolutions, legislative history before 1976, or who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.*



**Resolution Number:** 1982-D082  
**Title:** Urge State Legislatures to Make Information Available to Adoptees  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, **That state legislatures be urged to establish procedures that would enable adoptees [upon reaching legal age] to secure current information regarding their historical heritage, medical history, and genetic derivation: (1) without the necessity of court action, and (2) with sufficient safeguards provided for the protection of all parties in the adoptive triangle--the adoptee, the adoptive parents, and the biological parents;** and be it further  
*Resolved*, **That every Diocese and Parish be encouraged to support such action in every state.**

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-149.

TOPIC/TITLE: A Right to Human Identity

PROPOSER: Diocese of Albany

C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 76th General Convention urge all
- 2 dioceses to adopt the following statement: Personal history is a fundamental human right
- 3 and knowledge of one's entire parentage should be assumed as part of a person's natural
- 4 property; and be it further
- 5
- 6 *Resolved*, That the 76th General Convention urge all dioceses to adopt the following
- 7 statement: That all state legislatures be urged to establish procedures that would enable
- 8 adoptees [upon reaching legal age] to secure current information regarding their historical
- 9 heritage, medical history, and genetic derivation without the necessity of court action.
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EXPLANATION:

1) Adoptees in the United States are not necessarily granted knowledge of their parentage because state law in forty-eight states seals their original birth certificates. Records are sealed in New York State upon adoption.2) There are no laws that protect the identity / history of the children born using artificial reproductive technology. Sperm donation, egg donation, embryo donation may not be disclosed to the children so conceived. 3) Similar concerns exist for children born of surrogacy parenting. 4) Theological grounds for knowledge of one's origins may be seen in scripture. a) Old Testament scriptural testimony is structured around genealogical narratives. b) The theological concept of adoption witnessed to by Paul incorporates knowledge of one's origins. c) Jesus' birth narratives incorporate genealogies. d) The concept of "fatherhood" is retained in the New Testament.5) Church history has testified to the importance of "blood line" in canon law.6) The theological concept that a person may become a "child of God" by the "will of God" does not negate other origin narratives, but fulfills them.7) Narrative theology emphasizes the importance of the human narrative on personal and social levels. On the personal level, the narrative is related to healing and health.8) The Episcopal Church has already declared in Resolution 1982-D082:"Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That state legislatures be urged to establish procedures that would enable adoptees [upon reaching legal age] to secure current information regarding their historical heritage, medical history, and genetic derivation: (1) without the necessity of court action, and (2) with sufficient safeguards provided for the protection of all parties in the adoptive triangle--the adoptee, the adoptive parents, and the biological parents; and be it further Resolved, That every Diocese and Parish be encouraged to support such action in every state."9) Resolution 1982-D082 should be superseded in regard to item 2, which is vague.

BALLOT RESULTS: