

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2009-C032
TITLE: Financial Support for Seminarians
PROPOSER: Diocese of New Jersey
COMMITTEE: Ministry

Directly Related: (attached)

2006-B006 Respond to Crisis of Educational Debt for Future Clergy
2003-A064 Convene a Partnership to Address the Issue of Seminarian Debt
2003-A120 Convene a Strategic Planning Committee for Theological Education

Indirectly Related:

2006-D014 On the Topic of Reaffirming Financial Support for Seminaries (Rejected)
2000-A113 Affirm Commitment to Seminaries and Encourage Contributions by Congregations
2000-D014 Reaffirm Financial Support of Seminaries and Theological Education Sunday
1997-A139 Affirm Commitment to the Seminaries and Request Parish Contributions
1994-A135 Reaffirm Commitment to the One Percent Contribution to Seminaries
1994-D002 Appropriate Scholarship Funds for Hispanic Seminarians
1991-A126 On the Topic of Jubilee Ministry
1991-C052 Allocate Funds for Scholarships to Hispanic Seminarians
1988-D058 Allocate Restricted Funds for Hispanic Scholarships
1982-D035 Endorse the Establishment of a Hispanic Theological Scholarship
1979-B127 Approve in Principle a Form of Financial Support for Seminaries
1976-A084 Commend a Plan for the Financial Support of Theological Education

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: 2006-B006
Title: Respond to Crisis of Educational Debt for Future Clergy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention mandate that the Standing Commission on Ministry Development design strategies for raising awareness and responding to the crisis of educational debt for those preparing for ordained ministry in the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Ministry Development in consultation with the Church Pension Fund, the Executive Council, the Office of Mission and Ministry, the diocesan Commissions on Ministries, the Office of Ministry Development, and the Society for the Increase of Ministry, shall share their results and recommendations with Proclaiming Education for All (PEALL) following each meeting of the Standing Commission on Ministry Development, annually to the House of Bishops, and to the 76th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 684-685.



Resolution Number: 2003-A064
Title: Convene a Partnership to Address the Issue of Seminarian Debt
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Ministry Development to convene a partnership including members from the Church Pension Fund, the Episcopal Church Foundation, the Society for the Increase of the Ministry, the Episcopal Evangelical Education Society, the Council of Seminary Deans, and any other appropriate groups to address the urgent issue of seminarian debt and report back to the 75th General Convention with recommendations. This committee will include in its consideration the following points:

- determining the feasibility of amortizing seminary loan payments over the course of a cleric's career;
- including seminarian debt in the pension premium of parochial/institutional clergy, distributed over the course of a cleric's career;
- dioceses and congregations committing a greater proportion of income to the support of people preparing for ordination and lay professions;
- seeking funding support for the debt reduction of newly ordained persons who serve in priority mission areas that are under-served and under-funded, including new church plants, multicultural and specialized cultural ministries and rural areas; and
- the development of a fund to defray the educational expenses of seminarians through partnerships.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 475f.



Resolution Number: 2003-A120
Title: Convene a Strategic Planning Committee for Theological Education
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Ministry Development, contingent upon finding funding from other sources outside of General Convention, to convene a Strategic Planning Committee, consisting of bishops, seminary deans, and provincial representatives; and be it further

Resolved, That this Committee is to function in a broad collaborative manner for six years to prepare an in-depth study that will chart the future of theological education in the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Ministry Development will report on the work of this Strategic Planning Committee to the 75th General Convention and will deliver its final report to the 76th General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 217f.

TOPIC/TITLE: Financial Support for Seminarians

PROPOSER: Diocese of New Jersey

C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention request
2 the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance provide funding for the
3 next triennium to underwrite the mounting costs of theological education by providing
4 needs-based scholarships for EpiscopalSeminarians; and be it further
5 *Resolved*, That said funds be administered and distributed to needy seminarians through
6 the existing Scholarship Program of the Society for the Increase of the Ministry (SIM),
7 said Society having an established record of 151 years of
8 experience in administering scholarship grants to Episcopal seminarians; and be it further
9 *Resolved*, That the General Convention direct SIM to report annually to the Executive
10 Council on this work and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the future ordained
11 leaders of this Church and that the Executive Council, in turn,
12 provide a full report to the 77th General Convention; and be it further
13 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on
14 Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation in the amounts of \$100,000
15 in year one, \$150,000 in year two and \$200,000 in year three for the
16 implementation of this resolution.
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EXPLANATION:

The cost of three years of seminary can range from \$51,000 to over \$100,000, depending upon family circumstances and one's choice of seminaries. About half of our seminarians struggle under the burden of debt, most of which is educational debt. The Society for the Increase of the Ministry reported in autumn 2007 that some 42% of the graduating 2008 class will have incurred an estimated indebtedness of \$62,000, which will amount to about \$12,000 per year against a median postgraduation income of \$45,500. SIM also reports a declining enrollment of students in the Master of Divinity degree programs at Episcopal seminaries (a decrease of 25% over the last three academic years) reportedly related to the level of incurred student indebtedness. The high cost of seminary education and the threat of debilitating debt limits diversity among our seminary student bodies and limits the placement opportunities for ordinands to those congregations which pay better than others. This funding schedule is intended to bring the support from the General Convention budget to a level matching the annual grants committed by SIM (\$225,000 for the academic year 2008-09).

Review Status: Not Yet Reviewed by PB&F