

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D061
Title: Creating Space for Difference
Proposer: Quelly, Jewels
Topic: Diversity, Safe Church

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-B009 Encourage Study and Practice of Civil Discourse and Bipartisanship

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

None

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

D061 - Creating Space for Difference

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Quelly, Jewels

Endorsed by: Russell, Ms. Laura, Black, The Rev. Cynthia

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Directs an Interim Body: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents:

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That we as Episcopalians recognize the rich diversity of thoughts and feelings among us, especially during this difficult time of political strife; and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge that all need comfort and space at this time, as well as a path forward for civil discourse; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention ask all congregations to develop skills to hold space for our comfort and discomfort, and create discourse to talk to and be with one another when we disagree, and to have conversations in these brave spaces that respect each other and are grace filled; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations use resources such as the Civil Discourse Curriculum developed by The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations, to guide conversations while discussing issues that make us vulnerable, such as politics.

Explanation

Difficult discussions can be a profound tool to aid in reconciliation, healing and continued growth. To be productive, these discussions require us to look at value systems and various

points of view that may not only differ from our own, but that we may vehemently oppose. Recently, much of political discourse has resulted in arguing and shouting, rather than trying to understand each other's point of view.

However, as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to practice the Way of Love. Two scriptural examples, in particular, are brought to mind that demonstrate the redirection of Jesus towards tolerance and respect:

Luke 10:29 shows us a lawyer who was hoping to inherit eternal life, all while attempting to gain relief of the demanding law of "Love thy neighbor as thyself" by redefining who they were responsible to care for, since, through their own prejudices and intolerances, they found themselves unable to love their neighbor as themselves. When the lawyer presses Jesus for an affirmation of their narrow definition, Jesus shares the parable of The Good Samaritan. This passage ends with the lawyer acknowledging to Jesus that a true neighbor is "one who has mercy on others" and Jesus commanding the lawyer to go forth and do the same.

And this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:37-40

God made humankind in all its diversity in Gods' own image (Genesis 1:26). While we don't commit to agreeing with every person we meet, we do promise, through our Baptismal Covenant, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being.

The success of everything we do involves communication. Honest, open, vulnerable truths can be difficult to express and tough to hear and receive. Acknowledging our differences with an open mind and heart requires courage and compassion. Often passionate feelings, which require temperance and management to handle with civility and basic respect, are evoked for all participants.

In order to conduct more fruitful dialogue, all congregations should develop the skills necessary to have these conversations, creating spaces that hold our discomfort while assuring the participants no harm.

Brave Space is a term taken from: Arao, B., & Clemens, K. and is defined by the use of its five essential elements:

"controversy with civility, owning intentions and impacts, challenge by choice, respect, and no attacks".



Resolution Number: 2018-B009
Title: Encourage Study and Practice of Civil Discourse and Bipartisanship
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention calls on all Episcopalians to practice civil discourse in our political life, while not making peace with evil and injustice; and be it further Resolved, That the General Convention urge individual Episcopalians, parishes, dioceses and seminaries to use the Civil Discourse Curriculum developed by The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations as a resource to guide discussions about politics, policy, and legislation, while strengthening our relationships with one another; and be it further Resolved, That the General Convention direct The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations to work with bipartisan efforts in Congress, when possible, and intentionally engage with elected and career government officials from all political parties.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 887.