

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-A027
TITLE: New Funding for Clergy Formation
PROPOSER: Task Force on Clergy Leadership in Small Congregations
TOPIC: Theological Education

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A001 Reform Seminary Training and Develop Transformative Encounters
1991-A225 Develop Alternative Programs for Theological Education

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

2015-A045 Authorize a Task Force on Ministry Formation in Small Congregations
2012-D049 Launch Seminary Student Loan Program
2009-A106 Commend the Society for the Increase of Ministry Plan on Educational Debt
2009-C013 Request Funds for Students Preparing for Ordained Ministry

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

(Blue Book) Report to General Convention, [Task Force on Clergy Leadership Formation in Small Congregations](#), see pages 657-658.

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

A027 New Funding for Clergy Formation

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| Proposer | Task Force on Clergy Leadership in Small Congregations |
| Topic | Theological Education |
| Endorsed by | |
| Sponsored by | |
| Page numbers | Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A |
| HiA / Leg. Cttee | / |
| Current Status | Resolution Filed |
| Version | Original (as filed) |
| Review Status | Not yet reviewed |

RESOLUTION TEXT

- Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention direct the Executive Council to establish a committee of Executive Council with membership appointed by the Presiding Officers consisting of no fewer than ten (10) nor more than twenty (20) representatives. The committee shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from local diocesan clergy formation programs, representatives from seminaries (particularly persons involved in tuition assistance programs), fund development professionals within The Episcopal Church, and representatives from organizations (such as the Society for the Increase of Ministry and United Thank Offering) that provide funds to assist persons in advanced theological education. The committee shall be made up of bishops, priests, deacons, and laity. It shall develop and implement a plan to provide need-based central scholarship funding to individuals pursuing theological education who are preparing to serve as priests or deacons in non-stipendiary positions or in bi-vocational ministries in small congregations. This plan shall work to expand the funding available to aspiring priests and deacons who are engaged in theological education other than full-time seminary education. In addition to considering other funding sources, the committee shall examine the possible use of donor-directed endowment funds held in trust by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society [DFMS] as a partial means to fulfill this mandate; and be it further
- Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation for the implementation of this resolution.

EXPLANATION

There is little scholarship funding available to persons pursuing theological education other than in seminary M.Div. programs.

If a person seeking ordination intends to serve in a non-stipendiary position or in a bi-vocational ministry in a small congregation, a substantial impediment to pursuing this goal is the cost of obtaining the necessary education. Even the reduced cost of theological education in a non-residential setting or in a diocesan program can present a significant barrier to many potential clergy. Some for whom a costlier program might be most appropriate are prevented from pursuing that program because of financial constraints.

Moreover, funding theological education of any kind puts financial strain on many smaller dioceses. The Task Force perceives that creating a need-based, central scholarship fund is a justice issue. The fund would significantly level the playing field and enable access to a wider variety of educational resources by those who most need them.

The findings of the Task Force indicate that in the future, an increasing number of ordained ministers in The Episcopal Church will be non-stipendiary or bi-vocational. The data also shows that small congregations will depend more heavily on these clergy. To meet the need of small congregations for clergy and to avoid burdening these clergy with substantial debt, new strategies to provide funding for their theological education are needed.



Resolution Number: 2015-A001
Title: Reform Seminary Training and Develop Transformative Encounters
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention urge Episcopal seminaries and the General Board of Examining Chaplains to work collectively in creating, nurturing, and developing a culture of collaboration among them that results in: new structures; new curricula; new degrees beyond the traditional MDiv; partnerships and practices on the academic, departmental, and inter-seminary levels; alternative assessment instruments to provide tangible, measurable evidence that seminary trained leaders (lay and ordained) have the spiritual formation, skill sets, and intellectual aptitude to engage the world and to transform and lead The Episcopal Church, looking beyond competency in the academic areas defined by canon; standards of accountability, reporting, and mutual ministry reviews at all levels; and Episcopal seminaries' reportage of their progress to Executive Council and to each succeeding General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That Diocesan Councils and Commissions on Ministry, in collaboration with their Bishop, encourage and support diverse ways for ordained clergy to make a living inside and outside the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council study the issue of clergy compensation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society develop a network to help Episcopal congregations, including clergy, vestry, organist, musical, lay, and other liturgical leaders, to become skilled in creating, nurturing, and developing spaces and moments for spiritual encounters that transform lives and unjust structures; and to have partnerships and practices with other congregations to become excellent stewards of spiritual, financial, real estate, and community resources; and to report their progress and learning annually to their Diocesan Convention/Council and Bishop.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 456-457.



Resolution Number: 1991-A225
Title: Develop Alternative Programs for Theological Education
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this General Convention direct the BTE to work with the seminaries, dioceses, members of the Executive Council Staff appointed by the Presiding Bishop and other interested parties in the Church to explore and develop viable alternative programs and locations for ordained and lay theological education. Recognizing complex changes in the culture to which the Church is called to minister, particularly substantial demographic shifts, we are called to discover effective means for the education of an increasingly diverse, dispersed and mobile population. To that end specific strategies and pilot programs should be developed by the seminaries, utilizing current educational theories and technologies which are sensitive to cultural diversity.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Phoenix, 1991* (New York: General Convention, 1992), p. 272.