

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-B011
TITLE: Inclusive Language Policies for Episcopal Seminaries and Formation Programs
PROPOSER: The Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal
TOPIC: Theological Education

Directly Related: (Attached)

2009-D090 Encourage Inclusive Self-Identification on All Church Data Forms
1997-D039 Direct Use of Gender Inclusive Language in all Rules of Order
1988-A073 Direct Episcopal Church Staff to Use Inclusive Language in All Communications
1985-A095 Prepare Inclusive Language Texts for the Regular Services of the Church
1985-A115 Review the Constitution and Canons for Sexually Inclusive Language

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 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.

B011 Inclusive Language Policies for Episcopal Seminaries and Formation Programs

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| Proposer | The Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal |
| Endorsed by | Glasspool, The Rt. Rev. Mary; Baskerville-Burrows, The Rt. Rev. Jennifer |
| Sponsored by | |
| Page numbers | Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A |
| HiA / Leg. Cttee | HD / 14 - Christian Formation and Discipleship |
| Current Status | Resolution Filed |
| Version | Original (as filed) |
| Review Status | Not yet reviewed |

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That all theological seminaries affiliated with the Episcopal Church and all training programs and schools of formation sponsored or operated by one or more dioceses for the education and formation of persons for ordination be encouraged and requested to adopt policies calling for the use of bias-free and inclusive language for both God and humanity in all digital, written and oral communications, including lectures, discussions, papers, announcements, sermons, public notices and publications; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That all theological seminaries affiliated with the Episcopal Church and all training programs and schools of formation sponsored or operated by one or more dioceses for the education and formation of persons for ordination be encouraged to provide opportunities to explore the theological foundations for the use of bias-free and inclusive language for God and humanity; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That each such theological seminary, training program, and school of formation provide a copy of its inclusive language policy to the Secretary of the General Convention by October 1, 2019 and that the Secretary report on the policies received and not received to the Executive Council, to any appropriate interim body, and to the 80th General Convention.

EXPLANATION

Language matters, especially for Episcopalians who believe that the words we use to pray shape our beliefs about God and humankind, and who promise in baptism to “Respect the dignity of every human person.” Our seminaries and schools of formation, whether for those seeking to expand their ministries as lay people or for those seeking ordination have the opportunity and the responsibility to teach about the ways language can be used to marginalize people. This resolution asks seminaries and schools of formation to both explore and teach the theological foundations for the use of gender-inclusive language as well as to model that usage with policies that require the use of inclusive language when referring to God or humans. Many but not all of our seminaries already have such policies. Such theological reflection and language policies will equip our lay and ordained leaders to encourage inclusive language through out our church and make The Episcopal Church a more welcoming place for all people.

From the Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style, second edition (2014), section 4.3.1: “The generic use of masculine nouns and pronouns is increasingly unacceptable in current English usage. Historians must obviously be sensitive to the requirements of their sources, but in many cases the assignment of gender to God is best avoided.”



Resolution Number: 2009-D090
Title: Encourage Inclusive Self-Identification on All Church Data Forms
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recommends and encourages all bodies of The Episcopal Church to utilize all available resources to revise and adapt forms to be fully inclusive of all people: by including lines not only for one's legal name, but also for one's preferred name as well as one's gender identity and pronoun preference.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 712.



Resolution Number: 1997-D039
Title: Direct Use of Gender Inclusive Language in all Rules of Order
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

*Resolved, That the Secretary of General Convention be and hereby is directed in editing the Rules of Order for the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies and the Joint Rules of the two Houses for inclusion in the book entitled *Constitutions and Canons for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America otherwise known as the Episcopal Church*, to use gender inclusive language wherever reasonably possible.*

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 566.



Resolution Number: 1988-A073
Title: Direct Episcopal Church Staff to Use Inclusive Language in All Communications
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 69th General Convention direct the Presiding Bishop and Church Center staff to ensure the use of inclusive language in all communications and materials issued by the Executive Council and the Church Center so these do not perpetuate stereotypes of race, age, sex, and disabling conditions; and be it further

Resolved, That they monitor all national, provincial and diocesan training under the auspices of units of the Church Center to ensure the use of inclusive language by trainers in training materials; and be it further

Resolved, That the Education for Mission and Ministry unit in collaboration with the Women in Mission and Ministry and other units identify and disseminate information concerning available educational resources which would help dioceses, congregations, educators and trainers teach at every age level about the influence of inclusive language and imagery in shaping and communicating our biblical and theological tradition, and in affecting patterns of relationship and participation within the Church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 708.



Resolution Number: 1985-A095
Title: Prepare Inclusive Language Texts for the Regular Services of the Church
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Standing Liturgical Commission be directed to prepare inclusive language texts for the regular services of the Church, i.e., Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Eucharist, to be proposed for trial use at the next meeting of the General Convention in accordance with Article X of the Constitution and Canon II.3.6(a).

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 605.



Resolution Number: 1985-A115
Title: Review the Constitution and Canons for Sexually Inclusive Language
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 68th General Convention charge the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons to continue to review and revise the Constitution and Canons in order to ensure usage of language that is consistently sexually inclusive.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 515.