

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D050
TITLE: Solidarity with Victims of Religious Persecution
PROPOSER: The Rev. Dr. Titus Presler
TOPIC: Human Rights

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-C055 Condemn Violence Against Christians and Commit to Prayer
2003-C031 End All Forms of Religious Persecution and War
1997-D016 Take Actions to Express Church's Support of Religious Freedom
1988-D024 Support and Pray for Religious Freedom Throughout the World
1985-D069 Affirm Guidelines for Working for Religious Liberty

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

2003-D020 Oppose Legal Systems Which Violate Human Rights

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.

D050 Solidarity with Victims of Religious Persecution

Proposer	The Rev. Dr. Titus Presler
Topic	Human Rights
Endorsed by	O'Neal, Ms. Yvonne; Quick, The Rev. Judy
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	HB / 05 - World Mission
Current Status	On House of Bishops Calendar
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Passed review

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church reaffirm its commitment to the freedom of all people in all places to profess and practice their religious beliefs as a universal human right; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the General Convention express its concern that adherents of religious minorities in many nations and cultures are persecuted by religious majorities and by governments hostile to religion through gratuitous criticism, legal strictures, social exclusion, economic discrimination, sanctuary desecration, and physical violence; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations and mission organizations to include outreach to persecuted religious minorities in their international mission work; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations and mission organizations to establish in their international mission work relationships of solidarity with Christians experiencing persecution by reason of their faith in Jesus Christ; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Episcopal Church's Office of Governmental Relations to advocate on behalf of legislation and international appeals to protect religious freedom; and be it further
- 6 *Resolved*, That the General Convention Office communicate this resolution to the United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and to the bipartisan United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

EXPLANATION

The 21st century has seen an unexpected and disconcerting rise in threats to religious freedom around the world. North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, China, North Korea, Europe and the United States are places of particular controversy, but religious freedom is threatened in many other locales as well.

Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Bahais and Yazidis are among the groups who have

been victims of religiously motivated or anti-religious violence, and some of these groups, including Christians, have perpetrated religiously motivated violence. Other factors such as ethnic bias, economic competition and political expediency are often also involved, but religious motivation is often equally or more prominent.

It is incumbent on all Episcopalians involved in global mission to enact solidarity with Christians experiencing persecution in various parts of the Anglican Communion. Equally, Episcopal mission work must cultivate sensitivity to threats to religious freedom and reach out with compassion, relief and advocacy for all persecuted religious groups, whether they are victimized by religious majorities or by governments hostile to all religion.

This resolution has been endorsed by the Board of Directors of the Global Episcopal Mission Network (GEMN).



Resolution Number: 2015-C055
Title: Condemn Violence Against Christians and Commit to Prayer
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church condemns the heinous acts of violence and persecution directed toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and all others throughout the world persecuted for their faith; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention ask the Presiding Bishop to call for a specific Church-wide Day of Prayer in 2016 in remembrance of these contemporary martyrs and in solidarity with persecuted Christians in our own day; and be it further

Resolved, That we commit the Church to continual prayer for the cessation of all violent acts against believers.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 916.



Resolution Number: 2003-C031
Title: End All Forms of Religious Persecution and War
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the General Convention of The Episcopal Church speak out for an end to all forms of religious persecution and war by instituting, recognizing, supporting, and encouraging the yearly celebration of interfaith worship services (like the World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation) in all communities across America and around the world.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 477.



Resolution Number: 1997-D016
Title: Take Actions to Express Church's Support of Religious Freedom
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 72nd General Convention declare the Episcopal Church's solidarity with those who experience persecution by reason of the practice of their faith; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention reaffirm the 1988 General Convention's "support of the United Nations' work for religious freedom worldwide" as it is carried out by the United Nations' Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom, and High Commissioner for Refugees; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention affirm the mission partnership of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, responding to their guidance as to the most appropriate help this Church can provide to combat religious persecution in their home countries; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice to review the most appropriate ways in which this Church can respond to religious persecution abroad, taking into consideration the Anglican mission partnership and previous resolutions of the General Convention and Executive Council on religious liberty; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention urge the United States Government to increase the admission of refugees to the United States to respond to those refugees escaping religious persecution, while maintaining the current or higher levels of admissions for other refugee categories; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention:

- Encourage the Anglican and Global Relations Office of the Episcopal Church to continue its sensitive and persistent response to the needs of Anglican churches experiencing persecution;
- Encourage the office of Episcopal Migration Ministries to continue to advocate for victims of religious persecution;
- Commend to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief the material needs of Anglican Churches and other Church bodies experiencing persecution;
- Request the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice to explore ways in which the sufferings of persecuted Christians and other religious groups can be addressed through international diplomacy;
- Encourage Diocesan and Parish groups concerned with international mission to develop links of communication, prayer, and support with those experiencing religious persecution;
- Commend to the Church the Consultation on Persecuted Churches to be convened by the Episcopal Council for Global Mission in April 1998; and
- Request the Planning Committee for the 1998 Lambeth Conference to include the sufferings of persecuted Christians as a major item for discussion and action for the bishops of the Anglican Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention request the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations to explore, in concert with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies, ways in which inter-religious understanding can be advanced in specific situations so as to alleviate the persecution of Christians and other religious groups.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), pp. 780-781.



Resolution Number: 1988-D024
Title: Support and Pray for Religious Freedom Throughout the World
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 69th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urge the dioceses and parishes of this Church to pray for religious freedom in the world throughout the coming triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council be urged to adopt religious freedom as a public policy and devise ways and means to protest the persecution of all religions ; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention convey to the General Secretary of the United Nations, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and the Secretary of State of the United States its support of the United Nations' work for religious freedom world-wide and urge its continuation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council be urged to devise ways and means to intercede for individuals and groups suffering persecution wherever the Church is serving; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council be urged to publicize in the dioceses and parishes of the Church material on religious liberty approved by the Executive Council.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Detroit, 1988* (New York: General Convention, 1989), p. 224.



Resolution Number: 1985-D069
Title: Affirm Guidelines for Working for Religious Liberty
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 68th General Convention affirm its support for religious freedom for all persons by speaking out on behalf of and supporting through advocacy, intercession and prayer all persons deprived or threatened with the loss of their religious liberty; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention affirm the following guidelines in working on behalf of religious liberty and commend them to the ecumenical groups in which the Episcopal Church participates:

We will affirm religious freedom as a goal to be sought in all societies, regardless of their political creeds.

We will encourage forms of governance that guarantee freedom of association, speech, and self-determination, believing them to be the most supportive environment for religious independence and tolerance for all.

We will advocate such other support to the persecuted and their families as is deemed appropriate in order that they may know our concern, love and prayerful support.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 264.