
RESOLUTION C-005

This was the resolution which was presented at an Open Hearing of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church on 1 August 2003. By agreement, two members of the "Prayer Book, Liturgy, and Church Music" Committee (Legislative Committee #13) presented two opposing viewpoints to begin the hearing. The Very Reverend Sam Candler spoke in favor of the resolution; the Reverend Kendall Harmon spoke against the resolution. This resolution was later discharged, so that its substance could be debated within Resolution C-051.

Resolution C005

Topic/Title: Rites: Rites for Blessing and Supporting Committed Relationships

Proposer: Diocese of California

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That desiring to support all couples living in life-long committed relationships of mutuality and fidelity outside the relationship of marriage, which mediate the grace of God, the 74th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare for consideration by the 75th General Convention rites for inclusion in the Book of Occasional Services by means of which the Church may express that support; and be it further

Resolved, That the guidelines for the use of such a rite be included in rubrics for the rite and stress the necessity of pastoral support, discernment and preparation.

Explanation:

Resolution D039sa, Human Sexuality: Issues Related to Sexuality and Relationships, was adopted at the 73rd General Convention. That resolution acknowledged that "there are currently couples in the Body of Christ in this Church who are living in marriage and couples in the Body of Christ in this Church who are living in other life-long committed relationships". D039sa also expressed the intention of the Church to provide for all its members "in such relationships" "the prayerful support, encouragement and pastoral care necessary to live faithfully" so that their lives together might be characterized by "fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God". The Episcopal Church is a liturgical church. Liturgy is a vital and central way that we in the Body of Christ provide pastoral care and prayerful support to Church members. There is currently no rite authorized by General Convention expressing support for couples in life-long committed relationships of mutuality and fidelity other than marriage. Development and authorization by General Convention of such rites would not preclude diocesan bishops from authorizing other rites to meet the particular needs of their dioceses.