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## *What Would It Take For Convention To Be A Success?*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
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Grace and greetings to you from Columbus, Ohio! By the time many of you read this, several important votes may have already occurred at the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. However, I am writing these remarks on Tuesday morning, the day that opens our formal convention.

"Years from now, if you were to be characterizing this 75th General Convention as wonderfully successful, what would you say happened?"

That was the question many General Convention deputies were asked as we sat in random tables of ten, most of us with people we did not know. We were engaged in opening "conversations," ways to share our lives and stories before formal business began.

For me to call this Convention a success is to believe that God has poured his spirit out upon this community.

This Convention would be a success if we could say, afterward, that no one person emerged as a hero, no one faction won the day, and no one vote determined everything. Rather, each of us went about our days with deep faithfulness, loyalty to our tasks, and commitment to the gospel as we understand it.

Of course, we do have different tasks here. I am amazed at all the busy-ness. Convention resembles some sort of an ant colony, with every ant doing something rather important, but no ant doing exactly the same thing at the same time. Here at Convention, some are writing new resolutions, others are hanging out in the exhibit space, many are renewing friendships, some are testifying at open committee hearings, some are wandering around lost, others are catching up with a nap, some are praying, others are rehearsing music. Some are worried about one resolution; others have never heard of it. I am worried about how to properly file my own committee's motion.

This Convention would be a success if everyone remained faithful to their calling, as God has directed them. I realize that some of our understandings of that faithfulness are in disagreement. I realize that some of our tasks seem at cross-purposes.

But I do not believe that such disagreements are stronger than the Spirit of God. I believe God honors commitment to faith and love. If every individual here can remain focused and faithful, even if that puts us in occasional disagreement with friends for a time, then I believe Convention will be successful.

What will make this General Convention "successful" will be the same thing that makes any event in our lives successful. It is the same thing that makes any life of ours successful. It is not success that we are focusing on. We are to be focusing on the unity of God and the grace of the gospel. Can we be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we know it? The outpouring of God's spirit that arrives-not because we try to force it-but because it simply bubbles up during our common faithfulness.

The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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