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Will Resolution Bottleneck Prevent Resolution of Communion Crisis?

The Special Committee charged with considering and preparing resolutions which relate to the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion especially in response to the 2004 'Windsor Report' and subsequent statements, seems to be mired down. They had a lot on their plate as they came into Convention but now, after five days of meetings they have only completed work on three main resolutions and discharged four others.

Since it was possible to file new resolutions up until deadline of 5pm on Wednesday, the committee now has an additional nine resolutions to consider. So there are approximately sixteen resolutions still on the table.

The additional resolutions cover a variety of subjects, including some new issues, such as D044 which disassociates the Episcopal Church from the recent actions of the Church of Nigeria. (The Church of Nigeria has supported legislation which essentially would make it illegal for that church to listen to the homosexual people within Nigeria. This is in direct contradiction to Lambeth Conference Resolution 1.10.) In contrast with the brevity of D044, Dean Thomas Luck of Central New York has submitted a five page statement with a resolution that it be adopted as a response to the 'Instruments of Unity'.

While some of the new resolutions, such as D050, 051 and 052, all submitted by David Grizzle of Texas, directly parallel resolutions already on the Committee table, there are several new ideas being presented. It is difficult to imagine how this Committee is to complete its work in a timely manner, and the bottleneck developing means that it may be almost impossible for Convention to have a fully nuanced debate about its response to the current challenges in communion.

As Canon Kenneth Kearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office reminded us in his speech to the House of Bishops, the Anglican Communion, in the form of a small group appointed by the Joint Standing Committee, is waiting to assess the response of this Convention to the Windsor Report and subsequent statements. The possibility of a response which has been adequately debated in the Houses of this Convention seems increasingly distant.

Press Contact:

Ms. Louise Brooks
Chief Press Officer
626-993-4605
commteam2@integrityusa.org

620 Park Avenue #311 | Rochester, NY 14607-2943
800-462-9498 | info@integrityusa.org