

in Jesus Christ in North America (resolution #8)?

- How many are ready to oppose resolution #9 and to turn a blind eye to the persecution of gays in Africa and elsewhere?

Is This Resolution Necessary?

In his memo to deputies, the President of Diocesan Council asserts that “many of these resolutions” are “not necessary to our life as a diocese or to our witness to Jesus Christ.” This is probably true, but what could be truly “necessary to our life as a diocese”?

- Will our diocese actually die if we do not express thanksgiving for our Rwanda partnerships?
- However desirable a relationship with Uganda Christian University might be, is it in any sense *necessary* to our survival?
- Is not the whole point of resolution #8, calling for revival in North America, to advance the Gospel?
- Is not resolution #9, which seeks an end to arbitrary imprisonment (or even death) for homosexual activity, a witness for Jesus Christ?

What About Democracy?

Provinces of the Anglican Communion exhibit diverse polity. That of the U.S. church has always been democratic, as befits our national history and ethic. We do not allow bishops to appoint other bishops, and we have always had mechanisms for ordinary clergy and laypeople to participate in church governance.

- Are the people of this diocese really

so immature that we cannot be trusted with democratic processes? Do we need education? Training? Nannies?

- Are we, as a diocese, willing to set a precedent of being able to vote only on resolutions brought forward by the diocesan leadership team?
- It is admittedly time-consuming to discuss resolutions, but do we want to accept tyranny simply to save time?
- Do we want to show Archbishop Orombi the best of our polity, or are we merely putting on a show of total unanimity? Is not our ability to air our differences a sign of health?

We Can Do It!

We can handle discussion of resolutions #4–9. Do not let Diocesan Council take away our precious right to debate issues that we think important. Support taking up these resolutions at diocesan convention and protect our democratic traditions.



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Let's Have Democracy in Our Diocese

At its September meeting, Diocesan Council dealt with ten resolutions that had been proposed for consideration at diocesan convention, many of which enjoyed broad sponsorship. Most of the resolutions (#4–9) were forwarded to the convention, however, *with the recommendation that they not even be considered*, even though they were properly drawn and submitted! (Resolutions of greatest interest to the leadership team had already been passed without any such reservations.)

Why Do We Have Convention?

In its Statement of Purpose (*Pre-Journal*, p. 3), we are told: “The Convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh meets annually to transact the many regular business items of any such assembly,” including “... to act upon any motions, notices, and resolutions properly presented to the Convention.”

- Why does Diocesan Council want the convention to neglect its duty?
- Why does Diocesan Council believe that it should substitute its judgment for that of the convention?
- Perhaps more than any other convention function, dealing with legislation (*i.e.*, resolutions) is something that actually *requires* face-to-face interaction. Evading

performance of this function diminishes the utility of physically getting together.

Are We Missing an Opportunity?

In recommending that most resolutions *not* be considered, the President of Diocesan Council said (*Pre-Journal*, p. C1), “I suggested that debate of many of these resolutions would damage friendships and relations among us, and would injure the diocese.”

- Do we believe that unity, peace, and reconciliation come from ignoring issues that divide us, or is it not reasonable to suppose that they are more likely to be the product of respectful discussion?
- It is not clear that all resolutions are “divisive.” Some were crafted to attract broad support from conservatives, liberals, and moderates. Why should we deny ourselves the rare experience of achieving broad agreement within the diocese?
- Congress is surely as divided as we on many issues, yet even political adversaries in that body seem capable of maintaining strong friendships. Are we, even with the grace of the Holy Spirit, unable to do the same?

What Are We Doing to the People of Our Diocese?

To its credit, Diocesan Council issued a public call for resolutions. This is, no doubt, why it elicited ten of them. One might have thought such a harvest of the products of clerical and parishioner initiative would

have been viewed as a blessing, rather than a curse.

- Nearly 60 people sponsored the ten proposed resolutions. Others, no doubt, had a role in writing them. Is simply tabling these resolutions not an affront to all these people? What management or political theory, or what theology justifies the encouragement of participation, followed by its cavalier dismissal when it appears? Is this good stewardship or teaching?
- Suppressing discussion is a common, destructive tactic in dysfunctional families. In an organizational setting, avoidance is usually equally destructive. In what inappropriate and hurtful ways will the anger and dissatisfaction resulting from dismissing these resolutions be manifested?
- In his September 14 letter to deputies, our bishop admits that the diocese has been discouraging convention resolutions. It appears to be his view that we show “ourselves at our best” by avoiding discussion. He will, therefore, no doubt support a move at diocesan convention to table resolutions #4–9. Will this not be uncomfortable for supporters of our bishop who are invested either in the passage of particular resolutions or in democratic processes generally?

Are the Resolutions Really Too Hot to Handle?

There will, no doubt, be both supporters

and opponents of each of the resolutions that Diocesan Council would rather we not discuss. Given the recent history of our diocese, however, the resolutions that Council would protect us from seem relatively mild.

- Does anyone really believe that any of the resolutions is more divisive and inflammatory than the proposed amendment to Article I, Section I of the diocesan Constitution, which would allow this diocese to ignore the ECUSA constitution and canons with impunity? Is any resolution even as divisive as resolution #1 of 2002?
- We are part of ECUSA, and our bishop has often asserted his intention to remain in the Episcopal Church. Can there therefore be any reason to object to resolution #4?
- Are we really divided on whether we should give at least 0.7% of our budget to fund international outreach efforts and development programs (resolution #5)? Is this not why our bishop set up Anglican Relief and Development?
- Resolution #6, celebrating the ordination of women, seems to reflect what our bishop has always said about women’s ordination. How much opposition to this can there be in our diocese?
- How passionate is anyone likely to get over a technical change in the requirements for serving on a vestry (resolution #7)?
- How many of us are intent on opposing a call for a revival of faith