

Myths and Facts of General Convention

Myth: General Convention Deputies are delegates representing the diocese.

Fact: General Convention Deputies are *deputies* not delegates. They represent a diocese, but are deputized to make educated voting decisions not based on a constituency in their diocese, but based on their prayerful consideration of each question and issue and the dictates of their conscience.

Myth: The Episcopal Church has not complied with the Windsor Report.

Fact: The Episcopal Church has complied with more of the recommendations of the Windsor Report than any other branch of the communion.

Myth: The 38 Primates are the authority of the Anglican Communion.

Fact: The Primates are one instrument of unity in the Anglican Communion. While they have some moral authority, they have no formal legislative or executive authority or power over any part of the communion beyond their own individual provinces. The other instruments of unity are The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council. None of these entities has formal "authority" or power over the provinces. Each province is fully autonomous and fully self-governing.

Myth: The 38 primates requested the Windsor Report.

Fact: The Archbishop of Canterbury, not the primates, requested the Windsor Report.

Myth: The Episcopal Church can be kicked out of the Anglican Communion (AC) by the primates.

Fact: There is no formal provision for any of the instruments of unity to exclude member churches from their body. The Episcopal Church and the Church of Canada were asked to voluntarily withdraw from some deliberative bodies of the Communion to allow time and space for healing. The Archbishop of Canterbury determines who is invited to the Lambeth Conference which takes place every ten years. Only the Archbishop of Canterbury can declare a church out of communion with the Anglican Communion.

Myth: Actions from the 2006 General Convention can get The Episcopal Church kicked out of the AC.

Fact: While some within the Anglican Communion argue that decisions made by General Convention might result in the Episcopal Church removing itself from the Anglican Communion, only an overt declaration to that effect by both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops or a clear statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury so stating could have that result.

Myth: General Convention 2006 can undo General Convention 2003's approval of the election of V. Gene Robinson to the episcopacy.

Fact: General Convention 2006 cannot undo General Convention 2003's approval of the election of V. Gene Robinson to the episcopacy. Gene Robinson was duly elected by the Diocese of New Hampshire, his election duly certified by General Convention and he was consecrated by more than three bishops of the Episcopal Church who are themselves in good standing and in the apostolic line.

Myth: The Episcopal Church is the only member of the Anglican Communion C that supports gays and lesbians as full participants of the church.

Fact: Canada, Great Britain, South Africa, New Zealand (to name four others), also support gays and lesbians as full participants of the church. NOTE: Caution is required when characterizing the position of Great Britain. While a person who identifies him or herself as gay or lesbian can exercise priestly ministry, they must confirm that they are living in celibacy. The Church of England officially does not permit those living openly gay lifestyles to exercise their ministry. Moreover, Jeffrey John, who had affirmed that he was living a celibate life, and whose name had been forwarded to be bishop of Reading, withdrew his name under pressure from the Archbishop of Canterbury. It should also be noted that English civil law now recognizes same sex unions.

Myth: The Global South is a united front in its disdain of The Episcopal Church.

Fact: There are provinces in the “Global South” that do not show disdain to The Episcopal Church.

Myth: The Windsor Report requires specific actions from The Episcopal Church.

Fact: The Windsor Report made recommendations to be considered by The Episcopal Church and identified actions for the entire Anglican Communion.

Myth: Human sexuality is at the core of the Windsor Report.

Fact: The core issues raised by the Windsor Report relate to authority and the importance of the provinces' being in communion. The issues underlying the Windsor Report involve interpretation of Scripture (is there only one correct interpretation or are there multiple acceptable interpretations?) and issues of whether there is any person or body in the Anglican Communion that can define the "requirements" for remaining in the Anglican Communion. Issues of Scriptural interpretation and authority, as well as our relationships of authority within the Anglican Communion are also major issues in this conversation. Human Sexuality has simply raised the issue of how we live together in communion.

Myth: To be part of the AC, a province (church) must agree on core communion moral values.

Fact: To be part of the AC a church must be in communion with the ABC.

Myth: The Episcopal Church is liberal/radical on matters of human sexuality.

Fact: The Episcopal Church is respectful, prayerful, compassionate and responsible on matters of human sexuality.

Myth: The Episcopal Church is lax on core moral values.

Fact: The moral values of The Episcopal Church are defined by the 5 Baptismal Vows. There is nothing lax about them. The argument about sexuality represents a clash of competing claims of morality and justice and how the Baptismal Vows ought to be applied.

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