Resolution Number: 2018-D016
Title: Create a Task Force for Women, Truth, and Reconciliation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, **That the 79th General Convention as members of the Body of Christ, confess our sins of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms as we understand these sins, which include, but are not limited to, sexual and gender harassment, sexual assault, physically, spiritually, and emotionally abusive behavior, and oppression based on gender, particularly as these sins have denigrated and devalued women and their ministries; acknowledge that within our patriarchal culture, the misuse of power and authority is primarily exercised by men with the vast majority of victims being women; acknowledge that we have created a culture of excuses, justifications, enabling, and dishonesty around gender-based discrimination and violence; have not heard the experiences of women with the goal of justice through acts of contrition, restoration, and reconciliation; declare that we as the Church seek to turn from the systems of oppression, patriarchy, ableism, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and our colonial legacy, among others, and seek to engage in restoration of the dignity of women and reconciliation from past acts, beginning with confessing to God and to one another the truth that we have not loved God with our whole heart, and mind, and strength, and that we have not loved, respected, and honored the presence, gifts, equality, and ministry of women, seeing in them the presence of Christ; confess that we have embraced patriarchal power, and in doing so, have exploited women and been blind to injustice and prejudice; and declare that we seek to repent and be restored to God and to each other, with the Church and each diocese declaring a period of fasting and repentance for this sin;** and be it further

Resolved, **That the 79th General Convention authorize the establishment of a Task Force for Women, Truth, and Reconciliation for the purpose of helping the Church engage in truth-telling, confession, and reconciliation regarding gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms by those in power in the Church, making an accounting of things done and left undone in thought, word, and deed, intending amendment of life, and seeking counsel, direction, and absolution as we are restored in love, grace, and trust with each other through Christ;** and be it further

Resolved, **That this Task Force be appointed jointly by the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop, with 15 members - 6 lay people (at least 4 of whom identify as women), 6 priests or deacons members (at least 4 of whom identify as women), and 3 bishops members (at least 2 of whom identify as women). The overall composition of this task force shall include members of the LGBTQ community, people of color, and reflect regional diversity. The overall composition of this task force shall include at least 5 members who have experienced gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls and at least 3 members who have personal and recent (within the last 5 years) experience working with complaints within the general Church and/or secular community on matters of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls. This Task Force shall report its progress to Executive Council, present a public timeline, summary of ongoing work easily accessible by members of the Episcopal Church, and report back to the 80th General Convention on the following tasks:**

-To develop a survey on gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms as we understand these sins, which include, but are not limited to, sexual and gender harassment, sexual assault, physical, spiritual, and emotionally abusive behavior, and oppression based on gender. This survey shall be modeled on the survey used to gather information and compile the 2017 report "Sexual Misconduct in the United Methodist Church: US Update," and the task force shall create said survey no later than December of 2019 and shall work with appropriate general Church organizations, dioceses, and church leadership, both lay and clergy, to distribute widely in the Episcopal Church for access by both laity and clergy no later than spring of 2020, said survey being available primarily on-line, and with adaptations made as determined by the task force to enable responses by those members of the general Church who may not have ready and easy access to the internet;

-To conduct a review of survey responses and data regarding gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violent behavior that has been experienced by those who identify as women in our church; and present this information in accessible, public, and informative ways as a truthful reality of the treatment of women; and the impact of this treatment on lay and ordained women and girls, their ministries, and the ministry of the Church to the following members and organizations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: The House of Bishops, The Executive Council, The National Association of Episcopal Schools; all Episcopal Seminaries (including diocesan formation programs for ordination); Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers; Diocesan Youth Directors; all Canons to the Ordinary; all Transition Officers; all diocesan Chancellors; and any other bodies, organizations, or committees that the President of the House of Deputies or the Presiding Bishop deem necessary;

-To coordinate and receive reports from the aforementioned persons and organizations no later than six months after the publication of the survey response report with the following written responses to the report, a copy of the same responses shared with the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies: How their body and/or institution has contributed to a church culture of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms, when appropriate detailing specific examples of this culture that has approved of this behavior, ignored and/or excused this behavior, and how this culture has damaged the body and/or institution; The body and/or institution's plan of action within their body or institution that can bring about a culture of truth telling, repentance, reconciliation, and justice in our church; including a timeline of said plan of action; and any other questions the task force, in consultation with the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies, deem helpful and necessary for the general Church to confess the truth of the impact of the sin of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms and to engage the process of restoration and reconciliation;

-To create a Truth and Reconciliation process to guide churches, dioceses, provinces, and the general Church as they develop their own paths for reconciliation and restoration, with emphasis given to discerning the *qualities* of methods churches, dioceses, provinces, and the general Church may implement to witness the truth and to seek justice, restoration, and reconciliation; recognizing a one-size-fits-all process will not be helpful given the diversity of our Church, and that identifying qualities for a process

invites churches, dioceses, provinces, and general Church to map their ways forward to justice, restoration, and reconciliation with guidance;
-To conduct a comprehensive audit and analysis of the internal church-wide structures that exist, or are needed, to educate and inform the church about realities and consequences of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms; to develop programs to proactively reduce incidences of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence within the church; as well as to develop resources that build the capacity of our church to provide trauma informed pastoral care for victims;
-To oversee an audit done by an outside auditor of the culture within church-wide structures to identify systemic expressions of power and leadership that create and continue gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls in all their forms, particularly the impact of this system as it manifests in access to leadership, pay inequity, imbalances in power, inequality in leadership, gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, and the enabling of gender-based violence by those in positions of power throughout the church that diminishes, excuses, and discounts discrimination, abuse, and harassment, contrary to the Gospel of Christ.

And be it further
Resolved, **That the General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation of $320,000 for the implementation of this resolution which will provide funding for regular meetings, including bi-annual in-person meetings throughout the triennium ($150,000); costs associated with creating and distributing the survey and subsequent reports ($40,000) contract with external firm to conduct a culture audit ($65,000); website, communications, and staff support ($50,000); and expenses associated with in-person presentations of findings to strategic groups, including Executive Council, the House of Bishops, and other groups as determined by the Task Force, the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies ($15,000).**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 937-939.