

2005 FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

The Committee on Resolutions received two proposed resolutions prior to the January 15, 2005 deadline for submissions. Hearings were held on Saturday, February 19, 2004, in the Matthews Room at Diocesan House. In the course of the hearings, the proposers made certain changes from the proposals as contained in the Preliminary Report of the Committee. This Final Report also includes the recommendations of the Committee on Resolutions.

As provided by the Rules of Order, proposed resolutions not timely submitted to the Committee on Resolutions, and not required by canon to be submitted to some other committee, may be brought to the floor of Convention for consideration only upon a two-thirds vote of Convention.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee on Resolutions
 The Rev'd Dirk C. Reinken
 The Rev'd Terence Blackburn
 The Rev'd Joan R. Watson
 Ms. Margaret Hughes
 Mrs. Cynthia A. Miller
 Mr. John A. Sully
 Mr. Paul Ambos, Esq., Chair
 Ms. Mary Ann Rhoads, Diocesan Liaison

RESOLUTION 2005-1:

Subject: Concerning Celebration of Church Founders

Whereas, In the aftermath of the American Revolution, the parishes of the Church of England in this country were abandoned by many clergy and lay people, and by the leadership of the Church in London, leaving a dispirited remnant behind to pick up the pieces; and

Whereas, Priests such as Abraham Beach of New Brunswick and lay leaders of the remaining parishes in this state and others, organized local and regional meetings which led to the establishment of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the first independent part of what would become the Anglican Communion; and

Whereas, More than two centuries later, the Episcopal Church has grown and continues to witness to the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, We should honor those whose foresight and vision created what we have today; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Bishop appoint a committee, to include the Registrar-Historiographer, representatives of the Music and Liturgy Commissions, and any necessary others, which will develop and propose the necessary prayers and readings to celebrate the Founders of the American Church; and be it

Further resolved, That, when the committee's work is complete, it be forwarded to General Convention for possible inclusion in the calendar of the church.

Submitted by: The Rev'd W. Keith McCoy, Dcn., St. John's Church, Somerville

Statement in Support of Resolution 2005-1 by Proposer:

Since I was at Christ Church, New Brunswick, in the 1980s, I've been aware that the Diocese of New Jersey played a significant role in the regeneration of the Church of England after the American Revolution, in creating the Episcopal Church, and, in essence, the Anglican Communion. Yet, the only recognition of the early leaders of our denomination is of two bishops, who came somewhat later in the process. We don't recognize the Rev. Abraham Beach or the laymen who talked and organized and advocated for what we have today.

I offer this resolution to our convention asking that something be done about this lack of recognition of our founders. I have had positive responses to this idea from Brent Miller, co-chair of the Music Commission, Fr. Douglas Freer, co-chair of the Liturgy Commission, and Fr. Laurence Fish, Registrar-Historiographer.

Recommendation by Committee on Resolutions:

The Committee makes no recommendation as to this proposal.

RESOLUTION 2005-2:

Subject: Condemnation of Prisoner Abuse and of Death Squads

Whereas, The Government of the United States has condoned the torturous abuse of prisoners taken in the war in Iraq and other detainees; and

Whereas, U.S. troops and other persons acting in our name have, as admitted in government reports, used beatings, rapes, assaults with toxic chemicals, hooding,

electrical shock, chilling and burning of naked prisoners, exposure, sexual humiliation, mutilation, chaining and other unreasonable restraints, religious humiliation, and other abuses as intentional tools of interrogation and for retribution against detainees, with at least five prisoners having been tortured to death; and

Whereas, U.S. government officials have further proposed to terrorize civilian supporters of insurgent forces through the use of death squads; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That this 221st Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey go on record as opposing absolutely and condemning any form of government torture or other abuse of detainees either directly or through agents anywhere in the world, no matter what degree of government justification may be claimed for such conduct; and be it

Further resolved, That this Convention likewise condemn the use of death squads by the U.S. government or its agents; and be it

Further resolved, That the Secretary of Convention transmit copies of these resolutions to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and New Jersey Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, and to the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church with a request that he forward copies to appropriate bodies of The Episcopal Church; and be it

Further resolved, That individuals in this Diocese be encouraged to write to their own elected representatives urging support of the principles of this Resolution.

Submitted by: The Rev'd Robert L. Shearer, Interim Vicar, Christ Church, New Brunswick, and the Rev'd Stephen M. Rozzelle, Rector, St. Mark's Church, Basking Ridge

Statement in Support of Resolution 2005-2 by Proposers:

Ever since President George W. Bush's February 7, 2002 statement: "I . . . determine that none of the provisions of Geneva apply to our conflict with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan or elsewhere throughout the world," reports have surfaced of widespread use of "coercive interrogation" programs by our government.¹ Systematic abuse of detainees claimed to be "terrorists" has taken place in prisons in Guantánamo, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere. More recently, the Department of Defense has developed "manhunt" programs to assassinate or capture suspected terrorist leaders regardless of law-enforcement strictures: An instance of this was the November 2, 2002 missile attack on a Yemeni car full of suspects, all of whom were killed.² Earlier this year, it was reported that the Pentagon is

¹ E.g., Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (quotation, p. 5); Mark Danner, *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror*; Steven Strasser (ed.), *The Abu Ghraib Investigations: The Official Report of the Independent Panel and Pentagon on the Shocking Prisoner Abuse in Iraq*; Jane Mayer, "Extraordinary Rendition," *New Yorker*, Feb. 14, 2005.

² E.g., *USA Today*, Nov. 5, 2002; *CBSNews.com*, Nov. 7, 2002; Hersh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 261-286.

"intensively debating" using government-funded "so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers"—a policy termed "The Salvador Option" after its secret use by the Reagan administration against insurgents in El Salvador.³

American values are a bit hard to describe definitively, given our diverse ethnic, religious, and family backgrounds. But some are so generally held that they might be considered bedrock.

One of those is the inviolability of one's home ("A man's house is his castle") and another is the inviolability of one's person ("cruel and unusual punishment" is forbidden in our Constitution). As an immigrant nation, from the very first, we or our forebears came to these shores to escape tyranny, including oppressive abuse by governments of our persons and property. The Constitution was written with two notions in mind: establishing a government that could ensure domestic peace and prosperity, and protecting individuals and associations from the natural tendency of governments to oppress those whom they govern.

Our current federal government has drifted toward such oppression. It is now clear that the federal detention systems cannot be trusted to treat detainees humanely and in accord with American core values, whether the agency involved is the Immigration and Naturalization Service using attack dogs to coerce illegal immigrants, or the Department of Defense using torture or abuse (a distinction that is itself fatuous) to obtain information from combatants or non-combatants in actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Similarly, in the case of officially sponsored rogue bands of assassins (the so-called "death squads"), our government proposes to violate our own laws and those of other sovereign entities in an attempt to eradicate terrorism by engaging in it. Government officials sworn to uphold the laws that promote the peace and safety of individuals are engaged in violating those laws.

We cease to be "America, the land of the free" when the federal government for which we are responsible engages in such actions against the persons and property of individuals and associations, here or abroad. We become, instead, oppressors and tyrants.

Aside from being American citizens outraged by torture and death squads, as Christians we are committed to generating and encountering the kingdom of heaven for ourselves and for those around us. This is the mandate of Jesus, whom we are pledged to follow, and the mission of we who have been called to be *alter Christi*, other Messiahs at work in the world. Torture and abuse of detainees, it seems to us, cannot ever be a sign of the kingdom, or an expression of God's will.

We strongly urge support of the Resolution.

Recommendation by Committee on Resolutions:

The Committee makes no recommendation as to this proposal.

³ *Newsweek*, Jan. 8, 2005, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6802629/site/newsweek/>