

Passed as submitted, September 12, 2020

Resolution 2020-05

Title: Regarding Anti-Semitism and Palestinian Christians

Submitted by: The Rev. Grey Maggiano, The Rev. Jason Poling and The Rev. Manoj Mathew Zacharia

RESOLVED, that this 236th Convention of the Diocese of Maryland submits the following Resolution for consideration by the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church meeting in Baltimore in ~~2021~~ 2021:

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 80th General Convention recognizes that the Church has at times in its history been guilty of anti-Semitic words and actions and that Anglicans and Episcopalians have not been without fault in this regard; and be it further

Resolved, that this General Convention recognizes that the evil of anti-Semitism continues to infect our society today; and be it further

Resolved, that this General Convention notes that our Church has been made aware by our Jewish neighbors that some of our discourse surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been experienced by them as anti-Semitic; and be it further

Resolved, that this General Convention gives thanks to God that we are blessed to be in communion with our brothers and sisters in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem; therefore be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention resolutely and unequivocally rejects and abhors anti-Semitism in all of its manifestations: in thought, word, or deed, in things done or things left undone; and be it further

Resolved, That our Church commits itself anew to avoid anti-Semitic rhetoric, not least in our discourse regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and be it further

Resolved, that in regard to its policies with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict this Church will seek to know the mind of, and, insofar as it is not prohibited by our Constitution and Canons, defer to the interests of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, not least the Most Reverend Hosam Naoum, Bishop in Jerusalem, and his successors; and be it further

Resolved, that this 80th General Convention sends its warmest greetings to Archbishop Naoum and to all of our brothers and sisters in his Diocese, praying without ceasing with the Psalmist for the peace of Jerusalem, and upholding especially in prayer those God has called to be His ambassadors in the Land of the Holy One.

Explanation

During the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, meeting in Austin, a great many resolutions were proposed condemning Israel's policies and their implementation. Our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, speaking in the House of Bishops on the final day of Convention, expressed his deep concern about "the fixation on Israel" and noted the "sense of piling on" conveyed by the tenor of legislation and discussion at that Convention related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We share in our Bishop's observations and his concern, not least because we are aware of the profound consequences of anti-Semitism, especially as they have been shared with us by our Jewish neighbors in the Diocese and beyond. Given the degree to which our Jewish neighbors are concerned with the content and tone of what was expressed at our last General Convention, we think it would be appropriate for General Convention to declare unequivocally that anti-Semitism has no place in our Church.

The three of us had the privilege of spending three weeks over two summers in the Land of the Holy One studying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the Christian Leadership Initiative at the Shalom Hartman Institute. We visited a variety of sites including a Palestinian refugee camp, and met with a broad range of people, both Israeli and Palestinian. This experience of study has led us to believe that due to the complexity of the issues involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Bp. Sutton was right to question whether "we here [General Convention] can suggest that we actually know what the problems are," let alone precisely what solutions might be possible or should be implemented.

Moreover, our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Land of the Holy One, especially our fellow members of the Anglican Communion in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, are better positioned than we are to appreciate the complexity of the issues involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, they are the ones likely to experience directly any negative consequences of resolutions and statements made by our Church and its leaders. Accordingly, we think it important that the Episcopal Church operate in this policy area with a keen awareness of—and, as appropriate, a deference to—the concerns that our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land have.