Boycott of women priests urged

Plans are being prepared for a meeting of Episcopal organizations and individuals opposed to the ordination of women.

The Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen, an association of 15 organizations and publications, issued a release Thursday night saying, "We are at this moment laying plans for a meeting to take place as soon as possible, which representatives of all clergy and laity who share our concern will be urged to attend."

The action by the two houses of General Convention was called "null and void." The association urged Episcopalians to boycott services where women serve as priests.

"The Episcopal Church has no right or authority to change the nature of the Apostolic priesthood and episcopate," the statement said. "In asserting such a right and acting upon such an assertion the Episcopal Church's General Convention has separated itself and all who follow it from Catholic Christendom.

"No so-called ordinations which may occur as a result of this action can possibly be valid, nor can any sacramental acts performed by women claiming such 'ordination' be valid or effective."

The statement said members of the association "intend to stay where we are, at least temporarily, until the effects of General Convention's apostasy can be clearly ascertained. We call upon others to do likewise."

No time or place for the meeting has been set yet.

Conservative churchpeople, many of them staunch opponents of the ordination of women as priests, offered a variety of comments after the House of Deputies action.

Suffragan Bishop Robert Terwilliger of Dallas, one of the major theological advisers to the opposition, said simply, "I signed the resolution in the House of Bishops and I shall be faithful to it. (In the resolution opponents pledged not to leave the Church while reaffirming their conscientious inability to accept women priests.)

Sister Frances Katherine, Catonsville, Md., a nun of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, said, "The church is in the hands of Jesus Christ and he holds the church whether his hands be wounded or not."

Some conservatives also planning meeting of those opposed to ordination of women.

"The church has spoken — you say your prayers and you vote and that's it. We'll just have to live with division of some sort," said the Rev. Richard Martin of Washington, D.C.

The Rev. Iris Mayer of Chicago, one of the few women deacons opposing the measure, said, "It's an unhappy day for the Church. No matter what form of service the women go through I am firmly convinced that they not only should not but cannot be priests."

Dorothy Spaulding of Washington, D.C., a board member of the Committee for the Apostolic Ministry, dabbed at tears as she said, "I am unhappy. I cannot accept women priests. But I will accept this decision just as Bishop (William) Creighton (of Washington, a major supporter of women's ordination,) accepted the votes the other way that were taken in Houston and Louisville."

The Rev. James Wattley of New York, CAM's executive secretary, was on his way back from the airport where he had picked up a visiting Swedish bishop when he heard the news of the vote on his car radio. "I'm just shocked," he said. "That's where I am right now. I'm simply going to have to wait awhile to absorb this."

THE DAILY

of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church
Friday, Sept. 17, 1976

Women to be priests

The House of Deputies, by a narrow margin, completed approval Thursday of a canonical change that opens the priesthood and episcopacy to women.

Some deputies may file resolutions permitting priestly ordinations of women to begin immediately after convention. Otherwise, the new canon will go into effect Jan. 1.

The dramatic house vote came six years after the Houston Convention opened the diaconate to women and three years after the Louisville Convention, by a similarly narrow margin, voted against extending women's candidacy for the two higher orders. Thursday's narrow margin represented a swing of only a few votes from the Louisville decision in 1973.

After four hours of procedural action and 58 two-minute speeches, a somber house rose for five minutes of silent prayer and then voted by orders.

The vote, announced a half-hour later at 6:36 p.m. before a packed and nervous gallery, was:

— Clerical order: 60 dioceses for, 38 against and 16 divided. Needed for passage: 58.

—Lay order: 57 diocese for, 37 against and 12 divided. Needed for passage: 57.

At the request of house leadership, the vote was accepted in prayer and pleas for reconciliation by both sides of this bitterly divisive issue.

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"I plead that there be no winners and no losers," said the very Rev. David Collins of Atlanta, chairman of the committee on ministry, which presented the resolution concurring with a more decisive pro-ordination vote Wednesday by the House of Bishops.

The House of Deputies adjourned nine minutes after the ordination vote was announced. It will begin final deliberations on the Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer Friday. The ordination vote was inserted ahead of the Prayer Book issue in order to resolve one emotional log-jam before tackling another.

Before adjournment, the Rev. Kenneth Trueman of Milwaukee read and invited others to sign a statement almost identical with that issued by the minority in the House of Bishops Wednesday. The statement pledges loyalty to the Church, but states refusal to accept the new canon or to acknowledge the authority of either house to decide such a matter without "ecumenical consensus." It wasn't known Thursday night how many had signed the statement.

It was apparent that Deputies arrived Thursday prepared to vote a simple yes or no on ordination. Deputies voted to change the day's schedule in order to consider ordination immediately. Motions to substitute the two-step constitutional route and to insert a "proviso" reaffirming the authority of each diocesan bishop were defeated, as they had been Wednesday in bishops.

The tone of the five-hour afternoon session was set by Collins. In presenting his committee's report recommending approval, he said that the committee had considered the constitutional route and a possible "local-option proviso and had rejected both. He sought to explain the agonizing that committee members experienced. "We heard divisions not only among ourselves," he said, running his hand across his heart, "but within ourselves."

Collins said the committee voted 28 to 15 to present a "crisp, clean, simple motion" that gave the house a clear-cut decision.

Debate on the committee's motion began just before 4 p.m., after defeat of alternative resolutions. Two-minute speeches were allotted, and a total of 58 deputies came forward to speak, almost exactly divided between affirmative and negative positions.

The 58 speeches reiterated arguments for and against ordination that by now were quite familiar. Debate ended at 5:50 p.m., and Dean Collins returned to the podium.

Reconciliation, he said, doesn't mean agreeing "It means loving and caring across the deepest divisions we have," he said. He told about a recent day in Rome when 10,000 Roman Catholics and Protestants from embattled Northern Ireland embraced in love. He commended this response to the House, and to the gallery.

"The last five minutes of our report will be silence," Collins said. "We need to pray for guidance in our vote. We need to pray even more for that time afterward when the results are announced. I plead that there will be no winners and no losers."

After the five minutes of silent prayer, an unprecedented show of appreciation occurred. The Deputies and gallery rose in applause for the committee on ministry. They rose again to thank the President and Secretary of the House. The gallery applauded the deputies. And the deputies applauded the gallery for its patience and silence. "This is a real love-feast," Coburn said.

During the 30 minutes of vote-counting, deputies milled aimlessly around the floor. In the gallery, men and women stood quietly in bunches, sagging under the emotional load. Politicking was over. Allies exchanged nervous smiles and touches.

"Will the House come to order," Coburn announced, and deputies and gallery alike were in their seats in seconds. The secretary handed Coburn the tally sheet, and silence shrouded the hall.

Coburn read the vote quickly. Faint applause began but stopped immediately. The chaplain of the House read three prayers. The hall mumbled Amen.

Years compressed quickly into seconds. And suddenly that decisive moment in the Church's history had come and just as quickly gone. Then the realization. The Rev. William Coats of Virginia and The Rev. Patricia Park, deacon from Virginia, share those precious moments.

Photos by Nicholson White of the Daily staff.

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Here's the vote, diocese by diocese

Here are the clerical votes by diocese in the House of Deputies in favor of the ordination of women:

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Atlanta, Bethlehem, California, Central New York, Connecticut, Delaware, East Carolina, Eastern Oregon, Easton, Idaho, Indianapolis, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri,

Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Newark, North Carolina, Northern Michigan, Olympia, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Rochester, South Carolina, Southern Ohio, Southern Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, Spokane,

Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Texas, West Virginia, Western Massachusetts, Western New York, Western North Carolina, Wyoming,

Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Cen. Philippines, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Virgin Islands and the Churches in Europe.

Here are the yes lay votes by diocese:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Atlanta, Bethlehem, California, Central New York, Central Pennsylvania, Delaware, East Carolina, Eastern Oregon, Easton, Erie, Hawaii, Idaho, Indianapolis, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky,

Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Newark, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Michigan, Ohio, Olympia, Oregon,

Pittsburgh, Rhode Island, Rochester, South Carolina, Southern Ohio, Southern Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, Spokane, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Texas, West Virginia, Western New York, Wyoming,

Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Cen. & So. Mexico, Panama Zone, Cen. Philippines, S. Philippines, Taiwan, Virgin Islands and the Churches in Europe.

These are the no votes by diocese in the clerical order:

Albany, Central Florida, Central Gulf Coast, Colorado, Dallas, Eau Claire, Florida, Fon du Lac, Lexington, Long Island, Louisiana, Milwaukee, Montana, Nebraska, Northern California, Northern Indiana, Northern Michigan, Northwest Texas,

Oklahoma, Quincy, Rio Grande, San Diego, San Joaquin, South Dakota, Southeast Florida, Southwest Florida, Springfield, Western Kansas, Western Michigan, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Liberia, Cen. & So. Mexico, Northern Mexico, Western Mexico, Nicaragua and No. Philippines.

Here are the no votes by diocese in the Lay order:

Albany, Central Florida, Central Gulf Coast, Chicago, Colorado, Dallas, Eau Claire, Florida, Fond du Lac, Lexington, Long Island, Los Angeles, Louisiana, Milwaukee, Nebraska, New Jersey, Northern California, Northern Indiana, Northwest Texas,

Quincy, Rio Grande, San Joaquin, Southeast Florida, Southwest Florida, Springfield, Western Kansas, Western Michigan, Western North Carolina, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Northern Mexico, Western Mexico, Nicaragua and No. Philippines.

Here are the divided (2-2) clerical delegations:

Arizona, Central Penna., Chicago, Erie, Georgia, Hawaii; Los Angeles, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Upper South Carolina, West Missouri, El Salvador and Panama Zone.

Here are the divided (2-2) lay delegations:

Connecticut, Georgia, Maine, Nevada, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Upper So. Carolina, West Missouri, Western Mass. and Puerto Rico.

David Collins: reconciler

By Thomas L. Ehrich
of the Daily staff

Two moments tell the story of David Collins, the man whom many Deputies considered the most important man at convention Thursday.

It is 8 a.m. Thursday. The Deputies' committee on ministry gathers for a final vote on women's ordination. Members are mellow and concerned. They minister to one woman's very evident emotional pain. In low-keyed tones, the final debate begins. Hands shoot up. Chairman David Collins at the head table looks around in mock panic.

"I'm trying to keep names in order as I see hands raised, looking in all directions at once like a preacher on Ezekiel," he says, rolling his bright eyes and shrugging his shoulders.

'I've been to five conventions, and David Collins is the best chairman I've ever served under.'—Joseph E. Michael of New Hampshire.

The tension lifts. Committee members laugh. Opponents who came to Minneapolis prepared to fight, to politic, to maneuver, instead prepare themselves for a difficult vote. It goes 28 to 15 in favor of women's ordination.

The second moment comes Thursday around 6 p.m. David Collins stands before the House of Deputies and bids them pray. "Reconciliation means loving and caring across the deepest divisions we have," he says. "We need to pray not only for guidance in our vote. We need to pray even more for that time afterward when the results are announced. I plead that there be no winners and no losers."

David Collins stands in the great hall, alone, his silver head bowed in prayer. Thousands join him. They are preparing for a difficult vote. It goes narrowly in favor of women's ordination.

After the vote reconciliation begins.

Men and women who have worked with the Very Rev. David Collins of Atlanta say that if reconciliation does in fact occur at this convention the 54-year-old native of Arkansas will be largely responsible.

"I've been to five conventions, and David Collins is the best chairman I've ever served under," says Joseph E. Michael of New Hampshire, vice chairman of the committee on ministry.

"He made it possible to present to the House of Deputies a viable resolution with the least amount of turmoil. He showed loving, deep concern for the parties on both sides."

The dean of the 4,200-member Cathedral in Atlanta, the largest Episcopal parish in the United States, Collins feels the anguish of the ordination issue inside himself. "I'm a reluctant convert to the ordination of women," he says. "This is perhaps why John (Coburn, president of Deputies) chose me. I feel very much for both sides."

His wife still opposes women's ordination, he says, and that "inner division" helped Collins be keenly aware of the feelings of his 42 committee members.

"He is very fair, very pleasant, able to feel with everyone," says Barbara Sanchez, committee member from Puerto Rico. She opposed women's ordination and was in pain. "I thought I came here prepared for anything that could happen," she says. "The ministry I am receiving from the opposition is what is holding me up."

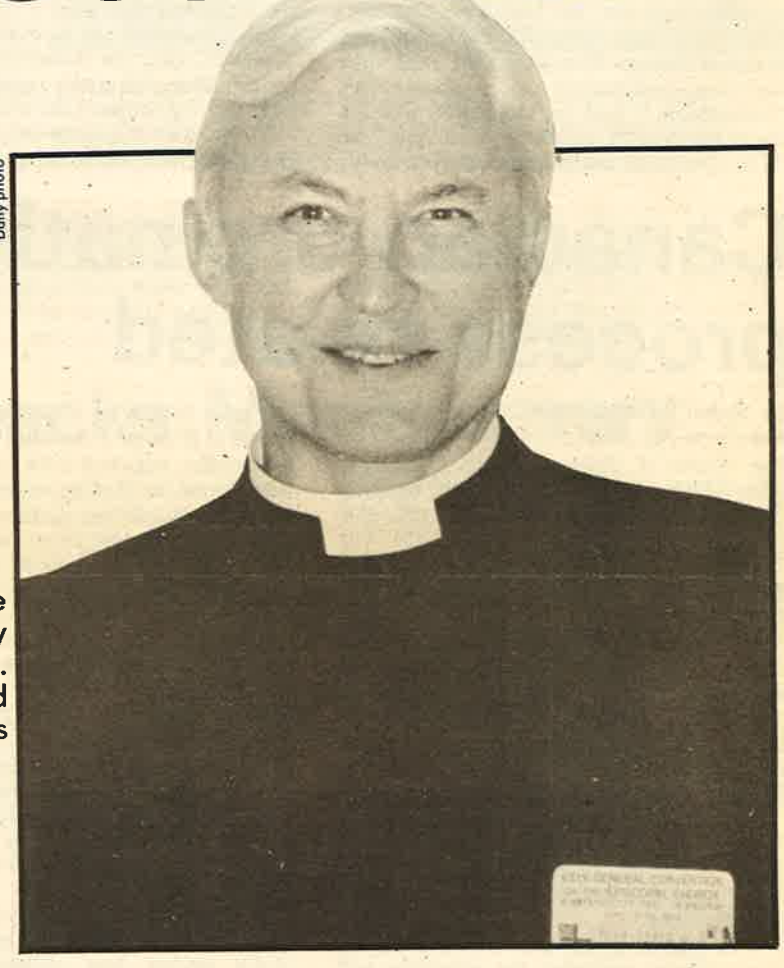
That ministry within the committee is much to the credit of Collins, members say. All along, they say, he began meetings with prayer and conducted them fairly. He tested continually for consensus. He appointed an unofficial steering committee to help him prepare and test out the presentation he would make to the full house Thursday afternoon.

Most important, members say, Collins perceived and ministered to the torn feelings of the committee, setting a model for the members. The Rev. Paul E. Towner of Nevada remembers how Collins saw the agony of one committee member and responded to her with the story he later told the full house, of the day in Rome when 10,000 Roman Catholics and Protestants from Northern Ireland embraced each other in love.

The committee on ministry had a moment like that itself on Wednesday night. All along, at Collins' initiative, members had debated the various issues, large and small, related to the ordination resolution, without ever taking straw votes or even, in most cases, expressing personal preferences.

Finally, Wednesday night, members stated their preference. It was a wrenching moment, but it led immediately into reconcilation and was, members say, a deeply moving experience. For two hours they cried, shared, witnessed, and prayed and ministered to each other.

"All of us were emerging as human beings," says the Very Rev. Perry Williams of Ohio. "There was no skirmishing or politicing. We were sharing the experience of being by chance or by choice into this issue. That process was a tribute to David's leadership."



Daily photo

The Very Rev. David Collins

"I was moved to tears by the personal witness by my brothers and sisters," says Carol Nichols of New Hampshire.

Members say it was characteristic of Collins that he never revealed his own preference until Thursday morning, when a formal vote was taken on the resolution sent over by the House of Bishops. When that vote was taken, Collins asked, almost shyly, whether he and vice chairman Michaels should vote. Members asked them to do so. Each voted in favor of the resolution, and then looked at each other, laughed and said almost in unison, "I didn't know until this morning how you were going to vote."

Collins never revealed his own preference until Thursday morning, when a formal vote was taken on the resolution from the bishops.

Collins and Michaels later stood near each other when the full house and gallery prayed silently for five minutes before the final vote. They embraced and walked with their arms around each other to their seats.

"He has led the committee into reconciling itself," says Dr. Malcolm Talbott of Newark.

And on the convention floor Thursday afternoon, Collins offered the experience and caring of his committee as a model for the whole convention. "If we're not reconciled, what do we have to give the world," he asks.

"At other conventions, I don't think there was the will to be reconciled," he says. "I feel the Spirit in action here. We prayed for this convention, you know. The Presiding Bishop asked us to pray for this gathering, and we did. We didn't pray for the other conventions.

"The Lord is trying to build a community, and you can't have a community without reconciliation."

Coggan arrives, has no comment

Archbishop Frederick Coggan said Thursday he would have no statement to make about any part of General Convention until after he addresses the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops today.

Accompanied by his chaplain, the Rev. John Kirkham, (bishop-elect of Sherbourne) and his press officer, John Miles, Coggan was greeted at the Minneapolis airport by Presiding Bishop John M. Allin and Bishop Philip McNairy of Minnesota.

According to the press officer, the archbishop was scheduled to spend several hours with Allin learning about convention actions to date, before speaking publicly.

Miles indicated it would be a breach of collegiality to answer any press questions until after his two addresses today.

The 64-year-old Primate of All England and titular head of the world-wide Anglican communion was elevated to his See in January, 1975, capping a distinguished career as biblical scholar, teacher and pastor.

From 1937 to 1944 he taught at Wycliffe College, Toronto, returning to England to be principal of the London College of Divinity. He was consecrated Bishop of Bradford in 1956 and enthroned as Archbishop of York in 1961.

In addition to his speeches to the two houses, the archbishop will also address the Minneapolis Rotary Club at noon. Later this afternoon he will receive the Gutenberg Award from the American Bible Society.

On Sunday the archbishop will preach the United Thank Offering Ingathering service sermon.

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