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## 2024 FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

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The Committee on Resolutions received three proposed resolutions by the January 15 deadline for submissions. The proposals are reported below, having been edited as to form. Hearings were held on Saturday, February 10, 2024, in person and by Zoom conference, at which proposers had an opportunity to amend their original proposals, and following which the Committee met and decided on recommendations. This Final Report thus supersedes the Preliminary Report.

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,*

The Rev. Susanna Paige Cates, Chair

The Rev'd Justin A. Falciani

The Rev'd Dr. John P. Mitchell

Canon Paul Ambos, Esq.

Mr. Curtis Hoberman

Meg Holland, Esq.

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### RESOLUTION 2024-1:

*Subject:*        *To Pass Resolutions in Local Municipalities to Establish a New Jersey Reparations Task Force*

*Be it resolved,* That the 240th Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey calls upon the Congregations, Members, and Clergy of the Diocese to encourage local governmental entities (Borough, Town, and City Councils, Boards of County Commissioners, and the like) to adopt Resolutions urging the State Legislature to pass Assembly Bill [A602](#) and the parallel Senate bill once filed, in order to establish a New Jersey Reparations Task Force; and be it

*Further resolved,* That a copy of this Resolution be sent to all Clergy and to the Wardens in each Congregation of the Diocese.

*SUBMITTED BY: The Reparations Commission of the Diocese of New Jersey: Canon Barbara Bach, Co-Chair, Canon Annette Buchanan, Co-Chair, Vernon Anthony, Willie Coleman, Vanessa Domain, Jonathan Gloster, Clare Gutwein, Dr. Patrick Milas, the Rev. Ryan Paetzold, Dr. Jolyon Pruszinski, Joe Rodriguez, Wesley Rowell, the Rev. Scott Russell, the Rev. Clive Sang, Dcn., the Rev. Beth Sciaino, the Rev. Sharon Sutton, and the Rev. Jack Zamboni, retired.*

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*Statement in Support of Resolution 2024-1 by Proposers:*

The Reparations Commission of our Diocese has been using the following working definition of Reparations, taken from the United Church of Christ:

Reparations is the process to remember, repair, restore, reconcile and make amends for wrongs that can never be singularly reducible to monetary terms. The process of reparations is "an historical reckoning<sup>1</sup> involving acknowledgement that an offence against humanity was committed and that the victims have not received justice that is due them."

As part of its work, the Commission partners with over 20 statewide groups in *NJ Faith Allies for Reparations: Say the Word* to advocate for the passage of paired Bills in the Legislature to establish the New Jersey Reparations Task Force. According to the Bills, the purpose of the proposed Task Force would be like that of the Commission: "to conduct research and develop reparatory proposals and recommendations to address the generational harms caused by New Jersey's role in America's institution of slavery and its legacy of systemic racial discrimination."<sup>2</sup> The State of New York, our neighbor to the North, [passed](#) a bill in December, 2023 that establishes the "[New York State community commission on reparations remedies](#)" to do similar work there.

This Resolution calls upon the congregations, people, and clergy of the Diocese of New Jersey to join the Commission's work by encouraging local governmental bodies in their respective areas to adopt Resolutions urging the NJ State Legislature to pass these Bills and establish the New Jersey Reparations Task Force. The text of one such resolution, adopted by the City Council of Asbury Park in May 2023, is [here](#). Members of the Commission and/or NJ Faith Allies can provide guidance for people in the Diocese in this work.

Some might think that Christians should not engage in political advocacy of this kind. The Baptist-mal Covenant, however, calls us to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being."<sup>3</sup> That is the theological reason for this Resolution. Historical and contemporary reasons for how a New Jersey Reparations Task Force would move our State toward greater justice and enhanced human dignity are outlined below in language drawn from the Bills:

"Contrary to what many people believe, slavery was not just a Southern institution and took root very deeply in New Jersey. In the early 17th Century, the first enslaved African people arrived in New Netherland, a Dutch settlement established in the Mid-Atlantic, which included portions of present day New Jersey. As the demand for labor increased, the number of enslaved African people imported to New Jersey increased. In 1704, the Province of New Jersey introduced the 'Slave Code,' which prohibited enslaved Africans and free Africans from owning property and made certain actions, like staying out past curfew, illegal for Black people. Although New Jersey outlawed the importation of enslaved Africans in 1786 and enacted a law in 1804 to abolish slavery gradually, the State Legislature passed 'Peace Resolutions' in 1863 denying Pres-

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<sup>1</sup> Visit [dionj-racialjusticereview.blogspot.com](https://dionj-racialjusticereview.blogspot.com) to learn more about the Commission's work of historical reckoning.

<sup>2</sup> Bill A606, [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A1000/602\\_11.PDF](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A1000/602_11.PDF) p. 2, lines 1-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 305.

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ident Lincoln's power to emancipate slaves and later voted against the 13th amendment to the United States Constitution."

"In 1844, New Jersey . . . restricted voting to white men, the first Northern state to do so."

"While many Northern states abolished slavery following the Civil War, New Jersey opposed the Emancipation Proclamation and was the last Northern state to abolish slavery. Following the Civil War, New Jersey refused to ratify the Reconstruction Amendments."

"The full effects of the institution and legacy of slavery on Black people and communities in New Jersey have not been sufficiently examined, nor have there been remedies for past injustice and present harm, or sufficient efforts at transformation. As a result of historic and continued systemic racial discrimination, Black people in New Jersey confront some of the worst racial disparities in America, including but not limited to these areas:

- (1) Access to Democracy . . .
- (2) Youth Justice . . .
- (3) Housing and the Racial Wealth Gap . . .
- (4) Racial Segregation . . .<sup>4</sup>"

"To address these systemic challenges in New Jersey, the 'New Jersey Reparations Task Force' will research, write, and publish a report that will make the case for State-based reparations in New Jersey and outline policy recommendations that seek to repair the harm that has resulted from America's original sin in the Garden State.<sup>5</sup>"

Further information on this effort is also available from the [New Jersey Institute for Social Justice](#) and the [NJ Reparations Council](#). The [Diocese of New Jersey Racial Justice Review blog](#) has rich information on the deeply problematic legacy of our own Diocese in the practice of enslavement.

***Recommendation by Committee on Resolutions:***

**The Committee recommends the adoption of this proposal. The Proposers have requested that this proposal be withheld from the Consent Calendar.**

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RESOLUTION 2024-2:

*Subject: Submission of Resolution to the 81st General Convention — Remove Title IV Intake Officer from Pastoral Response*

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<sup>4</sup> For detail in these 4 areas, see [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A1000/602\\_11.PDF](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A1000/602_11.PDF), p. 3., lines 26 ff., p. 4, lines 1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Bill A602, [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A1000/602\\_11.PDF](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A1000/602_11.PDF) p 4., lines 18-23

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*Be it resolved*, That the 240th annual Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey submit the following resolution to the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in 2024:

Title: Amend Canon IV.8.5 to remove Intake Officer from Pastoral Response Implementation

*Resolved*, That Canon IV.8.5 be hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 5. The Bishop Diocesan may designate a person to be responsible for the implementation of the pastoral response. Such person may **not** be the Intake Officer. The duties of such person may include coordination of pastoral care and coordination of communications between the Bishop Diocesan and Advisors.

#### EXPLANATION

In the clergy discipline process in The Episcopal Church, the Intake Officer is the person in each diocese (or, for proceedings against Bishops, for the Church) responsible for receiving information as to possible misconduct by members of the clergy. The Intake Officer has the responsibility for an initial determination whether the facts reported, if true, constitute an Offense as defined in the Title IV Canons. This should be a dispassionate matching of reported facts to the definitions of the Canons. If a possible Offense is found, the case proceeds to the Reference Panel (of which the Intake Officer is a member along with the Bishop and the president of the Disciplinary Board) for further determinations as to whether discipline should be imposed. (Canon IV.6)

In all Title IV matters, the Bishop Diocesan (or in the case of proceedings against Bishops, the Presiding Bishop) is responsible for implementing an "appropriate pastoral response" to the situation complained of, which "shall embody respect, care, and concern for affected persons and Communities. The response shall be designed so as to promote healing, repentance, forgiveness, restitution, justice, amendment of life and reconciliation among all involved or affected." (Canon IV.8.1) Clearly this is not a "dispassionate" undertaking, but instead is one requiring empathy and sensitivity to victims as well as offenders.

Canon IV.8.5 provides in pertinent part: "The Bishop Diocesan may designate a person to be responsible for the implementation of the pastoral response. Such person may be the Intake Officer." In many Dioceses the Canon to the Ordinary is the appointed Intake Officer. Until recently, the appointed Intake Officer for Bishops was the Bishop for Pastoral Development. Such officials are by the nature of their offices used to dealing with and supporting the clergy under their care; they don't ordinarily deal with lay persons or others who may be impacted by clergy misconduct. This presents a clear real or perceived conflict of interest: They will have, or will be presumed to have, a bias in favor of the clergy they deal with from day to day. This can affect their judgment (a) as to whether an Offense has been committed and (b) in offering healing, restitution, and justice for the victims of misconduct.

The proposed amendment separates the function of the Intake Officer from that of those offering a pastoral response on behalf of the Bishop. Such separation will better implement the objects of the Title IV process and will address some of the perceived biases in the current system.

*SUBMITTED BY: Canon Paul Ambos, Christ Church, New Brunswick*

*Statement in Support of Resolution 2024-2 by Proposer:*

See the "Explanation" to be included in the resolution to be proposed to the General Convention.

In the Diocese of New Jersey, this is not an issue because, in contrast to many other Dioceses and to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, our Intake Officer is elected by the clergy and people of the Diocese. Our Intake Officer has never had pastoral response duties. In other jurisdictions, however, the danger of coverup — or perceived coverup — of clerical offenses is present as long as one person is called upon to carry out conflicting duties.

***Recommendation by Committee on Resolutions:***

**The Committee recommends the adoption of this proposal. It will appear on the Consent Calendar for adoption unless removed.**

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RESOLUTION 2024-3:

*Subject: Submission of Resolution to the 81st General Convention — A Call for Ending Apartheid Against Palestinians*

*Be it resolved*, That the 240th annual Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey submit the following resolution to the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in 2024:

Title: A Call for Ending Apartheid Against Palestinians

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention acknowledge that Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and B'Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories report that the current government of Israel's entrenched discriminatory rule over Palestinians amounts to the international wrong of apartheid; and be it

*Further resolved*, That the 81st General Convention join the Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, the New England and Oregon-Idaho Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and Disciples of Christ in naming the aforementioned policies and practices against the Palestinian people to be apartheid, a crime against humanity; and be it

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*Further resolved*, That the 81st General Convention call on the Office of the Government Relations to represent ending the Israeli government's apartheid as a policy priority of The Episcopal Church and to influence policy and legislation on this issue.

#### Explanation

1. Recent reports from [B'Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#) (2021), [Human Rights Watch](#) (2021), and [Amnesty International](#) (2022), along with statements by United Nations officials, declare that the government of Israel practices apartheid against the Palestinian people under its authority.

2. Israeli apartheid is not a recent development. From the very beginning of its statehood, Israel passed laws to discriminate against its non-Jewish citizens. Beginning with the 1950 Absentees' Property Law and 1953 Land Acquisition Law, [more than 65 laws](#) passed over ensuing decades result in displacement, dispossession, and discrimination against Palestinians in Israel in ways from citizenship rights to the right to political participation, land and housing rights, education rights, cultural and language rights, religious rights, and due process rights during detention. This institutionalization and *legalization* of separate and unequal laws reached its zenith with the [2018 Nation State Law](#) that reserves the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel solely to the Jewish people and establishes that immigration leading to automatic citizenship is exclusive to Jews, negating the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees. The Nation State Law is a Basic Law. With no constitution, Basic Laws in Israel have legal standing akin to constitutional authority.

3. But this system of legally enshrined Jewish supremacy within Israel is only one part of the ongoing systematic and systemic oppression that constitute apartheid. At its heart, apartheid (from the Afrikaans word meaning *separateness*) is about separating peoples, as in the harsh discriminatory system imposed by White South Africa on its Black population. The same principle has been applied in the Zionist settler-colonial vision of Jewish supremacy that began in the early 20th century and culminated in the state of Israel. Separateness is not only physical, but also accomplished through access to rights and basics of livelihood. Throughout the state of Israel, in the occupied territories, including the Gaza Strip, and reaching even into the diaspora of Palestinian refugees, Israel has implemented laws, practices, and policies that have created and maintained an institutionalized regime of systematic separation, oppression, and domination over Palestinians, enforced through discriminatory laws, policies and practices. When seen as a totality, as in the view of the several human rights groups referenced earlier, the system controls virtually every aspect of Palestinians' lives and routinely violates their human rights. According to the Amnesty International report, this apartheid regime manifests and is enacted through territorial fragmentation and legal segregation; use of military rule to control and dispossess; denial of nationality, residence and family life; restrictions on movement; restrictions

on right to political participation; dispossession of land and property; discriminatory planning and zoning policies; and suppression of Palestinians' human development.

4. Apartheid is not a matter of opinion, or a political position that one may choose or reject; it is a matter of law. Statutes and criteria are enshrined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (Apartheid Convention) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute). As stated by Amnesty International, "The crime against humanity of apartheid under the Apartheid Convention, the Rome Statute and customary international law is committed when any inhuman or inhumane act (essentially a serious human rights violation) is perpetrated in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another, with the intention to maintain that system."

5. The framework of apartheid allows a comprehensive understanding, grounded in international law, of a situation of segregation, oppression and domination by one racial group over another. Such systems in varied settings will never be identical; therefore, the system in Israel need not be identical or analogous to that in South Africa between 1948 and 1994 to be legally judged as an system. The record of policy of The Episcopal Church toward apartheid in South Africa in the 20th century is abundantly clear. Beginning with Resolution 1976-D036, "Support Efforts by Church, Government and Business to End Apartheid" through 2000 and five more resolutions, the Church's opposition to apartheid in South Africa was unequivocal, including recommending boycott and sanctions.

6. Ending apartheid is not only a legal imperative, but also a moral imperative. Churches that proclaim to be followers of Jesus are obligated to set aside political expediences of the moment and act against injustice wherever it occurs. Thus has the [225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) voted](#) in July 2022 to declare that the Israeli government's actions against Palestinian people meets the legal definition of apartheid. Members of the United Church of Christ, the New England and Oregon-Idaho Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and Disciples of Christ have adopted similar statements or resolutions.

*SUBMITTED BY: Pat Kalinowski, St. Mary's Church, Haddon Heights*

*Statement in Support of Resolution 2024-2 by Proposer:*

See the "Explanation" to be included in the resolution to be proposed to the General Convention.

***Recommendation by Committee on Resolutions:***

**The Committee recommends the adoption of this proposal. The Proposer has requested that it be withheld from the Consent Calendar.**