

From the Bishop

10 Reasons Why Now Is the Time to Realign

Our 26th annual convention is approaching, and a momentous decision is before us as a diocese. At last year's convention, your clergy and elected delegates voted by majorities of around 80 percent each to remove language in our Constitution that affiliates us with the General Convention of The Episcopal Church (TEC). This year, clergy and delegates will be asked to ratify that decision to separate.

"Why now?" someone might ask. "Why is this the time for our diocese to separate from the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and realign with another Province of the Anglican Communion?"

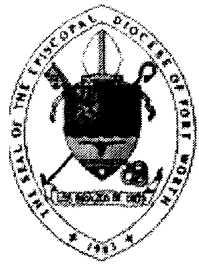
Here are a few of the thoughts that come to mind:

1. This is God's time – our *kairos* moment – and it has been coming for a long time. We believe that God the Holy Spirit has guided and directed us to this particular time and moment of decision. Some might well ask, "Why has it taken us so long to take definitive action, given the past 30 years of the shenanigans of The Episcopal Church?" We have explored every avenue and exhausted every possibility. Now is the time to decide to separate from the moral, spiritual, and numerical decline of TEC.

2. Actions of the General Convention have brought crisis and division to the whole Anglican Communion, not just TEC. More than 20 of the Provinces of the Communion have declared themselves to be in a state of broken or impaired communion with TEC because of the ordination of a homosexual bishop living in a sexual relationship with another man and the blessings of same-sex unions in many places throughout this church. We need to dissociate ourselves from the bishops and dioceses that are violating the teaching of Scripture by doing these things.

3. The heresies and heterodoxy once proclaimed by just a few renegade bishops – like James Pike and John Spong – are now echoed by the Presiding Bishop, who is the chief spokesperson for TEC and speaks on behalf of our church to the rest of the world. She does not reflect the orthodox beliefs of Episcopalians in this diocese. The greatest problem we face with Katharine Jefferts Schori is not that she is a woman, but that she is not an orthodox bishop.

4. If we do not act now, we will lose our momentum and lose our God-given opportunity. Many laity and clergy who have been standing with the Diocese, as a beacon of hope, will give up and leave for other Anglican bodies. We will never be stronger than we are right now! We will never have another chance to act with such a strong majority. The Episcopal Church many of us were born into or became members of many years ago no longer exists! It has been replaced by a liberal, revisionist sect that does not deserve our allegiance or support any longer.



The Bishop's Page

The Bishop's Staff

Our Location

Churches

Community

Documents & Publications

Calendar

Diocesan Convention

Church Finances

5. TEC is not turning back and matters will only get worse. General Convention is out of control and beyond reform. The Deputies seem to think that they can do whatever they want as long as they can muster a majority vote, even if what they propose is contrary to Holy Scripture. We will not accept majority votes of the General Convention that compromise the Christian faith. The more they change the teachings of the church, the less tolerant they are of dioceses such as ours. By the time I retire (in the next 7 to 13 years), this diocese will be unable to elect an orthodox bishop to succeed me.

6. TEC is coming after us, and they are the ones that brought on this crisis. In October 2006 the chancellor to the PB wrote a letter to our diocese demanding that we change our Constitution to remove the clause that says that we will not accept General Convention dictates that are contrary to the Bible and the apostolic teaching of the church. In addition, we were instructed to remove provisions stating that all church property in this diocese is held in trust for the use of our congregations and to state instead that our property ultimately belongs to TEC. If we don't make such changes, the letter asserted that the Presiding Bishop would have to determine what actions she must take "in order to bring your diocese into compliance."

7. At this time there is nothing in the Constitution or Canons of TEC that prevents a Diocese from leaving. Oh, I know that General Convention officials claim that dioceses cannot leave TEC, but you will not find that anywhere in the Constitution and Canons as they presently stand. So we have this window of opportunity to do what we need to do, for you can be sure that the next General Convention will close off this option by adopting amendments that will make it even more difficult to separate in the future.

8. The vast majority of our younger clergy, those ordained in the last 10 years or so, are in favor of the decision to separate and realign. They are the voice of the future of this diocese; they are the leaders who will take us into the next decade and beyond. You will notice that most of the clergy leaders opposing this move are already retired or on the verge of retiring. This is not their battle; they have had their time to lead. Now it is time to let this next generation step forward and lead, as we prepare a future for our children and our grandchildren.

9. We have international support for making the move at this time. Not only has the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone made provision for us to join them on a temporary basis as full members and partners in mission, but several Global South Primates are standing with us and have expressed their willingness to support us in this bold move. They have stuck their necks out for us and offered their encouragement, assistance and support. We must now have the courage of our convictions and act! What a joy and relief it will be to be part of a Province where we are not always under attack and on the defensive. We will then aggressively pursue the formation of an orthodox Province in North America in conjunction with the Common Cause Partnership.

10. Most importantly, this decision is about the truth of the Gospel and

upholding the authority of the Holy Scriptures. We believe in God's full self-revelation in Jesus Christ, not in the speculation of humanist unitarians who have been elected to high offices in our church. Many leaders of TEC are teaching a false Gospel and leading people astray. Now is the time for us to take a bold, public stand for the biblical faith and practice of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Now is the time to decide. Our cause is right, and the choice is clear. Let us act together, decisively, and with courage, faith and charity.

The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker
Bishop of Fort Worth
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