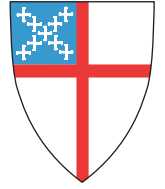


PEPtalk



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Duncan Leads Partnership in Formation of New 'Province'

Bishop Robert Duncan, who was deposed by The Episcopal Church in September, achieved his goal of having the Pittsburgh diocesan convention vote to leave the church for the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone in October, and was reelected bishop in November by those who wanted to “realign,” has led his Common Cause Partnership to declare itself a new “orthodox” Anglican province in December. On December 3, Duncan announced the formation of the “Anglican Church in North America” (ACNA), an entity that will now seek recognition from parts of the Anglican Communion, and perhaps from the Anglican Communion itself.

Not a surprise

The announcement of the new province comes as no surprise, though its timing and details would have been hard to predict years ago. The Common Cause Partnership is an eclectic group of church and parachurch organizations united primarily in their opposition to The Episcopal Church. The “partners” are the American Anglican Council, the Anglican Coalition in Canada, the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes (Anglican Communion Network), the Anglican Mission in the Americas, the Anglican Network in Canada, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, Forward in Faith/North America, and the Reformed Episcopal Church. Although the group claims

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Majority Leaves Diocese Episcopalians Regroup; Diocese Continues

On October 4, 2008, many members of the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh removed themselves from the church by voting in favor of changes to the constitution and canons of the diocese intended to remove the diocese from The Episcopal Church and transfer it, along with all its parishioners and assets, to the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, a small Anglican church headquartered in Argentina. Because Bishop Robert Duncan had earlier been deposed by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori for abandoning the communion of The Episcopal Church, the diocese was without episcopal leadership and was being led by the Standing Committee as the ecclesiastical authority.

It quickly became clear that every member of the Standing Committee except the Rev. Jim Simons, rector of St Michael's of the Valley, Ligonier, had left The Episcopal Church for the Southern Cone. Alerted that his former colleagues intended to vote him off “their” Standing Committee, Simons, in accordance with diocesan canons, appointed the Rev. Geoff Murph, rector of St. Thomas', Oakmont, and Ms. Mary Roerich, a parishioner of St. Andrew's, Highland Park, as additional members of the Standing Committee. The Presiding Bishop was informed of these developments, and the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori quickly recognized the three-person Standing Committee as the new ecclesiastical authority of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. Other necessary appointments followed, leaving as many positions as possible to be filled by election at a special convention (see story below).

Those who left the church on October 4 held a convention on November 7 to elect Robert Duncan their bishop. That group's control of diocesan assets, administered from the Oliver Building offices, is disputed and will likely be the subject of a court decision. The Episcopal Church diocese has established a temporary diocesan office at St. Barnabas', Brackenridge.

Many Churches Remain Episcopal Will Participate in Special Convention

Even before the October 4 split in the diocese (see story above), a number of parishes, including large parishes such as Calvary and St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, had declared their intention to remain in The Episcopal Church. Twenty-two parishes are listed on the new Web site of the continuing diocese, and at least twenty-seven are participating in the upcoming special convention.

On December 12 and 13, these and other parishes will participate in a special diocesan convention to be held at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon. “Coming Together in Faith” has been chosen as the theme for the convention. Events begin on Friday, December 12, with 7:00 PM Evening Prayer, followed by a reception.

The morning of December 13 will be devoted to electing people to fill open leadership positions, approving a budget, and voting on resolutions

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION
ABOUT THE DIOCESE**

New Web site:
<http://episcopalpgh.org>

New office:
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New Province

that it represents 700 congregations and 100,000 average Sunday attendees, these numbers are difficult to verify and seem to involve double counting and counting some parishes and parishioners who are actually still in The Episcopal Church.

The Network, on December 9, announced that it was essentially shutting down and transferring its assets to the ACNA because it had failed in its goal of calling The Episcopal Church back to “the Faith once delivered to the saints.” But Network leaders clearly believe that the establishment of the ACNA represents a major step toward accomplishing other long-standing Network goals.

Prospects

The idea of making the Common Cause Partnership a province to be recognized by a group of Anglican primates was announced last summer at the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), which invented a recognizing authority for the purpose, the Primate’ Council. That Council, however, includes fewer than one-fifth of the primates of Anglican Communion. Five of the six Global South primates who make up the group have praised the formation of the ACNA. They have not “recognized” it, however, and their meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury two days after the ACNA announcement produced no obvious result. Archbishop Rowan Williams’ office, however, did release a statement explaining that the process of establishing a new province within the Anglican Communion is complex and “take[s] years to complete.” The statement also made clear that the office had not received any formal request for recognition. The first official discussion of the “province” could take place at the Primates Meeting, an official Communion affair, early in 2009. The earliest that the Anglican Consultative Council could place it on the agenda would be 2012.

Despite all the talk by Duncan and his colleagues about Anglican tradition, the ACNA would be a very new thing in Anglicanism, which has always defined provinces by geography, rather than by theology. Some form of recognition of the ACNA by conservative primates has the potential to split the Anglican Communion and encourage widespread schism throughout the Anglican world. Washington DC’s Bishop John Chane has called the ACNA formation “a rejection of the respectful diversity and generous orthodoxy that defines the Communion.”

Member Notices

Please return your ballot for the PEP election as soon as possible.

There will be no PEP membership meeting in January. Look for notice of the February general membership meeting.

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Special Convention

affirming actions taken to move the diocese forward since October 4, consolidating districts in light of the reduced number of parishes, and affirming that certain changes made to the constitution and canons were improper and were therefore of no effect. PEP, of course, had taken strong positions against such changes, beginning with the 2003 annual convention.

The convention will conclude with a Eucharist at which the Rt. Rev. David Jones, who has been advising the diocese, will ordain St. Paul’s’ curate, Kristian Opat, to the priesthood. A reception will follow.

Historical Scrapbook

Building the Church

By Joan Gundersen

After the American Revolution, Episcopalians struggled to rebuild their church. One problem they faced was a shortage of clergy. The church had no seminaries, and had either lost control of the colleges Anglicans had founded or had lost sources of funding for them. Three decades passed before Episcopalians founded their first seminary. Methodists, on the other hand, solved a similar problem by recruiting clergy without regard to education and sending them out to ride circuit. Presbyterians and Congregationalists founded college after college on the frontier to churn out the clergy they needed for frontier mission work.

The Episcopal Church followed a different pattern. The church had founded a Church Missionary Society in 1820, but it was seriously underfunded. In 1835, the General Convention declared that the whole church *was* the missionary society, and it approved the consecration of missionary bishops. The church thus ensured that all of its growth would be officially supervised by a bishop directly acting for the General Convention. The first missionary bishop, Jackson Kemper, had a territory that covered seven Midwestern and Great Plains states. He was soon joined by a second missionary bishop serving an equally large swath of territory in the South. The bishops worked with a handful of missionary clergy.

Thus was born the somewhat confusing dual nature of The Episcopal Church. We have an incorporated missionary society that funds much of the work of The Episcopal Church and holds its endowments, yet the church itself remains an unincorporated organization that chooses the leadership of the missionary society.

While these missionary clergy certainly played an important role in the growth of the church, and did so at great personal cost, the

church often arrived long before these clergy did. It came packed carefully in someone's trunk or satchel in the form of the Book of Common Prayer. The prayer book empowered laity to organize worship on their own. When a missionary priest finally arrived in a community, he often found the core of a congregation waiting for him.

In 1821, Judith Lomax of Port Royal, Virginia had no local Episcopal parish to attend. In all of Virginia there were fewer than 30

functioning Episcopal parishes and only about 20 clergy. While she attended worship conducted by itinerant ministers of a variety of denominations, Lomax hungered for worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, so she gathered a "little congregation" of six girls and read Morning Prayer on Sunday mornings.

Three decades later on the Minnesota frontier, Episcopalians turned to the same solution as Lomax, gathering first in homes, then renting halls, and reading Morning Prayer. Similarly, the history of many of the Pennsylvania congregations founded before 1900 began with lay-led services in a home or rented hall. This experience was repeated time and again as The Episcopal Church spread across the U.S. and into foreign countries.

By the 1890s, several bishops, including those in Minnesota and the missionary district of Nebraska, had licensed women as lay readers, despite church canons that restricted that role to men. The bishops were simply recognizing what was the reality in these isolated communities. The women they licensed had begun reading services for their families. These services attracted others, and the result was a congregation led by a woman.

In the 1950s, when my parents helped form a new parish in suburban Chicago, they began meeting in a park fieldhouse with one of the men reading Morning Prayer. A priest from Seabury Western Seminary began driving out to provide monthly Eucharists. Within five years, the congregation bought land, built a church and called a full-time priest to lead the new congregation.

Here in Pittsburgh, as we begin a period of rebuilding, we may find ourselves returning to these traditional patterns of church growth. May we find comfort and strength in remembering that The Episcopal Church has not only a deep tradition of sacramentalism sustained by ordained clergy, but also a rich heritage of lay ministry that laid the foundation for the parishes we have today.



Are you a member?

This is an exciting time to participate in rebuilding the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh or in following the rebuilding progress. PEP invites Episcopalians both within and outside the diocese to support us in helping to build a healthy and diverse Episcopal diocese in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Join PEP or subscribe to our Yahoo! e-mail group, PEPchat. More information is available on our Web site at

<http://progressiveepiscopalians.org>

Comment

What next?

By Lionel Deimel

When PEP was officially organized in 2003, Robert Duncan was our bishop, few of us had heard of Gene Robinson, and the focus of those gathered to choose a name for the new organization was on reversing the drift of the Diocese of Pittsburgh toward a restrictive theology that was not yet regularly being called “orthodox.” Despite our constant emphasis on diversity and reconciliation over the years, PEP became a target of hostility in our diocese in a way that seemed much out of proportion. We became used to being demonized, and our insistence on truth-telling began to look like tilting at windmills.

But suddenly, everything seems to have changed. Our bishop has been deposed, our church has a Presiding Bishop who addresses dissent within the church more forthrightly, and the Pittsburgh diocese, though smaller, is now a

locus of fellowship and cooperation. If the Archbishop of Canterbury has not always taken a firm stand against bad behavior by certain bishops, he is at least showing signs of not wanting to encourage it.

In short, PEP’s initial objective seems to have been accomplished, though perhaps not in quite the way we planned. Moreover, our wider goal of promoting affection for The Episcopal Church for its rich liturgical traditions, pastoral sensitivity, and support of God’s Kingdom on earth has not been without its successes.

As our diocese holds its special convention to reorganize and to redirect its energies, we can take a moment to rejoice in what has been accomplished and say a brief prayer of thanksgiving. Difficulties surely lie ahead, but life in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh no longer seems an existence in an endless tunnel with no light in sight. It has been a great blessing that Episcopalians on both sides of

the “aisle” have discovered that their sisters and brothers on the other side are committed Christians capable of working hard together for a worthy goal. PEP and PEP members have helped us get to this place.

PEP’s job is not done, however. We need to help make our diocese work and make it an attractive home to which former Episcopalians might one day return. We need to continue our truth-telling, not only in Pittsburgh, but to the wider Anglican community. We need to use our personal contacts within the diocese to build stronger ties between parishes and genuine interest in diocesan affairs.

Most importantly, we need to help Pittsburgh Episcopalians realize that the real “orthodox Anglicans” are a diverse group reaching out to one another within our church. There is a different and better way to be Christian, especially in 21st-century America. It is time to invite our sisters and brothers to come and grow with us.

PEPtalk

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