

Realignment



Reconsidered

On April 22, the Diocese of Pittsburgh posted “Frequently Asked Questions About Realignment” on its Parish Toolbox Web site. Pittsburgh Episcopalians should understand that this document is not so much designed to inform, as to influence. We believe that those who rely on the answers in the diocese’s FAQ may be putting themselves and their parishes at great risk. You will find alternative answers here that we think are more helpful and realistic. We understand that many in this diocese discount any document from Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh. Schism is a serious business, however, and it should not be undertaken lightly or with incomplete information. Things may not be exactly as you have been led to believe.

The diocesan document is reproduced below. The formatting may differ slightly from the original, but the text is unchanged. Our answers are shown in italics. To avoid confusion, the links at the end, which were originally in italics, have been set in roman, with our remarks in italics.

— Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh

Frequently Asked Questions About Realignment

- 1) What does it mean to be an Episcopalian? What does it mean to be Anglican?

Episcopalian means “governed by bishops”. Anglican means that we have come out of the Church of England. The words can be and are used interchangeably throughout the world.

In an American context, being an Episcopalian means being a member of The Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church has never been “governed by bishops.” Our church has bishops, of course, and their role is important, but The Episcopal Church is governed at all levels by a combination of laity and clergy, including bishops. Being Anglican does, in fact, mean having a church heritage traceable to the Church of England. Not every “Anglican” church is in the Anglican Communion, however. The Episcopal Church is in the Anglican Communion, and the Communion is sometimes said to have begun with its establishment. In general, churches that have broken away from Anglican Communion churches are not part of the Anglican Communion.

- 2) Why are we really considering realignment? Are the differences between the Diocese of Pittsburgh and The Episcopal Church really just about Gene Robinson and sexual morality, like the popular media argues?

Newspapers and mass media are more concerned about sales than theology. As has always been the case, sensational oversimplifications (especially that contain the word “sex”) sell more papers than quiet truths. In actuality, this debate revolves around questions like, “Is Jesus really who he said he is?”, “Can we trust Sacred Scripture?”, and “Are there absolute moral norms given to us by God?” The “big issue” here is what it means to be a Christian, not just one single facet of morality.

Indeed, the dispute within The Episcopal Church is not all about sex, although the subject seems to be raised by those favoring realignment with surprising regularity. The Episcopal Church believes in the divinity and uniqueness of Jesus and in the historical creeds. Episcopalians believe that interpreting the Bible is an ongoing enterprise, however, and that many issues of morality cannot be resolved without reference to a particular social context. Episcopalians also believe that the Holy Spirit is a source of continuing revelation in the world. Episcopalians do not worship the Bible, but the Triune God.

Those urging realignment, on the other hand, reject the traditional Anglican embrace of diversity and seek to impose particular theological understandings on the whole church, to the exclusion of competing ones. They are inconsistent in this approach, however, as evidenced by their willingness to agree to disagree among themselves regarding the appropriateness of ordaining women.

- 3) By considering realignment, are we disobeying Christ’s command “to be one” as his Body?

Our goal is not to divide from the church, but to remain with the church. The leadership of TEC is taking the Episcopal Church out of mainstream Christianity. This has broken our relationships with the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, evangelical Protestants, the large majority of the world’s Anglicans, and many others. The only way we can repair those relationships with our Christian brothers and sisters is to not go on this journey with The Episcopal Church.

In fact, ecumenical conversations have continued. Our relationship with the Lutheran Church has not been impaired. Several substantive issues, including the role of women in the church, made any near-term expectations of union or intercommunion with the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Churches unrealistic, even before the current controversy. We have been in a state of impaired communion for thirty years with Anglican provinces in Nigeria, Tanzania, Central Africa, South East Asia, and Jerusalem and the Middle East because of their refusal to recognize women’s ordination. History suggests that Christian unity will always be more of a goal than a reality. The genius of Anglican unity in diversity is that we learn from one another, achieving, if not agreement, at least some degree of charity and humility before God.



4) If the Diocese chooses to realign, what would the immediate consequences be for individual a) parishes and b) clergy?

- a) There would be few immediate consequences for parishes. No property would immediately change hands. Expected lawsuits would largely target the Diocese.
- b) Clergy would need to enter a new retirement plan and would be clergy of the province that the Diocese joins instead of clergy of The Episcopal Church.

Most parishes in the diocese have both members supporting and members opposing realignment. Any parish intending to leave The Episcopal Church will likely lose some members. Some parishes might split down the middle. This is no small concern. Early legal action likely will be directed toward the diocese itself, but The Episcopal Church has made it abundantly clear that it will pursue ownership of property to which it believes it is entitled, and this includes all real estate, improvements, and contents of parish churches.

There is a unique situation in Pittsburgh that will likely make litigation over property different from what it might be otherwise. The stipulation in the so-called Calvary lawsuit signed on behalf of all parties on October 14, 2005, says, in part: "Property, whether real or personal (hereinafter 'Property'), held or administered by the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (hereinafter 'Diocese') for the beneficial use of the parishes and institutions of the Diocese, shall continue to be so held or administered by the Diocese regardless of whether some or even a majority of the parishes in the Diocese might decide not to remain in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America." This means that diocesan property such as Calvary Camp and diocesan trust funds will remain the property of the diocese. The stipulation defines "diocese" as "the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America." Thus, property is retained by those who maintain affiliation, as a diocese, with The Episcopal Church. Neither the bishop nor anyone else can claim to have left The Episcopal Church while concurrently claiming to be part of the diocese referred to in the stipulation. There may be a "diocese" after realignment that is not part of The Episcopal Church, but it will have no assets currently belonging to the present diocese. Significantly, the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin has filed suit against its deposed bishop, John-David Schofield, to reclaim its rightful assets.

As for property of individual parishes, the stipulation lays out a complex mechanism for assuring that no "sweetheart" deals are made with departing parishes. The Episcopal Church is not a party to this agreement, but it has standing to invoke procedures that could block such agreements, whatever the terms. While we cannot predict the actions that The Episcopal Church will take, parish leaders should be aware of the considerable risk of litigation that will result from realignment.

Clergy, of course, are free to leave The Episcopal Church, after which they can no longer contribute to retirement plans sponsored by the Church Pension Fund.

Those who have been in the system long enough to be vested will retain pension rights already earned, but they will need to find a new retirement plan to which they can make contributions from future earnings. The decision to leave The Episcopal Church can only be made by individual clergy, not by the Bishop of Pittsburgh or by diocesan convention.

5) Can a congregation “opt out” of diocesan realignment? What would happen to the a) parishes who do not wish to realign, and b) clergy who do not wish to realign?

- a) Parishes would be given time to consider whether to leave the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh by changing the “accession” in their by-laws. The Diocese would work with parishes to make such a decision as conflict-free and charitable as possible.
- b) Clergy would apply to the Bishop for letters dimissory (transfer letters) from the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh to whatever entity the leadership of the Episcopal Church sets up.

It is clear from the experience of the Diocese of San Joaquin that any parish that wants to remain in The Episcopal Church need only declare that intention. Likewise, clergy who want to stay in The Episcopal Church will not need to execute any sort of transfer or require anyone’s permission to do so, especially not that of a bishop who no longer holds authority in the church. Failure of a parish to declare its intention to remain an Episcopal parish could be construed as indicative of an intention to leave the church and could expose it to litigation by The Episcopal Church to recover parish property.

It is the position of The Episcopal Church, supported overwhelmingly by diocesan chancellors and legal scholars, that a diocese cannot properly remove its accession clause from its constitution, nor can it remove itself from The Episcopal Church. There will continue to be an Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh that is part of The Episcopal Church, but it will have new leadership. There will be no need for any parish remaining in The Episcopal Church to amend its bylaws, since there would be no conflict in acceding to the constitution and canons of the diocese that remains in The Episcopal Church.

Legal precedent for the inability of Episcopal Church parishes to remove parish property from The Episcopal Church is strong. Such matters are largely governed by state law, and a recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in the St. James the Less case—a case about which the diocese has largely been silent—gives little reason for realigning parishes to think that they can long remain in control of parish property. Changing parish bylaws will be unavailing.

6) If a congregation decides to stay with The Episcopal Church, who will be in charge of them and how will this appointment happen? Will they be elected?

We don’t know. If what is happening in the formation of the new “Episcopal” Diocese of San Joaquin is any indication, local Episcopalians may be given very little say in how the process proceeds or who leads them.



Local Episcopalians in San Joaquin who chose to stay in The Episcopal Church had a good deal of say about their diocese, and they were given a good deal of organizational and financial help from their parent church. There is no reason to expect otherwise in Pittsburgh, though the details of what happens here will be different.

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh will go through a brief period of reorganization, after which it will conduct its business in the usual way through elected conventions and other bodies. Initially, those members of the Standing Committee who remain in The Episcopal Church will be the ecclesiastical authority in the diocese. In time, the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh will elect a new bishop in much the same way as has always been done. Before then, either a provisional bishop will be selected by convention or the Standing Committee will arrange for episcopal services from one or more bishops of the church.

- 7) What will happen to a parish that chooses not to do anything regarding realignment? Where will they stand with The Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and Bishop Duncan?

If the convention passes realignment, every parish of the Diocese will be re-aligned. That means that every parish will no longer be part of The Episcopal Church, but will continue to be part of The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The constitution and canons of The Episcopal Church do not allow a parish to leave the church even if its members want to do so. There is overwhelmingly strong legal precedent in support of this position. It follows that no congregation can be realigned against its will. Again, we can cite the experience of San Joaquin: all that a parish had to do to remain in The Episcopal Church was to declare its intention to do so. Parishes that do not declare such an intention risk litigation to return their parish property to The Episcopal Church.

To suggest that a diocese can be removed from The Episcopal Church is a bit like suggesting that the Lincoln Mercury Division can be removed from the Ford Motor Company by its managers if they are unhappy with corporate policy. Just as those managers do not own the Lincoln Mercury Division, neither the bishop nor the convention owns the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. It is part of The Episcopal Church, and its status can only be changed by the General Convention. Whatever the realigners will be in, it will not be the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, no matter what they call it.

- 8) Is Bishop Scriven in favor of realignment?

Yes. He writes, "I come from having worked in several different jurisdictions in the Anglican Communion. I place a very high value on membership of a worldwide Communion and am very distressed to be in a church (TEC) with which a majority of Provinces of the Communion say they are in 'impaired communion'. Many attempts to resolve this issue have ended in the House of Bishops (of which I am a member) saying effectively that TEC will go its own way and they do not really care what others think. I do care. I believe TEC has indeed walked apart. I intend to stay within the mainstream of the Anglican Communion."

Bishop Scriven makes his position clear. Whatever the degree of “impaired communion” within the Anglican Communion—what the term means and to what relationships it applies is disputed—the present hostility seen within the Communion may say more about the health of the Communion generally than about the state of The Episcopal Church. Should the Communion fracture, The Episcopal Church will not stand alone, and will almost certainly be a member of that part of the former Anglican Communion that includes the mother church of all Anglican churches and the church in which Bishop Scriven was ordained, the Church of England.

9) Where does the Archbishop of Canterbury stand in all this?

The Archbishop of Canterbury himself is on the record saying that it is the diocese, not the province that is the concrete reality of the communion. If the Diocese votes to realign, we would maintain our relationship to the Archbishop of Canterbury through the Anglican Province with which we have aligned.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams wrote a letter to Bishop of Central Florida John Howe suggesting that the diocese is the basic unit of the Anglican Communion. He did so to reassure those in “Windsor-compliant” dioceses that, no matter what happens to The Episcopal Church, “orthodox” dioceses within it will remain in the Anglican Communion. The comment has nothing to do with those who leave The Episcopal Church to “realign.” In fact, no group that has left its province on its own and claimed affiliation with another province has been recognized as part of the Anglican Communion by either the current Archbishop of Canterbury or his predecessor. None of the bishops claiming a diocesan or missionary charge solely within the bounds of another province has been invited to the 2008 Lambeth Conference. Archbishop Williams opposed the consecration of bishops by African provinces to serve inside the U.S. He has stated, in a letter to the Canadian primate, that he does not “support or sanction” such border-crossings. In a letter to another Canadian bishop, he wrote, “I am quite content to repeat that I do not endorse any cross-provincial transfers of allegiance, and that this office and that of the Anglican Communion recognize one ecclesial body in Canada as a constitutive member of the Communion, the Anglican Church of Canada.”

10) Have the actions of The Episcopal Church affected our worship in Pittsburgh?

The Episcopal Church constitution and canons control our Prayer Book and our Scripture texts. Over the past few years, we have seen offices of TEC promote worship services modeled on pagan fertility rituals and sell books of spells (see endnote links). It is only a matter of time before content that bears no recognizable connection to Christianity makes its way into common use in The Episcopal Church.

These claims distort the record. One office of The Episcopal Church maintained an open Web site where anyone could post liturgical resources that would then appear on the Web without explicit approval by anyone. One person posted mate-

rial based on a pagan ritual. When it was identified as such, the material was removed from the site. The poster, an Episcopal priest, was disciplined and is no longer a priest. Before condemning all such borrowings from non-Christian sources, however, one should keep in mind that, historically, the Church has incorporated local non-Christian traditions into Christian rites and rituals. Two good examples of this are the early Church's adaptation of winter solstice symbols into the Church's celebration of Christmas, and the transformation of indigenous traditions into the veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico.

Not everyone would agree that the fact that the book Love Spells by Teresa Moorey was once on sale on the Web site of the Episcopal bookstore at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City is problematic, since selling a book is not necessarily an endorsement of it. In fact, however, the people responsible for this book's being listed are no longer employed by the bookstore, and store managers have repeatedly asked Anthology Inc., which manages the Web site for the bookstore, to take down the page advertising this book.

11) If realignment passes at the convention, what is the long-term plan?

To be One Church of Miraculous Expectation and Missionary Grace. We would plan to focus on local ministry, sharing the gospel, building up all of our churches and continuing to plant new congregations. Jurisdictionally, we would expect to work for several years on forming an Anglican province in North America that would bring together the hundreds of parishes that are staying within mainstream Anglicanism.

Supporters of The Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh also "plan to focus on local ministry, sharing the gospel, building up all of our churches and continuing to plant new congregations." Very likely, formation of an Anglican province of the sort suggested would forever change the nature of the Anglican Communion, which has always sought to avoid parallel jurisdictions. In any case, "miraculous expectation and missionary grace" may be tainted by interminable litigation.

Whereas some "province" may emerge from the Common Cause Partnership and a handful of Anglican Communion churches may declare themselves in communion with it, there is no reason to expect that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Lambeth Conference, or even a majority of the Anglican Communion primates will ever recognize it. It will become yet another "Anglican" institution outside mainstream Anglicanism, rather like the present "Traditional Anglican Communion."

12) What will happen if Bishop Duncan is deposed by The Episcopal Church? Who will be in charge?

It is our strong belief that the Episcopal Church has no canonical (legal) grounds to depose Bishop Duncan, as was stated in recent letters to the Presiding Bishop's Chancellor. If he were, illegally, removed from office, then the Standing Committee would become the ecclesiastical authority. An assistant bishop might be hired by the Standing Committee to serve a sacramental role (confirmations, etc.), but

he/she would not fill the role of the diocesan bishop. Regardless, we would hold the scheduled Diocesan Convention this fall and vote on realigning the Diocese.

The canonically appropriate committee (Title IV Review Committee) has already determined that Bishop Duncan has abandoned the communion of The Episcopal Church, although the House of Bishops has not yet met to affirm or reject that finding. It is uncertain whether Bishop Duncan will be deposed before the diocesan convention. Should the diocese vote for the proposed constitutional changes, though, his deposition is assured. The Standing Committee indeed becomes the ecclesiastical authority if the bishop is deposed, but any suggestion of what will happen once he is removed from office is speculative. As he is an Assistant Bishop, Bishop Scriven's term cannot extend beyond that of Bishop Duncan's (TEC Canon III.12.5(e)).

In consultation with the Presiding Bishop, the Standing Committee could arrange for episcopal services (TEC Canon I.2.4(a)(3)), or a diocesan convention could elect a provisional bishop (TEC Canon III.13), who, although serving at the pleasure of convention, would have jurisdiction and be the effective equivalent of a diocesan bishop.

- 13) How much money is litigation costing the Diocese per year? Is this budgeted? What happens if the courts freeze diocesan assets?

Over the past year and a half, we have been forced to spend approximately \$240,000 defending ourselves from litigation. We have spent almost nothing since July of 2007, when those who brought suit shifted their efforts to The Episcopal Church's ecclesiastical court system. The Board of Trustees has supported and funded our efforts to defend the Diocese. We believe it is unlikely that the court will freeze diocesan assets.

Diocesan leaders were sued by Calvary Church because, contrary to the canons of The Episcopal Church, they seemed ready to allow parishes to leave the church with their property. The diocese itself was not a party to the lawsuit until it was added as a defendant, over the objections of Calvary, by the diocesan leadership. Since then, all of us have had to bear the costs of litigation instituted because diocesan leaders did not want to abide by the canons of The Episcopal Church. Although it is not certain what course litigation will take should a majority of the convention vote to realign, the court might well decide to appoint a neutral guardian of diocesan assets until litigation concludes. Neutral overseers might well deny access to funds for litigation to both sides. What is certain is that those supporting realignment will be working with a greatly reduced budget, since parishes already committed to staying in The Episcopal Church contribute about one-third of the diocesan's current income.

We do not dispute that the diocese has spent \$240,000 in legal costs, but diocesan budget figures document only a small portion of that figure. Presumably, the bulk of the expenditures has come from funds controlled by the Board of Trustees; the diocese's answer suggests as much. Unfortunately, assets managed by the Board



of Trustees are not accounted for with the same transparency as the diocese's operating budget.

- 14) What about the lawsuits? Wouldn't it be better to spend money on ministry than denominational battles?

Absolutely. We are defending ourselves from lawsuits that we did not initiate or desire. We have repeatedly sought resolution. We are being good stewards by defending the assets of the Diocese so that they may be used for ministry for many years to come.

No one prefers spending money on lawyers to spending it for mission. Legal action would never have been necessary had diocesan leaders been willing to accept what the canons of our church say about property. The "resolution" the diocese has sought has been getting The Episcopal Church to ignore its own canons and abandon its property rights, so that realigning congregations can leave the church and take parish property with them.

- 15) If the Diocese chooses to realign, who actually owns the church buildings and endowments?

The church buildings, endowments and other resources of the Diocese are entirely held in either the name of the parish, the Diocese or the diocesan Board of Trustees. It is our contention that, whether or not we realign, the ownership of those assets should not and will not change.

The bishop has signed a legal document stipulating that these assets belong to the "Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh in the Episcopal Church U.S.A." The result of a decision by a majority of diocesan convention to support realignment will be that two distinct entities will claim to be a Pittsburgh diocese. Only one of these can and will want to claim that it is in The Episcopal Church, however. The courts will decide which of these entities legally owns the property. Ownership of all assets, down to the last hymnal, will be at stake should convention vote to leave The Episcopal Church.

- 16) What would happen to shared diocesan assets, like the Common Life Property at Donegal, if the Diocese votes to realign?

Nothing would change. It would still be available to all members of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

See the previous answer.

- 17) What about change "from within"? Can't we just wait for a year or two and see how things are progressing at that point?

Since 2003, the leadership of the Diocese of Pittsburgh has worked tirelessly to find safe haven for orthodox belief within the structure of The Episcopal Church, but none has been granted. Absolute conformity to TEC's agenda is expected without compromise or exception, and the legal avenues for a diocese to realign out of The Episcopal Church will be closed completely after canonical changes



proposed for the 2009 General Convention. We act now, or forever hold our peace.

It is unclear why anyone in The Episcopal Church needs “safe haven.” Judging by their actions, those seeking realignment appear to want nothing to do with The Episcopal Church—they do not want to contribute to its support, do not want to be governed by its rules, and do not want to have to interact with its leaders. Any Episcopalian who feels this way about The Episcopal Church is free to join another Christian church. It is ironic that the “orthodox” are so intent on being “protected” from a church most noted for its tolerance of theological diversity.

The Episcopal Church is not forcing anyone to act against his or her conscience or beliefs. Even in the case of the ordination of women, the church has never insisted that an objecting bishop personally participate in ordaining women. It has asked that such a bishop find a way for women in his diocese to answer a call to ordained ministry, and that congregations wishing to call a woman as their priest be allowed to do so. This compromise is in the best Anglican tradition of finding ways to honor seemingly incompatible beliefs.

18) If we vote to realign, who will “The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh” be?

We would continue to be “The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh”, pursuing exactly the same vision with renewed attention and vigor, as One Church of Miraculous Expectation and Missionary Grace.

We have no idea who “we”—Bishop Duncan and those who follow him—will be, but the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh will be a continuing diocese of The Episcopal Church and will be governed by those who choose not to realign.

19) Who exactly would we be realigning with?

Although realignment would not occur unless passed at the 2008 Diocesan Convention, a recent “sense of the council” vote indicated that the Diocesan Council is strongly in favor of realigning with Province of the Southern Cone. This orthodox province of the Anglican Communion occupies the southern portion of South America, and is led by Archbishop Gregory Venables.

Numerous recent statements, including those by Presiding Bishop Venables, have characterized realignment with the Southern Cone as “temporary.” What the long-term organizational arrangements might be is anyone’s guess. Each deputy should keep in mind this uncertainty when deciding how to vote.

20) If we realign with the Province of the Southern Cone, which does not ordain women, what will happen to the practice here, and what does it mean to our women in ordained ministry?

It would not change anything. We would not join any province that would not allow us to continue our witness and our practice of women in Holy Orders. The Southern Cone has said emphatically that they would welcome us under these circumstances, as they have already welcomed the Network in Canada, which continues to ordain women.



Aligning with the Southern Cone is acknowledged as a temporary expedient. However, realignment would likely leave women clergy isolated in a province in which no other diocese accepts women priests. Furthermore, among the Common Cause partners, only the groups affiliated with Uganda and Kenya are comfortable with women's ordination. All three of the dioceses in The Episcopal Church that have been led by bishops opposed to the ordination of women have or are seriously considering realignment.

21) What about others considering realignment?

Since 2000, some 300 individual congregations have realigned. The entire Diocese of San Joaquin has realigned, and the Dioceses of Fort Worth and Quincy are also considering realignment this year. Several dozen Anglican Churches in Canada have also realigned.

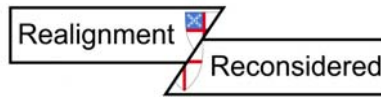
In fact, only about half of those "realigned" congregations were ever a part of The Episcopal Church, and most that were have either lost their property or are presently involved in property disputes. The Episcopal Church still has over 7,000 congregations. The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin is a functioning unit of The Episcopal Church. The so-called Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin has 40 congregations, half of which are missions unable to support themselves. The Diocese of Quincy has fewer than 2,600 members in 24 congregations. The Diocese of Fort Worth is about the same size as Pittsburgh. None of the dioceses mentioned are among the largest in The Episcopal Church, or even among the largest in the Anglican Communion Network.

22) If a church realigns, will the 1979 BCP still be used?

The 1979 BCP is our present prayerbook. We will be able to use it without compromise. The greater danger is if we do not realign. Before many years pass, liturgical changes encouraged by The Episcopal Church will greatly alter our traditional liturgy. The Episcopal Church forced the acceptance of the '79 Book of Common Prayer, as it will with any successors.

The Episcopal Church developed and uses the Book of Common Prayer of 1979. It was adopted after more than a decade of study, revision, and comment from parishes throughout the church. If and when the church does revise the Book of Common Prayer, a similar process will be followed. The General Convention and the leadership of The Episcopal Church have not forced any parish to worship using the current prayer book, although some bishops have required all parishes in their diocese to do so. In fact, The Episcopal Church has no immediate plans to adopt a new Book of Common Prayer, but has focused on providing supplemental liturgies for a variety of occasions. Any revision of the prayer book will need to be approved by two General Conventions under a voting system that requires much more than a simple majority for approval.

Those considering realignment may wish to reflect on the fact that a number of statements from supporters of realignment have held up the English Book of



Common Prayer from 1662 as their standard prayer book. Realigned parishes could find themselves worshipping from that unfamiliar book.

- 23) Because The Episcopal Church has not complied with the Windsor Report, how many bishops may not attend the Lambeth Conference? What percentage of the world's Anglicans do they represent?

A quarter to a third of all Anglican bishops will not be attending Lambeth. Because they come from some of the largest provinces of the Anglican Communion, they represent approximately half of all practicing Anglicans in the world.

The Windsor Report is a report and has no authority to demand "compliance." Whether or not one believes that The Episcopal Church has done all that the authors of the Windsor Report asked of it, it is clear that leaders of such provinces as the Southern Cone and Nigeria have flouted the report's call for a cessation of boundary crossings.

Despite talk of a boycott of the 2008 Lambeth Conference by those supporting realignment, the Anglican Communion Office has announced that more than 80% of all invited bishops have indicated their intention to attend. In fact, Bishops Duncan and Scriven recently said they would attend, as have Bishop Iker, of Fort Worth, and Bishop Venables, of the Southern Cone, a clear indication that the boycott has failed to attract substantial support beyond a few African provinces. All active bishops of The Episcopal Church were invited, except for Bishop Gene Robinson.

- 24) Why is Pittsburgh being targeted as a diocese that the president of the national Episcopal Women's Caucus called "decidedly hostile to women"?

This accusation is entirely without grounds. To the contrary, the Diocese has not just a goodly number of female clergy members, but is proud that many key clergy positions of leadership are filled by women, including the Canon Missioner and the Cathedral Provost.

It is not easy to measure hostility objectively. What can be said is that the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh was one of the first dioceses to ordain women, and yet, after three decades, the diocese has a lower percentage of women priests than The Episcopal Church overall. The diocese also lags in the percentage of its candidates for ordination who are women.

- 25) Have we learned anything by watching events unfold in the Diocese of San Joaquin?

We have learned that little quarter or consideration will be given to the orthodox who choose to stay with The Episcopal Church. We have also learned that The Episcopal Church feels no need to obey its own internal laws regarding disputes with bishops or dioceses. The events in San Joaquin have been followed closely, and the Diocese of Pittsburgh has learned a great deal that can be applied to our situation.

Given that the church's Executive Council has voted that the Dioceses of Pittsburgh, San Joaquin, Quincy, and Fort Worth have all violated the constitution and canons of The Episcopal Church by amending clauses in their diocesan constitutions declaring unqualified accession to the constitution and canons, the statement from the diocese appears to be an attempt to deflect attention from violations already committed. The actions taken to depose Bishop Schofield followed the interpretation of the canons used for more than a decade. The decision not to recognize the San Joaquin Standing Committee was based on solid evidence that all of its members had voted to realign and had thus placed themselves outside The Episcopal Church. In fact, The Episcopal Church has a long record of welcoming back those who have separated from the church, including a bishop who returned after being received into the Roman Catholic Church, and several clergy who had been bishops for groups that separated from The Episcopal Church because of the decisions to ordain women and adopt the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

- 26) Although we disagree on many things, is the Episcopal Church at least following its own rules in this conflict?

The leadership of The Episcopal Church has been relentless in its persecution of individuals who have challenged their direction. They have blatantly ignored their own canons (church laws) in doing so. The purported depositions of Bishops Cox and Schofield and the proposed depositions of Bishops Duncan and MacBurney are cases in point (see endnotes for a link to this story).

Like any set of laws, the constitution and canons of The Episcopal Church are subject to interpretation, and people of goodwill can disagree as to how they apply in particular instances. The House of Bishops acted in a manner consistent with previous depositions. Although the cases cited here all involve bishops usually described as conservative, liberal bishops, too, have had to face disciplinary procedures recently. All the bishops mentioned in the diocese's answer have freely admitted that they either have left The Episcopal Church or have committed the acts alleged.

- 27) How would Pittsburgh's international and ecumenical role be affected by realignment?

The actions of The Episcopal Church have left it in a damaged relationship with many of the world's Anglican believers, and with mainstream Christians in general. By realigning, the Diocese of Pittsburgh would be able to preserve and strengthen the valuable ecumenical and international ties that have proven so fruitful in its mission. Locally, the Diocese is held in very high esteem by leaders and people across denominational lines.

As was noted earlier (see Question 9), realignment might well open a rift between Pittsburgh and Canterbury. The Episcopal Church may be held in low esteem in Uganda, Nigeria, or the Southern Cone, but its relationships with Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, and other provinces are quite cordial. Realignment will strengthen some connections and damage others. It will certainly weaken bonds within the

Anglican Communion generally and encourage the fracture or demise of the Communion as we have known it.

It is hard to predict just what will happen locally, but Presbyterians or Methodists or Roman Catholics might want to avoid taking sides. On the other hand, there may be reason for them to support The Episcopal Church, since denominations such as the Presbyterian Church also face pressure from conservative dissidents who want to leave with church property. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, of course, has a communion agreement with The Episcopal Church, one that, presumably, would not apply to groups that break away from The Episcopal Church. The United Methodist Church has been discussing a similar agreement with The Episcopal Church and might likewise be reluctant to have too close a relationship with realigners.

- 28) Since we are the stewards of what they have left us, how would the founders of our churches have felt if presented with a choice between Christian orthodoxy and remaining in a straying Episcopal Church?

Although the decision would have been difficult for them, as it has been for us, they would no doubt have chosen the gifts of Holy Scripture and the Faith of the apostles over the “innovations” offered by The Episcopal Church. Christianity without a unique Christ, a Gospel without truly transforming power, would not have been something our founders could have conceived of, let alone condoned.

It is not clear to whom “founders of our churches” is intended to refer, but historians are rightly wary of this sort of speculation. In any case, those who founded the first Episcopal congregations in western Pennsylvania had a very strong attachment to The Episcopal Church and a broader range of theology than appears in statements by proponents of realignment. Significantly, the founders of The Episcopal Church actually were divided into two groups, one of which did consider the other unsound in its doctrine. The groups nevertheless worked together and found a way to become one church, rather than two.

- 29) What Scripture passages can be used in support of realignment?

I Corinthians 5:9-13, Galatians 1:6-9, Titus 3:1-11, II Peter 2:1-22, II John 1:4-11, Jude 1:3-4, 17-23

The diocese is not making an argument here, but is leaving it to the reader to do so. Certainly, the suggestion that these passages specifically indicate that realignment is the proper path for the Diocese of Pittsburgh is a stretch. Rather than trying to guess what these passages are supposed to teach us in our present circumstances, we will content ourselves with making a few observations.

Despite protestations that the present controversy is not about sex (see Question 2), sexual morality arises more than once in these passages. Neither scholars nor theologians can agree on the proper interpretation of scripture regarding sexual behavior, however, despite the certainty that some may feel about it.

In offering these passages for consideration, the diocese seems to be appealing to prejudice against The Episcopal Church without having to justify it. We believe that the condemnation of The Episcopal Church is based on trumped-up charges (see, for example, Question 10), and we suggest that, rather than fomenting enmity against our brothers and sisters in Christ, we might better adopt the advice of Titus 3:9 to “avoid foolish controversies.”

a. How should we respond to 1 Corinthians 6:1-11?

First read the context (1 Cor 5:9-13 and 6:12-20). Then consider whether it is acceptable to defend yourself. We are not bringing the lawsuit. We continue to work for every other alternative.

Once again, sex is prominent in the cited verses, although the main message we are apparently supposed to read here is that it is improper for Christians to use the “secular” courts to settle their differences. Specifically, the diocese, after violating its own constitution and canons and those of The Episcopal Church, is discouraging faithful Episcopalians from seeking redress by invoking a “theological” argument against their using the only means at their disposal for doing so.

Applying the advice of I Corinthians to Episcopalians and to the American judicial system ignores the difference in context between contemporary democratic society and that of the early Roman Empire. We live in a civilization governed by democratically established law largely developed and administered by Christians. Of course, I Corinthians 6:7–8 says this: “In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—and believers at that.” This is hardly an endorsement of the diocese’s position.

b. How should we respond to Matthew 5:26-26?

We have tried repeatedly to settle with our accuser. Is it wrong to stand for what is right? Jesus didn’t “settle” with Pilate, or make a deal with the Sanhedrin.

The relevance of this passage—apparently, the reference should have been to Matthew 5:21–26—is unclear, as the answer of the diocese seems to be dismissing Jesus’ advice. Both supporters and detractors of The Episcopal Church in this diocese believe they are in the right, and both sides have, to one degree or another, sought reconciliation. When parties cannot settle a dispute, only a third party can determine which side is in the right. The diocese’s dispute with The Episcopal Church will, no doubt, ultimately be determined by such a third party, namely, the courts, which, in the United States, can be relied upon to be fairer than Roman courts in Jesus’ time.

30) In the heat of this controversy, how can we as believers in Christ maintain a love for each other?

We can always pray sincerely and earnestly for one another. When you are tempted to “curse,” instead, “bless.” This is a powerful aspect of Christian love that should not be overlooked in the midst of conflict. Also, we can continue to



work together on projects that impact the entire community, like cooperation at Shepherd's Heart, Seeds of Hope, Uncommon Grounds and many other shared ministries.

We cannot dispute the answer here and pray that, at some time in the future, reconciliation will reunite the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Links in support of Question 10:

<http://www.episcopalbookstore.org/wc.dll?main~di~&vt=71883&idx=1SZ16RUNQ&idc=1&idi=I18670&ids=&idd=&pn=1>

This is a link to the Episcopal Books and Resources page featuring Love Spells. (See comments on Question 10.) As this document is being written, the page is unavailable and likely to remain so.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/octoberweb-only/10-25-21.0.html>

This piece claiming that The Episcopal Church is promoting idol worship should not be taken seriously. Significantly, it is in the Weblog section of the Christianity Today Web site, where, presumably, it received less scrutiny than material appearing in the print magazine. As explained in the comments on Question 10, the reputed Druid ritual was in no way endorsed by The Episcopal Church or by the Women's Ministries office.

Link for Question 27:

<http://www.livingchurch.org/news/news-updates/2008/4/9/pb-presses-efforts-to-remove-more-bishops>

The diocesan document seems to have mislabeled this reference. It apparently applies not to Question 27, but to Question 26.

The link is to a story from The Living Church titled "PB Presses Efforts to Remove More Bishops." If "more bishops" are being removed from The Episcopal Church, it is arguably because a number of bishops are actively engaged in undermining the church. The story mentions only two cases, however, those of Bishops Robert Duncan and Edward MacBurney. Charges against Bishop MacBurney were brought by the Bishop of San Diego, in whose diocese he acted without permission. The Presiding Bishop had a role in bringing charges against Bishop Duncan, but complaints were also filed by clergy and laypeople of Pittsburgh. Of course, the Presiding Bishop has a canonical role in all disciplinary cases against bishops, however initiated. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori did, in fact, temporarily lift the inhibition of Bishop MacBurney "to allow him to participate in liturgical services for a son who died April 4." (See http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_96448_ENG_HTM.htm for details.)