

The Crisis in the Episcopal Church
Brief Answers to Important Questions

The Rev Geoffrey W Chapman
St Stephen's Church
Sewickley, Pa

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This past August, General Convention affirmed the election of the Rev. Canon Gene Robinson as the new Bishop of New Hampshire. His election by the churches of New Hampshire came to Convention for affirmation in due process, as did the elections of some 10 other prospective Bishops from varying dioceses. **What made Canon Robinson's election a matter of international news was that he had divorced his wife years ago, left her and his two daughters, and has been living in an openly and sexually active gay relationship for over a decade.** His election was affirmed by about 60% of the delegates of General Convention. **That same week, Convention went on to affirm "local option" for dioceses wishing to affirm the blessing of same-sex unions.**

These twin decisions sent shock waves throughout Episcopal churches in our land and throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion. Never before had a historic Christian church affirmed what the Bible and 2000 years of Christian tradition clearly forbid. These decisions have brought the Anglican Communion to a watershed moment. Members of our churches are asking important questions – about sex, about the Bible, about our faith, about our Communion, and about our local churches - that need clear answers. The following paragraphs are offered to help believers in Jesus Christ address some of these pressing questions.

Questions About Sex

“The Church seems to be hung up about sex. Aren't there more important issues to focus on?”

We have been talking about sex for a long time, partly because sex is so important! Some people believe that **what you do with your body doesn't matter to your spirituality, but Christianity has always believed exactly the opposite.** We believe that God intends to dwell inside us by his Spirit, turning our bodies into his own temple (1 Cor 6.19), that our bodies are made for his honor and indwelling presence, and in the end that he intends to resurrect and completely transform our bodies. What you do with your body matters!

There are two other reasons we've been focusing on sex for so many years, though. One is that our culture has **“sex on the brain”** (which C. S. Lewis remarked is a strange place to have it!) We are obsessed with sex, turning a great gift of God into a massively captivating and destructive force. Sexual brokenness is rampant in western society, shattering millions of relationships and lives. The church is either going to be a part of the solution or a part of the problem. We need to help.

The other reason why this issue is so important is that at this moment there are Christian leaders who **are trying to change the church's long held beliefs about sex.** They seem to be taking their guidance from our sex-obsessed culture, favoring same-sex relationships and other sexual practices which Christians across the world and throughout the ages believe to be immensely destructive and against the clear counsel of Scripture.

“Isn't Christianity supposed to be inclusive and welcoming?”

There is no doubt about it; **the Bible speaks of God's love as the most inclusive force in the universe.** God famously loves the good and the bad, and he has a special love for sheep who wander from the fold and people whose lives are marked by failure.

Though God welcomes us sinners, He does not intend to leave us unchanged. Rather He intends to transform us into His own likeness.

“From the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him... should become like His Son...”
Rom 8:29 (LB)

This famous partnership between His unconditional acceptance and His transformational purposes are found time after time in the scriptures. **Take, for example, Jesus’ words to the woman caught in adultery...**

Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” Jn 8:10-11 (NIV)

Jesus’ special concern for the sexually broken came through repeatedly in His years of ministry. It was not only the woman caught in adultery, but also the prostitute who anointed his feet with her tears (Luke 7), the woman who had had five previous husbands (John 4) and a prodigal son (Luke 15) who were astonished by His love. Note that every time His love proved to have a direction, a forgiving, redeeming purpose.

Jesus reminds us in this that love and tolerance are not the same. Because God loves people does not mean that He tolerates sin. Exactly the opposite is true; He loves us deeply enough to hate our sin. And, at great expense to Himself (the cross), He has set out to forgive it and remove its power from our lives. When you genuinely love someone, you hate and fight against the things which destroy them. As the old proverb goes, **“Love the sinner and hate the sin”**.

“People in favor of the gay agenda argue that homosexuality is innate. Is this true?”

The sources of homosexuality’s origins are complex and hard to understand, but seem to include three primary sources: nature (how we were made), nurture (the influence of our families and culture), and choice (decisions we have made over the years).

When people argue that homosexuality is innate and unchangeable, they are saying that because it is so **deeply a part of my emotions, my attitudes and my history, it is therefore a matter of my “nature”**, a part of how I came into this world and a part of how God created me. So, it is argued, it must be accepted and celebrated.

But it is degrading to say that every longstanding impulse, desire or drive inside us ought to be accepted and celebrated. Some of our most destructive impulses, such as pride, self-worship, anger and lust, seem to be innate and almost beyond our control, leading to addictive behaviours. Where do these things come from? **The Scriptures speak frequently of our “sinful nature” (Galatians 5.13-26)** that is the inherited experience of all humankind, and the heritage of the Fall of Adam and Eve. Here is the powerful source of these twisted impulses. Our fallen nature contrasts sharply with our unblemished human nature found in creation (Genesis 2) and with our destiny found in the person of Jesus Christ. Instead of looking within ourselves to find our true nature (in our twisted impulses and desires), we do far better to look to our creation (before the Fall) and to Christ. There we discover our true selves and – **by God’s grace** – our final destiny.

But fallen human nature is not the only source of sexual brokenness. The influence of our culture and of our families can also play an important role. Add the decisive power of our own decisions and you have a potent recipe. Like many other human disorders, homosexuality is the result of a convergence of these three powerful forces in varying portions, our sinful human nature, the nurture of our culture and

homes, and the choices we have made. **Homosexuality is something that is “caught” (a part of our fallen human nature), “taught” (by our culture) and “bought” (by our own decisions).** That is St Paul’s argument in Romans 1.16-32.

“Is homosexuality changeable?”

No human condition is beyond the power of Christ to forgive, heal and transform. That is the claim of **the Bible, the witness of Jesus’ remarkable years of ministry upon earth, and the promise of the Apostles’ preaching.** “**He will forgive anything, but He overlooks nothing,**” sums George MacDonald.

There has been a debate about whether **ministries that seek to “reorder” a person’s sexuality by the power of Christ** are effective – or even right. The experience of many people who have been involved in these ministries is that if a person is highly motivated, the Holy Spirit is indeed **willing and able to either “reorder”** their sexuality (so that fulfilled heterosexual marriage is a possibility) or bring a deep sense of contentment in a single life lived abundantly for Christ.

What is important to say at the same time, however, is that as with any reordering of human sin, redemption is a step by step process that is only fully completed in the life to come. In our days upon this earth, we must face down ongoing temptation, depend upon the support and love of fellow believers, bring every emotion and attitude to Christ for healing, and seek by prayer and faith a supernatural work of transformation by the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1 Cor 6, Paul draws together a long list of human sins that had been the experience of many believers in the Corinthian Church, including various kinds of sexual brokenness, and then said,

“and that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Co 6:11 (NIV)

“I am homosexual. Am I welcome at St Stephens?”

Yes, you are. Without hesitation or qualification we warmly welcome all seekers after God.

St Stephens wants to be a place where people who have a spiritual hunger for something more in their lives can come and grow, step by step, at their own God-given pace, no matter what their life experience or what they believe. Many of the questions we have take time to think through. Much of the healing we need will not happen overnight. **We want to honor that sense of “God-time” for people, and make this church a welcoming place to help you in your spiritual journey.**

That does not mean that we do not have clear convictions or a deeply held faith in God’s transforming power in Christ. We do. **“God-changed lives” is our motto here.** I, like many others in this diocese, came to Christ out of an extended season of sexual confusion and brokenness. It was the patient, accepting, **“never-give-up” love of Christians that proved to be the open door to a new, forgiven and transformed life in Christ for me.** Because of our own experiences during our years in the sexual revolution in this culture, we have a special concern for people who suffer from sexual brokenness, disorders or addictions.

We want to have convictions as clear as those of Scripture and a love as broad as that of Scripture, and a patience as long as that of Scripture. That is a tall order, but we will give it our best shot!

Questions About The Bible

“The Bible says to do all kinds of things that we no longer do. Why do we pick some things and exclude others?”

Christian interpreters have looked at the Old Testament for centuries and made a distinction between the ceremonial, civil and moral law. Ceremonial law most often had to do with ritual purity and religious behavior. Civil law focused on the structure of the state of ancient Israel. **Moral law focused on God’s ethical commandments.** Sometimes these laws were found in sequential chapters or verses (just read through Leviticus 17-19!), but these three categories help to clarify their purpose. What Jesus claimed and Paul affirmed in the New Testament was that in Christ (and his Church) the fulfillment of the ceremonial (and civil) law is found (cf. Mark 7:19; Matt 5:17-19; 19:7-9; Col 2.13-23) – the moral law, however, is still binding.

So while we no longer worry about wearing clothing with two kinds of fabric (Lev 19.19), we are still focused on loving our neighbor as ourselves (Lev 19.18). Under the teaching of Jesus, the moral law has taken a more penetrating and challenging turn; while external behavior is still its focus, the thoughts of our minds and the attitudes of our hearts are now included as well (Matt 5.8, 28)!

“The Bible was written thousands of years ago for an ancient patriarchal people. Don’t we have to reinterpret it for our modern culture?”

One of the challenges in reading the Bible is to try and understand how what was said “then” applies to how we live “now”. Many people today take a “post-modern” approach to interpreting scripture. They import their own thoughts into the pages of scripture, and believe that the meaning of the Bible should be supplied by the reader, rather than the writer. This does violence to the Bible and to the function of language itself, and can make any sentence of any book mean almost anything!

The far better, and far more honest path to follow is the one chosen by Christians throughout the centuries. When reading the Bible, first understand the intent of the author. The intent of the original author(s) is the primary principle for understanding what the scriptures say to us today. Changing the words and phrases to mean what they never meant is dishonest, deceptive, and dangerous.

“What does the Bible have to say about homosexuality, anyway?”

The Bible’s teaching about homosexuality is best set out by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1.16-32. There Paul gathers up the full sweep of the Biblical understanding of human history, starting with the Creation and the Fall. Paul tracks a downward spiral in the human condition starting with the rejection of God (vv 20,21). In sequence, human minds, hearts, and behaviour were “darkened” – all of this flowing from worshiping created things rather than the Creator (vv 21-25).

Three times in the passage Paul said that God “gave them over” to the sin that was sought, until every part of human experience was disordered, including a “degrading” of the gift of sex. The downward spiral continued, Paul says, and men and women “exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones” (vv 26-27). The spiral spun lower yet, into “penalty” born in our bodies (vs 27) and a “depraved mind” (vs 28) – so that we actually end up applauding behaviour that destroys people (vs 32)!

In sum, the Bible speaks of homosexuality as one of a family of sexual disorders that flows from our passion for pleasure. Worshiping created things – including human bodies and passions – always leads to degradation and unnatural passions that turn and destroy us. God is irrevocably against these things (vs 32) not because He is mean-spirited or harsh, but rather because they loose humiliation and destruction upon the very people God created and loves.

Other passages that deserve careful attention include Gen. 19:5-8; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Deut. 23:17; Judg. 19:22; 1 Kin. 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kin. 23:7; Rom. 1:24,26,27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:9,10 (For an excellent **intensive discussion of these and other passages, see “The bible and Homosexual Practice” by Robert Gagnon [Abingdon].**)

“Jesus did not say anything about homosexuality, why should we?”

While Jesus did not make direct references to the subject of homosexuality, He made frequent references to the subject of sex, pointing back to Genesis 2:24 as the touchstone and norm. Life-long marital faithfulness between a man and a woman is the God-created place for sexual intimacy (Mark 10.1-12); anything else misses that mark. Jesus also referred to the coming judgment of Sodom (Matt 11.23,24), **and spoke against “sexual immorality” (Matt 5:32; 15:19; 19:9) which includes not only sexual activity outside of marriage, but impure sexual thoughts as well (Matt 5.28).**

It is a mistake to pretend that Jesus’ teaching is different than that of the rest of the Bible. He pointed forward to his own Apostles and affirmed the authority of the letters they would later write (John 15.20). He repeatedly upheld the moral teachings of the Old Testament, saying that it was His task to fulfil the Scriptures, not overturn them (Matt 5.17-20).

“The Church’s understanding of what the Bible teaches about the role of women and the treatment of slaves has proved to be wrong. Will we not find this to be the case with same-sex relationships?”

Any fair reading of the New Testament in its cultural setting makes it clear that Jesus and His apostles championed the dignity and value of every human life in a way that shook contemporary social structures and levelled the ground upon which humanity stands in the sight of God. This New Testament vision of the value of every person is the foundation upon which the best of modern liberation movements have been built.

But the New Testament above all champions liberation from sin dwelling within us, including every **distortion of the “way things were” in the creation before the Fall, and every deviation from the way Christ himself lived. It is important not to confuse “liberation” from external oppression with “redemption” from internal sin.** They are both important, but they are also different. To make external liberation our aim and to ignore the need for internal redemption will not be faithful to Christ and the forgiveness He promises, nor will it be helpful to the people we love.

Questions About Our Denomination

“How did we end up in this mess?”

Good question! Many of us think that when the church refused to discipline famous heretics among our leaders (like Bp James Pike in the early 60's and Bp Jack Spong in the last decade), we left the doors wide open to any and every belief. No longer willing to require affirmation from our leaders in the fundamental principles of the faith (like the deity and resurrection of Jesus), should we be surprised if our leaders champion any and every moral misbehavior?

We also got in this mess because people of biblical faith and values did not think it worth their time to get involved in the political structures of the denomination that is our spiritual home.

Many of us are arguing for a restoration of the biblical pattern of church discipline, too long absent in our denomination. The biblical focus on church discipline is a last resort, grace-anchored effort to bring about repentance and restoration, and is detailed in such passages as Matt 18:15-18; Gal 1:8-9; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Cor 6:14-17; 2 John 10-11; and Rev 2:20. The Bible says (in effect) that sometimes in moments of extreme illness, a surgeon must operate to save the body. We turned the surgeons out and closed down the operating rooms a half century ago. We are not healthier for it.

“What philosophical issues fueled the spiritual drift?”

Certainly the influence of modernity, a school of thought anchored in a naturalistic world view deeply skeptical of supernatural realities, was primary. This worldview became the dominant philosophical framework of many of the seminaries and the leaders they produced. Wave after wave of clergy were ordained who lacked confidence in the trustworthiness of scriptures and the creeds, often refusing to even give them the fair hearing they more than deserve.

Instead of the awesome news of a transcendent and holy creator-God who has stepped into our world in mercy in the mission of his Son, we began to hear of self-fulfillment, self-empowerment and a confused **“do-it-yourself” brand of spirituality**. Instead of a God who has decisively and clearly revealed himself to us **in the words of scripture, we began to hear that the real word of God was to be found “behind” and “under” and “around” (but hardly ever “in”) the words of scripture**. Instead of a Jesus who is Lord above every lord and the unique Savior of the whole world, we began to hear about many paths and many ways and many options.

Therapeutic models of faith development with a high value on self-fulfillment and left-of-center social action replaced the transformational gospel of Jesus Christ with its promise of a Spirit-filled life and its call to obedience, cultural impact and world mission. Under this kind of preaching, people have been leaving many Episcopal churches in droves, while evangelical churches have been growing at home and evangelical dioceses abroad have been surging forward by leaps and bounds.

“I have never been a member of a denomination before. How does the Anglican Communion work?”

The Anglican Communion is a world-wide family of churches linked in faith and structure to the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury. There are 38 Provinces in the Anglican Communion, each led by a Primate (senior Bishop) and each comprised of many dioceses. In the United States, the Anglican

Province is called the Episcopal Church and has about 100 dioceses. Pittsburgh is one of these dioceses, and has about 71 congregations, including our own parish. There are about 75 million members of the Anglican Communion. About 2.5 million of them live in the United States.

Churches in the Anglican communion are linked by a common faith, expressed in the Bible, the Creeds, and the Prayer Book tradition of worship. They are also linked by the international fellowship of our Bishops, who come together every 10 years at the Lambeth Conference, and by our fellowship with the Archbishop of Canterbury who serves as the head of our Communion. But we do not have well developed **mechanisms to “enforce” our shared faith on individual Provinces.** A great deal depends on our trust of **one another, upon the “moral weight” of our international leaders, and upon how deeply we value our common faith.**

“What is the position of the Anglican Communion on this issue?”

The Lambeth Conference in 1998 considered the sexual issues that have swept through the western **Provinces, and in the end rejected “homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture” while emphasizing** conversation, gospel ministry and pastoral care to people of homosexual experience and orientation. The vote at Lambeth of our gathered Bishops was overwhelmingly in favor of the resolution, 526-70. Most of the 70 dissenters were from Western countries whose churches are in serious decline and whose cultures have embraced the sexual revolution.

The new Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has promised to uphold the Lambeth resolution. He has called an emergency meeting of the Primates on October 15th of this year. Wary of international response, earlier this summer he asked the Episcopal Church to refrain from the very actions we have now taken.

“Will the church split over this issue? Hasn’t that threat been made before?”

It is true that there was serious dissent during the years of Prayer Book revision and women’s ordination (1970’s). Though some left, most stayed or quietly drifted away. But there are several reasons to think this is a much more serious situation. **The first is that while everyone thought the issue of women’s ordination** was important, far from everyone thought that it rose to the level of a fundamental issue of the faith. It was (and is) also true that people with a high view of scriptural authority were found on both sides of the issue. Most conservatives, however, believe that the sexuality issue squarely sits upon the **fundamentals of the faith, including the authority of scripture, the nature of a “Communion” (are we a federation of independent Provinces, each free to go their own way... or a Communion with a deeply held common faith?), the doctrine of marriage, the call to discipleship, and the very power of the gospel to change us.**

A second reason this is likely to be a church-splitting issue is that in the last century evangelical churches, deeply rooted in scriptural authority and historic Christianity, have become the vast majority in world Anglicanism. **The Episcopal Church, for example, has less than 3% of the world’s Anglicans, while Nigeria** has more than six times as many and is growing rapidly. Anglican Christians from the Global South are alarmed at what they see as the spreading illnesses of the western cultures. Furthermore, many of the third-world leaders have suffered acutely for their faith, and are not likely to be swayed by cultural imperialism or financial pressures from declining and spiritually compromised churches in America and Great Britain.

The international condemnation of the Episcopal Church's actions has been swift, extensive and sharp, setting up a struggle for the soul of this church between the Provinces of the South (who are growing, newer, larger, materially impoverished but spiritually vital) and the Provinces of the West (who are in control, older, diminishing, far wealthier and revisionist in theology).

“What are the options ahead?”

It will take some time to gather leaders for consultation and prayer. Several key meetings have been planned for the coming months, including...

- ❖ Sept 27th Diocese of Pittsburgh gathers in special Convention to consider a response. Other conservative dioceses also meet in the month of September in special conventions
- ❖ October 7th - 9th Orthodox bishops, clergy and laity leaders gather at Christ Church, Plano (Dallas) to affirm a plan
- ❖ October 15th International Primates gather at Canterbury in emergency session

A range of options will be considered at these various meetings, most fitting under the headline of **“realignment”**. Here are some of the principles that many of us will be advocating:

- ❖ Clarify and reaffirm the historic, biblical Anglican faith, rejecting the actions of General Convention
- ❖ Restore and exercise a biblical and grace-centered process of church discipline
- ❖ Work cooperatively under the guidance of the orthodox Primates and bishops of the Anglican Communion; act unilaterally only as a last resort
- ❖ Enable orthodox pastoral succession and leadership development for churches and dioceses
- ❖ **Act decisively to protect “churches at risk”, including their liberty and their property**
- ❖ Redirect finances away from the national church to resource the Gospel at home and abroad
- ❖ Restore the priority of Gospel mission

“What will happen at our Special Convention in Pittsburgh?”

Our Bishop has called for a Special Convention September 27th to consider six resolutions. The full text of the resolutions is included below. Every parish will be represented through their normal convention delegates. The resolutions are substantive, go to the heart of the issues involved, and are titled:

- ❖ Unconstitutional Actions Of The 74th General Convention
- ❖ Appeal For Intervention And Recognition By Anglican Communion Primates
- ❖ Episcopal Care For Beleaguered Clergy And Congregations
- ❖ Missionary Vocation And Mission Funding
- ❖ Dissenting Congregations In Pittsburgh
- ❖ Title To Property

Questions About St Stephens

“What is St Stephen's position on this crisis?”

St Stephens has for years tried to do two things in response to the sexual crisis in our culture and church: to uphold and model biblical standards, while extending to all the accepting, transforming Gospel of Jesus

Christ. We will continue to do both, and especially want to expand our ministries to people who suffer from all kinds of sexual brokenness.

We believe that the issues enumerated above are fundamental to our faith and to our congregation. We join with churches and dioceses across our country and throughout our Communion in repudiating the actions of General Convention, and in appealing to the Primates of our Communion for intervention to solve this problem.

We are grateful for the leadership of our Diocese and our Bishops in these matters, and intend to work in eager cooperation with them to seek the repentance and, if need be, the discipline of the Episcopal Church. We will only act unilaterally to leave this denomination if all other measures of resolution fail. We are not prepared to compromise over these fundamental issues under any circumstances.

“Does any of our money go to the national Episcopal Church?”

No. For three years, St Stephens has elected to redirect all the funds that would have gone through our diocesan apportionment to the work of the National Church. We have sent these funds (over \$25,000 per year) to Gospel ministries of our choosing. We continue to give our full apportionment to the Diocese of Pittsburgh (about \$135,000 per year), and are thankful for their faithful stewardship of those funds.

“Do we own our own property?”

We have claimed title to our property repeatedly in recent years, and have found informal affirmation of that claim from our Diocese. If, however, the Diocese were hostile to our faith and values, our property in certain urgent circumstances could be vulnerable. In view of this, the Special Convention of our Diocese will be asked to consider Resolution #6 next month, which states in part, *“Property held by the Board of Trustees of the Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh for the use of a Parish, Mission Fellowship or Diocesan Organization belongs beneficially to such Parish, Mission Fellowship or Diocesan Organization only. No adverse claim to such beneficial interest by any other body, by the Diocese, or by The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is acknowledged, but rather is expressly denied.”*

Passage of this resolution will be a helpful clarification of the issue.

“How can I help?”

Pray. Get educated. Get involved. Come to meetings. Support your leaders. Stay close to Christ and His Scriptures. Commit to sexual purity in your own life. Really commit to it and get help in going for it. Recognize it is all about the Gospel, and stay at Gospel ministry. Reach out to someone in sexual brokenness and befriend them. Invite them to church with you. Share your faith with them. Pray for them. **Don't duck the issue because it is hard or because people get in your face about it; you can't escape it because our culture is saturated by it. Lives are on the line, lots of them. Time to be a part of the solution! Get involved in helping us build ministries to people in sexual brokenness. Pray some more. And do what God leads you to do.**

Further Resources On The Web:

American Anglican Council's webpage

<http://www.americananglican.org/>

Kendall Harmon's webpage

<http://titusonene.blogspot.com/>

David Virtue's webpage

<http://listserv.episcopalian.org/archives/virtuosity.html>

Great Britain's Anglican Mainstream

<http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/>

Episcopal News Service

<http://ecusa.anglican.org/ens/>

Mario Bergner's Redeemed Lives Ministry, Ministering to People in Sexual Brokenness

<http://www.redeccemedlives.org>

Exodus International, Ministering to Homosexual People

<http://www.exodus-international.org/>

Diocese of Pittsburgh - Proposed Resolutions

Special Diocesan Convention in the Aftermath of the 74th General Convention

Unconstitutional Actions Of The 74th General Convention

1. The Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh holds that the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church has exceeded its authority and departed from its constitution, in confirming the election as bishop of a non-celibate homosexual man and in permitting same-sex blessings, separating itself from the Anglican Communion and from the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, directly rejecting its solemn responsibility to uphold and propagate the historic Faith and Order, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. These acts are thus held to be null and void, and of no effect, in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Appeal For Intervention And Recognition By Anglican Communion Primates

2. The Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh joins the call of the orthodox bishops at the 74th General Convention to the Primates of the Anglican Communion for intervention in the pastoral emergency created by the apostasy of the 74th General Convention. Further, the Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, together with those other dioceses, bishops, clergy and congregations who continue to uphold and propagate the historic Faith and Order, seeks recognition by the international Primates Meeting as the legitimate expression of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and seeks acknowledgement as the bona fide expression of the Anglican Communion in the United States of America.

Episcopal Care For Beleaguered Clergy And Congregations

3. The Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh further asks the Primates of the Anglican Communion to address the matter of Episcopal oversight and care, across existing diocesan boundaries to those clergy and congregations, committed to the historic Faith and Order, in dioceses where the offending actions of the 74th General Convention have been approved or implemented.

Missionary Vocation And Mission Funding

4. The Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh re-commits itself to its missionary identity and purpose: locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. The Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh further re-commits itself to aggressive resourcing (human and financial) of missionary endeavors both within and beyond the geographical boundaries of the diocese. As a consequence of the General Convention apostasy and in response to the present pastoral emergency thereby created, this Special Convention also directs that no assessment funds received from parishes for work beyond the diocese any longer be sent to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (the Episcopal Church in the United States of America), and henceforth be diverted, as Bishop and Council shall see fit, to those Anglican or Episcopal missionary agencies, dioceses, and structures that serve to uphold and propagate the historic Faith and Order, especially to those orthodox missionary works adversely affected by reduced national church resources.

Dissenting Congregations In Pittsburgh

5. The Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh expresses its commitment to those congregations seeking some interim disassociation from the actions of this Special Convention (until the Primates have rendered judgment as to how these matters of Faith and Order are to be resolved) such that said congregations be permitted to redirect all, or some, of their diocesan assessment, negotiating this matter with Bishop and Council, as well as whether some alternative episcopal oversight shall be arranged.

Title To Property

6. Property held by the Board of Trustees of the Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh for the use of a Parish, Mission Fellowship or Diocesan Organization belongs beneficially to such Parish, Mission Fellowship or Diocesan Organization only. No adverse claim to such beneficial interest by any other body, by the Diocese, or by The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is acknowledged, but rather is expressly denied. All other property of the Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh is held by the Board of Trustees for the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh for those exempt religious purposes within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States of America. Such exempt religious purposes shall be those determined by the Convention of the Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and the appropriate officers elected by it. No adverse claim to such beneficial interest by The Episcopal Church in the United States of America or any other body is acknowledged, but rather is expressly denied.