

# Evidence That Demands A Decision

## Remain Faithful Position Paper

Remain Faithful is a group of orthodox Christian lay Episcopalians, constituent members of the Anglican Communion. We believe and confess – and are primarily committed to upholding – two essential truths, which are the cornerstone of our orthodox Christian faith:

- (1) Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died on the Cross for our sins, was resurrected from the dead, and is the sole source of eternal salvation. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – and no one comes to the Father but through Him (*John 14:6*).<sup>1</sup>
- (2) The Bible is the revealed and inspired word of God. It contains all things necessary for salvation, and is the final authority and unchangeable standard for Christian faith and life.<sup>2</sup>

Scripture tells us the Truth in Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (*Hebrews 13:8*).<sup>3</sup> Sadly, however, the leadership of The Episcopal Church (now known as TEC, but formerly known as ECUSA) and its General Convention have progressively moved away from, and in some instances repudiated, these fundamental truths of Christianity and “our historic apostolic faith” in favor of a New Age theology. A crisis point has been reached, resulting in a situation in which personal and corporate decisions must be made.

Remain Faithful stands with those members of TEC and the Anglican Communion who continue to adhere to these same essential truths. We are committed to explaining why many orthodox Episcopalians are deeply troubled by the actions of

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:6 reads: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” This essential truth is confirmed in numerous historical documents of the Church, principally The Nicene Creed and the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D., Act V.

<sup>2</sup> See Theological Statement of The Common Cause Partnership (<http://www.united-anglicans.org/about/theology.html>). “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful in teaching, rebuking, correcting and training for righteousness, so that the Man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 *Timothy 3:16*) “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 *Peter 1:20-21*)

<sup>3</sup> “Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.” (*Hebrews 13: 7-9*).

General Convention and TEC's leadership. We feel compelled to "contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (*Jude 1:3*).<sup>4</sup>

By way of explanation, we submit this position paper, the purpose of which is three-fold. First, it spotlights the vast differences that now exist between the erroneous beliefs espoused by TEC and General Convention, and the fundamental and historic truths of our faith as Christians and members of the Anglican Communion. Second, it attempts to clarify and correct a number of misconceptions TEC has spread in response to common questions that are troubling many Episcopalians (as well as other faithful, orthodox Anglican parishes in Canada and throughout the world) as they consider the practical aspects of remaining aligned with the Anglican Communion. And, third, it provides a glimpse as to what additional changes are on the horizon for TEC, General Convention, and those who choose to remain fully aligned with those institutions.

As you read on, we prayerfully hope this discussion will help you choose whom you will serve – the "god" of TEC and General Convention, or the God of the Bible. (*Joshua 24: 14-15*).

## **SECTION I- ESSENTIAL TRUTHS**

### **A. Jesus the Christ**

All of history confirms that a man named Jesus lived and died here on Earth, founded the Church, has been worshiped thereafter as God for 2000 years, and changed the course of history. The question is: Who was this man named Jesus . . . and why does it matter to us now with respect to TEC and Remain Faithful? The actions of TEC leadership and General Convention have forced all Episcopalians to answer the same question Jesus posed to His disciples while still with them: "But who do you say that I am?" (*Mark 8:29*)

Historically, the Church has held in its ancient Creeds that:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right

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<sup>4</sup> "I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license of immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." (*Jude 1: 3-4*).

hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. (*Nicene Creed, 381 A.D.*)

***Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori talks about the Apostles and Nicene Creeds:***

*“Those creeds are not about checking off a bunch of propositions. They are about giving our heart to a sense that Jesus shows us what it looks like to be a divine human being” (Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori in Parabola Spring 2007).*

Who does Jesus say in the Bible that He is?

To Peter: He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." *Matt. 16:15-17*

To the High Priest during His trial: "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." *Mark 14:61-62*

To the Chief Priests and Scribes after His arrest: And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." *Luke 22:70*

To Jewish authorities: "I and the Father are one." *John 10:30*

C.S. Lewis and many other learned writers throughout the ages have pointed out the obvious: Jesus said He was the Son of God and that He and the Father were one; that is, that He is God.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. *John 14:6*

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. *John 3:36*

I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in Your sins. *John 8:24*

The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent me. \* \* \* . . . and no one

knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. *Luke 10:16, 22*  
 . . . even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have eternal life. \* \* \* He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. *John 3:14-16, 18*  
 But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. *Matt. 10:33-34*  
 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, . . . *Heb. 5:9*  
 And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the son has the life; he who does not have the son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life. *1John 5:11-13*  
 . . . dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power *2Thess. 1:8-9*  
 . . . This is the word of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. \* \* \* For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. \* \* \* He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day. *John 6:29, 40, 54*  
 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved. *Acts 4:12*

***Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori comments on “No One Comes unto the Father except through me” (John 14:6):***

*“In its narrow construction, it tends to eliminate other possibilities. In its broader construction, yes, human beings come to relationship with God largely through their experience of holiness in other human beings. Through seeing God at work in other people’s lives. In that sense, yes, I will affirm that statement. But not in the narrow sense, that people can only come to relationship with God through consciously believing in Jesus” (Arkansas Democrat Gazette, January 2007).*

Well-known persons throughout time have contributed valuable wisdom:

If there were any word of God beside the Scripture, we could never be certain of God’s word; and if we be uncertain of God’s word, the devil might bring in among us a new word, a new doctrine, a new faith, a new church, a new

god, yea himself to be a god. If the Church and the Christian faith did not stay itself upon the Word of God certain, as upon a sure and strong foundation, no man could know whether he had a right faith, and whether he were in the true Church of Christ, or in the synagogue of Satan. (Thomas Cranmer, 16th Century Archbishop of Canterbury and Martyr )

The foundational Christian message...has been replaced by other messages of unchallenging acceptance and uncritical license to pursue any lifestyle... Any thought that the passage of time will soften the resolve of the majority is unfounded. To do so would be a rejection of our core values. It would be a rejection of the gospel itself, and a denial of the price that Jesus paid on our behalf. (Gregory Venables, Archbishop of the Southern Cone)

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not professing Christ, no matter how boldly I may be professing Christ...Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. To be steady on all battlefields besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point. (Martin Luther)

Why then is there any dispute among Episcopalians about whether Jesus is the way of salvation when it seems so abundantly clear? Because Jesus is our Saviour on HIS terms, not ours. When those in leadership positions at TEC promote or allow the Gospel of Jesus to be diluted, to claim that there are many ways to salvation with Jesus being only one of them or that He is not who He says He is, then we have no choice but to respond. Jesus himself knew this would happen - that Satan would appeal to the rebellious hearts of men to promote the worldly message of freedom from Christ's limitations on our lives instead of freedom in Christ from the sin that holds us captive. Jesus forewarned us out of His great love for us, which warning was well-understood and re-iterated by His apostles:

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. *Matt.7:15*

I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument. . . . See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. *Col 2:4, 8*

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall

from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. *2Peter 3:14-18 (emphasis added)*

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. *1John 2:22-23*

For us, the problem with the leadership of TEC is their allowing the Gospel to be diluted to a culture-driven “I’m OK; You’re OK” philosophy that doesn’t require a Saviour at all. As Gene Robinson, activist gay bishop of New Hampshire stated to the British publication *The Guardian* in a 2005 interview: “I have been led to understand that I am loved by God just as I am.” However much God loves us, that’s not the whole of it, though. As it has been often put: “God loves me as I am, but He also loves me too much to leave me this way.”

In fact, TEC’s stated primary priorities for now, according to their website, are the wholly secular, no-Jesus-required, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are goals prepared by the United Nations and supported by TEC leadership even though they include no evangelism at all. That is, TEC apparently takes the position that feeding people’s bodies (although admirable and required by Christ) is more important than feeding their souls with the truth that Jesus came and died for them. Compare the statements made by TEC’s Presiding Bishop in 2007 with those of the Apostle Paul which have been revered and accepted throughout the ages:

*Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori:*

*The question is always how can we get beyond our own narrow self-interest and see that our salvation lies in attending to the needs of other people. (Parabola Spring 2007).*

Apostle Paul:

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

*Rom. 3:28*

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, *Rom. 5:1*

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. *Rom. 5:9*

The Book of Common Prayer (as most recently revised in 1979), still contains in the Articles of Religion these abiding truths:

XI. Of the Justification of Man. We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are

justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

XII. Of Good Works. Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII. Of Works before Justification. Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

In contrast to Holy Scripture and our historic faith, consider the following published quotes and actions by TEC leaders over the last few years. There have been more and more examples of non-Christian religious practices and appeals to other gods creeping into our liturgies, and some TEC clergy have allowed, without censure, the practice of other religions side-by-side with our Christian faith. Unfortunately, the trend is unmistakable:

*We who practice the Christian tradition understand him [Jesus] as our vehicle to the divine. But for us to assume that God could not act in other ways is, I think, to put God in an awfully small box (Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori, Time Magazine, July 10, 2006).*

*Human communities have always searched for relationship with that which is beyond them.. with the ultimate.. with the divine. For Christians, we say that our route to God is through Jesus. That doesn't mean that a Hindu doesn't experience God except through Jesus. It says that Hindus and people of other faith traditions approach God through their ... own cultural contexts" (Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori, National Public Radio, Interview, Oct. 8, 2006)*

*If you begin to explore the literary context of the first century and the couple of hundred years on either side, the way that someone told a story about a great figure was to say 'this one was born of the gods.' That is what we're saying. This carpenter from Nazareth or Bethlehem – and there are different stories about where he came from – shows us what a godly human being looks like, shows us God coming among us (Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori, Parabola, Spring 2007)*

*. . . I think there is actually danger in idolatry, and making an idol of Jesus . . . Jesus never actually asks us to worship him . . . Jesus asks us to follow. (The Rev. Winnie Varghese, Episcopal Chaplain at Columbia University, writer for The Witness online and Episcopal Life, the TEC newsletter, in Via Media's 2004 DVD Episcopal Evangelism: Not an Oxymoron Anymore)*

*Jesus was a particular character in history . . . a poor man of questionable parentage . . .*

*(The Rev. Winnie Varghese, Episcopal Chaplain at Columbia University, writer for *The Witness* online and *Episcopal Life*, the TEC newsletter, in *Via Media's* 2004 DVD *Episcopal Evangelism: Not an Oxymoron Anymore*)*

*A number of TEC congregations and organizations (84 on their website to date) are affiliated with the Center for Progressive Christianity, an organization which declares among its defining "8 Points" that they are "Christians who...Recognize the faithfulness of other people who have other names for the way to God's realm, and acknowledge that their ways are true for them, as our ways are true for us."*

*TEC's National Christian Education Conference in 2002 included various shrines to other religions, including Islam, Native American Spirituality, Buddhism and Christianity; at each shrine individuals were encouraged to engage in some activity related to the religion represented. (e.g. wave a feather and say a Native American "ancestor prayer," weave a small prayer mat out of strips of construction paper, or ring a Buddhist prayer bell and do a Buddhist chant.)*

*Two priests (a married couple) in the Diocese of Pennsylvania were exposed as leaders of a local society of Druids, who follow a pre-Christian practice of worshipping the sun and venerating the Earth. The woman priest also affirmed (and may have authored or submitted) a rite called "A Women's Eucharist—A Celebration of the Divine Feminine," which was featured on TEC's Office of Women's Ministries webpage as a liturgy for general use (although deleted after exposed). Their Bishop, Charles Bennison, Bishop of Pennsylvania (see reference elsewhere herein), referred to the situation as "a small error of judgment . . ."*

*Since the early 1990s, cathedral and parish churches have experimented with Sunday liturgies that delve into paganism. One such service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City even included praises to "Ra, the Sun god of Egypt" and "Ausar, ruler of Amenta, the realm of our ancestors." This service was led by the diocesan bishop.*

*In addition, Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori has supported the ministry of now-retired Bishop John Spong (even having him come to her Diocese to instruct her clergy) who stated in his now famous *12 Theses*, published by the author via internet in 1998, among other things:*

*Since God can no longer be conceived in theistic terms, it becomes nonsensical to seek to understand Jesus as the incarnation of the theistic deity. So the Christology of the ages is bankrupt.*

*The view of the cross as the sacrifice for the sins of the world is a barbarian idea based on primitive concepts of God and must be dismissed.*

*There is no external, objective, revealed standard writ in scripture or on tablets of stone that will govern our ethical behavior for all time.*

Lest there be any remaining doubt about TEC's position, at General Convention in 2006, a resolution was presented in the House of Deputies (D058) to affirm Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the only Name by which we are saved. Such resolution never even made it out of the Evangelism Committee and was discharged. This is what TEC's General Convention would not affirm:

Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church declares its unchanging commitment to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the only name by which any person may be saved (Article XVIII); and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge the solemn responsibility placed upon us to share Christ with all persons when we hear His words, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6); and be it further

Resolved, That we affirm that in Christ there is both the substitutionary essence of the Cross and the manifestation of God's unlimited and unending love for all persons; and be it further

Resolved, That we renew our dedication to be faithful witnesses to all persons of the saving love of God perfectly and uniquely revealed in Jesus and upheld by the full testimony of Holy Scripture.

The actions of TEC leadership seek to negate the need for Jesus. Our Lord commands us not to accept such leading, and we therefore cannot.

***The Diocese of Northern Michigan on who Jesus is:***

*"We seek and serve Christ in all persons because all persons are the living Christ. Each and every human being, as a human being, is knit together in God's Spirit, and thus [is] an anointed one – Christ. Jesus of Nazareth reveals this as the basic truth of the human condition" (Diocese of Michigan, Approved by the Diocesan Council, General Convention Deputation, and the Core Team in August 2007). Standing Committee*

***Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori on Life after Death in a 2006 interview with CNN's Kyra Phillips:***

*Question: So what happens after I die?*

*"What happens after you die? I would ask you that question. But what's important about your life, what is it that has made you a unique individual? What is the passion that has kept you getting up every morning and engaging the world? There are hints within that about what it is that continues after you die.*

*"I don't think God cares if we are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and so forth. What matters is a deepening relationship with God." (Dr. Marcus Borg, St. Petersburg Times, February 9, 2005)*

## **B. Holy Bible, Word of God?**

### ***The 2006 Utah General Convention Delegation On Scripture and Morality:***

*"Judgments about ethics by appeal to the Holy Scriptures alone are foreign to our Anglican traditions, which have always included other sources of authority in their deliberations... There is no single biblical morality..."-Episcopal Diocese of Utah-Deputies to General Convention 2006, Leadership, and Bishop (CCO1).*

*"There is no single biblical morality. Few biblical scholars would claim that a monochromatic approach to ethics and human behavior exists in the Holy Scriptures...The Holy Scriptures, written in antiquity, could not and did not foresee many of the ethical questions we face in our age." (A Statement from the Episcopal Diocese of Utah, General Convention, March 13, 2007)*

*"I believe the Bible is a book of poetry with a lot of history in it. I believe the Prayer Book has all that one needs for salvation. I believe that an all-loving God would never send anyone to hell for eternity. I believe he works it out in the end for everyone." (Bishop of Lexington, at meeting with St John's Parish, Versailles, KY, reported in Still On Patrol, March 14, 2008)*

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; *2Tim. 3:16*

A cursory review of critical scholarship on the Bible itself reveals it to be the only book in history of its kind, completely unique. It was written over 1500 years, by 40+ authors from all backgrounds and professions, in multiple places at different times, under different conditions, in different literary styles, and in three separate languages – and yet, the themes and essential doctrines are consistent throughout. It is unique in its distribution (in one year alone, almost 41 million complete Bibles and testaments were distributed by a single Bible society alone). It's unique in being translated, retranslated and paraphrased more than any other book – into more than 2,200 languages (for communication to over 90% of the world's population). It's unique in surviving through the centuries virtually unchanged from its original texts: (i) "no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament." (John W. Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, InterVarsity Press, 1971) and (ii) "Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their *massora* (*parva, magna*,

and *finalis*) they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity—scribes, lawyers, massorettes. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?” (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*, Moody Press, 1953).

The Bible has persevered through persecution and misunderstanding (for example, where subsequent archaeological findings support Bible accounts that had been mistakenly discounted). When put to the test by all forms of authenticity documentation, the Bible excels. For example, there are 643 manuscripts available for the Iliad (widely accepted as valid ancient text) and 24,970 of the New Testament. The rule is that the more manuscripts there are, the more reliable the document; and the shorter the gap between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant copies, the more reliable the document. In the case of Homer, for example, it's a 400-year gap and 643 copies; for Plato, it's a 1,300-year gap and 7 copies, but for the New Testament it's an amazingly small 50 (fragments) to 225 (complete)-year-gap and a whopping 5,366 copies. As to its own internal consistency, after studying apparent discrepancies and alleged contradictions within the Bible, Dr. Gleason Archer, a graduate seminary professor of biblical criticism, concluded that “There is a good and sufficient answer in Scripture itself to refute every charge that has ever been leveled against it. But this is only to be expected from the kind of book the Bible asserts itself to be, the inscripturation of the infallible, inerrant Word of the Living God.” (Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Zondervan, 1982)

This Bible then is a gift to us from our loving God. The truths therein have been revered through the ages, but there have also been persons in every generation who refused to submit to the message. Even today, some people want to ignore parts of the Bible, twist parts of it to fit a pre-existing agenda, or negate its authority completely. Yet those of us who follow Jesus as our Lord on His terms continue to submit ourselves daily as we read and absorb His word to us, learning day-by-day more about who God is and who He expects us to be. TEC, on the other hand, has apparently decided that the Scripture is no authority at all. While claiming that the Bible contains all things necessary to salvation, TEC ignores Jesus' clear proclamation in its pages that He is THE way, THE truth and THE life and that salvation is through Him only. While professing to respect the Bible and preach from it on Sundays, TEC has deleted verses from the annual lectionary cycles that are inconvenient, and completely ignored verses that are counter to its agenda (most obviously on the consistent Biblical admonitions against homosexuality as sin and even abomination in the face of irrefutable evidence that homosexual relationships of all kinds existed in the ancient world).

Consider that in 2004, then-Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold rather arrogantly stated:

*...I don't think the Scripture writers had any notion of homosexuality...So you're dealing with a reality that isn't reflected in Scripture. Is this possibly an instance where we've learned something that takes us beyond the world of*

*the Bible and therefore the texts used don't really apply? (2004  
Beliefnet.com interview)*

Most telling, however, is the attempt by Bishop Keith Ackerman of the Diocese of Quincy, at General Convention in 2003, to have a Resolution (B-001) passed to reaffirm the Bible as the Word of God and normative in all matters concerning faith and morals as originally set forth in the Articles of Religion established by General Convention in 1801. No amendments were offered, and it did not pass . . .

**Original Text of Resolution (B001):** (emphasis added)

*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 74th General Convention affirm that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation," as set forth in Article VI of the Articles of Religion established by the General Convention on September 12, 1801; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 74th General Convention re-affirm that "it is not lawful for the Church to ordain [that is, establish or enact] any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another," as set forth in Article XX of the Articles of Religion established by the General Convention on September 12, 1801; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 74th General Convention affirm that every member of this Church is conscience-bound first of all to obey the teaching and direction of Our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in Holy Scripture in any matter where a decision or action of this Church, or this General Convention, may depart from that teaching; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 74th General Convention reaffirm that the statements known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886, 1888, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, 1979 continue to be true and accurate statements of the faith and policy of this Church, and the Anglican Communion; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 74th General Convention affirm that councils of the Church have, and sometimes will, err but that Our Lord Jesus Christ, present through the person of the Holy Spirit, can and will correct such error; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 74th General Convention direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to forward a copy of this resolution to every diocese within The Episcopal Church.

Statements by leaders within TEC evidence why such a resolution wouldn't be likely to pass:

*And while I think we would all say as our ordination liturgy has us say – those of us who are ordained – that we believe that the Old and New Testament contain all things necessary to salvation, there is a broad interpretation of what precisely that means in actual terms as one looks at various issues*

*and concerns in the life of the church. ... So when we think about church, I think many of us think first of all about that sacramental experience rather than the Book as the absolute determinant of our ecclesial life. (Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: Anglicanism and Global Affairs: The Windsor Report and Beyond - Oct 19, 2004)*

*Statement to an orthodox congregation in Paoli, Pennsylvania, that “the church wrote the Bible and the church could re-write it (Bishop of Pennsylvania, Charles E. Bennison, later inhibited and currently on trial to be deposed for failing to protect his congregation from his brother, also a priest, and a pedophile.*

*Judgments about ethics by appeal to the Holy Scriptures alone are foreign to our Anglican traditions, which have always included other sources of authority in their deliberations. There is no single biblical morality. Episcopal Diocese of Utah - Deputies to General Convention 2006, Leadership, and Bishop (CCO1).*

TEC’s position may have been summed up most accurately by the American Anglican Council (according to their interpretation) in its publication as follows:

Scripture is a collection of stories that must be understood in its historical, cultural and societal context which limits its application and relevance. Scripture is not authoritative nor the revealed word of God but rather metaphorical. It is a product of human beings representing a specific historical ethos. *Equipping the Saints: A Crisis Resource for Anglican Laity*, The American Anglican Council, 2nd Edition

*Much of the information contained in Section I was obtained from the websites and/or publications of those entities referenced, from the excellent resource book by Josh McDowell “The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict” (Thomas Nelson, 1999); “Equipping the Saints: A Crisis Resource for Anglican Laity”, An Education Resource Produced by The American Anglican Council; and “The Montreal Declaration” prepared by Anglican Essentials Canada.*

*Retired Bishop John Shelby Spong on Theism*

*“Theism, as a way of defining God, is dead. So most theological God-talk is today meaningless. A new way to speak of God must be found.” (A Call for a New Reformation), 1998*

## **SECTION II- OTHER CONCERNS**

### **A. TEC- A Legal & Historical Analysis**

*“My sense is that history has come to a point where only one thing will save this venerable faith tradition at this critical time in Christian history, and that is a new Reformation far more radical than Christianity has ever before known and that this Reformation must deal with the very substance of that faith. This Reformation will recognize that the pre-modern concepts in which Christianity has traditionally been carried will never again speak to the post-modern world we now inhabit... It will not be concerned about authority, ecclesiastical polity, valid ordinations and valid sacraments. It will be rather a Reformation that will examine the very nature of the Christian faith itself.” Bishop John Spong (Retired) “A Call for a New Reformation,” (1998).*

#### **1. The History, Composition & Authority of the General Convention**

The gradual and ongoing erosion by TEC leadership of “the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer” and the continuing infiltration of New Age theology into the common life of Episcopal Churches and Dioceses throughout America have raised questions – for the first time since the establishment of the General Convention – about the history, nature, composition and authority of TEC.

The primary question that arises is whether the ultimate authority concerning local Church matters resides with a centralized, national organization or the local Diocese. Since this question has never before been seriously asked, no simple answer is available through legal precedent. Consequently, brief exploration of the legal composition and history of Episcopalians in America is necessary.

The seminal historical event as it affects Anglicanism in America was the American Revolution. When the Colonies won their independence from England, the Church in America was “orphaned”. There were no resident bishops in America; episcopal oversight up to that time had been provided by the Bishop of London under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a mission effort underwritten by the Church of England.

Between 1776 and 1789, most of the Anglican clergy (especially in New England) were sympathetic to the British, and many fled America and returned to England. Consequently, the Churches situated in each of the colonies acted independently of one another. Adherents to “High Church” practices and order (particularly in New England) held fast to the belief that there can be no Church government without a duly consecrated bishop. Accordingly, in or about 1784, Samuel Seabury traveled to England from the Diocese of Connecticut in an effort to receive consecration as America’s first bishop; however, he could not be consecrated by the English bishops, because he could not swear allegiance to the British crown as then required by the Church of England. Seabury then traveled to Scotland, where he was consecrated by non-adjuring Scottish bishops (who required only that the Book of

Common Prayer be used), and he returned to the United States in 1785.

The same year that Seabury sought consecration in England, various clergy and laymen from several of the states met in Philadelphia to “re-constitute” the Church in America. The Church in the southern states and the Church in many of the New England states did not attend this first meeting; instead, they continued to operate independently of one another, adhering to the custom, practice and order of the Church of England within the context of the time.

William White was consecrated Bishop of Pennsylvania in England in 1787, after the repeal of the English law requiring allegiance to the crown. White developed a plan to re-constitute the Church in America that competed with the plans envisioned by Bishop Seabury and those in the churches situated in the deep south. When the first meetings were called during the 1780s, most of the churches in the several states, when adopting resolutions authorizing deputies, limited the authority of the deputations to approve only of those actions that were consistent with the historical faith and practice of the Church, much in the same manner the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth qualified its accession to the authority of the General Convention. In fact, the Virginia Church specifically reserved the right to nullify any act by the General Convention to which it could not agree. These occasions establish that the dioceses existing within the several states operated both before the formation of the General Convention and, in most instances, independently of it.

A critical analysis of the historical development of the General Convention leads to the conclusion that the various dioceses, by voluntary mutual and independent assent, created a federation of dioceses for the purpose of establishing communion with one another, because they share a common doctrine and tradition. It also is clear that, based on this historical analysis, ultimate ecclesiastical authority resides within the Diocese under the leadership of the Diocesan Bishop.

The American Revolution was but the first of events to affect the Church of England as it existed throughout the British Empire. As other colonies achieved independence, the dioceses existing within those colonies established their own federations as local conditions warranted. These federations of dioceses, being in communion with the Church of England and other former Church of England federations, came to be called Provinces, and have voluntarily become a part of what we now know as the worldwide Anglican Communion. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, reiterated in the fall of 2007 the ancient principle that ecclesiastical authority rests within the diocesan structure when he stated that provinces exist to serve the needs of dioceses, and not vice versa.

"However, without forestalling what the Primates might say, I would repeat what I've said several times before - that any Diocese compliant with Windsor remains clearly in communion with Canterbury and the mainstream of the Communion, whatever may be the longer-term result for others in The Episcopal Church. The organ of union with the wider Church is the Bishop and the Diocese rather than the Provincial structure as such."

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams October 14, 2007

The idea expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury is not a new one. During the War Between the States, each diocese situated within the southern states withdrew from the General Convention. They established an alternative Southern coalition of dioceses that operated successfully for four years. No outcries were heard from those dioceses continuing their affiliation with the General Convention, no lawsuits were filed contesting the ownership of property, and no disciplinary action was commenced against any of the southern bishops or priests that separated.

In 1990, the five dioceses situated in the Philippines separated from ECUSA (then the proper name of the American Province) and became a separate and independent Province within the Anglican Communion as the Episcopal Church of the Philippines. The separation was made without threats of lawsuits or deposition of clergy.

The decision confronting the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and other Dioceses is not whether to remain Episcopalian. The question being considered here is whether, as Episcopalians, the constituency of this Diocese will remain in communion with the General Convention of The Episcopal Church. This question is being asked and debated in orthodox dioceses and parishes worldwide. For the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, that question will be answered at its 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention.

The continued erosion of the Faith by the General Convention and its leadership, together with the recent efforts by that leadership through threats and coercion not authorized by Church law to force its New Age theology upon this Diocese, compel the inescapable conclusion that withdrawal from the American federation is mandatory if the constituency of this Diocese is to remain free to embrace, observe and “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (*Jude 1:3-4*).

## **2. The History & Authority of the Office of the Presiding Bishop**

The authority of the presiding bishop of the General Convention has evolved since the establishment of the office in 1789. At that time William White, the first presiding bishop, retained his see in Pennsylvania while, at the same time, performing the duties of presiding bishop. Those duties involved administrative matters, only.

The office exists by virtue of Article I, Section 3 of the TEC Constitution:

At the General Convention next before the expiration of the term of office of the Presiding Bishop, it shall elect the Presiding Bishop of the Church. The House of Bishops shall choose one of the Bishops of this Church to be the Presiding Bishop of the Church by a vote of a majority of all Bishops, excluding retired Bishops not present, except that whenever two-thirds of the House of Bishops are present a majority vote shall suffice, such choice to be subject to confirmation by the House of Deputies. The term and tenure of office

and duties and particulars of the election not inconsistent with the preceding provisions shall be prescribed by the Canons of the General Convention.

Title I, Canon 2, Section 3(a) led to an ecclesiastical expansion of the duties of the presiding bishop by requiring the person elected to that office to resign from the person's previous jurisdiction. Sections 4(a), 4(b) and 4(c) of Canon 2 delineates the specific duties of the office:

**TEC Canons Title I, Canon 2, Sec. 4 (a)** The Presiding Bishop shall be the Chief Pastor and Primate of the Church, and shall:

- (1) Be charged with responsibility for leadership in initiating and developing the policy and strategy in the Church and speaking for the Church as to the policies, strategies and programs authorized by the General Convention;
  - (2) Speak God's words to the Church and to the world, as the representative of this Church and its episcopate in its corporate capacity;
  - (3) In the event of an Episcopal vacancy within a Diocese, consult with the Ecclesiastical Authority to ensure that adequate interim Episcopal Services are provided;
  - (4) Take order for the consecration of Bishops, when duly elected; and, from time to time, assemble the Bishops of this Church to meet, either as the House of Bishops or as a Council of Bishops, and set the time and place of such meetings;
  - (5) Preside over meetings of the House of Bishops; and, when the two Houses of the General Convention meet in Joint Session, have the right of presiding over such Session, of calling for such Joint Session, of recommending legislation to either House and, upon due notification, of appearing before and addressing the House of Deputies; and whenever addressing the General Convention upon the state of the Church, it shall be incumbent upon both Houses thereof to consider and act upon any recommendations contained in such address;
  - (6) Visit every Diocese of this Church for the purpose of:
    - (i) Holding pastoral consultations with the Bishop or Bishops thereof and, with their advice, with the Lay and Clerical leaders of the jurisdiction;
    - (ii) Preaching the Word;
    - and (iii) Celebrating the Holy Eucharist.
- (b)** The Presiding Bishop shall report annually to the Church, and may, from time to time, issue Pastoral Letters.
- (c)** The Presiding Bishop shall perform such other functions as shall be prescribed in these Canons; and, to be enabled better to perform such duties and responsibilities, the Presiding Bishop may appoint, to positions established by the Executive Council of General Convention, officers, responsible to the Presiding Bishop, who may delegate such authority as shall seem appropriate.

As can be seen from even a casual review of the canon, the primary focus of the presiding bishop remains administrative, and those provisions setting forth the presiding bishop's pastoral and ecclesiastical responsibilities do not include any reference to any authority by the presiding bishop to exercise any supervision or oversight of diocesan bishops.

Although the duties of the presiding bishop are primarily administrative, nowhere in the canon is there any provision conferring authority to file civil lawsuits against diocesan bishops, individual parishes, or lay leaders. While Section 5 of the canon authorizes the presiding bishop to appoint a chancellor, the duties of the chancellor set forth in the canon are limited to service "as counselor in matters relating to the [presiding bishop's] office and the discharge of the responsibilities of that office".

The administrative nature of the office is highlighted by the fact that the presiding bishop shares with the president of the House of Deputies the authority to make appointments to standing commissions of the General Convention. *See TEC Canons Title I, Canon 1, Section 2.* In addition, the presiding bishop and the president of the House of Deputies serve as *ex officio* members of the standing commissions.

As the presiding officer of the House of Bishops, the presiding bishop is entitled to be accorded respect for the office held; however, due to the federal construction of TEC, the presiding bishop is prohibited from exercising such ecclesiastical authority as would usurp or diminish the ecclesiastical authority of a diocesan bishop within the diocese. To hold otherwise would undermine the hierarchical diocesan structure that has defined the Episcopal Church in this country since the American Revolution.

Given the polity of the Church, it seems peculiar that much of the leadership in the General Convention have stated that they consider Bishop Iker to be a renegade who is trying to force the withdrawal of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth from TEC. It is outrageous to assert that the issues dividing us are simply a reflection of Bishop Iker's own personal problems with the Episcopal Church. Bishop Iker was ordained by the Church catholic "according to the use of the Episcopal Church", as the Prayer Book and other formularies make clear. Bishop Iker has insisted that, with the Church catholic, he has no problem. In addition, Bishop Iker never has indicated that he has the intent, the authority, or the means to make problems for anyone else. He cannot unilaterally decide whether this Diocese remains in communion with the General Convention and TEC; only the Diocesan Convention, comprised of both clergy and lay delegates from each parish and mission in the Diocese, can do that.

In words that St. Cyprian confided to his clergy in the third century, today Bishop Iker might likewise say: "I made up my mind to do nothing on my own private opinion, without your advice and without the consent of the people."

### **3. What it means to be Episcopalian, Orthodox, and Anglican – A Definition of Terms**

To be an Anglican necessarily requires one to be an Episcopalian. “Episcopalian” and “Episcopal” refer to episcopal polity – the governance of a church by bishops – and adherence to this doctrine. The term is often used to imply Anglicanism and churches belonging to the Anglican Communion. In general usage, an “Episcopalian” is the adherent, while “Episcopal” refers to the church and governance structure.

Anglicanism is rooted in the beliefs and practices of Christian churches, which either have historical connections with the Church of England or maintain a liturgy compatible with it. The word Anglican originates in *ecclesia anglicana*, a mediæval Latin phrase dating to at least AD 1246 meaning “the English Church”. The great majority of Anglicans are members of churches within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

There is no single Anglican Church with universal ecclesiastical authority, since each diocesan unit of the church has full autonomy. As the name suggests, the Anglican Communion is an association of those churches in full communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury. With over seventy-seven million members, the Anglican Communion is the third largest Christian communion in the world, after the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Anglicanism, in its structures, theology, and forms of worship, is commonly understood as a distinct Christian tradition representing a middle ground between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The faith of Anglicans is founded in the Scriptures and the Gospels, the traditions of the apostolic Church, the historic episcopate handed down by bishops ordaining bishops from the original apostles to the present day, the first four Ecumenical Councils, and the early Church Fathers. Anglicans understand the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith and Christian life. Anglicans understand the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the defining statement of Christian doctrine.

Anglicans uphold the catholic and apostolic faith and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. In practice, Anglicans believe that such teachings are revealed most clearly in Holy Scripture, and where such Scripture is silent, in Church tradition (particularly the ancient Creeds), as interpreted in light of scholarship and reason.

Anglicans celebrate the traditional sacraments, with special emphasis being given to the Holy Eucharist, also called Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper or the Mass. The Eucharist is central to worship for most Anglicans as a communal offering of prayer and praise in which the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are proclaimed through prayer, reading of the Bible, singing, and the reception of bread and wine as instituted at the Last Supper.

To be an “orthodox” Episcopalian is to be an adherent to the traditional understanding of Anglican theology as it has been observed throughout the ages. Derived from the Greek *orthodoxos*, the term literally means “of the right opinion”. First used in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century by the Greek Fathers, it refers to those who adhere to the “true Christian doctrine”, as opposed to those who followed heterodox or heretical doctrines.

Since those early years of the Christian experience, orthodox Christians have continued to battle whatever heresies become fashionable in popular culture from time to time. Throughout the ages, those who have contended for the “true Christian doctrine” have faced ridicule, accusations of intolerance, and calumnies untold from those who, in their time, considered themselves “enlightened”. Those struggles continue into this century as well, with TEC leadership not only espousing heretical and revisionist theology that embraces New Age philosophies, but also threatening those orthodox Episcopalians who stand for the “true Christian doctrine” with lawsuits, censure, deposition and excommunication.

#### **4. Church Property Ownership**

In the early 1980s, a decision was made to carve a new Diocese – the Diocese of Fort Worth – from the old Diocese of Dallas. It would include Tarrant County and 23 other western and neighboring counties.

At that same time, there were discussions on how to retitle the property within the new diocese. Prior to this time the property had been held in the name of the Bishop of the Diocese of Dallas or his successor in office. This was traditional in most dioceses of the Episcopal Church and had served well for decades. In these new times, however, there were occasions when the bishop would be away from the diocese for extended periods. Therefore, real estate closings had to be continued until such time as the bishop was back in residence. Today fax machines, e-mails and FedEx would help relieve this problem, but those technologies were not universally available, if at all, in the early 1980s.

A new plan was adopted to retitle the real property of the diocese in the name of a corporation which would be called “Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.”

This not-for-profit corporation was registered with the Texas Secretary of State in February 1983 to hold and service the real property within the diocese. It took a far-sighted and gracious bishop to agree to relinquish the real property traditionally held by him.

It would have been a strenuous task to deed all of the real properties of the diocese from the bishop to the newly formed corporation. Consequently, a lawsuit was filed in the district court of Dallas County, Texas. Its purpose was to obtain a court order that all real properties formerly standing in the name of the bishops of the Diocese of Dallas but now physically located within the 24 counties comprising the new Diocese of

Fort Worth would henceforth be held in the name of Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth. That Judgment was later recorded in all of the 24 counties of the new diocese.

At the first convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth on November 13, 1982, Article 14 of the Constitution was adopted to support the new corporation.

Further, Canon 18 provides that real estate in the Diocese is held by the corporation in trust for the individual parishes, missions and diocesan schools.

The constitutional and canonical provisions of Article 14 and Canon 18 are consistent with most statutes and Court opinions addressing the question of ownership of church property. Legal title is held by the ecclesiastical authority; equitable title is held by the local parish that has contributed the bulk of the funds to buy and build the property.

At the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth held in November 2007, delegates amended Canon 32 to provide a procedure for parishes desiring to separate from the diocese to do so without being required to abandon church property. Court opinions considering church property disputes have uniformly deferred to procedures enacted by the church when determining ownership of property. Canon 32 provides such a procedure.

Claims by TEC of some kind of equitable or beneficial ownership of church property in this diocese are wholly without merit. Several attorneys (including former members of the judiciary) who have examined the constitutional and canonical provisions of both the Fort Worth Diocese and TEC have concluded that, in light of the provisions of Canon 32 and the superior equitable right that each parish has to its property, it is unlikely that any claim to the property by TEC is likely to prevail.

Neither Bishop Iker nor anyone else can “take over” any church property. The property is held for the benefit and use of each individual parish. It was paid for by money raised by local churches. It is a strange injustice to say that property acquired through the efforts of a local parish for the specific purpose of glorifying God and spreading His Kingdom does not belong to that parish simply because the General Convention says so. It is even stranger that such a claim is being made by leaders in the General Convention who constantly insist upon “justice”.

## **B. What lies ahead? Can this happen in the My Parish?**

The revisionists have followed a very detailed plan for many years in attempting to modify the very tenets of our historic orthodox faith and to force their views on orthodox Episcopalians. This has been seen in various positions and reinterpretations of General Convention actions over the years as has been previously stated (revision of the convention's position on ordination of women, ordination of practicing homosexuals, and

consensual non enforcement now of same sex blessings). The lawsuits have started and it is clear that TEC is after property built and paid for by the lay people who actively participate in their Parishes. Remain Faithful believes it is unconscionable that TEC would strive to take away property that is owned by the Diocese for the beneficial use of the Parishes.

The pattern has become quite clear- but one only needs to look at the pending resolutions on “discipline” that are scheduled to be presented at the 2009 General Convention to project how TEC plans to move forward. Essentially, according to the proposed changes to Title I, Canon 17, Section 8 TEC would allow for discipline of lay persons for the first time in TEC history. The proposal would apply to “any person accepting an office in this Church”, which would include all lay positions in the Church of any kind- as well as clergy. The proposal provides for “removal without cause,” which means without a hearing or opportunity for the person or people “charged” to even offer an explanation. If this was not troubling enough- there is a provision under which a person or people may be removed for “a stated intention to disregard [performance of duty] in the future.”

To summarize, if this Canon change is implemented, any lay member or clergy member can be removed from their office without cause at any time by TEC. Are you ready to be disciplined and removed by your Church?

### **C. Women’s Ordination**

It should be clear that our primary issues that are essential to our faith are that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and that the Bible is the revealed and authoritative Word of God. TEC would have you believe the issues at hand are as simple as the difference of opinion on the ordination of women. Once again, this is not the case. Yes, it is a matter of concern to many, and TEC has not adequately responded to the voices of those who cannot in good conscience condone the ordination of women to the Priesthood or to the Episcopate. We do believe, firmly, that no Bishop should be forced by TEC or any other Province within the Anglican Communion to go against their conscience in this matter. TEC is now trying to force Bishops to “comply” with their position. As can be seen from the discussion above on discipline- it is clear if you do not agree 100% with whatever TEC would have you believe, you can be removed from office- whether you are laity or clergy.

### **D. Human Sexuality**

Here again, TEC has attempted to distract from the focus on our essential beliefs by focusing on the issue of human sexuality. Since we are a product of our times, the press typically picks women’s ordination and human sexuality as the “hot topics” that divide our Church. These are topics that pale in comparison to our essential beliefs. However, TEC leaders are pushing alternative lifestyle “rights” upon Episcopalians rapidly. We believe all people are created equal in the eyes of God, and we believe that we are all

sinner. We are not, however, willing to ignore the Bible's injunction against sexual immorality, whether it involves homosexual behavior or heterosexual behavior outside the sanctity of marriage. Either sin is equal in gravity for which forgiveness is available through Christ for those who truly and heartily confess and repent.

It should be noted that TEC is implicitly condoning sexual immorality as it is allowing same sex blessings even though General Convention has never acted explicitly on the subject and even though TEC's own House of Bishop's asked for restraint in this area in October of 2007. Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori reaffirmed her position in support of same sex blessings in a rally in October 2007 in San Francisco. Gene Robinson, an openly practicing homosexual who was consecrated as a Bishop has announced his own plans for a same sex blessing in June 2008.

Remain Faithful joins with the orthodox Anglican Communion and those within TEC who see the error in allowing same sex blessings within our Church. We do welcome all people to come and walk with us in our faith in Christ Jesus, regardless of race, color, or sexual orientation.

#### **E. Some Effects General Convention 2003 and TEC and Changes Over Time**

From 1965 to 2004, TEC membership decreased by 1,367,824 members- approximately 38% decline over the past 40 years

Following General Convention 2003- 22 of 38 Anglican Communion provinces declared broken or impaired communion with TEC

In 2003 and 2004, TEC lost 72,402 members- an average of almost 700 members leaving TEC per week

In 2004, the national average Sunday attendance in TEC was down 3.3% from 2003

TEC comprises less than 3% of the membership of over 77 Million members in the worldwide Anglican Communion

An estimated 200 Churches have disassociated from TEC since 2000, at least 100 of those since 2003

#### **CONCLUSION**

*"Heresy implies orthodoxy, and we have no such thing in the Episcopal Church."*  
*(The Witness, 1995).*

***The Very Rev. William Rankin, former President and Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass***

***Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori on how The Episcopal Church helps people answer questions about the ultimate meaning of life:***

*"Well, we don't come with a prescribed set of answers. We really do encourage people to wrestle with the question" (Arkansas Democrat Gazette, January 2007).*

*"You don't all have to profess exactly the same understandings of the central tenets of the faith," she added. "What's important is to worship together." (Presiding Bishop, San Diego, by Union- Tribune, April 5, 2008*

*"The Bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Los Angeles has issued an apology to Hindus worldwide for what he called "centuries old acts of religious discrimination by Christians, including attempts to convert them. The apology was given in a statement read to over 100 Hindu spiritual leaders at a mass from Right Reverend J John Bruno. The ceremony started with a Hindu priestess blowing a conch shell three times and included sacred chants... Rev. Karen MacQueen, who was deeply influenced by Hindu Vedanta philosophy and opposes cultivating conversions (added) "There are enough Christians in the world," (India Abroad, Posted: Feb 10, 2008.)*

It can clearly be seen from the preceding discussion that the leadership of TEC is leading its flock in a direction contrary to Scripture and the word of God as revealed in the Bible. Many examples have been given that demonstrate not only the existence of this trend but a steady acceleration in its intensity over the past few years. The issues at the heart of the matter are TEC's revisionist views on the nature and divinity of Christ; and on the Bible as the final authority and unchangeable standard for Christian faith and the literary source of all things necessary for salvation. The failure of the General Convention in 2003 and 2006 to pass resolutions reaffirming these fundamental tenets of the Anglican faith as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer and its 39 Articles of Faith point clearly to an organization whose voting majority and leadership has chosen to lead its followers in a direction different to the path prescribed by Jesus some 2000 years ago.

Numerous scriptural references have been cited in this Position Paper to highlight the heretical positions being espoused publicly by the current and previous Presiding Bishops, as well as by some other Bishops who follow the same post-modern line of thinking that seeks to deny the only true path to salvation for humanity. While all of us can agree that the practices of the Church must necessarily evolve to some minor extent over the decades to match the nature of the times - for example in ensuring that plans for land purchases for new churches include sufficient space for parking of cars, or in scheduling weekday morning services early enough to ensure that parishioners can attend worship and still arrive at work on time – the efforts of TEC towards a New Reformation that sees Christ as but one of the many paths to salvation and that sees the Bible as merely an interesting but outdated set of historical documents are tantamount to creating a whole new religion of its own.

It is very informative to note that rather than debate these theological issues with the orthodox dioceses and bishops, the leadership of TEC has chosen the purely secular approach of deposing bishops and priests that disagree with the revisionist view of the faith and of filing lawsuits in an attempt to retain possession of the buildings and land used by parishes that would seek to realign with an orthodox diocese or province. Such a response plainly shows that TEC is aware that its theological positions are untenable, as do its efforts to distract from the essential matters of Christ and the Bible by focusing on issues such as the ordination of women to the priesthood and the matter of human sexuality.

The continued erosion of the Faith by the General Convention and its leadership, together with the recent efforts by that leadership through threats and coercion not authorized by Church law to force its New Age theology upon the Diocese of Fort Worth, among others, compel the inescapable conclusion that withdrawal from the American federation is mandatory if the constituency of any Diocese is to remain free to embrace, observe and “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3-4).

In many ways the choice facing us is similar to the fable of a frog that was placed into a pot of cold water. After a fire was lit below the pot the water temperature slowly increased one degree at a time, but rather than jump out to save himself from danger he chose to remain where he was comfortable. Had he been placed in the pot when the water was already hot he would have jumped out immediately, but since the change in temperature was so gentle as to be almost imperceptible he stayed in the pot until eventually the temperature increased to a point where he was boiled alive. Many Episcopalians are today in the same position as that frog, staying in their comfort zone and ignoring the events surrounding them. The question we have to ask ourselves is whether we want eternal life through Christ the Saviour or would we rather end up in very hot water from which there is no escape?

*(References to TEC and revisionist views and quotes are referenced by italics within this position paper).*