

## APPENDIX H

**THE BISHOP'S ADDRESS**  
**At the Forty-Seventh Annual Convention**  
**Of the Diocese of San Joaquin**  
**St. James' Cathedral, Fresno, California**  
**December 1, 2006**

On trial for his life, the Apostle Paul began his defense before King Agrippa by saying: "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews . . ." (Acts 26:2-3a)

The charges brought against St. Paul were none other than his proclamation of the Resurrection, his belief that a crucified carpenter from Nazareth is Lord, and that this same Risen Lord communicated directly with the Apostle in a personal relationship.

In his closing argument, Paul states: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance." (Acts 26:19,20)

It is precisely this same proclamation that brings us to this 47<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention.

Undoubtedly you are aware that this meeting of the Diocese of San Joaquin is historic. You may have heard someone say that the diocese is seeking to secede from The Episcopal Church. If that is what you think, then you are **wrong!** This convention's business does not begin something new. On the contrary, we in the Diocese of San Joaquin are meeting to state clearly that we intend to go nowhere nor introduce anything new. Instead, we are defending the doctrine, discipline, and worship as this Church has received them. Why, then, are we amending our Constitution? This amending process is the first step in the removal from our Constitution of any reference to The Episcopal Church because --in our opinion-- they have decided to walk apart from the Anglican Communion.

Where, then, is the controversy? The departure from the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church began decades ago. At each step of the way many voices familiar to you withstood the erosion of faith, the lowering of the standards of

morality, and the unilateral action of the Episcopal Church when --without regard for law or order-- it went forward with 11 illegal ordinations in Philadelphia. Unashamed of this action and covering it with the mantel of "prophetic voice" it was cause for official celebration at the General Convention. This same illegal action, violating canon law carried no consequences or discipline for those involved, yet it caused a rift in the Anglican Communion and brought the hope of unity with Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church to a precipice. What began in rebellion ended with canon law that was explicitly stated to be PERMISSIVE not MANDATORY but changed in less than twenty years. Soon, The Episcopal Church --again, illegally-- sent squads of interrogators into dioceses that held to a different theological view without the bishops' permissions. (Somehow it seems to be all right to cross borders when the liberal part of the Church chooses to do so.) This arrogant disregard for canon law and diocesan borders when suited to those in power is only a shadow of what was to come.

When Bishop Spong published a book denying the Virgin Birth, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and Ascension protests to the then Presiding Bishop went unheeded. John Spong continued in his appointment as the Chairman of the committee on Theology for the House of Bishops with the then Presiding Bishop's support. And long after his retirement, Spong has continued to be the unchallenged voice of The Episcopal Church on radio and television. Twice, Bishop Spong has violated the canons by coming into this Diocese of San Joaquin and teaching both in Fresno and Stockton without permission from the bishop. These events, however, are mild by today's standards. With dismay we heard reports of the former Suffragan Bishop of Washington, DC forcing her way into a parish with police escort. Perhaps worse was the Bishop of Connecticut smashing down a parish priest's office door to gain entry in order to steal his computer and private files. No matter how outrageous all this is, this is not what has brought us to the crisis The Episcopal Church is in today.

Despite "eleventh hour" meetings with the Archbishop of Canterbury and specific pleas from Primates around the world, not to elect Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, the delegates of that electing Convention chose to ignore such calls for restraint. And, lest we think sexuality --or more specifically homosexuality-- is the issue, we need to put this to rest immediately. The concern has to do with the authority of Scripture which does not condone the practice of homosexuality. The REAL ISSUE has to do with the foundation of our faith as Anglicans. Liberals who would vote for Robinson didn't understand this. They saw the election of a man living with a male partner as a social justice

issue in the same way that they understood overturning the 2000 year practice of a male priesthood. It is likely that no-one was more surprised by the firestorm from around the world and from many denominations apart from the Anglican Communion than were those who voted for Robinson. Even if the liberals who have control of The Episcopal Church didn't understand what they did in 2003 everyone else did!

Before that General Convention in Minneapolis in 2003, urgent requests came from around the world asking Gene Robinson to follow the example of the Rev. Jeffrey John who had stepped down from being consecrated Bishop of Rochester in England because he, too, was a homosexual though celibate. Robinson refused. The General Convention confirmed his election . . . bringing forth the first emergency meeting of the Primates called by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Along with the 37 other Primates, our Presiding Bishop signed the document saying that to go forward with the Consecration of Robinson would "tear at the fabric of the Anglican Communion." This IS the definition of schism! Three weeks later after signing the document pleading with The Episcopal Church not to go on with the New Hampshire Consecration, Frank Griswold did just that.

If we are looking for a date when the Episcopal Church announced it was "walking apart", leaving, or going into schism, 2003 is the year.

Did believers within The Episcopal Church submit to this in silence? Some did. Many have stated clearly by their departure from the Church – "enough is enough." Over the past decades as the population of the United States has grown, The Episcopal Church has shrunk from 4 million members to 2.5 million and is now down to 870 thousand estimated to be in Church on Sunday. Many did NOT remain silent. A shadow General Convention met in Plano, Texas with some 4,000 in attendance. Through the then Cardinal Ratzinger Pope John Paul II sent a personal letter of encouragement to those who gathered. The Anglican Communion Network was founded by some 13 dioceses. Ministries to individuals and parishes located in hostile dioceses began. All recognized that something HAD to be done! For years organizations such as: The Evangelical and Catholic Mission, Episcopalian United, the Episcopal Synod of America—now Forward in Faith, North America—and the American Anglican Council... worked tirelessly to turn the tide of apostasy flooding into the Episcopal Church. These organizations along with others longed to see the Episcopal Church repent and were willing to "stay in" to work for a transformation that would never come. Consequently, Continuing Churches were founded to give a place for those leaving The Episcopal Church. Many –knowing they could not in good

conscience remain in an institution moving further and further away from a Biblical foundation still held back –not wanting to sacrifice their place as members of the world-wide Anglican Communion. Thus a second wave of departures began. These people sought refuge from Overseas Anglican Bishops and Provinces in Africa, South America, and Asia. (In deed, some of those people are among our visitors this week-end.)

Meeting in intense sessions, the Primates issued what has come to be called the Windsor Report asking The Episcopal Church to express its regrets for the actions of the 2003 General Convention and the consecration of Gene Robinson. Yet, even this mild discipline was rejected. Last summer the House of Deputies voted it down so that it couldn't come to the house of Bishops.

On the last day of General Convention in Columbus, Ohio a watered down substitute “regret” cobbled together in the middle of the night barely seemed to pass in the house of Bishops. So uncertain was the hand vote, the Bishop of Springfield called for a roll call vote. He was told to sit down. The vote had been taken. While that same vote was being cast later on that last afternoon by the House of Deputies, the Bishop of Washington, DC stood out in front of the Deputies’ Hall with some twenty other bishops announcing that he, and they, would ignore this vote. He was prepared to go on permitting same-sex blessings. It is not surprising, therefore, that the General Convention ended in no small chaos. The failure of the General Convention to respond adequately to the Windsor Report did not create the schism, it simply confirmed it.

Only after the General Convention did most of us learn that the newly elected Presiding Bishop not only rejected the Windsor Report of the Primates but that she had continued to allow same-sex blessings in Nevada while bishop there. Her statements saying clearly that Jesus is **not the only way** to the Father caused further consternation. Her public statements, both written and televised, have caused one theologian to discern five different schools of heresy forming her thought and faith. On the day before this Convention, in a last minute attempt to hold together a failing institution, Presiding Bishop Shori has proposed the creation of what is now being called a “Primatial Vicar” as a substitute for the requested Alternative Primatial Oversight. Bishop Duncan of Pittsburgh has commended the national leadership of The Episcopal Church for realizing that the time has come for a structural change. Nevertheless, he rightly points out: “At first glance what is proposed is neither Primatial, nor Oversight, nor is it an Alternative to the spiritual authority of one who, by both teaching and action, has expressly rejected the Windsor Report and its recommendations.”

How sad this all is. Time does not permit a rehearsal of any more events. What IS important is that we in San Joaquin took note long before last summer's General Convention that The Episcopal Church would depart – not solely in justifying sexual behavior specifically rejected by God's Word but by endorsing "Core Doctrine" so drastically reduced by judges in a sham trial of a bishop years earlier, Christianity itself had been trivialized. It was easy to foresee what the General Convention would do in 2006. For this reason and THIS REASON ALONE, a letter was written on April 8<sup>th</sup> this year and sent to faithful Primates around the world from your Diocesan Council, Bishop, and later from the Standing Committee. In it we simply asked that no matter what the General Convention did, we wanted to be recognized as an orthodox, faithful diocese still within the Anglican Communion. This request for recognition of who we have always been so infuriated the liberal leadership of the Episcopal Church that a systematic harassment of me personally began to take place almost daily at the General Convention. Bishops who had not talked with me for years were sent over to my table to try to talk some "sense" into me.

It was obvious that they were reading dark motivations and goals into three different documents of the diocese that simply were not there. When bullying and intimidation seemed to fail it was but a short journey of 24 hours from the conclusion of General Convention to bringing charges against me by four bishops in California. Their behavior, obviously supported by others in leadership on the East Coast, caused many in this diocese to take a serious look for the first time at the storm gathering on the horizon. The storm? The Episcopal Church has twisted the truth by continuously manipulating the press into reporting a caricature of who we are and what we are standing for:

The Episcopal Church walks apart from the Anglican Communion but accuses US of leaving the Church.

The Episcopal Church challenges and publicly denies core Christian doctrine but accuses ME of breaking vows to uphold the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church as it has received them.

The Episcopal Church labels us as divisive simply because we would rather remain faithful Anglican Christians instead of complacently accepting the new religion which the General Convention has created.

The Episcopal Church heralds justice for those who act sexually outside of Holy Matrimony while inflicting INJUSTICE on those who uphold God's Word, Sacraments and His historic Church.

With Bishop Jack Iker and the Diocese of Fort Worth calling for Alternative Primatial Oversight, many of us came to realize that was precisely what we had asked for on April 8<sup>th</sup> without having the terminology available to us.

By September this year meetings of cataclysmic importance for the well-being of the Anglican Communion and of The Episcopal Church happened in rapid succession. In New York City it became apparent to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates that the American Church was – as Bishop McNaughton of Texas announced some fifteen years ago – that there were two churches, two separate religions under one roof. It was also obvious to all that the chasm between these two churches could neither be bridged nor healed from within The Episcopal Church.

The Diocese of Texas welcomed 22 bishops who agreed that the Windsor Report of the Primates was the only way forward and that General Convention had failed to respond adequately to the mildest request of the Primates.

The Primates of the Global South met in Rwanda to address many and varied problems of their own but – out of concern for the Anglican Communion and believers in The Episcopal Church – they turned their attention to us and ended by setting up a Steering Committee of their leaders from around the world, among them: John Chew, Archbishop of Singapore; Drexel Gomez of the West Indies and the Caribbean; Gregory Venables, Primate of the Southern Cone, South America; and three Archbishops from Africa, including Peter Akinola of Nigeria as Chairman. These outstanding leaders took it upon themselves to meet with 10 of us dioceses in Virginia last month, and there they asked three things of us:

- 1) What were we prepared to give up in order to achieve unity among ourselves?
- 2) A single spokesman to be elected by us to speak for all the orthodox.
- 3) Submission to their authority and –as a demonstration of that– flexibility to allow them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to prepare a way for us to live in a separate ecclesiastical structure which would eventually provide a way home for many Anglicans

**who had left The Episcopal Church for conscience sake, and many individuals and parishes that had been isolated in hostile dioceses to be part of the world-wide family of the Anglican Communion.**

Working independently of this Virginia meeting three of our Rural Deans: Frs. Dan Martins, Jim Snell, and Richard James came up with a substitute for the originally proposed changes to our diocesan Constitution. I believe this was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for their work perfectly responds to the requests of the Primates that we remain flexible and allow them to provide the necessary leadership for us. Not only do I commend their work to you, I passionately believe what will be introduced to us at this Convention is a way for us to remain faithful to the Word of God, be set free from intimidation, and secure our present position as a faithful diocese of the Anglican Communion.

This initial vote does not separate us from The Episcopal Church but positions us to respond positively to the Primates. It leads the way for other like-minded dioceses to become part of a structure that remains true to all that The Episcopal Church has received in the past and which, tragically, the present institution and its leadership have chosen to walk apart from.

Your vote and the action of this Convention may be seen as historic within Anglicanism but-- ultimately and spiritually-- it is only doing what St. Paul did before King Agrippa – remaining obedient to the heavenly vision – that enables us to follow in his footsteps of proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ and recognizing that His words are spirit and truth. By being faithful in these ways we will discover our lives coming into an ever deepening harmony with God's revelation of Himself and eager – when we find anything that proves to be a wedge between us and Him – to repent.

How grateful I am that we are not alone! We share this vision in common with thousands in this country along with Bishop Robert Duncan, Moderator of the Network, our fellow Network bishops and dioceses, as well as Primates around the world who continually support and encourage us as we seek not only the Lordship of Christ but to remain faithful in the Anglican Communion.

The Rt. Rev. John-David Schofield