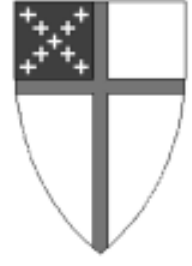




PEPtalk



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Second church joins Calvary's lawsuit

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wilkinsburg, has joined the lawsuit brought by Calvary Episcopal Church against Bishop Robert W. Duncan and other diocesan leaders to protect church property from possible appropriation by actions of the bishop and governing bodies of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

A petition to intervene in the case was sent by St Stephen's to the Court several weeks ago and was accepted by Judge James at a hearing March 17.

"St. Stephen's vestry voted to join the lawsuit because it wants to make clear that it shares Calvary's goal of protecting the unity and integrity of the property in this diocese, and because St. Stephen's wants to protect its own property interests," said the Rev. Diane Shepard, rector of St. Stephen's. "The vestry disagrees with the formation of the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes and with the recent actions of Bishop Duncan and Diocesan Council to have this diocese join that Network." She added:

"It is helpful and not too late for other parishes to join the lawsuit. We at St. Stephen's worked long and hard to make a good decision on this matter. It was not easy. We have made this decision with regret and sadness that the divisions in our diocese have come to such an extreme and threatening point. We are grateful that Calvary has pressed ahead here and laid the groundwork through the lawsuit for some action that might yet bring relief."

The lawsuit remains pending in Allegheny County Common Pleas Court, awaiting trial possibly this spring, after pre-trial pleadings and discovery.

Bishops address Network

Episcopal bishops, after grappling for three days with the challenge presented by dissidents led by Bishop Robert W. Duncan, issued a policy statement that appears to undercut the dissident Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes.

The bishops' statement was issued March 23, during the spring retreat of the House of Bishops in Navasota, Texas. The statement, titled "Caring For All The Churches," is described as "A

response. . . to an expressed need of the Church."

The "expressed need" is the desire of "orthodox" parishes to opt for "oversight" from like-minded bishops, rejecting pastoring by their own bishops who may have voted at the church's General Convention to consecrate Bishop Gene Robinson in New Hampshire and also to approve rites to bless same-sex marriages.

The new Network's stated goal is to implement an oversight system that would allow a dissident parish not just to reject pastoring by its home bishop, but actually to separate from the diocese and become permanently attached to a bishop in another diocese – even a diocese outside the Episcopal Church, USA. Conversely, the Network's sys-

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Parishes opt for ECUSA

Christ Church, North Hills, and Holy Cross Episcopal, Homewood, have adopted resolutions of loyalty to ECUSA and rejection of the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes. (Story on Page 6.)

Two bishops - two views of the church

This issue of PEPtalk features the differing views of two Episcopal bishops on the state of our church.

Pittsburgh Bishop Robert W. Duncan, in a March 14 sermon at St. John Shaughnessy Anglican Church in Vancouver, B.C., described the Episcopal Church, USA as shaken by "turmoil and tumult." Relating a recent visit to Uganda, Bishop Duncan invoked the memory of martyrs whose sacrifices helped make Uganda "the most Anglican country in the world."

Bishop Arthur B. Williams, Jr., retired suffragan bishop of Ohio, in a March 7 sermon at Calvary Episco-

pal Church in Shadyside, offered parishioners a tribute to "Classic Anglicanism," which he described as "a big house with one room for all sorts and conditions of believers." Commending Calvary for its role in "preserving in this corner of the vineyard what I would call 'Classic Anglicanism,'" Bishop Williams defined the character of any Episcopal Church that defends church unity amid diversity of believers.

Texts of both sermons, edited slightly for length, begin on Page 3. Bishop Duncan preached at both 9 and 11 a.m. services. The text herein is from the earlier service.

PEP members carry unity plea to Diocesan Council

PEP's campaign for church unity reached the heart of the Pittsburgh Diocese when a delegation of PEP members attended the Diocesan Council's monthly meeting March 2 to present a letter calling on the Council to rescind its February 3 vote to affiliate the di-

ocese with the new Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes.

The letter – titled “A Call for Unity” – was signed by 149 parishioners of 20 parishes all over the Diocese, including many non-PEP members. It contended that Council voted to join the Network without properly informing either itself or parishes in the diocese about the nature of the Network and the possible effects of affiliation with it.

“That you agreed to vote at that time, with so little notice, and with no informed discussion, either among yourselves or with your constituent parishes, was an abdication of the evaluation and oversight that the Council is charged to exercise over the policies, programs, work and mission of the diocese,” the letter said.

“For these reasons, the vote you took on February 3 should not be considered final. The vote should be rescinded, and the question of affiliation to the Network should be subjected to the scrutiny of the parishes and parishioners who stand to be affected by it.”

The letter also urged that before any new vote, the diocese should obtain a legal opinion from the chancellor of the Episcopal Church, USA, whether the Network's proposed operations will comply with the Church's Constitution and Canons.

Council President Battle Brown, introducing the letter toward the end of the Council's meeting at Trinity Cathedral, said he would refer it to the diocesan chancellor (its lawyer) for a legal opinion on issues raised by the letter, and that any action by the Council would be deferred pending the chancellor's opinion.

Brown then invited remarks by Rachel Nicholson, a member of St. Thomas Church in Canonsburg and one of the PEP members attending the meeting. Rachel, recognized for five minutes, began by noting that a memo issued by Brown after Council's vote stated that the issues raised by the Network had been addressed in the Diocesan conventions last year. In fact, she

said, convention resolutions dealt only with activities of the church at large. “There was nothing about affiliation with this group,” she said, adding that statements by Network leaders indicated that it “clearly is schismatic.”

“It's important to have a discussion on this,” she said. “You should have no fear to allow the people you represent and govern to be able to discuss this and to have a say about what the diocese is doing. The light of day and sunshine are best. Take it back until such time as the people out there tell you what they want.”

Council member the Rev. Moni McIntyre, rector of Holy Cross Church in Homewood and a PEP member, then spoke up to call for a correction in the minutes of Council's February meeting. She noted that the minutes stated that Council discussed the charter of the Network.

“No discussion of the charter took place,” she said. “We didn't even pull it out. The only discussion was on the process of passing it, not on the document itself.” She noted further that the Council was told by Bishop Duncan that “this must pass.”

After some discussion, the Council members accepted a revision to the minutes offered by Assistant Bishop Henry Scriven stating that Council discussed “the process of dealing with the issue of the organizational charter of the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes.”

Council member Mark Peelor, of Christ Church, North Hills, and a PEP member, then inquired: “Isn't it possible to put the decision (to join the Network) on hold,” pending further discussion.

President Brown pointed out that a motion to rescind the previous vote would have to be made by a member who had voted yes on the matter, and a two-thirds vote would be required. Peelor had been one of four members voting against the Network affiliation and therefore was not eligible to make a motion to rescind. No other member volunteered to do so.

PEPtalk

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'On the Way with Jesus'

'Classic Anglicanism' searches for God's truth

A Sermon by
The Rt. Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Jr.
Bishop Suffragan of Ohio, retired

Delivered at
Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh
Second Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2004

"Nevertheless today, tomorrow and the next day I must be on my way." (Luke, 13:33)

This verse that we have just heard from the Gospel of Luke is amazing in its simplicity. It indicates something of Jesus' intention in going up to Jerusalem in the kind of terms he himself would have used. "Today, tomorrow and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem." Thus he speaks of himself as a prophet whose purpose it is to lay down his prophetic challenge at the very heart, the very center of the military, legal, and religious powers, and face the consequences of doing so!

This theme of being "on the way" is doubly applicable for you who call Calvary your church home. Firstly, if the Lenten season is understood as a pilgrimage to Good Friday and Easter – and it is – then we are on that same way with Jesus. The Gospel tells us that in the midst of his ministry in Galilee he turned to his followers and with a new determination he said to them, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem." Luke says, "He set his face to go to Jerusalem." So the call to us on this Second Sunday of Lent is to be a pilgrim and to be on this Way with Jesus. This is the Lenten vocation to all who would call themselves Christians. When Jesus says to us, "I am the Way!" – what is that way for us? – even when we have heard Jesus' own lament, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! The city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!"

I say being on the way is doubly applicable for this parish of Calvary. Today, tomorrow and the next day you must be on your way. No matter the threat, no matter the isolation, no matter the criticism this parish must stay on the way of preserving in this corner of the vineyard what I would call "Classic Anglicanism" – the heritage of our Episcopal Church.

What do I mean by "Classic Anglicanism?" A seminary classmate of mine, Bill Countryman, now Professor of New Testament at one of our seminaries, likes this phrase, "Classic Anglicanism." We in the Episcopal Church were shaped

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'Tumult and turmoil' fracture church unity

A Sermon by
The Rt. Rev. Robert W. Duncan
Bishop of Pittsburgh

Delivered at
St. John Shaughnessy Church, Vancouver, B.C.
Third Sunday in Lent, March 14, 2004

"After this, the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come." (Luke, 10:1)

The theme of what I want to say today is about being sent on ahead of him, being sent on ahead of Jesus, about being the preparation rather than the main event.

I want to say some things about my own life in these last months, about the turmoil and the tumult of the days and weeks and months since the fifth of August in the American Church, the day on which the House of Bishops ratified the election of Gene Robinson to be Bishop Coadjutor of New Hampshire. That action is not about the presenting issue which is about human sexuality, about the boundaries of what God intends for sexual relations in his creation. It's not principally about that, it's really about the word of God, and the authority of Scripture, and whether Jesus can be trusted at his word, and I want to say to you that Jesus can be trusted at his word, and his word is reliable.

That's fundamentally what this whole thing is about. And the tumult and the turmoil come when a Synod says what's false is true, and what's unrighteous is righteous. Then there's nothing but tumult and turmoil for God's people, and indeed for the society around.

Everything changed in August for us. We moved, essentially within church life, from peacetime to wartime. We moved in a way in which unity, which we'd always striven for, was no longer possible within the body of Christ — that kind of unity which only Christ can give — and when some part separates itself from Christ then that unity is fractured, and that's the situation in which we've been living.

It's a season of all kinds of plans abandoned. In our missionary diocese in the last decade we've had growth in our churches every year, we've had growth in the number of baptized people, in the resources of the parishes. We've actually had growth in parishes, new congregations being formed, but with August of 2003, we've sensed that all of that is suspended for a time, as churches fracture, as people split, as folks have to declare where they stand.

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‘Classic Anglicanism’

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by a different kind of reformation than the ones that took place in the 16th century outside of England. We could have gone the way of the reformed Roman Catholicism that came out of the Council of Trent. We could have gone the way of the reformation in Geneva, which was represented in England by the Puritans. It would have been enticing to go either way because both of these 16th century traditions, Roman Catholicism and Puritanism, believed that they knew the mind of God better than others. They believed they were expert in determining what was perfect and what was imperfect in God’s Church.

Richard Hooker, the chief 17th century theologian of the English Reformation, had this to say in a religious tract at that time. “Two things there are which greatly trouble us in these times – one is that the Church of Rome cannot err, another is that Geneva will not err.”¹

It is in this that Classic Anglicanism distinguishes itself. We say of ourselves, “We do not expect the church to have a detailed and certain knowledge of the mind of God. No one will ever possess a complete and detailed account of God’s will.”² It is enough for us that the search for God’s truth takes place in the ongoing conversation in the ongoing life of the faithful community.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, now the retired Archbishop of Southern Africa, loves being an Anglican. When asked about how we Anglicans go about the business of being the church, he said, in his inimitable way, “This work can truly be an untidy business!”

Elizabeth the First of 16th Century England had to deal with the “untidiness” of the English Reformation. So she focused with her bishops and theologians on maintaining the unity of the Church in England. She did this by creating a big house with one room for all sorts and conditions of believers. This Anglican characteristic prompted Bishop Hensley Henson, former Bishop of Durham (1920-1939), to describe us as “the roomiest church in Christendom.”

Friends, what’s held us together for over 400 years is this over-arching – this foundational concern for maintaining the life and conversation of the faithful community of God. We believe it is enough conviction that God’s Holy Spirit will continue to work with us in the unity – not uniformity – of the church to guide us towards God’s truth.³ We believe, therefore, in the primacy of Holy Scriptures, but not as some kind of rulebook or divine blueprint for living. We read the Bible through the lenses of the Church’s Tradition, our experience and our human reason convinced that, in the

context of prayer, God will encounter us in its pages. The purpose of scripture is not to include some while excluding others, but rather that we should hear our God calling us into relationship through God’s Son Jesus who is for us Lord and Savior.

We cannot surrender to the dominant legalism of American Christianity inherited from our New England Puritan forefathers and foremothers.⁴ Nor can we surrender to the legalism of those within our Episcopal Church who claim to already know the mind of God so clearly that they will not go on maintaining the unity of the church, the holiness of conversation, and the diversity of God’s people. (Let us recognize that when the Anglican Archbishop of Nigeria says that he will boycott any meeting attended by our Presiding Bishop he closes down the possibility of holy conversation. Recognize also that the purpose of constitutional amendments and “confessing churches” is to close down conversation.)

So when I say the leaders and people of Calvary Church need to be “on your way” – it’s the way of the Classic Anglican I am speaking about. As you are

on your way today, tomorrow and the next day, worry not that some will label you “revisionist,” “modernist,” “heterodox” or whatever. One person’s revisionist is another person’s reformer. It was the so-called revisionists of old who dared to say the earth was not flat and that the sun did not revolve around this planet.

Reformers told us slavery, segregation, and apartheid are evils and repugnant to the Word of God and that women should be heard in the church, sit on its councils, and, indeed, be ordained to its leadership. It was the reformers who believed that God would be edified if the worship of God were offered in the language the people spoke. It was the reformers who suggested that some marriages no longer reflected the love of God; that some couples should have the opportunity to love again, and that their new relationship should be blessed by the church.

Today Bishop Gene Robinson will be installed as Bishop of New Hampshire – and the conversation will continue on 60 Minutes this evening with our Presiding Bishop and others.⁵ We in the House of Bishops know the Presiding Bishop well enough to know that he will speak about keeping us all around the Table, about the great diverse center in our church, about holy conversation, about the place of reconciliation at the heart of the church’s mission and about the search for God’s truth in all this.

I have to say frankly that as you here stay on the way “today, tomorrow and the next day” you cannot know all that is in store. Sometimes it’s difficult to believe that God has a plan for each of us. But be assured that as Jesus moves

‘We read the Bible through the lenses of the Church’s Tradition, our experience and our human reason convinced that, in the context of prayer, God will encounter us in its pages.’

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‘Tumult and Turmoil’

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And my plans as bishop are radically altered every day since the fifth of August. We had liberals in our diocese who pled with me for years to get into the news, to make the Episcopal Church just as well known in our part of the world as the Roman Catholic Church is, and you know what? — their plea and their prayer have been answered. But the liberals aren't happy that I'm as much in the news as I am. There's really a bright side to what's happened. I'm able to say this is really about the love of God and how vast that love is and anybody who wants to come to him he'll receive; it's just that when he receives you he asks you to love him back in his way, according to his order and his discipline.

The church is saying that we don't have to change, we don't have to be transformed, we don't have to be made different, we don't have to live in a way that's apart from the world. We can be in the world, the church is attempting to say now, not only in it but of it. We say we must be in it but we can't be of it. No one ever imagined that the church authorities would go astray and that the people of God would have to figure out how to be the church in the midst of an errant church.

It's in that context that I was invited to go to the enthronement of Henry Orombi, the new archbishop of Uganda, on St. Paul's Day, the 25th of January just past. I was actually asked to be there in place of the American presiding bishop, because the church in Uganda in its boldness and its zeal simply said what's happened in the Episcopal Church is unacceptable, it's un-Christian, it's not speaking the truth; and they uninvited the presiding bishop and his entourage, and said no thanks to American money, and they invited me.

I decided to go to Uganda to encourage our people, because I knew if the Ugandans wanted to put me in that place, it was a sign for them that they were putting them in that place, and that faithfulness would be recognized all around the Communion, that global Anglicanism was not going to let us go. I went to encourage others, and what happened in Uganda was that God really wanted to speak to me. God wanted to give me, I think, a new understanding of the text that I read to you and that's from our Gospel reading this morning, those opening words of the tenth chapter of Luke: "After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come."

We often think about the way in which we're to follow Jesus. But there's a sense in which we're actually to go out and precede him, to go before him, where he's about to come. And I think there are few places in modern Christendom that

better illustrate the point than the church in Uganda. As I was lined up in this marvelous procession to go into Namirembe Cathedral, the procession stopped not far from a small cemetery, and buried just inside the gate to that cemetery is James Hannington.

Hannington went out as the first bishop of Equatorial Africa in the fall of 1885. He crossed Lake Victoria from what's now Tanzania to what's now Uganda. He landed on the shore with his companions, and was there met by the guard of King Mwanga, and he and his companions were tortured for a week and executed on the 27th of October in 1885. Think about the plans that Hannington must have had, what it was he'd come to Uganda to do. His last words were, "Go tell King Mwanga, I pave the way to Uganda with my blood." That's all he was able to do, but that surely was not his plan.

What God began to say to me as I prepared to go into the cathedral was that sometimes we serve God best when we sacrifice our own plans. Things don't always go as we had anticipated. But those who will go before Jesus, into every town and village where he is about to come, will surely prepare his way.

The other great story associated with Uganda is the martyrs of Uganda. It happened in the spring of 1886, on June the third, Ascension Day. They were pages of that same king Mwanga, who

had come to claim Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior. Anglican and Roman Catholic, thirty-four of them, most were in their twenties, as young as 14 and as old as 35. The senior among them, Charles Lwanga, was 24 — he'd catechized all the rest. They were wrapped in sticks, in dry wood, piled up and burned alive. They died, it is said, singing the hymns they'd learned as catechumens.

Their plans for their lives must have been very different, having just met that new king Jesus and been promised a new, fulfilling, abundant life with him. They were given ample opportunity to escape. One of those boys who were martyred was the nephew of the executioner, but they wouldn't run away from what they knew was certain death. They gave up their plans, and of course Uganda was changed. It's now, brothers and sisters, the most Christian country in Africa, and it's the most Anglican country in the world. No wonder. With Tertullian we know that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

The final piece in this is that seated at the right hand side of the altar in Namirembe Cathedral I was reminded of the fourth archbishop of Uganda, Janani Luwum. He served as archbishop only three years, before Idi Amin personally executed him, in February of 1977. I know Luwum must have had great plans too. But he had to give them all up to be faithful to Jesus.

The point I'm making here, for all of us who serve in

‘Let’s look at the cloud of witnesses, literally martyrs, who surround us, cheering from the side, in the stadium of this conflict.’

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difficult times, is we have not sacrificed to the point of shedding blood, so never mind, let's get on with it. Let's look at the cloud of witnesses, literally martyrs, who surround us, cheering from the side, in the stadium of this conflict. Let's admit and even grieve that so many of our plans and so many of the nice things that we imagined would be true for us and for our children in our day and in this part of the world, that those things are all gone now in this tumult and turmoil.

But let's remember that we're not the main event. Jesus is. Our task is to be sent on ahead of him into every place where he is about to come. And if the church were clearer that that was its role, not its grand plans or great comforts; if the church were clearer that it was its role to go on ahead of him into every town and village where he was about to come, casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, saying "The kingdom of God has come near to you;" if we were to give up our plans, which is what we're being asked to do just now, recognizing that it's not about us, but it is about him, that he is the one with the plan, and if he can do it with the failed ministries of James Hannington and those young martyrs and that archbishop who stood and was executed; if we could stand with them, his plan would come.

His plan for Uganda was a better plan than any of those martyrs had. And the truth my brothers and sisters is that his plan for us is far better than any plan we could have.

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along his way he wants each of us also to move along our way. May God bless you all on your way and in your particular calling to be the church in this place. Let us pray the words of one of the church's great mission hymns:

Come, labor on.

Claim the high calling angels cannot share—

To young and old the gospel gladness bear:

Redeem the time; its hours too swiftly fly.

The night draws nigh.

Come, labor on.

No time for rest, till glows the western sky,

Till the long shadows o'er our pathway lie,

And a glad sound comes with the setting sun,

“Servants, well done.”

Notes:

1. Richard Hooker. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Vol. 1, P.91)

2. L. William Countryman. “Dealing with Conflict as Anglicans”

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. CBS 60 Minutes opted not to air this segment.

More parishes resolve to stay with ECUSA

Christ Episcopal Church, North Hills, and Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Homewood, have joined the growing number of parishes that have adopted resolutions affirming their determination to remain within the Episcopal Church, USA, and to reject affiliation with the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, the newly-formed organization headed by Bishop Robert W. Duncan.

The Christ Church vestry, at its meeting March 9, voted 10-2 to adopt the following resolution:

“Christ Episcopal Church, North Hills is a parish comprised of members with beliefs spanning the entire spectrum of opinions on the recent issues at the heart of the controversy between the Episcopal Church, USA and the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes. We wish to continue to worship together in an environment of loving and welcoming tolerance and respect for each other.

“Christ Episcopal Church, North Hills, as a member of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, is committed to remaining part of the Episcopal Church, USA, to which our Diocese belongs.

“Our parish needs no affiliation other than with the Episcopal Church, USA and the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. Therefore, we decline to be considered a member of the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes.

“We will continue to pay our assessments to the Episcopal Church, USA and to the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. We request that none of our Diocesan assessment be used to support the Network's activities.”

The Holy Cross vestry, on March 22, adopted the same words, with one change: in place of the second sentence of the resolution's first paragraph (above), the Holy Cross vestry stated simply: “We choose to be an inclusive parish.”

Similar resolutions have been adopted by Christ Church, Indiana; St. Brendan's Episcopal Church, Franklin Park; Church of the Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, and St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Canonsburg.

Bishop skips Council meeting to lead Network committee

Bishop Duncan usually participates in monthly meetings of the Diocesan Council, of which is an ex-officio member. But when the Council gathered at Trinity Cathedral for its monthly meeting March 2 — at which it heard PEP's request that it rescind its vote to affiliate with the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes — the bishop was at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Sewickley, where he presided over a meeting of that same Network.

“We accomplished an enormous amount of organizational work and are committed to rapid forward movement,” he said in a statement at the end of a three-day session of the Network's steering committee.

Bishops address Network

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tem would enable a conservative diocese to adopt conservative parishes emigrating from other dioceses, as was suggested by some speakers at last year's annual convention of the Pittsburgh Diocese.

A key element of the Network plan is that dissident parishes would not have to inform their bishops of their plans or get permission to receive oversight from outside bishops.

The bishops' statement did not mention the Network, but it addressed key points of the Network's plan.

Bishop Duncan and other Network leaders have cited a statement by Anglican primates last October, calling for the church "to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight of dissenting minorities," a phrase reiterated by Duncan on March 16 when he spoke in support of a confirmation service in Akron, Ohio, conducted by six dissident bishops who acted without notifying the Bishop of Ohio.

The bishops cited the same phrase, but added preceding words in the same sentence of the primates' statement: "that bishops must respect the autonomy and territorial integrity of dioceses and provinces other than their own."

And in implicit reference to another key element of the Network plan, the bishops stated: "In our Episcopal Church polity, 'oversight' does not confer 'jurisdiction.'"

Instead of the "adequate oversight" demanded by the Network, the bishops designed a system of "Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight," which also would negate key parts of the Network plan.

Where the Network plan envisions that a dissident parish would be able secretly to negotiate an alliance with a bishop in another diocese, the bishops' plan requires that the supplemental pastoral oversight "shall be under the direction of the bishop of the diocese, who shall invite the

visitor and remain in pastoral contact with the congregation." Moreover, the supplemental oversight must be directed toward reconciliation of parish and bishop, rather than separation. And for cases where reconciliation can't be reached, the bishops prescribed a system of appeals to panels of bishops and leaders of ECUSA provinces.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold stated: "I could not possibly be more proud of our bishops, who with great care and deliberation sought to articulate our shared ministry of reconciliation in ways that are generous toward those who feel themselves in some sense alienated from our common life."

The bishops' plan appears to confront Network members with a stark choice: either give up key elements of the Network agenda, or forge ahead with more actions like last Sunday's confirmations in Ohio, in open defiance of the House of Bishops – in effect in rebellion against ECUSA.

Such defiance was forecast by the Network's parent, the American Anglican Council (AAC), which called the bishops' plan "undeniably and woefully inadequate."

"The plan is designed to be viable only where it is unnecessary, that is in the few dioceses where bishops agree to AEO (adequate episcopal oversight)," the AAC said. "It gives no hope for those who feel abandoned by their church."

"We will proceed as we must," the AAC declared. "We stand in solidarity with those in beleaguered dioceses, and we pledge our support of senior bishops who courageously and compassionately seek to minister to those in need of adequate episcopal oversight."

Bishop Duncan's response was more measured. The bishops' plan will require "tremendous generosity and charity on the part of the bishops and an extraordinary new level of trust on the part of the people and clergy," he said.

"Generosity and charity will characterize our local response," he added. "We will do what we can to enable the plan's success in the wider church."

Church leaders repudiate 'clandestine service'

In what appeared to be the first muscle-flexing of the new "orthodox network" headed by Bishop Robert W. Duncan, five retired Episcopal bishops and one Brazilian bishop gathered in Akron, Ohio, on March 14 to confirm 110 individuals from six congregations – five Episcopal and one Anglican – that had rejected the leadership of Ohio Bishop J. Clark Grew, II and the Episcopal Church, USA.

The rites were conducted without notifying Bishop Grew that the visiting bishops intended to enter the Ohio Diocese, an omission that was strongly condemned by many church leaders but defended by Bishop Duncan.

Bishop Duncan, in a statement issued March 16 through the American Anglican Council, said the joint confirmation service "was brought about by the failure of the Episcopal Church to provide adequate Episcopal oversight for orthodox minorities in revisionist dioceses."

The Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice, comprised of 10 bishops from dioceses spanning the nation, issued a statement expressing "strong disapproval" of the action and directly rebutting the Network's contention that it had the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Council stated that "this action – being in violation of our Constitution and Canons – is contrary to the Archbishop of Canterbury's understanding of how we are to move forward. As he said in a recent letter to our Presiding Bishop regarding the forthcoming meeting of the House of Bishops: 'My hope and prayer is that this meeting will offer generous and constructive ways forward within the constitutional and canonical structures of ECUSA that will guarantee Episcopal care for all and avoid further fragmentation, and the consequent distraction from our main task of proclaiming Christ.'"

Anti-Racism Conference

Six members of the Diocesan Anti-Racism Commission attended the Province III Anti-Racism Conference on Saturday, March 6, at St. John's Church, Hagerstown, Md., joining with representatives from six of the 13 dioceses in the province to learn and to share.

Delegates from each diocese summarized their anti-racism programs. Nancy Bolden of Church of the Redeemer gave the summary of Pittsburgh's program. The attendees viewed Pittsburgh's Anti-Racism Video, "Breaking Down the Walls," produced by Gladys Hunt-Mason of St. Stephen's, McKeesport. The video was extremely well received, and each diocese asked for a copy and the accompanying Study Guide. The video has been distributed to all parishes in the Pittsburgh Diocese. Copies can be obtained by calling the Diocesan office at 412-281-6131.

Pittsburghers attending the session were Nancy Bolden and Frances Dennenberg, Church of the Redeemer; Martina Gardner-Woods, St. Brendan's, Franklin Park; Gladys Hunt-Mason, St. Stephen's, McKeesport; Al Mann, St. Andrew's, Highland Park, and Jane Banning, St. Thomas, Oakmont.

All Episcopalians in Province III are invited to attend the Province III meeting in Martinsburg, W.Va., May 23-25, beginning on the evening of Sunday, May 23 and ending with lunch on Tuesday, May 25. All churches in the Province will be receiving the Province III newsletter in late March. Information and registration forms will be included in the newsletter. Useful information pertaining to the meeting as well as the Province can be found on the Province III Web page: <http://www.province3.org>.

Help circulate *PEPtalk*

Don't just read *PEPtalk*, the newsletter of Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh. Contribute to it — send us letters, articles and ideas. Most important, distribute *PEPtalk* in your church. For copies, call Charles Robideau, editor, at 724-776-1684, or email crobideau@stargate.net. *PEPtalk* is also on the PEP website: <http://progressiveepiscopalians.org>

PEP 'via media' mission

As "via media" groups like PEP have sprung up across the country in response to the divisive activities of the American Anglican Council and the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, the groups have sought to coordinate their actions. To further this effort, leaders of 11 groups are to gather in Atlanta March 25-27. Representing PEP will be President Lionel Deimel and Vice Presidents Joan Gundersen and Christopher Wilkins.

PEP members at the membership meeting March 15 authorized use of PEP funds to help defray costs of the trip — approximately \$1,300. In addition, tax deductible contributions may be sent to the Rev. Mabel Fanguy, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 139 N. Jefferson Ave., Canonsburg, PA 15317. Checks should carry the notation: "PEP Atlanta trip."

Interested in learning more about PEP?

Please fill out and mail this form and we will send you information and an application for membership.

Name _____

Address _____

Parish _____

Phone _____ (Home ___ Work ___?)

Email _____

Please mail to:

PEP Membership, 634 Tenth Street, Oakmont, PA 15139-1143

or send an Email request to: bovinesue@aol.com

PEPtalk

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House of Bishops
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PEP carries unity plea
to Diocesan Council