

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: RESOLUTION ONE

## **Why is Resolution One necessary?**

**The Episcopal Church has declared itself autonomous.**

*Resolution B032 of the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention (Columbus, Ohio) declares the “historic separate and independent status of the churches of the Anglican Communion” and that no other body can interpret the meaning of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church.*

*The House of Bishops, March 2007, reiterated this position: The Primates proposal for the good of the Communion was rejected because the “proposal contravenes the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church.”*

**The Episcopal Church has refused to provide the mechanism for sufficient theological differentiation for Dioceses like Pittsburgh.**

*Despite a unanimous proposal by the Primates Meeting of the Anglican Communion for a “way forward” on Pittsburgh’s request for Alternative Primatial Oversight, two meetings of the House of Bishops (March and September, 2007), as well as the Executive Council (June 2007), have rejected the plan as “inconsistent with the polity [independence] of the Episcopal Church.”*

*Executive Council, in June 2007, attempted to declare the Diocese of Pittsburgh’s constitutional mechanism to allow the diocese to uphold historic Faith and Order (Article I, Section 1, 2004 Diocesan Convention) to be “null and void.”*

*The Rev. Mark Lawrence, former Rector of St. Stephen’s, McKeesport, received sufficient consents from the Standing Committees of the Episcopal Church (representing the mind of both clergy and laity) to become Bishop of South Carolina in 2007, but several consents were rejected by the [national office] on the basis of “form”, thereby requiring a second election and calling into deep question the broader Episcopal Church’s willingness to allow conservative Episcopalians to choose leadership that reflects their own orthodox faith and order.*

## **Does the Diocese have the authority to enact Resolution One?**

**The Diocese is acting within its own canonical and constitutional structures.**

*The governing documents of the diocese lay out a clear path for changing the Constitution of the diocese. The proposed Resolution One follows that course exactly and allows the diocese to make decisions about its future in good order.*

**The Episcopal Church has no authority over its dioceses.**

*It is by Diocese that consent is given to bishops, and by Diocese that they are elected.*

*The Executive Council is given no constitutional or canonical authority to overrule the constitutional decisions of a Diocese.*

*There is no national executive department. The role of the Presiding Bishop is principally ceremonial or gathering.*

*The canons of the Episcopal Church do not assign any authority to the General Convention or to the Presiding Bishop over the Dioceses. In the last General Convention legislation that “directed” a Diocese to do something, was regularly and intentionally changed to “urge” or “request.”*

*There is no National Court that has jurisdiction over a Diocese, only a Court for the Trial of a Bishop and Provincial Courts of Review (Clergy Discipline). Attempts at several General Conventions to establish such a Court have been rejected.*

*Contribution to the budget of the Episcopal Church is free-will.*

*The Constitution and Canons are silent on the matter of a Diocese disaffiliating.*

*In the case of nine southern dioceses disaffiliating in 1861, no action was ever taken against them, nor was any legislation ever adopted to block it from happening again. While we do not sympathize with the cause of those dioceses, the precedent is clear.*

*The Dennis Canon alone attempts to establish national authority over property held by parishes. It does not appear to give The Episcopal Church any claim over diocesan property. It is a general principle of law that such a trust cannot be established without the consent of those affected.*

*Three parishes of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and before its founding of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, existed prior to the creation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.*

## **What exactly will the constitutional changes accomplish if approved?**

*The title of Resolution 1 describes the priorities as we see them: Faith and Order by Constitution and Provincial Membership by Canon.*

*Article I, Section 1, secures the right of the Diocese of Pittsburgh to define itself as a constituent member of the Anglican Communion...within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.*

*Article I, Section 2, secures the right of the Diocese of Pittsburgh to establish its Provincial alignment by canon. It does not alter the alignment. Dis-affiliation from The Episcopal Church and re-alignment with another Province would be achieved by a canon passed at the time of adoption at the second reading.*

*Article I, Section 3, allows the union of parishes outside the historic geographical boundaries of the Diocese.*

*Article XII translates the role of General Convention Deputies into deputies or delegates to serve at any extra-Diocesan Convention or Synod. There is no change in the manner of election or the purpose for which elected, except that the field of service is wider and all-encompassing. Canon 26 (Provincial Deputies) is also thereby covered and becomes redundant.*

## **Will anything be different the day after Diocesan Convention if Resolution One passes?**

*Yes and no. The passage of Resolution One sets a direction for the diocese, but in fact makes no immediate changes to the status of the diocese, parishes or individuals.*

*The vote on Resolution 1 does not immediately accomplish dis-affiliation from the Episcopal Church or cause a realignment of the Diocese with another Province. In fact this vote does not even amend the Constitution. It is the first step in what would be a three step process that would give the Diocese freedom to dis-affiliate and realign by a decision of its diocesan convention at a future time. Those three steps are: (i) a vote to amend the Constitution at this Convention, (ii) a second vote to amend the Constitution at the next annual Convention, (tentatively slated for November of 2008) and finally (iii) a separate and third vote at an annual convention to adopt a canon that specifies membership in a province other than TEC. Of course the whole concept of realignment presupposes (i) that TEC will continue to walk apart and (ii) that the Diocese identify another Province that would accept it into membership.*

*So, “what do the constitutional amendments accomplish?” They secure for the Diocese the right to seek an alternative Provincial affiliation. Exercise of the right would require a separate vote at the time of the second reading of the constitutional change (or by a future diocesan convention), preceded by serious discussions with any Province that might receive us.*

*The constitutional amendments proposed in Resolution 1 put our future more clearly and more immediately in our own hands as a Diocese.*

## **What happens next?**

### **First Constitutional Reading (November 2-3, 2007)**

*The first reading establishes an intention to establish Faith and Order by Constitution and Provincial membership by canon. It is not the action itself.*

*The first reading launches an intense period of consideration and preparation for the consequences of the action, if and when adopted upon the second reading.*

### **Between First and Second Readings (November 2007 – November 2008)**

*Assuming the passage of Resolution One, it would be in this period that a discussion would be undertaken about which Anglican Province to affiliate with upon dis-affiliation from the Episcopal Church.*

*It would be in this period that determinations and negotiations would be undertaken as to how the minority (those who disagree with the dis-affiliation) would be charitably and equitably treated, including the hope that they would remain a part of the Diocese and continue to benefit from its resources and mission strategy.*

*It would be in this period that the possibility of a mediated settlement in the best interests of all parties might be accomplished.*

### **Second Reading (November 2008)**

*The diocese will make a final decision about whether or not to put this mechanism in place. It would be necessary to also adopt a canon specifying Provincial affiliation if the mechanism is approved.*

**Some, though sympathetic with the orthodox faith of the majority of the diocese, believe now is not the time for action. Why should the diocese act now to begin this process?**

*The fight has been draining to all. Two different trajectories are unmistakably clear. All of us need to get back to the mission as we understand it. Continuing to invest energies in the battle, or in control of one another, is a scandal to the world and odious to our God.*

*Guaranteeing the culture of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh into the future is eminently preferable to having our culture supplanted by the present culture of the Episcopal Church. We have been characterized by against-the-trends growth and by charity toward all. This provision for disaffiliation from the Episcopal Church allows us to remain who we are at our best.*

**Proposed**  
**Rules of Order**  
**Debate and Decision on Resolutions One and Two**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> November, A.D. 2007**

1. There shall be twenty minutes of debate.
2. Procedural motions will be in order after 10 minutes.
3. Three microphones will be provided and shall be designated by the President as follows:
  - one for those wishing to speak in favor
  - one for those wishing to speak in opposition
  - one for procedural motions
4. Debate will be limited to registered deputies and those having voice by Canon II.3.
5. Any deputy may speak only once to the issue.
6. No deputy may speak for more than 2 minutes.
7. Debate may be extended twice, by ten minutes each time, upon proper motion made and passed.
8. The vote shall be a vote by orders, as required by Article XV of the Constitution of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.