

*Responses from the Nominees
for Bishop Coadjutor*



Fr. Chris Culpepper



The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

April 2019

THE REV. CHRISTOPHER PIERCE CULPEPPER

Biographical

Born: Lynchburg, Virginia • 1970
Married: Tarrytown UMC, Austin, TX • 1997
Spouse: Marjorie Holmes Culpepper • b. 1973
Two children

RELIGIOUS/DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Ordained Deacon, 19 February 2005, St. Vincent's Cathedral, The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth
by The Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker

Ordained Priest, 14 September 2005, All Saints' Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth
by The Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker

EDUCATION

Master's of Divinity, *cum laude*, Nashotah House Theological Seminary, 2005
Bachelor of Journalism in Public Relations, The University of Texas at Austin, 1992

EMPLOYMENT

Rector

2008 – present

Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church, Fort Worth

Initiated planting of CTR Jan. 1, 2008 by organizing a launch team of 15-20 people, while attending training seminars and receiving coaching. Developed launch process, training lay leadership and organizing parish infrastructure. Held multiple community-awareness events. Became first rector within 4 years of starting. Hired multiple staff, clergy and lay. Negotiated lease for first and current shopping center facilities. Ongoing organization of worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, stewardship, prayer, mission, pastoral care, communication, et al. Grown budget to \$600,000 and parish to 225 members, with ASA of 125. Took 20 people to New Wineskins Missions Conference. Led 22 youth and adults on mission to Malawi. Recently held 10-year celebration. Retained consultant to develop strategic plan for next 10 years & beyond. Currently implementing strategy for future with vestry to grow spiritually, numerically, and prepare for future, permanent parish home.

- Collaborating Priest 2016-Present
 Church of the Incarnation, College Station
 Worked in collaboration with Fr. Lee Nelson to discern, vet, and train planting priest for Incarnation, College Station. Raised \$175,000 to fund plant and still fund-raising. Consulted with Launch Team about planting process.
- Planting Vicar 2009-2013
 Christ Church, Waco
 At the request of Bishop Iker and four families from Waco in 2009, initiated a launch process similar to CTR (see above). Organized families into launch team. Developed launch process and parish infrastructure, based on coaching and experience received through CTR process. Supervised regular schedule of worship, discipleship, and fellowship events, as well as community-awareness activities, including participating in Baylor University interdenominational activities and meeting key university leadership. Provided pastoral leadership and training for future leadership, both lay and clerical, including selection and supervision of other clergy to provide pastoral care to the congregation in my absence. Brokered reconciliation and reunification after internal disagreement led some to separate and pursue AMiA church plant, with cooperation and assistance from (now) Fr. Lance Lormand and Fr. Michael Jarrett. Grew participation numerically from 4 families to roughly 70-75 people in community, with regular bi-weekly ASA of 50-55. Supervised 25+ confirmations. Grew budget from \$5,000 to \$121,000. Finally, discerned with Fr. Lee Nelson his call to continue planting CCW. Facilitated transition of congregation to him.
- Associate Priest 2005-2007
 All Saints' Episcopal Church, Fort Worth
 Primarily responsible for missions, evangelism, and men's ministry. Developed operating manual and leadership councils for Missions Commission, Evangelism Commission, and Men's Council. Trained teams and led international missions to Belize (2) and Kenya (1). Recruited team for and attended New Wineskins Conference for Global Missions (2007). Fostered growth of domestic missions, including food and supply relief efforts to hurricane Katrina victims. Implemented Alpha and Spiritual Gifts courses in parish. Oversight and growth of Greeter/Usher program. Developed, coordinated and led men's discipleship program. Developed strategy for mother-daughter church plant, using All Saints' Episcopal School chapel as launch point. Wrote curriculum for and taught 8th grade religion class at All Saints' Episcopal School. Other regular responsibilities include preaching, liturgy, pastoral care, finance committee. All Saints' parish was an 1,800 member congregation at the time.
- Director of Student Ministries 1997-2002
 St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Ft. Worth
 Created, implemented, and operated ministry process and programs for grades 5-12 including: writing curriculum for Sunday school program (grades 7-12); developing weekly small group Bible studies and training leaders (grades 7-12); initiating and coordinating monthly fellowship activities for calendar school year; training and leading jr. and sr. high mission trips to Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico; developed operating manual and leadership of Youth Council, consisting of adults and students responsible for ministry tasks; pioneered PrEYC program for 5th grade; created a city-wide 5K run called "Run to the Cross" to raise money for summer mission trips, sponsored by KLTU radio station and Luke's Locker Room Running Store, averaged 750 annual attendance over 4 years and raised \$30,000 for area-church missions. St. Andrew's was a 1,700 member congregation at the time. Diocesan responsibilities then included diocesan Youth Council; member of diocesan World Mission Committee.
- Commercial Real Estate Agent, The Woodmont Companies, 1992-1997
 Developed 13 acres of land for Albertson's shopping center in Euless, TX; leased over 200,000 s.f. of retail space; leased over 45, 000 s.f. of industrial/office space; sold over 14 acres of land; completed transactions with Albertson's, Barnes & Noble, Office Max, Just for Feet, Pizza Hut, Subway. Did all initial site selection and negotiation of leases for Papa John's Pizza in Tarrant County, including opening 7 locations.

OTHER INFORMATION

Religious Organizations

GAFCON Primates Council Panel of Assistance, 2018-present
ACNA Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue Task Force, 2018-present
Forward in Faith North America, member, 2015-present
Diocesan Representative to Extra-Diocesan Conventions, 2013-present
Catholic Clerical Union, member, 2005- present
Executive Council, The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, 2016-2018
Standing Committee, The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, 2015-2018 (President, 2016-2018)
Sharing Of Ministries Abroad, Board of Directors, 2006-2016
Coordinated Boots & BBQ Fund-raising dinner, 325 attendees; raised \$48,000

Miscellaneous

Director of Men's Conference, The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, 2009-present
Initiated expanding St. Peter/Paul's Men's Retreat from parish to diocesan-wide
Organized, expanded, and still lead steering committee
Recruit annual guest speaker, musician(s), emcee event
Coordinate logistics and oversee marketing

Nashotah House Theological Seminary, 2002-2005
Choral Scholar
Delegate to Inter-Seminary Leadership Conference
Jackson Kemper Missionary Society, president
Organized 25 seminary students to attend New Wineskins (2003)
Organized and led 6 seminary students on mission to Uganda (2004)

Texas Run to the Cross, founder and vice-president, 1999-2002
Averaged 750 participants per year over 4 years
Raised over \$30,000 for area-church missions

Alpha Tau Omega, social fraternity
Founding Father, Gamma Eta Chapter, 1990
Vice President (1990-1991) Alumni Relations Chairman (1991 – 1992) Public Relations Officer (1990)

Hobbies: Golf, guitar, song-writing, hunting, reading

Written Responses

Personal

1. **Who is Jesus to you? Describe your walk with Him.** Jesus is the Savior and Lord and Jesus is my Savior and Lord. Without him, I am dead in my trespasses and destined for Hell. With him, I am forgiven of my sins, embracing the abundant life he offers, and holding onto the hope of heaven in my heart.

I would describe my walk with Jesus as a life-long journey. I was baptized as an infant at St. John's Episcopal Church in Wilmington, N.C. My earliest memory of Christian formation was the First Communion class at Christ Church in Charlotte, N.C. I loved my youth group at Christ Church in New Bern, N.C. and still remember my godfather helping me prepare for Confirmation there. When we moved to Fort Worth, we settled at St. Andrew's, downtown, where I served as an acolyte and was active in youth group. Looking back, those were very formative years. For example, I was always hoping an acolyte wouldn't show so I could substitute. By the end of high school, I had the whole canon of the Mass memorized. College was not the most faithful time (and yes, I can laugh at all the jokes about Austin, TX that accompany this fact). After college, I moved into an apartment with a fraternity brother, who lovingly and persistently invited me to his church. Though his tradition was very different – and, I don't think I had attended any church other than an Episcopal one up to that point – I remember thinking how powerful the sermons were. In a congregation of 3,000, it was as if God was speaking just to me. I also remember thinking the people there had something I knew I was missing. And, I was hooked. I went through a 3-hour course called "A Walk Through the Bible" and God pierced my heart. My past and my future seemed to collide in one divinely-appointed moment. I knew I was being called to preach the Gospel.

You might say my walk resumed here because I sensed God was telling me to "go back and pick up where I left off" in high school. Immediately, I went back to St. Andrew's and started volunteering to teach high school Sunday school. There, I fell in love with the Bible. Soon, I found myself in a young adult Bible study, led by the curate. And, one day in 1996, I found myself on a mission trip to Malawi, where God brought everything together for me. It was as if God was saying the same Bible you believe over there is the same Bible they believe over here. Because of the language barrier, I couldn't understand the liturgy per se, but because of the cadence, the rhythm, and the flow, I knew exactly where I was in following it. I remember thinking, "If we could just take the powerful preaching I had heard in my friend's denomination, and marry it to this beautiful liturgy, within this global Communion, we'd have an unstoppable force in this world." And, God seemed to say, "Right!" I knew I was being called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

My walk continued when I returned home from Malawi and God brought Margie, my wife, into my life. Evidently, He had been preparing her to marry a minister all this time! So, we married, had two amazing children, and began my calling into ministry together, as I signed on to serve as a youth minister at St. Andrew's, which lasted 5 wonderful years. Soon after, our walk took us to Nashotah House, where God formed us for what we are doing today. Before, during, and after seminary, I read every book and attended every seminar I could find on churchplanting. I believed God was particularly calling us to "establish his Kingdom where it did not exist" and I have been immeasurably blessed to live this out in my life. Churchplanting has been an awesome journey and a joy.

Through these experiences, I would describe my walk with Jesus today in this way: I may not be where I want to be, but thank God I am not where I used to be. Through his life, death, and resurrection, by His merits and mercies, because of His goodness and grace, and in view of his glory, I have been saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved. I have been adopted by grace through baptism and faith as a Child of God and I try to live this out day by day as a faithful husband, father, and priest in Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, studying His Word, participating in the Sacramental life, and hopefully, displaying the charisms, gifts, and fruit of the Holy Spirit in my life. I can honestly say I have never been more excited about being a Christian, thanks be to God!

2. **Describe your understanding of the office of Bishop, and how your life and witness have led you to consider being a Bishop in the Church of God.** In principle, I understand the office of Bishop as it is described in I

Timothy 3. In practice, I believe the office of Bishop is *esse* to the Church, as articulated by Ignatius of Antioch in his letter to the Smyrneans, "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful to baptize or give communion without the consent of the bishop. On the other hand, whatever has his approval is pleasing to God. Thus, whatever is done will be safe and valid." Pragmatically, this embraced and beautifully expressed in the Anglican Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer. Personally, more often than not, it is because I have observed Bishop Iker faithfully execute his ministry by doing his job in the trenches, day after day, that I have often been able to persevere in doing mine, as a priest.

My life and witness have led me to consider being a Bishop in the Church of God in much the same ways I have found myself in ministry in the first place. Over time, people have spoken things into my life that have caused me to search the Scriptures and prayerfully consider whether or not God may be leading me along this path of discernment. Humbly and respectfully, with these external affirmations of the internal call I feel, I believe He is.

3. ***Describe your relationship to your family (wife and children), and the impact they have been upon you and your various ministries and responsibilities you have been involved with through the years. Are there any reservations your family may have concerning you becoming the Bishop of Fort Worth? Are your wife and children exercising an active faith?*** Over 21 years of marriage to Margie, I have benefitted immeasurably from her faithfulness, constancy, and companionship as my help-mate. Truly, I would not be the man I am today without her. She has been as Jesus to me in more ways than I can list on paper. If she and my children were all I had in this world, I would remain a blessed and happy man. They have loved me, taught me, refined me, shaped me, and formed me as a husband, father, and priest. They have absolutely no reservations about my becoming bishop and have both collectively and individually encouraged and supported me in this process of discernment. I am happy to report that they are all active in their faith. Margie has and continues to be engaged in worship and ministry in the life of our parish and in her calling as an elementary school teacher. Sarah, my college-aged daughter, faithfully attends worship at an ACNA parish in Austin and is a leader in Young Life at an inner-city high school there, discipling a group of girls. Caleb is active in our youth group at CTR, attends weekly Bible study with some friends, and plays the drums, both in his praise band at Southwest Christian School and at our parish, Christ the Redeemer.
4. ***Describe three individuals who have profoundly influenced your thinking, your theology, and your philosophy.*** If I may take the liberty of listing four they would be, in no particular order: C.S. Lewis, Thomas Aquinas, and Fr. Tom Holtzen and the late Fr. Dan Westberg, two of my professors at Nashotah House.
5. ***Describe your Rule of Life.*** I take Acts 2:42 as my model. Therefore, my Rule of Life includes private and family devotion, regular Morning and Evening prayer, consistent Confession, monthly spiritual direction, monthly personal accountability, monthly Clericus lunches for fellowship and prayer, weekly Eucharist, and constant engagement in mission and evangelism.

Theological

1. ***Please give us your interpretation of John 14:6.*** I interpret this passage in the literal, grammatical, and plain sense of the text. They are the words of God, spoken by Christ Jesus, who is the Word of God. Jesus alone is the exclusive means and mediator of salvation for the world and there is no other way to be saved from the stronghold of sin and sting of death, but by him. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, but by him. Therefore, Abundant Life and Eternal Life are found, neither in a philosophy, nor in a set of logical propositions alone, or any other religious construct, but ultimately in a relationship with the God-Man, who is Jesus, the Christ.
2. ***Please elaborate your thoughts and beliefs concerning: the Incarnation; the Virgin Birth; the death of Jesus and its effects; the Resurrection; the Ascension; the Second Coming and Final Judgement; the Holy Spirit***

- (Sacraments; Gifts of the Holy Spirit)*
- a. The Incarnation is the game-changer of human history. It sets Christianity apart from every other religious and philosophical construct. It is God become flesh, the invasion of the King and his Kingdom to redeem the world. I would cite Hebrews 2:14-18 as my foundational understanding of the same.
 - b. This dogma of the Church, revealed to us in Luke 2:26-38, is essential to our understanding of Jesus being fully God and fully man. Specifically, Mary was not impregnated by Joseph – or any man - and Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, making Jesus the New Adam. By extension, the Blessed Virgin Mary is considered the New Eve and the Theotokos.
 - c. II Corinthians 5:21 declares, “He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God.” Thousands of people have been crucified on a cross. Jesus’ crucifixion is uniquely set in the context of God’s covenant with his chosen people, Israel. Whereas the Old Covenant sacrifice was necessarily repeated year after year because the priest was an incompetent mediator and the animals were an insufficient sacrifice, Jesus Christ is both Victim and Victor. His death fully and finally satisfies the wrath of God against human sin, with the effect of issuing forth the New Covenant of grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) for the forgiveness of sins and the hope of everlasting life. It is our atonement and the means for our adoption as children of God (cf. John 1:12-13). By it, we are a new creation in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).
 - d. I Corinthians 15:12-22 says it all. In short, if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, and we are fools to be pitied above all. It is the primary evidence of life after death.
 - e. The Ascension evidences the fulfillment of Jesus’ earthly life and ministry, which demonstrates that life after death does not extend in perpetuity, here on this fallen earth, as evidenced by its actions and effects: First, Jesus returns to heaven, where he is seated at the right hand of the Father, serving as our advocate and mediator, preparing for his Second Coming to judge the living and the dead. Second, the promised Holy Spirit comes to us for the establishment of the Church as the New Israel, the continuing witness of Jesus Christ on earth, as evidenced by the manifestations of the gifts of the same, empowering Christians to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.
 - f. Someone once told me that the beautiful thing about the Bible is that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. We know where we came from, where we are, and where we are going. Speaking on a personal level, Matthew 25 is what made me take my Christian Faith seriously for the first time in my life! Hebrews 9:27 says, “Man is appointed once to die, then the judgment.” Therefore, the Judgment of God is at once the warning of repentance to the unfaithful and the hope of the faithful that things will fully and finally be made right, to the eradication of evil and the fullness of joy in the New Heaven and the New Earth, in the New Jerusalem, according to Revelation 21.
 - g. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, promised to us by Jesus in John 14:15ff, and fully manifest at Pentecost, (Acts 1:8ff). In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was given to particular people at particular times for particular purposes. However, as prophesied in Joel 2:28-32 and realized in the New Covenant at Pentecost in Acts, Chapter 2:17-22, He lives within all Christians, giving gifts and charisms for the work of mission and ministry in the world. In Ephesians 1:14 He is the seal of our redemption, to the praise and glory of God. And, in John 16:8, he works to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
 - i. The Sacraments are the normal means of sure and certain grace for the Church. In them, the Holy Spirit operates supernaturally within the natural economy of God’s creation, using ordinary elements to become spiritual, sacred mysteries of God, in symbol and in substance. There are two Dominical sacraments unto salvation and five Ecclesiastical sacraments concerning stations in life.
 - ii. The Gifts of the Spirit, found in I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, are given to Christians as heavenly signs & wonders, which accompany the proclamation of the Gospel, as evidence that the Church is the continuing witness to Jesus Christ, for the benefit of the same and the salvation of the world, to the glory of God.

3. *Describe the relationship of Tradition and Scripture.* Scripture is the final authority for our faith and morals, containing all things necessary for salvation. By the canonization of them, the Church formally subjected herself to them, while retaining the authority to interpret them, yet does not have the authority to make anything necessary for salvation that is not found in them. Tradition is the living embodiment of Scripture in

the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

4. *Describe your understanding of the phrase in the Nicene Creed which states, "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church."* The church is one. Because the same Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian, ultimately there can be no substantial division of the Church, even though presently there are doctrinal differences, which create denominations. The Church is holy. She is set apart by God in this world, not because of the virtues of her members, but by the merits and mercies of Christ, our Savior, who calls us to holiness, according to I Peter 1:16. The Church is catholic. We are "of the whole" and not less than, nor other than what Christ has given us to believe and practice. The Church is apostolic. She is founded upon and grounded in the revealed Word of God in Christ Jesus, transmitted to and embodied by the first apostles and their successors. (Ref. Ephesians 2:11ff.)
5. *Describe your stance on the following issues, and your reasoning: a. Ordination of women to the priesthood and diaconate; b. Marriage; c. Human Sexuality; d. Right-to-Life issues (abortion, end-of-life issues).*
- a. Ordination of women to the priesthood and diaconate – The offices of bishop, priest, and deacon are given by God exclusively to men, as revealed in Scripture and upheld in Tradition. The reasoning is that in the order of creation, God gave the commands to Adam, charged him to shepherd his wife with the same, and held him specifically accountable when he did not. The Old Covenant priesthood of Aaron was exclusively male, distinct from the pagan religions of the world, which had both priests and priestesses. In the New Covenant, Jesus chose 12 men to be apostles. As the Son of God, he could have also chosen women, but he did not. St. Paul reinforces this in I Timothy 3.
- b. Marriage – Marriage is a covenant and sacrament between a man and a woman, intended for life. The reasoning is that it was established this way by God in creation (Genesis 1 & 2) and ratified by Jesus in the economy of salvation (Matt. 19:4-6). Again, this was attested to by St. Paul in Eph. 5:31-33.
- c. Human sexuality – Humans are either male or female. Both Scripture and Natural Law attest to this truth. According to Genesis 1:27, "In the image of God he made them, male and female he made them." In his divine wisdom, God chose to create us in complementarian fashion, as male and female, thereby both revealing something of his own nature and allowing us to serve as co-creators with him. Outside of marriage, men and women are to remain celibate and chaste. Within the bonds of marriage, we are to remain faithful to one another, as God is faithful to us.
- d. Right-to-life issues (abortion, end of life issues) – Life is to be valued, protected, and preserved, from natural conception until natural death. The reason for this is because life is a gift, given to us by God, expressed most beautifully in Psalm 139:13-16. Because we are co-creators, not creators; therefore, we are but stewards of what is given, and not owners of the gift. If I may end on a personal note, my birthmother was date-raped, and that is how I was conceived. Were it not for her willingness to give birth to me, I would not be here today. So, I take this very seriously.
6. *The Diocese of Fort Worth is often described as Anglo Catholic. What does this mean to you, and what are your thoughts? What are your thoughts about other expressions of traditional, biblically orthodox Anglicanism?* To me, the term Anglo-Catholic means my best effort to believe and practice the Christian Faith as articulated by the Vincentian Canon: that which is believed by all, everywhere at all times. More generally, my thoughts are that the term Anglo-Catholic, together with other expressions of traditional Anglicanism, can most charitably be described in two ways. First, they are all terms various groups use to describe their efforts to believe and practice "the faith once delivered to all the saints," according to Jude 1:3. Second, the terms themselves evidence the need to restore the Ecumenical Councils of the Church, whereby we are able to once again present a unified doctrine to the world, not just within Anglicanism, but across the manifold denominations and historic Communion. For, Jesus charged us with two truths in this matter: (1) "A house divided against itself cannot stand," Mark 3:25 and (2) "May they all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me," John 17:21. May we relentlessly work and pray for the visible unity of the Church!
7. *By way of churchmanship, where on the spectrum do you feel most comfortable? How well do you function outside of your liturgical preference? a. What Prayer Books, in your opinion, should be authorized for*

worship in our Diocese? Concerning churchmanship, I feel comfortable anywhere the Word is rightly preached and the Sacraments are duly administered. Therefore, I would hope I can function very well in a variety of liturgical preferences.

- a. In my opinion, the Prayer Books that should be authorized for worship in the diocese should be the ones authorized for use in the diocese and the Anglican Church in North America.

Leadership

1. ***Describe your leadership style.*** I am a visionary who builds consensus. The Bible declares these two truths. First, Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Second, Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed." In short, God has given us all something to do, and each of us has a part to play in fulfilling it. Therefore, these are the passages that direct my leadership style.
2. ***The mission of the Diocese of Fort Worth is "To Equip the Saints for the Work of Ministry." How would your leadership further this vision?*** Over the last few years of church-planting, I have given much prayerful thought to this. And, in my opinion, how we deal with this question has everything to say about the future of our diocese. The times have changed. Society has changed. We must be ready to meet the challenges that are ahead of us. Therefore, if elected bishop, my leadership would further this vision by evaluating, developing, strengthening, and expanding it. Here is how.

First, I believe we need to start with an internal evaluation, a conversation among ourselves, about ourselves. Corporately, does our diocese support our current mission statement? Specifically, how? Are there ways in which we may be misaligned and, if so, why and how did we get there? Individually, I would want to ask the same questions of our parishes. Also, I would want to consider an external evaluation. How are we known in the communities around us? Are we known in our communities to be a diocese that is equipping its people for the work of ministry? In what ways would the people of the community see and know that about us? If not, why not? Finally, what does this data tell us about our diocese and parishes in relationship to our current mission statement and what should be done about it as it currently stands?

In the areas of developing, strengthening, and expanding, here is the conversation I would want us to begin. First, I would want to consider distinguishing between vision and mission. The vision should be our God-given "big idea" that expresses the transformational reality of the Gospel in some way, informed by addressing questions such as these: Does our heart break for the things that break God's heart? In what ways? As our God is a missionary God, who sent his Son to redeem the world from sin and death, do we know ourselves to be on mission with him? In what ways are we currently living that? Additionally, how are we currently preparing to reach the city, the town, the community around us as individuals, as parishes, as a diocese? Building consensus around these questions and answers will help us see our "big idea" more clearly and with consensus, allowing us to begin releasing the visions and dreams God has put in our hearts, individually and corporately, to live into the fullness of our identity in Christ.

Having established a strong vision statement, we can develop a mission statement that will support the vision. To address our current mission statement more directly, while it is good and biblical, I would observe that it only addresses 2/3 of our God-given calling. While it rightly emphasizes training the people we already have for the work of ministry, yet it does not overtly and specifically address how we're going to bring people in the door in the first place, which is the other 1/3 of the mission. Each parish and the diocese should be able to articulate a clear process for evangelism, discipleship, and mission: how do you get people in the door; how do you catechize them; and how do you train and mobilize them for mission and ministry? These elements would form the essence of a diocesan mission statement that supports our vision.

Finally, with a clearly-articulated vision and mission, we will not only have a unified goal and plan, but we will also have begun to establish a common set of core values, which can become objectives and standards by which we are able to evaluate the health of the diocese as a whole, and each parish and

mission, in particular. Moreover, we will be giving new church plants a plan and path to follow in the establishment of their own mission and ministries, establishing a pipeline for our growth and development. Finally, we will have said to the seeker: This is who we are; this is where we are going; this is how you engage; and this is what you can expect for your spiritual growth and development!

3. *Describe your plans for clergy development, and for that of the laity.* We all know leadership starts at the top. Therefore, the establishment of any plan for clergy and laity begins with what I expect of myself. Personally, I expect to keep myself healthy in body, mind, and soul, by eating well, exercising, studying the Scriptures, and observing & learning trends in business, government, and society, so I can stay sharp. In my current parish, we have lived by the motto of “creating a culture of excellence.” I would bring this same standard to the diocesan office, so that the diocesan staff would function well and be an excellent resource. I believe that as the clergy and laity have a good model in place, this will not only have the effect of holding me accountable to the standards I set for myself and my staff, but also of creating a culture of excellence in the diocese.

Next, I want to make this statement first concerning any specific plan for clergy and laity development: I believe we all want to do our best and we all want to get it right. Therefore, any plan would begin with the sentiment we all know: no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. Accordingly, I would want to begin with considerate, conscientious, and concerned pastoral care: How are you doing? How’s your wife, your kids? How’s your parish? How’s your ministry? What are your hopes, your dreams, your challenges? The same things apply to the laity.

Finally, building on intentional pastoral care of our clergy and laity, I believe any specific plan we put in place for clergy and laity development involves these three fundamental factors:

1. Acknowledging where we are – We all know we have been suffering because of the law suit. Moreover, we have felt its demoralizing effects. However, I’m not sure we’ve ever taken stock of its toll on our spiritual psyche and how we’ve been living out our spiritual journey over the course of its continued effect upon us. We need to continue to find healthy and healthful ways to reduce its power by acknowledging the difficulty it has caused us and the current challenges it still causes us.
2. Asking ourselves what we can and can’t do – What we can’t do should be obvious. We can’t control the outcome of the lawsuits. But, in the meantime, there is a lot we CAN do. We can get ready. Obviously, there are two scenarios: win, or lose. However, in either case, there is a question we must ask ourselves in the meantime: what does a healthy church look like? I would suggest that one component of the answer involves looking at the various denominations around each of our parishes and missions and finding out what “normal” looks like in our surrounding area. Of course, it will be different for rural than it will be for suburban, and again for urban. However, if and as we can find out what the metrics for other congregations are – ASA, budget, salaries, etc. – then we have both a standard and a goal by which to evaluate ourselves.
3. Developing a strategy for our future – I believe the health and future of our diocese revolves around 5 basic ideas: Renew, Rebuild, Reproduce, Reforms, Relationship. We must start by renewing our call to the Gospel and giving every parish and mission the opportunity to succeed. As we renew our call, it’s time to rebuild, implementing the programs that reflect the priorities that are necessary for our future. Third, we must reproduce! The future of this diocese must focus on church planting, which must be willing to embrace creative ideas for getting the gospel into areas we have not yet reached, socially, economically, and ethnically, for starters. This, of course, will require reforms, both at the parish and diocesan level. Here, we need to embrace two fundamental facts. First, the diocesan assessment must be lowered, to put money in the hands of the parishes, so they can succeed. Yes, this may mean the streamlining of the diocesan staff and programming, but we are all going to have to embrace some measure of sacrifice for the future reward of success. Second, we simply have to develop an intentional pipeline for leadership. In my opinion, this includes the start of a new parochial school, among other things, as we have now lost or closed all of our substantial parochial schools. We have to be systematic, diligent, and persistent about providing our children with Christian formation, raising up young men for the ordained ministry, and giving all people the opportunity to hear and receive God’s call on their lives. I believe our vision has to be big, and it has to be bold, which leads me to the last point, relationship. Everything we do begins and ends with relationship, our relationship with Jesus, and our

relationship with one another. Indeed, is this not the essence of the Great Command? Whatever else we may or may not do, we must begin by loving Jesus well, and loving one another well. As Jesus himself said, "By this, all men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another," (John 13:35). This will be the greatest evidence of our future together.

4. *We have several Hispanic and African congregations in this Diocese. Do you have experience ministering with ethnically diverse communities? How might you lead our ethnically diverse diocese?* First, I would like to acknowledge what a wonderful testimony it is that the global nature of the Gospel is evidenced within in our own diocese! To answer the first question, I can offer two things. First, we have both African and Hispanic families in our parish. Second, I have experience with ethnically diverse communities in other congregations, but more from a missionary perspective than on a sustained day-to-day basis. To address the second question, given my limited experience, I think it would be unrealistic of me to try and offer any leadership suggestions in a different cultural setting without first seeking to explore and understand any nuances of leadership expectations that may be particular to that community. Finally, I would like to acknowledge that our opportunities for ethnically diverse ministries extend far beyond our existing African and Hispanic communities. For starters, demographic reports show we have a strong Asian and Middle Eastern presence within our diocesan boundaries. I think we have incredible church-planting opportunities in these communities, as we pay attention to their needs and concerns and invite them to be part of our future.

Evangelism/Church Growth and Planting

1. *How do you personally evangelize?* I evangelize by building relationships with the hope of encouraging people to become part of God's redemptive story in Christ Jesus. I'll never forget the article I read in Newsweek when I was a youth minister. It was written about an inner-city clergyman who was doing great things in his community. The journalist asked him why he had become so fruitful. The clergyman replied by saying he used to spend a lot of time in his office. Outside his window, he routinely saw drug lords grabbing young boys off the streets, engaging them to sell drugs. One day, the minister said he took the bold step of walking outside to ask the drug lord why he was so successful. The drug lord replied something like this. "While you're sitting in your ivory tower reading your lofty books, I'm outside giving kids a loaf of bread and a \$5 bill. I will win every time." Not only has this stuck with me, but I have known it to be a pattern of my own life. While not evangelistic per se, in college I was one of 13 guys who helped start a fraternity that grew to 100 men in two years. In my real estate career immediately after college, I was given a desk and a phone. You either made it or you didn't. This foundation translated quite nicely into evangelism. My youth ministry at St. Andrew's was much the same. I had no training, just a desk and a phone. You either figure it out, or you don't. Church planting seems to have been the another verse of the same song, so to speak. My church-planting coach challenged me to make 20 new relationships per week! Both in my ongoing work at CTR and in helping to start Christ Church in Waco, there was basically a desk, a phone and a lot of hard work, meeting people and engaging them with the gospel. Interestingly, my favorite golfer, Ben Hogan, was once asked why he was so successful. He replied, "Because I dug it out of the dirt." I love that answer. It's what Jesus did. Jesus extended personal invitations to his disciples to follow him. Nothing replaces building relationships. Nothing.

2. *We are living in a post-modern, post-truth, and post-Christian culture. How would you lead and assist your clergy and churches to minister to the various communities in new and imaginative ways?* When I was hired as a youth minister at St. Andrews, I had no idea what I was doing. So, I tried everything I could to gather a crowd: 6-Flags, lock-ins, games, parties, you name it. I soon learned that none of it had any staying power. I could get a crowd, but it was never the same crowd, and there was no consistency. Finally, God said to me, "Why are you giving them what the world already gives them; why don't you try giving them what only I can give them?" From then on, the ministry was built on engaging kids in three things: worship, discipleship, & mission and we literally grew from a core group of 3 kids to well over 100 in the 5 years I was there. I'll never forget that experience. It has become the pattern of my ministry: worship, discipleship, and mission. So,

I want to be very careful and very clear here. Anything “new and imaginative” that the Holy Spirit has ever given me to do in ministry has come from laying a foundation of what is “tried and true”. In other words, I have observed and thought of lots of things I think might “work” as I’m sure we all have. For example, I would love to host assemblies on college campuses to present the Gospel. Why not debate an atheist, a Muslim, etc., and get our name out there? We might catch some fish. We’d at least get some attention. Additionally, how many of our lay people work in offices? Why not start office Bible studies, using conference rooms? I’ve always respected Bill Craftson and Search Ministries. He gets groups of people into homes, along with clergy, over several weeks, and answers questions of apologetics. I’m sure there are a zillion ideas waiting to be tried.

However, this is where I want to be really clear. Again, any “new and imaginative” ideas I have ever had that have had any measure of success have been the result, not the starting point. So, I’ll offer this final example to illustrate. As we built in a habit of worship, discipleship, and mission in the youth ministry at St. Andrew’s, the students got so excited and engaged in what we were doing that they asked if I would bring pizza to their high school over lunch once a week so I could meet their friends and we could talk about Jesus. Soon, we had 50 kids meeting at the Methodist church across from Paschal High School, talking about Jesus. Eventually, some of them joined our Bible studies and went on mission trips with us. One of them even got baptized on one of our mission trips to Juarez! This effort was the initiative of the kids, as a result of being formed through worship, discipleship, and mission. Engage in the hard work of ministry through patience and persistence, building relationships in the name of Jesus Christ. Get out of the office. Go into the streets. Meet people. Get to know your community. Take one more step than the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Dig it out of the dirt. As we give our people a steady diet of worship, discipleship, and mission, I believe the Holy Spirit will show us exactly what to do.

3. *Please briefly describe your beliefs and practices of Christian Stewardship.* First and foremost, I approach stewardship holistically. In creation, God gave us dominion over the earth and it is our charge to care for it in all of its forms and fashions. As stewardship concerns money in particular, I firmly and fundamentally believe people give to vision. In my own ministry as a church-planter in this diocese, I have watched this play out, as people have given to Christ the Redeemer, to Christ Church in Waco, and now to Incarnation in College Station. And, it is exciting to watch, particularly keeping in mind that these 3 church plants have happened over just the last 10 years, notably during a law suit!!! As a matter of principle, many hold to the tithe (or 10%) as the “biblical” standard of giving. However, as the New Testament principles of giving are different than the Old Testament, I invite the members of our parish to consider goals we can achieve in ministry when we give joyfully, generously, and sacrificially of our first-fruits, keeping the tithe in mind, but more in the spirit of giving our highest and best to God, just as God the Father gave us his highest and best in giving us his Son, Jesus Christ.
4. *What would your approach be in creating a diocesan-wide culture of evangelism, church growth, and church planting?* Of course, this is a very exciting question! Here are my thoughts. First, we will have to prepare ourselves by recognizing that a culture change within an organization is at once the most rewarding – and the most difficult – kind of change. Second, we will need to embrace the fact that this project will be a marathon, not a sprint. Then, we will want to creating a reasonable set of expectations for success, embraced and supported by the broad constituency within the diocese which, in my opinion, will embrace the following three principles:
1. Priority – We all know we are more likely to hit the mark when we have a target to hit. Therefore, evangelism, church growth, and church planting will need to be made a priority at every level: individual, priest, parish, and diocese (see answers above).
 2. Plan - People want to be part of something that is bigger than themselves. People will give to a big, bold vision. However, a vision without a plan is just a dream. And, the plan we develop will necessarily need to begin by asking the right kinds of diagnostic questions: what are we doing and why? Is it working, why or why not? What aren’t we doing, why or why not, etc.? Then, the plans we develop will need to be both objective and subjective. Using church planting as an example, there are a set of objective principles that generally apply to most church plants. However, those principles must be subjectively applied, given contextual factors, such as target audience, location, community, resources, etc.

Fortunately, the ACNA has developed wonderful resources to help in each of these areas. Moreover, we have people within the diocese who are doing good work in these areas. Fr. Scott Wilson and TELET come to mind for evangelism. We will need to consult and employ both external and internal resources in these areas.

3. Pipeline – Remembering this is a marathon, not a sprint, we will need to be intentional about creating a leadership pipeline in these areas today. As we all know, the investments we make today will take time to reap rewards.

5. *Describe your approach to technology and social media.* I believe technology and social media are tools to communicate the Truth of the Gospel. Generally speaking, my approach on the messaging side is simply to ask what is good, what is true, and what is beautiful and publish the message accordingly. In interacting with technology and social media; that is, on the interactive and responsive side, I try to live by Ephesians 4:29. Concerning any kind of strategy we might employ, I am reading a fascinating book right now called Building a Story Brand by Donald Miller. I would commend this book at diocesan-wide level as a starting point, as I believe it can help us, both at a diocesan and parish level, find ways to more effectively get our message into the marketplace, specifically taking advantage of technology and social media. I could see us doing a whole leadership conference in this area, from which we would develop a strategic plan for the diocese and parishes.

Pastoral

1. *How do you foster clergy wellness?* As I said above, I believe leadership starts at the top by setting a good example in body, mind, and soul. Moreover, we all know the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I believe the greatest measure of prevention is to establish healthy boundaries. For example, my church-planting coach told me early and often that I'm the only one who can control when I answer phone calls, emails, and texts. If I make myself available at all times and for any reason, I send the implicit message of constant access to my congregation. Even God established a day of rest for himself. Ultimately, each priest has to set responsible boundaries and, as the priest is setting responsible boundaries, the bishop is right to support and encourage that. With that said, clergy wellness is broader than just establishing a principle of setting boundaries. These efforts must be supported by a parish that invests in resources that support clergy wellness, such as financial and staffing resources, benevolent volunteers, and the like, all of which happen through constancy of dialogue among bishop, priest, and parish in working toward the same. I firmly believe that a healthy church is the best way to help this hurting world.

2. *When clergy or lay become burned out, how would/do you minister to them, and bring them back into the full life of the church?* Burn-out is a difficult reality, often caused by a complex set of circumstances. Therefore, first and foremost, I would treat each case on its own terms, as each person deserves the attention and dignity of being treated as an individual. Second, in light of the potential complexity of the problem, I would want to allow for time and space – as much as possible – to try and identify and properly treat the source(s) of the problem. Has it come from the allures of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Is it a result of over-ambition? Was it caused by a lack of support structure or mismanaged expectations? As Bishop Parsons taught us in seminary, "As it often takes a while to make a mess, so it takes some time to clean up the mess." Accordingly, the full burden of re-integration into the life of the parish cannot solely be carried by the one who is suffering from the burn-out. It requires a network of support, including the bishop, the family, and the parish. With all of that said, an ounce of prevention can be worth a pound of cure. Below are some measures we have put in place in our parish to prevent burn-out as much as possible.

Concerning clergy, my general approach has been to stay in consistent conversation in an effort to create an environment of transparency and accountability, where we can openly and honestly discuss how we are doing in body, mind, and soul. We meet monthly to do this. We talk about how we are doing in our marriage, family, and ministry. Our doors are always open to one another. Additionally, I have been intentional in laying out a plan with the vestry sabbaticals and continued education, to make sure we build that habit into

our parish. Together, our leadership team works to foster a healthy environment.

Concerning laity, I try to set realistic expectations. Our church-planting coach told us even the most dedicated lay person, with rare exception, can only give about 10 hours per week to volunteer. I know how hard it would be for me to find 10 extra hours to volunteer in my week at another person's business, so we try and set realistic expectations. Accordingly, we have a policy whereby lay leaders make a 1-year commitment to ministry. Toward the end of that year, we evaluate whether or not they are called to serve another year, or transition the ministry into new leadership. This keeps the lines of communication open and gives both the priest and lay person an exit strategy if something isn't working. People have freely "opted in" and "opted out" and I have always tried to give people permission to do what they think is best, knowing they are giving out of the kindness of their heart.

3. *What does it mean to be the "Chief Pastor of the Diocese"?* To be the Chief Pastor of the Diocese is to advance the Kingdom of God by the spread of the Gospel, while guarding and defending the Faith and the Flock and calling people into communion with God.

General

1. *If you are selected to be a semi-finalist in this process, a background check will be required of you. Is there anything you would like for us to be aware of?* No.
2. *Is there any question we did not ask, that you wish would have been asked? If so, what would that be, and what are your thoughts?* Well, given that I'm nearly half-way through page 10, I will bullet-point some things that are on my heart:
- Care of clergy wives – I want to find more ways to honor and encourage the long-suffering, patient, and often silent ways in which clergy wives are supporting their spouses. I would want to explore the possibilities of conferences, counseling (as needed), and other methods of care for them.
 - Clergy concerns – Is there anything our clergy feel is important to say in this time of transition about themselves, about their parishes, about the diocese, about the ACNA? How are the clergy preparing for their future in these areas?
 - Impact of lawsuits – How are our clergy and congregations currently dealing with the impact of the law suits on a day-to-day basis? What is the true effect on the spiritual psyche of our clergy and laity? What are we doing to prepare for our future? And, how are we actively working to evangelize and disciple in the midst of them?
 - Youth/College/Young Adults/Young families – We are an aging diocese and we must make leadership pipeline a priority! As a former youth minister, a husband of growing children who will one day have their own families, and as a priest who is concerned for our future, this is a central concern on my heart.
 - Is our parish friendly toward these demographics?
 - If we think we are, on what do we base our answer, ourselves, and/or people outside of us?
 - What can we do with what we have?
 - What volunteers can we train for the task?
 - What dollars can we devote to discipleship?
 - How are we leveraging our identity in ways that attract these demographics?

 - Concerning college ministry specifically, we must fund it! College students bring a vibrancy unmatched by any other demographic group. Simply put, the college ministries that succeed in other denominations are the ones who commit full-time staff, plus ministry resources. They usually get 50-100 students engaged. Imagine what we could do if we had a successful Canterbury house at each of the universities in our diocese. Not only would it have its own intrinsic value, but we could also commission college students from the various Canterbury ministries to go be of help to many of the parishes in the diocese, giving internship experience to the students, and ministry help to the parishes. Can you imagine the impact that would have on our diocese? How would we fund these ministries? Why not consider having concerned

alumni – and others - raise money to create an endowment for the same that would cover stipends and programming?

- Should we consider starting a seminary? Isn't it time to make seminary education more accessible and affordable? In a metroplex of over 5 million people, together with the critical mass of Anglicanism present in it, it seems we might have the resources to do it. Think of the ethnic diversity we have in the metroplex, the average debt families carry coming out of seminary, and those who simply can't afford it. Are we not potentially missing – even now - the opportunity to engage young men in a conversation about a calling to the priesthood, to train college men and women as youth ministers, catechists, Sunday school teachers, and other vital ministries?

Thank you for the opportunity to answer these questions. I'm very excited about the future of this diocese!

