



A Statement of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of Fort Worth concerning certain actions of the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church

The adversarial relationship between this Diocese and the leadership of The Episcopal Church was exacerbated by two decisions made by the Executive Council of TEC at its meeting last week.

I. The Council's refusal to participate in the Pastoral Scheme developed by the Dar es Salaam Primates' Meeting has deepened our sense of alienation from TEC. Instead of "waging reconciliation," the Council has failed to respond to the expressed needs of those dioceses appealing for Alternative Primatial Oversight, pushing us further apart from TEC. They have claimed that the Pastoral Council proposal violates the polity of TEC, but they have been unable to substantiate this by citing any constitutional or canonical provisions to that effect.

II. Claiming an authority that our polity does not give, the Council has declared certain amendments to our Diocesan Constitution "null and void." To this, we respond, first, that it is not within the scope of duties assigned to the Executive Council to render findings as to the legality or constitutionality of actions by the several dioceses of The Episcopal Church; and second, that resolutions adopted by the Council, or even by the General Convention, are non-binding. Therefore, this resolution is nothing more than an opinion expressed by those individuals who issued the statement. It is itself "null and void" – unenforceable and of no effect. This action is another example of the heavy-handed tactics being used by those who do not have the right to interfere in the internal constitutional process of the dioceses.

While the Council's resolutions on a range of subjects may excite debate, that does not guarantee their opinions are consistent with the Faith, the law of the land, or the Constitution of The Episcopal Church, much less that they establish precedent. That the Council would attempt to interfere now, nearly 20 years after this diocese first amended its Constitution, is evidence of an illegitimate magisterial attitude that has emerged in the legislative function of TEC. Sadly, the one thing the resolution does show is that there is no desire on the part of the Council for reconciliation with those alienated by the recent actions of General Convention.

The Council's threats may continue, but we will continue to stand for the historic biblical faith and our Lord Jesus Christ's call to extend His Kingdom. We regret that a further deterioration in our relationship with TEC has been effected by these decisions.

The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker
Bishop of Fort Worth

The Very Rev. Ryan S. Reed
President, Standing Committee

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