

Jubilate Deo

The Diocese of South Carolina

Legal Defense Fund Special Edition 2013

Take Your Stand

The Campaign to Proclaim and Preserve God's Word and Witness in the Diocese of South Carolina

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 6:10-12

In 1789, the four-year-old Diocese of South Carolina joined eight other Anglican dioceses in establishing The Episcopal Church (TEC), a voluntary association that grew from the missionary work of the Church of England. For two centuries, the Diocese of South Carolina was a dynamic part of TEC, providing Bible-based, Christ-centered, orthodox Anglican religious opportunities for hundreds of thousands of parishioners. However, during the past four decades, the relationship between the Diocese of South Carolina and TEC has been strained due to issues of theology and polity.

Unfortunately, decisions made by TEC along with statements and sermons by its leadership were making it difficult for the Diocese of South Carolina to remain associated with the denomination. Then, in October 2012, TEC manipulated polity and governance to declare that Bishop Lawrence had "abandoned The Episcopal Church." When TEC attempted to remove Bishop Lawrence and replace him with a Bishop whose theology and polity was aligned with them, we withdrew.

Knowing TEC's strategy of suing churches and seizing their property, our Diocese initiated litigation to protect the churches, rectories and other buildings that South Carolinians in our Diocese built, paid for, maintained –



JIM PRINGLE

In celebration of the Parish Church of St. Helena's Tricentennial a Town Crier reads a proclamation from Queen Elizabeth II. St. Helena's was established in 1712, 77 years prior to the formation of the Episcopal Church.

and in some cases died to protect – without any support from The Episcopal Church. We are engaged in a legal battle to preserve our autonomy so that the Diocese may continue to proclaim God's word and witness in South Carolina.

A Time of Trial, Tribulation and Triumph

The act of disassociation is proving to be a source of renewal and revitalization for the Diocese, its clergy and parishioners. We enter the most pivotal and important time in our

history with a sense of the Holy Spirit in our midst, providing calm, confidence, and courage. While the impending trial is disconcerting and saddening, we remember Jesus' words, "in this world we will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Rather than a time of tribulation, the current situation is a time of triumph – triumph of a Bible-based faith, triumph of a Christ-centered lifestyle, triumph of church polity embedded in Anglican tradition. Bishop Lawrence, the clergy and the laity of our Diocese enter this time and this legal battle strong in

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Court Decisions Favor the Diocese's Legal Case

Federal and State court judges render three pivotal rulings, all supporting the diocese's claims and petitions.

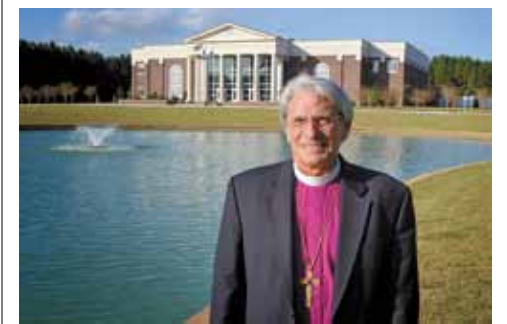
Injunction Protecting Name and Seal Remains in Place

On October 11, 2013, South Carolina Circuit Judge Diane S. Goodstein ruled in favor of the Diocese of South Carolina's position that her injunction, which prohibits The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Episcopal Church in South Carolina (ECSC) from using the names and seal of the Diocese of South Carolina, should remain in place.

Judge Goodstein issued the injunction and temporary restraining order in January.

"I'm not going to disturb the injunction," she said. The judge said it will remain in place to protect the diocese's duly registered marks. Under South Carolina civil law those are entitled to protection.

ECSC had asked Judge Goodstein to vacate her injunction and permit the denomination



"We are encouraged by the fact that to date, all legal decisions have supported the claims from and perspective of our Diocese," said Bishop Lawrence, pictured above in front of the District Court House. "Equally exciting is the sense of renewed purpose and mission among the clergy and parishioners throughout the Diocese."

Courts Rule in Favor of Additional Departing Dioceses

South Carolina state courts are not the only ones that have ruled against the Episcopal Church's (TEC's) legal arguments. This summer, courts in several other states ruled in favor of departing Dioceses like ours. An Illinois Circuit Court judge ruled that TEC had no grounds to seize the endowment funds of the Diocese of Quincy. Diocesan funds will be released thanks to a decision by Adams County Circuit Court Judge Thomas J. Ortbal, who ruled that TEC has no right to seize the local property because the diocese "met its burden of proof ... that it has title and ownership of the accounts and deed titled in the Trustees. Reviewing its actions under neutral principals of law, [the diocese] established its withdrawal from association with [the denomination] was compliant with the applicable corporate charter, bylaws, as amended, as well as the not for profit corporation laws."

The Diocese of Quincy sued TEC in 2008

after the denomination seized diocesan funds when the diocese withdrew from TEC over fundamental religious doctrine. About 60 percent of the diocese's members voted to leave the denomination because it began to move away from historic Anglican theology.

"We are grateful that Judge Ortbal invested hundreds of hours to review all the arguments and case law in this matter, and that he determined that the members of the Diocese of Quincy have a right to worship in the churches they have built and maintained, said The Rev. Canon Frank Dunaway. "TEC's legal position was that we gave up our rights when we joined The Episcopal Church. We are thrilled that the court protected those rights. And we look forward to using the diocesan endowment as it was intended – to defend our faith and perform good works."

Similarly, The Texas Supreme Court overturned a lower court decision supporting TEC over the separated Diocese of Fort Worth.

That court ruled that questions of identity and property must be decided based upon neutral principles of law, not TEC's assertions of Church hierarchy. That means the same laws used to determine property ownership and identity in any other case will be applied to that of the Diocese of Fort Worth. The high court effectively told the lower court that the case must be reheard applying those principles.

In June, a California judge denied TEC a summary judgment request that would have nullified the decision by two former TEC churches to leave the denomination. The judge referred the matter for trial.

And finally, in South Carolina, a federal district court judge decided that the Circuit Court of South Carolina is the proper court to decide the fate of our property, upsetting TEC's efforts to get the case heard by the federal judiciary.

to claim the name, seal and symbols of the Diocese. The injunction has prevented TEC and ECSC from assuming the identity of the Diocese of South Carolina. In other cases, TEC has simply assumed the identities of dioceses that have left the denomination.

The Diocese of South Carolina left TEC last year, after the denomination attempted to defrock its bishop. The diocese was one of the founders of the Episcopal Church.

"I'm encouraged by this ruling, for the clarity it allows us in continuing with the mission and ministry of the Diocese," said the Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence, bishop of the diocese.

TEC Not Allowed to Expand Lawsuit

On October 3, 2013, South Carolina Circuit Judge Diane S. Goodstein released her decision that TEC and its local remnant, ECSC

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Take Your Stand

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the Lord and His mighty power. We take our stand in the secular court clothed in the full armor of God.

Make no mistake. This court battle is for much more than the protection of our properties, it is to protect religious freedom, the transformative message of the Gospel, Scripture as the Word of God, the certainty that Christ died on the Cross for the forgiveness of the sins of the whole world and that "Christ did truly rise again from death and ascended into Heaven" as stated in the Articles of Religion (#4) of the Anglican Communion.



JOY HUNTER

"We have historic and new buildings on our campus worth millions of dollars sacrificially paid for by members of St. Paul's Summerville—none of these present buildings received any financial contribution from The Episcopal Church. We will protect our property from any forced take-over by others. We are Anglicans of Scripture, Tradition and Reason and find the present trajectory of The Episcopal Church contrary to our Biblical beliefs as well as the Tradition established through the ages..." —The Rev. Michael Lumpkin, Rector, St. Paul's Church, Summerville

"Take Your Stand" Campaign

TEC's history of litigation against dioceses and churches totals more than \$22 million. We estimate the cost of preserving our Bible-based and Christ-centered principles to be \$2 million. The Take Your Stand Campaign is a fundraising initiative, approved by the

Diocesan Council and Bishop Lawrence, to secure the resources needed for our legal team. A Legal Defense Fund Committee has been empowered to raise the money.

The Campaign is centered on two key audiences: 1) churches continuing in the Diocese who we hope will raise more than half the funds we need, and 2) individuals and organizations with a great passion for our orthodox faith and our courage in championing the cause of religious freedom. Each parish in the Diocese has been given a requested contribution amount that collectively will secure over

half the goal. The stewardship strategy will reflect the unique character and ethos of each parish. Because our legal case has attracted national attention, we've created a special link on the Diocese web site http://www.diocsc.com/legal_defense_fund.htm that provides extensive information and a way to donate money on-line or request contact from the Bishop or members of the LDF Committee.

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Diocese Establishes Legal Defense Fund

\$2 Million Estimated to Underwrite Cost of Litigation Defending Diocese Against the Attacks of the Episcopal Church

The Diocesan Council, with support from the Rt. Rev. Mark J. Lawrence, XIV Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina, established the Legal Defense Fund Committee to assist the Diocese in raising \$2 million to underwrite the cost of litigation against The Episcopal Church (TEC).

In his charge to the Committee, Bishop Lawrence invoked Jesus' words from John's gospel, "in this world we will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He encouraged the committee to be prayerful, creative, forthright, and affirming. He urged the group to acknowledge that our legal suit is a tempestuous battle against "the spiritual forces of evil" and advised the members to "put on the full armor of God" trusting in His righteousness and believing in His justice and judgment.

In accepting the charge, committee chair, Dr. Peter Mitchell noted, "If we believe God has a plan for everything and everyone – and we do – then it is God's plan for this diocese at this time to engage in this mighty battle – a battle to proclaim the truth of Scripture, a battle to espouse a Christ-centered lifestyle, a battle to preserve religious freedom."

Mitchell added, "What an amazing time to be a parishioner in this diocese, what an awesome time to be a priest. One hundred years from today, church historians will be writing about the events of 2012, 2013 and 2014 and they will describe these years as a time of rebirth, a time of renewal, a time of revitalization for our Diocese."

Committee Members Design Strategy

The members of the Legal Defense Fund Committee are Dr. Peter Mitchell (Prince George Winyah, Georgetown) as chair; Rectors John Barr (Holy Comforter, Sumter); Haden McCormick (St. Philip's, Charleston) and Jeffrey Miller (St. Helena's, Beaufort); lay members Myron Harrington (St. Philip's, Charleston); Elizabeth (Boo) Pennewill (Holy Cross, Sullivan's Island); and Charles Waring (St. James, Goose Creek); Canon Jim Lewis, and Bishop Lawrence. The committee has met four times during the past three months to design a strategy and develop materials for a stewardship campaign.

Protecting Our Freedom for My Grandchildren and Their Grandchildren

By Myron Harrington, St. Philip's, Charleston

Throughout the long and illustrious history of our diocese stretching back over 300 years, we have experienced wars, fires, earthquakes, financial challenges and a multitude of other traumatic events, but always the Diocese survived, grew and prospered because of its steadfast belief in following the word of God as written in Holy Scripture and the dynamic leadership of a legion of Bishops.

That belief in scripture, faith in God, and the leadership of a long line of Bishops and clergy, some even taking up arms to defend the faith when necessary, but who always preached Jesus Christ from the pulpit, ensured



that we, here in the Diocese today, could enjoy the peace and solitude of our holy and sacred places of worship.

That peace, solitude and freedom of worship is in jeopardy as we have witnessed firsthand what the National Episcopal Church has done and is doing to its teaching and liturgy, as well as forcing unwanted policies on dioceses.

To ensure religious freedoms for us and generations yet to come we must stand firm with our Bishop and do everything in our power to not only protect our historic heritage but to ensure that our clergy will not be constrained from bringing us Holy Scripture as it was meant to be.

That is why I'm in the fight, to do my part to ensure that my grandchildren and their grandchildren we be able to worship and grow in Christ as I have.

Court Decisions Favor the Diocese's Case

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cannot expand their counterclaims against the Diocese of South Carolina to include almost two dozen parishioners who voluntarily serve as Diocesan Trustees and members of the Diocese's Standing Committee.

In her decision, Judge Goodstein wrote, "This court finds that the individual leaders whom Defendants seek to join as Counterclaim Plaintiffs are entitled to immunity" under state law. She also wrote that "adding the additional defendants would be futile."

In the spring, TEC and ECSC had sought to broaden their lawsuit against the diocese to include dozens of diocesan volunteers, threatening to hold them financially liable. They filed to add these additional defendants to their lawsuit after attempting to move the entire matter to U.S. District Court, where a federal judge decided the issue would best be heard in South Carolina circuit court.

"We are extremely grateful that Judge Goodstein found the law protects innocent parishioners from the threat of legal action," said Jim Lewis, Canon to Bishop Lawrence. "It is unfortunate that TEC felt the need to intimidate faithful parishioners whose only offense was their loyalty to the Diocese of South Carolina."

The Diocese has consistently disagreed with TEC's embrace of what most members of the global Anglican Communion believe to be a radical fringe scriptural interpretation that makes following Christ's teachings optional for salvation.

Federal Lawsuit Against Lawrence Dismissed

On August 23, 2013, U.S. District Court Judge Weston C. Houck dismissed a federal trademark lawsuit filed by Episcopal Church Bishop Charles vonRosenberg against Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina Mark Lawrence.

The decision acknowledges the authority of the Circuit Court of South Carolina to decide the rightful owner of the names, symbols and property of the Diocese of South Carolina.

In January, the Diocese and several of its parishes filed a lawsuit asking the state court to issue a declaratory judgment against TEC to protect the Diocese's real, personal and intellectual property and that of its parishes.

The Diocese filed the lawsuit after it dissociated from the Episcopal Church when the denomination attempted to remove Bishop Mark Lawrence. Following the Diocese's decision, 49 churches representing 80 percent of the Diocese's 30,000 members confirmed their desire to remain with the Diocese of South Carolina, disassociating from the Episcopal Church.

Historically, TEC has taken legal action against parishes and dioceses that disassociate from the denomination, in an effort to seize the local property. As a result, TEC now owns several unused and/or underutilized churches across the United States.

Soon after the Diocese filed its suit – and in advance of TEC's announced plan to organize a new diocese – a South Carolina Circuit judge

issued a temporary injunction against TEC and the Episcopal Church in South Carolina (ECSS), the remnant group created following the Diocese's disassociation from TEC.

The injunction stated that the remnant group may not claim to be the Diocese of South Carolina or use any of its registered names, marks or seal. The lawyers for TEC and ECSS consented to that injunction.

TEC then unsuccessfully attempted to move the matter to federal court, in an apparent effort to find a more supportive legal venue. In June, Judge Houck remanded the case to the South Carolina Circuit Court.

Judge Houck's decision set the stage for the entire matter to return to the courtroom of Judge Diane S. Goodstein, who issued the temporary injunction that specifically prohibited all but Bishop Lawrence and his designees from using the Diocese's names, symbols and property.



"You know me as an attorney, and you are correct. That is my profession. But, I am a Christian first," said Alan Runyan, lead counsel for the Diocese, shown above, during his presentation at the recent Clergy Day. Runyan updated those present on the status of the litigation and told how his presence at "a time such as this" representing the Diocese was highly implausible but for the hand of God.

"We are extremely gratified that Judge Houck agrees the entire issue should be decided by a South Carolina state court using South Carolina law under which the Diocese and its parishes are incorporated," said Jim Lewis, Canon to Bishop Lawrence. "We are only sorry that TEC's legal action has delayed resolution of this matter and served as a distraction from our real mission of ministering to the needs of the faithful."

In assessing these three key decisions, Bishop Lawrence noted, "We are encouraged by the fact that to date, all legal decisions have supported the claims from and perspective of our Diocese. Equally exciting is the sense of renewed purpose and mission among the clergy and parishioners throughout the Diocese. In the midst of this unfortunate court case, we continue to proclaim God's word and witness, fulfilling our Diocesan vision to "Make Biblical Anglicans for a Global Age."

The Real Story Behind Our Split with The Episcopal Church

By the Rev. Jim Lewis, Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of South Carolina

The Charleston Mercury ran the following article in its October 2, 2013, issue. We are grateful for their permission to reprint the article here.

Much has been written about the Diocese of South Carolina's separation from The Episcopal Church (TEC) – and most of it has been wrong.

Virtually all the articles suggest our diocese left because TEC ordained a gay bishop. That's just not true. The diocese separated last year, nine years after TEC elected its first, noncelibate, gay bishop – and only after the denomination tried to strip all authority from our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence.

Though media insist our motive for leaving is our difference with TEC's policies on the ordination of gay bishops and same-sex marriage, the real issues are rooted in the 1970s, well before Gene Robinson became the first openly gay Episcopal bishop in 2003.

It's About God, Not Gays

To understand the situation in South Carolina, you need to understand the history of the Episcopal Church, which is an American expression of the Anglican Communion. We have a unique view of the denomination since the Diocese of South Carolina was one of the nine pre-existing dioceses that founded TEC in 1789. The denomination has been redefining itself since the 1970s effectively evolving into two churches under one roof – a traditional one that embraced historic Anglican doctrines and a modernist one. By the 1990s, the modernist faction was gaining dominance within the denomination. For example, TEC's then-Presidenting Bishop, the Most Rev. Frank Griswold, proclaimed that "truth," is "pluriform." This meant the church recognized no single truth, no single theology, no single pathway to salvation.

He effectively said that one person's truth is as good as another's. And many of us found that to contradict everything we believe as Anglicans.

It's true that we live in a nuanced, multicultural world, but traditional Anglicans believe in the authority of Scripture. For us, a belief in Christ is fundamental to the faith, not one of several optional paths to salvation. It is why we are Anglicans, rather than Unitarians or Buddhists or Hindus or something else.

In a 2006 interview with *Time* magazine, the Presiding Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts-Schori, a strong pluriform proponent claimed that to believe, as Jesus said, that He is "the way the truth and the life no one comes to the Father but through Him," was to put God in an "awfully small box." That denial of Jesus' essential role clearly displayed the difference between traditional and modernist or pluriform Anglicans/Episcopalians.

Many Leave TEC

The denomination's embrace of relativism has increased under Jefferts-Schori's leadership. As the newly elected presiding bishop,

Jefferts-Schori presided over the General Convention in 2006 that failed to honor the requests made by the Anglican Communion. In response, seven dioceses – including the dioceses of South Carolina, San Joaquin, Calif.; Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, Springfield, Ill., Dallas and Central Florida – asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to grant them oversight by someone other than TEC's presiding bishop.

When no action took place, an exodus began. San Joaquin left TEC in 2007. The Diocese of Quincy, Ill., voted to leave in 2008. Pittsburgh and Fort Worth left in 2009. Between 2000 and 2010, TEC church attendance dropped by 23 percent – and some dioceses lost up to 80 percent of their attendees at Sunday services. Beyond the four dioceses, more than 100 individual parishes left the denomination.

But the Diocese of South Carolina stayed, trying to work with TEC. We took the steps necessary in good conscience to differentiate ourselves from the positions and actions of the TEC leadership while still remaining in the denomination. It's true that our people were torn about TEC's shift away from historic Anglican beliefs, but we remained part of the denomination, until last year, when TEC ruled that Bishop Lawrence had "abandoned" the church and took steps to remove him from the leadership role to which members of the diocese had elected him.

Strong Support to Leave

The denomination's Disciplinary Board for Bishops claimed that Bishop Lawrence abandoned the Episcopal Church "by an open renunciation of the discipline of the church." We believe the decision stemmed from the bishop's consistent efforts to protect traditional voices and beliefs. The charges laid against him were for actions taken by our Diocesan Convention and its duly-elected leaders.

The Diocese's Standing Committee announced that the action of TEC's Disciplinary Board triggered two pre-existing corporate resolutions that simultaneously disaffiliated us from the Episcopal Church and called a special convention of the diocese.

The disaffiliation was affirmed by the vast majority of members who attended the special convention in November 2012. It has since been confirmed again in votes by congregations within the diocese. In all, 49 parishes representing 80 percent of the diocese's 30,000 members voted to leave TEC, exercising our right to freedom of association.

Anglican leaders from around the world have sent messages of support for the diocese. Many members of the global Anglican Communion feel as we do that TEC has departed



VICKI VASQUEZ

"Ever since the Cornerstone of St. Michael's Church was put into the earth in the 1700s, we have been ambassadors of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as a mission station on the corner of Meeting Street and Broad," says the Rev. Al Zadig, Rector. "To be faithful to our ancestors and, at the same time, be a mission station today to our city and beyond, means we can no longer participate in nor support The Episcopal Church whose teachings are contrary to the Bible and Book of Common Prayer. We also cannot allow The Episcopal Church to force us to adopt doctrines and policies that go against everything for which our Cornerstone stands."

from historic Anglican beliefs. Most agree TEC has embraced a radical fringe scriptural interpretation that makes following Christ's teachings optional for salvation.

The diocese has also been visited by numerous Anglican bishops to demonstrate their support. Easily a dozen from around the globe have been our guests since our departure with more each month. There are vastly more Anglicans in Communion with the Diocese of South Carolina right now than with TEC.

Preventive Lawsuit

In January, we filed suit in South Carolina Circuit Court, asking for legal protection of the diocese's property and identity from takeover by TEC. Critics suggest that our suit was unusual. Some even say that the litigation was unprecedented – and "un-Christian." To be clear, however, the only thing unusual about the lawsuit was that we managed to file before TEC.

The little-reported fact is that TEC has filed more than 80 lawsuits seeking to seize the property of individual parishes and dioceses that left the denomination. TEC itself has admitted to spending more than \$22 million on its legal action. These efforts have largely succeeded when TEC attempts to seize the property of individual parishes. Parishes across the country have been evicted from their churches.

TEC's policy is simple and punitive: No one who leaves TEC may buy the seized church buildings. In several cases where TEC has succeeded in seizing a church, it has evicted the congregation and shuttered the building. In some cases, the church has been handed over to remnant groups that remained loyal to TEC. In other cases, the church has been sold to another religious group.

However, TEC has had less success with the lawsuits it has filed against dioceses. Recently, an Illinois Circuit Court judge decided that TEC had no grounds to seize the endowment funds of the Diocese of Quincy. The Texas Supreme Court overturned a lower court decision supporting TEC over the separated Diocese of Fort Worth. And in South Carolina, a federal district court judge decided that the Circuit Court of South Carolina is the proper court to decide

the fate of our property, upsetting TEC's efforts to get the case heard by the federal judiciary.

It's About Religious Freedom

We are not thrilled about turning to the courts for help but believe we had no other recourse for our protection. Much like St. Paul's appeal to Rome (Acts 25), we feel confident the courts will give us a fair hearing. While TEC attempts to portray us as bigots, the real issue is religious freedom.

Members of the diocese who voted to leave TEC feel the denomination has moved away from the authority of Scripture and their historic Anglican beliefs. They left us. You may agree with us about this, or you may find that TEC's revisions are appropriate. But whatever you believe, those personal opinions should not prevent us – or others – from practicing our faith.

And, since that religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed in the United States, we believe that the people who built and paid for the disassociated parishes and dioceses have a right to their property. Obviously, TEC wants to keep those millions of dollars in property – an attractive prize for a denomination that is losing members and closing churches.

Irony of Reconciliation

Local media have devoted significant attention to the claims of TEC's representatives that they hope for reconciliation between the denomination and the diocese.

It is difficult to imagine what form that reconciliation might take. After all, Bishop Lawrence spent years trying to keep us within TEC – only to be found guilty of abandonment while in the very midst of attempting negotiation. We were effectively fired upon under a flag of truce. Individual parishes that separated from TEC around the country have been spurned when they attempted to buy their church buildings from the denomination. In one case, a church was actually sold to an Islamic community group at a price significantly lower than the congregation had offered.

That said, we do not wish malice against anyone who wishes to embrace TEC's vision of faith. But neither will we allow them to impose their vision on us.

Pluriform Truth and The Millstone

By Elizabeth (Boo) Pennewill, Church of the Holy Cross, Sullivan's Island

There's a huge, granite millstone in my dad's yard. It's been in our family for generations. I first remember seeing it in my great grandparent's yard (with pansies annually planted in the center of it). Then it moved to my grandmother's yard. Now it resides in my dad's yard (with monkey grass in its center). It must weigh several hundred pounds. It makes me think of the passage in Luke where Jesus said to his disciples, "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble." Luke 17:1-2



DAVID MANDEL

"It makes me grateful for what we have in the Diocese of South Carolina, knowing that our leadership is Christ-centered, that we are being led on the straight path," says Elizabeth Pennewill, above.

Our family millstone makes that passage very vivid (and frightening) to me - envisioning how fast someone would be hurled to the bottom of the sea with *that* thing tied to their neck. When I think about the changes The Episcopal Church has made to basic doctrine – promoting essentially boundary-free ambiguity – I am distressed. Leading people to embrace a pluriform truth is causing people to stumble.

It makes me grateful for what we have in the Diocese of South Carolina, knowing that our leadership is Christ-centered, that we are being led on the straight path, one on which we won't stumble.

Questions and Answers about the Legal Defense Fund with Peter Mitchell, Chair of the LDF Committee

Jubilate Deo: The first thing parishioners think about is their beloved sanctuary and church buildings. How does the lawsuit affect tangible properties owned by the parishes in our Diocese?



Jubilate Deo: I have read that a centerpiece of the lawsuit deals with the “identity” or our logo. Could you explain what identity or logo or name is in dispute?

Peter Mitchell: Names can be changed and replaced. Legal identity is not everything. Our Christian identity is of far greater and imperishable value. No court can touch that. Nonetheless, our legal identity is still

important to us all. Like a reputation, hard earned and built over the years, it is not to be lightly surrendered. Nor should it be.

When we disassociated from The Episcopal Church a small group of individuals assisted by TEC began using our names and symbols misrepresenting themselves as the Diocese of South Carolina. It not only caused confusion, it presented legal issues regarding identity, assets and property. Our legal names are the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina and the Diocese of South Carolina.

Jubilate Deo: As one of the original nine dioceses that founded TEC and a diocese with a rich history and heritage of proclaiming the truth of Scripture and joy of a Christ-centered life, is our heritage at risk or a stake in this litigation?

Peter Mitchell: All of us have a stake in the heritage of this Diocese and its parishes. We’ve poured ourselves into their development and ministries. We’ve sacrificed to see them grow and thrive. In many cases, that has been the work of generations. We are beneficiaries of the work of those who have gone before us, and rightfully so. So, yes our heritage is at risk and we owe it to the generations who formed that heritage to defend our beliefs and principles.

Jubilate Deo: What effect will the lawsuit have on future ministry in our Diocese?

Peter Mitchell: Our parishes represent the launch pad from which we will continue to do faithful ministry in the future. They are not essential to doing that ministry, but they



JOY HUNTER

“Is it worth it to be a Christian proclaiming and preserving God’s Word and Witness in the Diocese of South Carolina?” asks Peter Mitchell, (above) Chair of the Diocese’s Legal Defense Fund Committee. “To that question, the answer is a resounding, ‘Yes, this is our calling as followers of Christ!’” Peter shared his enthusiasm with the clergy during their Clergy Day at St. Paul’s in Summerville, September 12, 2013.

are a great blessing. They will multiply what is possible. In no small measure, we are defending what will be taught in these places and what kind of ministry will be done. We have a responsibility as stewards of these assets to do nothing less.

Jubilate Deo: It seems a shame that we have to fight this battle in secular courts and that there will be significant expense in terms of legal fees. Is it wise to mount a legal case that will probably cost close to \$2 million?

Peter Mitchell: With regard to the return on this investment, we have been blessed with great success so far. By God’s grace, we have accomplished far more, in a short time, than might have ever reasonably been hoped. To date all judicial rulings have favored our cause. We are on course to move through this litigation process far more quickly than anyone anticipated. While not only speeding our passage through this valley, limiting how long this season of litigation must be endured, the end result will be a lower legal expense by doing so. Consequently, it needs to be acknowledged that many of those providing legal counsel in this process are doing so at much reduced rates (or even pro bono). Enough cannot be said for the quality and character of the legal

counsel we are receiving. We are getting a great deal more than we could reasonably expect because, for many, this is a labor of love and faithfulness.

Jubilate Deo: A final question, in a sense the proverbial “bottom line” question – Is it really worth it?

Peter Mitchell: The quick answer is yes. Unfortunately, TEC’s pattern of litigation has forced our Diocese into this situation. We either acquiesce or we protect and defend. Is the \$2 million anticipated legal fees a good investment? Absolutely, because we have no choice. What are we defending? Our property, identity, heritage and ministry – in essence our very calling from God. What are we getting? An excellent legal defense team at the lowest possible cost, but even more important, an opportunity to witness to our Bible-based and Christ-centered faith in a place and at a time when so many are desperately seeking the Good News of the Gospel! Perhaps the real bottom line question should be, “Is it worth it to be a Christian proclaiming and preserving God’s Word and Witness in the Diocese of South Carolina?” To that question, the answer is a resounding, “Yes, this is our calling as followers of Christ!”

Jubilate Deo

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The Rt. Rev. Mark J. Lawrence
Bishop

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Freedom of Religion - a Big Tug for this Lowcountry Resident

By Charles Waring, St. James, Goose Creek

The Diocese of South Carolina has many valid reasons for wishing to be on its own and apart from The Episcopal Church; freedom of religion is a big tug for this Lowcountry resident and publisher. It is not difficult to look around and see dozens and dozens of Christian denominations – all are going about their business in peaceful manners. Why can’t

Bishop Lawrence and his band be equally free? When we look back in history, we remember our friends in the Huguenot Church and recall the massive persecutions they endured after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes more than 300 years ago. Many settlers of South Carolina came to this colony to be able to worship freely; however, the national Episcopal Church wants to take our property from us, impeding our freedom of worship. As more than a whopping 80 percent of parish-

ioners in the Diocese of S.C. wish to remain with Bishop Lawrence and his orthodox and Gospel-centered style of worship, it seems only proper, logical and democratic that those standing with Bishop Lawrence be able to go their own way. When we celebrate Thanksgiving, let us remember our constitutional right to freedom of religion and how hard we fought to settle in this country in the first place and find that shining city on a hill.

Take Your Stand

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The next two years will define the future of our Diocese and in many ways, the future of the Anglican Communion in the United States. The generosity of our parishes and parishioners, as well as supporters outside the Diocese will ensure that we present our best defense!

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