

RESOLUTION IV

Affirming Accession to the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church

Whereas Article V of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church requires an unqualified accession by each diocese to the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and outlines the conditions for the transfer of territory from one diocese to another; therefore be it

Resolved that Article I of the Constitution of the Diocese of Pittsburgh remains unchanged from its wording as of November 1, 2003, and thus reads in its entirety as follows:

Acceding to the General Constitution

Section 1. The Church in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, being a constituent part of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, accedes to, recognizes, and adopts the Constitution and Canons of that Church, and acknowledges its authority accordingly.

Section 2. The Diocese of Pittsburgh embraces all those counties of the State of Pennsylvania known as Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland.

Be it further

Resolved that Canon I enacted by Diocesan Convention on October 4, 2008, purporting to make the Diocese of Pittsburgh a member of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, is null and void and of no effect, and the Canons of the Diocese retain their numbering as of the start of that Convention; and be it further

Resolved that the Committee on Canons be charged with preparing a report, to be completed prior to the next annual meeting of Diocesan Convention, recommending such other actions to clarify or change the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese as may be necessary or appropriate to conform to the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America or to facilitate the operation of the Diocese in an effective and pastoral manner. The Committee on Canons is urged to carry out this work as transparently as possible and to solicit ideas, suggestions, and recommendations from the members of the Diocese, both clerical and lay.

Explanation

The Constitution of the Episcopal Church has historically required all dioceses to include in their Constitutions an accession to the Constitution (and, later, to the Constitution and Canons) of the Episcopal Church. (See Episcopal Church Constitution, Article V, Section 1.) The General Convention of 1865 approved the creation of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh upon certification that the proposed diocese had the required accession statement in its Constitution. Prior to November 2003, Article I of the Constitution of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh read as is stated in the resolution.

Diocesan Conventions of 2003 and 2004 voted to amend Article I by adding the following at the end of Section 1:

In cases where the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the Church in the

Diocese of Pittsburgh speak to the contrary, or where resolutions of the Convention of said Diocese have determined the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, or resolutions of its General Convention, to be contrary to the historic Faith and Order of the one holy catholic and apostolic church, the local determination shall prevail.

This provision clearly conflicts with unqualified accession, and the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church passed a resolution on June 14, 2007, declaring it “null and void” and stating that the diocesan Constitution was as if such no such amendment had been passed.

Diocesan Conventions in 2007 and 2008 voted to amend Article I further to eliminate accession completely, to allow the diocese to be attached to another Anglican province, and to provide for diocesan parishes outside the established diocesan boundaries:

Faith and Order by Constitution and Provincial Membership by Canon

Section 1. The Church in the Diocese of Pittsburgh is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces and regional churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

Section 2. The Diocese of Pittsburgh shall have membership in such Province of the Anglican Communion as is by diocesan Canon specified.

Section 3. The Diocese of Pittsburgh embraces all those counties of the State of Pennsylvania known as Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland. Additionally, for reasons found satisfactory to any Convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, parishes outside of the boundaries of the aforementioned counties may be considered for admission into union with the Diocese of Pittsburgh, provided that they meet all other requirements set forth in the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Pittsburgh for canonical admission.

A new Canon I, relying on Article I, Section 2, above, was added in 2008 that purported to place the Diocese in the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone.

It is beyond the power of a diocese to alter its accession clause or to adopt changes to its constitution and canons inconsistent with the accession clause once the diocesan constitution has been accepted by General Convention. Resolution IV affirms this understanding. Because Convention had no power to make the changes for which it voted, those changes are null and void and of no effect. (See *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* 10th ed., p. 332, l. 15–18.)

The Resolution also charges the Committee on Canons with making a complete review of the diocesan Constitution and Canons for propriety and practicality. The Committee is asked to engage members of the diocese in this process and to report its recommendations for action by the next Annual Convention.