

Episcopal Church Ousts Bishop Amid Gay Row

Yesterday the Church voted to remove a California bishop three months after he and his diocese voted to break away from the official church over disputes about scriptural interpretation.



[] The Episcopal Church voted this week to remove the San Joaquin, Calif. diocese bishop only three months after he, along with three-quarters of his 8,000-member diocese, voted to split from the mainline church over biblical interpretational issues, including homosexuality, reported *The New York Times*.

During the church's semiannual meeting yesterday in Texas, the Episcopal House of Bishops voted to remove Bishop John-David Schofield.

The unprecedented move served to highlight a schism that has been widening within the Episcopal Church ever since it ordained openly gay New Hampshire Bishop Gene Robinson in 2003.

Schofield, who left the American-based Episcopal Church to align with the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, based in South America, said the church forced the dissension. "I have not abandoned the faith," he told *The Times*.

"It is the leadership of the Episcopal Church that is treating itself as a separate and unique church. They may do so, but they ought not expect everyone to follow teaching that serves only to undermine the authority of the Bible and ultimately leads to lifestyles that are destructive," he said.

Leaders of the Episcopal Church, which has already warned two other bishops not to go forward with their votes to secede, contend that Schofield's removal was not "punitive" but was "dealt with ... prayerfully."