

Episcopal Church Schism Widening

Recently a central California diocese became the first in the nation to break from the Episcopal Church over interpretational disputes regarding Scripture and homosexuality.



Central California's Diocese of San Joaquin became the first in the nation to leave the Episcopal Church over the issue of the Bible and homosexuality reports the Associated Press (AP).

Clergy and lay members voted 173 to 22 at the diocese's annual convention recently to eliminate all references to the national church from the diocese's constitution.

According to the AP the diocese plans to align itself with the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, based in South America.

Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Katharine Jefferts Schori, who supports the ordination of gays and lesbians, had warned the diocese against secession.

"We deeply regret their unwillingness or inability to live within the historical Anglican understanding of comprehensiveness," Schori said in a statement after the vote.

The Rev. Van McCalister, a spokesman for the diocese, said they felt they had no choice. "We have a leadership in the Episcopal Church that has drastically and radically changed directions," McCalister said. "They have pulled the rug out from under us. They've started teaching something very different ... and it's impossible for us to follow."

The San Joaquin diocese serves 8,500 parishioners in 47 congregations throughout central California.