

IN IN THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA
THE MATTER OF
THE REV'D DR. B. CAYCE RAMEY, RESPONDENT

Motion to Reconsider Sanctions Nos. 2 and 4

Respondent, the Rev'd Dr. B. Cayce Ramey, by counsel, moves the Disciplinary Committee to reconsider corrective sanctions #2 and #4 as set forth in the Disciplinary Board's decision of January 15, 2024.

The grounds for this motion are as follows:

Corrective sanction #2 specifically requires that Respondent provide the names of all clergy who received the September 23rd email. The church attorney stated that this was necessary in order to know whether any potential witnesses were "biased." Corrective sanction #4 requires that Respondent provide the names of "both Clergy and Lay expected witnesses" who received the September 23rd email. Notwithstanding the unfounded view that clergy would be biased solely because they are friends with Respondent and received an email from him that had an incorrect understanding of the requirement for clergy to talk with the Church Attorney, the sanctions are unnecessarily overbroad and harmful to vulnerable clergy and lay people who are completely irrelevant to the proceedings.

In Discovery the Church Attorney asked for and received the names and addresses of all individuals that Respondent discussed his Eucharistic Fast with prior to his decision, as requested. In addition, the Church Attorney received all emails that Respondent sent to the Bishop, clergy and laity that referenced or discussed the Fast prior to the Title IV referral. Those disclosures include all of the people who could possibly be witnesses for this proceeding, even though there is no evidence that any of them were unwilling to talk with the Church Attorney when contacted. However, providing the names of the 12 clergy (3 persons of color, and 9 women) who expressed support of Respondent after the Title IV proceeding began and received the email updates on the process is unnecessary and puts them at possible risk for retaliation and reprisals with no possible benefit to the proceeding. Additionally, the Board has already ruled that clergy must cooperate with the Church Attorney, enabling the Church Attorney to ask directly at any time any clergy identified as witnesses, negating the need for Respondent to provide names.

The Diocese of Virginia must begin considering "the history in the room" in matters of racial justice like this Title IV proceeding. BIPOC clergy and lay members of the Episcopal Church have been the targets of violence, oppression, discrimination, retaliation, and erasure throughout our history.

The Episcopal House of Bishops has identified and named white supremacy as:

“...the most salient and pressing issue we face, and a deeply entrenched and pervasive obstacle in our common life. Thus, confronting it is the first step to building beloved community.”

The report goes on to specify that white southern Episcopalians [clearly including Virginia],

“...continued to obstruct African-Americans from taking their rightful place in the Church, and as late as the 1950s and 1960s, white Episcopalians at parishes throughout the South sought to bar African-Americans from worshipping.

Under the heading of “Anti-Blackness and [W]hite [S]upremacy,” the section begins by acknowledging the, “...reality of black people being assumed guilty, viewed as dangerous and threatening...” [bbc hob theo cmte report on white supremacy.pdf](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/bbc-hob-theo-cmte-report-on-white-supremacy.pdf) ([episcopalchurch.org](https://www.episcopalchurch.org))

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed by name his now famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to eight clergy leaders, including two Episcopal bishops.

As of January 22nd, 2024, the Diocese of Virginia official history as published on www.episcopalvirginia.org omits entirely and purposefully, any mention of enslaved people and profits from slavery as well as any “things done and left undone” during the Civil Rights movement or the Black Lives Matter movement. The official history lists the diocesan headquarters building as having been, “left to the Diocese by the heirs of Peter Mayo, a wealthy 19th century tobacco merchant.” While all aspects of the American economy were dependent on slavery at the time of the early Mayo family, one must consciously and purposefully work to avoid mentioning slavery when referencing tobacco farming in Virginia.

Respondent has been charged with heresy and violating his ordination vows and therefore support of Respondent clearly could result in a negative perception of those supporters. The Church Attorney has already stated that he views those who received the email as biased. Respondent has been told by several supporters that they fear reprisal. One rector of a parish has expressed concerns that renting space or hiring Respondent in any fashion would negatively impact their congregation in the eyes of the diocese. Other clergy have specifically told Respondent that they are no longer emailing him due to the potential for it to become public in this process. A lay person in the diocese said that they had been told their priest would be punished if he were to hire Respondent to speak. Bishop Stevenson testified at an earlier proceeding that he would be violating his own ordination vows if Respondent were allowed to function as a member

of the Standing Committee. Further, Bishop Stevenson in his letter, “Restriction on Ministry” states he already believes Respondent is guilty, stating plainly,

“The reasons for this restriction on ministry are my concern for your manner of life and behavior as manifested in your recent actions at All Saints Sharon Chapel involving your **failure to abide by your ordination vows and promises, your habitual neglect of public worship and of the Holy Communion, and your noncompliance with the disciplinary rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer**, and which concern your compliance with the Discipline of the Church.”[emphasis added]

Certainly anyone who is known to support or assumed to be supporting a clergy person the diocesan Bishop has publicly identified as guilty of such offenses is legitimately concerned that such support would adversely affect their position or standing in the diocese. Additionally, with Bishop Goff as the Complainant of this matter, any identified clergy risk reprisal from not one but two widely known bishops of the Church. Bishops are pivotal in determining a clergy person’s ministry not only in this diocese but in any other dioceses as well. One phone call or email can end the transition process. Such risks are even more severe for vocational deacons who serve only under the direct placement of the diocesan bishop. Even if the Board considers the risk of reprisals to be small, the negative consequences could be ministry or career-ending and so must still be considered.

We cannot, then, proceed with both our belief in a Gospel of Love and Justice concerned with the marginalized and oppressed AND with the belief that there is minimal risk for clergy that have been ordered to be identified under the sanctions. There is no real dispute regarding the facts of the underlying situation regarding these sanctions, but rather this is a theological issue.

For these reasons, Respondent respectfully requests that Sanction #2 and #4 be rescinded.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev’d Dr. B. Cayce Ramey

By:

/s/Jack W. Burtch, Jr.
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I certify that a copy of this Motion for Reconsideration has been provided by email to Mr. Julian Bivins, President, the Disciplinary Board, Thomas Hahn, Esquire, The Rt. Rev'd E. Mark Stevenson, J.P. Causey, Esquire, Bradfute W. Davenport, Esquire, The Rt. Rev'd Susan E. Goff, the Rev'd Edward O. Miller, Jr., the Rev'd B. Cayce Ramey.

/s/Jack W. Burtch, Jr.

Date: January 29, 2024