Episcopal Church General Correspondence

Letters to Episcopal Churches, clergy and officers in cities where the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are planning to have national conventions are at these links organized by city.

See the pages for specific city campaigns for additional correspondence.

This is a letter I sent to the head of the Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Katherine Jefferts Schori on May 28, 2014 by certified mail.. I also sent copies of the letter to all the members of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other officers of the Episcopal Church. As of 10/25/14 I have not received a reply.

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| May 28, 2014                                                                                      Edward H. Sebesta  [esebesta@tx.rr.com](mailto:esebesta@tx.rr.com)    The Most Rev. Dr. Katherine Jefferts Schori  Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church  The Episcopal Church  815 Second Avenue  New York, NY 10017  Dear Rev. Dr. Schori:  I research and investigate the neo-Confederate movement. I am published by university presses and peer reviewed academic journals as well as *Black Commentator*. My resume is online at[www.templeofdemocracy.com/resume.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/resume.htm) and I enclose a copy.  The Episcopal Church in America is the leading church for hosting neo-Confederate organization national convention services. I enclose an Excel sheet of churches hosting services for the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) from 1990 to the present along with a bar graph of same by denomination; an Excel sheet of churches hosting services for the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) from 1990 to the present along with a bar graph of same by denomination;, and an Excel sheet of churches hosting services for the Children of the Confederacy (CofC) from 1990 to the present along with a bar graph of same by denomination. The CofC is run by the UDC to indoctrinate children with neo-Confederate values. The bar graphs and Excel tables mentioned above are also online at[www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm).  One thing that becomes immediately apparent is that the Episcopal Church is the leading denomination enabling neo-Confederate organizations. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Episcopal Church is the leading denomination enabling neo-Confederate organizations and to ask the Episcopal denomination not to do so.  I am concerned with how mainstream organizations enable neo-Confederate groups. In 2013 *Black Commentator* published my expose of the racism and extremism of the SCV.  I enclose a copy of the paper which is also available online at the free guest link<http://www.blackcommentator.com/526/526_confederacy_sebesta_guest_share.html>. This guest link is also in my online resume.  Referencing this article I was able to get major corporations to drop out of an affinity buying plan for the SCV and additionally the affinity group website dropped the SCV. It took about eight days from when the corporations received the letters I wrote  to the program being stopped. *Black Commentator*published the story of this campaign which is also available through a free guest link, which is also in my online resume, at<http://www.blackcommentator2.com/527_cover_scv_donation_loss_sebesta_guest.html>.  After this initial success I decided to then ask American churches that enable neo-Confederate groups to stop doing so. Most American churches proclaim that they are anti-racist and express great concern about racism unlike corporations whose concern with racism is usually a paragraph in their personnel handbooks. I was optimistic and thought that this would be an easy task. I regret to say that so far the temples of Mammon were much more willing to give up neo-Confederacy than the churches of Christ.  I have not yet published a write up on the UDC. However, for the historical record regarding the UDC and race I refer you to the website [www.confederatepastpresent.org](http://www.confederatepastpresent.org) and suggest you use the search term “daughters.” You will find in the UDC’s own writings their opposition to the mid-20th century civil rights movement, and earlier in the 20th century you will find in their writings and publications their support for the KKK and white supremacy.  For documentation of the UDC’s racism in the 21st century, I enclose three articles from the *UDC Magazine*. The UDC currently runs a Red Shirt Shrine to glorify a violent white supremacist group that existed in 19th century South Carolina and of which they are proud of as documented in the June/July 2001 *UDC Magazine*article, pages 23, 24, and the cover of their magazine.  In the Dec. 2012 *UDC Magazine*, pages 11-14, is an appalling racist article in which the infamous post-Civil War Black Codes of the former Confederate states are defended, African American men are represented have been potential rapists, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution is argued to be misguided, freed African Americans are asserted to have been incompetent to be citizens. The article asserts, “Newly liberated Negroes were not prepared for their freedom…”  In the Nov. 2007 *UDC Magazine* on page 15 is an article recommending that the reader purchase the book “Southern by the Grace of God,” by Michael Andrew Grissom. This white supremacist book praises the Ku Klux Klan of the 19th and 20th century as well as other violent white supremacist groups, praises a lynching in Oklahoma, recommends pro-Ku Klux Klan media such as the movie “Birth of a Nation” and the writings of Thomas Dixon. It recommends that the reader join the Council of Conservative Citizens (www.cofcc.org).  The author of the article Retta D. Tindall, calls this book along with other books “treasures” and that “Mr. Grissom wrote this book for four reasons: to offer a firm understanding of our heritage, to instill pride in being Southern, to pursue the elements that characterize the South, and to rally Southerners to defend and preserve their unique heritage.” Grissom’s book makes it very clear that he feels that violent white supremacist groups like the KKK and others are part of Southern heritage, and Tindal recommends this book and others be given to the reader’s “child or a grandchild.” These are but three contemporary examples of the UDC’s racism.  Finally the SCV and the UDC exist to glorify the Confederacy a government created to perpetuate slavery and white supremacy. This is in itself a reason to not enable them or lend them any resources.  Allowing the UDC the use of a historically or architecturally prominent churches such as St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, St. John’s Episcopal Church or any other Episcopal churches, prominent or otherwise, enables the UDC by lending the UDC the use of the building, the prestige of the building, as well as the prestige of the Episcopal Church. Similarly so for the SCV and other neo-Confederate organizations that the Episcopal Church might allow to use its facilities.  I have written the Episcopal bishops for Charleston, Richmond, and Dallas areas concerning allowing their facilities to be used by the SCV and the UDC.  I enclose copies of my letters. I have not heard back from them excepting the bishop for the Dallas area who emailed that he was “certain that the congregations of this Diocese would not make themselves available for such use,” for the SCV scheduled national convention in Dallas.  Looking at the tables for hosting you can see that St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia hosts neo-Confederate groups more than any other church in America and have contributed by their own efforts significantly to making the Episcopal Church the leading denomination for hosting the UDC national convention services. I enclose a copy of my letter to Rev. D. Wallace Adams-Riley which I copied to every vestry member and officer and pastor of St. Paul’s. In reply from Rev. Adams-Wiley was this response.    We ground all decisions we make, including those regarding the use of our facilities, in our Baptismal Covenant, where we commit to seeking and serving Christ in all persons and to striving for justice and peace among all people (The Book of Common Prayer, page 305). We would be grateful for your prayers as we seek to live up to that high calling.  This is simply an evasion of my inquiry and my request and it is self-satisfied and smug. Upon reflection a person realizes that this reply mocks page 305 of the Book of Common Prayer by having that page be used for the purpose of this letter to avoid and evade the issue of neo-Confederate groups and the Episcopal church. My correspondence with the bishops and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church is online through page links at [www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm).  It is somewhat ironic that the place at which you gave your address at the “groundbreaking” Episcopal forum “Fifty Years Later: The State of Racism in America” was at St. Andrew’s Cathedral in 2013 is also the same place which in 2013 hosted the Children of the Confederacy or that the event was sponsored by the Diocese of Mississippi which lent the use of its Vicksburg Episcopal church in 2013 to the SCV.  The neo-Confederate movement is a serious issue in American life. They promote the Lost Cause interpretation of America’s past and in the present promote the neo-Confederate agenda. Institutions and organizations that enable their agenda help these groups poison American life.  A decision of the Episcopal Church to not enable neo-Confederate groups and give up their leading role in enabling neo-Confederate churches would be groundbreaking. Besides denying the UDC and SCV the use of its prestigious buildings and the prestige of the Episcopal Church it would set an example for other religious groups.  I ask you to initiate a discussion in the Episcopal Church about the practice of the Episcopal Church of hosting neo-Confederate groups and enabling them so that this leads a change within the Episcopal church in which the practice of hosting neo-Confederate groups occurs less and hopefully comes to an end.                                                                                      Sincerely Yours,                                                                                      Edward H. Sebesta  Cc: Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, President of the House of Deputies & Vice-Chair Executive Council Rev. Gay Clark Jennings. Members of the Executive Council: Ms. Liza Anderson, Rt. Rev. David Bailey; Very Rev. Dr. Brian Baker, Ms. Sarah Dylan Breuer, Rev. Susan Brown Snook, Ms. Stephanie Cheney, Rev. Brian Cole, Ms. Jane Cosby, Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel, Mr. Joseph Ferrell, Rev. Canon John Floberg, Rev. Dahn Gandell, Ms. Martha Gardner, Dr. Anita George, Rt. Rev. Wendell Gibbs, Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth Jr., Mr. Stephen Hutchison, Sra. Pragedes Coromoto Jimenez de Salazar, Mr. John Johnson, Ms. Tess Judge, Ms. Nancy Koonce, Mr. Bryan Krislock, Ms. Lelanda Lee, Rev. Cristobal Leon Lozano, Karen Longenecker, Rev. Marion Mauai, Ms. Vycke McEwen, Rev. Nathaniel Pierce, Ing. Francisco Quinones, Rev. Silvestre Romero Jr., Rev. Dr. Rufus Stanley Runnels, Ms. Katie Sherrod, Rev. Dr. James Simons, Ms. Deborah Stokes, Dr. Fredrica Thompsett, Rev. Canon Tanya Wallace, Ms. Anne Watkins, Rev. Canon Dr. Michael Barlowe, Mr. N Kurt Barnes, Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls, Mr. David Beers, Mr. Byron Rushing, Ms. Sally Johnson. |