

What is Title IV (and What Is It Not)?
by the Rev. Canon Randall R. Warren

I. Title IV is a discernment process designed to help this part of Christ's Body, the Episcopal Church, address serious misconduct by its ordained leaders.

II. Title IV is a discernment process.

A. Title IV is a process by which to discern how the Church might best act in response to allegations of clergy misconduct.

B. The Title IV process is designed as a series of conversations.

1. Our faith is in our Triune God.
2. Since this Triune God is Creator, we believe that communal action which aims in Christian faith towards the good, the true, and the beautiful stands the best chance of representing and proclaiming our Triune God.
3. Since Jesus Christ is God's creative Word made truly human, we know that the human is one domain of God's work in the world.
4. Therefore we discern in community, not in isolation, believing that in this way we can best discover and follow the Holy Spirit's guidance.

C. As with all discernment processes, all the participants in a Title IV process should be held in prayer.

III. Title IV is an activity of the Body of Christ, the Church.

A. An important core belief is that in Christ we are made one with God and each other.

1. A professional, secular disciplinary process seeks to
 - a. embody the organization's core beliefs and values,
 - b. attempts to shield the organization from legal liability,
 - c. and, when necessary, seeks restitution.
2. Title IV functions similarly.
3. Because unity in Christ is a core belief, Title IV must also seek to enact the following values whenever possible:
 - a. repentance,
 - b. forgiveness,
 - c. healing,
 - d. amendment of life,
 - e. reconciliation,

f. and justice.

B. Title IV is an ecclesiastical process, not a legal process.

1. Secular courts are concerned with
 - a. the punishment of wrongdoers,
 - b. the restitution of the wronged,
 - c. and the protection of individual liberties.

2. In contrast, the Body of Christ is
 - a. less interested in punishment than amendment of life,
 - b. understands restitution to be a component of reconciliation,
 - c. and may encourage the self-sacrifice of individual liberties for the good of the whole.

IV. Title IV addresses serious misconduct by the Church's ordained leaders.

A. Being a member of the clergy is a privilege not a right.

B. By virtue of the promises and vows made at ordination

1. the clergy enter a public role
2. and submit themselves to specific standards.