



Response to the Open Letter

A Message to the *Supporting a Progressive Bishops* Community

Dear *Progressive Bishops* community,

We note the *Open Letter to Joseph Raimondo and Daniel Tate* ('the Open Letter'). We respectfully disagree with the contents of the Open Letter, but we do not think it would be useful to reply to it point-by-point. Our position is set out in our [SGM Motivational Letter](#). Rather, we highlight a few important points below:

1. The *United Bishops* Website

The Open Letter states that it is 'for the sake of transparency,' yet it says nothing about the one part of our SGM Motivational Letter that concerns the author personally: **Clause 4.2 of the ODU Constitution and the *United Bishops* website.**

On 26 June, three days after the OD Committee's Pride Flag letter, an anonymous campaign site and petition went live at unitedbishops.org. It named no-one as responsible. The author of the open letter, a serving member of the Committee, **confirmed to us in person on 4 August that he started and ran it.** Within an hour of launch, he was circulating it to his year group: 'The United bishops site has only been live for an hour... Sign this so we can end the fighting.' His first message in the *Bishops Stakeholders Action Group* WhatsApp group was headed, 'Update on unitedbishops.org.' The site is still live today, though with just a placeholder message and all signatories taken down.

Material parts of that site were copied from our *Progressive Bishops* site. Twenty-six style names we invented for progressivebishops.org appear in its code, our four brand colours appear as exact hex values, and some of our wording is reproduced almost word-for-word.

A sitting member of the OD Committee, which exists to represent all ODs, anonymously ran a faction's campaign machinery, built by copying the *Progressive Bishops* site, while that same Committee was corresponding with Bishops Council on the same subject, and while he moderated the *Stakeholders* group as an admin. Clause 4.2 of the ODU Constitution says the OD Union's activities 'shall be in furtherance of the objects and **not for specific benefit of an individual member or a group of members**' [emphasis added].

The Open Letter does not deny any of this; it simply leaves it out. The author claims that an SGM is a choice, not a necessity. **An OD Committee whose members anonymously run a faction's campaign while claiming to represent all ODs is exactly what makes an SGM necessary.**

2. Stalling Tactics

It is crucial to identify the institutions established by the OD Committee for what they are: **stalling tactics to attempt to divide and distract from the impending SGM.** We made clear in our SGM Motivational Letter that the 'Investigative Review,' 'Constitutional Subcommittee,' and its 'Working Group' were not requested by us; they were established unilaterally by the Committee. These institutions do not provide safeguards, because **their ultimate intention is to use bureaucracy as a delaying tactic.** Naturally, then, we declined the seats on these committees. This was not breaching the mandate from our members, as **these are not the structures we agreed (or even proposed), and they do not guarantee free and fair elections at the 2027 AGM.**

Here are some pointers to confirm the delaying tactics by the OD Committee:

- It has been confirmed to us that members of the Committee **favour establishing endless committees as a stalling tactic.**
- **Independence of the 'Investigative Review':** the Committee Chair stated in writing on 1 September that 'the investigator will determine the appropriate Terms of Reference,' yet days later wrote to the OD community that the Committee will finalise the terms of reference. The lack of independence of this Review is omitted in the Open Letter.
- **The needless 'Constitutional Subcommittee':** there is no need for another committee - or its 'working group' - to bring about early elections at an SGM. A constitutional amendment is not necessary either. Our [resolutions for the forthcoming SGM](#) cleanly and simply lay out the Constitutional grounds for a no-confidence vote and elections, and have been checked for compliance by multiple legal professionals.
- **Missing safeguards:** our SGM Motivational Letter made clear the safeguards that remain missing: (1) the Committee would step down by the AGM if necessary to ensure the elections could occur, and (2) there are electoral integrity stipulations set in place. Considering the multiple voting irregularities that occurred in this year's AGM, as well as the current vacancy of the ODU President, the latter is as important as the former.
- **Red herrings:** the Committee's continued reference to an OD's public statements - statements neither made by us nor prompted by us - is a clear example of stalling through 'red herrings': these are attempts to distract/mislead ODs by pulling attention away from the main issues. We return to the main issues below.

3. Back to Basics

The Open Letter did not address the OD Committee's recognition of its own overreach, nor the need for interim reassurances between now and the 2027 AGM. These are at the heart of the matter: the Committee has **acted beyond its mandate, recognises it has done so**, and yet **refuses to commit to reassurances that it will act within its mandate** going forward.

The ODU needs to return **back to basics** - to focus on bringing us together as ODs, supporting the growth of the School, and ensuring that Bishops thrives as a force for good in South African society. **These are the main issues, no matter the semantics in the Open Letter.** The committees, reviews, and red herrings are **distractions**.

We emphasised these main issues in our negotiations with the Committee, but unfortunately, those negotiations were unsuccessful. So, we must be emphatic:

We need an SGM, a no-confidence vote, and fresh elections.

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We will continue to engage in dialogue with the ODC at the forthcoming SGM, but we reiterate that the *Progressive Bishops* WhatsApp group is not the forum for such debate, as is made clear in the [Community Norms](#) and has been our position since the creation of the group.

Yours Faithfully,

Daniel Tate & Joseph Raimondo

Co-Facilitators

Supporting a Progressive Bishops

Tuesday 15th September 2026