

To those who will listen,

It is easy to look at what is going on between my family and The Episcopal Church and think: *these children are just angry because of their parents' divorce*. It benefits TEC for you all to believe that. It certainly benefits my father. It is convenient and easy to think like this, but I challenge you to see the bigger picture. To do the hard thing, not the easy one. The narrative path down which TEC has strategically led you is about divorce. About one family's divorce, and one bishop's new marriage. But this is not a story about divorce. My personal disagreements and critiques of my father's behavior have little to do with what is appropriate behavior for a bishop.

Bishop Prince Singh physically abused me on a regular basis between the ages of 3 and 13 years old. Much of this abuse occurred while he was drunk because he—as he has said to us many times in writing—has a drinking problem that developed into functional alcoholism. Shouldn't this be enough to establish that someone is not qualified to be a priest? The same hands Bishop Singh used to baptize hundreds of children were used to physically abuse me. I wish that my father was more concerned about the effect of repeatedly beating his firstborn child than his vows to the Episcopal Canons. My father's station may have allowed me a degree of financial security, but because of the violence, every professional and personal relationship in my life has been fraught with trust issues, imposter syndrome, and the inseparable fusion of love and physical pain.

I am more than the son of a bishop. I am a musician and performing arts administrator. I am a respected educator and a fierce friend. I am also a survivor of Bishop Singh's abuse. While I wish that his vows to me as a father were more important to him than his miter and robe, please understand that is not what this is about.

My brother, Eklan Singh and I reported Bishop Singh's history of domestic violence and alcohol abuse to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on December 29th, 2022 and nothing happened. Two adult domestic abuse survivors (30 and 22 years old) made serious allegations of physical, emotional, and substance abuse on the part of a bishop in The Episcopal Church and nothing happened—at least not until we both went public on Facebook on June 14, 2023. It was not until there was a public spotlight on TEC that a formal Title IV investigation was launched. To wait for 6 months to pass and for survivors to go public on Facebook to launch a legitimate Title IV investigation not only proves that TEC does not take Domestic Violence allegations against Bishops seriously, but also makes the entire institution's leadership complicit in our abuse.

After I disclosed this information to Presiding Bishop Curry on Dec 29th, 2022, he responded that there was “no quick fix” and to await pastoral support from Bishop Todd Ousley. Bishop Todd Ousley never reached out. There was a one-hour Zoom call with my mother and Presiding Bishop Curry on February 23, 2023 where she addressed my father's public messaging about our family prior to our disclosure. We did not go public first. My father did that on February 24, 2021 in his email to 10,000 parishioners and clergy in the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester informing them of all of his marital problems. Members of the diocesan staff supported my father's messaging by reinforcing the idea that my brother, mother, and I wanted privacy in this matter. Not once did any of us ask for privacy. This was a strategy to isolate us.

All I wanted was for someone—anyone—from the church to reach out with a kind or supportive word. Bishop Singh got to position himself as the victim when he has in fact been my abuser for my entire life. In her Zoom meeting with Presiding Bishop Curry, my mother pleaded with him to see the larger systemic problem in the way my father has been granted narrative *carte blanche* and a TEC-sponsored megaphone to completely shape the public narrative about our lives. To tell our story and place himself at the center of it. She, as always, led with love and care for others—fighting to make sure other bishop families do not fall victim to the same

selfish abuse of power. We do not have a paid staff, team of lawyers, or a communications director. Every bishop, every priest, has a private life. So what happens when that life is, in fact, very different from the paid professional storytelling?

My December 29, 2022 letter to Presiding Bishop Curry clearly disclosed domestic violence, and even then I could only scratch the surface. My father would administer an *Adi* on me regularly. *Adi* is the Tamil word for "beating." I received an *Adi* as punitive physical abuse. When my father had been drinking or was hungover, this would escalate to prolonged, hard hits across my thighs, arms, legs, face, and buttocks. Reasons for the physical abuse included being late for school, getting something wrong on my homework, and misbehaving in church. The threatening question, *Adi ventuma?! was yelled at me frequently. The English translation is, "Do you want a beating?!" This was more than spanking. I remember the intensity of my heaving sobs during the abuse. I found it hard to breathe, and remember gasping for air while being struck. After the abuse, I would be sent to my room where I would cry myself to sleep. Sometimes I would urinate on my own carpet in silent protest.*

While my father was an Associate Priest at St. Peters Episcopal Church in Morristown, NJ, I tied a lamp cord around my neck and pulled it as hard as I could in a suicidal attempt to escape the beatings. I was 10 years old at the time. Nighttime bedwetting became an uncontrollable problem for me and would continue until I was around 13 years old, when I was able to live away from the abuse at boarding school. I have teachers and friends who can verify I wore diapers at night until 7th grade. Any child psychologist will tell you that this is a tell-tale sign of abuse. I have been in trauma recovery therapy and EMDR sessions about the physical abuse since 2018. I can provide receipts from my health insurance to verify this. When I was a child, Bishop Singh was more than my father: he was my priest. When he beat me, God was beating me. This is what Bishop Singh did to me when I was a child. You have been misled into thinking this is about a divorce by a power structure built to protect its leaders at all costs.

Even as an adult, my father has used his position and financial support as a way of manipulating me and forcing my silence on the subject of the abuse that I have detailed above. Every time I have tried to hold him personally accountable for the abuse I suffered, his first reaction has always been to threaten to resign, or to sue me for defamation. I released a song on all music streaming platforms in March, 2020 under my full name. The song was called "God." These lyrics were my first public mention of the abuse. I lost a lot of theater sound design work during the pandemic due to the lack of live performances. I released this song and others as a means of raising funds to support myself. When my father heard the song, he called and threatened to sue me for defamation. It is true that I waited until I was 30 years old to come forward publicly about the abuse in detail. Now that I am an adult with more experience in the world, I realize that the circumstances of my childhood were violent and unusual. I finally feel that I have broken out of Bishop Singh's bubble of control and feel empowered and safe enough to hold him accountable. Unfortunately, children of abusive parents often have no choice but to normalize their experiences to survive.

I have nothing to gain from going public. In fact, I stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars from the inheritance my father has been so quick to mention to my brother and me in recent years. The retraumatization from TEC's public messaging has caused me to have horrible nightmares about the abuse. Sleeping and eating have felt like luxuries I can barely afford. My job performance has suffered, my friendships have suffered, my romantic relationships have suffered. In spite of all this, I am grateful to be in a place where I can finally come forward for the sake of my own long-term healing, and for other survivors. I refuse to carry this deep wound around any longer. After going public on Facebook, six months of inaction and 28 years of abuse were transformed into Title IV action in *only six days*.

My father grew up in a physically abusive household himself. On her deathbed, my grandmother told me stories for the first time of how my grandfather would throw things, bruising her. How he would physically discipline my father and his older brother. She told me how my father, at the age of 11, would get between the two of them to stop the fighting. I now know that, with her final words to me, my grandmother was finally sharing the truth that my father is a hurt person. In the 30 years I have known my father, I have not once heard of any kind of consistent engagement with a therapist.

Instead of breaking the cycle of abuse, my father went on to abuse his own children. He threw things at all of us. I had cell phones smashed in front of me, glass chess boards shattered, and video game systems ripped apart. Most of the physical violence was directed toward me punitively. I remember one day before school when he kicked me while I was on the ground screaming. He was holding my crying baby brother at the time; so he could not use his hands like he usually did. My father screamed at me all the time. My father screamed at my mother and brother all the time. We have friends who can verify that he screamed at us in front of them. When my dad tried to give my brother an *Adi* in the car when he was only two years old, I got between them and said, "No, not him." History repeats itself. I would not see the cycle of abuse continue. When I asked my father as an adult why he used physical abuse as a form of punishment, his explanation was that I was a "difficult kid." When I questioned him further about the hypocrisy of his actions, given his profession, he said, "I didn't know better..." and "I said multiple times that I am sorry for spanking you." I do not have the built-in trust that comes with being ordained, but I trust that you will believe me when I say that what I experienced was more than spanking.

Presiding Bishop Curry and Bishop Ousley's actions/inactions took advantage of both our vulnerability and ignorance. It is very clear from our initial letters to Presiding Bishop Curry that none of us knew anything about Title IV. There is no way that either Presiding Bishop Curry or Bishop Ousley were ignorant of what they were supposed to do upon receiving an explicit disclosure of physical abuse. In a time in which we were risking sharing our experiences and asking for help and acknowledgment from the church that had abandoned us while my father spun a false and image-managing narrative, the church responded again by failing to provide appropriate care and to follow their own standards of conduct and accountability. This betrayal is worse because Presiding Bishop Curry made professions of care, but did not follow the standards that he was sworn to uphold, leaving us vulnerable to more harm from my father.

Our understanding is that we should have received pastoral care. One Zoom call does not constitute adequate or appropriate pastoral care for a family given the circumstances, especially as Presiding Bishop Curry was failing in his responsibilities to treat our disclosures as grounds for a Title IV procedure led by Todd Ousley. This was Ousley's responsibility both as Bishop for the Office of Pastoral Development and as the Intake Officer for Title IV offenses involving a Bishop. It has come to my attention that Bishop Todd Ousley has recused himself from his role as Title IV Intake Officer since I posted about the abuse on Facebook. In February 2022, Bishop Singh was appointed as Provisional bishop for two dioceses: Eastern and Western Michigan. His predecessor was forced to resign after an extramarital affair. TEC's Office of Pastoral Development, headed by Bishop Todd Ousley, was heavily criticized for its response to this scandal. Ousley was also the Bishop of Eastern Michigan from 2006 until he joined the Presiding Bishop's staff as the bishop for the Office of Pastoral Development in 2017. It seems that the Episcopal Church may have realized that Ousley's recusal was a necessary image management step.

Bishop Ousley's conflicts of interest and problematic handling of Title IV cases involving Bishops have been publicly noted before. [Resolution 2022-D095, "Call for a Task Force for Review and Support of the Presiding](#)

[Bishop's Office of Pastoral Development"](#) explained that the Office of Pastoral Development headed by Bishop Todd Ousley's implementation of Title IV in cases in which the Respondent is a bishop raised serious concerns, citing the example of Prince Singh's predecessor in Diocese of Eastern and Western Michigan. Among their concerns were Ousley's conflicting roles in the case: "He was Intake Officer, responsible for the provision of pastoral support, the previous diocesan bishop of one of the dioceses affected, and responsible for providing candidates for provisional episcopal oversight." None of these concerns appeared to weigh with Presiding Bishop Curry when we disclosed abuse in December of 2022 and Bishop Curry sought Ousley's support in providing care for our family, which Ousley never followed up on.

Because neither Presiding Bishop Curry nor Bishop Ousley followed proper procedure for Title IV and pastoral care, my father was able to appoint a personal friend who is not a licensed therapist to oversee an unethical family counseling process, in which neither of us felt safe. This "counselor," David Singh, described himself as having been appointed by Presiding Bishop Curry to be a counselor for my father. We have no way of knowing if this is true, but my father treated it as such. We believed that Presiding Bishop Curry had authorized David Singh's plan of care, including his offering to do family counseling with my father and us. I now understand that this is extremely unethical and inappropriate. We should never have been put in this position. I participated in one Zoom Session with David Singh and my father which felt more like an intervention for me to keep quiet than a healing process. My December 29, 2022 abuse disclosure to Presiding Bishop Curry was minimized to my "abandonment issues." Our unwillingness to continue to participate was then used by my father to publicly portray himself—using church communication channels on June 19th, 2023—as having pursued therapy efforts in good faith, while portraying us as unwilling to participate in a legitimate process. In this communication, he disclosed confidential health information about myself and my brother without our consent.

Bishop Singh is a damaged person in power with a penchant for abuse and compulsive, public lies. If you have ever heard my father give a sermon, you know he is a masterful storyteller. This is a story of an organization that chooses to blindly protect abusive bishops instead of their victims. This story is about someone who should not be a priest, but has managed to find success within the church, along with access to increasingly sophisticated public relations and legal instruments. Meanwhile, his victims have actually lost resources, have become even more marginalized, and have had to go to even greater lengths to try to address the harms done to us. The system has actually made it easier for Bishop Singh to get away with it as he has climbed the ladder. He's not just trusted more; he has more and better people looking after him.

This isn't about a divorce. This isn't even directly about the abuse, in a way. This is about being victims of a system in which people can get themselves elevated to power and resources regardless of their moral and ethical qualifications — elevated to such power that they can even get their own families shut out and disposed of like so much garbage. Even when this garbage finds the courage to speak up to power, it's dumped into rigged counseling sessions and broken promises about further contact. It's about paid church leaders who are complicit in the public lie that the Public Bishop and the Private Bishop are the same and that you always get the same Godshonest person no matter what. They have the resources and the people to do this. "This is The Bishop, and We Love Our Bishop."

It shatters my heart to think that the same church that molded me into the person that I am today would turn around and side with my abuser. TEC has chosen to silence our voices as survivors by preying upon public empathy, minimizing this as family drama, and enabling our abuser by repeatedly handing him a microphone on TEC channels. Bishop Singh cannot even address the camera about this topic without hiding behind his sunglasses.

On paper, Title IV sounds good. If this had been offered to us after our disclosure and proper procedure had been followed, it could have spared us all a great deal of pain and betrayal. TEC's website about Title IV frames the process through the lens of TEC clergy/staff, with plenty of information for the accused, but very little information for reporters of abuse. Every place I have worked has had a whistleblower hotline for reporting that is made explicitly clear to employees as an HR resource. Where is the clear online button or phone number for victims of abuse to safely report about abuse in The Episcopal Church? Who watches the watchmen?

We would like for best practices to be followed now. We would like reporting resources to be updated so that future survivors of bishop/clergy abuse in TEC are not left to fend for themselves like we were. No one has offered to do so or offered to educate us on best practices. We have had to do this ourselves and have had to ask for this ourselves. Leaving survivors in ignorance or forcing them to figure everything out by themselves works in the favor of church leaders that wish to evade accountability, even as the church portrays itself as holding itself to a high disciplinary standard. I would love to see the church change course and do the right thing here. If survivor resources are truly a priority to TEC, I would like them to show us.

Until then, if you are an Episcopalian who stands with us, I humbly ask you to stop financially donating to The Episcopal Church, an organization who would rather silence abuse survivors than own their evident, public mistakes. If you are asked why by your church's leadership, I hope you will share our story. I am trying to be as open as possible without making myself vulnerable to further harm and betrayal by an institution that has failed our family repeatedly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nivedhan Singh', written in a cursive style.

Nivedhan Singh