

People

News in the [June 1, 2004](#) issue

Otis Charles, an Episcopal bishop who came out as gay at age 67 in San Francisco after retiring as bishop of Utah, has been prohibited from administering sacraments by San Francisco-based Bishop **William E. Swing**. The action was taken after Charles went against Swing's decision and "married" a male partner of two years on April 24. Swing said his Diocese of (northern) California is open to gays, and he had "taken heat when [Charles] came out of the closet in our diocese." Also, Swing said that he and his wife, Mary, "were very fond of [Charles's] ex-wife Elvira," and the Swings later had Otis and his partner, Felipe, as guests "in our home and I wish them well." Although Charles had claimed he and his partner were wed in a church "according to [Swing's] protocols," Swing disagreed in a public statement in early May. Upon reading an April 29 newspaper account of the "blessing of his union," Swing said he informed Charles that his defiance meant that he would no longer be considered an "assistant bishop" (an honorific title) in the diocese or be allowed to preside over baptisms and other sacraments.

Ending an 18-month search for a new president, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary has named **Dean K. Thompson**, a minister who has served pastorates in West Virginia, Texas and California. Thompson succeeds John M. Mulder, who resigned and was suspended from the ministry in the fall of 2002 for admitted sexual misconduct. Thompson was senior pastor from 1979 to 1984 at Central Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, then from 1984 to 1995 at Pasadena (California) Presbyterian Church and since then at the 1,600-member First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, West Virginia. First Church has built five Habitat houses, and in its ecumenical hunger ministry feeds more than 21,000 families in a typical year. It has historical ties to the Kentucky seminary where 11 students from the congregation studied before entering the ministry. Thompson will begin his duties June 28.