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Archbishop of Canterbury leads gay summit - 1/12/04

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, will lead a summit of more than 50 Church of England bishops today to discuss the way forward over the homosexuality crisis in the Anglican Church, reports the Times.

It follows a 3½-page letter from the Archbishop, sent on Friday to Primates, warning of serious consequences if Anglicans do not heal their rift.

The meeting, to be chaired jointly with the Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, will take place behind closed doors at Lambeth Palace, in London.

All 44 diocesan bishops and 10 suffragans have been invited to debate how to give a lead to their flock over October's Windsor Report, the document produced by the commission set up to examine the crisis.

The report called for a moratorium on the authorisation of same-sex blessing ceremonies and on the consecration of gay bishops and for statements of regret from provinces that had breached the "bonds of communion". It also proposed a covenant to be agreed by all 38 provinces to inhibit further schismatic developments.



But as The Times revealed last month, same-sex blessings are still being performed by Anglican clergy across the UK, and the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement expects that there will be 1,000 a year once the Government's new civil partnerships law comes into effect next autumn.

[The Windsor Report 2004](#)
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The conservative evangelical Bishop of Rochester, Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, will address today's meeting.

The Bishop of Willesden, the Right Rev Pete

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Broadbent, said: "It is important that the bishops give a lead on this matter. We are all committed to trying to stay together if we can."

1/12/04

Another source, an evangelical, said: "The meeting has been called at short notice. It has come out of discussions in October. It is being held so that the bishops are not all at loggerheads over this, so any fights and arguments are got out of the way before the meeting scheduled for January."

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The January meeting precedes the General Synod in February, when the Windsor Report and the crisis over homosexuality will be debated by bishops, clergy and laity in public for the first time.

The bishops are meeting on the day that Anglican evangelicals publish their own report warning that the Church's Bible-based stance against active same-sex relationships, agreed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, should not be "gradually eroded".

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Following the publication of the Windsor report, whilst many who support the appointment of gay bishops and services of blessing for same sex couples did express regret for their actions. Many on the conservative side however did not.

The Church Society called for the report to be rejected, saying it would "allow immorality to fester" and "destroy the churches of the Anglican Communion".

Anglican bishops in Africa called the report "offensive". They suggested that expressions of regret made by the Episcopal church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada did not go far enough, and dismissed their own need to express any regret.

In their assessment, Anglican Mainstream, the lobbying group set up to campaign against the appointment of Dr Jeffrey John as Bishop of Reading, and the Church of England Evangelical Council say that the Windsor Report has "fallen short" in recognising "the reality of human sin within the Church".

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