



Anglican Network in Canada NEWS RELEASE

Diocese of Ottawa votes to walk away from historic Anglican teaching and from the global Communion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 13 October 2007

We are deeply saddened by today's decision of the Ottawa diocesan synod. Unfortunately, the synod has chosen to reject the pleas of the global Anglican Communion, and 'walk apart' from the vast majority of Anglicans worldwide.

We are grateful that Bishop Chapman has not made a hasty decision to endorse this action and pray that he will see the wisdom of listening to the Primates' call. The Primates have asked the Canadian and US Churches for an unambiguous endorsement of traditional Church teaching on sexuality and an end to same sex blessings.

"At a minimum, we hope the Bishop will provide a period of time to allow parishes and clergy to discuss their futures without fear of reprisal and with the confidence that the Bishop will honour the need for such reasonable and legitimate discussion," says the Right Reverend Donald Harvey, moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada. "There must be care for people who uphold Biblical teaching and are Communion minded. We need a charitable way forward."

Should the Bishop agree to this request, the diocese will abandon historic Anglican teaching and signal that it does not value walking with the global Anglican Communion. This would only widen the split and fuel the crisis in the Communion.

This crisis is fundamentally a theological dispute about core Christian and historic Anglican teaching. It is about how we understand the nature, authority and truth of the Scripture. The question for the church is: are we going to view the culture through the lens of Scripture or will we view the Scripture through the lens of our culture. These are irreconcilable views of the Scripture that have led us to the brink of schism in the Anglican Communion. The Ottawa diocesan decision shows that the Anglican Church of Canada has a de facto "local option" policy for same sex blessings which is the opposite of what the Primates of the Anglican Communion requested in their Dar es Salaam Communiqué. This will also violate the conscience of many biblically faithful Anglicans in Canada.

The Network supports biblically-faithful, Communion-committed Canadian Anglicans. We are committed to remaining true to historic Anglican orthodoxy as articulated in the founding principles of Anglicanism in Canada, the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Communiqués. We stand firm in the mainstream of Anglican tradition and Christian teaching – together with the vast majority of Anglicans worldwide.

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Backgrounder

Anglican Church of Canada General Synod decisions, June 2007

Following the seemingly inconsistent decisions by the Anglican Church of Canada General Synod in Winnipeg this past June, there has been increasing confusion within the Church.

General Synod considered two resolutions related to same-sex blessings:

1. The first, A186, passed. It stated: *That this General Synod resolves that the blessing of same-sex unions is not in conflict with the core doctrine (in the sense of being credal) of the Anglican Church of Canada.*

This motion was carried by a vote of 152 for vs 97 against in the order of clergy and laity, and by a vote of 21 for vs 19 against in the order of bishops.

2. The second, A187 narrowly failed. This resolutions read: *“That this General Synod affirm the authority and jurisdiction of any diocesan synod,*
 1. *with the concurrence of the diocesan bishop, and*
 2. *in a manner which respects the conscience of the incumbent and the will of the parish, to authorize the blessing of committed same-sex unions.”*

The vote was: Laity 78 for and 59 against; in the order of clergy 63 for and 53 against; in the order of bishops 19 for and 21 against. So, it failed by two votes in the order of bishops.

Anglican Communion decisions

July-August 1998, Primates meeting: Resolution 1.10 rejects “homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture” and “cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions.”

October 2004, Primates issue Windsor Report: “Actions to move towards the authorisation of such rites (of blessing same-sex unions) in the face of opposition from the wider Anglican Communion constitutes a denial of the bonds of Communion. In order for these bonds to be properly acknowledged and addressed, the churches proposing to take action must be able, as a beginning, to demonstrate to the rest of the Communion why their proposal meets the criteria of scripture, tradition and reason.”

February 2005, Primates meeting (Dromantine): ‘We request that the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada voluntarily withdraw their members from the Anglican Consultative Council for the period leading up to the next Lambeth Conference. During that period we request that both churches respond through their relevant constitutional bodies to the questions specifically addressed to them in the Windsor Report as they consider their place within the Anglican Communion.’

February 2007, Primates meeting (Dar es Salaam): ‘The Primates request... that the bishops will not authorise any Rite of Blessing for same-sex unions in their dioceses, or through General Convention...’

July 2007, Global South Primates Steering Committee: *“We have also noted the decisions of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and are dismayed by their unilateral declaration that ‘same-sex blessing is not core doctrine’. While we were grateful for the temporary restraint shown in not proceeding with any further authorization, we have observed that a number of the bishops are continuing to defy the recommendations of the Windsor process. We are exploring the possibility of additional pastoral provisions for those who want to remain faithful to Communion teaching and have been affected by the continuing actions of their own bishops.”*