

Anglican Network in Canada NEWS RELEASE

## Diocese of Niagara “walks apart” from Anglican Communion

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The Anglican Network in Canada stands with the millions of Anglicans – in Canada and throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion – who are hurt and distressed by the decision of the Niagara Synod and Bishop to proceed at a time of the bishop’s choosing with the blessing of same-sex marriages. The Ottawa and Montreal Synods approved similar motions in October but their bishops have withheld consent to proceed.

“We are grieved that the synod and bishops of Niagara have chosen to walk away from centuries of Christian teaching and defy the consensus within the Anglican Communion,” says the Right Reverend Donald Harvey, Moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada. “There is clearly a growing momentum within the Anglican Church of Canada to ignore biblical teaching, disregard the views of the global Church, and even ignore the principles upon which the Canadian Church was founded. These actions have ‘torn the fabric’ of the Communion at its deepest level just as the Primates warned in October 2003”

By proceeding with these decisions to bless civilly married same-sex couples, the Diocese of Niagara is separating itself from the vast majority of Anglicans worldwide and deepening the divide within the Anglican Church of Canada and the global Communion.

In its rush to discard its heritage and conform to current culture, the Anglican Church of Canada has abandoned biblically-faithful Canadian Anglicans who, increasingly, feel they no longer have a home within that church. Ironically, while traditional Anglicans are marginalized within the Canadian church, they remain among the vast majority of global Anglicans, upholding historic Anglican and Christian teaching and tradition.

We are grateful for the support of Archbishop Gregory Venables and the Province of the Southern Cone who, at their Synod last week, expressed their willingness to provide a safe haven and Communion connection for these biblically faithful people. The Network is holding a conference – *Building on the Solid Rock*, in Burlington, Ontario, on November 22-23 – to discuss this option.

The Anglican Network in Canada is committed to remaining faithful to Holy Scripture and established Anglican doctrine and to ensuring that orthodox Canadian Anglicans are able to remain in full communion with their spiritual brothers and sisters around the world.

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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."*

**November 2007, Province of the Southern Cone synod** votes to welcome into membership on an emergency and pastoral basis North American Anglicans needing godly episcopal oversight and wishing to remain in the mainstream of the Anglican Communion and be faithful to its Biblical and historic teaching and witness.