

Essentials Network and Federation NEWS RELEASE

Orthodox Canadian Anglicans Await International Response to Historic Report

Canadian Orthodox Anglicans look to the leadership of the International Anglican Communion following release of the Windsor Report today in London

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VANCOUVER – Canadian orthodox Anglicans are waiting for the response of the leaders of the International Anglican Communion to the Windsor report, considered by many to be the most significant report in the history of the worldwide Anglican Church.

Dissent in the Canadian Anglican Church over the decision of the Diocese of New Westminster to authorize the blessing of same-sex unions, and in the Episcopal Church in the United States (ECUSA) over the appointment of an openly gay priest to Bishop, triggered a conflict for the 77 million Anglicans worldwide. In October 2003, the Archbishop of Canterbury struck the "Lambeth Commission", whose mandate was to recommend a response to these decisions. The report, now called "the Windsor Report", was released today in London. The Primates (heads of the 38 international Anglican churches) will debate its recommendations in February 2005.

There was a clear recognition that the unilateral actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and ECUSA were the principal cause of this crisis which is threatening to split the global Anglican Communion. They called for a moratorium on further blessings and an apology from all Bishops who have authorized such blessings for "breaching the bonds of affection" of the Communion. Even more striking was the call to those Bishops to consider withdrawing themselves from "representative functions" in the Anglican Communion pending such apology.

Orthodox Anglicans in Canada have expressed appreciation for the importance the report placed on scripture. "We are pleased the report focused on the need to recognize scripture as the Church's supreme authority and as a focus and means of unity for the Anglican Communion" said Bishop Donald Harvey, Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. Bishop Harvey is also Moderator of the newly formed Network of Canadian orthodox Anglicans, a growing coalition of Canadian orthodox Anglican Bishops, clergy and lay people. "We are also thankful for the recommendation for Alternative Oversight which will provide true security for dissenting parishes in hostile Dioceses. We hope the Canadian House of Bishops will heed the call to support the spirit and intent of the report when we meet at the end of October".

"While we see positive recommendations in the report, there are still many questions about whether the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) will accept those recommendations and follow the mainstream Anglican teaching" said George Sinclair, Chairman of the Anglican Essentials Council and the Network. "If they do not commit to the common life of the Communion, we will be looking to the Primates for guidance and leadership on a way forward which will ensure the orthodox Anglicans in Canada can remain connected to the global Anglican Communion".

The report recommends that the 38 international Anglican churches agree to sign a covenant to uphold a common Anglican teaching. If they do not sign the common covenant, they would essentially be suspending themselves from the Anglican Communion. "Hopefully, the ACC will vote to remain part of the global Anglican Communion rather than become a stand alone church" said Bishop Peter Mason, retired bishop of the Diocese of Ontario, and a member of the a new Federation of orthodox Anglicans committed to a renewed orthodox Anglicanism in the ACC. "If they choose to leave the global Communion, it will be a sad day for the orthodox in the Canadian Church".

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