

Essentials Network and Federation

Media Backgrounder to the Anglican Crisis in Canada

- ▼ **October 2004.** The Lambeth Commission releases the “Windsor Report” in London. The Commission was struck by the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 2003 to deal with the crisis in the Anglican Communion as a result of the decisions of the Diocese of New Westminster (see June 2002) to bless same-sex unions and the Episcopal Church in the US (ECUSA) to consecrate as Bishop a divorced man living in a same-sex relationship (see November 2003). The recommendations of the Windsor report are to be debated at the next Primates’ (the heads of the 38 Anglican churches or “Provinces” in the world) meeting in February 2005.
- ▼ **August 30-September 1, 2004.** The Anglican Essentials Council hosts “the Way Forward” Conference in Ottawa, Ontario, to find a way forward for Canadian Orthodox Anglicans in light of the decisions of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) in May 2004. Two steering committees are commissioned by the conference to investigate structures and visions for 2 groups that will bring the orthodox Anglicans in Canada together for common cause and orthodox mission. One group is called the “Network”, whose mandate includes the provision of pastoral care and spiritual oversight to parishes that dissent from the decisions of their Bishop, Diocese, or the ACC which contravene mainstream Anglican teaching. The Network will also investigate ways to ensure that any Canadian orthodox Anglican parish, particularly dissenting parishes, can remain connected to the global Anglican Communion during the resolution of this crisis. The other group, called the “Federation”, is committed to a renewed orthodox Anglicanism within the ACC.
- ▼ **May 28-June 4, 2004.** The General Synod of the ACC votes to defer the motion to support a local option for approval of same-sex blessings to the next General Synod in 2007. An amendment to the motion is subsequently passed which “affirms the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same-sex relationships”.
- ▼ **March 2004.** The Matthews Task Force, which was commissioned to investigate Alternative Episcopal Oversight (AEO) for parishes of the Anglican Communion in New Westminster (ACiNW), submits its report to the Canadian House of Bishops. The final report does recommend a model of AEO but the House of Bishops does not act on the report at its spring meeting.
- ▼ **February 2004.** Four international Primates offer Temporary Alternative Episcopal Oversight (TAEO) to disaffected parishes in Canada and 4 parishes from the ACiNW accept the offer and separate themselves from the ACC. They form the Anglican Communion in Canada (ACiC).
- ▼ **January 2004.** The Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes (now called the Anglican Communion Network (ACN) is officially launched at Plano, Texas. Bishop Robert Duncan, Bishop of Pittsburgh is elected Moderator. The Network is a coalition of orthodox Episcopalian churches in the U.S. seeking to remain connected with the Anglican Communion while dissenting from the decisions of their House of Bishops to consecrate as bishop, an divorced man living in a same-sex relationship.
- ▼ **December 2003.** Bishop Michael Ingham of the Diocese of New Westminster writes to the Rev. James Wagner only a few days before Christmas to advise him that the Mission Church of the Holy Cross in Abbotsford, B.C. which had recently joined the ACiNW, is terminated and he is placed on leave with permission to officiate. Rev. Wagner continues to meet with his congregation in a rented facility and his church is not officially considered a member of the global Anglican Communion. The Diocesan Council had voted to “terminate” the church in October 2003, but the Bishop reserved his decision until December.
- ▼ **October 2003.** The Canadian House of Bishops strikes a task force chaired by Bishop Victoria Matthews to investigate AEO for the parishes of the ACiNW. Bishop Terry Buckle, bishop of the Yukon, accedes to a request by the House of Bishops to withdraw his offer of AEO for the ACiNW parishes (see March 2003) to allow the task force to do its work. Bishop Ingham stays the charges against the clergy (see October 2003).
- ▼ **October 2003.** The Primates attend an emergency meeting in London to deal with the crisis precipitated by the actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and the impending consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire. They issue a statement saying the actions of New Westminster, and the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) if they proceed with the consecration, “threaten the unity of our own Communion” and “will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level”. The Archbishop of Canterbury strikes the “Lambeth Commission on Communion to prepare recommendations on how to deal with the crisis – the “Windsor Report”.
- ▼ **October 2003.** While the Primates are meeting, Bishop Michael Ingham delivers canonical charges against 7 rectors of the ACiNW parishes.
- ▼ **September 2003.** Bishop Ingham invokes Canon 15, a rarely used church canon equivalent to religious martial law, to take over control of the ACiNW parish of St. Martin’s North Vancouver, change the locks on the church

building and dismiss the orthodox trustees and volunteers. (the orthodox parishioners later begin a church plant under the name St. Timothy's and join the ACiC in July 2004)

- ▼ **August 2003.** Canon Gene Robinson is confirmed as Bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire.
- ▼ **May 2003.** The Primates meet in Brazil and state that same-sex blessings pose a significant threat to Anglican unity and they cannot support it. Two days later, the first same-sex blessing takes place in Vancouver. Reaction of the Primates is swift and several Primates representing 5/7^{ths} of the Anglicans worldwide declare Bishop Ingham and the Diocese of New Westminster "out of communion" with them.
- ▼ **March 2003.** Bishop Terrence Buckle, Bishop of the Yukon offers Alternative Episcopal Oversight (AEO) to the parishes in the ACiNW. Seven parishes hold special vestry meetings (same as a Special General Meeting) and vote with an average of 98% to accept his oversight. Metropolitan David Crawley commences disciplinary proceedings against Bishop Buckle which could lead to him being de-frocked.
- ▼ **October 2002.** A report issued by two high-ranking Anglican Archbishops and the General Secretary of an Anglican society representing over 14 Anglican Primates and over 150 Bishops recommended Alternative Episcopal Oversight -- also known as a "Flying Bishop" -- to the (then) eight parishes of the ACiNW. Alternative Episcopal Oversight is a step beyond the "Episcopal Visitor" offered to conservative parishes by Bishop Ingham, in that it provides an external bishop with the jurisdictional power to appoint and transfer priests.
- ▼ **September 2002.** The Anglican Consultative Council (a worldwide assembly of Anglican Archbishops, Bishops, and lay people) meet in Hong Kong. In his presidential address, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, said he was deeply concerned that unilateral action by Bishops and dioceses ran the risk of splitting the Anglican Church. He made direct mention of Bishop Michael Ingham and the diocese of New Westminster. He then introduced a resolution that would urge individual dioceses to consult with the worldwide communion before making such decisions. The resolution passed unanimously with one abstention. In an interview shortly after the vote, Archbishop Carey said that Bishop Ingham had not consulted with the worldwide communion on this matter.
- ▼ **August 2002.** Both present and incoming Archbishops of Canterbury urged individual dioceses not to bless same-sex unions without taking stock of the ramifications for the international church.
- ▼ **June 2002.** The Diocese of New Westminster voted 215 to 129 in favour of blessing same-sex unions and Bishop Ingham assented to the result. Eight parishes form as the Anglican Communion in New Westminster (ACiNW) and are opposed the result on the grounds that it went against not only the current position of the national and international Anglican community, but also the explicit teaching of Scripture. Representatives of these eight parishes declared themselves in impaired communion with their Diocese and Bishop and appealed to the Canadian House of Bishops and the global Anglican Communion for Alternative Episcopal Oversight (AEO) or oversight from alternative Bishop.
- ▼ **2001.** The Diocese of New Westminster voted 226 to 174 in favour of blessing same-sex unions. However, Bishop Ingham did not give his assent, citing a need for "greater consensus and mutual understanding" in the diocese.
- ▼ **1998.** Anglican bishops from around the world rejected the blessing of same-sex unions at the decennial Lambeth conference in London, by a vote of 526-70.
- ▼ **1998.** The ACC General Synod affirmed the revision of the 1979 guidelines with its rejection of same-sex unions.
- ▼ **1998.** The Diocese of New Westminster, voted 179 to 170 in favour of asking Bishop Michael Ingham to authorize the blessing of same-sex unions. The bishop withheld his consent, pending further consultation with the wider church.
- ▼ **1997.** The Canadian House of Bishops voted to update the 1979 guidelines while retaining their original intent.
- ▼ **1994.** Anglican Essentials is launched. A coalition of 3 orthodox Anglican groups, Anglican Renewal Ministries, Barnabas Ministries and the Prayer Book Society, join forces to be a theological and spiritual rallying point for historic Christian orthodoxy in Canada.
- ▼ **1979.** The Canadian House of Bishops issued its first major statement on homosexuality, including same-sex unions. The bishops acknowledged the place of gays and lesbians within the church, noting, "homosexual persons, as children of God, have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, concern and pastoral care of the church." They rejected the blessing of same-sex unions, however, noting that their acceptance of those of homosexual orientation is not an acceptance of homosexual activity.
- ▼ **1976.** The Canadian House of Bishops committed itself to a period of study and discussion and a task force was created to consider the issue of homosexuality, particularly with regards to pastoral concerns and ordination.