

MEDIA RELEASE

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Gay Anglicans call Church to action, not further delay

As the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada prepares to debate resolutions about homosexuality starting next week in Winnipeg, gay and lesbian Anglicans are praying that after 30 years of study, the Church will finally allow parishes to bless committed same-sex relationships.

“We know the Anglican Church is not yet ready to marry us,” said Dr. Donald Meen of Integrity Vancouver, “but we are hoping the Church will at least allow willing parishes to recognize the goodness of our relationships publicly, and to support us in our promises of love and commitment.”

Civil marriage has been open to same-sex couples in Canada since 2005, but Anglican church law prevents gay couples from religious marriage rites. One of the resolutions the church synod will debate, commonly called Local Option, would affirm the right of individual dioceses to decide whether to permit parishes to bless same-sex couples, though not their marriages. A second resolution calls the national church to begin a discussion about equal marriage.

Integrity Canada spokesperson Ron Chaplin notes that the difference between civil law and current church law leaves same-sex couples in “pastoral and ecclesial limbo.” “Civily married gay people now operate in the Church’s ‘grey zone’ where access to the sacraments, to ordained ministry, and to rites is unclear and confused. It is time for the General Synod to end this confusion.”

Rev. Linda Fisher Privitera, chaplain to Integrity Ottawa, agrees. “Pastoral care of the GLBT believing community is at a crisis point when the Church itself is wounding us by questioning our faith and by refusing to bless our good loves. It is hypocritical for the Church to affirm our relationships as holy and life-giving – as the General Synod did three years ago – and still refuse to live into the actions implied by such affirmation.”

In October the Canadian House of Bishops also seemed to agree, calling for “one or more significant decisions” from Synod and saying, “further inaction, or the perception of stalling, may result in widespread disobedience.” Many Anglican clergy are finding it increasingly difficult to justify the Church’s discrimination against same-sex couples. Some have already resigned over the issue.

But last month the bishops changed their mind, calling for three more years of theological study, which Chaplin believes will deepen the Anglican crisis of conscience. “Further dithering and delay will only sap our credibility in our primary mission field, right here in Canada.”

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[Integrity Canada](http://www.integritycanada.org) is national network of individuals and groups working toward the full inclusion of gay and lesbian people in the life and ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada.

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