

**Media Release**

18 October 2004

**Integrity Canada responds to the Lambeth Commission Report (The Windsor Report)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Integrity in Canada has looked at the Windsor report, and will be studying it for a while. We note that Archbishop Eames says in his preface that "this Report is not a judgment. It is part of a process. It is part of a pilgrimage towards healing and reconciliation." Integrity is glad to read that, and hopes to be a part of the pilgrimage envisioned by the authors.

The report speaks about a need for a way for the communion to come to common understandings on vexing questions, and proposes models for that perception to take place. Given how badly the divisions over same-sex blessings, and the ordination of Bishop Gene Robinson have affected the communion, such a process is clearly needed. Our current structures are not adequate, neither have consultations (as mandated by the Lambeth conference in 1998) been widely held.

We hope that conversations will begin widely across the church on these questions, and trust that they will include lesbian and gay Anglicans. Integrity has been part of the church for nearly 30 years, and will be happy to make ourselves available for ongoing dialogue.

The report speaks of how the "bonds of affection" that help bind the communion have been breached by both same-sex blessings in New Westminster, and the consecration of Bishop Robinson. People have been asked to apologise for the hurt experienced by others. Integrity can empathise with their distress, and recognise that they need to know that their hurt is acknowledged and regretted by others.

The price for repairing these bonds of affection seems to be an apology and an agreement not to do it again. That could, in turn, strain bonds of affection which the church has with the gay and lesbian people in the pews now.

Following the release of the report, Steve Schuh, President of Integrity Vancouver, commented: "The Anglican Communion appears to be content with its long-standing practice of asking its gay and lesbian members to wait quietly and apologetically while church leaders debate our future. We will not wait quietly, nor will we apologize for the work of God in our lives. As long as God continues to bless same-sex couples in their committed relationships, and to bless gay and lesbian clergy with gifts for ministry, we will continue to press toward our full inclusion in the Anglican Church of Canada. We are bound by both our conscience and our commitment to Jesus Christ to follow the Holy Spirit wherever she will lead, regardless of which other church structures are ready to follow."

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Integrity continues to stand with those in New Westminster who worked for, and then authorised, blessing of same-sex unions, and with those who authorised and participated in the consecration of Bp Robinsons. We are convinced that these actions were, and are, in keeping with the Gospel. We hope that those bishops will also be part of a Communion-wide dialog on these issues- explaining the theological reasons for their positions.

We also stand with Bishop Gene Robinson himself who was elected, confirmed, and consecrated in accordance with canon law and a Spirit-led process in the Diocese of New Hampshire. We are confident that, as there is further consideration of the recommendations in the Windsor Report, Bishop Robinson will not be excluded from the councils of the Communion. For him to be isolated would echo the isolation of the closet that many lesbians and gays have felt for years, and which the acceptance of the Church should overcome.

We look forward to the ongoing discernment process throughout the communion that this report envisages. Gay and lesbian Anglicans have been baptised, and continue to claim our place at God's table.

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