

24 October 2007

The Most Reverend Fred Hiltz
Primate, Anglican Church of Canada
80 Hayden Street
Toronto ON M4Y 3G2

Your Grace,

As the Canadian House of Bishops prepares to meet in just a few days, Integrity Canada prays that your gathering be marked by the grace, peace, and “holy boldness” of our Lord Jesus Christ! Given the particularly difficult times in which you lead our church as Primate, we extend to you, and our brothers and sisters of the House of Bishops, our prayerful support and encouragement.

You will appreciate that this is a difficult time for gay and lesbian Christians in the church. After the confused and hurtful statement from the House of Bishops in the spring, and the discouraging performance of our bishops at General Synod in June, many of our members are feeling abandoned and even betrayed by our episcopal leaders.

The pain of recent months is fresh and deep among us, as is our concern about the future given the ambiguous state in which the House of Bishops and General Synod have left us. The pastoral care of gay and lesbian people, our families, and our faith communities has been left in the hands of disputing canon lawyers, and our inclusion in the church is threatened by international forces that question our love for God, for the Church, and even for each other.

As you know, last October the House warned General Synod that inaction or the perception of stalling on these questions would have serious consequences for the Church. Ironically, the House’s more recent statement last May, and their voting at General Synod reinforce the impression that it is our bishops who are forcing delay.

Although it is evident that the Spirit is moving the Church to embrace its gay and lesbian members more fully, the bishops’ self-imposed moratorium on blessings is preventing us from taking the next step on that path. Synods in both Ottawa and Montreal have now voted to bless civil marriages, joining New Westminster and Niagara in calling the Church to bless our committed relationships. The pressure is mounting, and reports from across the country suggest that the effects of continuing inaction and stalling will be as devastating as the bishops predicted.

We contend, therefore, that the moratorium on same-sex blessings has served its purpose, that dioceses have exercised due diligence in discerning the movement of the Spirit in their midst, and that those whose consciences allow must now be permitted to express their convictions in accordance with the core doctrine of our Church. We ask the House of Bishops, through you, to lift the moratorium on same-sex blessings.

In all of this, please be assured that we are with you and support you. We remain committed to the cause of the Gospel which compels us to strive toward the full inclusion of lesbian and gay people in the life and ministry of our church, that we may all be one in Christ Jesus (Gal.3:28).

Grace, peace, and holy boldness!

Chris Ambidge
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Ron Chaplin
Integrity Ottawa

Steve Schuh
Integrity Vancouver