

An Open Letter to the Leadership of the Anglican Church of Canada May 25, 2017

It was with sadness and dismay that we learned this past week that the Provincial House of Bishops of BC & Yukon will not consecrate the Diocese of Caledonia's bishop-elect, the Rev. Jake Worley. We want to believe that this decision was reached in a fair and reasonable manner, but we are also aware that to many Anglicans in the pew it looks unfair and deliberately skewed--especially given some recent history.

1. In 2002 the Diocese of New Westminster, in that same Province, approved same-sex blessings against the wishes of the Communion and the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Canada (several others subsequently did the same). This breach of doctrine and discipline, the cause of division and schism both within that diocese and across the Communion, was met with acceptance by national leaders.

2. Following General Synod's July 2016 first-reading vote on the change to the marriage Canon, several Canadian bishops, emboldened by National Chancellor Canon David Jones' technical assurance that the Canons did not expressly *forbid* same-sex marriage, declared their intention to proceed when they thought the motion had been defeated and, once it was passed, to go ahead rather than wait for second reading. They were not disciplined, to our knowledge.

3. In September of 2016, an unmarried, partnered gay man was elected bishop in the Diocese of Toronto, although his manner of life would seem to conflict with Lambeth 1.10, the Anglican Communion's authoritative teaching on sexuality. Written objections on the grounds of a breach of doctrine and discipline were dismissed. Objectors at synod were simply told that the Rev. Kevin Robertson was under licence and was a priest "in good standing." He was consecrated in January, 2017.

Now the Diocese of Caledonia, having elected one of its own priests in good standing, finds itself back to square one. In a statement released by the Anglican Church of Canada on May 15, Abp. John Privett, Provincial Metropolitan, is quoted as saying that "within the past five years the Rev. Worley has held – and continues to hold – views contrary to the Discipline of the Anglican Church of Canada." These "views" relate to jurisdictional issues.

Even if the canonical argument against Worley stands, why have other dioceses and bishops avoided ecclesial censure? Moreover, is it not the case that several of those same Provincial bishops hold views contrary to the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Canada?

A pattern seems to emerge regarding the kinds of rules and canons that can, and cannot, be broken. Why do Canons guarding jurisdiction seem to be sacrosanct, while Canons related to doctrine and our received tradition must give way to the vanguard of revisionist teaching on sexuality?

Finally, we understand that during Worley's interview he was asked to make a promise as to the direction he might take the Diocese of Caledonia. Will all future episcopal candidates be subject to this kind of Provincial scrutiny, and asked to make special promises based on a hypothetical situation?

Our hope is that in this very destructive situation, some resolution can be found that begins to mend the relationship between the Diocese of Caledonia and leaders at the Provincial and National levels—and, indeed, serves to increase unity and trust between those leaders and Anglicans who have remained within the ACC as loyal dissenters.

We want to assure the Diocese of Caledonia, the Rev. Worley and his family, the Provincial House of Bishops and Archbishop John Privett of our prayers at this difficult time.

In Christ,
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