



Anglican Church of Canada
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August 5, 2016

+Stephen, Bishop of Algoma
+David, Bishop of The Arctic
+Darren, Suffragan Bishop of The Arctic
+Fraser, Bishop of Athabasca
+William, Bishop of Caledonia
+David, Bishop of Fredericton
+Michael, Bishop of Saskatchewan
+Larry, Bishop of Yukon

My dear Brothers in the Lord,

I read with great care and concern your July 15th statement “To all the faithful in the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Communion.” I have taken some time to consider it and pray about how I would respond. Having taken that time, in the midst of a host of other post General Synod matters requiring my immediate attention, I offer the following by way of reflection.

- I honour your condemnation of “homophobic prejudice and violence wherever it occurs,” and your “rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people”. On this point we are indeed one in mind, heart and deep conviction as a Church.
- I note your commitment to “offer pastoral care and loving service to all irrespective of sexual orientation” and I am confident in your word. The challenge we face of course is that for many in the Church pastoral care includes full and equal access to all the ministrations of the Church, including the solemnization of their marriages, and it is precisely on this point that members of the Church hold very different views and with deeply held convictions of theological perspective.
- I note your statement “We believe that our General Synod has erred grievously and we publicly dissent from this decision”. I acknowledge your right to do so, albeit sadly.
- I am concerned by your view that “The Resolution as carried does not provide adequate protection for the consciences of dioceses, clergy and congregations. We are concerned for all those of a traditional conscience on marriage within the Anglican Church of Canada.” I feel compelled to ask-- What would “adequate protection” look like? How would you define it? How would the Church uphold it? How would it apply in your dioceses for persons of the opposite view?

- I share your concern that before a Second Reading of an amendment to the Marriage Canon making provision for the solemnization of same sex marriage in our Church at General Synod 2019 that “some bishops have vowed to proceed with same sex marriages immediately” While I have as you know no canonical authority to prohibit bishops from taking such action, I will encourage a conversation in the House of Bishops about patience with the due process of General Synod proceedings through Second Reading in 2019.
- I am saddened that you feel so strongly that “the entire process, beginning with the hasty vote in 2013 and concluding with the vote and miscount this past week, has been flawed.” As you might imagine I do not share your view. On the contrary I believe considerable care was taken by the Council of General Synod in the establishing of a Commission on the Marriage Canon and in giving it a mandate in keeping with the resolution as amended and approved by General Synod 2013. I believe that the Commission did its work thoroughly. As I noted at General Synod, I regret that its report “This Holy Estate” was not considered by the Church to the extent to which it had been hoped. I also believe that some considerable care was taken in framing questions for conversations in neighbourhood groups at General Synod; as well as in making provision for abstentions on the vote on the resolution should members choose or feel compelled to do so.
- I am troubled by your statement that “terrible hurt and damage was inflicted on all involved”. I need to hear more from you with respect to your point of view. My view is that in the course of this Synod many members, some perhaps for the first time, in a very powerful way experienced the pain of another whose view on this matter is very different than their own. Many have commented that as difficult as that was, the grace of God held us together.
- I share with you a deep sense of frustration over legislative processes to consider matters of deep theological and pastoral importance in the life of the Church. I long for ways of discernment for the leading of the Spirit that are less adversarial, less confrontational, and less hurtful. We are not alone in this frustration and this longing. What would such an alternative look like?
- I acknowledge your unambiguous reaffirmation of commitment to “Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all; his body, the Church Catholic; the Anglican Church of Canada; and the Anglican Communion;” Know that I stand with you in this commitment.
- I also acknowledge your call to me and the Archbishop of Canterbury “to seek ways to guarantee our place within the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Communion.” I pledge my very best efforts and those of our Church as a whole to answer this call.

Here are some initial steps

- ❖ At the Synod itself members took a substantial block of time in table group conversations to consider the question -What next- Pastorally? Prophetically? Structurally? That question came in the morning after the results of the vote on Monday evening. I think it is

just as appropriate as we consider the results of the vote on Tuesday afternoon. I have read all of the feedback and I believe the spirit and substance of the responses are applicable to both results

- ❖ I intend to have all of the notes from these table groups conversations collated and sent to every member of Synod. I intend to have them before the Agenda Committee of the House of Bishops and the Planning and Agenda team for the Council of General Synod. They will serve as a basis for the conversations we must have in both bodies, responding in their respective ways, for providing leadership for the life and witness of our Church.
- ❖ At the September meeting of the House of Bishops there is time set aside for
 - an opportunity for anyone who wishes to comment on or reactions to General Synod, the process and decision making re A051
 - a “Cross Country Check up” with every bishop responding to the question: How are things in your diocese after GS2016? (I will speak to any international reaction to GS2016)
 - a plenary session centered on the question: In regards to this issue what do we need to do as a House of Bishops to provide the Christian witness and leadership needed for the whole Church in Canada at this time.

I encourage your full participation in this session.

- ❖ In the spirit of your call I have spoken with the Archbishop of Canterbury and assured him of my efforts to address it as comprehensively as I can. I will do so in the spirit of the broadest view of the Church attainable, the highest degree of Communion sustainable and the deepest degree of charity to which the Gospel calls us.
- ❖ For me, my brothers, the question you ask is really a question for all members of the Church. To what extent can we and will we make room for one another? To what extent will we pastorally accommodate one another?
- ❖ Finally as you have asked that I pray for you so I ask that you pray for me. These are challenging times. With you I take great heart knowing that day by day our lives and ministries are lifted heavenward by the prayers all the faithful.
- ❖ I close with a reference to the counsel with which I shaped my own statement following General Synod, the counsel of St Paul to the Church in Ephesus

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

I pray for the grace to live by this holy counsel as I know you do too.

With respect



