

Statement of the Primates of the Global South in the Anglican Communion, 2 November 2003

01 November 2003 - [Print Version](#)

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It is with profound sadness and pain that we have arrived at this moment in the history of the Anglican Communion.

We are appalled that the authorities within the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) have ignored the heartfelt plea of the Communion not to proceed with the scheduled consecration of Canon Gene Robinson. They have ignored the clear and strong warning of its detrimental consequences for the unity of the Communion which was contained in the Statement from the Primates' Meeting of October 15th and 16th which was unanimously assented to by the thirty-seven Primates present including the presiding bishop of ECUSA.

The consecration of a bishop, who divorced his wife and separated from his children now living as a non-celibate homosexual, clearly demonstrates that authorities within ECUSA consider that their cultural-based agenda is of far greater importance than obedience to the Word of God, the integrity of the one mission of God in which we all share, the spiritual welfare and unity of the worldwide Anglican Communion, our ecumenical fellowship and inter-faith relationships. The overwhelming majority of the Primates of the Global South cannot and will not recognize the office or ministry of Canon Gene Robinson as a bishop.

We deplore the act of those bishops who have taken part in the consecration which has now divided the Church in violation of their obligation to guard the faith and unity of the church. A state of impaired communion now exists both within a significant part of ECUSA and between ECUSA and most of the provinces within the Communion. By its actions, ECUSA is held solely responsible for this division. In addition to violating the clear and consistent teaching of the Bible, the consecration directly challenges the common teaching, common practice and common witness within the one Anglican Communion.

As ECUSA has willfully disregarded the strong warnings given at Lambeth that such an action would "tear the fabric of the communion at its deepest level", we can now have no basis whatsoever for any further confidence that ECUSA will pay any regard to the findings of the recently announced Commission set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We urge the Archbishop of Canterbury to bring forward urgently a mechanism to guarantee "adequate provision of episcopal oversight "[1] for parishes and clergy within ECUSA dioceses and the Diocese of New Westminster with whom we remain in fellowship. We also call on those persons who have already placed lawsuits that further tear the fabric of our common life to withdraw their destructive worldly actions

As Primates who represent over fifty million Anglicans, we have a solemn stewardship to steadfastly uphold and promote the historic and universal Apostolic Faith and Order of the Church throughout the ages as well as to protect those who are one with us in this same. We therefore affirm the ministry of the bishops, clergy and laity in ECUSA who have, as a matter of principle, and in fidelity to the historic teaching of the Church, opposed the actions taken at General Convention and objected to the consecration. We will continue to recognize and support their membership within the worldwide Communion fellowship and promise them our solidarity and episcopal support. We will now do everything that is necessary to uphold historic Anglicanism and advance our common faith, life, mission and ministry.

We cannot now uniformly define the further implications of this impairment created by ECUSA. As each province lives into the "emerging" character of this impairment of communion according to the theological and legal demands of their respective churches [2], we pledge support of each other in our common response to the willful decision of ECUSA authorities to oppose the Communion's teaching.

We are challenged and hopeful about the future while we grieve for those who have defiantly chosen to walk another way. We call on faithful Anglicans to a season of prayer for repentance, renewal and reconciliation in Christ and for the unity of our Anglican Communion rooted in truth and love.

To God alone be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever! Amen.

Most Revd Peter J. Akinola DD. '

For and behalf of the working committee for the Primates of the Global South.

[1] Primates' Statement October 16 2003

[2] Commission's Mandate October 29 2003 Paragraph 2.