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**DIOCESE OF YUKON** ✠  
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

January 25, 2016

To the People of the Anglican Diocese of Yukon

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who unites us in His Spirit and makes us one. I pray that your Christmas has been a time of experiencing the joy that comes from that unity as you celebrated our Lord's birth and I hope the you will be able to find the rest you need as you prepare for the new year ahead.

As most of you are aware, the Anglican Primates from all over the world met in England in January and made a statement for public reading that I have printed at the end of this letter. As it impacts the whole of the Anglican communion including us, I feel that I should write and give you some of my thoughts regarding it.

Again, as most of you are aware, a Primate represents the Anglican Province that he or she serves. For the Anglican Church of Canada, our Primate is the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz. Many of you will remember his visit to our Diocese last summer.

The discussion regarding the merits of homosexual behaviour and same sex marriage has been a point of disagreement in the world wide Anglican Communion for many years and I believe it is one of the major reasons for the Primates not meeting for almost 10 years. The actions of some churches concerning this discussion was a major reason for this Primates meeting.

My thoughts concerning the Primate's statement are as follows;

1. **It is Gracious.** In any family there are disagreements. How we deal with those disagreements reveals our attitude towards the family as a whole. The Primate's Statement is gracious. It recognized the disagreement of a few but inflicted the least consequences to maintain unity. There could have been much heavier consequences put on the Episcopal Church in the USA but out of love and a desire to continue to be a family it settled on much lesser consequences. One of the reasons I am an Anglican is because it is gracious. We were always ready to struggle together to try to keep the family together. In my first years in the Anglican Church of Canada when there were disagreements, we discussed, sometimes argued together, until we came to a decision that we could live with together. We thought not to blame or criticize but to heal and strengthen. It often

meant that few got what they wanted but we were able to live together with the results. It saddens me that recent decisions of the Anglican Church of Canada have not been as gracious as the past, in my opinion. However, when I read the Primate's statement it is gracious. It seeks to keep the family together, to build and strengthen.

2. **It Desires and Promotes Unity;** "We gathered as Anglican Primates to pray and consider how we may preserve our unity in Christ given the ongoing deep differences that exist among us concerning our understanding of marriage" "It is our unanimous desire to walk together." Despite the very strong differences the Primates wanted unity. The majority were willing to lessen their expectations to hold on to unity. When unity is broken, everyone loses. It is a lesson I hope we have learned in Canada.
3. **It Recognizes that there are Costs to Unity;** In any family there are costs to keeping unity in times of disagreement. Love for each other will cause us to lessen our expectations. Love will sometimes cause us to accept the consequences of our decisions with humility. Love will find a middle ground without compromising our core beliefs. This however, usually means accepting the costs, expectations or consequences that follow. This Statement recognizes the cost to unity. For the Episcopal Church in the USA it means accepting the consequences, for others there is a warning that similar consequences might be applied to them if they follow this way. For others it means recognizing and living with members who have opposing theological differences than themselves for the sake of unity; for the sake of love; for the sake of Christ.
4. **It Recognizes the Real Pain that Exists;** "We have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognising the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ." This statement tells me that there is a recognition that there is real pain. Real Pain caused by prejudice, ignorance, hate, lack of understanding, not communicating and/or not loving. This real pain calls for real action in allowing the healing process to begin.

I do not know where this will lead or what the results will be. I believe that the Primate's Statement can give us time and opportunity, if we choose to use it to come together in love and as an Anglican family to see if the Anglican Communion, as we now know it, can remain together. If it cannot, I fear that it will have a great influence on our Anglican family in Canada. In February the Canadian House of Bishops will meet over the possible change to the marriage canon to allow same sex marriage. And then again this issue will come to a vote at the General Synod to be held in July. I ask you to hold these two meetings in your prayers that the love of Jesus would dominate.

These are my thoughts on the Primates Statement written to the Members of the Diocese of Yukon. They are my opinions. If you have any questions regarding what I have said, please feel free to contact me.

I remain humbled at the support and prayer given me and ask your prayers that I may honour that support in representing this Diocese in sharing the love of Christ.

In Christ's name.

*+Larry*

The Rt. Rev. Larry Robertson  
Bishop of Yukon

### *The Primates Statement of their Meeting of January 2016*

- 1. We gathered as Anglican Primates to pray and consider how we may preserve our unity in Christ given the ongoing deep differences that exist among us concerning our understanding of marriage.*
- 2. Recent developments in The Episcopal Church with respect to a change in their Canon on marriage represent a fundamental departure from the faith and teaching held by the majority of our Provinces on the doctrine of marriage. Possible developments in other Provinces could further exacerbate this situation.*
- 3. All of us acknowledge that these developments have caused further deep pain throughout our Communion.*
- 4. The traditional doctrine of the church in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds marriage as between a man and a woman in faithful, lifelong union. The majority of those gathered reaffirm this teaching.*
- 5. In keeping with the consistent position of previous Primates' meetings such unilateral actions on a matter of doctrine without Catholic unity is considered by many of us as a departure from the mutual accountability and interdependence implied through being in relationship with each other in the Anglican Communion.*
- 6. Such actions further impair our communion and create a deeper mistrust between us. This results in significant distance between us and*

*places huge strains on the functioning of the Instruments of Communion and the ways in which we express our historic and ongoing relationships.*

- 7. It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.*
- 8. We have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognising the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ.*