

FAITH, WORSHIP AND MINISTRY REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD, JUNE 2007

Appendix C: Responses to the St. Michael Report

Since the following report was prepared by Patricia Bays, some additional responses have been received. Responses were received from 35 individuals (including 3 couples), 9 parishes, 4 groups (2 deaneries, a youth synod and a group of retired clergy), 10 dioceses and 1 ecclesiastical province. Some responses did not respond specifically to the St. Michael Report, but to questions of the blessing of same-sex unions, human sexuality, and/or the unity of the Anglican Communion.

Some diocesan, and the provincial, responses are in the form of Memorials to General Synod and are included elsewhere in the Convening Circular. Some diocesan responses are available on diocesan websites.

Responses to the St. Michael Report received to February 2007 A Report to the Council of General Synod by Patricia Bays

To February 9, 2007, 39 written responses to the St. Michael Report were received by the national office. The Faith Worship and Ministry Committee read 30 of these at its February meeting in 2006. I have read the 9 which came in since then. Most of these latter were responses from groups – deaneries, parishes and dioceses, indicating that dioceses have taken seriously the responsibility to study the Report. The numbers may not in all cases add up to 39 since not everyone answered the same questions nor was it possible to identify categories (clergy/lay, province) in all cases. The summary merely gives a snapshot of current responses.

Clergy 13 Laity 17 Unidentified 1 Groups 8

Canada 8 Ontario 10 RL 11 BCY 1 Unknown 8

Answered the questions 24 Did not deal with questions 15

On the question of the level of doctrinal importance give to the issue of same sex blessings, 9 respondents felt it to be a matter of doctrine, 15 felt it a matter of core doctrine, 9 regarded the issue as adiaphora and 5 gave no answer. On the question of whether the church should permit the blessing of same sex unions, 19 replied “Never”, 9 replied that such blessings should be permitted as soon as possible and 8 were somewhere in the middle, suggesting that a longer time be taken in making this decision.

Responses covered a wide range of positions, from those who believe that the church should proceed at once to the blessing of same sex unions to those who

would oppose such a decision for a variety of reasons. Many suggested that the church needs to do further work on a variety of issues – a further explanation of the meaning of doctrine, the nature of authority, the interpretation of Scripture, questions around blessing and marriage, sexuality and friendship.

There were many expressions of thanks to the Primate’s Theological Commission for the excellent work that they had done in exploring this issue. One response praised the “gracious attempt to set out differing opinions clearly and fairly.” It was clear that Canadian Anglicans valued the opportunity to reflect on the report and the issues it raises. They welcomed the process by which their views could be expressed to the national church.