



ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

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NEWS RELEASE

Archbishop authorizes a Theological Task Force on Holy Orders
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At the inception of the Anglican Church in North America, the Lead Bishops unanimously agreed to work together for the good of the Kingdom. As part of this consensus, it was understood that there were differing understandings regarding the ordination of women to Holy Orders, but there existed a mutual love and respect for one another and a desire to move forward for the good of the Church. This commitment was deeply embedded in the Constitution and Canons overwhelmingly adopted by the Inaugural Assembly (2009).

In respect of the two integrities concerning Holy Orders, three matters were specifically agreed in Constitution and Canons:

1. The Province shall make no canon abridging the authority of any member dioceses, clusters or networks (whether regional or affinity-based) and those dioceses banded together as jurisdictions with respect to its practice regarding the ordination of women to the diaconate or presbyterate (Constitution, Article VIII)
2. Except as hereinafter provided, the norms for ordination shall be determined by the Bishops having jurisdiction. (Title III Canon 1.4)
3. To be a suitable candidate for the episcopate, a person must: Be a male Presbyter at least 35 years old. (Title III Canon 8.3.7)

This initial consensus has allowed the North American Province to make huge strides on almost every front of Kingdom work.

Within the College of Bishops there has been a desire, from those representing both integrities, to do the Biblical and theological work that was never done before our founding as a Province. There is also the commitment to be in dialogue about this work with our global Anglican and ecumenical partners. The Bishops have given serious time to this enterprise at their meetings in Amesbury (2010) and Sumas (2011), and will do so again at Orlando (2013). Thus far, the work has been done only when the Bishops have been face to face. The same spirit that characterized the Province's inauguration has characterized these discussions.

“In our fourth year as a Province we are ready to go deeper still,” said Archbishop Duncan. “It is time to appoint a continuing body to help us with the study that was never previously undertaken.” Archbishop Robert Duncan has requested the formation of a Theological Task Force on Holy Orders, affirming the conciliar leadership that has become a trademark of the Anglican Church in North America. “As a Church we do not avoid our disagreements. Rather, we face them in love and charity and, above all, with a Kingdom mindset.”

To lead this task force, Archbishop Duncan has appointed the Rt. Rev. David Hicks, Bishop of the REC Diocese of the Northeast & Mid-Atlantic. Bp. Hicks has proposed a procedural approach for the task force to address the topic from a neutral standpoint and is awaiting approval from Archbishop Duncan. The proposal recommends populating the task force with two additional Anglican Church in North America bishops and four theological scholars. Bp. Hicks has also suggested that at least two members of the task force be women.

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The proposed procedure rolls out in five phases. Once the task force is populated and approved, the first major conversation will be a study of hermeneutical issues, specifically looking at how the Church's tradition and culture influence interpretation of Biblical texts.

As the work progresses, the procedure requires the task force to report back to the Archbishop and College of Bishops at the end of each phase for review and revision. Thus, the larger leadership body of the Church will remain closely tied to the discussion. In addition to the College, Bp. Hicks has also recommended a procedure for feedback from the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans Theological Resource Group throughout each phase of the process. Before the fifth and final phase, comments from our ecumenical partners will also be requested.

A specific timeline has not been assigned to the task force. Confident in the mission of the Anglican Church in North America, Archbishop Duncan explained, "The current consensus stands. Should a new consensus emerge, we will move forward on it because it is a consensus, for the Kingdom's sake."