



Integrity

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ECUSA SPECIAL COMMISSION REAFFIRMS
FULL & EQUAL CLAIM FOR GAY & LESBIAN EPISCOPALIANS**

Integrity commends the Special Commission on Anglican Communion Affairs for reaffirming ECUSA's 30-year-old stand on gay and lesbian inclusion. "The widely predicted 'U-turn' on lesbian and gay inclusion failed to materialize," said Integrity President Susan Russell. "This a huge victory for those committed to communion and a significant defeat for those insisting on capitulation. Instead of an about-face, the report offers a way forward for those willing to stay in conversation and community with those with whom they disagree."

In reaffirming the inclusion of gays and lesbians, the report makes the strong statement that this church will not scapegoat its lesbian and gay members for a threatened schism not of their making. Rejecting the call for a moratorium on the election of gay or lesbian bishops, the report instead affirmed that considerable caution should be exercised in ANY episcopal election (caution which we firmly believe was exercised in 2003).

To "present a challenge to the wider church" can, we believe, be a vehicle for the movement of the Holy Spirit. We recognize that just as ECUSA needs to confront the challenges of racism and imperialism voiced by our sisters and brothers from the Global South, the voices of witness of the gay and lesbian faithful in ECUSA and other provinces offer challenges to sexism and homophobia in other parts of our communion. We have much to learn from each other and we are grateful for a report offering ways to continue, rather than cut off, the conversation.

We do find the proposed moratoria on the authorization of Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions (proposed resolution A162) problematic, mostly in its distinction between "private" and "public" rites. We believe it is impossible for the church to hold that a "private" response is also a "pastoral" one in this case. We find the use of the word "private" to be a potential step back from Resolution C051 of 2003 (which called such liturgies "within the bounds of our common life") and, therefore, we cannot support A162 as it currently stands.

Our own detailed analysis of this document will be forthcoming. For now we offer this brief sketch of our hopes and concerns with gratitude for the work that has thus far been done.

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