

Gay bishop Robinson, barred from Lambeth, will be around anyway: Denied "official observer" status

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Episcopal bishop V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, a flashpoint of controversy within the Anglican Communion for being a partnered gay bishop, said he turned down an offer from fellow U.S. bishops to be on the margins of this summer's Lambeth Conference in London—allowed to appear in the exhibit hall and give media interviews.

But Robinson told reporters March 10 that he plans to “observe” and be around during the once-a-decade gathering despite the fact that efforts to give him “official observer” status had failed. His election as bishop in New Hampshire and affirmation given by the 2003 meeting of the Episcopal Church are bitterly opposed by many Southern Hemisphere churches.

Some Anglican bishops in Kenya, among African bishops who have threatened to boycott the conference, greeted the news of Robinson's exclusion by suggesting that a boycott may be unnecessary.

“If we are assured Gene Robinson and others will not be attending, then there is no reason why the Kenya church will not attend,” Anglican bishop Julius Kalu of Mombasa told ENI on March 12.

Others indicated that they are not reconsidering the boycott because the Episcopal Church has not repented for its stances on homosexuality and the unofficial blessings of same-sex unions.

Bishop Gideon Ireri of Mbeere said, “There has not been any repentance in the church over the deviation from the doctrine of creation.” He acknowledged that the American church has said it regretted that its actions distressed other parts of the church, but, Ireri said, to regret is one thing and to repent is another.