

# Episcopal Church said to face sanctions over support for gay bishop: May be placed on "quarantine"

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Leaders of the Episcopal Church may be placed on quarantine by the rest of the worldwide Anglican Communion because of the U.S. denomination's approval of an openly gay man, V. Gene Robinson, as a bishop, London newspapers reported early this month.

The *Times* and the *Telegraph* described what they said were the expected findings of a special commission that was set up by the archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in the aftermath of Robinson's election, ratified at a convention last year. The Anglican Church of Canada may face sanctions as well for its almost equally controversial support for same-sex blessings in a province in western Canada. Both actions run counter to stances taken at the 1998 Lambeth conference by bishops of the 75-million-member communion.

The special commission, which has sought ways to keep unity amid threats of schism, was to hold its final meeting in Windsor, England, the second week of September. Its long-awaited report is due to be released in October.

If the news reports September 3 are correct, U.S. bishops who continue to support Robinson, now bishop of New Hampshire, would be excluded from Anglican summits. New bishops everywhere in the communion would be required to support official Anglican policy.

The newspapers also indicated that the New York-based Episcopal Church of 2.3 million members and more than 3,400 congregations would face possible exclusion from the communion unless its leadership renounced its position. That kind of decision would be made at the next Lambeth Conference, scheduled for 2008, the

news reports said.

The *Telegraph* reported that if such steps were taken, they “could prove enough to placate the church’s conservatives.” The newspaper noted that many of the suggestions emerged from the Anglican Communion Institute, a think tank supported by George Carey, the previous archbishop of Canterbury.

Carey caused controversy in August by agreeing to carry out confirmation ceremonies in the U.S., at the invitation of dissident parishes that are withholding support from the Episcopal Church over homosexuality issues. -*Ecumenical News International*