

## New Westminster Clergy Under African Oversight

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Four Anglican priests who recently resigned from the Vancouver-area diocese have announced they are now operating under the oversight of five senior archbishops from Africa and Asia.

The conservative priests have left the 700,000-member Anglican Church of Canada and refuse to accept the authority of liberal Bishop Michael Ingham, who consented to same-sex blessings in 2003.

The disaffected priests, who call their new organization the Anglican Communion in Canada, vow temporary obedience to five conservative Anglican leaders, known as primates, from the Congo, Rwanda, Central Africa, Kenya, and Southeast Asia.

Anglican Communion in Canada spokesman Paul Carter said Thursday that members of his newly formed organization will be 'cared for' by conservative Anglican cleric Thomas Johnston, of Arkansas, who serves as 'missionary bishop' for Rwandan Primate Emmanuel Kolini.

Johnston is one of the leaders of a conservative group known as the Anglican Mission in America, which broke away several years ago from the larger U.S. Episcopal church.

However, Carter said his new Canadian organization is not part of the Anglican Mission in America.

The four Vancouver-area priests, including himself, now consider themselves 'canonically resident' in the Anglican province of Rwanda, he said.

That means, said Carter, the four priests from this point on will 'operate outside the canons of the Anglican Church of Canada.'

In addition, the four will only be only 'affiliate members' of the Anglican Communion in New Westminster, a larger coalition of conservative activists who don't accept the authority of Ingham but are choosing to remain in the Anglican Church of Canada.

The four priests' resignation raises questions about the future use of church property. Carter, who has been on a leave of absence from the diocese, has been leading a congregation in a temporary facility, as has disaffected priest Rev. Silas Ng of Richmond's Church of Emmanuel.

However, two of the priests who quit the Anglican Church of Canada -Rev. Ed Hird of St. Simon's parish in North Vancouver and Rev. Barclay Mayo of St. Andrew's in Pender Harbour - have been serving congregations that meet in properties diocesan officials say are owned by the diocese.

Asked whether the disaffected priests and their followers hope to hold onto the North Vancouver and Pender Harbour properties, Carter said, "We think there's a case to be made for the property to stay with the parishes."

A lawyer is looking into the property issue for the Anglican Communion in Canada, Carter said. He did not wish to comment further, other than to say, "We'll see what unfolds".

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