

# THE STRUCTURE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

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**THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA** comprises 30 dioceses across Canada, each under the jurisdiction and pastoral care of a diocesan bishop. (Parishes in the Diocese of Cariboo function as the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior under the direction of the Metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon.) The dioceses together comprise 2,800 congregations, organized into 1,700 parishes. Along with the bishops, each diocese sends lay and clerical representatives to the General Synod.

Dioceses are organized into districts called ecclesiastical provinces, to allow them to gather and function regionally. Canada has four provinces, each headed by a Metropolitan: British Columbia and Yukon (B.C. and Yukon), Rupert's Land (Prairie provinces and the Arctic), Ontario, and Canada (Quebec and Atlantic Canada).

General Synod consists of elected lay and clerical members and the bishops from across Canada who gather to discuss national and international concerns of the Church. General Synod meets every three years for about a week and is the governing body of the national Church. The Primate is the chair of the proceedings of General Synod. From time to time the responsibility for chairing sessions of the General Synod may be delegated to the Prolocutor of General Synod.

Council of General Synod is the body that oversees the implementation of General Synod decisions, and exercises executive powers of Synod between sessions. It includes an elected representative (episcopal, clerical or lay) member from each of the dioceses; members-at-large; officers of General Synod and partners.

The national office of the Anglican Church of Canada is also known at General Synod.

**THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION** is a world-wide family of autonomous, interrelated, and interdependent provinces and national churches, all of which are in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Anglicans speak many languages, come from many races and cultures, and are spread around the world. The Anglican Church is episcopally led (that is, by bishops) and synodically governed (that is, elected lay and clergy members together with the bishops).

**ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY** is the chief bishop and principal leader of the Church of England, the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion and the diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury, the see that churches must be in communion with in order to be a part of the Anglican Communion. The current archbishop is Rowan Williams.

Williams is the 104th in the list of Archbishops of Canterbury, in a line that goes back more than 1400 years to the first, Saint Augustine of Canterbury, who founded the see, the oldest in England, in the year 597. Along with the Church of England as a whole, the Archbishops of Canterbury were Roman Catholic until the English Reformation, circa 1534, when the independence of the English Church was established.

**LAMBETH CONFERENCE**, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, meets every ten years and is attended by bishops from around the world. It is a forum for sharing and consultation rather than for legislation.

**THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL (ACC)** assembles every three years, with up to three representatives from each national church within the global Anglican Communion. ACC is a synodical body. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the President of the Consultative Council and its proceedings are chaired by one of its members.

