

PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY

Canon C12 Paragraph 5

In the matter of an appeal against the revocation of Licence

BETWEEN:

The Reverend RICHARD COEKIN

Appellant

-and-

THE LORD BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

Respondent

SKELETON ARGUMENT ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT

THE ORIGINAL LICENCE

- 1.1 The Appellant was licensed to the office of “Assistant Minister of the Chapel of Emmanuel Wimbledon” on 7 January 1996. Emmanuel is a Proprietary chapel within the geographical boundaries of the parish of St Mary Wimbledon. This is the only licence the Appellant has held from the Respondent. It is the subject matter of this appeal.
- 1.2 The licence was granted on the nomination of the Reverend Jonathan Fletcher who was, and continues to be, the Minister of Emmanuel and it was as his assistant, with specific responsibility for the congregation meeting at Dundonald school, that the Appellant was licensed. The Minister of Emmanuel specifically stated that he wanted the Appellant licensed by the Bishop of Southwark because: “Despite our anomalous position as a Proprietary Chapel we are anxious not to be

outside the structures of the Church of England” and it was on that basis – i.e. that the Appellant and the Dundonald congregation were not to be outside the structures of the Church of England - that the Appellant was licensed by the Bishop of Kingston-upon-Thames exercising area jurisdiction on behalf of the Bishop of Southwark.

(Licensed ministers of a proprietary chapel also require the permission of the incumbent of the parish to exercise their ministry Canon C4, such permission does not bind succeeding incumbents Richards v Fincher (1874) LR 4 A & E 255 and the Bishop can at any time revoke the licence Sedgwick v Bishop of Manchester (1869) 38 LJ Eccl 30)

THE APPELLANT’S MINISTRY UNDER THE LICENCE

2.1 The Appellant’s church planting activities, against the wishes of incumbent clergy (mostly evangelical) set out in paragraphs 9-19 were in breach of the Appellant’s licence as assistant minister of the Emanuel Church and **Canon C4**. The esteem the Appellant claims for himself [4] is not shared by the majority of clergy in the diocese of Southwark – not even the majority of evangelical clergy [*see Pleadings 78*] – **The whole of the appellant’s case totally ignores the rest of the diocese of Southwark and the Bishop as a focus of unity and the fact that other clergy – evangelical clergy had been complaining about the appellant and expecting the bishop to act** [*See pleadings 59, 61 Canon Downey*]

2.2 The whole question of whether the Appellant should continue to be licensed in the Diocese of Southwark was raised by the Respondent in his letter of 25 July 2003, in which he made it quite clear that that question arose because the Appellant was no longer exercising ministry in accordance with that licence. The Respondent also made it clear, as Ordinary of the diocese, that the ordination of the candidates subsequently ordained in the unauthorised ordination, should not proceed until the Appellant’s position and the disputed church planting issues had been resolved. Nevertheless, the Respondent subsequently agreed that the two candidates should meet with the Diocesan Director of Ordinands so that their ordination in the Diocese could be considered in the regular way. See Canons C3, C4, C6 and C7.

