

African Bishop Vindicated After Gay Rights Stance Cost Him Job

An African bishop, whose appointment as dean of a foundation at Dartmouth College was rescinded over his past comments about **homosexuality**, has been named a fellow at a Massachusetts divinity school.

Bishop James Tengatenga of Malawi will serve as a presidential fellow at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge for six months starting in January 2014, the school said in a statement on Monday.

In July, Tengatenga was named as dean of the William Jewett Tucker Foundation at Dartmouth, which seeks to educate students at the Ivy League school for “lives of purpose and ethical leadership.” But the New Hampshire school revoked the appointment amid a controversy over past remarks by Tengatenga.

The criticism stemmed from the bishop’s leadership of an Anglican church in Africa that opposed **gay rights**. He served as diocesan bishop of Southern Malawi and chair of the Worldwide Anglican Communion’s Anglican Consultative Council, a network of 44 churches.

After the appointment, but before his hiring was blocked, Tengatenga said his views on homosexuality had changed and that he considered all people equal regardless of their sexual orientation.

He noted changing attitudes toward gay rights, particularly in the United States after the consecration of Gene Robinson as the first openly gay Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire in 2003.

On Monday, Episcopal Divinity School said it had strongly protested Dartmouth's actions, citing an open letter that described the move as "a gross injustice."

The school said Tengtenga had a long record of support for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in his native Malawi and across Africa.

"His dynamic faith, moral leadership, and commitment to justice are values that have long defined EDS," the Very Rev. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, the school's president and dean, said in a statement.

The seminary, she added, had "a long history of embracing those relegated to the margins of society."

During the fellowship, supported by the Episcopal dioceses of Connecticut and Massachusetts, Tengtenga said he hoped to share his experience with students and consider questions about "the important work that God has set before us – the work of alleviating suffering and inequality."

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