

## The Resolution on the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions

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As I write this article, Lutherans from across B.C. are preparing to attend a synod study. We will spend one whole day and two evenings listening, studying, reflecting and praying to better understand the issue of the blessing of same-sex unions. My e-mail is clogged with opinions on this issue. As I travel through the Synod, I am repeatedly questioned about the National Church Council resolution, which is coming to the national convention in July. Strong opinions by people of faith are expressed on both sides of the question.

Many articles and books have been written about the blessing of same-sex unions. I commend the authors who have researched, reflected and made their writing available to the members of our church.

Although Bishops are non-voting advisory members of the National Church Council, I commend the Council for bringing to the convention this resolution recommending what has been called a "local option." In a previous Canada Lutheran article, I stated that the church cannot remain silent on this issue. Pastors and congregations are asking for guidance from the church.

The accusation has been made that the church is being pressured by society to bless same-sex unions. While it is true that society and the courts have brought the issue of same-sex union to our attention, it is an opportunity for us to respond with a gospel and a faith perspective. It is an opportunity for us to explore how the Gospel of Jesus Christ prompts us to interact with same-sex couples who want to make a life-long commitment to one another in the presence of God and their community of faith.

This is a pastoral issue which we need to approach prayerfully and with humility. At the end of our study and reflection we will not have all the answers! We live in a broken and hurting world. Many homosexual couples, like heterosexual couples, are seeking to live faithful lives supported by a community of faith. It is my prayer that they will find that community of faith in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Author Jeffrey John in his book, *Permanent, Faithful, Stable*, states that homosexual couples, like their heterosexual friends share the hope "...of finding someone to love and be wholly given to, someone to grow together with, someone who would still be there at the end of the day and at the end of their life."<sup>1</sup>

I support the recommended "local option" because if approved in convention, it will enable congregations after prayerful consideration - with the support of two-thirds of their members and their pastor - to be communities of faith where same sex couples can find a church home. Although many in our church hold different and often passionate views on this issue, I pray that we may continue to respect each other as people of faith redeemed by the grace of God.

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<sup>1</sup> John, Jeffrey. *Permanent, Faithful, Stable*, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1993