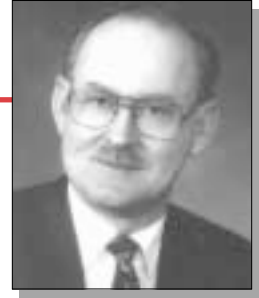


PRESIDENT RALPH E. MAYAN



Resolved that Lutheran Church–Canada reaffirm that “marriage” is the union of one man and one woman as God has created and instituted it; and be it finally
Resolved that the officers, pastors and parishioners of Lutheran Church–Canada affirm our scriptural position whenever opportunities arise.

Here . . . now

THE OPPORTUNITIES ANTICIPATED IN THE RESOLUTION adopted at our 2002 synodical convention have risen and it is time for God’s people, with great boldness, to affirm what we believe and confess. The issue is marriage, the estate we hold to be created and instituted by God Himself.

Recent Events

An Ontario court became the first in the world to rule that the constitutional protection from discrimination requires a change to the current definition of marriage in Canadian law. The divisional court’s ruling declares constitutionally invalid and inoperative the common legal definition of marriage as “the lawful and voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.” The court has given the Parliament of Canada 24 months to legislate in this issue. This ruling follows an opposite decision made by the British Columbia Supreme Court relating to the same matter. That ruling is to be appealed either late this year or next year.

It is good to hear that the federal government decided to appeal the Ontario ruling, a process which will no doubt ultimately reach the Supreme Court of Canada. It is also important to note that both the prime minister and the minister of justice, Martin Cauchon, have stated that the government desires to hear the opinions of its citizens on this matter. The method for this hearing has not yet been clearly defined.

What we teach and confess

Christians believe marriage is not of human origin, but divinely instituted. God established marriage at the time of creation when He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” and He created a “helper fit for him.” With the creation of that helper, this commentary is recorded in Scripture: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh.”

Established by God, the estate of marriage is subject to certain Divine requirements which remain in effect until the close of this age regardless of social custom, civil law or the ecclesiastical rites which may surround it. Through marriage the Scriptures teach us that God intends to provide for (1) the relation of man and woman in mutual love (Gen. 2:18), (2) the procreation

of children (Gen. 1:28) and (3) the partial remedy for sinful lust (1 Cor 7:2).^{*} The fourth and the sixth commandments presuppose this divine estate and support and defend it from abuse.

This teaching regarding marriage is not uniquely Christian, but reflects the moral and natural law which God placed into the heart of humanity at creation. All major religions have a similar position regarding marriage and the family, a reality we should not overlook and which those who provide leadership in our multicultural country must not ignore.

Affirming our position

Responding to the informal request of the government for input from its citizens, I have requested the chairman of the Synod’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations to draft a brief statement regarding the teaching of our Synod on the subject of marriage and its foundational place within society and culture. Should the government choose to have formal hearings across the country, I will request our districts to make special presentations at a hearing in their area, presentations which will clearly reflect our teaching and confession. It is important for us to participate as we follow our convention directive.

But most important is what you can do. I encourage you to exercise your right as a citizen and inform the government what you believe regarding the subject of marriage. It is important that the prime minister, the minister of justice and your own member of parliament know. Not sharing your personal conviction with them will limit their understanding of what Canadians think, and specifically what it is you believe. Failure to speak may lead to decisions contrary to what you and we together teach and confess. And so with boldness I ask you to be bold and “with great boldness” let the leaders of our nation know where you stand. It’s your duty as a Christian and as a citizen of Canada.

NOTE

If you are anxious about what you should say or perhaps how you should say it see *page 10* or go to www.lutheranchurch.ca/boldness. The website has letters written by others on the subject to assist you. If you have written a letter and want to share it with the president, e-mail a copy to info@lutheranchurch.ca or send it to 3074 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3K 0Y2

^{*}*Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the LCMS September 1981.