

An Open Letter to the Members of General Synod 2007

June 9, 2007

Dear Members of General Synod:

As men and women who have experienced same-sex attraction in our own lives and who still strive to live chastely in accordance with traditional Christian teaching, the members of Zacchaeus Fellowship are gravely concerned by the motions before Synod that would bless and affirm same-sex unions.

Contrary to what is implicitly suggested by the recent direction of our Anglican Church of Canada, not all persons with same-sex attractions want these attractions affirmed. We are especially concerned for those whom we describe as “silent sufferers” in the pews. These are the many individuals who adhere to the traditional Christian teaching on sexuality and wish for the church neither to condemn them as persons nor to encourage them to act on those same-sex attractions. To approve Resolution A186 or A187 would pull the rug out from under such people.

Please be warned that the current controversy is not simply about inclusion of those who are in same-sex unions. While we concur with the consensus to include all persons in our church, we believe a misperception has arisen, namely, that accepting *persons* of homosexual orientation must lead to the accepting of same-sex unions/marriages. In fact, no one is excluded from our church because of sexual orientation; the rite of baptism includes us all.

Recently the Reverend Canon Michael Patterson, director of evangelism in the Diocese of Niagara, was quoted in the *Toronto Star* (June 2, 2007) as indicating that same-sex marriage is the law of the land and that the church needs to accept that reality or risk becoming irrelevant. He also said, “We need to be the face of the church in the world, and I fear that we are losing that opportunity.”

In fact, to be the face of the church in the world, we need to be proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and his transforming power in people’s lives. The church should focus on what God accomplishes through the person of Christ and not let secular law dictate church discipline. While same-sex marriage is the law of the land, it is contrary to Scripture, Tradition, and good solid Christian reason.

In Romans 12:2, Paul said, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Jesus was counter-

cultural. He proclaimed God's will and God's ways, even if contrary to worldly views or practices.

By conforming to the world, the church risks becoming truly irrelevant in our world, because then it would be no different from the world and would have nothing to offer those who are seeking!

We understand how powerfully appealing it can be for loving and well-meaning people to see themselves in the role of defender of an underdog, especially one perceived to be unfairly maligned. But we also consider it necessary to ask if you are aware of the gay activist handbook [After the Ball](#), published in 1989. It shamelessly describes manipulative tactics such as its Principle 6, "Give Potential Protectors a Just Cause," which recommends "casting gays as society's victims and inviting straights to be their protectors." It explains, "For this to work, however, we must make it easier for responsive straights to assert and explain their new protective feelings. Few straight women, and fewer straight men, will be bold enough to defend homosexuality per se. Most would rather attach their awakened protective impulse to some principle of justice or law, some general desire for consistent and fair treatment in society" (p.187).

The apostle Jude warned against "malcontents" who indulge their own lusts; "they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage." Many of us in the Zacchaeus Fellowship were gay activists and played that card ourselves in our unreformed lives. So while we do not question the sincerity of the compassion that many have expressed towards our brothers and sisters who openly espouse gay or lesbian lifestyles, we urge extreme caution, lest legitimate sympathy distort the interpretation of Scripture as properly grounded in the tradition and history of the Anglican Church.

We urge you, as the delegates voting on this matter, to weigh the evidence very carefully and prayerfully before making a decision that will affect the whole church.

In the name of Jesus crucified and risen,

The Rev'd C. Dawn McDonald, Chair of the Zacchaeus Fellowship,
priest in the Diocese of Yukon
The Rev'd Dr. Don Alcock, Vice Chair of the Zacchaeus Fellowship,
priest in the Diocese of Huron
On behalf of the Zacchaeus Fellowship