

To Conference of Mennonites of Alberta (CMA),

Recently we as the Calgary Inter Mennonite Church Council met Linden Willems, Marguerite Jack and John Schellenberg to review the relationship between CIM and the CMA. The tone was that of a dialogue, which we appreciated. However, we recognized that CIM continues to support an inclusive membership stance and that this continues to create difficulty for many others within the CMA.

As a Mennonite church, we believe we do reflect the core values of the Mennonite community of faith and therefore, wish to continue our organizational participation with the CMA. We value our identity within the broader Mennonite community and feel that our participation in this larger community would be mutually beneficial.

We do not see that sexual orientation should be a barrier to the inclusion of those who wish to join us in confessing faith according to Mennonite traditions. While our stance varies from the recent statements by the Mennonite Church Canada grouping of churches, we recognize that those statements are descriptive and not prescriptive in nature. Through the years many of us as churches have found reason to re-evaluate our interpretation of scriptures. In the past generation inclusion of those who had been divorced and then chose to remarry was a difficult issue for many. By defining "core values" and seemingly viewing a statement of faith as prescriptive we feel the conference has created rigid barriers where we believe the Bible invites us to struggle with a lack of clarity within the community of faith.

We understand that our church's journey has not been the same as many. Some of your sons and daughters have joined us, and then informed us of their homosexual orientation. We knew them, and we valued them as fellow Christians. We struggled with how to walk with them as mutual people of faith. Likewise we have walked with some of the parents and families trying to find their place within the situation. We now understand scripture to call us to acts of love, support, and openness to all who God leads to us.

We have not been present with you this past while because of our agreement to temporarily be absent; however, we value you as a conference and wish to remain a part of the CMA. If you decide that we cannot continue to journey together at this time, we wish you well, ask for your continued prayers and support as you are able, and hope that someday we might be able to journey together again.

CIM Council

Resolution

Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church withdrew their membership from Mennonite Church Alberta in the summer of 2000, for a five year time frame.

BE IT RESOLVED,

- That the Mennonite Church Alberta executive formally ask Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church to reconsider its position regarding the practice of homosexuality. If a positive reply is not forthcoming by June 11, 2005, that the executive request a formal withdrawal letter prior to the 2006 annual delegate sessions,
- That the Mennonite Church Alberta executive maintain an informal relationship with Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church. This may included their continued welcome to participate in the Camp program, continued communication on the executive level as well as pastoral care as needed,
- That if Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church provides Mennonite Church Alberta, with a letter of withdrawal that we continue to work at reconciliation.

Sven Eriksson, Mennonite Church Canada Conference Pastor, in his February article in "Equipping" on Same Sex Marriage ends his letter as follows:

"But most importantly, let us not allow the controversy around this divisive issue to detract us from offering sensitive caring ministry to all who struggle with gender and sexual issues in their lives, the lives of their family members, and those who minister to them."