

We are retired Archbishops of the Anglican Church of Canada who love our Church and treasure its membership in our world-wide family of some 80 million Anglicans in 164 countries.

We are greatly saddened that same-gender blessings have become a divisive issue in our church and communion. We believe that this should not be a church-dividing issue. It is part of our Anglican heritage that we can hold honest and deeply felt differing convictions on important questions, including the interpretation of Scripture, and still with integrity maintain the unity of the church. Indeed this unity in diversity is fundamental to our Anglican way.

We urge the members of General Synod gathering in Winnipeg to vote in favour of affirming the blessing of faithful, committed same-gender unions and to agree that dioceses may decide, by appropriate processes, how they will act in this matter.

We have studied, reported and discussed the place of gay men and lesbians in the church for 25 years, and have concluded that the blessing of same-gender couples is not a core doctrine. We are deeply concerned that ongoing study of this matter will only continue to draw us away from issues which are gradually destroying God's creation – child poverty, racism, global warming, economic injustice, concern for our aboriginal brothers and sisters, and the growing disparity between the rich and the poor.

We urge you to respond to the leadership of our Primate and the Council of General Synod by supporting the blessing of the same-gender union resolutions, which were arrived at after carefully reviewing the St. Michael's Report and prayerful consideration on all sides of the issue.

Will there be a negative reaction from some of the members of our church? Of course there will be. This is understandable, but we are confident that our church is committed to providing generous pastoral support for those for whom these decisions will be painful. By affirming same-gender blessings you will have voted for a church that is committed to building inclusive communities of justice, compassion and hope for all God's people.

May God's love and wisdom be with you.

Archbishop John Bothwell (Diocese of Niagara and Metropolitan of Ontario, retired)

Archbishop David Crawley (Diocese of Kootney and Metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon, retired)

Archbishop Terence Finlay (Diocese of Toronto and Metropolitan of Ontario, retired)

Archbishop Percy O'Driscoll (Diocese of Huron and Metropolitan of Ontario, retired)

Archbishop Arthur Peters (Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and Metropolitan of Canada, retired)

Archbishop David Somerville (Diocese of New Westminster and Metropolitan of British Columbia and Yukon, retired)