

Danish Remnant Breaks Fellowship with Same-sex Marriage Supporters

In a joint letter published Saturday (15 June 2013), the presidents of eight Danish conservative Christian organizations urged believers to boycott Church of Denmark (Folkekirken) bishops and pastors who support same-sex weddings, as well as pastors who are living in relationships “that God’s Word warns against.” The letter, entitled “A Schism is Forced Upon Us,” is especially significant, because some of these organizations have traditionally avoided suggesting any break with the Folkekirken.

Denmark enacted a same-sex (or ‘gender-neutral’) marriage law a year ago, and the Folkekirken bishops adopted a gender-neutral marriage ceremony on the same day. Eight of the ten bishops of the Folkekirken cooperated in developing the new ritual – the other two declined to participate, but are not blocking the rites in their dioceses.

These conservative organizations issued a joint letter a year ago warning of the false doctrine leading to the same-sex ritual, but at that time avoided recommending withdrawal from the Folkekirk, leaving specific responses up to individuals. In sharp contrast, Saturday’s letter explicitly urges a boycott of same-sex marriage supporters. It also exhorts pastors to hold boldly to the Christian Church’s “original view of marriage, cohabitation and blessing.”

The joint letter promises that its signatories will in their preaching “... make clear what love for neighbor is, as it includes saying no to detaching relationships and sexuality from marriage as God’s good arrangement for human life.”

“When the church tampers with this scheme,” it continues, for example by now authorizing a wedding ritual for two of the same sex, by ordaining ministers living in homosexual relationships, or otherwise legitimizing homosexual cohabitation in preaching and pastoral care, we find it necessary to maintain that this is contrary to God’s Word and the Folkekirken’s confessional basis.

“Bible History is full,” the letter continues, ... of examples of the truth being suppressed by the official religious structures and institutions – and only surviving among the few We believe that the new rite is incompatible with a Christian understanding of marriage and expresses an ethical and theological heresy. It runs counter to some of the fundamental and guiding principles in the Lutheran faith.

The letter asks for prayer for repentance, for homes and families, and for those with homosexual desires. “Our struggle must never be against people,” it declares, “but against the unbiblical doctrine and practice, against the lies and deception and apostasy.”

“We have not asked for this schism in the Church,” the presidents write. “It has been forced on us ...”

The letter concludes by noting that a Lutheran understanding of the Church implies agreement on the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, but not necessarily on the church's external organization.

“Because we need each other – whether we choose the path of [remaining in] the Folkekirken or the path of an independent congregation ... there are still common tasks nationally and internationally, which allow us to work together and pull together.”

Signatories to the letter included the following:

Hans-Ole Bækgaard, President of the Ecclesiastical Society of the Inner Mission;
Jens Peter Rejkjær, President of the Lutheran Mission;
Poul Iversen, chairman of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission;
Henrik Højlund, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Network;
Christian Jensen, President of the Danish Bible Institute;
Peter Rask, chairman of the Christian Federation of Students;
Hans Olav Okkels, President of the Ecclesial Gathering around Bible and Confession;
René Yde, President of the Churchly Renewal

The letter was published 15 June 2013 in Kristeligt Dagblad:

<http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/513832:Kronik--Et-skisma-i-folkekirken-er-blevet-os-paatvunget>