

The Session of Dayspring Presbyterian Church, Edmonton, at its regular monthly meeting on November 24, 2018, affirmed the response of the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest to the paper **"On the Question of Unity and Diversity."**

The paper "On the Question of Unity and Diversity" gives an honest voice to the frustrations and pessimism felt by many in our Synod. Finding unity as we debate differing opinions on the full inclusion of LGBTQI individuals sometimes seems like an impossible task. However, while this document is good at outlining the history of unity and the challenges of maintaining it, it does little to assist our congregations as we hold these difficult conversations. We are disappointed that the paper did not explore more deeply other scriptural examples of unity and diversity (for example, Jesus' prayer for his disciples in the Gospel of John or the various church conflicts found throughout the Epistles) and the theological implications those Biblical passages would have on our current debate. We also wish the paper recognized and celebrated that healthy and loving debate is a key characteristic of Reformed identity; that our congregational membership has always consisted of a diversity of views on significant theological issues; and that it is in the spark of clashing opinions that the Holy Spirit is present, lighting the way forward.

What we need now is guidance on how to work together in service of Christ while lovingly and passionately disagreeing with one another. It is our hope that the Special Committee of Former Moderators will guide all sides of the debate towards a loving and respectful dialogue.

To this response, Dayspring Session adds the following.

Our faith is not faith in certain beliefs. Rather, our faith is in God - primarily as we know God in the person of Jesus and we are bound in a covenant relationship with God by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

There are widely diverging beliefs among members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada on such matters as LGBTQI inclusion, freedom to choose regarding termination of a pregnancy, medically assisted death, etc. The PCC as a whole, through its courts, tries to reach conclusions about such matters - conclusions that reflect our corporate understanding of Scripture, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. However, the conclusions we come to are beliefs. They are not, intrinsically, THE Word of God. Further, they are not necessarily shared by all who are members of the PCC.

So, it seems to us that, going forward, the PCC needs to reframe its understanding of what it means to be church in the world as a community of faithful followers of Jesus who may disagree even on major issues but who understand that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ charged with increasing human experience of the love of God in the human family across all boundaries of belief, culture, race, and geography.

Our wish is that differing views would be held while having mutual respect for one another.