

# NEWS

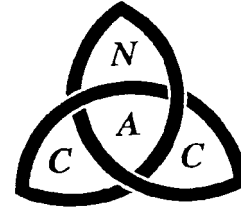
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# BRIEFS

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## MORE TEN TON TRUCKS

The first two "trucks" mentioned below are travelling extremely fast - well over the speed limit in fact, and in quite the wrong directions. By the time you see this, they may have caused incredible damage. Still, if that *hasn't* happened, please consider doing what is suggested.

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**Redefining "Marriage":** At time of writing (June 12) the federal Justice Minister is considering how to react to the very recent (and decisive) ruling from the Ontario Court of Appeal that Canada's present legal definition of marriage (one man, one woman) is unconstitutional and that same-sex unions have to be legally included. This Ontario decision sustains earlier rulings in BC and Quebec.

For people like us, these rulings raise at least four key questions. In order of importance, they are: (1) What does God's truth, as expressed in the Bible, have to say about marriage? (2) Is there some sort of worldwide social consensus about this? (3) What does the law of Canada say? (4) What are the practical political considerations?

Friends, for us, #1 trumps the rest (see, for example, Matt 19:4,5; Mark 10:6-8), and we need to say so. Moreover (#2), there is near unanimous agreement across the world's cultures and religions that marriage does indeed mean one man, one woman. On #3: our politicians need to understand that human laws and constitutions are never more than gropings for the truth, and their inherent flaws demand correction, not exploitation. Finally, #4, politicians are elected to do the right thing, not what is expedient - even if that requires courage!

Since this matter is presently being fought out in the political arena, please take time to join those of us who are making our views known to our local MPs, the Prime Minister, and other federal politicians. If using email some addresses are: Rt. Hon. Jean CHRETIEN, MP - Prime Minister of Canada" <[pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)>, Justice Minister, Hon. Martin CAUCHON, MP - Attorney General of Canada, <[Cauchon.M@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Cauchon.M@parl.gc.ca)>, Hon. Wayne EASTER, MP - Solicitor General of Canada" <[Easter.W@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Easter.W@parl.gc.ca)>, Leader of the Official Opposition, Stephen HARPER, MP <[Harper.S@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Harper.S@parl.gc.ca)>. If you're using Canada Post (no stamp required), write c/o House of Commons, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa ON K1A 0A6.

Please also pray the politicians will set aside expediency and be led to serve God's purposes in this matter.

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**Bill C-250:** Clever use of procedural rules has allowed Svend Robinson's "Hate Bill" to come dangerously close to a final vote in the House of Commons - possibly almost immediately. Despite Mr. Robinson's denials, critics argue persuasively that the adoption

of this Bill will make "hateful" (in law) the beliefs of Christians and others who believe homosexual practice to be inherently sinful.

Two representative voices are those of Bruce Cleminger and Janet Epp, both of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Cleminger (an EFC Director) says, "With a precedent being set in a provincial court [Saskatchewan], it isn't farfetched to assume that Bill C-250 can lead to parts of the Bible being labeled as hate literature." Epp, EFC's Legal Council, points out that the Bill, if passed, would almost certainly restrict religious expression on the matter, no matter how even-handed, measured, or biblically based.

Once again, please (1) pray about this, and (2) consider writing the parliamentarians mentioned above.

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The Faith: Carole Burton, in Newfoundland, is quite properly concerned that the meaning of Good Friday has been (and continues to be) devalued by many influential voices in our denomination. The root problem is that much of the UCC has gone soft on Sin, and it is *Sin* that makes the Cross necessary. Sin is a painful subject, but our church has given in to the understandable - but profoundly dangerous - temptation to pretend it doesn't exist in any real sense. So, no Sin: no need for the Cross, . . . or Atonement. (Ed.)

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS: Ultra-liberals present the Atonement as a barbarous concept, one the modern church must renounce. They believe the very idea presupposes a vengeful God who demands recompense for sin.

This is a profound distortion of orthodox Christian/Biblical teaching, a distortion that is increasingly promoted in the United Church. The NACC and its member congregations need to be clear that Christians do *not* worship a vengeful God who demands payment for sin. He is a loving God who wishes to provide all people with a way to have close fellowship with Him.

But God gave us free will, and that allows us to make bad (sinful) choices in life. In fact, we *all* sin, in large or small ways. That means there's no way any of us, with our very real imperfections, can survive contact with His awesome holiness - UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE TO DEAL WITH OUR SIN. And, just as some bacteria are destroyed in the presence of sunlight, God's *self* sacrifice on the cross is His way of purging us of what prevents the intimate relationship He longs for us to have with Him.

Their present theological confusion leads many UC ministers to say that the great Christian understandings of Christmas and Easter are really just myths. They do not believe Jesus can be simultaneously man and God, and so the incarnation (Christmas), the atonement (Good Friday, with Jesus bearing our sins on the cross), and the resurrection (Easter) didn't happen: they're just myths. But the Christian faith is like a fabric - pull out critical threads and it all unravels, falls apart. A right understanding of the Cross is one of those critical threads.

Please pray for the church.

Carole

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Snappers: (1) This summer, Ted Wigglesworth's lawyer will be engaged in an Examination for Discovery, the first step in Ted's suit in the Supreme Court of Alberta for wrongful dismissal from ministry. Many believe that Ted's being NACC Chairman had much to do with this matter. Legal processes are expensive, of course, and donations to the NACC's Legal Defence Fund are earnestly requested. The case will likely be a long one, and there will be periodic appeals for financial support. (Tax receipts will be issued.) Please send donations to **Jack Scott, NACC Treasurer, 792 Headley Dr., London ON N6H 3V8**, and thank you for responses thus far. (2) The UCC M&S Newsletter (Feb.) notes, "Today about 1/3 of our members support M&S". That suggests 2/3 do not! Further, only "about 8% of all the gifts given in the church is allocated to M&S - not even a tithe." Could the wider church be saying that gifts to M&S are not well spent?