



YES MEANS YES AND NO MEANS NO

The Canadian Unitarian Council hailed today's Supreme Court decision not to allow non-government groups to appeal the Ontario Appeal Court decision that permit same-sex marriages. Unitarians in Canada have been officiating at same-sex commitment ceremonies since the 1970s.

"We commend the Court for upholding religious freedom and human rights," said CUC president Elizabeth Bowen. Unitarians affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of all persons, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.

As an organization, the Canadian Unitarian Council has repeatedly advocated for gay and lesbian rights. Every single practicing Unitarian minister in Canada endorsed the EGALE petition calling for recognition of same-sex marriages.

More than one hundred same-sex couples have booked or held weddings at Ontario and BC with Unitarian ministers or lay chaplains since last spring, when the Supreme Court struck down provincial laws barring them from doing so.

Unitarians believe that marriage is the legal and religious recognition of the love between two individuals and their commitment to care for and support one another in good times and bad. "We encourage all loving couples to express their commitment if they are so inclined, and our faith community will support them," said Ms Bowen.

Today's decision means that gay and lesbian couples can continue to celebrate nuptials in Ontario and BC. It also means that Parliament will have the prerogative to promulgate a new definition of marriage, eliminating bias against same-sex couples.

"We look forward to the day when people wonder why there was such a fuss about relationship-recognition," said Ms Bowen. "We've been marrying people all summer, and the world hasn't ended yet. In fact, we think the world is a better place now."

The Canadian Unitarian Council/Conseil unitarien du Canada (CUC), is an association of forty-four congregations located across Canada with 5,200 individual members. Arising out of the work of outspoken reformers and dissenters within the Christian tradition five centuries ago, the Unitarian movement today includes Universalists and flows in a broad religious stream augmented by Humanist, earth-centred, Buddhist and other progressive beliefs.

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