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Bishop Bradosky joins American religious leaders in defending marriage and religious freedom

Bishop John Bradosky of the North American Lutheran Church has joined other American Christian leaders and religious leaders from other faith communities in an open letter defending marriage and religious freedom.

“Marriage and Religious Freedom: Fundamental Goods That Stand or Fall Together — An Open Letter from Religious Leaders in the United States to All Americans” was released on Thursday, Jan. 12.

“As religious leaders across a wide variety of faith communities, we join together to affirm that marriage in its true definition must be protected for its own sake and for the good of society,” the letter states.

“We encourage all people of good will to protect marriage as the union between one man and one woman, and to consider carefully the far-reaching consequences for the religious freedom of all Americans if marriage is redefined,” the letter says.

The letter notes that changing the definition of marriage will change hundreds of laws. It also states that those who hold to traditional religious beliefs about marriage would face discrimination and legal sanctions for holding to their faith if the definition of marriage is changed.

“We especially urge those entrusted with the public good to support laws that uphold the time-honored definition of marriage, and so avoid threatening the religious freedom of countless institutions and citizens in this country. Marriage and religious freedom are both deeply woven into the fabric of this nation,” the letter says.

In addition to Bishop Bradosky, signers to the letter include leaders from a wide range of Christian church bodies — from Roman Catholics and Anglicans to Baptists and Pentecostals.

The Rev. Matthew Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, was among the 35 signatories.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and some other liberal Protestant church bodies did not have any leaders sign the letter.

“Being bold in on our confession of Christ to a hostile culture is never easy. There are times when making a stand for what we believe brings us into relationship with those of diverse

theological perspectives. That is certainly the case among those who have joined together to sign the statement released today regarding the preservation of religious freedom, the sanctity of marriage, and the definition of marriage preserved in the Scripture and the faithful interpretation of the Scriptures over thousands of years,” said Bishop Bradosky.

“While we believe these understandings and values are essential for the good of all people in our nation and throughout the world, and further believe that political pressure exerted on the church to acquiesce or redefine marriage according to relativistic cultural understandings is a perversion of rights guaranteed by our Constitution, it is abhorrent to us because it is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. The definition of marriage is established by the Creator, affirmed by the Savior and blessed by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore impossible for the Church to redefine or acquiesce to such changes and remain faithful.

“It is sad to admit that our culture has reached a point where such a statement is necessary, and yet it is for just such a time as this that the Lord has called the North American Lutheran Church into being, to be able to make such a stand and offer our support to this important cause,” Bishop Bradosky said. “For all those reasons I am honored to sign this document.”

In December of 2010, Bishop Paull Spring of the NALC joined other American religious leaders in signing “The Protection of Marriage: A Shared Commitment.”

The letter including the list of signers is available online at www.thenalc.org. A list of frequently asked questions and an executive summary are also available online.

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