

L'ÉGLISE PRESBYTÉRIENNE AU CANADA -- THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
CONSISTOIRE DE MONTRÉAL -- PRESBYTERY OF MONTREAL

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Overture concerning Fines Incurred Due to Exercise of Conscience

Minute extract of an overture transmitted by the Presbytery of Montreal

At Montreal, on the internet by Zoom, the 16th day of March in the year 2021:
Which day the Presbytery of Montreal met and was constituted with prayer.
Among other matters addressed, the presbytery agreed to transmit the following overture to the General Assembly:

To the Venerable the General Assembly:

WHEREAS Remit B, 2019 expanding the definition of marriage to include same sex marriage and Remit C, 2019 approving the call and ordination of LGBTQI persons as ministers and ruling elders, were approved by the 145th General Assembly;

WHEREAS a) both Remits were adopted in the context of “liberty of conscience and action” by ministers, ruling elders, and congregations; and b) there may be some who oppose same sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQI people who fear that they might be sued for refusing to celebrate same sex marriage or to participate in the ordination of LGBTQI people;

WHEREAS these fears could be easily assuaged by the national church undertaking to pay any court costs or fines incurred in refusing to celebrate same sex marriage or to participate in the ordination of LGBTQI people;

WHEREAS such an undertaking will cost the national church nothing if, as has been argued, liberty of conscience in this matter is guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 2(a);

THEREFORE, the Presbytery of Montreal humbly overtures the Venerable, the General Assembly to make the guarantee of liberty of conscience on same sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQI people practical by guaranteeing that the national church will pay the court costs and any fines incurred in refusing to conduct a same sex marriage or to participate in an LGBTQI ordination, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, deems best.

The Presbytery transmits this overture with approval.

Michael Pettem
Clerk of Presbytery