

To the Commission on Marriage Canon XX1 - Anglican Church of Canada

Dear Commission Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my personal views, and my experience with managing change within large institutions, which is what the Anglican Church of Canada is presently doing with the Marriage Canon. As a professional administrator with years of study and experience, it has been my privilege and important duty to provide leadership in policy development as the chief executive officer of an organization with over ten thousand employees. My perspective also comes from being a cradle born Anglican, an Aboriginal Elder in the Métis community, and a descendent from the Cree First Nation.

May I first comment on the existing submissions to the Commission, which come from sincere Christians across our Country. The Commission members will be challenged by the wide range of perspectives. The ones that impressed me the most are founded on God's Word in the Bible. The evidence submitted by our church laity and also by graduates of Medical, Divinity, Engineering and other professions provides a compelling case for not changing the Marriage Canon. I also respect those who support changing Canon XXI exclusively with the knowledge that God's unconditional love is for all people, including sinners. However this does not justify changing the existing marriage Canon. Marriage is a deep rooted tradition around the world and is based firmly on being "between one man and one woman". Our worldwide Anglican community and other Christians accept this definition. Archbishop Justin Welby reminded us that we live in a global community in a local context, and our voice carries around the world. "*When we take actions in one part of the church, particularly actions that are controversial, that they heard and felt ... around the world...*" Our Church of Canada leaders must heed this statement.

As an experienced manager of change I learned early in my career that there is an inertia that exists for changes which must be carefully gauged. The Coastal Salish people use the expression "wya wha" which basically means that the time and reason for change must be right. Please know that my friends within the Aboriginal community not only oppose changing the Marriage Canon; many would rather not talk about it. We know that all change comes with consequences; usually positive and some negative. For example, the May 2003 decision in the Diocese of New Westminster to allow the blessings of gay and lesbian unions, (subject to a similar "*conscience clause*" in the proposed Marriage Canon). The decision resulted in the two largest parishes and some smaller parishes in the Diocese to walk away. The affected clergy and parishioners felt that the local Diocese in the Anglican Church of Canada had abandoned them. If the new marriage Canon is passed, I anticipate the potential consequences would be huge.

In the forthcoming months of this ongoing process, my family will continue to pray that each member of the Commission will be guided by the Holy Spirit, and that God's will be done in on Earth... Amen.

Alvin R. Myhre M.Ed.

Parish of St. Mark - Ocean Park in the Diocese of New Westminster.

(Courtesy copy to: The Right Reverend Mark Macdonald, National Indigenous Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, 80 Haydon Street, Toronto ON. M4Y 3G2)