

I am Christopher John Eve, parishioner Church of St. John the Divine, Victoria in the Diocese of British Columbia. My contact details are in the last line of this message.

In answer to your questions:

How do you interpret what scripture says about marriage?

I do not think you can interpret scripture about marriage out of the context of the rest of the Bible. The Bible is not an instruction manual. It is a collection of texts divinely inspired but set down by humans acting in good faith. They - like me - were attempting to work out their own salvation in an often violent societal context.

How do you understand the theological significance of gender difference in marriage?

It was a societal norm. Theology was used to give a gloss of respectability to that - usually by the dominating culture.

Is there a distinction between civil marriage and Christian marriage?

Marriage is what my wife and I have. There is nothing that any civil or religious authority can do or say that will change or devalue that. It is deeply personal. I am grateful that we were able to have our relationship celebrated in a wedding at our local parish church over 25 years ago. That was profoundly meaningful, and could not have happened in the same way as recently as 50 years ago since I am a divorced person. The state recognises our wedding as equivalent in law to one conducted under their auspices but for me they are not the same. A Christian wedding is a public service of the church.

What is the theological significance of:  
companionship in marriage?

The passage from Tobit used at our wedding said it is not good for a human to be alone. The love between a couple is like the love of Christ for the church.

bearing and raising children?

The marriage service is permissive with respect to children. I am not a parent, I admire parents but have never had the slightest desire to become one. I believe the best chance children have

of becoming happy healthy adults is if they are raised in a home where there is a foundation of love between themselves and the parents. Life has taught me that the gender of those parents is unimportant if love is present.

the relationship between marriage and sexuality?

Sexuality is a gift from God best expressed in an exclusive relationship of love to enrich that relationship. If the partners choose, celibacy is fine too.

What is the difference between marriage and the blessing of a relationship?

Marriage is a sacrament. A blessing is much less than that - a mere recognition of relationship.

How do you understand the sacramentality of marriage?

I am not a theologian but I like this: "A sacrament is an outward visible sign of an inward visible grace. The inward invisible grace of the marriage is the couple's love for each other."

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions. I hope to see change in my church to eliminate the gender restrictions in the current regulations and procedures.

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