

Submission to the Commission on the Marriage Canon

As a relative newcomer to the Anglican Church, my wife and I have been attending for a bit better than a year, we have found ourselves profoundly drawn and taken in by its tradition, liturgy, the proclamation of the Word and the celebration and centrality of the Eucharist. We find strength and security in reciting the Lord's prayer and the Creeds. They anchor us in this time of rapid change and uncertainty. We have been welcomed and embraced by a loving community of believers and have been encouraged to contribute in the life of the church as our gifting allows us. All of these aspects seemingly steeped in centuries of church tradition, based upon and in agreement with the Scriptures, and lived out in obedience to and out of love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As we have become more aware of the Anglican church and its "business" we have come to realize that this community of faith represents an immense diversity of theological persuasion, interpretation, and application. As Justin Welby stated in the Anglican Journal: "We have such breathtaking diversity across the Communion that it's a massive task to even think about how we can relate to each other effectively." The passing of Resolution Coo3, being a current expression of this diversity. We have responded with surprise to this resolution as we find ourselves asking how such a resolution would find grounds for approval in the Anglican Communion as we observe the Scriptures, the BCP, the BAS, the Solemn Declaration, Canon 21, and the 39 Articles of Religion in light of the proposed change to the church's Canon 21 on marriage.

As we observed these sources we find ourselves even more surprised by the resolution and its intent as many state that marriage is to be a holy matrimony between man and woman as ordained and instituted by God to be seen as a representation, an image of the mystical union of Christ and the Church. A sacred, holy covenant with the purpose of becoming one as set in motion by God's created order, for procreation, for mutual society, help, and comfort for one another. Furthermore, the writings also state that the church should not ordain anything that is contrary to God's written Word (Article 20). The Solemn Declaration states: "we are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in his Holy Word." The BCP, which clearly describes the solemnization of matrimony as being between a man and a woman, was issued by the authority of the General Synod in 1962 and is seen as a priceless possession of our church, which is agreeable with Holy Scripture, and that no change can occur which would imply any change of doctrine of the Church.

We cannot help but think that in this particular situation we find a church at odds with itself and its origins. Why did the General Synod, who also issued the BCP back in 1962 which is still being used and recognized, even pass this resolution? Is that why a conscience clause is needed as part of the resolution? So that we can appease the consciences of those who find themselves at odds as they entertain the impact of the result of the resolution for themselves and their parishes. Does the Anglican Church of Canada consider the impact of this resolution not only on a personal, community level, but also globally in the moral and ethical realms of church and secular life? For example, will the Anglican Church bless a marriage between an aunt and niece? Aunt and nephew? Brother and brother? Father and child? May minors marry? Must

marriage be limited to only two people? What about a transgender spouse? Is such a union same-gender or male-female?

By what authority do we come to a decision? Do the Scriptures that we proclaim every service and thank God for have any bearing on this? How can we hear yet not listen to the Word? How can we call ourselves and become known as the people of God when God's Word does not guide and direct our decisions and actions. In my opinion "to allow the marriage of same-sex couples in the same way as opposite-sex couples" and ask the church to bless these unions would place it in direct opposition to its foundation and source of life. We pray that God would not cause his people to have "eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear to this very day," but rather that we will be known as God's people "who have an ear, and hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Submitted by:

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