

**SUBMISSION TO THE
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
"COMMISSION ON THE MARRIAGE CANON"**

There is no need to revise the existing canon law on marriage for our church.

Because of a motion made at General Synod in 2013, the Anglican Church of Canada now has the embarrassing task of considering a revision to church law that will redefine marriage to include behaviours that God abhors.

The proposed expansion of church law is a spiritual battle. The crux of the matter rests on whether we will allow God's Word to be authoritative in our lives.

Some background on how we got into this situation

God has made himself known. The bible helps us see God's purposes, our own brokenness, and our possible redemption in Christ Jesus. "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing people what is wrong in their lives, for correcting faults, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). The scriptures offer Christians what they need to live lives pleasing to God. Christians need to be personally accountable to the authority of scripture.

Humanity has had a problem for a long time. God's purpose in creating man was so that there could be a genuine relationship and mutually fulfilling fellowship between himself and man. But since Adam and Eve, mankind has turned from God. Everyone is now conceived in sin. All lives are permeated with disobedience. No one seeks God.

God offers a solution to this estrangement. He invites everyone to himself, to become cleansed and forgiven through trust in Jesus Christ. In his holiness, God's mercy is to withhold from us what we do deserve: his anger and wrath. In his love, God's grace is to give us what we don't deserve: his forgiveness and redemption.

The bible describes many supernatural incidents in Jesus Christ's life. He was born of a virgin and announced by angels. He showed his glory at the celebration of a wedding. He walked on water. He commanded his creation to obey him; stormy waves were calmed, fish were caught. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and raised the dead.

Jesus stood against religious leaders and accused them of leading people away from truth. His own teaching was astonishing because it had authority. Revealing, and also concealing his identity, he asked the ultimate question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Praised with palms, yet humiliated and crucified. A virgin's son, yet the son of the living God. He was a man, and also God. In a body, yet without sin. Representing both humanity

and deity, Jesus' death upon the cross was an atoning sacrifice: full and perfect; sufficient to hold back the judgmental wrath of God upon sinful people who put their trust in Him. More than a sacrificial lamb at Passover, his shed blood fully redeems believers and casts away sin. He is Christ, the Son of the Living God. His identity is his very name, Jesus.

Let us Canadian Anglicans acknowledge this truth: Jesus Christ came to save sinners.

No one deserves salvation. We all of us are unrighteous, and are lost without Christ.

We can become disciples through repentance of sin and belief in these truths about Jesus. Humble followers want to esteem Christ as Saviour so that the glory of God's grace might be amplified. Anglicans exalt Christ as Lord as they surrender themselves to the authority of God as he has revealed it. True believers will be united with him forever and ever. God's eternal purpose is to win a bride for his son, Jesus Christ; together, the born again community of true believers make up his church.

We can all become children of God because of his love and mercy for us. Forgiven of sin, free from guilt, justified as righteous, called to holiness and sanctification, awaiting glorification; the church worships God because its members are saved. In expectant hope, the Holy Spirit and the Bride say, "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!"

But there is a problem. Liberal theology is infecting the Anglican Church. Many Anglicans in Canada do not want to please the Lord. They do not look to the Scriptures to determine how to live. Instead they look to the society around us for moral guidance. The authoritative revelation of God and bible-based theology are ignored. God's holy ideals are set aside in favour of a gay agenda. Detrimentially, people inside the church are calling for the ratification of sinful behaviours.

Introduction

A motion introduced at the 2013 General Synod has constrained the leadership of the church to promote the unbiblical idea of allowing the marriage of same sex couples. The plan to bring forward a motion at General Synod 2016 has a misguided expectation: that the Anglican Church of Canada would approve "marriage" inside the church for pairs of homosexual practitioners.

The 2013 motion pandered to selfish people, sought to approve sinful behaviour by redefining marriage and demonstrated contempt for the atoning work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

The motion of 2013

The inappropriate suggestion to change church teaching by redefining marriage was bluntly stated. Motion C003 was presented at the General Synod 2013 in Winnipeg. It

asked the synod to “direct the Council of General Synod to prepare and present a motion at General Synod 2016 to change Canon XXI on Marriage to allow the marriage of same sex couples in the same way as opposite sex couples.”

The Council of General Synod is the small body of about 40 people that has authority to manage the Anglican Church in between the times that the Canada-wide General Synod meets. The CoGS typically meet a few times a year.

The General Synod meets every three years and has about 300 delegates. They last met in Winnipeg in July 2013. General Synod will meet again in Toronto in 2016. The General Synod directs the work of the Anglican Church of Canada. It has three components: the House of Bishops, the House of Clergymen and women, and the House of Laypeople.

The people who drafted the 2013 request for CoGS to make a motion in 2016 offered a conscience clause, but did not have a plan to provide a biblical and theological defence for the idea of marrying same sex couples, so it is evident that they have no scruples in moving ahead without a godly foundation. They just want what they want, and hope to drag enough people along with them to get what they want, even if it will mangle plain English, impair the church’s voice of moral authority and obscure gospel truth.

Further, the motion had no plan to consult with church members, and no plan to explain how it does not contravene the Solemn Declaration of 1893. There was no plan to legally protect bishops, dioceses, clergy or lay people who think it is wrong that people with same-sex attraction may want to get “married” in the church, if such an idea is approved. However, wise counsel was offered, and the motion was amended before the vote.

Even so, the Motion C003 did pass. The responsibility of inviting approval of behaviour against nature in the church is no longer the task of homosexual activists, but it is now up to the senior church leadership and subcommittees of the Council of General Synod to introduce this ungodly modification to canon law.

To legally protect clergy etc., from human rights lawsuits is not under the control of the church, so there is an aspect of the motion that cannot be fulfilled.

People will be one of two sides of this possible motion

On the side of conserving truth and obeying the revelation of God there would be celibate people with same-sex attraction seeking to live holy lives before God. It is appropriate Christian behaviour to maintain celibacy in obedience to God’s call to refrain from fornication, which is sexual behaviour outside of marriage. Indeed, this is the task for all unmarried people who find their identity in Christ.

Additionally, there would be other people, unmarried and married, who believe that followers of Jesus should live holy lives in obedience to Scripture. Any error of judgement over

what pleases God ought to move behaviour toward choosing greater holiness and less sin. These Christian Anglicans are those who seek to obey God.

On the other side there might be three categories of people who want to bring innovations into church doctrine and policy. These people want “progressive” change, they want to “revise” church law, and they want to “liberate” people to do what is right in their own eyes.

First, there are gay people and activists in society. These secular people do not believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Their interests are served as pro-gay advances are made in any realm of society. They have created a moral decline in Canadian society as our nation has shifted its attitude from tolerance of a degenerate behaviour toward an acceptance of a degenerate behaviour. They typically do not attend church.

One of their ploys has been to create an identity for homosexual practitioners that is grounded in sexuality. This pseudo identity can even override faith commitments though it actually confuses activity with identity. Secular homosexuals build community by creating gay-centric groups such as “Gay Dads’ Support Group,” “Lesbian Seniors,” and “Pink Pages.”

These secularists do not want society to merely tolerate their unnatural behaviour. They want approval, even celebration by Canadians. They are seeking a new conformity, to have all people agree that homosexual behaviour is natural and normal, though it is a sexual perversion. They call detractors “bigoted.” People who resist their revision of morality are labelled “homophobic” or “haters.”

In a second category, there are people with same-sex attraction who are activists inside the church. They call themselves Anglicans. But they don’t value God-designed limits or boundaries. They don’t think the Scriptures are an authoritative guide for life and morals. Persuading others is the task of these Anglican activists. They hope the church will see their behaviour is good and normative when it actually is deviant and against nature.

These Anglicans are more interested in proclaiming their sexual proclivities than they are in following Jesus. So, for instance, there are “Proud Anglicans” who willingly align themselves with all sorts of sexual perversions that are so outrageously foisted on the public in city streets during gay pride parades. Using a play on words, these people do not promote Anglicanism and its historic tradition of sharing the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Instead, they promote themselves as homosexual activists who happen to be Anglicans, who want the approval of the gay community. Some congregations identify themselves as “inclusive” or “affirming.” These are euphemisms for the idea that God’s love is so great that there is no wrath to come, no future judgment, nor is sinful behaviour something to confess.

Thirdly, there are people with heterosexual attractions in the church who are allies to the gay movement. These Anglicans go along with those who seek to disobey God.

What is marriage? - the non-religious model - natural design

Real marriage is the union between a husband and wife, and the typical expectation of jointly generated children. Society is interested in these pairings because parents need support over the long term as they raise their children. Love is not a prerequisite. A couple makes a public commitment to each other at the wedding.

In consummating a marriage, a conjugal union of bodies is needed. Only one male and one female offer the necessary complementarity and organic capacity. This wholeness has a biological purpose: children may be the result. Coitus makes a marriage, and its successful conclusion has often been demonstrated by the spilled blood on a bed sheet after the hymen is broken. Sexual intercourse thus creates a special link between becoming married and the possible birth of children. Sensual pleasure is a bonus.

Two men or two women cannot achieve organic bodily union and so ersatz parts must replace the unavailable organs as they try to have sex. True sexual behaviour is not available to same sex practitioners. Reproduction— the generation of children— is not possible. Same-sex couples can not breed. It's like looking in a mirror; there is no otherliness. Homosexual acts are always perverse, for they distort biological processes; there is no complementarity. Same-sex “marriage” does not exist, unless the meaning of marriage is mangled to include non-sensical notions.

The permanence of the covenant between husband and wife provides a secure environment for the bearing and rearing of children. The presence of children can deepen the bond between man and woman. The family structure that helps children the best is a family headed by two biological parents in a stable and harmonious marriage. This provides generational stability that is good for society. It has proven its worth down through through the ages, which is why societies and cultures around the world celebrate weddings— the creation of new couples, and the hope of new families.

Marriage is based on the design of our created bodies. Marriage exists in all societies, between a man and a woman, with a natural design for the procreation of children and the joy of the couple.

Civil marriage is one thing, and in the case of same sex “marriage” in Canada, it has been established by activist judges, not by voter mandated legislation. Its right to exist was created by man, to accommodate an incorrect understanding of the nature of man. Christian marriage is better, willingly based on God's clearly visible creation, and on his statements about design, purpose and meaning found in Scripture. It's the obligation of the church to resist the very recent innovations about marriage that our secular society has unwisely adopted.

Christian marriage - the Anglican tradition follows the bible

God's pleasure is revealed in Scripture. Ceremonies are designed for church use in that they set forth God's story in a way that honours him, while calling people to holy and godly living. When well written, they both reflect the truths found in Scripture and please God.

We have a fine example of a church ceremony in the classic Solemnization of Matrimony. The text in the 1962 Book of Common Prayer reads:

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this Congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. This holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee...” (BCP page 564.)

Anglican marriage is a God-ordained institution and has always consisted of recognizing and blessing the union of a man and a woman, who in their very nature as a couple, display a relationship that Christ has with his church.

What is marriage? - the Christian model - creation, a union of male and female

The wonderful story of Eve's presentation to Adam follows God's observation that it was not good for man to be alone. The naming of animals helps Adam discover his own singleness. After a God-induced sleep, and made from Adam himself- not the ground- Eve is introduced to Adam by God to be a helper suitable to him.

This powerful anecdote of the presentation of Eve to Adam is replayed in most church weddings, when the minister asks, “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” Every father acts out the role of God to his family, and ideally, raises his daughter in purity, which is why women wear white bridal gowns. A father protects his girl's honour, virtuous children are his delight. The father (and often the mother) gives his daughter away, and a new family is created as she covenants with her husband to love and cherish each other, until death.

Genesis 2 offers the definitively powerful passage that expands on this presentation of Eve. Adam bursts into poetry upon seeing his counterpart: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:23). An explanation follows, noting generations before they even existed. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). These texts about the complementarity of the two discrete genders must be deeply explored in any theology of marriage.

Marriage as found in scripture is that male and female become one flesh in their union. Scripture defines the natural design that all societies recognize. Men and women are different— God made them that way, and he tells us that was his plan. Leadership is male, Eve was designed to be a helpmate to Adam. Initiative, headship, and authority are masculine traits that are complemented by a woman’s nurture and support. A husband and a wife have a mutual responsibility for the success of their relationship.

Deep and abiding fellowship can be realized as physical, spiritual and emotional needs are both shared and met. True companionship with another person is available in marriage. This friendship and love is, at its best, a faint picture of what God wants with his people.

The Scriptures tell us that God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27). We were made to be in relationship with God. God’s blessing followed creation, along with the Creation Mandate: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it...” (Genesis 1:28). What was God seeking when he joined a couple to make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? God was seeking godly offspring (Malachi 2:15).

God did not provide multiple women to Adam, nor another man. It is the work of the devil to raise doubts, to question God, to deceive. Through Satan, sin entered the world, man fell from grace and the plan of God’s good creation has become distorted. Brokenness in relationships, wrong attitudes, unholy behaviours are the result; even nature groans for redemption.

Still, the model for families has not been abrogated. Jesus directly quoted the establishing verses and Paul too uses them for his teaching on marriage.

Matthew’s gospel records Jesus’ view of marriage in Chapter 19. In answering his critic’s question about divorce, Jesus gives his view of marriage. Assuming the authority of scripture in Genesis 2:24, he points to the first teaching about human sexuality: “Have you not read ... a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:5-6). Divorce is allowed due to sin and hardness of heart, “but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8).

Paul works with this text from Genesis as well. He’s outraged at Christians having sex with prostitutes, and he offers these principles: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? ... do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. ... glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:15-19).

The estate of marriage is a recognition of what God established. It is the sexual and covenantal union of a man and a woman in life-long allegiance to each other alone, as husband and wife, with a view to displaying Christ's covenant relationship to his blood-bought church.

What is marriage? - the Christian model - the Church is the Bride of Christ

Five of the Ten Commandments point to the standard nuclear family. Children are told to honour their mother and their father. Readers are told not to commit adultery, which assumes marriage; God will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Him; we're told not to covet our neighbours' wife; neither son nor daughter shall work on the sabbath (Exodus 20:2-17.)

We can't keep the law— it exists to teach us what sin is. No one is without guilt, we're all liars and thieves. We're in need of a saviour. We need God's grace. The law serves to show us our need for Jesus Christ's atoning work completed on a Roman cross. We can be the recipients of God's love in Christ through faith in Him.

Faithfulness between a husband and wife demonstrates God's love for his people. His love is always presented in terms of the two genders. God is masculine, while Israel and the church are always feminine. Romantic allusions of this type abound in the bible.

In the Old Testament, God often refers to his people as his betrothed, his bride. He delights in His people as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride. (Isaiah 62:5.) In turn, his people, as called by his city Jerusalem, showed a covenantal devotion to God— her love as a bride was toward him (Jeremiah 2:2).

Hosea is a prophetic account of God's mercy for his bride, though she had played the whore. "In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband'... I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and injustice, in steadfast love and in mercy... in faithfulness" (Hosea 2:16,19-20).

Quite properly the Anglican Church of Canada has traditionally assumed the bible as the reference point to help us understand marriage. The Solemnization of Marriage Ceremony says that the honourable estate of marriage "signifies unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church." The commitment of a man to his wife is a reflection, a type, a picture of the reality of the relationship and love and life found between Jesus Christ and his Church.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Messiah. He fulfilled God's plan to bear witness to the Son of God, announcing him to the world. John said to his followers and the Jews, "You yourselves bear me witness that I said, "I am not the Christ but I have been sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom,

who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete." Speaking of Jesus, John continued, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:28-30.) John said Jesus was a bridegroom.

Remember that Jesus' atoning work upon the cross was done to win for himself the church, his bride. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25). Jesus wants to present the church to himself like a blameless bride in all her beauty, with no evil or sin in her (Ephesians 5:27). The man who loves his wife loves himself. She becomes part of him. Quoting Genesis 2:24 again, Paul says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31-32.)

Marriage illustrates a profound mystery. God made people with distinctive masculine and feminine natures. Their distinctive roles in marriage as husband and wife display Christ and the church. This means that the basic roles of husband and wife are not interchangeable. The husband displays the sacrificial love of Christ's headship, and the wife displays the submissive role of Christ's body, the church. The mystery of marriage is that God created a triple layer display in mankind. He created man as male and female, and as a husband and a wife, Christ and his church are shown to the world. Both genders are required, and a married couple illustrates the Son of God and his bride.

The servant John described the city of God, and said the inhabitants were those people whose names "are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:27). Outside the city are "the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." (Revelation 22:14). The city itself is described and named as the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. Together with the Spirit, the Bride calls to Jesus, as Alpha and Omega, saying, "Come."

The goal and end of our Christian faith is this— that we are saved by Christ for Christ in the church as his bride, that we become united to him, that we worship him, and that we reign with him forever and ever.

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints" (Revelation 19:6-8).

Biblical narrative is fully adequate for the status quo

God has created marriage for a man and a woman. The Anglican Church of Canada currently agrees with the scriptures, as the Solemnization Ceremony shows. This is good.

Marriage occurs in the church community in the sight of God, and it is between a man and a woman. The “marriage” of same sex couples IS NOT THE SAME as a marriage between opposite sex couples. A “marriage” of two men or two women DOES NOT illustrate this principle. Motion C003 wants to break this scriptural, traditional, and reasonable understanding of God designed marriage.

The bible illustrates the intimate connection between God and His people by using bridal imagery. Christ and the church are like a bridegroom and a bride. The Anglican Church also supports this mystical concept. Both a male figure and a female figure are required for the success of this metaphor, as the Solemnization Ceremony shows.

Marriage is a mysterious picture of Christ and his church, an illustration of God’s love for his people; God is always masculine and his people are always feminine. Again, a “marriage” of same sex couples DOES NOT illustrate this concept. The “marriage” of same sex couples IS NOT THE SAME as a marriage between opposite sex couples. Motion C003 fails to address this important illustration.

In addition, matrimony is a state of being for a husband and a wife. Marriage creates a new family unit. The estate of marriage is not a right granted by a society or a government, it’s a recognition of what God has established. Civil society may acknowledge various structures of marriage, such as marriage as a contract, polygamous unions, short-term unions (as in Islamic mut’a, i.e. overnight marriages), or same-sex unions. These man-defined marriages are incorrect; only covenantal male-female unions are real marriage. The Solemnization Ceremony captures the correct structure for marriage: that it was instituted of God.

Marriage is the system for exhibiting God’s union of a man and a woman and the creation of a new family. God set up this principle with Adam before he sinned, the institution of a family is created when a man initiates a ‘one flesh’ union with a woman. Two men can’t make a union. So, again, a “marriage” of same sex couples DOES NOT illustrate this principle. The “marriage” of same sex couples IS NOT THE SAME as a marriage between opposite sex couples. Motion C003 fails to address this important reality.

The 1962 BCP marriage ceremony and canon law XXI already serve the church. They are satisfactory, coherent and in complete agreement with Scripture. Anglican canon law serves us because the principle that guides our obedience is this: the church follows God by using the authority of Scripture to guide us; it does not follow pressure groups, local culture, secular court decisions, or trends in contemporary society.

Facile pro-homosexual arguments from the bible fail

The bible declares homosexual behaviour sinful. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither ... men who practice homosexuality ... will inherit the kingdom of God.” (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Yet activists and their allies demand to have this lifestyle declared good and normal. Their task is impossible if they want biblical approval.

Homosexual activists in the church are silent on offering biblical arguments that approve of same sex activity. There are no biblical references to homosexuality that see same-sex behaviour in a positive light. None. Approval is non-existent. Of course they are silent.

So instead, points will be raised by revisionists that will attempt to show that the Bible doesn't really say what it plainly does say. They offer specious arguments for their interpretations— these are attempts to obfuscate the clear meaning of the biblical texts so that the abomination of homosexual behaviour is negated, if not expunged.

Typical arguments for promoting same sex unions inside the church devolve into revising the meaning of the biblical text using exegetical gymnastics. Appeals are made from secular sources, or from the experience of individual couples. Even church documents such as marriage ceremony prayers can be interpreted to support same sex “marriage.”

Revisionists of bible stories claim the sin of Sodom was actually just a lack of hospitality. Yet, the text says that the two angel guests did receive Lot's hospitality, both dinner and a place to sleep. The male citizens of Sodom wanted to rape the guests of Lot. (Genesis 19). And so homosexual practitioners have often been called sodomites and their sin has been named sodomy.

Some will say the scriptures never record Jesus speaking against homosexuality, as if an argument from silence is conclusive. Or a point will be made, saying there are only a few verses that condemn homosexuality, as if the fewness of the verses reduces their authority.

Revisionists will say God's love is unconditional, never condemning and always accepting. This typical and limited view of God as a God of love is not the only character quality he has. Our God is also a God of wrath. Those people who have not humbled themselves, and have not trusted in Jesus for salvation will not have their names recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. God's wrath will rightly condemn them for their inherent sinfulness. All people will be subject to God's holy standard, “You shall be perfect.”

Currently, we are in an era of grace as exemplified in the story of the woman caught in adultery. Jesus said, “I don't condemn you,” And he said, “Go and sin no more.” God is patient with us as we flee from the wrath that is to come, and bear the fruit of repentance. We remain guilty unless we humble ourselves before the cross of Christ, and receive his righteousness, trusting God's propitiation upon Christ, since our own righteousness is as

filthy rags and deserving of death. Flee to Jesus and be saved! His righteousness will protect you from God's wrathful judgment.

Advanced knowledge of various bible verses will be offered. Revisionists will say the idolatry argument in Romans 1 actually revolves around unbridled lust or heterosexuals going against their own nature by having homosexual sex, though the plain text needs extra-scholarly turns of understanding to get there. Pity the poor churchman who has only a bible to work with.

Revisionists will say modern-day same-sex orientation was something the biblical authors didn't know anything about, as if our God who inspired them wasn't cognizant of every type of sin, behaviour or malady that people might ever practice, perform or suffer from.

The explanations of biblical prohibitions of sex other than between a man and his wife are often a replay of the devil's question to Eve, "Did God actually say...?" Revisionists question the authority of scripture. Like Satan, they question God.

The church needs to stand on the authority of God's Word for her faith and practice. Scripture is consistently universal in clearly pointing out the innate sinfulness of homosexual behaviour.

What behaviour are we wanting to bless?

Studies of typical sexual behaviour between homosexual activities such as anal sex have identified their inherent unhealthiness. Problems include: rectal prolapse, perforation that can go septic, chlamydia, cryptosporidiosis, giardiasis, genital herpes, isosporiasis, gonorrhea, viral hepatitis B and C, and syphilis. The rectum is where food waste travels out of the body. Motion C003 wants the church to celebrate the disgusting idea that sexual pleasure is to be enjoyed in this final part of the digestive system.

Over 80% of active homosexuals practice engage in "rimming" touching the anus of one's partner with one's tongue and inserting the tongue into the anus. 22% engage in 'fisting' inserting one's fist into the rectum of the partner. 23% engage in 'golden showers', urinating on each other. (The Gay Report, by Jay and Young, 1979. Quoted in "Homosexuality: Winning is Sifting, Earle Fox 2003).

Though no longer listed, homosexuality has been identified as a mental health disorder. It can be asserted that homosexual behaviour is compulsive and addictive. Sexual orientation is not definitively genetic or inborn. People choose to participate in this behaviour.

Shall we rewrite the Book of books?

To move their agenda forward, revisionist need to deconstruct Scripture. Should a motion allowing same sex marriage be approved in the Anglican Church of Canada, then it

will be necessary to rewrite the definitions of sexual sin. Existing verses about the heinousness of homosexual behaviour found in Romans 1:26-28, Leviticus 18:22, Revelation 21:8, etc., would necessarily be obviated.

If the sinfulness of sin is made of no account, then the death of Jesus is made unnecessary—salvation is not required, God's grace is pointless, and indeed the majestic themes of God's love, Christ's redemption and our justification are rendered useless and without meaning. The master narrative of creation, fall, redemption and new creation would be destroyed. The result is violence done against the entire revelation of God.

The foundations that the church stands on would be demolished. In a mini story of house construction upon either rock or sand, Jesus invited his disciples to listen and follow his words. Jesus warned his followers against disobedience. (Matthew 7:24-27). Are we going to be faithful to the authority of Scripture? The consistent biblical condemnation of homosexual practice leaves us no option. The consistent biblical approval of male and female unions also leaves us no option. The church will compromise biblical authority if she chooses to move forward with this planned motion. Instead, the church must remain unmoved. Let us stand on one foundation, Jesus Christ our solid rock.

Here's an example of a biblical text that will have to be deconstructed and rewritten. An innovative exegesis will need to be devised.

Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes [or passive homosexual partners], or men who have sexual relations with other men [or active homosexual partners], those who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy [sanctified], and made right with God [justified; declared righteous] in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Expanded Bible, 2008 Thomas Nelson).

If a change in canon law is proposed and promoted within the Anglican Church of Canada to allow same sex "marriage", then the bible text above won't make sense. Many revisions to the bible will be required. If we bless homosexual activities, we will also have to honour greed, drunkenness, stealing and lying. Do we really want to tell the Author of the Ten Commandments that he wrote the law wrong?

The Apostle Paul says some people used to be homosexuals: "Some of you were like that." People who are made right with God have been washed clean, made holy; they no longer practice drunkenness, lying or homosexual behaviour. God's Word says that people who continue practicing such behaviours have no part in his Kingdom.

The glory of God is in the text! His grace is in Christ who died for the ungodly. Jesus offers a way that brings a variety of sinners out of their sin into righteousness and a clean standing with God, having a wise hope for holy living and an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Once upon a time, Paul's readers were practicing sin, but now in Christ, they are not.

There are Christian ministries grounded in this belief. They proclaim that freedom from homosexual behaviour is desirable and possible. These ministries respond to people who want to come out of the homosexual lifestyle. And people do come out.

What does the Anglican Church of Canada want? Surely we want to exalt God for his good news of salvation that brings people out of their sin into holy lives that please him.

Language has meaning, meaning understanding can be gained ... or not

The meaning of marriage in the church will change if the motion proceeds. Already in many secular situations that recognize male and female, document categories have had to be revised to accommodate requests from homosexual activists. It's not just a matter of semantics and word choice. The very nature of the meaning of marriage is being eroded when optional phraseology is brought in, or where ambiguity is introduced.

Should a pro-same sex "marriage" option be introduced and pass in 2016, The Anglican Church of Canada will also have to make accommodations for confused understandings of God's design. The marriage ceremony phraseology will have to change. Gone will be phrases like: "Will you take this woman to be your bride?" or "I now pronounce you man and wife." In place of this, the minister will say something like, "Will you, Applicant A, take this person Spouse B, to be your partner?" These various options create confusion and ruin any understanding of the inherent nature of marriage—being a covenant between a man and a woman—since the word choice offers optional understandings of what marriage is.

If we can pick and choose what marriage is, then what is to prevent the church from moving toward celebrating the confusion of unions that are polyamorist, or incestual or between an adult and a child? God had his own plan for the institution of marriage.

The Commission's extremely difficult task

The Commission on the Marriage Canon now must do the background work as required by the amended 2013 motion. Part of the task of the Commission on the Marriage Canon is to create a biblical and theological rationale for a wrong conception of the nature of Christian marriage. Typical revisionist interpretations of the bible are easy to refute. The Commission can readily find solidly defensive replies to these attacks upon the bible and its authority for Christians. You must defend God's idea of marriage.

You've been asked to identify a biblical basis for allowing same-sex "marriage." Your mandate is that you must justify a motion promoting such "marriage". But there is no

justification for change. The amended motion of 2013 as passed can not be fulfilled. Since the tasks it asks for will be incomplete, (and can never be made complete) it would behoove the Commission and the Council of General Synod to admit failure in completing their assignment. A motion for General Synod 2016 should not be offered for consideration.

You did invite replies to:

How do you interpret what the bible has to say about marriage? How do you understand the theological significance of gender difference in marriage? Is there a distinction between civil marriage and Christian marriage? What is the theological significance of companionship in marriage? What is the theological significance of bearing and raising children? What is the theological significance of the relationship between marriage and sexuality? What is the difference between marriage and the blessing of a relationship? How do you understand the sacramentality of marriage?

Would that you had asked:

Is the Bible God's Word and therefore authoritative in the lives of Christians? What is God's ideal for marriage as revealed in scripture and how can the church best support it? What occurs theologically when a Christian couple gets married in a church by a minister? Are homosexual couples adequately equivalent to couples that can get married in terms of illustrating God's plan for marriage? Is homosexual behaviour sinful in the eyes of God? Why is the existing wedding ceremony inadequate?

Many submissions to the Commission that defend real marriage point to bible verses. Anglicans across Canada think that God's Word is an authoritative guide for living as a Christian. These writers see no need to change the canon law.

In contrast, submissions that invite change point often to secular arguments from science or the courts or popular opinion or modern times, or else they attack God's Word. Ultimately this is the essence of what is before you, before CoGS, before General Synod, before the church: Will we follow God, or not?

This document has attempted to open up a variety of ideas that clearly point to the inappropriate nature of the 2013 C003 motion, the wonder of God's good design for men and women in marriage, the current adequacy of the Anglican Church of Canada's understanding of marriage, the inability to defend the necessary doctrinal revision to accede to the motion's demands, and unpleasant outcomes that would result if the planned motion is eventually passed.

Recommendations for the Commission

As the Commission on the Marriage Canon comes to conclusions that support real marriage, you can choose to act in ways that will thwart the misguided expectations of General Synod in 2016. The Commission can submit a clear statement to the CoGS that

says that a biblically informed theology must retain and celebrate the God-given institution of marriage, which is the life-giving union of a man and a woman.

You have a wonderful opportunity to promote a biblically based understanding of true marriage. “Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous (Hebrews 13:4). Encourage the church to have real strong marriages.

You have a wonderful opportunity to reinvigorate the church with a hunger for scriptural truth and biblical literacy. Encourage preaching that exalts God’s agenda for the salvation of all peoples and nations. Encourage systematic Bible reading, so the whole counsel of God is explored by Canadian Anglicans. Encourage us to love God’s Word.

You have a wonderful opportunity to bring the church back to her first love, her bridegroom Jesus Christ. Clear teaching on future judgement and the coming wrath of God, as well the sinfulness of sin, personal confession and active repentance will help ensure that Canadian Anglicans understand what it is to believe Jesus so they can be saved, and devote themselves to loving him. Teaching on God’s grace in Jesus Christ will provide content for evangelism and result in church growth. Encourage our recognition of the supremacy of Christ above all things, and a deep devotion to him through personal and corporate worship.

The CoGS would have an excellent opportunity to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord before the church and world. Encourage Canadian Anglicans to greater holiness in life.

Let us fear the Lord. Let us stand strong on a solid foundation. Let us take up Joshua’s challenge and decide: “As for me and my house, we shall follow the Lord.”

Prayers for the work of the Commission on the Marriage Canon (selected)

Almighty and Everlasting God, save your church from all error, ignorance, and pride, we beseech thee. Amen.

Most gracious God, fill your church with all truth. Where it is corrupt, purify it. Where it is in error, direct it. Where anything is amiss, reform it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Take away all enmity so that we may be united in one holy bond of truth and peace. Amen.

Portions of the Solemnization of Matrimony Ceremony (BCP 1962)

These portions from the BCP assume that marriage is between a man and a woman— this has been the traditional church understanding of marriage.

... If no impediment be alleged, then shall the Priest say unto the man:

Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together according to God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other, keep only unto her, so long as you both shall live? *Answer.* I will....

I N. take thee N. to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

[After a ring is placed on the woman's hand] Then shall the Priest say:

O ETERNAL God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life; send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, (whereof this ring given and received is a token and pledge,) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A prayer from the Solemnization of Matrimony Ceremony (BCP 1918)

O God, who by thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing; who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint, that out of man (created after thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning; and knitting them together, didst teach that it should never be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by Matrimony hadst made one: O God, who hast consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church: Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that both this man may love his wife, according to thy Word, (as Christ did love his spouse the Church, who gave himself for it, loving and cherishing it even as his own flesh,) and also that this woman may be loving and amiable, faithful and obedient to her husband; and in all quietness, sobriety, and peace be a follower of holy and godly matrons. O Lord, bless them both and grant them to inherit thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Finally, a few side notes to ponder

••• Really, the standards for getting married are quite simple. Is one person a man? Is the other person a woman? Ideally, are they both virgins? Are they related closely in a family or kinship relationship? (Hopefully not, that may need checking out.) Are they both Christians? Are they willing to commit their lives to each other? OK, good to go.

But same sex couples who want to get “married” are apparently subject to a different standard of relationship. Are they of complementary gender? (Nope, not important.

Irrelevant. Next.) Are they loving? Are they committed to each other? Are they monogamous in their relationship?

These questions about the characteristics of a same-sex relationship aren't asked of a real couple getting married. Why the difference?

Maybe there are known problems with same sex relationships that need to be managed.

Loving: Isn't it true that homosexual relationships are more likely to be domestically abusive than opposite sex common-law couples or married couples?

Committed: Isn't it true that the people with homosexual attraction are typically libertines, engaging in fornications of short duration with dozens of partners?

Monogamous: Isn't it true that among couples of people with homosexual attraction the idea of being a couple also allows for affairs on the side, and so much so that after 5 years together, most couples have no longer been faithful to each other?

Relationships are understood differently in the homosexual community. The definitions of 'committed,' 'loving,' 'family,' 'monogamy,' etc., mean something different among members of a homosexual community.

- What do we find in churches that are fully for same sex unions or marriage, which have been practicing them for a while? What lessons are there to be learned, especially in the ministries of biblically based preaching, evangelism for salvation of souls, and world mission designed to plant churches? Have these realms been stimulated or hindered? Is Christ exalted above all things? Consider the United Church of Canada, Metropolitan Community Churches, and examples from Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

- If same-sex couples can get "married," then the logical conclusion of this innovation could be explored in this idea: everyone who gets married gets "married" as a same sex couple. What would be the result? No breeding, no children, no new generations. The rational outcome to allowing same sex "marriage" is the possible collapse of society in one [missing] generation.

- Marriage in the church is already available to people with homosexual attractions, everyone who practices the behaviour of ersatz sex with someone of the same sex can get married to someone of the opposite sex, and have real sex. Even the American bishop, Rev. Gene Robinson was married to a woman for many years...

- The experience of any individual couple is not authoritative and has marginal bearing on this discussion. Similarly, provincial or federal law and the reasoning that has created same sex 'marriage' in Canada or elsewhere is not authoritative. Church order, doctrine and ceremony need to be derived from evidence found in God's design and scripture, with a particular view toward coherence, congruence and unity with all the scripture texts.

••• Though Canada has allowed same sex marriage across the nation for a few years, there are still eighty countries around the world that have laws that prohibit homosexuality. The argument put forth by the movers of the motion is that same-sex marriage is allowed in our country, so the church should do it too. Anglican churches in other countries will not be moving to change their canon law. Many Anglican church provinces do not support same-sex unions. If Canadians have a different standard for allowing people to get “married,” rupture will result with these fellow Anglicans. Why antagonize them?

••• It’s worth clarifying the state of Canadian Anglicanism: What is ANIC, and how did it develop, and why? And among Anglicans around the world: What is the group called GAFCON? Why was it created? Why does Canadian-trained Rev. Eliud Wabukala think that supporting homosexual behaviour in the church is flat-out wrong?

••• If our church were to have suddenly discovered that mankind is male and female, there would be no question about agreeing to approve opposite sex marriage. Can a dissenting vote be imagined?

But, at every synod where a liberal motion has been brought forth that involves greater laxity toward same sex morals, there have been dissenting voices and votes. As the church tries to move toward a non-traditional definition of “marriage,” there will not be unanimity. That there are already numerous submissions to the Commission holding for existing biblical standards should give serious pause toward moving forward with this motion’s directives.

A servant of the church, for Christ’s glory,

Brian Johnson

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September 29, 2014