

SUBMISSION TO THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA MARRIAGE COMMISSION
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Question 1: How do you interpret what Scripture says about marriage?

I understand the scriptures to describe that marriage is between man and woman, and man and woman only. I believe that the unlawful sexual relations forbidden by God in Leviticus 18 are explicit and literal commandments which are still in effect for those who worship Christ today. Furthermore it is my opinion that Romans 1:18-32 offers an explanation as to why such sexual relations are displeasing to God, further strengthening the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

Question 2: How do you understand the theological significance of gender difference in marriage?

Mankind is male and female, and male and female are complimentary to one another. I understand the gender difference in marriage to be an image of the fullness of humanity; the unity of the duality of the two human sexes. I believe that in the complimentary nature of maleness to femaleness and vice versa, the two were made by God to work together.¹ Karl Barth says, "to live humanly means never to escape the astonishment of one's own sex at the other, and the desire of one's sex to know the other."² I believe then that gender difference is necessary within marriage, especially if marriage is to be a sign of Christ and the Church. Otherwise a marriage where there is gender similarity would seem to attest to two Christs or two Churches and would be without the fulfillment of both complimentary functions.

Question 3: Is there a distinction between civil marriage and Christian marriage?

Yes. I understand civil marriage as the legal recognition of a contracted or assumed partnership between two persons who are then obligated to live with and care for each other until the termination of said contract by which there may then be an equal division of shared property and children (if applicable). Christian marriage is, I believe, the taking of vows before God to enter a life partnership with his blessing. If the unity of the two persons is displeasing to God because it stands contrary or incongruent to his word of authority in the Holy Scriptures, then the marriage does not have his blessing and the Church cannot truly recognize it as an actual marriage in the Christian sense, even if it attempts to do so.

Question 4: The marriage canon describes "the purposes of marriage" as mutual fellowship, support, and comfort; the procreation (if it may be) and nurture of children; and the creation

of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfilment in a community of faithful love. What is the theological significance of:

◦companionship in marriage?

In Genesis 2:18, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" The helper which God makes that is suitable for him is a woman taken from the rib of his own flesh. She is human like him, but she is different from him in that she is of the female sex where he is of the male sex. I believe this demonstrates the suitability of the complimentary nature of the two sexes to be together in marriage, and to provide mutual society and comfort for each other.

◦bearing and raising children?

I believe procreation to be the primary function of the sex act. Unless there is some disorder in one or both of the differently sexed bodies, or unless there is an interference of contraception, the sex act will inevitably result in the conception of a human life. I believe that the love between a husband and wife is a means to this end, in addition to fostering their companionship as life partners. The affection, intimacy, the closeness and knowing of the other in the sex act I believe strengthens their unity in order that the environment of their marriage as a family unit might be more suitable for the nurture and development of children. Therefore I understand the bearing and raising of children to be a fundamental part of marriage.

Where the husband and wife have not yet had children in their marriage, or are incapable of having children due to barrenness or sterility, or do not wish to have children (though I personally find the concept of a man and woman intending to marry, but wishing to never have biological or adopted children with each other to be somewhat disharmonious to their desire to enter the married state together), I believe the sex act to function to achieve its secondary end which is to cultivate mutual love and affection as life partners in the companionship of marriage.

◦the relationship between marriage and sexuality?

I believe that in marriage, where there is male and female, there is a sense of completion. The husband knows himself more fully as a man in relation to his wife as she is a woman, and vice versa. Through their sexuality they come to know each other and themselves more fully as individuals and as human beings. And in this knowledge they come closer together as married companions, and this knowledge may result in a child. And in the birth of this child and the undertaking of their development, the husband and wife come to know

themselves and each other even more. There is a fulfillment of knowing themselves and the other, and the fulfillment of using their bodies together for this creative purpose. Therefore, I believe that the sexuality within marriage fulfills the marriage, and the marriage between man and woman fulfills man and woman as human creations, thus allowing them to find fulfillment under God as his creations, being and doing what they were created to be and do.

Question 5: What is the difference between marriage and the blessing of a relationship?

It is my understanding that the difference would pertain to the Sacrament, and the permanency of wedlock. However, in order for the Church to bless a relationship (or more accurately, confer God's blessing upon that relationship) they must recognize that the relationship is God and right before the eyes of God, or else when they present his blessing upon it, they are doing it falsely. Without going into a lengthy explanation of scriptural exegesis or discussion or hermeneutics, I will say simply and directly, that I believe same-sex relationships, insofar as they imitate the intimacy of the relationship between a man and a woman, are repugnant to the words of the Holy Scriptures (both New and Old Testament), the order of creation, and the will of God for humanity.

Question 6: How do you understand the sacramentality of marriage?

I believe that before creation the relationship between Christ and the Church were present in the will of God. I believe that in creation the complimentary nature of Christ and the Church were projected from the character of God onto man and woman when they were made. I believe that the unity of the marriage between man and woman reflects and pertains to the relationship of Christ and the Church, and that to participate in marriage is to participate in this image of what is greater. Therefore the institution of matrimony is a sacred thing as it is a sign of what is sacred. To have a "marriage" between two of the same-sex would be to remove the complementary nature of the relationship, and I believe this would be to simultaneously be a marriage that is not a sacrament, and a marriage that blasphemes the sacrament.

REFERENCES

- ¹Wright, N.T. "N T Wright on Gay Marriage," 25 March, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKxvOMOmHel> (accessed September 24, 2014).
- ²Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics, III.4: The Doctrine of Creation*. Translated by A. T. Mackay et al, and edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 2010, (167.)