

I think amending Canon XXI to allow for same-sex marriage would be a tragic mistake.

Pragmatically, amending Canon XXI spells disaster. We have already witnessed the fragmentation of the Anglican Communion, and the Anglican Church of Canada over same-sex issues and the discussions surrounding them. We do not live in a vacuum as individuals or as a national Church; we are deeply interconnected with other Church bodies outside of the Anglican world as well. Changing our marriage canon will make us a laughingstock to our ecumenical partners; I am thinking specifically of the Roman Catholic Church, but also bodies such as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and other Evangelical groups who are growing vigorously against the general decline of Christianity in Canada. This is, of course, only the practical side of things; I have not yet touched on issues of truth - what is right and what is wrong.

I interpret Scripture to teach that marriage is as it is defined in the preface to Canon XXI (see especially section 2). This is not my private interpretation, and I do not see my view to be one among many. I believe this is the correct interpretation of Scripture, that marriage is an institution between one man and one woman. This is keeping with the historic Christian tradition, to which the majority of Christians profess today, and to what the majority of our Communion partners believe.

I am entering into my seventh year of theological studies surrounding Scripture and how it is interpreted. I have much to learn, and there are many that know more than myself about these issues. Having noted this, I believe the plain sense of Scripture is unequivocally clear about the nature of marriage; it is an inclusive union requiring one person of each gender - one gender should not be excluded from any marriage. I also am aware that to those who have little or no theological education this plain sense of Scripture appears all the more plain. The exegetical gymnastics that are required to come up with any other understanding of marriage are inane. I recognize that those of differing views are generally well intentioned Christians, but I fear the overlooking of God's revelation in Scripture as the norm for our morals is a great tragedy. The case for same-sex marriage from Scripture is weak at best, and therefore I reject the change proposed for Canon XXI.

I think it is significant to note at this point as well the scriptural portrayed natural result of marriage is procreation "if it may be." The procreation of children is a reality deeply enmeshed into the essence of what marriage is. To allow the change to Canon XXI would be to spurn this reality, as we know that same-sex couples are physically unable to conceive children. We find too, that same-sex "marriage" would be incapable of fulfilling the biblical image of a family that includes the roles of both father and mother.

The bottom line is the proposed change to Canon XXI is one suggested without regard for the teaching of Scripture. If Scripture is presented as part of this change it is interpreted in a radically innovative way that is antagonistic to the historic Christian tradition, and the majority of what Christians profess both inside and outside of the Communion. This new interpretation of Scripture is held, as far as I can tell, largely by Western Christians that have not duly taken into account the views of our brothers and

sisters in the Majority World. I do not wish to see the fragmentation that has been occurring in our Church to deepen further.

I believe God loves people of all genders and sexual orientations - this much is clear from Scripture, and held to be true by Christians on both sides of the debate regarding Canon XXI. Grace and love should be extended to all, but refashioning the clear teaching of Scripture and the Church in our own image should not be permitted.

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