

To Whom it may Concern

Thank you for opening this discussion. Better late than never.

I wish that I was a better Christian and that I attended my church more often but as it stands my family and I are members of the Anglican parish in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Our church is the beautiful and historic St. George's in the Pines. My wife and I were married there almost twenty years ago, my three daughters were christened there and we have been fairly regular attendees and supporters of our church for many years.

I am a wedding photographer in Banff, a very busy resort town and destination wedding location. I have photographed and therefore, attended almost 3000 weddings in my 25+ year career. there isn't very much that I have not seen.

Most of the weddings ceremonies are performed by Alberta Marriage Commissioners and I would guess 1 out of 50 are in any local church.(that's something for you to ponder as well, but another day perhaps) I have photographed many same sex weddings and have been a legal witness at many of the smaller ceremonies.

I could write a very long letter describing my conversion from being anti gay marriage to a devout supporter but let me just make a few quick points.

- 1) Some of the most profound, meaningful and heartfelt ceremonies that I have ever witnessed were weddings of gay couples.
- 2) Come to one. Meet a committed gay couple who are in love and need to be with each other to be whole. There are no horns or tails just human beings who are trying, like all of us, to find happiness in the one life they have here on earth. You might be surprised how many times the couples ask that scripture be read at their ceremony. (I always feel a bit ashamed for myself and my church at that)
- 3) Why would a gay person not love God any more or less than a straight person?? And if that gay person loves God why would God not love them??

As I write this there are gangs roaming around Russia searching for gays to beat, torture, humiliate and murder with no-one stopping them. In Africa, where it seems so much of our donated dollars go, governments are handing out death sentences and long prison terms for homosexuality. It goes on and on. It breaks my heart.

People in love. People finding happiness. Happy, devoted couples being positive and vital parts of our communities. Isn't this what it's about??

Anyway. it's happening out there and wonderful people who would be a tremendous asset and addition to our church family are having the door closed in their faces. **There is nothing to fear.** Please let our church be more accepting. Let's show that when we say that we love and do not judge our neighbours, we actually mean it.

Many thanks.

Malcolm Alexander Carmichael  
Diocese of Calgary