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The motto of the Joint Assembly in 2013 — in which the motion to propose changes to Canon XXI was passed — was “Together for the Love of the World.” As a delegate to Joint Assembly, I kept this motto in mind and in heart when deciding how to vote on the motions up for discussion. This motto does not mean “*Together for the love of People We Agree With*”, or even “*Together for the love of Christians*”; it means exactly that: “*Together for the Love of **the world***.” Everyone. I thus use this motto, created by the Anglican Church itself, as the basis for my argument in favour of modifying the Canon on Marriage.

If we as the the Church believe that our existence is to love the world, how can we justify isolating our own members? Not only isolate, but strike fear into our young children — homosexual or not — who will be afraid to be different in our own sanctuaries. A sanctuary is a place where someone feels safe and loved. What kind of sanctuary are we defining for ourselves if we isolate our own kind and everyone else within them?

And is loving one another not precisely what Jesus tells us to do?

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” -- John 13:34-35

When Jesus gives us his New Commandment, he does not offer stipulations. He simply states that, to be a Christian, we must love others as He loved us: unconditionally.

Homosexuality is *not* a lifestyle choice. It is not — and should not — be a sin for a person to be attracted to another. This is a simple matter, despite the efforts of some to intentionally obfuscate it or unintentionally become caught up in scripture. We have never taken the rules of the Bible literally — we follow the spirit of the readings — so why are we doing so in this case? We can quote obscure biblical references to justify banning homosexuality until the Second Coming, but that gets us nowhere. If we were to do that, then we must also ban those of you wearing leather jackets, those wearing trendy ripped jeans, and those who eat shellfish from participating in the church, to name a few\*.

But we do not ban these people from the church for — unlike homosexuality — their lifestyle choices, because that would be ludicrous. So why do we continue to ban people for being normal?

And make no mistake: restricting homosexual couples from marriage — one of the sacraments of the Church — is akin to banning them. Why should homosexual Christians want to be a part of the Church — give offerings, volunteer time, and do God's work — when they are not given full inclusion in it?

Maybe they shouldn't want to be a part of the Church. I know I wouldn't. If we as an institution refuse to love each other as Jesus loved us, and refuse to work together for the love of the world, then we have failed in our chief mandate.

*\*Leviticus 11:10, Leviticus 10:6, Leviticus 19:19.*