

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I would urge you to not change the marriage canon to allow for same-sex marriage, but first a few observations about process.

I submit that there are problems with this entire process:

We have not been told how submissions will be weighed. Will they be grouped by diocese? Will the opinion of a well known legal mind be given more weight than a humble believer who speaks from the heart? Does a conservative voice have as much weight as a liberal? If someone quotes from the Bible is their input immediately disregarded? What will be done with irrelevant information or inaccuracies stated as fact? To me, how a person comes to be homosexual, how frequently they worship, whether they are moral and upright, industrious and good neighbours, or whether some homosexual relationships are more loving than some heterosexual marriages is not relevant for this discussion

We are in danger of living in an Alice in Wonderland Church where words mean whatever we want them to mean therefore 'marriage' can apply to any couple. . The issue is whether 'Marriage' can be accurately used to describe that relationship regardless of what words and ceremony are used and by whomever. For the church to be credible it must use another term to characterize both heterosexual and homosexual relationships if that is what is desired.

A simple analogy: We might want to call an orange an apple. We could call apples 'apples' and also call oranges 'apples'. Most of us would say an orange is still an orange whatever we call it. Is it equal to an apple? How- Weight? Colour? Vitamin C? Number of seeds? We might want to pick another word that would accurately apply to both the apple and the orange and not compromise the description of either.

My specific reasons for opposing this measure are as follows:

I. I believe we have no warrant to do so. That would mean a change in the teaching (or doctrine) of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Solemn Declaration of 1893 (p viii of the book of Common Prayer 1962) which states clearly that the determination of the those assembled (paragraph 3) was to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in his Holy Word, and as the Church of England hath received and set forth the same...' My understanding is that we have not officially set these aside and therefore they still have weight. Our responsibility is to uphold and not to change.

II. In the Book of Common Prayer(the doctrinal standard for the Anglican Church of Canada) the service for the Solemnization of Matrimony p564 states the purposes of marriage as:' (a)the hallowing of the union between man and woman, (b) the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and (c) for the mutual society, help and comfort that the one ought to have of the other both in prosperity and adversity.' Of these, only the third could apply to same sex couples.

III. Also in the Book of Common Prayer p565 it is stated: 'For be ye well assured that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful.' It seems to me that we may do what we will and use what language we like but the couple will not be joined together by God. To refer to a same-sex relationship, however committed and loving, by the term marriage does not mean that it is either initiated by God or approved by Him.

IV. If we think that changing the Marriage Canon will result in multitudes coming to worship and supporting the church so that the decline in the Anglican Church of Canada would be reversed, I believe we are mistaken. A few might come in, others would feel no longer welcome and many would simply see the Church's credibility further undermined. I believe such a change would simply speed the decline. Same-sex 'marriage' would not be the salvation of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The church is not called to imitate society but by the grace of God to transform it.

Sincerely

Yours,

Bill MacMullin