

# SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION ON THE MARRIAGE CANON

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When the Commission was formed, I was happy to see the general terms of reference provided, which emphasized the need to evaluate the proposed change in light of the Solemn Declaration as well as to provide, “a biblical and theological rationale for this change in teaching on the nature of Christian marriage.”<sup>1</sup> The issue of the proposed change to Canon XXI: On Marriage in the Church (hereafter “the Marriage Canon”) is one of doctrine<sup>2</sup> and Church doctrine is rooted in theology, which in the Anglican tradition is governed by the supremacy of Holy Scripture, then by what, “man may conclude by force of Reason,”<sup>3</sup> to quote Richard Hooker, and finally by the Traditions of the Church. Too often, rather than viewing Tradition and reason as lenses through which we interpret Scripture, there can be a temptation to use them as substitutes (often in tandem with ‘experience’) for Scripture itself. The Terms of Reference remind us of the necessity of moving forward in the spirit of Anglican tradition.

I also appreciate the fact that the Terms of Reference limit the remit of the Commission to the doctrinal issue. The issue of same-sex marriage brings with it, necessarily, a number of issues of pastoral care, particularly in the context of the *status quo* canons and homosexual parishioners. While related, they are an entirely separate debate, and I suspect that many Anglicans who find themselves of opposing viewpoints on the doctrinal issue of same-sex marriage would find far more common ground on the issue of a pastoral response to issues raised by homosexual Anglicans.

This submission will respect the limit to the Commission’s remit, and the instructions provided by the Commission’s invitation for submissions, and focus on a discussion of the six suggested questions. Several of the Commission’s questions are addressed in each section.

## 2. THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE AND ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Before being able to discuss the issue of same-sex marriage, marriage itself must, in the Anglican context, be understood. There are three sources that ought to be consulted: Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer and the Marriage Canon as it currently stands.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Commission on the Marriage Canon: Terms of Reference,” *Anglican Church of Canada*: 1, last modified 3 January 2014, <http://www.anglican.ca/primate/files/2014/01/The-Commission-on-the-Marriage-Canon-Terms-of-Reference.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> “Report of the Primate’s Theological Commission of the Anglican Church of Canada on the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions (The St Michael Report),” *Anglican Church of Canada*: 8, last modified June 2005, <http://www.anglican.ca/primate/files/2010/11/StMichaelReport.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Vol. 5*, ed. John Keble (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1876), 34.

It might be worthwhile, as a reminder, to note that the civil definition of marriage has no place in this debate. The Laws of Canada are not a source or evidence of God's law, and should not, as a rule, have any bearing on Canon Law in relation to doctrine. The legality of same-sex marriage in Canada should have no more bearing on this Commission's work than the illegality of it in other provinces of the Anglican Communion. It does raise issues of pastoral concern, but as has been previously noted and stressed, the Commission's remit is to deal with the doctrinal issue of same-sex marriage, not the pastoral issues relating to homosexual Anglicans. Further, as a definition of terms, this submission will draw a distinction between marriage, which will refer to the civil and legal estate of marriage in Canada and Holy Matrimony, which will refer to the covenant made with God and blessed in His name by the Church.

While Holy Scripture is the highest source of doctrine for Anglicans, in this submission it may be simpler to first look to the Book of Common Prayer and the existing Marriage Canon to see what Anglican tradition says regarding the meaning of Matrimony, and Scripture may then be more easily illuminated in that light.

The Canadian Book of Common Prayer, 1962 says:

Matrimony was ordained for the hallowing of the union betwixt man and woman; for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, in both prosperity and adversity.<sup>4</sup>

Given the importance of the Solemn Declaration in the Terms of Reference, it might also be useful to review the words of the Book of Common Prayer, 1662, which says Holy Matrimony:

is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men...<sup>5</sup>

The first point of note is the complete accord of both books that Holy Matrimony was ordained by God. It is not a matter that can therefore be decided solely by human intellect, reason or experience, but rather by the understanding of God's will.

The Canadian Book of Common Prayer lists two reasons for Holy Matrimony: the procreation of children to be raised in faith and the mutual help and comfort of the man and woman. The 1662 prayer book very explicitly lays out three reasons for marriage, namely for the procreation and raising of children, to avoid fornication and mutual help and comfort.<sup>6</sup> The second reason is entirely Scriptural, coming as it does from St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>7</sup> and although it is not explicitly reproduced in either the Marriage Canon or the Canadian Book of Common

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<sup>4</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1962), 564. Hereafter this version is cited as *Book of Common Prayer* (1962).

<sup>5</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1662), 352. Hereafter this version is cited as *Book of Common Prayer* (1662).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 352f.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor vii. 2, and 1 Cor vii more generally.

Prayer it remains relevant by virtue of the Solemn Declaration and by the fact that it is implied in both through scriptural references.

The Marriage Canon itself broadly cites the definition of the Book of Common Prayer in its preface, and singles out the two primary reasons highlighted before, the procreation of children and their raising in faith and the mutual help and support offered to the husband and wife. The Marriage Canon also very explicitly notes the Scriptural basis of Matrimony saying, “The Anglican Church of Canada affirms, according to our Lord’s teaching as found in Holy Scripture and expressed in the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer...”<sup>8</sup> and goes on to cite several verses of Scripture from the Old Testament, the Epistles and Gospels.

This brings us to the question of what Scripture says. There are many verses which could be cited as having direct relevance to the description of Matrimony, and there are other verses which are held relevant by proponents and opponents of same-sex marriage even though the verses may not directly deal with the issue of Matrimony. In developing a biblical understanding of Matrimony, we must be careful to avoid a situation in which some parts of Scripture are presented in a way that supports an argument, for or against same-sex marriage, while placing that interpretation in opposition of other verses of Scripture. The Cistercian monk Michael Casey described selectively using the Bible to, “confirm and reinforce our own views,” as reducing it to, “the status of a hand puppet.”<sup>9</sup> This practice is also prohibited by Article XX of the Thirty-Nine Articles, which denies the Church authority to promote doctrines not in accord with the whole of Scripture.

Scripture has a lot to say about the nature of Matrimony, but perhaps the most important place to look for a biblical understanding are Christ’s own words, recorded in the Gospel according to St Mark, chapter x. 6-9:

But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.<sup>10</sup>

Christ here explicitly affirms God’s plans that man and woman should be joined together in Holy Matrimony. That upon entering into this covenant they should separate themselves from their parents and the support networks provided by them and by implication instead rest upon each other for their support. It further reminds us that it is in the context of Matrimony that the man and woman become one flesh, thus engaging in licit sexual acts. Finally, Jesus emphasizes Matrimony as a covenant when he affirms that Matrimony is meant to be permanent under God. It is in this teaching by Jesus that we clearly see the source of the definition of Matrimony provided for in the Book of Common Prayer.

It is also important to note the fact that Christ implies a difference between man and woman. “God made them male and female,” implies a difference between them. God made male and female, that there are differences and similarities between them, and that at times they can be called to different roles. Former Bishop of Durham N.T. Wright once spoke on the Biblical basis for the role of women in the Church in which he expressed surprise that anyone would think that

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<sup>8</sup> “Handbook of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 17th ed.,” *Anglican Church of Canada*: 108, last modified 2013, <http://images.anglican.ca/pdf/handbook/handbook-17th-ed.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Casey, *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, (Liguori, Mo.: Triumph Books, 1996), 7.

<sup>10</sup> All Scripture citations are taken from the English Standard Version.

the differences between male and female create differences between men and women in respect of salvation.<sup>11</sup> I echo this sentiment in affirming that these differences do not mean that men are superior to women or *vice versa*, and to expand upon it, our sexuality is not an impediment or aid to salvation. This merely means that under certain circumstances different people hold different roles in God's perfect plan for all humanity.

Different verses of Scripture speak to the nature of the relationship between men and women. St Paul says to the Corinthians, "For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."<sup>12</sup> In his letter to the Church at Ephesus, St Paul tells them, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."<sup>13</sup> In the context of matrimony, God calls husbands and wives to love and support each other, sometimes in the same way and sometimes differently, and again affirms that Matrimony is a mirror of Christ's relationship to the Church.

Elsewhere in the epistles, St Paul tells the Corinthians, "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion."<sup>14</sup> This might be used by proponents of same-sex marriage to support their position, but does this passage mean that rather than homosexuals being forced to 'burn with passion' in a celibate unmarried life, they should simply be allowed to marry? Does it mean that God's proscriptions of sexually immoral acts are only ever proscribed outside of the context of Matrimony and that far from what the rest of Scripture describes for Matrimony it is nothing more than a license for whatever sexual passions we seek to entertain? In the preceding chapter, St Paul had just warned the Corinthians against sexual immorality:

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything... The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body... Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality.<sup>15</sup>

We cannot ignore one part of Scripture in favour of another. Just as Jesus commanded us to love one another, he also said that he did not come to abolish the law.<sup>16</sup>

A supporter of the Church performing a same-sex marriage might suggest that in that passage in St Mark's gospel, Christ was simply speaking in terms the people of the time would understand, and thus all we should understand from this is the sacramental importance of Matrimony in God's eyes, while ignoring the elements restricting Matrimony to one man and one woman as

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<sup>11</sup> A partial reproduction of his lecture is available online at [http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright\\_Women\\_Service\\_Church.htm](http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Women_Service_Church.htm).

<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor vii. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Eph v. 22, 25.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor vii. 8-9.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor vi. 12-18.

<sup>16</sup> Jn xiii. 34-35 and Mt v. 17-18.

merely a reflection of the time. This is nothing more than an attempt to tame the Word of God, but as CS Lewis reminds us, Aslan—the Word of God—is not a tame lion. This notwithstanding, I want to explore two more reasons such an argument lacks merit.

First, this ignores the reality that Christ’s message in almost all cases was counter-cultural. Christ did not allow cultural mores to limit his message. In the Gospel according to St John vi. 51-66, Christ tells his followers they must eat his flesh. Many are offended and do not understand. This is not the preaching of someone who limits the Truth of God to an understanding shaped by cultural standards of the day and which would be acceptable to those not willing to accept significant change.

Second, Article XX of the 39 Articles of Religion affirms the importance of Scripture, prohibiting the Church from proclaiming, “any thing that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another.” Given the fact that the terms of reference for the Commission demand that its findings respect the Solemn Declaration, no one can argue here that the Articles of Religion hold no weight. In that event, we are compelled to stick to the whole of Scripture not ignoring parts which may be difficult or oppose our personal or secular points of view and philosophy. If we ignore the Articles, this leads us down the path St Augustine warned of when he counselled the faithful that, “If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don't like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.”<sup>17</sup>

There are many more verses of Scripture that could be cited to discuss either the nature of Matrimony in Scripture or gender roles within that form of marriage, but Jesus’s summation of them, and its reflection in both the Book of Common Prayer and the Marriage Canon’s preface, provide a sufficient understanding of the Scriptural basis of marriage and illuminate its primary theological implications as well as the Anglican Church’s traditional understanding of Matrimony.

### 3. CIVIL VERSUS CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

As the Rev. John Macquarrie warns, “[m]arriage, of course, is a “natural” institution as well as being a Christian sacrament, and as a natural institution, it is a far wider phenomenon.”<sup>18</sup> While somewhat similar, civil marriage and Christian marriage, again referred to generally as Matrimony in this submission, are entirely separate institutions. One issue that has arisen in this debate, which was previously discussed in this submission, is the tendency to equate civil and Christian marriage. There are a number of reasons for this; most common is likely the fact that the civil law provides for a civil marriage to be solemnized in a religious setting. When this is the case, a priest presiding over the sacrament of Matrimony is in effect holding two hats, one as ordained clergy who is offering the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony between husband, wife and God, and secondly an official of the state who is solemnizing a civil marriage which confers legal benefits and responsibilities.

This is a vestige of a time when civil marriage itself had an extremely strong link to Matrimony. The legal benefits incurred through marriage were created in order to encourage Christian

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<sup>17</sup> St Augustine’s Sermons, 20, 2. Cited from “St. Augustine of Hippo (about 354-430 A.D.).” *Catholic Faith and Reason*, accessed 19 August 2014, <http://www.catholicfaithandreason.org/st-augustine-of-hippo-about-354-430-ad.html>.

<sup>18</sup> John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966), 453f.

morality through marriage, which is to say pre-marital celibacy, monogamy and parental responsibility towards children (both in terms of their physical and spiritual care). As the years went on, more and more legal benefits were created to encourage couples to enter into this natural institution, as Macquarrie put it. In Canada, the concept of common law marriage<sup>19</sup> was ultimately created to confer some of those benefits on cohabitating partners who remained unmarried, as a method of recognizing an increasing cultural norm of cohabitation over marriage. Much more recently, the demands for an expanded definition of marriage were brought, suggesting that in our legal system, equality demanded that the legal benefits of marriage be granted to others including homosexuals.

What must always be recognized is the legal nature of a civil marriage does not flow from God. Spousal RRSP contributions are a policy of the Government of Canada for married persons, not a benefit of God's grace for those in a marriage covenant.

Conversely, civil marriage bears no influence on Holy Matrimony. When governments legislate common-law relationships, it is not a sign that the Church ought to change the Marriage Canon to allow for a 'marriage' ceremony that would confer God's grace without the requirement of a marriage covenant. There is no basis for it in Scripture. While the Anglican Church of Canada would rightly reject such a change to the Marriage Canon, Anglicans could still accept that, within the context of Canada's legal system, such a system might be, if not desirable, necessary given Canada's legal rights framework. The same could be said of the Civil Marriage Act of 2005, which legalized same-sex marriage in Canada.

The Commission must continue to recognize the distinction between the utterly separate definition and recognition of civil marriage versus Holy Matrimony. The arguments that support same-sex marriage in civil law have no bearing on the question of whether or not same-sex marriage should be allowed in canon law. It is not a question of equality, of benefits or of discrimination; it is a question of what God ordains, what He blesses and what He covenants with us.

#### 4. MARRIAGE AND BLESSING OF RELATIONSHIPS

Since the passage of the Civil Marriage Act authorizing, in the civil sphere, same-sex marriage, a number of Anglicans have proposed, as a response, that the Anglican Church of Canada, while not performing Christian marriages for those couples, ought to offer a blessing of a civil same-sex marriage in a ceremony separate from the civil marriage itself. To some, this would be little more than a stepping stone towards full recognition of same-sex marriage within the Church, which the Commission is now exploring, while others considered it a solution that recognized God's exclusion of same-sex couples from the covenant of Holy Matrimony while still conferring on their civil marriage (or other unrecognized relationship) the Church's blessing.

Given the nature of the Commission's work, I will ignore the issue of the blessing of same-sex relationships as some form of transitional step towards same-sex marriage in the Church, and instead focus simply on the question of the distinction between the two and how it might relate to some of the previously explored issues of the Scriptural understanding of Matrimony and relationships.

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<sup>19</sup> Common-law marriage varies from province to province, but in essence allows for certain legal benefits of marriage to be conferred on any two persons who form an interdependent relationship (generally requires simply cohabitation) for a given period of time, usually at least one year.

To do this, the nature of blessings must be discussed. Can the Church bless what it wants? Blessings originate from God, not the Church. When we bless something, it is as a visible and outward sign of God's grace towards us. In the process of solemnizing a marriage, we call on God to bless the couple to, "perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made... and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>20</sup>

Again, much like the St Michael Report concluded on the issue as a whole, the issue of blessings is one of doctrine and not of pastoral care.<sup>21</sup> The Church may not bless something which God does not bless, for the Church's role is merely to act as a visible sign of His blessings and grace. The report also noted the extremely close theological implications of blessings of relationships and Matrimony, saying:

The doctrine of the Church, moreover, has always been defined and expressed through its liturgies. The liturgy of blessing is no exception, since in such a liturgy the Church declares the activity of God towards the object of that blessing. The authorization of a particular form of liturgy for the blessing of same-sex couples would infer that the form and content of that liturgy is an expression of Christian doctrine as received and understood by the Anglican Church of Canada.<sup>22</sup>

While there are differences between the two, for the purposes of the blessing of same-sex relationships, the non-sacramental nature and other differences ought to be disregarded owing to the effect the approval of a blessing of same-sex relationships would have on Church doctrine.

## 5. THE SACRAMENTAL NATURE OF MARRIAGE

What is a Sacrament? A sacrament is defined in the Book of Common Prayer as, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."<sup>23</sup> This grace is conferred by God alone. Article XXV of the 39 Articles of Religion further speaks to the sacraments, saying:

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.<sup>24</sup>

The Article goes on to suggest that the other Sacraments, which includes Holy Matrimony, ought not to be considered Sacraments of the Gospel as they were not explicitly ordained by Christ as were Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. This does not, however, limit the understanding of the other five rites as themselves Sacraments in the same nature as Baptism and the Supper of the

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<sup>20</sup> *Book of Common Prayer* (1962), 567.

<sup>21</sup> St Michael Report, 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Book of Common Prayer* (1962), 550.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 707.

Lord. Given the text of the rite of Holy Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer, it is difficult to see how it could not be considered Sacramental as God's grace is referenced throughout the liturgy. Beyond articulating a differentiation between the Sacraments of the Gospel and other Sacraments, Article XXV further offers a caution, which may well be applicable in this situation:

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. *And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation:* but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith<sup>25</sup> (emphasis added).

This reinforces one point that has been previously made and provides another. The first point being that, as a sacrament, if it is received unworthily it is no longer wholesome. The Church cannot compel God to offer his grace upon a marriage which contravenes His will for marriage. Secondly, the point that a sacrament may be received unworthily reinforces that there are criteria and conditions for which the sacraments are to be received.

The first point is made rather plainly. The second is important to make in light of those who question whether or not it is legitimate for the Church to deny anyone the sacraments. Scripture is sometimes cited to support the idea that all are equally deserving of the sacraments, namely St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians where he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."<sup>26</sup> While this is true, it does not take away from the fact that the Church has always recognized that there are barriers to Baptism and barriers to receiving the Eucharist. The requirement for Baptism is repentance, either made personally or on behalf of the Baptismal candidate by their parents and Godparents. The requirement for the Lord's Supper is for the recipient to, "examine themselves, whether they truly repent of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead the new life; have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men."<sup>27</sup> We should therefore accept that even in just the sacramental sense there are restrictions on who may receive the rite of Holy Matrimony.

Another argument commonly used in favour of the idea that the Sacrament cannot be denied is a general appeal to the concept of Jesus taught us to love one another. This statement is true, but ignores the totality of what Jesus taught, as recorded in St John's gospel when Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."<sup>28</sup> His instruction is specifically to love others as He himself loved them. Put another way, Christ instructs us to love others as God intends us to love others.

If one takes his command as nullifying all other Scriptural regulations, then the Church ought to offer blessings for all sorts of prohibited behaviours such as adultery, so long as they are done in love. Clearly that is not the case; Jesus was not overturning God's laws, as he himself says.<sup>29</sup> If he had, when he told the woman caught in adultery to, "go, and from now on sin no more,"<sup>30</sup> the instruction would make no sense. God's love is shown in the forgiveness of sins and in the empowering to avoid future sins.

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<sup>25</sup> 1 Cor xi. 27

<sup>26</sup> Gal iii. 28.

<sup>27</sup> *Book of Common Prayer* (1962), 551f.

<sup>28</sup> Jn xiii. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Namely, "do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." Mt v. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Jn viii. 11.

Beyond ignoring the fullness of Christ's command, it again usurps God's role by saying that it is human love which ought to determine who will receive God's grace, and not His own will. The love which Jesus calls us to express is love defined by God's will for us. Regardless of what modern philosophy and cultural norms tell us, God's love remains defined through His revealed Truth in Holy Scripture. Jesus calls us to a position of pastoral care for all, but as has repeatedly been stressed throughout this submission, the question of the proposed amendment to the Marriage Canon is one of doctrine, not of pastoral care.

There is a related issue to this objection. Proponents might argue that because God is a god of love, justice and equality, His love should be interpreted in the context of what we understand equality and justice to demand of us. Surely it is difficult to say that the Government's Civil Marriage Act does little more than to provide for legal equality, in terms of the legal benefits afforded to committed couples? They therefore argue that in order to serve God's justice and equality, the Church ought to follow suit. This view dangerously presupposes that God's justice mirrors our own understanding, and that changing human logic and philosophy ultimately always comes closer to God's perfection. This is a theologically dangerous view that is prone to leading to error. One need not look further than Jesus's parables to see that what we might expect is not always what Jesus reveals of God's nature.<sup>31</sup> Beyond this danger of extrapolating God's nature, it absolutely calls into question the supremacy and integrity of Scripture. Doing so challenges the foundations of our tradition. Anglicans historically place in Holy Scripture the rule and standard of faith or as Hooker puts it, "the first place both of credit and obedience."<sup>32</sup>

Matrimony is first and foremost a sacrament, an outward sign of inward grace. As a sacrament, it is possible to be received unworthily, in which case God confers no grace, and indeed if the requirements to receive the sacrament are not met it ought not to be offered in the first place. In effect, the Church may not force God to give grace to a marriage that falls outside of God's definition of Matrimony as understood through Holy Scripture.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This submission has endeavoured to respond to the six guiding questions provided. In responding to these guiding questions, it has also explored some of the scriptural issues raised by proponents and opponents of a change to the Marriage Canon, in the hopes that these issues will further be explored in the Commission's Report.

In discussing these points, I have yet to find a compelling argument for why the Marriage Canon ought to be changed in the proposed way, and have found many varied reasons why Scripture, as the ultimate authority of the Anglican Church, seems to prohibit us from so doing. I cannot in good conscience support the proposed change to the Marriage Canon.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pax Christi,*

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<sup>31</sup> See the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, Mt 20. 1-16.

<sup>32</sup> Hooker, 34.

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