

Monday, September 29, 2014

To:

Commission on the Marriage Canon  
Anglican Church of Canada  
80 Hayden Street  
Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2

From:

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Dear Members of the Commission:

I appreciate this opportunity to provide some personal thoughts in anticipation of your deliberations on the proposed changes to Canon XXI. While other submissions may originate from a scholarly basis, my submission comes from my heart as I try to imagine, "What would Jesus do?"

The fact that the Scriptures were written by a very select few from the patriarchal segment of society allows for a certain reflection of the times and may allow us to realize that there was little balance in recognizing the rights of all citizens. In Biblical times, marriage was more of an act of economic convenience and often meant taking more than one wife. While we acknowledge the past, we need to build on a future which will include everyone.

The Scriptures were written to justify actions and create order in Biblical times, and have evolved over the centuries to reflect our societal norms and ethics as they changed over the millennia. With sadness, I read a few contributors' submissions to the Commission, which encouraged all of us to "appreciate the constant reminders of God's love for all humankind," while wondering if "a name other than marriage might have helped us in our acceptance of such (*same-gender*) unions."

Marriage is based on love and, where there is love, God is absolutely within us. Is that not a basic tenant we all believe as Christians? I am fortunate to be in a long-standing marriage with my husband, but I am equally blessed to be a part of a congregation where there are same-gender unions based on love, respect, fidelity, nurturing, kindness and intimacy.

Just within my lifetime, Anglicans have moved to allow the divorced to remarry in the church, to make procreation an optional purpose of marriage and to ordain women as priests, which is still controversial in some parishes. I will leave it to those far more learned than I to debate the amendment proposals to Canon XXI, but I do pray that a decision is based on love. Why should we have the right to deny same-gender couples the sacrament of marriage when they wish to enter into a relationship with God, based on love?

Respectfully submitted,

Judy McCallum