

I offer this submission to the Commission on the Marriage Canon knowing that my thoughts and ideas have most likely been expressed already in one form or another in the many other submissions that have been made. I have tried over the years to understand how the marriage of two people of the same gender can be reconciled with the teaching of scripture, or how a homosexual couple can form a marriage. My understanding has developed and grown through the kindness of homosexual friends and colleagues who have graciously agreed to have conversations with me to help me wrestle through many questions. I am grateful to them and my compassion and respect for them has deepened over time. I am heartbroken, however, that there is no reconciliation; not in scripture, not by nature, and not in human society.

Accepting the marriage of two people of the same gender requires that scripture be interpreted in ways that I believe are unfaithful. Our integrity as people who claim the authority of scripture is compromised in our dismissal of important passages that should inform our understanding of these human relationships.

My plea is that the commission will recognize the unique nature of the joining of male and female. A marriage requires the joining of one of each gender. Established in the beginning of human existence created with design and purpose, the joining together of male and female is the fundamental unit required for the perpetuation of the human race.

The nucleus of human society is the joining of male and female. The Marriage between a man and a woman creates the bond that is meant to create stability in human community. We acknowledge that marriages break down, there are many that are not perfect and some that are harmful. But this does not diminish the value and purpose of the institution of marriage.

Homosexual relationships may provide a loving community of mutual support but exclude the opposite gender and hence is by nature different. Perhaps the Commission would consider preserving the Marriage Canon as it is and create something new to accommodate the reality of the homosexual experience. Consider what is the nature of that reality and create something new that provides an opportunity to establish a covenanted relationship between two people of the same gender that does not require that we diminish or disregard the unique reality of the joining of male and female.

If the creation and development of such a ritual or ceremony is chosen it would be necessary, as people who claim the authority of scripture, to write up a rationale supported by scripture.

Although some have maintained that gender difference has no theological significance in marriage I would contend that gender difference is central to marriage. Both male and female are present in the mystery of God. Same gender relationships are missing the

whole dimension of the other gender. When Jesus was approached with a question on divorce he responded by affirming that a man and woman are joined together and become one flesh. He reminds them that this has been so since the beginning of humanity. (Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 1:27)

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