

To whom it may concern;

I would like to add my voice to the collection of voices you have already collected on the issue of changing the marriage canon. I apologize that this will not have adequate references and may not be articulated in as clear a way as I would like as I just learned today about this project, and as it turns out, it is the final day. That being said, here are my thoughts:

**How do you interpret what scripture says about marriage?**

I think it is first important to acknowledge that there is no unified view of marriage in scripture. At times it is a loving covenant between two individuals, and at others it is a business transaction. At times it seems to be pointing toward a commitment between equals, and others the woman is treated as a object to be purchased. Though marriage is always in scripture, between a man and woman, it is at times one man and multiple women. All that being said, I think scripture itself leads us to believe that it isn't so much about asking what scripture says about marriage but rather guides us to ask what is the Holy Spirit saying to God's people about marriage today. I believe that scripture points to an ever expanding community of inclusion that begins to stretch the traditional set up of institutions such as marriage.

**How do you understand the theological significance of gender difference in marriage?**

To me the more important question, and the one that I believe that Moses, the Prophets, Jesus and Paul all thought was most important, and should be the root of all theological questions is "What does love of neighbour look like in this situation?" When I ask this question then I think that even if all the scriptural writers could not fathom the idea that marriage could be between anyone other than a man and a woman, we need to say what does love look like here and now. I cannot imagine how it is more loving to deny marriage to those who seek to make this covenant because they are of the same gender then it is to marry them.

**Is there a distinction between civil marriage and Christian marriage?**

Yes, I think so. I believe that civil marriage is a legal status, but Christian marriage is the commitment before God to put the needs of the other before the needs of yourself and to trust that they will do the same for you. Christian marriage is meant to be a time when the rest of the local body of Christ commits to do anything in their power to journey with the couple to make sure that they can keep their promises. That being said, if we are going to stay in the business of providing both civil and Christian marriage, then both should be available to anyone no matter their gender.

**What is the theological significance of the following:**

**Companionship in Marriage:** I believe the significance of this is that we are created to image God, who exists in relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that marriage when lived out properly as an ever giving cycle of love between two people that overflows to love children, friends and all those around them they begin to reflect the image of God in the Trinity. This, I don't think, requires that the people in this relationship need to be of different genders.

**Bearing and Raising Children:** I think this was a command given to all of creation in the Garden. Humanity has taken this very seriously and has been very successful in bearing children, so much so that it seems our fruitfulness and multiplication is now not only stopping other parts of the earth from multiplying, but is actually destroying the earth. We have filled it, but now we need to ask what it the new command is. Maybe we need to have more couples thinking twice about procreation in an age where population growth is destroying the planet.

**What is the difference between marriage and the blessing of a relationship?**

It seems that in our church we have created this difference so that we can offer something for our Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters without upsetting those who don't want marriage to be changed. I think it ends up created second class citizens of our Gay and Lesbian Anglican's being a little welcoming but not enough that they can participate fully in the sacraments of the church.

Thanks for considering my thoughts.

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