

Commission on the Marriage Canon
The Anglican Church of Canada
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We strive for inclusivity in our church, so how can we not allow this seemingly benign change to the Canons? Very simply, we must include and embrace all sinners (ourselves included), irrespective of sin, without judgement, which is reserved for God. Whether marriage is an exclusive right to heterosexual adults is not the issue; Scripture makes it clear that a person does not have to be married to serve God. [Matthew 19(11)]

We read further in Romans 1(24-32) that while God has given us the freedom of sinful desire, to give into desire is to turn from God. God's laws are different from governmental laws and society's laws. Society does not set the standard for God's law. While homosexuals consider their desires normal and that they have a right to express them publicly, God does not encourage us to fulfil all our desires, even if we consider them normal.

Rather, we should surrender ourselves to God, asking him to show us our way out of sin.

I believe, after much study, prayer and discernment on this issue, that the Resolution to change Canon XXI is contrary to:

- I) Scripture
- II) Article XX of the 39 Articles of Religion (1604) which were a strong basis for the Reformed English church and specifically the Anglican Church. (1)
- III) The Marks of the Mission #1-"To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom": Insofar as we are not truthfully proclaiming the biblical nature of sin but rather overlooking and perhaps promoting it.

However, we must remember that we have been called by Christ to embrace all who come to us (and also those who don't) and treat them as we would ourselves and we are proud of the efforts of so many of those in our church who lead in the pursuit of social justice for all, especially through changes in governmental and societal law to protect those who are vulnerable or excluded, including the legalization of same sex civil unions which has already been achieved through civil law in Canada.

While the discussion of sin can make many of us in the church uncomfortable, to ignore it and make a change to the Canonical foundations of the Church, on strictly emotional or compassionate grounds is to go back to a pre-reformation movement "good works" framework which we realized was inconsistent with Scripture and moved away from over five hundred years ago.

(1) *"XX. Of the Authority of the Church.*

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain 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. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

[The 39 Articles of Religion - Anglican Church of Canada website (<http://www.anglican.ca/about/beliefs/39-articles/>)]