

# Integrity Canada

## Gay and Lesbian Anglicans & Friends

2014 09 29

Commission on the Marriage Canon  
Anglican Church of Canada

Dear Friends:

Integrity was founded in 1975 to improve the lot of gays and lesbians in the Anglican/Episcopal church. Over the last 39 years, “all the sacraments for all the baptised” has been at the heart of Integrity’s advocacy. Integrity is therefore strongly in favour of amending Canon XXI to allow for the marriage of same-sex couples.

You have received many submissions from people on both sides of this discussion, so you will have heard from others the theological / biblical comments we might make. We would only add: the Jesus of the Gospels is always accepting, always inclusive, always helping others to move to closer relationship with God. Gay and lesbian people wanting to live in committed partnership with one other are looking for that acceptance and inclusion from their church, and to move to closer relationship with God in their marriages.

We believe that the Anglican Church of Canada has to legislate for Canada, not for other parts of the world. If we had waited for unanimity from the Anglican Communion, we would not today have women priests, much less women bishops. The sizeable majorities in all three houses of General Synod for the motions which led to your commission show that, in Canada, there is a large proportion of people who want to move on the question of same-sex marriage. Worrying about what other parts of the world may think is beside the point.

It always has been the case that clergy can, for their own reasons, refuse to marry any couple; and we support the continuation of that opt-out provision. We believe that it should be a positive decision to opt out; that is, people would assume that a given cleric / bishop / diocese would allow for marriage of same-sex couples, just as they do for marriage of divorced people, unless the cleric actively states otherwise.

In secular terms, the Anglican Church of Canada, at General Synod 1995, changed the table of kindred and affinity to align with the laws of Canada, in terms of those permitted, and those forbidden to marry for reason of close relationship. Canada moved in 2005 to allow same-sex couples to marry. We believe that it is appropriate for the Anglican Church to move in that same direction.

As equal marriage legislation has spread around the world, some jurisdictions are more concise than others. The UK legislation goes on and on for 20 pages of minutiae. The Canadian legislation has four substantive clauses, and fits on half a sheet of paper. We urge you to draft a simple and clear Canon in the mode of the Civil Marriage Act 2005.

Section 1 of the preamble to Canon XXI speaks of marriage as a lifelong union in faithful love, and that the purposes of such a union are mutual fellowship, support, and comfort, the procreation (if it may be) and nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfilment in a community of faithful love. That description is equally applicable to same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, and we urge you to provide draft legislation that makes such marriages available to all couples. Then the church will have moved closer to providing all the sacraments for all the baptised.

Sincerely



Chris Ambidge  
for Integrity in Canada

