

September 30, 2014

We are grateful to the *Commission on the Marriage Canon* for this opportunity to submit our thoughts and opinions on this important matter, and we are thankful to be part of the Anglican Church of Canada.

We acknowledge that these issues certainly get at the heart of our existential struggle as human beings. This debate brings to the surface a deep struggle because we, as do others who have submitted their comments, have treasured and esteemed friends, neighbours, family members and professional colleagues who are homosexual and live in a range of expressions of gender identity and lifestyle.

It is a strong temptation in our Church, situated as it is in a pluralistic society, to say that there are many roads to God. Yet, the witness of Scripture attests again and again to the Lord's command, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20.3). Romans 1 makes clear connections between worship of the wrong things and sexuality (see verses 21-31). To approve of changing the marriage canon would seem to signal our Church's worship at a wrong altar. Therefore, we seek to uphold the marriage canon as it stands.

So, how does one embody the Gospel of Love when Scripture prohibits same gender sex? We believe that the truth of Jesus Christ is found in the Holy Spirit making known His risen life. Please pray for all of us, as we are all sinners who struggle everyday with competing idols in our hearts, to love God and our neighbours as ourselves.

In the peace of the ascended Lord,

Rev. John and Nancy VanStone