

Commission on the Marriage Canon
Anglican Church of Canada
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Dear Members of the Commission on the Marriage Canon:

As a life-long Christian I have come to find myself in the last several years drawn to the Anglican tradition for several reasons. The most relevant to the Church's recent discussion on marriage stems from the importance and necessity I find in the traditional Anglican pillars of authority: namely Scripture, tradition and reason. From my viewpoint, it only makes sense that the Anglican Church must retain its connection to these three pillars in order to maintain any authoritative integrity in its doctrines.

The Scriptural case for marriage between one man and one woman, using the plain and perspicuous teachings and examples across the entirety of the Old and New Testaments, couldn't be clearer and has been well covered by other submissions. To claim that Scripture (or Christ himself, such as in Matthew 19:4-6 or Mark 10:7-9) teaches otherwise is to embark on a journey of disingenuous *eisegesis* rather than a hermeneutically sound *exegesis* of the text. That is, one has to ignore the original intended meaning in order to force upon the text a progressive modern bias or understanding of marriage and sexuality completely foreign to the authors' intent. This form of interpretation provides for no boundaries and will almost certainly lead to heresy.

In addition to the sheer weight of Scripture we must also consider the tradition of the Church since its inception, including within the Anglican tradition (namely the Book of Common Prayer). Nowhere in the history of Christianity, from the Apostles to the Fathers of the Church and onwards until the present day, do we find any support for homosexuality or "marriage" of anyone other than a man and woman, nor do we find any biblical interpretation in tradition that supports such a notion. On the contrary, we find that the tradition, as passed down from the Apostles and preserved in the Church, rejects unlawful marriages. Eusebius of Caesarea, as just one clear example, states:

"[H]aving forbidden all unlawful marriage, and all unseemly practice, and the union of women with women and men with men, he [God] adds: 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for in all these things the nations were defiled, which I will drive out before you. And the land was polluted,

and I have recompensed [their] iniquity upon it, and the land is grieved with them that dwell upon it' [Lev. 18:24–25]" (*Proof of the Gospel* 4:10 [A.D. 319])

When weighing the evidence in Scripture and tradition, it becomes clear that to be true to reason is to reject homosexual unions as being part of God's plan for human sexuality, marriage and the family. By natural law the sexual act between same-sex persons is disordered and cannot lead to the creation of the family or the will of God for humanity to "be fruitful and multiply." As stated by St. Thomas Aquinas:

"It is evident that, in accord with natural order, the union of the sexes among animals is ordered towards conception. From this it follows that every sexual intercourse that cannot lead to conception is opposed to man's animal nature." (*Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos, Cap. 1, Lec. 8*)

Also, reason does not support the notion that doctrinal declarations can be decided upon by popular opinion. The Church was never intended to be ruled as a democracy, with God's eternal will being decided upon—or worse yet, His revelation reneged—by popular vote. It shouldn't be up to me or any other layperson to decide what is and what isn't God's revealed truth. The fact that I have to write this letter to defend one of the most fundamental doctrines of the Church as made clear by Scripture, tradition and reason is disheartening to say the least.

In saying all these things it is important to remember that a Christian should not have to compromise complete and unconditional love for all persons no matter their sexual attractions while upholding the eternal truth of marriage. Some may feel that not affirming same-sex attraction is akin to denying a person the love of God and the reality that they are created in His image. Nothing could be further from the truth! As we are told, "...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

We have all inherited sinful natures and must take up the cross of discipleship (Matthew 16:24). For each of us that path is different, but all of us—whether we hold same-sex attractions or not—are called either to celibacy or marriage. There are good Christian men and women with same-sex attractions who have chosen both of these things and are experiencing the grace and blessing of God. None of us Christians were called to an easy existence where every moral shortcoming—whether innately derived or externally provoked—should be affirmed as being in God's plan for how we should conduct ourselves. Rather, "[b]lessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

As a married young man, I have begun to learn the reality of marriage as a sacred covenant of love that shouldn't be defined by merely by sexual attraction. Marriage is ultimately a path to holiness, an opportunity for us to learn the meaning of true love and sacrifice towards our spouse, and God-willing, our children, in the same way Christ displayed for His Church. In the same way, celibacy can also be a path to holiness and a way to dedicate oneself to serving God and others.

I must be honest and say, not as a threat but as an act in accordance with my conscience, that should this change be made to the Marriage Canon I will no longer in good conscience be able to remain faithful to God while at the same time submit to, and place my trust in, the authority of the Anglican Church.

I hope and pray that as you consider all these things you will be led by the Holy Spirit into all truth.

Prayerfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Josh Brown".

Josh Brown