

My name is Robert Walker. I'm a disabled, gay man in my mid-thirties who lives in Toronto. I've completed the MDiv. at Trinity College, Toronto, and am currently a postulant in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. On my bishop's recommendation, I am completing PhD studies during my postulancy, and am enrolled for Distance Learning at the University of Birmingham (UK), reading in Theology and Religion. The focus of my research is on dialogue between Christian Queer and Evangelical/Pentecostal theologians around issues of sexuality and gender.

My journey with Jesus has been long and diverse. I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour at age 5, and was raised in the Alliance church, a conservative Evangelical denomination. I was baptised by immersion in 1991 at age 11. When I was twelve or thirteen, two significant things happened in my life: I was "baptised in the Holy Spirit," and I realised I was attracted to those of my own gendersex. Both of these things caused tremendous upheaval in my life, and pressed me to seek to know more of God and to develop a passionate friendship with the Triune God.

The Evangelicals of my upbringing taught me to love Scripture as the primary way to hear the voice of Christ, and to seek a passionate and living relationship with him. The holiness Christians taught me to love the gifts and power of the Spirit, to affirm healing of body and spirit as basic to the Gospel, and to dance, in spite of my physical challenges (cerebral palsy). The Vineyard taught me to recognize the ways in which God speaks to me, along with practical and very low-key ways of ministering to people with various kinds of needs.

This combination of traditions, of course, did not teach me to view my budding awareness of attraction as a good thing! In fact, I was taught that homosexual attraction was a Freudian lack of maturity—or a demonic spirit. Sexual orientation could be adjusted because Jesus is capable of healing, and wills to heal and cure every sort of disease and sickness. They were also less than honest about the exegetical and pastoral debate going on in the North American Church, partly because they did not think through the various ways Christian communities can relate Scripture to Reason (including Science) and Tradition.

I came out while still a Pentecostal, convinced intellectually that the Church's Tradition was not in fact correct in its assessment of some forms of homosexuality and same gendersex relationships. The experiential was a much harder gap to overcome: "this is demonic" to "this is a gift of your journey" is quite a dramatic and difficult shift. Eventually, I fell in love with an amazing man and we were hand-fasted (a Celtic marriage tradition) in the summer of 2005, surrounded by friends and family. It was an explicit Christ-centred event, and I remember a "shift" happening very palpably in how I carried myself—when a friend asked me to describe the difference, the best I could come up with was, "I have more authority." When heterosexual married Christians described the inner dynamics of their marriages, I felt I could understand without remainder; they were experiencing one-fleshedness, and that was also my experience.

Though we filed a marriage certificate in Manitoba in 2006, the government never received it—or perhaps some bureaucrat put it in the circular file. I was not always a mature husband, and he decided he did not want to be with me anymore in Advent 2007. Though I fought hard to maintain the covenant I had made, in the end I realised that loving him well meant letting him go. Thus, I experienced divorce, even though I have never been married legally. The spiritual bond was ruptured, and when my therapist asked me how I was, for months afterwards I pictured my inner life as a beautiful glass vase, smashed, lying in pieces, and ground underfoot—my heart could never be the same shape, ever again.

But I healed, and my parish in Winnipeg and the Mennonites of Canadian Mennonite University helped me re-gain a sense of my usefulness for the Kingdom. The Mennonites taught me that non-violence is an ethical key for living the Gospel, based on the reported ministry of Jesus. As a current resident of Toronto, I hang out with New Direction, a former ex-gay ministry that focuses on Generous Spaciousness as a relational posture in the midst of Church debates about sexualities, and at Metropolitan Community Church Toronto, not necessarily because I agree with all of their 'progressive' theology but because I don't have to argue with anyone about sex—thanks be to God. Though I am not often able to get there because of mobility issues, St. George the Martyr Anglican Church of Toronto has felt like home.

In this reflection, I am aware that I am a postulant, but I also speak as a scholar trying to follow where the evidence of my research leads. My opinions are my own, and subject to change. But I believe that the kinds of questions I am asking in my research and have been asked by non-Anglican queer people, whether Christian or not, should be added to the conversation. I take the time to testify and to mark my situated knowledge because I believe that testimony to the work of Christ in the lives of Christians and Christian communities is still given short shrift in academic theology. The Church has never adjusted her doctrine before it was prompted by a new attempt at faithful testimony, and this is what we are seeing today in the lives of Anglican gay and lesbian people who seek the sacrament of marriage. (We don't yet speak well at all, in the Canadian Church, with bisexual, trans, or intersex people—never mind widespread but outside-the-mainstream communities formed by practices like BDSM (relationships prominently featuring bondage, domination/submission, or sado-masochism) or polyamory (faithful, egalitarian sexual or romantic relationships that include multiple partners), or plural marriage (which may or may not overlap with polyamory). Regardless of where the ACC lands on the question of adjusting the canonical definition of marriage, there are more stories to hear and there is more theological work to do beyond the potentially dismissive verbal gesture, "Sin does not deserve the dignity of a point of view!"

I left this reflection too late to be able to cite all of my sources, but I am glad to have conversation with individuals or groups who want to engage further! Please be free to contact me at rob [dot] daywalker [at] gmail [dot] com.

1. How do you interpret what scripture says about marriage?
 - 1.1. I interpret marriage as a human institution allowed (but not necessarily ordained) by God. Why do I make this distinction? Primarily because Genesis 2 and the words of Jesus can be read differently. After describing the adam's action to the new woman, the text continues, "For this reason..." Anglicans tend to interpret this as implying that God Himself ordains marriage. But does the text actually say this? "For this reason..." is the narrator's voice: "Since God has been good enough to give us suitable partners, isn't this way we get married and establish households?" Recognizing the narrator's voice allows us a way to honour marriage while recognizing that it is shaped by thoroughly human cultural assumptions that God *can and does use* but of which He does not *necessarily* approve. It is true that the vast majority of social and sexual pairings throughout history have been between those considered of different gender-sexes (though it is often not useful to assume that gender and sex are the same thing!). On the other hand, there is nothing before the creation of Eve that suggests a difference of gender is necessary for the bond of community that Yahweh

wants to achieve for the adam. Perhaps, though the text has what some scholars call a “heterosexist” bias, this bias is cultural and does not reflect the mind of God.

- 1.2. Since God gives the adam the ability to name created things like the animals, though, perhaps we can be bold enough to suggest that the God-ordained human ability to *name* is in fact permission to shape faithful cultural constructs. Gay and lesbian believers who seek the marriage in the Anglican tradition want to come before God because, in naming themselves faithfully in His presence and before His people, they expect to hear the voice of God saying, “And this, too, is very good.”
- 1.3. In terms of the words of Jesus about the nature of marriage, I’m not sure the Church has necessarily understood well what He is trying to do. Several scholars mount impressive arguments that Jesus’ statements about marriage, divorce, and eunuchs have the social effect, if implemented, of perhaps destroying the institution (or perhaps, only a little less radically, of destroying patriarchal forms of it. The Church throughout history has basically assumed that Jesus, quoting the rabbis, believes that since marriage is made in heaven, we frail humans shouldn’t mess with the plans of God! But in speaking of eunuchs—many of whom are shown by ancient literature to be the sexually active queer people of their cultures—Jesus may be pointing toward a different way of doing sexual relationships—including celibacy. “Let anyone receive this, who can.”
- 1.4. If the teaching of Jesus is more ambiguous than Christians might like to think, it is true that there are other voices in our tradition that make marriage a revelation of Christ’s purposes for the Church (as in Ephesians 5 or the end of the book of Revelation)! Two considerations seem important here.
 - 1.4.1. There are multiple dissonant voices within Scripture that do not, in fact, reconcile. The Church catholic recognizes this implicitly by centring the lectionary (and our hermeneutics) on the life of Jesus in the Gospels, and not (for example) on the writings Paul and his school of thought. I know that the 39 Articles state that we should not explain one part of Scripture to make it repugnant to another. But the implicit metaphor here, of a legally binding constitution that must be interpreted as internally consistent in order to be the basis of Law, is, I submit, a poor reflection of what Scripture demonstrably is: a community library, the revelatory and ongoing conversation about how to be faithful to the God revealed most fully in Jesus. Multiple and contradictory voices are *expected* in a community library, yet they are not repugnant to each other, because they help the Community discern which strands of the Tradition serve the Gospel in our context. This is why, in my opinion, the Holy Spirit can and does say different things in different circumstances—each part of the Body is trying to discern how best to express the Gospel, and each chooses to combine or separate or prioritize different voices in the Tradition.
 - 1.4.2. Could this be an example of an inspired use of human culture to reflect the truths of the Gospel, which nevertheless should not be absolutized as a universalizable concept? Perhaps the view of marriage expressed by Revelation or Ephesians is the same sort of theology that some early Fathers used to reflect theologically on why cutting the Communion wine with water was appropriate! The reflections are beautiful and fully consonant with what happened to Jesus, but they arose from a demonstrable and limited political and cultural context. In the same way, perhaps the heterosexuality of marriage in the Bible is not actually necessary to its usefulness in God’s economy. We have hints of this in some of the Christian mystics—Jesus appears to some of them, whether women or men, as Some people might say that this opens the door to absolute relativism: anything we don’t like in Scripture, we can “throw out” by explaining its

historical location! That is the risk, but the Church's conviction is that the Spirit will bring us around even when our interpretation of Scripture is flawed. We need a high doctrine of the Spirit and a renewed discussion of the nature of Scripture. The risk of relativism is one we must run because of the Incarnation: the Word became a particular human being, and only by the resurrection of Jesus can we say that His life is applied by God across all of human history. It is a necessary risk, I think, to assume that Scripture is very particular to its time and place; it will not always be obvious that everything in Scripture applies to us, or how.

- 1.5. Since I am arguing that marriage is a human institution that God uses and that heterosexual bias does not necessarily reflect the heart of God as revealed in Scripture,¹ what guidelines do I think would be appropriate to deploy in the Church's discernment about marriage? 1) Love God and love neighbour as self. How to walk this out practically? 2) Use 1 Corinthians 13's description of love as a metric, adding 3) "Love does not harm a neighbour." Is there harm that we do to gay and lesbian Christians when we forbid them the Church's blessing in marriage?
2. How do you understand the theological significance of gender difference in marriage?
 - 2.1. As a scholar, the term "gender" in this question raises more problems than it solves, given the differences between the Biblical contexts and our own. Biblical writers did not speak of sex and gender quite the same way that we do. This is not to say either that the Bible is wrong or that we need to somehow make our Christian assumptions about gender and sex align with those of the biblical authors.
 - 2.1.1. In the spirit of theological clarity in our context, I submit the following understandings. *Sex* is sometimes understood pre-linguistic and biological: Males have penises and females have vaginae. *Gender* is usually understood as the cultural meanings that attach to the social relationships between males and females using cultural norms of masculinity and femininity, and include *gender(ed) roles*, statuses that are appropriate for one gender as opposed to another. *Sexual orientation* is, unfortunately for those of us who appreciate richness and complexity, a conflation of at least three different axes of human personality and attraction: the erotic (with whom do I want to have sex?), the social (with whom do I want to spend time in non-sexual situations?), and the romantic (with whom do I want to partner in long-term love relationships?).
 - 2.1.2. Queer theory, especially, complicates the second-wave feminist definitions that many Christians know (at least implicitly). For human beings, many branches would say, there is no such thing as pre-linguistic or pre-interpretive experience. Therefore, even the allegedly self-evident biological organization and differentiation called 'sex' is equally as cultural as 'gender.' Christian theologians regularly conflate or interchange gender and sex with minimal explanation about why they so do. I agree with Queer Theory's explication of linguistic shaping even of biology, and thus I often use the term *gendersex* in my own writing.
 - 2.2. Historically, in cultures across the world, marriage is mixed *gender*, but not necessarily mixed *sex*. For example, in some cultures an anatomical male who identifies with the women of his community is allowed to marry a warrior; however, two warriors are not allowed to marry, because they are the same *gender*. It may be, then, that marriage requires a sense of difference in terms of how *gender* is lived out between partners, though they may be of the same *sex*.

¹ I am assuming here that there are adequate re-readings of the six passages that have to do with same-gendersex sexual behaviours. Even Romans 1, in my opinion, has to do with Roman "sacred sexuality" and not with anything that contemporary queer Christians would affirm as compatible with the Gospel.

But most often, conservative Christians in our culture assume that males are men who are heterosexual and females are women who are heterosexual; anything different is a form of (non-diagnostic) *gender identity disorder*.

- 2.3. I do not believe that there does not need to be a difference of either gender or sex in order for a relationship to be marital. Each relationship is a complex and sometimes complicated weaving of sameness and difference—until we find, with palpable relief, “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” I do not believe, along with New Testament scholar James Brownson, that ‘gender complementarity’ is something that originates in the biblical texts themselves. Heterosexual otherness is appropriate for the majority of the human population; but just because queer people organize their relational otherness differently does not mean we dishonour the body or erase distinctions that are allegedly built into (pre-linguistic?) Creation. When queer people find our matched opposite, our suitable helper, many of us have a sense of God’s joy: “And this, too, is very good!”
3. Is there a distinction between civil marriage and Christian marriage?
 - 3.1. Yes, and it must be maintained. If the Canadian State does not recognize the conscience clause of the proposed amendment and pursues legal action against Anglican clergy, perishes, or dioceses, there is a simple solution: we give up our marriage licenses and continue to preach the Gospel. Though we are in a State that recognized marriage equality, this willingness to give up the privilege of acting as Agents of the State would also go in the other direction: if something coheres with the Gospel but State Agents are forbidden, we act as citizens of the Kingdom and not citizens of the State (which offers a false salvation anyway).
4. The marriage canon describes “the purposes of marriage” as 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. What is the theological significance of:
 - 4.1. companionship in marriage?
 - 4.1.1. Genesis 2 states that it is not good that human beings should be alone, and implies that human communities recognize the ‘one-fleshedness’ of consummated life together as the institution of marriage. Marriage represents a key way that human beings express their sexual personhood and thus overcome their aloneness. It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that marriage is or should be the primary way of gaining companionship.
 - 4.1.2. Many people, regardless of sexual orientation, assume that marriage does, in fact, have this primacy. This is why we expect almost everyone, except a precious few, to marry. Single people, whether celibate or not, are expected to be in a transitional stage that can be overcome by finding ‘the one.’ There is also a strange binary underneath this urgent primacy: single people have none of their companionship needs met, and married partners approaching 100 percent of their needs met! Well, it ain’t necessarily so!
 - 4.1.3. This attitude also creates an idol by assuming that the (nuclear) household is the basis of society; for Christians, the basis of society is our incorporation into God’s Church, our belovedness and friendship with God. Marriage, on this re-orientation, is a specific modulation of friendship, historically recognized by the Church because it includes sexual intercourse.
 - 4.2. bearing and raising children?
 - 4.2.1. Genesis 1 states that humankind bears the image and likeness of God. Part of our dominion over Creation—whether or not dominion in Genesis 1 implies violence is another discussion—is facilitated by the ability to reproduce. Eastern Orthodox thinker

John Zizioulas calls reproduction a “human task,” which is distinct, in his view, from a “Christian” or “new human” task.

4.2.2. I don’t think he would agree, but here’s how I apply his distinction: Bearing children is a “human task” that is no longer the Church’s responsibility. This is not a Marcionite claim, as some scholars would have it; the last time Scripture tracks “family” or genealogy is in the life of Jesus Christ (in Matthew and Luke). Why is this theologically significant? The Messiah has been born, the universe has been saved, and God gains children not by reproduction, but by *adoption*. In order for human beings to be adopted, obviously they need to be born; but Christians gain disciples, according to the New Testament, by “making disciples of all nations...”

4.2.3. If all Christians chose to no longer have children (unlikely as that is!), the human race would not die, and neither would the Church (though certain human institutions called church might implode for lack of numbers!) Why not? Because we would still form disciples of Jesus through the practices and proclamation of the Gospel, by *conversion of life* rather than *biological reproduction*.

4.2.4. If this theological reading has merit, it immediately cancels the argument that same-gender relationships cannot be marriages because they lack capacity for baby-making procreativity. Reproduction is a good, but Christians (particularly in the growing ecological crisis) may wish to prayerfully discern the reasons why they want to have children. Reasons like “to continue the family line or to make a name for ourselves” or even to “extend the economy of salvation across history,” I submit, are less than adequate reasons, theologically, for assuming that most married Christians are called to bear children (as some scholarly voices in the Church catholic claim).

4.3. the relationship between marriage and sexuality?

4.3.1. There is no necessary relationship between marriage and sexuality, although marriage is one of two primary ways (the other being celibate singleness) for expressing holy sexual personhood according to the Tradition of the Church. As conservative a scholar as Oliver O’Donovan is prepared to admit that perhaps the exclusivity of these two modes may come more from the Tradition than from Scripture itself; I agree with him, especially because I take the “community library” view of Scripture and Tradition.

4.3.2. Sexuality is not primarily about genital sexual expression or even about embodying two distinct sexes and genders with specific genitals.² Fundamentally, I believe sexuality is “the drive to overcome aloneness.” Any attempt at connection with another human being—no matter how feeble or broken—becomes an expression of sexuality or sexual personhood. Thus, not all attempts at connection are “having sex,” but rather “an expression of sexuality.” This view would help the Church deal better with single adults, and also perhaps give us a way of reframing how children can express their sexual personhood, rather than assuming that they are “asexual”: that sexual behaviour of various sorts only kicks in at puberty (which is demonstrably false anyway). If sexuality encompasses any attempt at connection with human beings, perhaps we can move away from a stereotypical view in much of the Church and society that all sexual behaviour outside of marriage is “bad, mean, nasty” and all sexual behaviour inside

² In saying this, I gesture toward questions we haven’t even asked with any seriousness in the Canadian Anglican context—if God creates *only* “male and female,” for example, where are trans* and intersex individuals in the scheme of things? Are they considered ‘disabled’ or mal-formed somehow, as I am (a man with cerebral palsy)? Does our theological framework respect the testimony of trans* and intersex people about the integrity of their lives? How do they view healing as part of the Gospel, for example?

marriage is “green-lighted.” (I am not claiming that responsible Anglican priests and scholars actually teach this view, but that it nevertheless persists among laypeople and ‘secular’ people as well.)

4.3.3. But let’s talk more narrowly about sexual intercourse for a moment. Is all sexual intercourse outside of marriage a sin? If our answer is yes, is this because of Tradition, of Scripture, or of other considerations?

4.3.3.1. My own question has to do with *porneia*, the Greek word usually translated “fornication” in English Bibles. There seems virtual consensus among conservative Christians that *porneia* means “anything sexual outside of marriage that isn’t adultery.” But my current understanding is more nuanced than this. In the original cultural context, *porneia* seems to have been a term for some kind of transactional sex, probably of pagan origin, and the full semantic range—what was covered by normal usage of the word—is much less certain, historically. When Christianity moved into the Roman Empire, *porneia* was expanded to include anything the Church hierarchs didn’t like that wasn’t adultery. Though marriage and celibate singleness both bear good fruit, overall, in our Tradition, I’m not certain it’s wise to dismiss all sexual activity that occurs outside those contexts as sinful, as *porneia*. Again, the Bible does not have one voice on the subject, and Jesus doesn’t close the issue down completely, either, in my opinion.

4.3.4. Part of the reason why gay and lesbian people and Anglicans have pushed for civil and sacramental marriage, I believe, is the sense of wanting our communities to confirm the fruit of what we sense deep in our bones—we are not living in sin, but rather we are choosing a path of holiness (distinction for God) and righteousness (justice that brings *shalom*). (Even unchurched people know that marriage tends to confer wholesomeness in the view of our society.) If the Church’s conclusion is that sexual expression outside of marriage is a sin, well then, give us marriage so that we don’t live in sin!

4.3.5. I invite you into a playful theological and pastoral thought experiment. What if the Church were to (at least provisionally, for, say, the next twenty years) granted that it was possible *some* people engaged in *some* kinds of sex outside of marriage were not sinning? (Perhaps this question assumes too much—do the pastors and scholars of our Church believe, in fact, that all sex outside of marriage is sinful?) Perhaps opening this question would allow for non-anxious discussion of what marriage is and what holy sexual expression is beyond the current polarizations? Perhaps marriage and celibate singleness are holy vocations *alongside others* that the Church has not had the tools nor the inclination to explore candidly until this point in the Church’s history, when queer people have emerged as a tribe, or even a coalition of tribes? So many premises and conclusions have been left ‘packed in the basement,’ so to speak, that need to be re-aired. Have we been asking good questions about sex, sexuality, gendersex? The authors of the 1995 *St. Andrew’s Day Statement*, for example, believe that the Church does not have authority to confer blessing upon relationships which not marriage, but I don’t know why this is the case, because they do not defend their contention.

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

5.1. The blessing of a marriage, in my opinion, is a specific kind of blessing: there is an *epiclesis* in our liturgy that enables the couple to conform to the image of Christ within that specific vocation. But I wonder if the difference between blessing a marriage and a relationship has to do with God’s approval/the Church’s expectation of God’s approval of 1) the gender mix, and 2) the expectation of sexual behaviour.

- 5.2. A marital blessing expresses the Church's certainty (by means of the *epiclesis*) that God blesses the entirety of the relationship in principle, but placing same-gender unions under a more generic blessing expresses the Church's ongoing questions about how this particular form of relationship shows forth the Gospel. For some people, I suspect, the 'blessing of a relationship' would allow them to affirm same-gendersex friendship, but also to condemn sexual behaviour in that friendship as inappropriate, whether because it is willfully sinful or out-of-alignment with God's 'original design in Creation.'
- 5.3. For most gay and lesbian Anglicans, in my experience, there is a strong sense of second-class citizenship precisely because a "blessing" does not honour *our* confidence as Christians that our relationships are "marital." For those of us who seek marriage or who consider our relationships marriages, our stories reflect our conviction that, with our other-gendersex married friends and neighbours, our sexually active, shared lives reflect one fleshedness and our sense of God's delight.
 - 5.3.1. (An important aside, so as to put sexual behaviour in perspective: regardless of gendersex mix, according to sexologists, most relationships struggle with sexlessness, that is, with sex occurring 10 or fewer times a year. Perhaps this is in alignment with scholars who read Paul as encouraging marriage in 1 Corinthians 7: eventually, the passion of sex will burn out completely! All kidding aside, Christians don't do sex well, in general, especially when it comes to the art *and* the science of sexuality.)
- 5.4. Granted that I would like the Church to extend the definition of marriage, I also think there is room, in principle, for the blessing of other kinds of relationship as part of longer term theological and pastoral exploration and playfulness.
 - 5.4.1. I realise that, for some Anglicans, this sense of exploration might have the feeling of opening Pandora's Box. The reality is that while we are struggling to expand the definition of marriage in our Church, cultural conversation is already twenty years ahead. More about this under the next heading.
6. How do you understand the sacramentality of marriage?
 - 6.1. As a protestant Anglican, I understand marriage to be a "sacrament, so-called," rather than a dominical Sacrament. I affirm that the testimonies of Anglican gay and lesbian Christians confirm that it is appropriate to extend the definition of marriage in the Canons, because the same graces that heterosexual people experience are reported by gays and lesbians. But as a divorced man and scholar immersed in Queer Theory and other conversations about sexualities, I must admit I have many questions that I believe need additional theological work. The most pressing, in my contexts, are questions related to plural marriage, monogamy, and polyamory. The Canadian State, too, has been recognizing that plural marriage and polyamory might be the next legal questions surrounding the institution of civil marriage.
 - 6.1.1. The marital vows stipulate that spouses must forsake all others (sexually, I assume). Is monogamy *intrinsic* to the sacramentality of marriage, and if so, how? Are Anglican immigrants to Canada with multiple spouses in their nations of origin in Christian marriages? Are faithfulness and monogamy the same realities, and how should they overlap?
 - 6.1.2. I offer a story from my family history, as it was told to me. My former step-father's mother had MS for most of his childhood, until her death. She would parent from a supine position in the bedroom: four children! The family was Italian Catholic. At some point, my Grandmother had a discussion with my Grandfather: "I cannot give you the intimacy you require; you have my permission to find a lover." My step-father

was able to relay this story because he was contacted by one of his half-siblings, with whom, it turns out, he would play as a child without knowing they were related!

6.1.2.1. Was my Grandmother wrong to offer what she did? Was my Grandfather wrong to accept? Does adultery happen even when consent is given to a spouse to engage romantically and sexually with another, or simply without it? Some people might argue that this is a case of ‘moral theology’ and pastoral care covering the gap between God’s standard and a broken creation; does that mean that an able-bodied couple of whatever orientation is no longer in a Christian marriage if they fall in love with a third person? If this three person relationship is not a marriage, what kind of theological and pastoral works needs to be done about, for, and with people in these kinds of situations? What if one or both spouses experience a shift in erotic orientation, but take Jesus’ strictures against divorce literally? I get asked these kinds of questions all the time as a Queer scholar, and I would like the Church’s support in exploring genuinely helpful and biblically nuanced answers to questions and lives like these.

In sum, I hope that the Anglican Church of Canada will expand the definition of Canonical marriage. I also hope, with a sense of playful seriousness rather than fear, that Anglican Christians in Canada will engage creatively with emerging trends around sexuality and relationships in culturally intelligible and Christ-centred ways. In my view, the kinds of questions that may emerge in further reflection about sexual relationships and marriage should *not* prevent us from bringing shalom to those people who seek the God’s blessing in marriage within the Church’s affirmation of monogamous faithfulness. I invite further dialogue and questions, and appreciate so much the invitation to make this submission to the Commission.

In Christ’s joy,
Rob Walker
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