

## COMMISSION on the MARRIAGE CANON

### ANGLICAN CHURCH of CANADA

Canon Robert Falby and Commissioners:

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on General Synod's resolution to consider changing Canon XXI on marriage. The following are my thoughts on the questions provided.

The Bible, which covers an extensive period of time, contains numerous references to marriage between males and females without exception. Jesus was present and performed his first miracle at the marriage in Cana. In Matthew 19:4&5, He says "at the beginning the Creator made them male and female...For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

In Genesis, God created the first couple, Adam and Eve, male and female. Later He instructed Noah to build an ark in which his wife, his 3 sons and their wives would preserve humanity from the coming flood. In Genesis 9:1 God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."

God's intention for marriage is the propagation of our species. Having children and grand-children within an extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings and grand-parents has been the foundation of society throughout the world, up to and including the present age.

Civil marriages are performed by state agents such as marriage commissioners, while Christian marriages are performed by licensed clergy in the church. The distinction between them is that the congregation act as witnesses in a Christian marriage and undertake to provide prayerful support to the couple and education in the faith to their children.

The purposes of marriage are firstly to honour God. As King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 4:12 "a cord of three strands is not easily broken." God is the invisible 3<sup>rd</sup> strand that binds the couple together. Secondly, marriage provides companionship whose consummation or highest expression is sexual intercourse. Thirdly, marriage provides a supportive environment for the husband and wife to model the differences and similarities of gender roles to their children.

The blessing of a relationship apart from Christian marriage does not exist in the Anglican Church of Canada. Article XX-Of the Authority of the Church(BCP) states "it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word" and "ought not to decree anything against the same".

The same principles apply to General Councils(Synods) under Article XXI which states “things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward act of grace. Anglicans consider baptism and Holy Communion to be sacraments because the elements of water, bread and wine are transformed into agents of God’s grace.

In the Solemnization of Matrimony(BCP), marriage is described as “an honourable estate, instituted by God...signifying to us the mystical union between Christ and his Church. The elements in a wedding ceremony, the vows and rings which are taken and exchanged, represent human love and fidelity and with God’s blessing symbolize Christ’s love for the Church(his Bride).

A further comment on the conscience clause attached to the motion you are drafting is necessary. It is my understanding that previous reports on this issue have concluded that a change to Canon XXI constitutes a change in church doctrine. Doctrines are statements of belief about God and the practice of our Christian faith derived from the Scriptures and Church tradition. They’re not optional, you either agree with them or not. Therefore a conscience clause cannot be applied in this case.

Some laws in Canada which are contrary to the Church’s teaching would be the removal of Bible reading and recitation of the Lord’s Prayer in our public school system and the allowance of merchants to operate on Sunday.

The basis of change to the Marriage Act was a challenge by same-sex couples who wanted to claim dependant spouse status on their Income Tax forms. The purpose of claiming a dependant spouse is to provide tax relief to offset the cost of raising children with one spouse staying home or working part-time. The Church’s response to this piece of flawed legislation (the probability of reproduction being zero and greed being one of the seven deadly sins) should be NO!

When asked about paying taxes, Jesus replied “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s”. In three of the four gospels: Matt.19:14,Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16, Jesus said, ”Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”.

Respectfully submitted,  
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