

**Council of General Synod
Marriage Canon: Report Back**

From: "The Ven. Terry Leer" <amdath@telus.net>
Date: Monday, March 13, 2017 at 2:33 PM
To: Michael Thompson <mthompson@national.anglican.ca>
Cc: "Lawton, Fraser" <bpath@telusplanet.net>
Subject: C003 advance information

Dear Michael,

Please find attached

- an outline for the diocesan conversations we conducted prior to General Synod 2016,
- the thematic Bible Study created by the then Very Rev. Dr. Iain Luke to support parish reflections on marriage, and
- that same Bible Study with the passages printed in the text so as to streamline the process and enable individuals to more easily reflect on the study.

We have as well notes and some transcripts from the regional gatherings based on the first item above, but I don't think that will be of much value in your context.

I am sending this out in Fraser's absence. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish further input or information.

Terry

**The Venerable Canon Terry Leer,
Archdeacon for Mission Development
The Anglican Diocese of Athabasca
*Go, get out, get going therefore and make
disciples of all nations...***

Outline: **The Diocese of Athabasca Prepares for General Synod 2016**

To: Fraser Lawton, Iain Luke, Danielle McKenzie

From: Terry Leer

Date: November 5, 2015

Latest revision: November 6, 2015

1. The diocesan staff agreed that there should be a series of guided conversations in preparation for General Synod 2016. The process will focus on the following.
 - 1.1. Stage one: theological reflection on the nature of the Church, on our theology of marriage, and on the role of scripture, tradition, reason and inspiration in our theological reflection.
 - 1.2. Stage two: the history of the same gender issue in the Anglican Church of Canada, examining the core issues within the discussion, exploring the relationship between Church and society, outlining the possible repercussions of any legislative action by the Church.
 - 1.3. Stage three: parish-based discussions and conversations using resources supplied by the diocese.
 - 1.4. Stage four: intentional and explicit training for the General Synod delegates.
 - 1.5. Stage five: follow-up conversations after General Synod 2016.

2. Stage one: the Church.

Central to this conversation will be the following questions.

- 2.1. What is the Church? How does Scripture define the Church?
- 2.2. How does the Church reflect on its own nature, ministry and relationship with society?
- 2.3. How does the Church relate to society? What is justice? What is relevance? Does relevance matter? Does society provide leadership to the Church or does the Church provide leadership to society?
- 2.4. What does it mean to be welcoming with respect to our choices? What is the difference between “welcome” and “approval”, between “integrity” and “tolerance”?
- 2.5. What authority do we give to Scripture and the Church and how is that authority perceived by society?
- 2.6. What do we actually believe with respect to the tradition (intellectual, theological, spiritual) of the Church?
- 2.7. How do we assess our own abilities to make judgements and to use reason to chart our future?
- 2.8. Can divine inspiration be objectively assessed? How is inspiration to be evaluated or discerned?
- 2.9. All of the above are intimately linked to discipleship formation and mission development.

-Preparation for General Synod 2016-

3. Stage two: the issues created by GS 2013 Resolution C003.

Central to this conversation will be the following questions.

- 3.1. What is marriage as viewed by Canadian society? What is marriage as historically understood within the Anglican Church?
- 3.2. What is the history of the discussion within the Anglican Church of Canada? What are the current positions and statements of the diocese?
- 3.3. How is unity within the Body of Christ to be understood and expressed? What does unity say about our ecclesiology?
- 3.4. Since relationships are fundamental to our proclamation and experience of the gospel, how are we to maintain and strengthen relationships throughout this process?
- 3.5. What does the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon actually say and what does it mean?

4. Stage three: parish-based discussions and conversations using resources supplied by the diocese.

Central to this conversation will be the following questions.

- 4.1. How are we as parishes to encourage the free exchange of opinions and theologies without judgment and censure?
- 4.2. How are we to use these situations to strengthen both our fellowship in Christ and our proclamation of the gospel?
- 4.3. How can we best study and interpret the Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon?

5. Stage four: intentional and explicit training for the General Synod delegates.

Central to this conversation will be the following questions.

- 5.1. What are the best ways of using the Rules of Order and the legislative practices of the General Synod? How are we to have the greatest and most effective impact on the debate?
- 5.2. How are we to cope with and reflect upon the passions of those with whom we disagree?

6. Stage five: follow-up conversations after General Synod 2016.

Central to this conversation will be the following questions.

- 6.1. How do we now understand the Church as a community of faith and the tool of God in the world?
- 6.2. How does the decision of the General Synod affect our ability to proclaim the gospel in word and deed?
- 6.3. What are our next steps in continuing the conversation?

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Readings: **A Thematic Bible Study on Marriage**

I. Creation, gender and marriage

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

Genesis 2:18-25

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.' So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

'This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.'

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Mark 10:6-9

But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Discuss:

1. What does the creation of "male and female" say about human nature?
2. What role does marriage have in expressing this feature of human nature?

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

3. What does it mean that human beings are created male and female “in the image of God”?

II. Symbol and sacrament of relationship with God

Ephesians 5:25-33

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Revelation 19:6-9

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out,
‘Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;
to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure’ —

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’

Exodus 34:12-16

Take care not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you are going, or it will become a snare among you. You shall tear down their altars, break their pillars, and cut down their sacred poles (for you shall worship no other god, because the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God). You shall not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to their gods, someone among them will invite you, and you will eat of the sacrifice. And you will take wives from among their daughters for your sons, and their daughters who prostitute themselves to their gods will make your sons also prostitute themselves to their gods.

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

Hosea 2:16-20

On that day, says the Lord, you will call me, 'My husband', and no longer will you call me, 'My Baal'. For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more. I will make for you a covenant on that day with the wild animals, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will take you for my wife for ever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord.

Discuss:

1. What does marriage illustrate about the relationship of God with God's people?
2. How does our contemporary view of the relationship between the sexes (men and women) affect the way we read these passages?
3. If marriage reflects something of the relationship between God and God's people, what does that change in our understanding of what marriage is, and how it works?

III. Bringing children into the world

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

Genesis 28:1-4

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, 'You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. Go at once to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham.'

Deuteronomy 25:5-10

When brothers reside together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her, taking her in marriage, and performing the duty of a husband's brother to her, and the firstborn whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the deceased brother, so that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. But if the man has no desire to marry his brother's widow, then his brother's widow shall go up to the elders at the gate and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' Then the elders of his town shall summon him and speak to him. If he persists, saying, 'I have no desire to marry her', then his brother's wife shall go up to him in

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

the presence of the elders, pull his sandal off his foot, spit in his face, and declare, 'This is what is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' Throughout Israel his family shall be known as 'the house of him whose sandal was pulled off.'

1 Samuel 1:3-11

Now this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year after year; as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah said to her, 'Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?'

After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly. She made this vow: 'O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.'

Psalms 127:3-5

Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons of one's youth.
Happy is the man who has
his quiver full of them.
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Isaiah 56:3-5

Do not let the foreigner joined to the Lord say,
'The Lord will surely separate me from his people';
and do not let the eunuch say,
'I am just a dry tree.'
For thus says the Lord:
To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,
who choose the things that please me
and hold fast my covenant,
I will give, in my house and within my walls,

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

a monument and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that shall not be cut off.

Discuss:

1. According to these passages, why is it so important to have children?
2. What does the capacity to bear new life say about human nature as created by God?
3. How do we see this differently in a world which has already been “filled and subdued”?

IV. Celebrating human love

Psalm 45

My heart overflows with a goodly theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

You are the most handsome of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you for ever.

Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your glory and majesty.

In your majesty ride on victoriously
for the cause of truth and to defend the right;
let your right hand teach you dread deeds.

Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.

Your throne, O God, endures for ever and ever.

Your royal sceptre is a sceptre of equity;
you love righteousness and hate wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;
daughters of kings are among your ladies of honour;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear;
forget your people and your father's house,

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

and the king will desire your beauty.
Since he is your lord, bow to him;
the people of Tyre will seek your favour with gifts,
the richest of the people with all kinds of wealth.

The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes;
in many-coloured robes she is led to the king;
behind her the virgins, her companions, follow.
With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.

In the place of ancestors you, O king, shall have sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.
I will cause your name to be celebrated in all generations;
therefore the peoples will praise you for ever and ever.

Song of Solomon 2:3-13 and 8:6-7

As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among young men.

With great delight I sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his intention towards me was love.

Sustain me with raisins,
refresh me with apples;
for I am faint with love.

O that his left hand were under my head,
and that his right hand embraced me!

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or the wild does:

do not stir up or awaken love
until it is ready!

The voice of my beloved!

Look, he comes,
leaping upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle
or a young stag.

Look, there he stands
behind our wall,
gazing in at the windows,

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

looking through the lattice.
My beloved speaks and says to me:
'Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;
for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

...

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

John 2:1-12

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the

good wine until now.’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there for a few days.

Discuss:

1. What (if anything) do these depictions of human marriage and intimacy say about God?
2. These passages show human love, grounded in physical intimacy, in a positive light. Can you think of Biblical passages or stories which show it more negatively?
3. Should a faith community celebrate loving relationships, and if so, how and why?

V. Getting it wrong

Genesis 3:16-19

To the woman he said,

‘I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.’

And to the man he said,

‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
“You shall not eat of it”,
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face

you shall eat bread

until you return to the ground,

for out of it you were taken;

you are dust,

and to dust you shall return.’

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house and goes off to become another man’s wife. Then suppose the second man dislikes her, writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (or the second man who married her

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

dies); her first husband, who sent her away, is not permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the Lord, and you shall not bring guilt on the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession.

1 Kings 11:1-4

King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the Israelites, 'You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you; for they will surely incline your heart to follow their gods;' Solomon clung to these in love. Among his wives were seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

Matthew 5:27-32 and 19:7-9

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

...

They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but at the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.'

Discuss:

1. What do these passages show about the human capacity to go wrong regarding marriage?
2. What does faith have to offer in the face of marriage breakdown and failures?
3. How do we think differently about these issues in an era of gender equality?

VI. Same-sex prohibitions

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

...

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.

Romans 1:24-27

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Jude 5-7

Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgement of the great day. Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Discuss:

1. In these passages, what are the rationales for repudiating same-sex activity?
2. Can you think of Biblical passages or stories which depict same-sex relationships more positively?
3. What (if anything) has changed in our world view, that leads us to view these passages differently?

VII. Alternatives and counter-themes

Ruth 1:11-17

But Naomi said, 'Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.’ Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

So she said, ‘See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.’ But Ruth said,

‘Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you!
Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge;
your people shall be my people, and your God my God.
Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried.
May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well,
if even death parts me from you!’

1 Samuel 18:1-4 and 2 Samuel 1:26

When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armour, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

...

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

Matthew 19:10-12

His disciples said to him, ‘If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.’ But he said to them, ‘Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.’

Luke 20:34-36

Jesus said to them, ‘Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 7:32-38

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world,

-Scripture passages: Bible Study on Marriage-

how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly towards his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control, and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. So then, he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

Discuss:

1. What is the case to be made for celibacy as opposed to marriage?
2. What do the stories of Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David, say about the possibilities for human fulfilment in deep friendships?
3. What does the example and teaching of Jesus say about the centrality, or necessity, of erotic relationships for human flourishing?

Concluding questions and feedback

1. What surprises have you encountered in the biblical material on marriage?
2. What themes or passages have we missed?
3. How does this study affect the way you want to offer teaching and support to people in your parish – married, single, or in non-marital partnerships?
4. What are the highlights of this study for you, and what messages do you want to share?

Diocese of Athabasca – Consideration of the Proposed change to Canon XXI

Though the proposed change to Canon XXI only came to the floor of General Synod in 2016, there have been a number of other resolutions, studies and proposals considered by General Synod over many years. At each stage, the meetings of the Synod of Athabasca, and at other diocesan conversations, has given these attention and consideration:

- 1994 synod – request for clarification on policy re ordination – bishop’s comments included note about expectations around sexuality in general, and not just same-sex
- 1997 synod – request to GS delegates to take stand against several “divisive” issues facing the church, including the promotion of same-sex relationships
- 2003 synod – affirmation of the way Archbishop Clarke had been handling the issues presenting re same-sex relationships, ordination, etc. Again, the attention was also turned to sexual relationships in general and the expectations of Christian living. There was a strong sense of the issue (i.e. same-sex blessings) being “pushed” on us and that there was a definite bias and agenda in the handling of the situations. The bishop’s charge noted the hurt caused by the unilateral actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and the subsequent injury to the family. At that time the issue was raised of parting ways with the government with regard to being marriage agents. He also noted that continuing stand of the vast majority of Anglicans in the world (Lambeth 1998) on traditional view of marriage. The Diocese of Athabasca expressed support for those who felt they had to withdraw from New Westminster as a result of the actions of its bishop.
- several resolutions were prepared for the 2003 and 2006 synods clearly endorsing the traditional stand with regard to marriage and sexuality and of commitment to the Communion
- Synod 2008 resolution:
 - The current doctrines of the Anglican Church regarding the blessing of same-sex unions as represented in the St. Michael’s Report and as contained in the Canon on Marriage of the Anglican Church of Canada (Canon XXI) be maintained and held in the Diocese of Athabasca until and unless at some time they are adjusted by the full and proper process as outlined in the Canons and the Declaration of Principles of the Anglican Church of Canada;
 - Full discussion of our hermeneutics be entered into, whereby we search for deeper understanding of our gospel call through scripture, reason and tradition;
 - We recognize all our members as full, inclusive, and complete members, subject in love to our doctrines and canons;
 - We call upon the entire Anglican Church of Canada to undertake a similar process in love.
- The 2008 synod had a fulsome report back from the 2007 General Synod and its grappling with same-sex blessings (including the difficult “flavour” of these and sometimes derogatory dismissal of those opposed)
- At a meeting of the Diocesan Synod in 2010, the following resolution was passed:
 - Be it resolved that:
 1. This synod endorse and accept the proposed Covenant for the Anglican Communion, in the form forwarded to the provinces for their consideration.
 2. We commit ourselves to the process of consultation and study proposed by General Synod, in order to understand more fully the implications of the Covenant for our shared life and mission.

- 3. A copy of this resolution be forwarded to the General Secretary of the General Synod.
- 4. Clause 1 of this motion be forwarded as a memorial to the Synod of the Province of Rupert's Land."

Diocesan Engagement process post-General Synod 2013:

- Each round of proposal to General Synod (recognition of relationships, SSB, Canon XXI change, etc.) have been brought before the people of the diocese
- In advance of 2016 General Synod, we decided to be very purposeful in our consultation/conversation, using a multi-step process:
 - To engage with people across the diocese to consider the question at hand in terms of theological thinking. To help, we presented information and held conversation around the topics of the use and authority of scripture, the place of "Tradition", the role of catholicity.
 - Parishes were asked to carry on conversations in light of these realities at the local level
 - Parishes were asked what resources were needed
 - A bible study was formatted and made available
 - A list of resources was distributed (including "This Holy Estate")
 - Parishes were asked to feed back the results of the discussions
- After GS2016, the executive council was asked what was needed to continue the conversation
 - A guest came to speak across the diocese concerning her experience as a same-sex attracted person and how the church may best minister
 - We held an "open mic" session at synod where people were given time to share their thoughts, feelings, etc.

The Diocese of Athabasca has intentionally engaged with the reports, arguments and issues through the last couple of decades with regard to the desire of some for same-sex blessings/marriage in the Anglican Church of Canada. We have consulted with one another, prayed and studied together while being mindful of the various positions and actions within Canada and the wider Communion. We feel as though we have no choice but to defend the position that reflects the traditional, scriptural, and majority position (in the Anglican Communion, catholic churches, other denominations) on human sexuality and marriage relationships. Though as Diocesan leadership we have taken this position, we are very much aware that many in our Diocese will not agree with the statements that follow. In this time of confusion, we remain committed to walking together as Christian people and we very much value the gifts and contributions of all who call our Diocese home.

The process that has brought the ACoC to this place, we feel, has often lacked the necessary signs and fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23). Many of our people who have participated in General Synods dealing with the discussions have felt the process to be biased, and even manipulative, aimed at achieving a predetermined outcome. The arguments in favour of same sex marriage have many sources, but thus far, they have failed to convince the broader Church that a large scale revision of the Scriptural understanding of Marriage is what the Spirit is asking of the Church. *This Holy Estate* provided a partial and truncated rationale for changing the canon, and in the process, it raised some dangerous questions about the unity of the Scriptural canon. Instead of seeking unity in the patient, prayerful and common reading of Scripture, we find ourselves hurtling toward a vote that could prematurely divide and wound our Church. We are grateful that some people have begun to express concern about the ramifications of the proposed changed to Canon XXI, but we can only hope and pray that this sense of caution will be sufficient to mend our brokenness.

While the discussion around same sex marriage has challenged us to think more deeply about the nature of marriage, relationships and the character of the Church, it has also produced discord and division. As a national Church, we have provoked ruptures and division within the Communion, and harmed our place within it. We have caused division and separation within Canada and we continue to interact with one another with an attitude of mutual suspicion. We have lost parishioners, parishes, clergy, and seen the emergence of variant Anglican denominations in North America. Despite the calls for inclusion and communion, it now seems that what was once the clear stand of the church on marriage and sexuality is now a barely tolerable artefact within the church.

Our Diocese has been blessed with clergy and parishioners from around the world who both enrich our common life and remind us that the western cultural mindset on human sexuality is a local phenomenon that is not accepted or affirmed globally within the communion. We are deeply concerned that the ACoC has not accepted the wider counsel of the communion, and the very specific requests from representative bodies to not move forward with this canonical change. If we have any hope of being catholic in the expression of our Christian faith, we believe it would be a mistake to dismiss and ignore the calls for restraint issued from the wider Church. While there are many contextual and local aspects to any Christian ministry that we might acknowledge, the communion has clearly told us that changing the traditional teaching on marriage is not a 'contextual' reality but one that belongs to the whole Church. Ignoring this counsel will do little to inspire holiness and sanctity in our Church.

The counsel of the communion is not merely a matter of its own opinion, but rests on the established doctrine of the Christian Church. This doctrine is not the "possession" of any particular part of the church. The ACoC cannot change Christian doctrine by virtue of a vote based on its own polity and opinion. However, a change to the Canon on Marriage would indicate an intentional parting of ways from the rest of the Church Catholic, *rejecting* its doctrine.

Marriage, though unquestionably personal, is not merely the action of the couple. It is an expression of the life of the community that spans families and generations of people. The arguments to "change" marriage based on a celebration of personal love lacks the fullness of God's purposes for marriage. Matrimony's celebration of love is in what God has revealed in Himself, and in what He has designed marriage to be. Instead of pursuing what has become an increasingly irrelevant process (given the decisions in several dioceses to proceed with the practice of same-sex marriage before the canon is changed), we would suggest we have a much greater need to focus on receiving and engaging people, whatever their circumstance of life, such that they experience the love of God and know the power of the resurrection. We regret that ways in which this debate has wounded individuals and we are deeply aware of how our position on this matter may hurt and offend many people. In this respect, we can only pray and ask God to make us humble, faithful and gracious witnesses to the Gospel of Christ. While same-sex marriages will not be allowed in this diocese, we ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to be agents of God's grace in our communities and in our world. As a Diocese and as a national and global communion, we pray that the Spirit will lead us into the unity and truth of Christ.

FEEDBACK TO COGS RE. MARRIAGE CANON CHANGE DISCUSSIONS – DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON

Gathering of Diocesan Synod Delegates:

On Saturday, September 16, 2016 a special gathering of diocesan synod delegates occurred to begin to engage in the study of same-sex marriage in preparation for General Synod 2019 as requested by the 2016 Meeting of General Synod.

The day included the Rev. Paul Jennings, a member of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, presenting the “This Holy Estate” document as well as an address by Bishop David Edwards focused on how we can “bear with one another” (Ephesians 4) and how God’s mission may continue to move forward.

Those gathered participated in small group listening circles as people shared their responses to the following questions.

- 1) How in light of the differing opinions on the subject of same-sex marriage and other divisive matters do we work towards Paul’s scriptural injunction (Ephesians 4) to “bear with one another”?
- 2) How, in the light of our diversity, do we ensure that God’s mission of making disciples continues to move forward?

Clergy Day:

A clergy day took place on May 22, 2018 during which a discussion paper (see attached) was presented by Bishop Edwards. A time of discussion and clarification occurred followed by clergy participating in table discussion groups to respond to several questions. The questions, clarifications and recommendations shared during this time were used to plan and prepare for the town hall meetings held in during the fall.

1. What might the Diocese look like if we can walk together recognizing the deeply held conviction on each side of the debate, yet striving to work with each other for the good of all?
2. What are the benefits for New Brunswick of having an Anglican Church firmly imbedded in our communities doing the work of the Gospel?
3. What are the Gospel truths we wish to communicate for the benefit of all? How will internal struggles impact this?
4. What might our Diocese look like if we have to divide on this issue?
5. What should the Bishop do (in the Fall of 2018) with the issue of Same-sex Marriage prior to our upcoming Diocesan Synod?

Town Hall Meetings:

Nine town hall meetings occurred throughout the diocese during September and early October, 2018, ensuring that at least one took place in each of our seven archdeaconries. Diocesan synod delegates and substitutes were especially invited to participate as well as all members of the diocese.

A discussion paper was presented by Bishop Edwards (see attached) followed by a time of questions for clarification and comments. Those gathered worked in table groups to respond to the following questions:

- 1) What are the benefits for our province (of New Brunswick) of having an Anglican Church firmly embedded in our communities doing the work of the Gospel? What are the essential Gospel truths that we see as vital to the lives of people in the Province? What are the things we want to communicate for the benefit of all? How will internal struggles impact this?

- 2) What might the Diocese look like if we have to divide on this issue?
- 3) What might the Diocese look like if we can walk together recognizing the deeply held convictions on each side of the debate yet striving to work with each other for the good of all?
- 4) **What things do you think that the Council of General Synod should take into account when considering this matter?**

The answers shared during the various town hall meetings for question 4 can be summarized as follows:

- a) More time and discussion is needed. A full consideration and discussion about human sexuality is needed. Many have not discussed the topic of human sexuality as a parish let alone that of same-sex marriage. We need to also hear and understand what our Indigenous brothers and sisters are sharing.
- b) A parliamentary procedure is not helpful. The process through which changes to the Marriage Canon are being made needs to be reconsidered. There must be another way to work through this issue. Many do not even understand what goes on at General Synod.
- c) Ramifications need to be fully considered as a decision to change or not to change the marriage canon will cause further division. Also, there is concern as to how this will be implemented if the marriage canon is changed, particularly there is great concern for the ministry of the cleric and the options available to each.
- d) Further clarity regarding scripture is needed.
- e) The Diocese is not monochrome on this issue though the majority would not be in favour of changing Canon 21.

Diocesan Synod Motion:

The following notice of motion was given for the November 3, 2018 Session of Diocesan Synod. (Note: The diocesan synod did not meet on November 3 as the Diocesan Council Executive decided it was inappropriate due to the illness of Janet Edwards, Bishop David's wife)

Motion 2018 – 10 – Unity

Moved that as Jesus prayed for the Church to be one, so the Synod of the Diocese of Fredericton commits itself to walk together, in the bonds of love and affection, recognizing diverse opinions on the matter of marriage of same-gendered couples in the church. We will care for one another and continue to strengthen our commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel and living and loving as Christ.

MARRIAGE CANON CHANGES – DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Introduction

It goes without saying that this subject is very difficult for us to contemplate. There are numerous viewpoints, and emotions can become engaged quite quickly. The first thing to point out is the purpose lying before us is not to make general comment on human sexuality. The General Synod has not been asked to vote about the nature of same sex attraction per se.

Discussions have centred on the blessing and latterly marriage, of adults in committed same sex relationships. Some may see that as splitting hairs, but that is the reality and may be one of the reasons why we have arrived in our present situation. By this I mean that the Anglican Church of Canada has not set this debate against a broader canvass.

It is not a given that the change to the marriage Canon (21) will pass un-amended or at all in the three Houses of General Synod in 2019. Should it do so, as things stand, the national canon will come into force on January 1st, 2020. I imagine that Diocesan Synods will be asked to vote on the change during the Fall of 2019, though that is unclear. The Council of General Synod (COGS) has asked all Diocesan Synods to discuss the issue and provide feedback prior to the end of November 2018. As they have not provided a method to facilitate this, the most likely route to do so at present is via a Memorial, though this may change.

No matter which way the General Synod votes there will be discontent, because people on whichever side of the issue will be distressed if the result is not as they might have hoped. The purpose of this paper is not to rehearse the arguments around the issue of Same Sex Marriage; it is rather to raise the question of how we move forward together, no matter what happens at General Synod 2019.

As your bishop at this point I should make it clear that whatever the result of the 2019 General Synod vote I do not intend to lead this Diocese out of the Anglican Church of Canada. Some people may be surprised by this and others disappointed. It has always been my belief that schism is dangerous. After reflection around the words of Jesus in John 17, the thoughts of Cyprian; and Augustine of Hippo's actions and writings around the Donatist controversy, I have re-affirmed my position.

As many of you will know I have always had two major concerns during the years of this ongoing discussion: the Anglican Church's understanding of itself in regard to scripture, tradition and reason, and our place within the Anglican Communion.

I fully understand that for some the actions of the Anglican Church of Canada on this matter are felt to be schismatic. That being said, the general response of the Anglican Communion towards The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Episcopal Church of Scotland (where same sex marriage in church is allowed), has not been to declare a schism. There have been

sanctions (primarily around participation in the Anglican Consultative Council and in ecumenical discussions), but not exclusion. Therefore, from a Communion viewpoint the two churches remain as full partners with the Archbishop of Canterbury as invitees to the 2020 Lambeth Conference and in the Primates' meetings.

Given this I imagine that if the Anglican Church of Canada revises its Marriage Canon in 2019 similar sanctions will be applied. This will mean that the Anglican Church of Canada is still regarded as the conduit for Canadian Anglicans into life of the Communion. Therefore, it will not be regarded as schismatic. My concern is to remain within the Communion to be supportive of those who need to be encouraged in this difficult period. I suggest that the biblical mandate is to stand with those in distress.

Unintended Consequences

Having taken time to reflect on the passing of the first reading of the revised Canon 21 it occurred to me that there are issues of consequence which have arisen. Given previous decisions of the General Synod; and that the amendment has to pass by a two-thirds majority in each House over two consecutive Synods, a change of doctrine is implied. It is certainly the way in which things have been framed. This has several, what in discussion with the Primate and other bishops, appear to be unintended consequences. Those I have noted are as follows and centre on the oaths required of clergy:

- 1) an ordinand has to swear agreement with the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Canada,
- 2) a cleric changing parishes has to do likewise,
- 3) as does a bishop being consecrated.

In addition, if a person is elected as bishop, the bishops in the Provincial House of Bishops have to concur with the election for it to be confirmed. If the candidate has taught something contrary to the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Canada during the previous 5 years, this is one of the grounds upon which the Provincial House of Bishops may refuse concurrence. It appears that with the Canonical change, if a candidate for Episcopal office has spoken against Same Sex Marriage during the previous 5 years, then his/her election may not be accepted by the Provincial House.

What this does is illustrate the complexity we face in "walking together" beyond the 2019 vote. Having said that, there are significant discussions going on amongst our bishops to try to find ways of attaining the "highest level of communion" possible within the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Diocese of Fredericton

Over the months since the General Synod of 2016 I have been taking the pulse of our Diocese on the issue of Same Sex Marriage in Church. People have asked me where I think we stand on the matter. The following is my opinion, and it is only an opinion. The first is

that there is a difference between clergy and laity. It is my belief that were we to vote in our Synod more than 50% +1 in the House of Laity would vote in favour of the change. I do not think that there would be the required 2/3rds majority in that House.

Amongst the clergy I do not think there is a simple majority for the change, that being said there are a number of clergy who would vote “yes”. I, as bishop, have to recognize that there are some who would vote for change who feel unable or are unwilling to state their position publicly, because of my “no” vote in 2016. I am genuinely sorry that they feel that way.

In thinking about this issue, we have to be mindful of the fact that we are part of a larger Church (the Anglican Church of Canada) and of a Worldwide Communion. Although we have no central magisterium, authority in the Communion is based upon what are known as the Bonds of Affection, namely:

- 1) the Archbishop of Canterbury;
- 2) the Lambeth Conference of Bishops (which last met in 2008 and is next scheduled for 2020);
- 3) the Anglican Consultative Council; and,
- 4) the Primates’ Meeting.

It is the latter which has met most frequently in recent years and the sanctions noted above have been imposed by this body. The ability of the Primates’ Meeting to impose sanctions has been called into question by some, though not resolved.

In addition, the Primates’ Meeting has always called for the Communion to “walk together” despite its differences. This is a continual request which also recognizes how difficult such a task is. In general they have managed to do this, in the sense that they continue to meet.

As I said earlier it seems to me if Canon 21 is passed “as is” on second reading by our 2019 General Synod the Anglican Church of Canada will become subject to the same sanctions as TEC and The Episcopal Church of Scotland (and possibly the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, which recently passed Same sex Blessing legislation). It appears that our Primate, Fred, agrees with this judging from an interview with the Anglican Journal on October 12 2017. The consequence of all this is that if the Marriage Canon is amended by General Synod 2019, the Diocese of Fredericton will at some point in the future (presumably after the next Primates’ Meeting following the vote) become subject to the TEC Episcopal Church of Scotland sanctions.

The Worldwide Church

One aspect of the debate which is easily forgotten is that of ecumenism. The desire for Church unity goes back to Jesus in John 17, but it found resonance at a very early stage with the Church Fathers. St. Cyprian wrote:

“Think not that you are thus maintaining the Gospel of Christ when you separate yourself from the flock of Christ”.

This was a major theme for him.

The two largest denominations in the world are the various branches of Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. The Anglican Communion is in ecumenical dialogue with both, neither has made provision for Same Sex Marriage; and change on our part is likely to be viewed as impairing the conversations. This is presumably the reason why both TEC and the Episcopal Church of Scotland have been excluded from ecumenical bodies as part of the Primates’ Meeting’s response to their decision to allow Same Sex Marriage in church and or clergy to officiate.

In Canada we have been in dialogue and now have a covenant relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), which allows Same Sex Marriage. In addition, General Synod passed a motion in 2016 encouraging further dialogue with the United Church of Canada (UCC), which again allows Same Sex Marriages to be celebrated.

There are other denominations such as the Baptists and Wesleyans who are opposed to Same Sex Marriage, though as I understand it, the issue is being raised in their councils. At the local level the question will be how will other denominations relate to us on the ground should Canon 21 be amended?

The Church in Culture

It is important to note that the Church does not exist in isolation from the culture around it. Throughout the centuries the Church has impacted culture and culture has done the same to the Church. One of the greatest contributions on this subject was made by the American theologian H. Richard Niebuhr in his 1951 book *Christ and Culture*. In recent years writers such as Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon have argued that his model is too centred in Christendom and although I would agree with them, I think it is helpful for us in understanding how we have arrived where we are.

Niebuhr begins by saying that Christ is the one whom Christians accept as their authority.

“Belief in (Christ) and loyalty to his cause involves men in the double movement from world to God and from God to world”.

What Niebuhr is suggesting is that the follower of Jesus is always at an interface between the Church and culture as the Church is made up of people it faces the same issue. In essence the matter is, which has the greater influence over the Church/individual, Christ or culture? Niebuhr suggested that there are three ways to view this, though number three is subdivided into three parts, therefore his thesis is often said to have 5 components.

The first category is *Christ Against Culture*. This is seen for example in monastic terms or in communities like the Amish. The theme is a loyalty to Christ which rejects culture and society.

Secondly, there is the *Christ of Culture*. There is a lack of tension here between the Church and the world, because Christ is seen as the one who fulfils society's hopes and aspirations. Niebuhr cites Peter Abelard and many Protestant liberals in this category.

Thirdly, we have *Christ Above Culture* which Niebuhr sees as the main way in which the Church and culture have worked with each other through history. He argues that there are three aspects to this.

- a) *Synthesis*. Here there is a reliance on Christ and culture. God uses the best elements of culture to give people what they cannot achieve on their own. It links reason and revelation. Advocates cited are: Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Aquinas.
- b) *Christ and Culture in Paradox*. There is a constant conflict between God and humanity which crosses over into Christ and culture. Human depravity corrupts creation and culture, but God's grace and mercy are also present, mediating the effects. Niebuhr suggests the Apostle Paul, Luther and Kirkegaard represent this view.
- c) *Christ as Transformer of Culture*. Culture is under God's judgement and sovereign rule. Therefore, the Christian must work within culture to affirm what is good and seek the transformation of the corrupt. Niebuhr points to the work of Augustine, Calvin and F. D. Maurice in this regard.

It should be noted that Niebuhr does not regard any of these categories as wholly satisfactory, though he views *Christ of Culture* with the greatest scepticism. He says that no one should settle on one category for all time as there is always movement, both in the individual and the Church.

Recent critiques of Niebuhr have centred on the movement in western society from Christendom assumptions. The main aspect of this being the centrality of Christian thought within culture. The basis of the critique is that the decisions of society are more firmly based in secular humanism than derived from Christian ideals.

An example of this is the recent debate around what has traditionally been called euthanasia and is now more commonly known as Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). This argument has been characterized in terms of the individual's right to determine his/her time of death when faced by extreme suffering. The person requesting MAiD is seen in terms of being isolated from the broader concerns of society.

The issue with Niebuhr's categories is that he presumes that the world will have an interest in the voice of Christ and will in some ways give it preferred status, whereas this is no longer the case. It also leads to the question of whether engagement with the surrounding culture is something the Church should be doing. Is the Gospel message a potential "good"

in and for the wider culture or is it more prudent to accept that in the West the Church's day is past?

You may ask what does this have to do with Same Sex Marriage? In truth the shift in culture during the last fifty years has moved society into a place where the question of Same Sex Marriage has been brought onto the stage. It is possible to argue that its roots lie in the Reformation, if not before, where the self and its rights and freedoms began to be emphasized. It is interesting that the Church is now struggling to find its place in a culture it had a role in creating.

Lesslie Newbigin suggests that there is a further weakness with Niebuhr's thesis, its origins lie in the same Christendom assumptions outlined above, but it is quite distinct. Newbigin argues that it is not merely that the Church is uncertain as to its role within the culture, but also that because of being deeply embedded in a pseudo-Christian culture for so many centuries it has no tools to engage in dialogue.

Newbigin worked for many years in the Church of South India, latterly as a bishop, hence he was in a society where Christianity was not privileged. His observation was that in the West dialogue with others assumes there is a need for compromise, i.e., the need to come to a common mind or that one side has to win the argument. He goes on to suggest that this is a fruitless process, because on the one hand neither side is satisfied, or on the other, there is defeat and resentment.

In Newbigin's view dialogue does not begin by privileging either position, rather it is about listening, understanding and learning. The aim is not to change the other person's position, but neither is it to give ground on one's own. In the end there may be a shift in opinion, but that is not the purpose of the conversation.

The suggestion is that the interplay between people and ideas gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work, but the process has to be entered into in good faith. It also relies upon seeing a broader canvass than the issue(s) which may be the most contentious.

A Way Forward?

Newbigin's idea was that this way of dialogue could be useful for the Church when addressing people of other faiths or our current culture. I have found that it is helpful in this regard. I wonder if it might be a helpful method in our discussions today and in the future.

Such a discussion begins with the things which unite us rather than those which divide. Rather than considering the whole of the ACoC or the Anglican Communion we begin with us.

David Fredericton

22 May 2018

On CANON XXI

A paper in preparation for the Diocese of Fredericton Fall 2018 Town Halls

by the Rt. Rev. David Edwards

10 September 2018

The main purpose of the town halls is to help us to shape thoughts ready for the discussions at Diocesan Synod. The Council of General Synod (CoGS) has asked each diocese to make a response about the upcoming vote at General Synod concerning the proposed changes to [Canon XXI](#) (often known as the Marriage Canon).

The text of this Canon can be found on the Anglican Church of Canada website at https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/221_canon_XXI.pdf

The text of the amendment to Canon XXI passed at the 2016 General Synod, is as follows:

General Synod 2016 Resolution - Resolution Number A051-R2 - Subject: Amendment to Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church)

Moved by: The Ven. Harry Huskins Seconded by: Ms. Cynthia Haines-Turner

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. Declare that Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church) applies to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.

2. Make the following consequential amendments to Canon XXI:

(a) in paragraph 2 of the Preface, delete the words “of the union of man and woman in”;

(b) in paragraph 4 of the Preface, substitute the words “the parties to the marriage” for the “husband and wife”;

(c) in section 16 a) of the Regulations, substitute “the parties to the marriage” for “a man and a woman”;

(d) in section 17 b) of the Regulations, substitute “the parties to the marriage” for “husband and wife”.

3. Add the following to section 11 of the Regulations

(e) A minister may only solemnize a marriage between persons of the same sex if authorized by the diocesan bishop.

4. Declare that this resolution shall come into effect on the first day of January after being passed by General Synod at Second Reading.

Source: Submitted By: The Commission on the Marriage Canon

Does this motion contain within it any financial implications? Yes NO

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION (D) In accordance with section 11(c)(i) of the Declaration of Principles, an amendment to a Canon dealing with doctrine, worship or discipline must be approved by a two-thirds majority in each Order voting at two successive sessions of General Synod.

It has been recommended that everyone read the report *This Holy Estate* which was prepared for the 2016 General Synod and is available on the website of the Anglican Church of Canada (https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Marriage_Canon_REPORT_15Sept22.pdf) as well as on our 2018 synod session page. (In asking you to read this, I would note that it is recognized, even by the authors, that the brief for the writing of the document was tightly circumscribed by the 2013 General Synod. Essentially the brief was to make a case for change in Canon XXI, with regard to same sex marriage. There were complicated reasons for this which arose on the floor of the 2013 Synod in Ottawa.)

As you are probably aware an initial vote about this matter was taken at the General Synod of 2016. The first reading was passed by a majority vote in all three Orders (laity, clergy and bishops) by the required two thirds majority in each. The same motion now moves to a second reading; again it needs a two thirds majority in each Order if it is to be enacted. The motion can be amended from the floor of Synod. It is far from clear whether the motion will be presented as is, in an amended form or not at all.

One of the important things to recognize during our discussions is that we are not being asked to discuss issues pertaining to the nature of human sexuality. The matter before the General Synod concerns marriage between those of the same gender.

It is important to remember that no matter which way any possible vote in 2019 goes, those who feel they have “lost” will experience hurt and upset. As with other occasions when this matter has arisen it is likely that people will conclude that they can no longer remain as part of the Anglican Church of Canada. This is extremely regrettable, but likely to be a sad reality.

A great deal of ink has been spilt on this issue and we have been unable to reach any kind of resolution. It is my observation that one of the main reasons for this is that each side in the debate begins in a different place, therefore resolution is difficult to obtain. The following is a generality, but I think is correct in essence. Those who would vote “Yes” for same sex marriage tend to begin from a human rights perspective, whereas the “No” voters begin with scripture and doctrine. People generally sit on a spectrum between these two points.

Neither group can easily see a justification for those in the other group beginning where they do. What it means in practice is that each tends to pass the other in discussion as though on a parallel track.

The difficulty is that no matter which side of the discussion a person is on these issues strike at deeply held beliefs, consequently peoples' emotions are quickly engaged, leading to a lack of understanding. For those who would say "No" to a change in Canon XXI, scripture has often been their guiding principle for decades; to step away from that, for them, is bound up with identity. It reduces the Word of God, calling into question a way of believing which has been definitive for them. On the other hand, those who would say "Yes" also see the issue as having to do with identity. To refuse the sacrament of marriage to someone who is same sex attracted is to deny their identity.

It is difficult for people to understand how an opposite view to theirs (their view being so basic to who they are) can be legitimate. Is it possible to accept a view that we disagree with as valid? In other words, on a matter like this can we say that we do not know enough to be definitive? Is it possible to live together within the tension?

We have managed to do this before and it has become such a commonplace that most of us do not know we are doing it. Back in the days of the Reformation one major factor which prevented the Protestants from coming together was the way in which they viewed what happened at the Eucharist. On one side there were the Calvinists led by Zwingli and later Calvin who believed the Lord's Supper was a memorial of the death of Christ. On the other hand, the Lutherans, led by Luther and later Melancthon and Bucer, eventually concluded that although the substance of the bread and wine does not change (as in transubstantiation, the belief that the bread actually turns into the body of Christ and the wine his blood), the presence of Christ somehow enters the elements and feeds the soul of the recipient.

For several decades during the Protestant Reformation there were attempts to bring both sides together on this matter, with no success. During the early days of the Church of England it was decided that both views were acceptable. The High Church Party essentially believed in "real presence", while the Puritans were memorialists. Although in Canada we tend towards the "high church" view, there are many memorialists among us. On this issue, which was divisive 400 years ago we now live together. Who is right?

This argument was based around scriptural understanding. The questions ranged around what Jesus meant by the words he used at the Last Supper. Was he speaking literally, figuratively or saying something else entirely. There has been no resolution of this discussion. Those who hold opinions on this matter would cling to their position as being correct, but the Anglican Church has not been definitive. Can that be a way forward on the issue of same sex marriage in church?

As you might have gathered from this paper my purpose is to try to chart a way in which we can move forward together, emphasizing the imperatives of the Mission of God which has been given to the Church. I am deeply committed to this as I am to the authority of scripture. There is another element which also comes into play and has its roots in the words of Jesus. In John 17, Jesus prays for his future disciples, the Church down the ages, that we will be one. Additionally, many of the early church fathers, such as Cyprian, were determined to maintain unity.

The Anglican Communion has identified four “bonds of affection” which unite us. They have developed over the centuries as the church has become more diverse and moved away from its reliance on the Church of England. The first “bond” is the Archbishop of Canterbury. Secondly, the Lambeth Conference (a meeting of all the Bishops of the Communion approximately every 10 years). Thirdly, the Anglican Consultative Council (the only “bond” which includes a lay voice). Finally, the Primates’ Meeting (a meeting of the Primates from all the national provinces of the Anglican Communion).

During the current discussions within the Communion several churches have decided to allow same sex marriage in church. These include The Episcopal Church (TEC – USA), the Episcopal Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church of Brazil. At present the former two have had sanctions imposed upon them by the Primates’ Meeting, namely they are no longer full participants in the Anglican Consultative Council and they cannot participate in ecumenical dialogue as representatives of the Communion. There has been no declaration of schism against these Provinces of the Communion by any of the “bonds of affection”. This may suggest that there is no intention of doing so, or it could be it is felt the time is not yet right.

On the other hand, there have been groups who have either left the Communion (they would perhaps argue that the Communion has left them) or set up alternative entities whilst remaining within the fold. An example of the latter would be the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON). Despite many tears in the fabric of the Communion, there are relatively few who have completely severed ties.

I know that some people are concerned about my personal position regarding our Diocese remaining as part of the Anglican Church of Canada. I want to make it absolutely clear that I will not lead the diocese out of the Anglican Church of Canada. There are several reasons for this. The first is my commitment to the Anglican Communion. My observation of the Communion’s reaction, so far, to those Provinces which have already decided to allow same sex marriage in church, is that they have not been excluded. I think there is little stomach across the Communion at present to make people leave. Additionally, those who leave of their own volition are not formally recognized by the Communion.

As I said earlier I think that schism is wrong. Therefore, if the only way to remain in the Communion is to be part of the Anglican Church of Canada, then that has to be the case.

In addition, I believe that the Communion forms a mutually supportive family of believers. For us to leave would mean that we would lose all of the benefits that come to us by being members. There are many Christians throughout the world who are helped by our presence in this body. The obvious example is our partnership with the Diocese of Ho.

I have been asked to comment on what I know of the views of other denominations on this matter. Of course, there are some such as the United Church who have already decided to go down this route. Others, notably the Roman Catholics, who show no real sign of movement. My discussions with leaders in the Protestant denominations suggest the issue is on most peoples’

radar in some way. Having walked the path within our Church, what I would say is that many denominations have moved on issues of human sexuality. By this I mean there has been some accommodation to those who are LGBTQI. Whether they will continue to walk this way I cannot tell; what I can say is that they have passed some of the milestones that the Anglican Church of Canada has in the past.

As a result of this we are faced with a basic question: Can we move forward together? As I said earlier, there will be some who are unable to stay and who they are is likely to depend upon how the possible vote in General Synod is resolved. It is a burden to me that no matter what the decision people will face hurt. Such a thing is antithetical to the role of the Church, which is to be a place of healing.

With all of this in mind I am hoping that we can look at a series of questions together at our Town Hall meetings during the early Fall.

What are the benefits for our Province (of New Brunswick) of having an Anglican Church firmly embedded in our communities doing the work of the Gospel? What are the essential Gospel truths that we see as vital to the lives of people in the Province? What are the things we want to communicate for the benefit of all? How will internal struggles impact this?

What might the Diocese look like if we have to divide on this issue?

What might the Diocese look like if we can walk together recognizing the deeply held convictions on each side of the debate yet striving to work with each other for the good of all?

What things do you think that the Council of General Synod should take into account when considering this matter?



The Diocese of Huron

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MARRIAGE CANON

Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force

Submitted by

The Rt. Revd. Linda Nicholls, Bishop of Huron

&

The Marriage Canon Task Force

The Ven. Greg Jenkins

Canon Marilyn Malton

The Revd. Dr. Stephen McClatchie

October 2018

Diocese of Huron Synod 2018

Report of The Marriage Canon Task Force

Summary

1. The Diocese of Huron and the Marriage Canon
2. The Deanery Conversations (Process and Summary)
3. What We Heard in the Deanery Conversations
4. What Will Happen at Huron Synod 2018

Appendix A:

Details of What We Heard in the Deanery Conversations

Appendix B:

Motion Passed by General Synod 2016

Web site:

<http://diohuron.org/resources/>

[click on “Diocesan” and then on “Marriage Canon Task Force”]

Quotes from Deanery Participants:

We need to understand that we can walk together even if we don't agree.

1. The Diocese of Huron and the Marriage Canon

In 2016, General Synod passed a resolution to change the Marriage Canon (Canon XXI, On Marriage in the Church) so it will apply to “all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.” This resolution will only come into effect if passed by General Synod at a second reading (in 2019). Between the first (2016) and second (2019) reading, the resolution is to “be referred for consideration to diocesan and provincial synods.”

In response to the resolution of General Synod, the Bishop of Huron established a Marriage Canon Task Force (“MCTF”). The purpose of the MCTF is to develop and oversee a process for the Diocese of Huron to consider the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon, but not to vote on this matter. This process will allow the Diocese to send our considered opinions and concerns to General Synod. To this end, in consultation with our Bishop, the MCTF developed and distributed resources, facilitated

If same sex marriage will be approved most probably I will stop any relationship with the Anglican Church.

If it doesn't pass, my pastoral work with all youth groups, and especially with LGBT youth in foster care, will become very difficult. It will be seen as the Church failing to honour their lives.

The Diocese of Huron has done 'due diligence'; voices have been heard. “Be Not Afraid”

Regardless of the outcome there is a need for ways to assist in reconciliation.

the consideration process, and collected, collated, and reported comments, questions, and concerns to the Bishop.

***Quotes from Deanery
Participants:***

The members of the MCTF are:

- The Ven. Greg Jenkins
- Canon Marilyn Malton
- The Revd. Dr. Stephen McClatchie

For the Diocese of Huron, the consideration process began at Synod 2017 when members participated in break-out groups to discuss the following questions:

1. How does the motion to change the Marriage Canon challenge you or encourage you?
2. What do you need clarified to help you prepare your synod report to the parish (regarding the Diocesan process to consider the motion to change the Marriage Canon)?
3. Given that we have been asked to have this conversation, what would be helpful at the Deanery level?

Written responses from individual members of Synod were also sought and encouraged.

Bishop Linda gave a presentation on the Marriage Canon and, following a summary of feedback from the break-out groups, responded to questions that were raised. Her presentation and a summary of Synod participants' feedback is available on the Diocesan web site (see page 1).

In addition, the MCTF prepared and circulated a background paper before Synod that provided an introduction to the task; traced the history of the question of same-sex blessings and marriages in Canada, in the Anglican Church of Canada, and in the Diocese of Huron; and briefly summarised the situation in selected other provinces of the Anglican Communion.

This is also available on the web site. Following Synod 2017, a summary

I want General Synod to hear that every church, every person, would be praying earnestly about this and that every voice would be heard and respected. And that Truth would prevail.

Continue to get together to share and to listen as colleagues, as Parishes from both sides. Provide opportunities for this ministry.

I will need a deepening of faith in order to be pastoral to my colleagues or parishioners who are 'opposed' to sacramental inclusion. I hope there will be a 'support' group for me if the vote is 'no'.

The roller-coaster experience of the last General Synod vote has taught us how difficult dealing with the outcome will be, whatever it is. I believe this process is 'Spirit-Led, and I very much want a vote 'in favour'. I also know that there will be strong emotions at the parish level, so the need for pastoral resources to deal with 'emotion' is clear. We must find ways to stay together regardless of the outcome.

We don't restrict gay members of the Church from any other 'sacramental' opportunities, so why 'this' one?

of the theological and scriptural issues around the proposed changes was prepared and posted on the Diocesan website.

2. The Deanery Conversations

Responding to what we heard at Synod 2017, the MCTF designed a series of Deanery Conversations that took place in Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 in order to take the pulse of the Diocese on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon, provide opportunities for conversation, and receive comments and questions. Each Deanery, via the Regional Deans, was provided with resources and asked to organize two opportunities for a facilitated discussion of the following questions to occur: The Lenni Lenape Algonkian Iroquoian Council (LAIC) and Youth Synod were also invited to host gatherings and provide written submissions.

1. What questions do you have about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?
2. (a) How will the outcome of the vote at General Synod 2019 affect you?; and (b) What resources will you need from the Diocese if the motion passes or if it does not pass?
3. Based on what you have heard from each other, what do you most want General Synod to hear from the Diocese of Huron about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?

The MCTF provided a video to be shown at each gathering in order to introduce the process and summarize some of the principal issues about the proposed changes. The video was also posted on the Diocesan website.

This report provides a distillation and summary of the comments received from each gathering and individual written submissions. Every response, question, and suggestion, arranged by the themes used below in

Quotes from Deanery Participants:

Everyone wants Christ's love to be reflected in our Church. I don't like seeing people hurt –right or wrong. Afraid it will not be the last vote.

I am gay and belong to a GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) at my high school. Many of its members have experienced insults and discrimination by 'Christians' and have come to expect disappointment from 'any' church. It will be extremely difficult to support my friends if it doesn't pass.

If it passes I will be joyful for friends who have felt alienated from their church because of children or grandchildren, or sisters or brothers who have been excluded from the marriage sacrament.

I don't think I could stay in a Church that would sanction same sex marriage.

How do we live together with such deep differences?

It may have an effect on a rural community more than an urban one. It may put the church under attack more. A small number of dissenters for either decision can have a big impact on a small congregation.

Appendix A, has been provided to the Bishop's Office. This information will form the basis of a presentation by the MCTF at Huron Synod 2018.

Quotes from Deanery Participants:

Participation at Deanery Conversations

Deanery	# Gatherings	# Clergy	# Laity	Total
Brant-Oxford / Norfolk	1	10	2	12
Delaware	2	3	22	25
Kent	2	5	16	21
Essex	2	18	30	48
Huron/Perth	2	10	32	42
Lambton	1	6	60	66
London	2	14	51	65
Saugeens*				
Waterloo	2	12	26	38
TOTAL	14	78	239	317

* The Saugeens gatherings, scheduled for November, were postponed to April owing to the unexpected death of The Revd. Chad Honneyman and the challenges of winter travel in the region.

If this becomes doctrine does this allow people who believe the Bible literally to still be comfortable in the church?

If changes pass, will clergy opposed to same-sex marriage be obliged to refer couples to other priests or offer a blessing? Will there be a referral roster and protocol whereby a priest who will not marry same gendered couples will refer to an Anglican priest who will?

Will the passing of the changes create another kind of contentious issue whereby a parish seeking a new Rector may reject a candidate solely based on her/his stance on presiding at a same-gendered marriage?

3. What We Heard in the Deanery Conversations

Overview of Deanery Responses

There is significant fear and anxiety expressed about the issue of changing the Marriage Canon in the Diocese of Huron and a strong desire for “clear communication,” sometimes even approaching a sense of “please tell us what to do.” Fear and anxiety about the unknown and discomfort with the uncertainty involved in this unfolding process appears to be shared among all participants.

- o Participants seem to be feeling ill-equipped for “fall out” after the 2019 vote; there is a desire for resources around conflict, reconciliation, and pastoral care.
- o There is a desire for “clear communication” before the 2019 vote: for example, statements, assurances, guidelines, tools, theological packages, Biblical packages/Bible studies, a simplified version of *This Holy Estate*, liturgies, paperwork, etc. in both print and web-based formats.
- o Many questions raised fall into the “**what if**” category, mostly centred on potential conflict:

In the matter of ‘conscience’, what about clergy who strongly support same gender marriage, but serve in a diocese whose Bishop does not permit the same? How will a ‘patchwork’ Anglican Church of Canada function?

Why is so much time being spent on this issue when Bishops and Clergy ultimately, can, of their own volition, choose to continue to segregate the LGBT community. There is a need for ‘standardization’.

- What happens if, whichever way the vote goes, the priest and congregation have an opposing view to that of the bishop?
- If the changes do pass what will actually happen with regard to the conscience clause? There is confusion, anxiety, and mistrust about the conscience clause.
- There are concerns about a “patchwork” approach from diocese to diocese; sometimes this was expressed as a desire for “standardization.”

There is considerable **confusion about church governance/polity**:

- Many participants seem not to understand how decisions are made in the Church. More education is needed around the respective roles and responsibilities of bishops, clergy, laity, Diocesan Synods, and General Synod in the Anglican Church of Canada.
- Given the confusion among participants about the process of changing the Marriage Canon and who is actually involved in making this decision, it is sometimes difficult to know which bodies are being referenced in comments from participants, e.g., “the task force,” “the committee,” “Synod.”

There is **significant mistrust of the Church and of the Bishop on this issue**:

- This mistrust is reflected in comments such as, “We are being manipulated”; “Does our input matter?”; “Decision has already been made”; “Some voices are not being heard,” Why bother if the bishops can decide?, etc.
- Also, the majority of participants seem to feel that they are unlikely to get the resources needed from the Diocese or that that they do not need any Diocesan resources.

Quotes from Deanery Participants:

What affect would this change have on relationships around the communion? Is this the right time?

Curious – what scripture change made it possible to get here. How can we support a church that goes against Sound Doctrine?

If Jesus’ teaching is about loving one another, why is it taking so long to change?

What, if any, diocesan resources will be ‘readily’ available, to enable caring for those who might feel hurt and/or angered by the outcome of the General Synod 2019 vote?

Will there still be room for conservatives in the church if this passes?

Is there protection for conscience of individual clergy and will this protection be guaranteed to continue?

I wasn’t aware there were resources –want Biblical passages for both sides. Want resources now –not after.

How can we be sure our opinions will be respected?

There is a **tendency in the process to confuse having one's voice heard with getting the outcome one wants.**

- o It can be challenging to negotiate opportunities to voice opinions/desires and the collective discernment process of the church. The process itself was variously characterised as “too fast” or “too slow”.
- o Does having one's opinion respected mean having it included in the report from our Diocese? Influencing the outcome of the vote at General Synod? Having influence after the vote?

Some participants' understanding and use of Scripture sees a **conflict between “theology” and the certainty of what the Bible/God's law has to say** about same-sex marriage.

There is a spectrum of responses to the possible effects of the 2019 vote.

- o In response to the question about how the outcome will affect you, many participants did not think that the outcome would affect them personally, but they expressed an anticipated need for supports and resources especially in the area of pastoral care.
- o Understandably, responses focussed on emotions, depending on the outcome and one's position, of anticipated hurt/pain/unhappiness or happiness. Regardless of the outcome, there is a sense that there will be sadness, loss, hurt, and a need for pastoral care.
- o For some participants the outcome of the vote (either way) may result in them leaving the Anglican Church of Canada.

What do participants want General Synod to know?

- o That there is a need throughout the process for love, respect, and walking tougher (including in the Anglican Communion and ecumenically). The process should include prayer and time for discernment.
- o Many participants wonder if there is another way/path/option, e.g. could the church get out of the “marriage business” altogether.
- o Some participants feel strongly that the time is right for a yes vote; others feel strongly that a no vote will always be the right decision.
- o Some participants do not believe that all voices will be heard; others are grateful for the engagement process.

4. What Will Happen at Huron Synod 2018

The MCTF will engage Synod 2018 with the report and a dialogue with Bishop Linda. There will not be a vote at Synod on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon.

In addition, Synod will elect its clergy and lay representatives to General Synod 2019. These representatives will attend General Synod 2019 in Vancouver and vote on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon (as well as other matters).

Appendix A

Details of What We Heard in the Deanery Conversations:

There were similar ideas voiced at the various Deanery gatherings. The following tables present these clusters of ideas organized into themes.

Question 1: What questions do you have about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?

Theme: Conscience Clause; conflicting views among various groups

Questions and Comments:

- Why does it even exist? Still in effect?
- Desire for assurances, concern about possible legal and employment ramifications (for clergy and for parish selection committees)
- Clergy referral questions and concerns: obligatory? Roster and protocol for same? Set formula for refusing?
- Differences between bishop and clergy: any option for clergy who differ from bishop?
- Differences between congregations and clergy
- Can laity object to a marriage?

Theme: Bishops being able to support or not support, opt-in or opt-out of, changes to the Marriage Canon

Questions and Comments:

- If the bishop says no/is not supportive of changes: is it a question of obedience for clergy? any option for clergy? Disciplinary implications? Referral to other diocese? What happens when new bishop elected with different view?
- If the bishop says yes/is supportive of changes: are we compelled to agree? If bishop says yes regardless of vote, how can s/he discipline a priest? What happens to a bishop who proceeds regardless of vote?
- Why are we spending so much time on the issue when bishops (and priests) can decide to segregate LGBT community?

Theme: Desire for “standardization”/concerns about a lack of “standardization”

Questions and Comments:

- In matter of conscience, what about clergy who strongly support same-sex marriage but serve in a diocese whose bishop does not permit the same? How will a 'patchwork' Anglican Church of Canada function?

Theme: Implications for local congregations

Questions and Comments:

- what happens if bishop/priest are willing but parish unwilling
- who decides? Pastoral implications at parish level? Creation of another contentious issue between priest and people?
- If local church disagrees with decision of General Synod, will they lose the church building?
- Room for “local option”?

Theme: Unity/division at various levels

Questions and Comments:

- How will the Church address these divisions?
- Concerns about Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Communion, international relationships
- Concerns about congregational splits
- Concern about relations with other denominations, positive and negative

Theme: Marriage liturgy/blessing/preparation

Questions and Comments:

- What will the liturgy be like? Same as current marriage rite (concern about redefinition of a sacrament) or separate (conflicting views about the advisability of this)
- Will (the same) marriage preparation be required?

Theme: Role of scripture in decision-making

Questions and Comments:

- How do we decide without clear guidance from scripture? What did Jesus teach about marriage and same-sex? Do we have sufficient scriptural warrant to change? Has God's law changed in other areas also?

Theme: Understanding/teaching/doctrine about marriage

Questions and Comments:

- Will the Anglican definition of marriage differ from the rest of society? What of scriptural teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman? What is theological basis for/against change? Will integrity of church be undermined?
- Why not use a different term?

Theme: Process/decision-making process

Questions and Comments:

- What happens if the General Synod vote is no? Third-vote tie breaker? Time limit for debate?
- What contingency plans are there for amendments (e.g. to conscience clause) at General Synod?
- Are conservative Christians represented? Will Diocese of Huron allow conservatives to attend General Synod?
- Too fast/too slow
- On what basis has the bishop even allowed this discussion?
- If other dioceses/parishes not engaged in this process, how can we confident in 2019 decision?
- After the vote, hope that it is not left to individual parish vestry to pass motions
- If we say no will the question be brought again to weary us all

Theme: Why does it need to change?

Questions and Comments:

- Why now? What is the motivation?

Theme: Input – does it matter?

Questions and Comments:

- How can we be sure our opinions will be respected? How important is my opinion?
Will both views in Huron be represented at General Synod?
- Will this discussion make a difference? Will it have weight?
- This is just another attempt to persuade me to your point of view; we are being manipulated.

Theme: Why is it taking so long?

Questions and Comments:

- Why wait until 2020 for implementation?

Theme: Pastoral concerns

Questions and Comments:

- Is there any recourse for couples who are denied?
- Will a same-sex couple have a “second class” marriage if they move to a diocese that does not approve?
- Need for diocesan resources regardless of outcome

Theme: Possibility of church getting out of “marriage business”

Questions and Comments:

- What would this look like? Should only provide “blessings” to the already civilly married.

Theme: Other

- Any implication for ability to be ordained?
- What about transgender and questioning individuals?

Question 2 (a): How will the outcome of the vote at General Synod 2019 affect you?

Theme: Hurt/pain/unhappiness if the vote is “no”

Questions and Comments:

- Disappointed and depressed; sad (personally and about hurt feelings caused); distressed; devastated; embarrassment (church making a wrong turn, hypocritical)
- How explain to LGBT friends, community, parishioners, many of whom expect disappointment from “any” church
- Church needs to lead by example: concern about pastoral implications
- Currently in discernment process for ordination and will rule it out if this does not pass
- I know that it will pass some day

Theme: Hurt/pain/unhappiness if the vote is “yes”

Questions and Comments:

- Disappointed and sad
- My heart is broken; this is so wrong

Theme: Hurt/pain/unhappiness if the vote goes either way

Questions and Comments:

- Sadness/loss over whoever is the “losing side” (people disenfranchised); lot of hurt; pain for all; distressing; need for healing
- How walk with both sides?
- Distracting

Theme: Happiness if vote is “yes”

Questions and Comments:

- Joy; pride; relief; full support of decision
- Positive personal implications: acceptance of friends/relatives; clergy able to marry friends/relatives; I can get married in church

Theme: Happiness if vote is “no”

Questions and Comments:

- OK, supportive; not overjoyed

Theme: Leave/stay & unity/disunity if vote is “yes”

- Will leave/stop any relationship with Anglican Church of Canada
- Have to assess whether to stay
- I think I could stay; I will probably come around to it but I will probably be dead; I will stay, but wonder what marriage is now
- Disruptive to parish life; disappointment in being out of sync with rest of Anglican world

Theme: Leave/stay & unity/disunity if vote is “no”

Questions and Comments:

- Devastated to the point of leaving the church
- Will stay
- Will prove the church is unaccepting

Theme: Leave/stay & unity/disunity if vote goes either way

Questions and Comments:

- Sad that this could tear the church apart
- Why is this the deal breaker?
- Is already having an effect: people are leaving
- How do we live together with such deep differences?
- Lots of explaining will be required
- Regardless, will work toward unity and not division
- Do I have a future in church as a parent of young children; is there a place for me?

Theme: View of Marriage if vote is “yes”

Questions and Comments:

- Will no longer see weddings as a sacrament or any different than a blessing
- Church needs to get out of marriage business

Theme: Impact, or not, on church/congregation

Questions and Comments:

- May have more impact in rural areas; will affect dynamic of church family
- Small number of dissenters for either decision can have big impact on small congregation
- Where is the voice of the congregation?

Theme: Impact on view of Diocese of Huron if vote is “yes”

Questions and Comments:

- Will lose faith in leadership and level of respect for bishops
- Will be difficult to support diocesan projects

Theme: Concerns about place for conservatives if vote is “yes”

Questions and Comments:

- Will there still be room for conservatives in the church? Is there room for difference?

Theme: Desire for Change

Questions and Comments:

- Want to celebrate all relationships; we need to catch up with the times

Theme: Views on LTBTQ2

Questions and Comments:

- Do I need to accept lifestyle? Can I love them as people and reject same-sex marriage?
- Sympathy for the community and wish that it could be accommodated in different fashion

Theme: Other, if vote is “no”

Questions and Comments:

- How long before it is raised again and pushed through?
- Will question spiritual integrity of church?
- What do “welcome,” “inclusivity,” and “non-judgemental” look like now?

Theme: Other, if vote is “yes”

- I refuse to believe it’s a done deal, I don’t agree with it; my faith is being tested; I worry about the future of the ACC
- The church and world is evolving; a yes seems obvious and progressive
- I am new to the church and this causes me great conflict but hearing others being supportive; a desire for a positive vote is very encouraging

Theme: Other, if vote is either way

Questions and Comments:

- Church can move on to other issues
- No matter what, the Spirit will determine the outcome
- What can we do if we do not agree?

Question 2 (b): *What resources will you need from the Diocese if the motion passes or if it does not pass?*

Theme: Healing/reconciliation/conflict management and resolution/counselling/pastoral care

Questions and Comments:

- Needed regardless of outcome; special needs for clergy (support)
- Time
- Continued conversations in this format (safe)
- Encouragement, not judgement
- Education/explanation
- Safe place/opportunity to deal with anger and sadness
- Any First Nations models that could help?

Theme: Clear communication

Questions and Comments:

- Needed before 2019: make web site resources easier to find; clarity: existing resources feel ambiguous; copies of *This Holy Estate* to parishes
- Timely announcement of result and clarity of next steps by bishop; consistency

Theme: Guidelines, including on conscience clause

Questions and Comments:

- Specific for clergy; general for laity
- Clear outline of expectations and implementation (or not)
- Written assurance by bishop about conscience clause
- Specific instructions for parish selection committees

Theme: Theological information

Questions and Comments:

- Scriptural and theological focus; not biological
- Biblical foundation for both sides; bible study tools
- Explanation of theological rationale, regardless of outcome

Theme: Prayer/Discernment

Questions and Comments:

- For clergy and laity
- Resources to assist with extra prayer, discerning the leading of the Spirit

Theme: Liturgies/Marriage Preparation

Questions and Comments:

- Liturgy needed before the change happens; clear liturgy with clear guidance
- Resources for marriage preparation
- Strong leadership and support, prayerful and mindful of the Gospel and not on finances

Question 3. Based on what you have heard from each other, what do you most want General Synod to hear from the Diocese of Huron about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?

Theme: Need for love/inclusivity/respect – *some overlap with need for reconciliation, walking together*

Questions and Comments:

- Loving disagreement; look at loving core values of church; love and kindness trumps all
- Need to follow Jesus and love everyone, including our enemies; are we Christian if we do not? Must practice what we preach.
- We're all God's children and everyone deserves to be happy
- Look to what we have in common rather than on our differences; respect all views/voices

Theme: Need for reconciliation/walking together – *some overlap with need for love/inclusivity/respect*

Questions and Comments:

- A plan needs to be in place before the vote
- Listen to one another; hear people's stories and pain
- Focus on fact that Christ came not to condemn but to save and apply to both sides
- We need to understand that we can walk together even if we do not agree

Theme: Is/will be division – *overlap with first two*

- Are we prepared? A big split is coming; we are going to lose people. How will we come back together?
- We are concerned about the union of the Anglican Communion
- Desire to avoid parallel Anglican bodies

Theme: Yes, move ahead

Questions and Comments:

- We want the change; very much in favour
- Have been talking a long time; get on with it
- I believe that a majority of people want it to go ahead
- We need to be on the side of the oppressed, not the oppressors; we want an inclusive church
- We are all one in Christ

Theme: No, do not move ahead

Questions and Comments:

- Please do not do this; do not change the Word of God; God will not be able to bless the church if this passes
- The church does not need to follow the way of the world
- If it passes, will there be a church to go to? This will damage our church
- Process should be steeped in prayer

Theme: Input – does it matter?

- Our input has no import
- Will both sides be given equal weight? Will there be justice for everyone's point of view
- Are the No voices being heard? Rural voices? Indigenous voices? Youth?

Theme: Process/timing

Questions and Comments:

- What happens if the General Synod vote is No?

Theme: Perception that awareness is low in parishes

Questions and Comments:

- Congregations don't know enough
- Need to raise awareness at parish level

Theme: Other

Questions and Comments:

- Are there lessons to be learned from the processes around the remarriage of divorced people and/or the ordination of women?

Appendix B

Motion Passed by General Synod 2016

General Synod Resolution A051 (as amended and carried)

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. Declare that Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church) applies to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.
2. Make the following consequential amendments to Canon XXI:
 - (a) in paragraph 2 of the Preface, delete the words “of the union of man and woman in”;
 - (b) in paragraph 4 of the Preface, substitute the words “the parties of the marriage” for the “husband and wife”;
 - (c) in section 16 a) of the Regulations, substitute “the parties to the marriage” for “a man and woman”;
 - (d) in section 17 b) of the Regulations, substitute “the parties of the marriage” for “husband and wife.”
3. Add the following to section 11 of the Regulations:
 - (e) A minister may only solemnize a marriage between persons of the same sex if authorized by the diocesan bishop.
4. Declare that this resolution shall come into effect on the first day of January after being passed by General Synod at Second Reading.

Addendum to the Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force

Report on the Discussions at the Diocese of Huron Synod 2018

1. What Happened at Huron Synod 2018

Following a year of deanery-level conversations, the Synod of the Diocese of Huron came together to review and discuss the Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force. After prayer and a brief presentation of the Report by the Task Force, the Bishop of Huron and the Primate of the Anglican Church engaged in a moderated question-and-answer session on issues derived from the Report: on what will happen if the vote is yes or no; on its implication for clergy and congregations; on the impact of the decision on our ecumenical and international relationships; and on living together, or not, after the decision.¹

Synod members were then asked to provide written feedback on the Report (which had been distributed in the Synod Circular) and on the presentation and session with the Bishop and Archbishop that had just occurred. They were specifically asked to indicate whether or not their views were represented in the Report.

After recording their individual comments, members then moved into table discussions on practical next steps for the Diocese to take as well as on what additional resources might be needed. This information was also collected on the same form.

The feedback forms were collected and reviewed by the MCTF who presented a summary of them the next day (see below). Bishop Linda then responded to a number of points made and outlined the immediate next steps for the Diocese of Huron.

2. Feedback from Huron Synod 2018 Members

- A sizeable majority of members of Synod both in favour of and opposed to the change felt that their views were reflected in the Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force.
 - For every ten people who said that the report reflected their views, one did not and wished to see changes. In some cases, that was because there was a hope that the Report would have a clear conclusion or make firm recommendations, which was not its purpose.
 - Some felt that the views of those who attended the deanery gatherings were not proportionally representative of the views across the diocese or that some people did not feel that it was safe to attend.
- Synod members were encouraged by the prayerful and pastoral process used to develop and consider the Report as well as by its thoughtful, frank, and sensitive presentation.

¹ Video excerpts of this session and discussion guides prepared by the MCTF for use in parishes are available on the Diocese of Huron web site at <http://diohuron.org/resources> [click on “Diocesan” and then on “Marriage Canon Task Force”].

- They were encouraged by the sense that both sides have had a voice in the discussion, that the bishop has truly been listening, that the tone of the conversation has shifted over the past year, and that the final decision will be honoured regardless of the outcome.
 - Some members expressed concern that minority views will not be represented by the Diocese’s delegates to General Synod (and, by extension, concern about the way that decisions are made in the Anglican Church).
 - Other members noted that the decision has a different kind of impact and potential pain for the LGBTQ community. To see it as a theological issue only can seem to justify hatred and bigotry.
 - Some members felt that the process did not engage enough with scripture, or theology, or social justice questions, or power analysis.
- There is a strong desire in Huron to continue to walk together regardless of the outcome, which we recognize will be painful and emotional either way.
 - There is a clear statement that courtesy and tolerance must go both ways.
 - There is a strong desire for the continued careful use of language so that no person or position is diminished or rejected (e.g., “moving forward” seems to suggest that the opposite is backwards).
 - The notion that two faithful theological streams of thought on marriage already exist in the Church and will continue to exist regardless of the outcome at General Synod 2019 seemed to resonate strongly with Synod delegates.
 - There was strong appreciation of and considerable compassion expressed for the Primate and for our Bishop as they guide the Church in its discernment on the issue.

3. Summary of the Diocese of Huron Synod’s Consideration of the Proposed Changes to the Marriage Canon

The Diocese of Huron engaged in a year-long consideration process, at two consecutive synods, and at deanery gatherings open to all.

The process:

- confirmed that we are not of one mind about the proposed changes;
- identified a number of issues and concerns;
- hosted gatherings and provided resources to respond to concerns;
- resulted in a report the overwhelming majority of synod members felt reflected their views.

MEMORIAL TO GENERAL SYNOD 2019

DIOCESE OF MONTREAL

“This Synod, being broadly in support of the proposed changes to the marriage canon, memorializes General Synod with regard to Resolution No A051-R2, that the Diocese of Montreal, meeting in Synod, June 2018, finds the principles of declaring the marriage canon to apply “to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage” to be problematic, in that it ties us to impossible-to-predict changes in Canadian law, rather than to theological principles determined by the Church itself.”

Diocese of Niagara Video

youtu.be/w_X-jSjehPY



Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

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The Right Reverend Ron Cutler, Diocesan Bishop

October 13 2017

The Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson
General Secretary
The Anglican Church of Canada
80 Hayden Street
Toronto, ON
M4Y 3G2

Dear Michael,

This letter constitutes the formal response of the Synod of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island to the request by the General Synod to “consider” the proposed change to General Synod Canon 21 (On Marriage).

Our diocesan synod met for its regularly scheduled session, from May 25-27 2017.

- Prior to the synod, members had been asked to read the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon. Regional gatherings of synod delegates allowed an opportunity for members to ask questions regarding the process that had been followed leading up to the General Synod in the summer of 2016.
- The entire first evening of the agenda at our Diocesan Synod was given to the consideration of the change to the canon.
- I began the consideration by giving an overview of the process leading up to the General Synod meeting, the process at the meeting, the outcome of the vote and the requirement that each diocesan and provincial synod consider the change before the next meeting of the General Synod in 2019. I noted that our next regularly scheduled Synod would take place at the end of May 2019 and that this was too late to give feedback to the General Synod.
- Our diocese is fortunate to have two members of the Commission on the Marriage Canon exercising ministry here: The Rev. Dr. Paul Friesen and the Rev. Paul Jennings. Both addressed the Synod giving insights into important parts of that work.
- Following their presentation, they were ‘interviewed’ on the stage. Both were asked a number of questions to bring additional clarity to the work of the Commission and the impact of the proposed change to the canon.
- At this point the members of Synod were presented with three questions for discussions in their table groups (The 285 members were seated at 39 tables)
- The three questions were: 1) What makes you hopeful about the proposed change to the Canon on Marriage? Personally? In your Parish? 2) What makes you anxious about the proposed change to the Canon on Marriage? Personally? In your Parish? 3) Are you in favour of providing

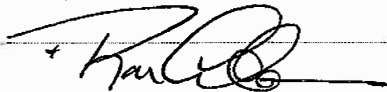
a pastoral response to same sex couples seeking to be married in the Church in this Diocese before a second vote on the change to the Marriage Canon?

- The members were given an hour for discussion and provided with the “Group Norms” that were used at General Synod. I asked that comments be recorded and that if there was a consensus at the table that this also be recorded.
- In response: 35 table groups were hopeful about the proposed change, 4 were not. Despite the overall hopefulness, the groups expressed a number of sources of anxiety, ranging from concern that the change might not receive the second required passage at General Synod in 2019, to concerns about relationships within the Anglican Church of Canada, with indigenous communities of Anglicans and with global partners.
- On the last question, where I had asked for advice to me about whether to authorize a rite for same sex marriage in the interim period, the synod was pretty well split: 14 tables encouraging me to provide such a rite, 12 tables saying I should wait and 9 tables unable to come to a consensus.

The outcome of the presentation and discussion at our Synod with respect to the changes in General Synod Canon 21 was mostly positive, both in terms of the respect that was evident in the table conversations and the overall tone of the notes from those conversations.

This was not a vote on the proposed change to General Synod Canon 21, I specifically did not want a vote at our Diocesan Synod. “Hopefulness” cannot be directly translated as endorsement of the proposed change yet it would seem to be clear to me that the majority of our synod delegates feel positive about the proposed change.

Sincerely,



The Most Rev. Ron Cutler
Archbishop of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

The Incorporated Synod of the
Diocese of Ontario

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The Anglican Church of Canada - L'Eglise anglicane du Canada

The Venerable Wayne A. Varley
Archdeacon of Ministry and Program

November 8, 2018

The Venerable Dr. Michael Thompson
General Secretary
The Anglican Church of Canada
80 Hayden Street
Toronto, ON
M4Y 3G2

Dear Michael,

On behalf of Bishop Michael Oulton, the clergy and laity of the Diocese of Ontario I am pleased to send to you all of the material prepared by members of the Diocese of Ontario in respect of the proposed changes to Canon 21 and to fulfill the request of Resolution A054 of the General Synod 2016 in preparation for General Synod 2019 second reading.

The Bishop appointed a Steering Committee and they facilitated our consideration of the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon. Individuals, parishes and other interested parties participated. For example, there was a clergy day held in February 2018 facilitated by Bishop Linda Nicholls to consider This Holy Estate. Bishop Oulton and Reverend Dr. Bill Morrow led three archdeaconry meetings in April 2018 that addressed the process for consideration as well as unpacking the biblical rationale of This Holy Estate. The Bishop required of the clergy, at a minimum, that they discuss the proposed changes with their parish's lay representatives to Synod in preparation for the session of diocesan Synod occurring November 1 to 3, 2018. It was during Synod that we heard three presentations from Reverend Dr. Christopher Brittain who addressed the worldwide Anglican Communion treatment of the issue; Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat presenting the biblical rationale in favour of changing the Marriage Canon to accommodate same-sex relationships; and Reverend Dr. Glen Taylor presenting the biblical rationale opposing making changes to the Marriage Canon to accommodate same-sex relationships.

Synod's consideration culminated with a non-binding straw poll to determine where our Diocese might stand on the proposed change to Canon 21 (the result is included with this material) and the approval of a resolution to memorialize the General Synod with our input.

Faithfully yours,

Venerable Wayne Varley

Some Themes that Emerged from the Break-Out Groups at Synod

William Morrow

1. Whatever the decisions—keep talking.
2. There must be a resolution not to discriminate, to see people as people.
3. A number of concerns were raised about the hurt that will be caused, whatever the decision.
4. Discussion groups varied in their character, some were mainly composed of those who opposed a change, others mainly composed of those who favoured it.
5. There were expressions of weariness with the debate and sadness that so much energy has been spent on this issue.
6. A spirit of generosity often prevailed.
7. The discussion of concrete steps was somewhat stymied because an answer depends on the decisions made at the next general synod.
8. The role of scriptural authority was raised.
9. A need for pastoral care and support, particularly for clergy, was identified.
10. How the decision might affect commitment to the Church and the current structure of Synod; some resolving to maintain them while others suggesting that change may be necessary.

In my summary remarks to Synod, I emphasized the following points:

- It was easier to address the question of personal investment than the one about concrete steps after the decision, as the final outcome of General Synod 2019 is not known.
- It was obvious that maintaining relationships was extremely important; everyone was committed to the Church, although that commitment was expressed in different ways.
- A spirit of graciousness characterized these conversations.
- That observation led to reiterating what was expressed by many groups: whatever happens conversation has to be ongoing, we need to keep talking to one another.



DIOCESE OF ONTARIO

The Anglican Church of Canada

Canon 21

A response to General Synod in the form of a Memorial Resolution

Engaging discussion, within the Diocese of Ontario, on *This Holy Estate* gave consideration to resolution A051-R2, as passed on first reading at General Synod 2016, and which will be placed before General Synod 2019 for second reading.

Challenging us was how to balance the requirements placed upon the Diocese in two areas. **First**, from a governance perspective, calling for the ‘consideration’ of Resolution A051 following the first reading and **second** to respond to the resolution of General Synod calling for *This Holy Estate* to be considered at all levels of the Church.

A **Consultation Steering Committee** was formed by Bishop Michael Oulton in September 2017. Members of this Steering Committee included: Rev. Dr. William Morrow, Rev. Lisa Chisholm-Smith, Mr. Andrew Innes, Rev. John VanStone, Mrs. Anne Patterson, Mrs. Haroldine Neil-Burchert, Rev. Canon Dr. Barbara Robinson, The Very Rev. Don Davidson and Archdeacon Wayne Varley as Staff Support.

Our mandate: To focus on the referral from General Synod of Resolution A051-R2 amending Canon 21 (Marriage Canon). According to the Declaration of Principles of General Synod, canonical amendments:
Shall require to be passed by a two-thirds majority in each Order voting at two successive sessions of the General Synod, the Canons and alterations proposed having been referred for consideration to diocesan and provincial synods, following the first approval of the General Synod.

The work of the Steering Committee from September 2017 to the meeting of Diocesan Synod November 1-3, 2018 was directed toward facilitating the consideration of A051. The Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon *This Holy Estate* and the study guide accompanying it was the focal point of engaging discussion and consultation within the Diocese. To accomplish this the committee sought to encourage as broad an engagement as possible with the report throughout this time by encouraging forums at the deanery, clericus, parish and individual levels. Other groups and organizations, both formal and informal, also were encouraged and engaged in discussions. All of these reports and submissions can be found at <http://ontario.anglican.ca/wp/canon-21-steering-committee/>

The Diocese of Ontario Synod devoted the morning of November 2nd to hear three presentations from: Reverend Dr. Christopher Brittain focussing on the Anglican Communion; Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat presenting the biblical rationale in favour of changing the Marriage Canon to accommodate same-sex relationships; and Reverend Dr. Glen Taylor presenting the biblical rationale opposing a change to the Marriage Canon.

Questions and comments from delegates on the presentations were received in written form until noon and were responded to by the appropriate presenter after reconvening for the afternoon session.

We then broke into small **breakout groups** to respond to two questions:

- 1. What do you have personally invested in the outcome of the vote?**
- 2. Regardless of the outcome, what concrete actions can we take so that the Diocese of Ontario models walking together with different perspectives on this issue after GS2019?**

A **non-binding straw poll** was taken to determine where our diocese might stand on the proposed change to the Marriage Canon.

General Synod 2016 passed Resolution A054 on first reading declaring that Canon 21 (on Marriage in the Church) applies to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.

Regarding this proposed change to the Marriage Canon,

I am,

In Agreement: _____ **107** _____

In Disagreement: _____ **43** _____

Undecided: _____ **13** _____

The afternoon session of Synod concluded with the passing of the following **resolution**:

Be it resolved that the Synod of the Diocese of Ontario, meeting November 1 to 3, 2018, memorialize the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada to receive all of the material prepared by members of the Diocese in respect of the proposed changes to Canon 21 and to fulfill the request of Resolution A054 of the General Synod 2016 in preparation for General Synod 2019 second reading.

Moved by: Anne Patterson

Seconded by: Dean Don Davidson

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

MEMORIAL TO GENERAL SYNOD 2019

DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE

“The Diocese of Qu’Appelle, through a process of several, prayerful and respectful, regional and diocesan consultations believes that the Spirit is leading us to call upon the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada to be cognizant of the following when considering second reading of the proposed amendment to Canon 21:

- As a diocese we are not of one mind on the proposed change to the marriage canon.
- The bishop of Qu’Appelle has informed the diocese that irrespective of the decision at General Synod the diocese will meet in the fall of 2020 before considering a diocesan response to the discussion about same sex marriage
- We need to maintain the autonomy of the Church with clear separation from the State while still being cognizant that civil law reflects society and we must be prepared to respond to changing norms
- Given that each diocesan bishop can determine how the amendment is implemented provision must be made to minister to those who move from a diocese which accepts and celebrates same-sex marriage to one which does not.
- The unity of the Church is important. Attention needs to be paid to preventing, as much as possible, division within our own Church as well as ecumenically
- Consideration be given to the possibility of writing a completely different canon rather than amending this one
- We need to avoid a ‘winner/loser’ mentality-focusing instead on seeking the guidance of the Spirit.
- Voting needs to be transparent and carefully conducted, results need to be clearly communicated, pastoral care and support to all delegates must be provided for all whatever the result.
- It is important to ensure that all voices- such as the LGBTQ2S, Indigenous, traditionalist, ecumenical-are heard with respect
- It is important to ensure all voices are heard and the strongest scriptural, theological, and philosophical arguments be shared on both sides of the issue
- Good communication is critical so high quality multi-media resources and a carefully thought out delivery plan are essential
- Prayerful discernment, respectful listening, and loving mutual support must be the hallmarks of our decision-making process”

Message to Synod

Report to Synod, November 3, 2018

Background Information

Based on directives from the Bishop, the Diocesan Council, and the Executive Committee, a consultation process was developed to facilitate conversation in each archdeaconry prior to the special diocesan synod, November 3, 2018. The process consisted of a one-time event which began with Bible study and included a historical background piece, presentation of the actual proposed amendment, a conversation circle in that causes concern, the question “What do we want to say to diocesan synod?” and identification of resources needed to continue the conversation as mandated by the Bishop in his pastoral letter. Approximately 100 people from about 20 congregations took part in the regional consultations. Most participants felt good about the process. They appreciated the design of the event, the limited focus, the leadership of the facilitators, the historical summary, the conversation circles, and identification of priorities. Many expressed the sense that the opening bible study set the proper context and helped create a safe space in which to raise and express one’s views. A number felt that it would have been helpful to have had the historical summary in advance. Some felt that there should have been a wider scriptural reference and that more time should have been spent discussing the emerging themes before the priority-setting exercise,

Reporting Results

A comprehensive report on the consultations is in the process of being prepared and will be distributed in due course. The significant portion of that report for this session of diocesan synod is as follows:

Message to Synod

In the Message to Synod section of the consultation several broad trends emerged.

Scripture as Basis for Decision

A significant number of participants felt that scripture mandates marriage as a heterosexual union between man and woman and therefore the amendment to the marriage canon would be contrary to God’s law. On the other hand many saw the matter differently. To these individuals the scriptural requirement that we love one another, seek justice for all, and refrain from judging lest we be judged takes precedence over the prohibitions most of which are from the Old Testament. Across the spectrum however there was a general agreement that we need to seek God’s direction by studying scripture more intensely and in greater depths and by remaining constant in prayer in a spirit of love, peace and unity.

Inclusivity

Many felt that inclusivity is an important Christian virtue and that the church should be more welcoming, accepting and valuing of all persons. They felt that the amendment recognizes that sexual orientation is not a choice and that therefore the sacraments should be available to all. Some of these were concerned that since implementation requires the consent of the diocesan bishop, there could still be a degree of exclusion.

Others felt that the marriage canon assumes that marriage is between one man and one woman, that the amendment is an awkward addition, and that the best way to ensure that same sex couples be included would be to develop a separate canon specifically for the marriage of same sex couples. Still others felt that the Church should drop its involvement in marriage altogether and instead provide church blessings to those who had already been civilly married.

Church Unity

Many participants are anxious that whatever the decision on the amendment is, the result will be divisive to the Church family. Some felt that the debate has already gone on too long and that continuing it will only contribute to more division and therefore felt that it is time to approve the amendment and to move on to what they consider to be more important issues. Others were concerned that approval of the amendment would do irreparable harm to our relationship with the rest of the Anglican Communion as well as the rest of the Christian Church. Some felt that the amendment is evidence that the Church is being held hostage to the world's agenda. Others felt that the world is changing and that the Church needs to respond positively to that change just as it has in the past. Concerns were raised about how this will affect day-to-day operations of the church. What will happen to relationships between priest and bishop if they disagree? Can a bishop change the decision of his or her predecessor? All felt that whatever is decided the care and concern for each other needs to be a priority. Individuals on both sides of the issue are hurting and must be respected, cared for and loved.

Wording

Concern was raised that "...duly qualified by civil law" was too broad and binds the church to changes in civil law. 'Parties to the marriage' was thought to be too vague and needs clarification.

Communication and Implementation

A number of participants expressed a concern that whatever is decided communications will be a critical feature. Parishes and individuals need to know what is happening and why.

General Comments

I have tried, in the interests of time, to provide a broad general overview of the "Message to Synod" reports from each archdeaconry. If I have missed any item that should have been included I apologize and invite anyone with a concern to contact me at davidashdown@myaccess.ca so that I can consider it for inclusion on the final comprehensive report dealing with all aspects of the consultation process.

I feel it is incumbent on me to indicate how impressed I was by how all the regions reported such a high level of respect, consideration, trust and thoughtfulness shown by the participants in conversation on this often difficult and divisive subject.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ David". The plus sign is inside a circle, and the word "David" is written in a cursive style.

The Rt. Rev. David N. Ashdown

Marriage Canon Discussion

“What can we do to ensure that we continue to live together as a faith community in the Diocese of Rupert’s Land beyond General Synod 2019, regardless of what decision is made on the Marriage Canon?”

1. Love, accept and respect one another as Jesus commanded us – this includes agreeing to disagree, opening our hearts to each other, hear each other’s stories, mourn together whatever the outcome, listen to both sides, value each others’ gifts, stop using labels.
2. Stop talking about this, trying to change other people’s minds, and find other issues to discuss. We need a clear-cut decision in order to move on even if that decision is divisive. We must get off the fence, even if that means we lose some people from our congregations or even some Parishes from our Diocese.
3. Leave marriage to the Province and focus on the relationship that goes beyond the wedding day.
This includes the possibility of removing marriage from the list of sacraments since Jesus only ordained Baptism and the Eucharist. This would include blessing the unions if asked. Perhaps the church is too slow to change the “rules.”
4. Recognize our place as a Christian family, emphasising the value of relationships in God’s love the way we celebrate the peace and the Eucharist. Work on relationships. Look at our history and how we have worked through hard issues before, and how other confessions (like the ECLIC) have resolved the question.
5. Respect the fact that not everyone is at the same place in understanding this issue, so encourage education and greater understanding, including more congregational meetings.
6. Provide more pastoral care for angry, disappointed or discouraged congregants and more support for clergy especially from meetings between clergy.
7. Allow parishes to opt in/out according to conscience.
8. Stop “cherry-picking” Scripture and focus on not hating. Jesus says much more about love than about marriage.
9. Should the church reflect or influence society? Where do our opinions come from?

WHAT WE HEARD

Over 600 people participated in the process of consideration of the proposed changes to The Marriage Canon at the Regular Session of Synod for the Diocese of Toronto on November 9-10, 2018. While most Synod members participated in the process as invited, it was clear that many are fatigued with these conversations. There is a sense of inertia and frustration with being stuck in the discussions. Decisions need to be made so that we all, regardless of our commitments and beliefs, can move on.

The following outlines the major themes that emerged from the process of listening and sharing as described in the document titled *Outline of the Diocese of Toronto Process*.

In listening to each other we heard reflections that are familiar from previous processes:

Living in Diversity

As Anglicans in the Diocese of Toronto we already live with a great diversity and have done so for a long time. It is a core part of our identity: past, present, and future. The gift of this diversity is that while we can be very different in our beliefs, convictions, languages, ethnicities, cultures, sexualities/genders, and ages, we all belong within a large tent where there is place for us all. Though we sometimes keenly feel the polarization inherent in living with diversity, we value the big tent and don't want to leave it.

We have a deep aversion to breaking relationships and feel real pain when people, from either end of the spectrum, choose to leave. The reflections that are shared in this document represent ways we can value and protect our big tent approach to diversity.

Scripture and Theology

We are all sincere our beliefs, including our reverence for Holy Scripture. No one must ever be made to feel less than worthy of God's love and grace. As with all else, our narrative around sexuality and marriage must always be rooted in Scripture. God is always at the centre of our conversations and deliberations.

We have important questions about how we read, interpret, and apply Scripture in changing times and in situations emerging in our 21st century world. We must continue to work toward discerning a hermeneutic (or a range of interpretative principles) that will undergird growth in God's mission in times of change and diversity. When we draw closer to Jesus we begin to find the unity we long for. We need to continue to be open to finding ways to do this together.

Cultural and Ethnic Voices

It is deeply important that we continue to hear the voices of those from our Indigenous communities and from other multicultural and intercultural perspectives. In some ways the Diocese of Toronto is like a microcosm of the Anglican Communion. The importance of this was highlighted in some of our table groups, who pointed to the importance of seeing this as an

opportunity to work towards larger issues of cultural and racial inclusion; becoming a truly inclusive church within our big tent.

Relationships within the Communion

We value and want to continue to strengthen our relationships within our diocese, within the Canadian Anglican Church, and within the global Anglican Communion. Regardless of the outcome of the vote we affirm our commitment to listen and to continue in dialogue. We know that this can be difficult but avoiding pain is not an option if we are committed to building deeper understanding and stronger relationships for the sake of Christ's body which is the church.

We also heard reflections that are new or have taken on a new sense of urgency:

Pastoral Support and Resources After the Vote

We must work to minimize people's sense of being devalued or marginalized by the results of the vote and what follows. This could include a protocol for pastoral support and resources that could be prepared and made available after the vote. We must acknowledge and care for those who will feel hurt or disenfranchised and find ways to minimize a winner-loser binary outcome.

Clergy Anxiety

Clergy are worried that their career options could be limited especially if their beliefs fall outside the normative view of their dioceses. There are policies and systems to be developed to manage these situations.

For some there is trepidation in engaging the conversation within the parish for fear of raising up conflict. Clergy shared a concern about being able to be an effective pastoral presence within their congregations if their views are known. It is also noted that the leadership of many churches are blocking the discussions from taking place in their parishes.

Generational Concerns

People see that same-sex marriage is simply not an issue for young people. We worry that the longer we spend considering same-sex marriage the longer we appear irrelevant and exclusive and that this is an impediment to our ministries and missional invitations with younger adults and teens.

Interpretation of the Results of the Vote

The bishops of the Diocese of Toronto are and will remain committed to the *Pastoral Statement on Commitment to Diverse Theological Positions in the Diocese of Toronto*, September 29, 2017. This includes the pastoral offering of alternative liturgies for the marriage of same sex couples in some parishes where there is a consensus to do so.

“As Bishops we endorse unequivocally the principle that the Diocese of Toronto must honour and safeguard the diversity represented in its parishes and clergy, including those holding to an historic understanding of Christian marriage, so as to maintain the highest degree of communion possible, and together participate in the mission to make the crucified and risen Christ known in the world. We are personally committed to continue the face-to-face conversations that will foster this. This diversity will continue to be reflected in the selection, ordination and appointment of clergy, and in

the lay and clerical membership of committees and councils of the diocese. It will also include the honoring of clergy conscience in the celebration and blessing of marriage.”

The Diocese of Toronto Message to Council of General Synod November 2018

OUTLINE OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO PROCESS

The Diocese of Toronto met the General Synod's Declaration of Principles (section 11(c)i requirement that alterations proposed to Canon XXI (The Marriage Canon) be referred for consideration to Diocesan and Provincial synods in a number of ways over the course of two years.

SYNOD 2017

In 2017, Archbishop Colin Johnson called together the Canon XXI Task Group. Their mandate was to assist the synod in its consideration of the proposed changes. The group was made up of representatives from a diversity of perspectives and was chaired by Ms Marge Watters Knebel.

Over the course of two successive Regular Sessions of Synod, members spent time engaged in conversations and listening. First, in 2017 members were asked to submit what they believed would be most helpful to them in preparation for their consideration. The 530 responses that were collected informed the work that followed in 2018. (Appendix 2)

Requests included the availability of facilitated discussion processes for parishes, which were made available, and a set of resources which were prepared and published on the diocesan website. They include:

- Same-Sex Unions - A Brief Survey of the Conversations (appendix 3)
A history of the dialogues, decisions and key moments in the Church's discernment process.
- Authority in the Anglican Communion (appendix 4)
An explanation about how the churches of the Anglican Communion try to come to a common mind.
- National and International Views (appendix 5)
A summary of National and International views concerning same-sex marriage.
- Annotated Bibliography (appendix 6)
An updated bibliography of key resources using the Annotated Bibliography from the Marriage Commission Report.
- A Word About Facilitated Dialogue (appendix 7)
A resource to help Anglicans have facilitated conversations.
- Pastoral Statement on Commitment to Diverse Theological Positions in the Diocese of Toronto (appendix 8) by the Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson Archbishop of Toronto and endorsed by the Bishops Suffragan of Toronto, the Right Reverend Peter Fenty, the Right Reverend Riscylla Shaw, the Right Reverend Kevin Robertson, and the Right Reverend Jenny Andison.

The greatest response by far was a deep desire for prayerful, respectful and honest listening and dialogue, across our difference, in ways that would build understanding and relationships. It was this request for gracious listening that shaped our work at Synod in November 2018 and the pre-synod meetings beforehand.

SYNOD 2018

A process of speaking in triads was designed to help people engage in deeper sharing of that they think and feel about the proposed changes to The Marriage Canon. This process had a test-run at the four pre-synod meetings (one in each Episcopal Area). The over 600 members had two more triad conversations at Synod itself.

Triad Process

People were invited to form groups of 3 with people they did not know and share their responses to the following questions.

1. What would you like to say to the group about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon? What are your hopes and fears?
2. No matter the results of General Synod's vote in summer 2019, it will be met by both joy and hurt. How can we face this? What does it mean to be a diverse people of God?

Sharing was done without interruption. Each speaker had up to 7 minutes. Once finished, others in the group could ask questions for clarification. At the close of the session the triads summarized what they had heard from each other. There was no feedback from this session directly.

Norms

The purpose of our triad conversations was to invite a deeper understanding of what people feel and think about the potential changes to the Marriage Canon and how we can value and sustain relationships in a time of disagreement. It was acknowledged that these conversations can trigger deep emotions for many, so members were asked to be attentive to both the feeling and the factual substance of our conversations, and to follow these norms.

1. We grant that as people of faith we are all sincere our beliefs, including our reverence for Holy Scripture.
2. We are neighbours now and we will continue to be neighbours after General Synod's decision is made.
3. We know that people of diverse sexuality and gender identities are present.
4. We value inclusion and will strive for greater understanding of each other.
5. We will speak in the first person. We will use "I" statements rather than "they" or "everyone".
6. We will not use language known to be offensive to others.
7. We respect the right of people to speak of their own experiences.
8. We respect the privacy of others. What others say is their story to tell, not yours.
9. We will ask no questions that we are not prepared to answer ourselves.

Feedback

After members had an opportunity to participate in 3 triad conversations their feedback was collected by scribe/facilitators in a plenary session at their tables. The feedback question was *What have you heard?* Particular attention was paid to reflections shared in response to question #2 – looking into the future after the vote in 2019. Feedback was collected from 68 table groups.

What we learned from the process

- Participants in the hundreds of triad groups and over 60 table groups were, for the most part, highly respectful of each other. There were only 2 complaints of disrespectful conduct. All people involved were offered pastoral support. Even given the likelihood that some others struggled but chose not to report, this represents a much lower incidence of situations needing care or management than in past processes.
- The norms were acknowledged as very helpful. They were clear and concise, and people invoked them in their triads. Having an LGBTQ person introduce the norms to the group was particularly pastorally effective.
- The focus was on listening. This was upheld by the facilitators during the feedback and Synod members were able to share what they had heard from others in their triad groups. This was helped by an acknowledgement, both in the introduction and by the table facilitators, that some would be sharing commitments and convictions that are very different from their own.

Diocese of Toronto Synod Strategy Process Report Back:

Preparing for Our Consideration of the Proposed Changes to Canon XXI

November 25, 2017

This is a very brief summary of what you said would be most helpful to you and the diocese in preparing for our discussion next year on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon. Thank you all very much for your engagement in the process and your thoughtful responses.

There were 380 sheets handed in and these shared approximately 530 specific suggestions. All submissions will be collated and used to shape the development of processes and resources over the next year.

The largest number of comments -164 of them, are about **the process** you hope to see unfolding over the next year. In particular you express a deep desire for prayerful, respectful and honest listening and dialogue across our differences. You call for kindness and charity with each other, a willingness to listen to strongly held commitments and convictions – sharing our differing perspectives in good faith, and a hope that this will build relationships and understanding within the diocese.

You note the importance of including the voices of LGBTQ people, indigenous peoples, and of youth.

You ask that these dialogues happen in facilitated, small groups with clear and agreed norms. Talking Circles, Indaba, and Conversations over Coffee processes are named as helpful examples.

60 comments speak directly to the need for **parish engagement** in this discussion. You acknowledge that not many are considering the upcoming vote to change the Marriage Canon and what this might mean to them and suggest that processes and resources for including parishes in this dialogue would be helpful and timely. You see this could happen in individual congregations or regionally.

Again, in considering parish engagement you request that the processes be carefully designed and facilitated.

54 comments remind us of the importance of including **LGBTQ voices** and experiences. You note that a change to the Marriage Canon is a decision that will affect people's lives very personally and as such, you feel it is important to hear from LGBTQ people in our presentations. In particular you would like to listen to those who are married, and those who are seeking marriage in the Church. You ask to hear their stories of wanting a church marriage, their experience with the church, and what difference marriage has made – or they believe will make - to their lives and their faith.

You feel it would be helpful to hear the experiences of parishes and clergy who perform blessings and marriages; what has this been like in the life of their congregation?

There are also requests to hear from LGBTQ people who feel called to celibacy, and those who don't agree with same sex marriage.

In inviting the voices of LGBTQ people there are cautions and hopes expressed regarding our capacity to create a respectful environment through care for language, and norms for listening and conversation.

94 comments focus our attention on the importance of continuing to engage in learning and dialogue regarding disciplined **scriptural interpretation** and critical **theological reflection**. You are clear in your commitment to the value of working together to deepen your understanding of each other across difference.

The call for this work comes from people across the spectrum. You are requesting the opportunity to hear and discuss more fully the arguments and commitments that each holds; and you are asking for learning and discussion on how we appeal to scripture with authenticity and integrity when discerning something that arises from our current 21st century context for our ministry - like same-gender marriage.

Thanks to 64 comments, we now have a list of **resources and information** you believe will be helpful in preparing for further discernment. These include:

- an expanded history of the dialogues, decisions, and key moments in the Church's discernment process (National and International);
- a history of same-gender unions in the church and society
- a precis of the key arguments for and against allowing same-gender marriages;
- clarity about how the Anglican Church internationally is structured especially regarding issues of authority
- information about the processes and decisions in different denominations;
- information on attitudes towards homosexuality in the Anglican church internationally;
- a bibliography of key resources
- a glossary of words that are experienced as sensitive or unhelpful by people from both ends of the spectrum

55 comments suggested that it would be helpful to have a better sense of the **definition of marriage** and the history of marriage, and in particular Christian marriage.


There are also requests for a more thorough description of exactly what the Change to the Marriage Canon implies, and how some dioceses/bishops could allow for marriage and/or partnered LGBTQ clergy before the Canon has been changed.

47 comments raise significant concerns about what might happen **after the General Synod 2019 vote**. You focus our attention on the need for compassionate care and understanding for people who are disappointed or even devastated by the results. Others ask how they, themselves, will find compassionate care from the rest of the church should they be the ones who are hurt.

You care deeply that we can continue to live together as a diocese, and within the worldwide communion. You are very concerned about the ways this vote can impact our relationships and our ministries together.

Concerns are expressed for the ongoing respect and protections for clergy who cannot agree with the outcome of the vote. Concerns are raised from people at both ends of the spectrum regarding protection for clergy from being required to act against their conscience, or from being ostracized because of their commitments.

Finally, and not unexpectedly, 29 comments urge the diocese to simply **move on**. These come from people who hold diverse commitments on the subject of same sex marriage. There are expressions of weariness with the discussions. Some feel that there has already been enough consideration and it's now time to make a decision. Others note that the "train has already left the station" in that marriages are being performed both in some of our churches and civilly. These comments urge us to refocus the time and energy spent on this discussion towards ministry and towards learning to live with our difference.



Same-Sex Unions

– A Brief Survey
of the Conversations

Appendix 3



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

1967

Homosexual acts between consenting adults decriminalized in Canada.

1976

Human Sexuality Task Force report to Anglican Church

1978

House of Bishops Press Release:

‘We believe as Christians that homosexual persons as children of God, have a full and equal claim, with all other persons, upon the love, acceptance, concern and pastoral care of the Church. The gospel of Jesus Christ compels Christians to guard against all forms of human injustice and to affirm that all persons are brothers and sisters for whom Christ died. We affirm that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection under the law with all other Canadian citizens.

‘It is clear from Holy Scripture that only the sexual union of male and female can find expression within the covenant of Holy Matrimony. In the heart of biblical teaching about creation we discover insights into the nature and purpose of sexuality. Rooted in God’s creative purpose is the fulfillment and completion of male and female in each other, together with the procreative function of sexuality. Thus the Church confines its nuptial blessing to heterosexual marriages, and we cannot authorize our clergy to bless homosexual unions. We are aware that some homosexuals develop for themselves relationships of mutual support, help and comfort, about which the Church must show an appropriate concern. Such relationships, though, must not be confused with Holy Matrimony, and the Church must do nothing which appears to support any such suggestion.’

1979

House of Bishops’ Resolution

“1. Our present and future considerations about homosexuality should be pursued within the larger study of human sexuality in its totality; 2. We accept all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, as equal before God; our acceptance of persons with homosexual orientation is not an acceptance of homosexual activity; 3. We do not accept the blessing of homosexual unions (see previous press release); 4. We will not call in question the ordination of a person who has shared with the bishop his/her homosexual orientation if there has been a commitment to the Bishop to abstain from sexual acts with persons of the same sex as part of the requirement for ordination.” (Pastoral Statement on Human Sexuality)

Various sexuality studies and processes,

including 1985 study “Human Sexuality”. A number of Toronto clergy and laity were members of the task group.

1989

General Synod (St. John’s, NF)

– asked for increased study of human sexuality and dignity of all before God.

1990

National Executive Council asked the House of Bishops to update its 1979 Statements on human sexuality and ordination of persons of homosexual orientation.



1991

The Rev. Jim Ferry removed as incumbent of parish (June)

- Bishop's Court February 1992
- Archdeacon Colin Johnson began as Executive Assistant to the Bishop March 1992
- Bishop Finlay's decision and sentence to inhibit the Rev. Jim Ferry, March 1992

1992

General Synod (Toronto)

Toronto members moved a motion that was adopted; Toronto clergy and laity facilitated study groups.

Resolution: *"That this General Synod request the House of Bishops and the National Executive Council to commission an immediate study of homosexuality and homosexual relationships, including: modern scientific knowledge; the Church's understanding of Biblical teaching on homosexuality, human relationships, inclusiveness and justice; the experience of gays and lesbians who are committed Christians; and that the study be completed, and a report with specific recommendations submitted to General Synod 1995, in a form that would be available to the whole Church."*

1992

Report from the House of Bishops on the steps they were taking, including:

'We see the need for some further, more intensive study of the scriptures, particularly as they relate to sexuality, and we will undertake this in the Fall of 1993. Every age must struggle anew with the need to apply an unchanging gospel to a constantly changing environment. This is as true for us as it is for the church at large. All scripture is inspired by God, as Paul says, but not all receive the same understanding from it. We plan to spend a significant amount of time working with a number of respected theologians representing diverse approaches to scripture. From this we hope, in consultation with the rest of the church, to discern the mind of Christ for the body of Christ.'

1995

General Synod (Ottawa)

- *That this General Synod affirms the presence and contributions of gay men and lesbians in the life of the church and condemns bigotry, violence and hatred directed toward any due to their sexual orientation.*
- *That this General Synod:*
 - *encourage parishes and dioceses to continue, deepen, extend and adapt the learning, reflection and dialogue identified by the Task Force on Homosexuality and Homosexual Relationships (as reflected in Recommendations 1 through 4 of the Task Force Report).*
 - *encourage parishes and dioceses to give particular attention to the ongoing dialogue with respect to the issues identified in Recommendation 5 of the Task Force Report.*
 - *encourage parishes and dioceses to develop plans of action to further the dialogue as described in the Recommendations of the Task Force Report.*
 - *request the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee to make provision for leadership to ensure that this process continues at the parish and diocesan levels and that a report be made at the next General Synod.*

- *That this General Synod request that the Primate continue to encourage dialogue on "homosexuality and homosexual relationships" throughout the church.*
- The following resolution was tabled (and was not lifted from the table, so was not voted on): *That the Doctrine and Worship Committee, or its successor, initiate broad-based consultations within the Anglican Church of Canada concerning the liturgical recognition of committed monogamous same-gender unions, and report to the next General Synod.*

1994-2004

Toronto Dialogue Group

– a small mixed group to study and promote diocesan dialogue convened by Archbishop Finlay.

1997 October

House of Bishops statement on Human Sexuality included the following:

"The church affirms its traditional teaching that only the sexual union of male and female can find appropriate expression within the covenant of Holy Matrimony. However, we recognize that some homosexuals live in committed sexual relationships for mutual support, help and comfort. We wish to continue open and respectful dialogue with those who sincerely believe that sexuality expressed within a committed homosexual relationship is God's call to them, and we affirm our common desire to seek together the fullness of life revealed in Christ.

Blessing of Covenanted Relationships

We continue to believe that committed same sex relationships should not be confused with Holy Matrimony. The house will not authorize any act that appears to promote this confusion. There is, and needs to be, ongoing discussion about how to respond appropriately to faithful and committed same sex relationships. In the context of the ongoing debate this would necessitate respectful listening and learning about the nature of such relationships and their meaning for the persons involved in them. We recognize that relationships of mutual support, help and comfort between homosexual persons exist and are to be preferred to relationships that are anonymous and transient. We disagree among ourselves about whether such relationships can be expressions of God's will and purpose.

While consensus may be unlikely in the near future, we believe that study and dialogue continue to be fruitful. As we continue to listen together to scripture, tradition, and reasoned argument based on the experience of the Church, including and especially the experience of its gay and lesbian members, we grow in our recognition that our disagreements reflect our attempts to be faithful to the Gospel in our different personal and pastoral contexts.

As long as such dialogue continues to be fruitful we believe it should continue. We are not ready to authorize the blessing of relationships between persons of the same sex. However, in interpreting the Gospel, we must always reflect on the context to which it is addressed. We are, therefore, committed to ongoing study of human sexuality and of the nature and characteristics of human intimacy and family life as it exists in our society...

Among our clergy there are some who are gay or lesbian. Their ministries are often highly dedicated and greatly blessed. God has endowed them with many intellectual and spiritual gifts and we give thanks for their ministries. We reaffirm that

sexual orientation in and of itself is not a barrier to ordination or the practice of ministry within the church. Within the wider parameters of suitability, it is the manner in which sexuality is expressed that must be considered. Our intimate relationships are an expression of the most profound possibilities for human relationships, including our relationship with God (Eph.5:32). At ordination, candidates promise to live their lives and shape their relationships so as to provide a “wholesome example” to the people of God (BCP, 642). Exemplary behaviour for persons who are not married includes a commitment to remain chaste.”

1998

General Synod

“That this General Synod commend the House of Bishops for its statement “Human Sexuality” issued on October 29, 1997, and acknowledges the need for continuing study and dialogue. “

1998

Lambeth Conference

The Lambeth Conference 1998 Section I produced a report on the subject of homosexuality outlining a variety of positions held by the bishops. It suggested that there not be a resolution. Nevertheless, a resolution was debated and eventually passed:

“This Conference: a. commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality; b. in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage; c. recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God’s transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ; d. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex; e. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions; f. requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us; g. notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.”

1999-2002 Report on Conversations on Human Sexuality in the Anglican Communion

Archbishop Finlay was one of eleven members. They reported that they lived by this covenant:

1. We will respect each other’s faith journey.
2. We will listen respectfully.
3. We will ask inviting questions.
4. We will have flexible understanding, attempting to understand from the point of view of others.
5. We will seek to learn from all perspectives.

6. We will keep the topic in mind when speaking.
7. We will not speak as individuals for the group apart from our common statement.
8. We will not repeat each other's comments after we leave. We are free to share learnings without attribution to individuals. Otherwise, we will respect the confidentiality of other's statements.
9. We will clarify the nature of our speaking. We will request clarification in good faith.

While they 'were not able to reach a common mind regarding a single pattern of holy living for homosexual people', they did, among other things, agree:

1. The Scriptures are foundational for all aspects of our work.
2. The questions at issue centre on homosexual behaviour, not on homosexual people. We are called to love homosexual people as we are called to love any other people.
3. Homosexuality is a much more varied phenomenon than the singular noun suggests; there are no "assured results" available to us from medical and other research into origins, causations, etc. Even if there were, Christians would not be relieved of the responsibility of making theological and ethical judgments.

● **2002** **First Anglican blessing of same sex couple in New Westminster.**

● **September 2003** **Lambeth Commission established**

Archbishop of Canterbury established the Lambeth Commission on Communion in the light of the anticipated consecration of a gay partnered bishop in The Episcopal Church and the blessing in New Westminster, and the intervention by Primates and bishops in Provinces other than their own; asked to find ways to continue to live in the highest degree of communion possible.

● **November 2003** **Gene Robinson consecrated Bishop of New Hampshire**

● **2003-2004 Toronto Diocesan Consultations**
– workshops on human sexuality throughout the diocese.

● **2004** **Same-Sex Consultation Group**
– in preparation for a special Synod.

● **May 2004 General Synod (St. Catharine's, Ont.)**

1) Affirm that even in the face of deeply held convictions about whether the blessing of committed same sex unions is contrary to the doctrine and teaching of the Anglican Church of Canada, we recognize that through our baptism we are members one of another in Christ Jesus, and we commit ourselves to strive for that communion into which Christ continually calls us.

2) Affirm the crucial value of continued respectful dialogue and study of biblical, theological, liturgical, pastoral and social aspects of humans sexuality; and call



upon all bishops, clergy and lay leaders to be instrumental in seeing that dialogue and study continue, intentionally involving gay and lesbian persons;

3) Affirm the principle of respect for the way in which the dialogue and study may be taking place, or might take place, in indigenous and various other communities within our church in a manner consistent with their cultures and traditions;

4) Affirm that the Anglican Church is a church for all the baptized and is committed to taking such actions as are necessary to maintain and serve our fellowship and unity in Christ, and request the House of Bishops to continue its work on the provision of adequate episcopal oversight and pastoral care for all, regardless of the perspective from which they view the blessing of committed same sex relationships; and

5) Affirm the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same sex relationships.'

The original resolution brought to General Synod contained a section 2 which read "That this General Synod affirm the authority and jurisdiction of any diocesan synod, with the concurrence of its bishop, to authorize the blessing of committed same sex unions." In the course of debate, a motion to defer this clause was moved and carried: *That Resolution A134 be amended by: • Deferring consideration of section 2 until the meeting of General Synod in 2007; and during the period of deferral: • Request that the Primate ask the Primate's Theological Commission to review, consider and report to the Council of General Synod, by its spring 2006 meeting, whether the blessing of committed same sex unions is a matter of doctrine; • That on receipt of such a report, the Council of General Synod distribute it to each province, diocese and the House of Bishops for consideration.*

- Bishop of Toronto's Task Force on the Windsor Report 2005 established

October 2004

Windsor Report of the Lambeth Commission

Windsor Report of the Lambeth Commission on Communion requested, among other things, a moratorium on all the actions which had precipitated the report (ie the consecration of gay partnered bishops, the blessing of same sex unions, and interventions.)

November 27 2004

Special Diocesan Synod

Votes to defer decision on blessing same-sex unions by narrow vote.

Affirms the sanctity and integrity of adult, committed same sex relationships.

May 2005

Primate's Theological Commission of the Anglican Church of Canada on the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions issued its St. Michael Report

'It is the determination of the Primate's Theological Commission that the blessing of same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine. In reaching this conclusion, the Commission recognizes the range of interpretations given to the term 'doctrine'. We do agree that the blessing of committed same-sex unions is not a matter of what is often referred to as core doctrine in the sense of being credal. It is a matter of doctrine that does not hinder or impair our common affirmation of the three historic creeds. We have indicated what we believe to be the primary lines of connection



to the doctrines of salvation, incarnation, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, theological anthropology, sanctification, and holy matrimony. In our conviction that the blessing of same-sex unions is doctrinal, we are mindful of the burning pastoral issues involved. Doctrinal and pastoral concerns are not mutually exclusive, but profoundly connected. It is precisely the pastoral importance of this issue that demands the dignity and integrity of a careful consideration of its doctrinal implications. The pastoral importance of this issue deserves a careful consideration of its doctrinal implications in a manner that is deeply respectful of the dignity and integrity of the gay and lesbian members of our church.'

● 2005

Civil marriage laws, initially overturned in various provincial jurisdictions, come into force across Canada allowing marriage between two qualified persons.

● June 2007

General Synod House of Bishops Statement on Pastoral Care of Same Sex Couples

● July 2007

General Synod (Winnipeg)

- *That this General Synod resolves that the blessing of same-sex unions is not in conflict with the core doctrine (in the sense of being creedal) of The Anglican Church of Canada.*
- *Request the Council of General Synod to consider a revision of Canon XXI (On Marriage) including theological rationale to allow marriage of all legally qualified persons and to report back to General Synod 2010.*
- *Welcome the Statement of the House of Bishops of October, 2006, urging the church to show pastoral understanding and sensitivity to all same-sex couples, including those civilly married, and committing the House to develop pastoral strategies to give effect to the acceptance of gays and lesbians to whom we are already committed by previous General Synod and COGS resolutions, House of Bishops guidelines and Lambeth Conference statements.*
- *Ask the Primate to request the Primate's Theological Commission to consult with the dioceses and parishes and to report in advance of General Synod 2010 on: 1. the theological question whether the blessing of same-sex unions is a faithful, Spirit-led development of Christian doctrine; 2. Scripture's witness to the integrity of every human person and the question of the sanctity of human relationships. 2. Ask the Primate to request the Anglican Communion Task Force to report in advance of General Synod 2010 on the implications of the blessing of same-sex unions and/or marriage for our church and the Anglican Communion. 3. Support and encourage dioceses to offer the most generous pastoral provision possible within the current teaching of the church to gays and lesbians and their families. 4. Request Faith, Worship and Ministry to develop a process to engage the dioceses and parishes of the Anglican Church of Canada in a study of the Christian perspective of human sexuality through the lens of scripture, reason, tradition and current scientific understanding.*

● 2009

The Galilee Report of the Primate's Theological Commission

Chaired by Bishop Linda Nicholls, this is a series of discussion papers outlining various theological positions on human sexuality and related issues in response to General Synod 2007 without reaching a consensus.



January 2009

– Toronto College of Bishops propose that a limited number of parishes be given episcopal permission to offer prayers and blessing ‘but not the nuptial blessing’ to same-sex couples ‘in stable, long-term committed relationships.’

May 2009 Diocesan Synod indaba process

Consensus – not unanimity – about about implementing College of Bishops’ January 2009 proposal.

2009-2010 Pastoral Response Advisory Group (PRAG) formed to formulate guidelines for the above decision

2010

General Synod (Halifax) agreed statement:

“The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada met in Halifax, Nova Scotia in June of 2010. Together we entered into intentional conversations in order to hear where our Church is at this time in its life in relation to the matter of blessing of same gender unions. Our conversations were marked by grace, honesty and generosity of spirit towards one another. There was robust participation in the conversations. In dialogue we shared our passion for the mission of God in the world and our thoughts, feelings and convictions. We were attentive to each others’ perspectives, experiences and stories and we shared a commitment to continued theological reflection and scriptural study as a foundation to our ongoing dialogue and discernment.

“We engaged these conversations within the particularity of our Canadian context – a country that is diverse and many cultured. Canadians have been learning how to dialogue across their diversities over the course of our national life. We do so with deeply held commitments to transparency and openness, an approach that is not without risk and that we affirm as a great gift. Often, in processes of discernment, the task is to see our way through a paradox.

“Our conversations affirmed the full inclusion of gay and lesbian members in our churches, aboriginal voices in our midst, and the wide range of perspectives on the issue of same gender blessings across all dioceses. Our dialogue has been a positive and helpful step in our discernment. At this time, however, we are not prepared to make a legislative decision. Above, in and through all of this, and despite all our differences we are passionately committed to walking together, protecting our common life.

“We acknowledge diverse pastoral practices as dioceses respond to their own missional contexts. We accept the continuing commitment to develop generous pastoral responses. We recognize that these different approaches raise difficulties and challenges. When one acts there are implications for all. There can be no imposition of a decision or action, but rather we are challenged to live together sharing in the mission of Christ entrusted to us, accepting that different local contexts call at times for different local discernment, decision and action.

“We are in a time of ongoing discernment which requires mutual accountability through continuing dialogue, diocese to diocese and across the wider church. It also requires continued theological and scriptural study and dialogue on the wide range of matters relating to human sexuality.

“For many members of General Synod there is deep sadness that, at this time, there is no common mind. We acknowledge the pain that our diversity in this matter



causes. We are deeply aware of the cost to people whose lives are implicated in the consequences of an ongoing discernment process. This is not just an ‘issue’ but is about people’s daily lives and deeply held faith commitments. For some, even this statement represents a risk. For some the statement does not go nearly far enough.

“In the transparency and openness we have experienced with one another, we have risked vulnerability but it is in such places that we grow closer in the body of Christ and behold each other as gift. Abiding with each other, and with God we are sustained through struggle, patient listening, and speaking from the mind and heart together. We have experienced these conversations as a gift for us here at Synod and hope that they will be a further gift to the Anglican Church of Canada and to the wider Church.”

October 2010

Pastoral Guidelines for the Blessing of Same Gender Commitments issued by the Diocese of Toronto College Bishops.

July 2011

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada authorizes same sex marriages where pastor’s and congregation’s conscience permits.

2012

Diocesan Synod 2012 memorial to General Synod to provide for marriage of same sex couples on an equal basis – passed by counted vote

2013

General Synod (Ottawa)

Resolution to prepare a revision of the Canon on Marriage for two legally qualified persons, by General Synod 2016. The original motion by 2 lay members was amended to include consideration of a number of principles.

September 2015

Marriage Canon Commission established

The Commission chaired by Chancellor Bob Falby, then Bishop Linda Nicholls, issues “This Holy Estate” for study.

July 2016 General Synod (Toronto)

First reading of the changes to the Marriage Canon approved by a 2/3 majority in each order.

November 2016

Pastoral Guidelines for Same-Sex Marriages (Diocese of Toronto)



Authority

in the Anglican
Communion

Appendix 4



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

AUTHORITY IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

by The Rev. Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan

For the purposes of this article, I am going to speak about how the churches of the Anglican Communion try to come to a common mind. This is a discussion of structures for discernment in one family of the universal Church, and will only touch on deeper questions about how authority in the Body of Christ is exercised theologically, guided by the Holy Spirit.

There have been many books and articles on the subject of authority in the Anglican Communion, and I will not attempt to address all the relevant questions. Rather, I will try to state where I believe we are at the moment, after a long process of struggle on the part of Anglicans everywhere to try to formulate a common understanding of how our family works, or how it should work.





First, it is crucial to state that every church which is a member of the Anglican Communion is autonomous. We are a very loose collection of churches, often founded by missionaries from quite different agencies and perspectives; many but not all were shaped by the British colonial project. In a legal sense, each church is governed by its own constitution and canon law; chooses its own chief bishop variously called 'Primate', 'Presiding Bishop', 'Primus', or 'Moderator'; sets up bodies for decision-making comprised of bishops, clergy and laity; discerns matters of doctrine; authorizes forms and norms for worship and discipline; manages its own financial affairs; and structures itself for the work of mission in its territory.

Autonomous bodies can delegate their authority to a wider body if they choose to. The history of Anglicanism has been of attempts to have member churches delegate some of their authority to one or more international bodies, and of these attempts never succeeding.

Thus the Anglican Communion has no central decision-making body. Instead, it has what have commonly come to be called Four Instruments of Communion (originally called 'Instruments of Unity'). These, in order of development, are the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates' Meeting.

- I. We accord the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the bishop of the See of Canterbury with which Anglicans have historically been in communion, a primacy of honour and respect among the college of bishops in the Anglican Communion as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). As a focus and means of unity, the Archbishop gathers and works with the Lambeth Conference and Primates' Meeting, and presides in the Anglican Consultative Council.
- II. The Lambeth Conference expresses episcopal collegiality worldwide, and brings together the bishops for common worship, counsel, consultation and encouragement in their ministry of guarding the faith and unity of the Communion and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4.12) and mission.
- III. The Anglican Consultative Council is comprised of lay, clerical and episcopal representatives from our Churches. It facilitates the co-operative work of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work, calls the Churches into mutual responsibility and interdependence, and advises on developing provincial structures.
- IV. The Primates' Meeting is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury for mutual support, prayer and counsel. The authority that primates bring to the meeting arises from their own positions as the senior bishops of their

Provinces, and the fact that they are in conversation with their own Houses of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures. In the Primates' Meeting, the Primates and Moderators are called to work as representatives of their Provinces in collaboration with one another in mission and in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.

Note that of the Four Instruments, one is a person and the other three are meetings. They are places for persons with their own authority within their churches (whether as bishops or clergy or lay delegates) to confer with one another. All of the meetings are based in life of common Eucharistic worship, prayer and Bible study, and are thus the churches gathered as the Church always gathers. However, international Anglicanism is not a 'church', but a communion of churches. Thus it is always consultative, not deliberative.

This is not to say that there is no value to the resolutions of Lambeth Conferences or the meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council, or to the communiqués and statements from the Primates' Meetings. It is said that the Lambeth Conference has 'moral authority' as it is the gathering of all Anglican bishops. The Anglican Consultative Council, as the only one of the Instruments which has lay participation, is valued by a Communion which has always insisted on the participation of laity in governance. The results of discernment by these Instruments are offered as guidance to the churches on matters that affect the common life of all, and they are to be respected.

Changes in Anglican teaching and practice often come about when the guidance offered by one or more of these bodies is taken up into the life of the member churches. This process is called 'reception'. A member church duly considers the resolution and may either adopt it formally into their own canon law or pass a synodical resolution, or it may simply begin to live in accordance with the spirit of the resolution. Thus, for example, the Lambeth Conference's ecumenical resolutions often guide the ecumenical practice of member churches, even if they are not formally adopted. Reception, not just legislation, is a vital part of discernment.

Legally, however, such resolutions and statements have no effect unless they are adopted by the synodical systems of the member churches themselves.

The Instrument who is a person, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has very limited powers outside of his proper jurisdiction in the Diocese and Province of Canterbury, and in the Church of England. There have been calls, from time to time, for these powers to be enhanced, as when, for example, there are divisions within Provinces of the Communion

that seemingly cannot be resolved internally. However, such powers as the Archbishop might have in such a situation are limited to powers of diplomacy and persuasion.

While it may have seemed odd to some, when The Episcopal Church was deemed to have stepped outside the parameters of Anglican tradition in consecrating a second out gay person, the 'penalty' was the withdrawal of Episcopal members of international commissions and ecumenical dialogues and commissions. The Archbishop's argument was that persons from such a church could not represent the heart of Anglicanism, but it was also the case that the naming of persons to such bodies is one of the few powers which the Archbishop has in the Communion. Recently, the Primates supported the Archbishop in asking members of the Scottish Episcopal Church to withdraw from such bodies for three years, following that church's endorsement of gay marriage.

In March of 2012 something very significant happened to international Anglicanism that, while it certainly garnered some attention at the time, did not really begin to sink in. That was when it was determined that not enough dioceses of the Church of England had agreed that the Anglican Communion Covenant could come back to the General Synod for a second reading. The news certainly took many people by surprise, as they had not noticed how formidable the opposition to the Covenant had become. After all, this was to many the 'mother church', containing the Province and See of Canterbury, the base from which missionaries had gone throughout the British Empire to make disciples and obedient servants of all nations. It was a shock that England did not agree to the very solution to the current problems of Anglicanism that its own Archbishop had enthusiastically proposed to the world.

This decision – or, really, non-decision – by English dioceses in my view marked the end of a very long period of trying to establish institutions for international Anglicanism that would to some degree be binding upon the churches of the Anglican Communion.

It can be argued that the development of each Instrument of Communion came about because some churches were upset with decisions of other churches and wanted to find a way to bring them into line. There was an Anglican church whose bishops were so upset by the biblical and sexual views of a bishop from another Anglican church that they persuaded the Archbishop of Canterbury to hold an extraordinary meeting in order to deal with the problem. The bishops who were upset were from Canada, and the meeting was the first Lambeth Conference of 1867. What prompted this indignation was that a local bishop in South Africa, Bishop Colenso of Natal, chose to take actions that he thought

were appropriate responses to the Gospel for his local context, but others disagreed. The Lambeth Conference found itself unable to resolve the situation, but the experience of having bishops from around the world meet to pray and discuss and discern together proved so valuable that the Conference has continued since then, roughly every ten years.

The Anglican Consultative Council arose in part from the Anglican Congress that met in Toronto in 1963. That gathering was made up of bishops, clergy and laity from the whole Anglican world, and it met at the time when many British colonies were gaining independence. The challenge for the Anglican Communion was how to undertake mutually accountable mission together in this changed contest. The slogan that came from the Congress was ‘mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ’. In order to facilitate ongoing support for this mutuality in mission, the Anglican Consultative Council was established. It has met roughly every 3 years, and takes its title ‘consultative’ very seriously.

The Primates’ Meeting was established in 1978 also for mutual consultation. Over recent decades of debate about the ordination of women and issues in sexuality, the Pri-

mates have met more and more often, and have often issued pastoral statements which some Anglicans have seen as imperative. Since the Primates have not been delegated legislative powers, they cannot have this authority. Moreover, the powers that Primates have within their own churches vary widely. Some can ‘speak for’ their churches, but some can only speak for them on the basis of policy developed by their churches.

Through the 1990s there were a number of consultations which led to two reports on how authority within the Communion could be understood. These were ‘Belonging Together’ (1992) and ‘The Virginia Report’ (1997). Both were sent by the Anglican Consultative Council to the member churches, and neither one of them received much response. Only two churches responded to Virginia, Ireland and Canada, and they raised a number of concerns about the move toward centralization. The theology that underpinned Virginia was very influenced by ecumenical theology of the time, the theology of communion, or *koinonia* (the Greek term for communion). This theology was influential in the way that Anglicans talked with Roman Catholics and with Orthodox in their international ecumenical dialogues. From such dialogues, Anglican theologians were convinced



that Anglicans needed a coherent ecclesiology (teaching about the nature of the Church) for the Communion. It was this theological need, plus the emerging crises that led to the breakdown of mutual trust among some churches, that led to the development of the Anglican Communion Covenant, which was finalized in 2009 and sent to the churches for decision.

The failure of the Covenant to gain buy-in from enough churches of the Communion means that for some time Anglicans will live with institutions that cannot be binding, but which will help them to listen deeply to one another

So where does this leave us? Just about where we have always been, ministering the Gospel of grace as we have received it in our tradition, in the local contexts in which we are rooted, seeking through our synodical processes and prayer to discern what the Spirit is saying to us. We will have disagreements, and it is incumbent on us to explain ourselves to one another, because we were all called into communion by the God of love.

All the while this high level negotiation has been going on, Anglicans have been doing all sorts of things together. There are Anglican Communion networks on the environment, on peace and justice, on health care, on women, on refugees and migrants, on the family and on gender based violence. We have staff who represent us at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. We have lively ecumenical dialogues with 7 international partners. We have had Continuing Indaba and Bishops in Dialogue, bringing leaders from different parts of the world to talk about mission and

leadership. We have an Anglican Communion Legal Advisors Network, which discerned amongst all the official canon law of the member churches 104 common principles of canon law operative across the whole Communion (Principles of Canon Law, 2008).

We have the Anglican Alliance, which coordinates relief and development work and which is able to deliver directly to churches on the ground when disasters strike. People still pray the Anglican Cycle of Prayer. The Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 called for a ‘Season of Intentional Discipleship’ for all Anglicans, with resources to equip and enable the whole church to be effective in making new disciples of Jesus Christ. We are partners in the Gospel and partners in mission despite the background noise and the really severe differences of opinion.

Even though we do not have a common legislative framework, we are obliged by our love for one another to live out our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ to the fullest extent that we can, always trusting with enough humility that each of us alone does not know the whole truth. The motto of the Anglican Communion is ‘you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free’. The truth that sets us free is in the One whom we serve, who alone is truth, and that One has promised us the Spirit to lead us into all truth. That is a common journey in communion. †





National and International

Views concerning
Same-Gender Marriage

Appendix 5



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL VIEWS CONCERNING SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE

In the many comments received after the presentation at the Diocese of Toronto's Synod 2017 around the proposed changes to the marriage canon, a number of people asked for more information about what is happening in other Christian denominations in Canada and other Anglican churches around the world with regard to same-gender blessings and marriages.

Both nationally and internationally, we can see certain churches engaging in discussions around the place of same-gender relationships within the church community. Indeed, some have moved to a position in which same-sex marriages have become a regular part of their church life. However, it would be fair to say that the majority of Christian denominations, both nationally and internationally, continue to oppose any form of blessing or marriage rite for same-gender relationships.

THE CANADIAN CHURCH LANDSCAPE

The Anglican Church of Canada is currently engaged in two bilateral dialogues, one with the Roman Catholic Church and the other with the United Church of Canada. Since 2001, we are also in a relationship of full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The Roman Catholic Church is by far the largest Christian denomination in Canada. According to a recent national census, close to one-third of the Canadian population declare themselves to be Roman Catholic. While Pope Francis has made a num-





ber of statements in recent years expressing a more pastoral approach to people involved in same-gender relationships, it is clear that this does not extend to a consideration of same-sex blessings or marriages. The following statement made by the President of the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops in a letter to the Prime Minister at the time when changes in the national civil law around marriage were being made still reflects the current Roman Catholic position. “For Catholics, marriage is an issue intimately related to human nature which has been created male and female. Despite the recent decision of the House of Commons, Catholic teaching on this remains consistent and constant: marriage is the exclusive union of one man and one woman.” Churches belonging to the Eastern Orthodox (Russian, Greek, Ukrainian, Romanian, etc.) and Oriental Orthodox (Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, Ethiopian, etc.) traditions hold similar positions. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, the highest Orthodox Christian representative body in the Americas, reaffirmed in a statement in September 2013 that “the Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality, firmly grounded in Holy Scripture, two millennia of Church Tradition, and Canon Law, holds that the sacrament of marriage consists in the union of a man and a woman, and that authentic marriage reflects the sacred unity that exists between Christ and his Bride, the Church”. A similar view is also held by a variety of Protestant churches including the Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian and Free Methodist communities. It is a view shared also by the Anglican Network in Canada, which was formed in 2005 in opposition to what ANiC members considered to be the heterodox positions on homosexuality and same-sex blessings of the Anglican Church of Canada. ANiC presently consists of 73 parishes in 9 provinces and 2 American states.

However, there are several Canadian church communities that do presently bless same-sex relationships or perform same-gender marriages, including the following:

a) United Church of Canada

In 2003, the General Council of the United Church of Canada decided to ask the federal government to recognize same-sex marriage in federal marriage legislation. The General Council has subsequently welcomed same-sex marriage within the United Church but this does not make same-sex marriage the norm in all United Church congregations. Each congregation is free to develop their own marriage policy and practices.

b) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

At the Church’s 2011 National Convention, a motion was passed that allowed ELCIC ministers to preside at or bless marriages including those of same-sex couples according to the dictates of their consciences and according to the laws of the province in which they serve.

c) Mennonite Church Canada

This conference represents the largest gathering of Mennonite churches in Canada. In 2015, the first same-gender marriage took place in a congregation of the Mennonite Church Canada. Subsequently, in 2016 the denomination declared that each congregation is free to decide whether to allow same-sex marriages to be performed in their congregation.

d) Metropolitan Community Churches

The first same-sex marriages were conducted at the Metropolitan Community Church in Toronto in 2001 and have continued to be conducted since that date.



THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Many Anglican Provinces within the Communion oppose the blessing and/or marriage of same-gender couples. This is particularly the case, though not exclusively, in the Provinces of the Global South. These churches have expressed their convictions strongly at Anglican Primates' meetings and elsewhere. There are other churches within the Anglican Communion who either support same-sex marriage at present or who are considering it within the course of their church life and structures. The following are a number of these churches:

a) **The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**

The 2014 General Synod of the Church called for proposals for the blessing of same-sex relationships. A working group was established which brought a proposal to the 2016 Synod to authorize new rites of blessings as “additional formularies” rather than doctrinal changes. This proposal was not accepted by the Synod but instead the Synod voted to table the motion with the expectation that at the next General Synod (May 2018) there would be a decision to move forward. Another working group was established to explore structural arrangements which would allow people with widely differing convictions to remain within the Church. It published its final report in January 2018. It recommended that local bishops should be able to decide whether to authorize a service of blessing for same-gender couples in their dioceses, using provisions already within the Church's canons for a “non-formulary service”. It also states that there should be no change to “the Church's teaching on

the nature of marriage which is to affirm marriage as between a man and a woman.” There would also be canonical protections for clergy who decline to conduct such services and for those who decide to perform such services. This report is to be considered at the May 2018 gathering of General Synod.

b) **The Scottish Episcopal Church**

At its June, 2017 meeting of General Synod, the Church voted by a two-thirds majority in all three houses (bishops, clergy, and laity) to alter the Church's canon on marriage, removing the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman, and adding a new section that acknowledges that there are different understandings of marriage which now allow clergy to solemnize marriages between same-sex couples as well as couples of the opposite sex. The revised canon also stipulates that no member of the clergy will be required to solemnize a marriage against their conscience. The vote at Synod came after several years of study and discussion within the Church as part of the Cascade Process involving church members in dialogue on the question of marriage.

c) **The Anglican Church of Australia**

At the 2017 session of the General Synod of the Australian Church, a motion was passed recognizing “that the doctrine of our church, in line with traditional Christian teaching, is that marriage is an exclusive and lifelong union of a man and a woman, and further, recognizes that this has been the subject of several Gener-

al Synod resolutions over the past fifteen years”. While the Church does not allow for same-sex blessings or marriage, there exist a variety of understandings and convictions around same-gender marriage within the Australian Church. During the course of the recent public referendum in the country to allow for same-sex marriages in the civil sphere, the Diocese of Sydney contributed \$1 million dollars to the “No” campaign while seven diocesan bishops from other parts of the country wrote in support of the proposal.

d) Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil

The Church has affirmed its support of same-sex relationships. In 2016, the presiding bishop convened an extraordinary Synod to discuss adding same-sex marriage to the marriage canon. The proposal was not approved but was to be brought forward again at subsequent Synods.

e) Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Same-sex civil unions became legal in South Africa in 2006. At its 2016 General Synod, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa was presented with a motion to allow for “prayers of blessing” to be offered for people in same-sex civil unions. This motion was rejected by the Synod. The proposal continues to be a subject of much debate within the Church. While many bishops and others stand against it, at recent Synods of the diocese of Saldanha Bay and of Pretoria, there have been motions in support of the proposal. The canon law of the Church continues to state that “marriage by divine institution is a lifelong and exclusive union and partnership between one man and one woman.”

f) Church of England

The Synod of the Diocese of Hereford put forward a motion in October of 2017 for consideration at the General Synod of the Church of England in 2018 concerning same-sex blessings. The motion proposes that Anglican clergy be authorized to offer a service of blessing for those couples who have formed a civil partnership or have been married in a secular ceremony. Individual priests and churches would be allowed to opt out of the blessing services. The proposal would not allow for same-sex marriages in Anglican churches. A spokesperson for the Church reiterated that the teaching of the Church of England as reaffirmed in the Bishops’ pastoral statement on same-sex marriage is that such services of blessing are not at present allowed in the Church. The spokesperson continued that it is recognized that there is a real and profound disagreement in the Church of England over questions relating to human sexuality, and the House of Bishops is in the midst of preparing a new teaching document on mar-



riage and sexuality. Already, in dioceses such as London and Southwark, prayers may be offered in parish churches on behalf of those same-sex couples who have entered into civil partnerships. The General Synod of the Church has spent considerable time in recent years in discussing the Church’s understanding of marriage and its response to civil legislation concerning civil partnerships and marriages.

g) The Episcopal Church of the United States

In 2009, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted a resolution allowing individual local bishops to provide “generous pastoral response” to those members of their dioceses entering into same-gender marriages, unions, or partnerships. A committee of the Convention was also tasked with collecting and developing theological and liturgical resources connected to the blessing of same-sex relationships. As a result, at the next General Convention in 2012, an official liturgy of blessing called The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant, was approved. In



2015, the General Convention, after the Supreme Court of the United States had ruled in favour of legalizing same-sex marriages in the nation, changed its canon law. The changes removed language defining marriage as between a man and a woman and provided for two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples. The rites are to be used under the discretion and permission of the diocesan bishop. The canon also states that clergy retain the right to refuse to officiate at any wedding.

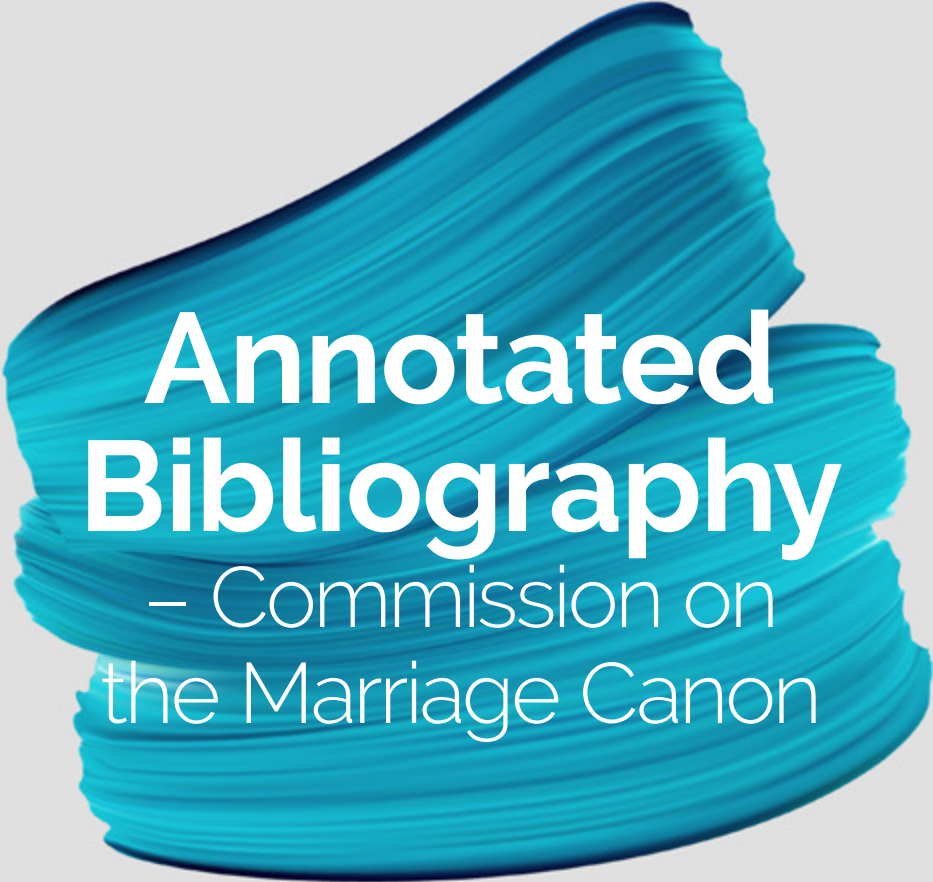
As a result of these actions of the Episcopal Church of the United States, the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2016 implemented certain restrictions on the participation of American Episcopalians within the Anglican Communion for a three-year period. Episcopalians are excluded from any forums in which doctrine is discussed, including international ecumenical dialogues, and they are also excluded from chairing Anglican Communion committees. These same sanctions were applied in 2017 to the Scottish Episcopal Church after it amended its marriage canon.

CURRENT SITUATION IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

The motion to amend the marriage canon passed its first reading at the July meeting of General Synod in 2016, but because same-sex marriage is a matter of doctrine, it requires a two-thirds majority vote at two consecutive Gen-

eral Synods. In preparation for the next General Synod in 2019, dioceses and ecclesiastical provinces have been asked to consider the motion before the second and final vote. Dioceses across Canada are responding to General Synod's request in different ways. Some are faced by serious logistical and financial constraints which mean that their diocesan Synods will not be able to meet before the gathering of General Synod in 2019. In several dioceses, a presentation followed by facilitated conversations on the proposed change were part of their 2017 Synod meetings. Many of the dioceses are looking to hold regional or deanery gatherings throughout 2018 to facilitate discussion and "holy listening" amongst parishioners. Various resources have been prepared (videos, links to resources, guidelines for "holy listening", Bible studies) which can be used at these gatherings. In most of these dioceses, it is expected that reports from these regional gatherings will be fed into a conversation which will take place at the meeting of their diocesan Synods, which will take place prior to General Synod 2019 (for some, this will be in 2018 while for others it will occur in 2019). Other venues where some dioceses are planning to discuss the motion are at the diocesan Executive Committee and at the diocesan clergy conference. A few dioceses are also hoping to encourage conversation at the parish level, although, for the most part, dioceses have seen the region or deanery to be the key level for local discussions leading into a final discussion at the diocesan Synod. †





Annotated Bibliography

– Commission on
the Marriage Canon

Appendix 6



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

PRINT ARTICLES

Anglican Church of Canada: Report – Blessing Same-Sex Unions (2005).

This document outlines a few key themes and questions that are present in the discussion of blessing same-sex unions.

Faith Worship and Ministry (FWM). 2004. *Addendum to FWM report to the Council of General Synod on the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions*. Toronto: General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. Accessed February 28, 2018. <http://gs2004.anglican.ca/atsynod/reports/006-3.htm>.

This is an outline of the proposed motions to be presented to the Council of General Synod regarding the blessing of same-sex unions.

Bourque, R.P. 2003. *Interim Guidelines for Same Sex Marriage/ Blessing of a Relationship*. Ottawa: Canadian Armed Forces Chaplains Branch.

This is an outline of the guidelines offered by Canadian Military Chaplaincy's Interfaith Committee on Same-Sex Marriage/Blessings. Where a chaplain is not able or willing to perform such a blessing or marriage, clear referral to a chaplain who will is to be made, following with the commitment and faithfulness each individual has to their respective faith tradition.

Consultation on Blessing of Same Sex Relations: Proposal for Contracting with Facilitators (Toronto: Faith, Worship, and Ministry, 2005).

This is a resource produced by FWM to guide preparations for the discussion concerning same-sex blessings with significant concerns as to the anxiety and tension surrounding such discussions.

Davison, Peter. "Revisions to Canon 21" (1999). (Listed in General Synod Archives under "Same-Sex Blessings," exact provenance unknown)

Davison proposes a revision to Canon 21 (On Marriage). No mention is made concerning same-gender marriages, however emphasis is placed on the need for sufficient preparation of couples in response to the individualism of society.

Ecclesiastical Matrimonial Commission of the Diocese of British Columbia. *Report to the Marriage Canon Task Force*. (Undated)

This report recognizes the need for clergy and the church to reassess their role in matrimony, emphasizing the need for pastoral concern in matters of marriage, and further addresses the validity of the church's role within matrimony as not simply a dispenser of blessings, but a presence and a partner to couples seeking to integrate their union with the common life of the worshipping community.

Henshaw, Pat. *Memorandum on the Task Force on Review of the Marriage Canon* (Toronto: General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 1999).

This memorandum specifically addresses marriage between a Christian and a person of another faith tradition, acknowledging the increasingly multicultural nature of Canadian society, and the value of diversity brought by unions between two such people. Importance is given to the fact that Christian beliefs and values should not be displaced amidst consideration for non-Christian beliefs and values, but that reconciliation should be strived for between both parties.

International Anglican Liturgical Consultation. *Rites Relating to Marriage* (2009-2011).

This is "a resource for theological reflection and further inquiry" into the rites of matrimony addressing particularly questions of cultural and contextual relevancy to how the rite of matrimony is celebrated by the church.

Harwood-Jones, Chris. *Memorandum Re: Marriage Commission* (1997)

Jones, a priest of the Diocese of Kootenay, distinguishes between marriage as a function of the state, and blessing as a matter for the church. As the Church has a "moral obligation" to bless, Jones states those cases where the church is justified in withholding blessings as either "of category (i.e. baptized, congregational membership) or of intention."



Murray, Kim. *Background to the Same-Sex Blessings Motion from FWM* (2003).

Murray offers a background of the discussions raised around the motion for same-sex blessings and an examination of each paragraph of the specific motion.

Reynolds, Stephen. *The Holy Estate* (2002)

This is an essay explaining the institution of marriage in light of the Pauline usage of “mystery” in reference to Christ’s relation to the church. Matrimony, then, must be considered in the “creative economy and saving purpose of the three-personed God.” His understanding of marriage is one of unity wherein two become joined in a common life, just as Christ shares in the common life of the church.

ONLINE ARTICLES

Anglican Church of Canada. “*Distinctions Among Marriage, the Blessing of a Civil Marriage, and the blessing of a union: a preliminary resource for discussion and development,*” accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/focus/hs/marriage/distinctions/>

This is an attempt at clarifying what is meant by “blessings” and an introduction to some of the complications raised in distinguishing between marriage and the blessings of civil marriages and unions. It references the problems cited in the St. Michael’s Report, which states that blessings of committed unions are analogous to marriages.

Anglican Church of Canada. “*History of Statements and Resolutions about Homosexuality,*” accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/focus/hs/ssbh/hsrh/>

This is an outline of the historical development of the Anglican Church of Canada’s stance towards homosexual people. A common prominent theme is the continued and persistent effort, amidst ongoing discussion, towards understanding, accepting and promoting the rights and dignities of homosexual people as full and equal members of God’s creation.

Anglican Church of Canada. “*The Galilee Report,*” 2007, accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/primate/ptc/galilee/>

This is a report prepared by the Primate’s Theological Commission consisting of fourteen essays submitted for

discussion concerning same-gender unions, and the conclusions arrived at in response. No definitive conclusion is reached. However, the discussion provides valuable feedback about the breadth of views both for and against the topic.

Anglican Church of Canada. “*St. Michael Report,*” 2005, accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/primate/ptc/smr/>

This is a report prepared by the Primate’s Theological Commission to determine whether the blessing of committed same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine. While concluding that the blessing of such unions is indeed a matter of doctrine, it arrives at one particular conclusion which is particularly pertinent: “It is the view of the Commission that any proposed blessing of a same-sex relationship would be analogous to a marriage to such a degree as to require the Church to understand it coherently in relation to the doctrine of marriage.”

Fletcher, Rae. “*Blessing: Theological Dimensions of Human Sexuality*” accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/files/2010/10/fletcher.pdf>

This is an essay examining the differences between salutary and sacralising blessings, with the argument that the blessing of marriages has been primarily salutational rather than sacralising, according to the definitions he gives. He argues that just as we are willing to bless “things that belong to the fallenness of creation” (i.e. battleships, weapons, etc.), “those who think that homosexuality is not part of God’s intentions for the world, but a product of the fall, should not automatically balk at the salutational blessing of same sex unions: at saluting them, welcoming them, sustaining them and wishing them well.”

Ingham, Michael. “*For God So Loved the World,*” Toronto, 1996. Accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://justus.anglican.org/~maffin/issues/ingham.html>

This is an address confronting the “double standard” which Ingham identifies within the church towards human sexuality, and particularly towards LGBT peoples: “I have come to think that the basis for our continued denial of dignity and intimacy to gay and lesbian people is not theology but pathology.”



Ingham, Michael. “*Sex and Christianity: Re-thinking the Relationship*,” accessed on February 28, 2018, <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/ingham.pdf>

Ingham offers an examination of Christian sexuality, noting, and challenging, particularly the Christian preoccupation with procreation as the predominant reason for human sexuality. Modern developments both in science and socio-cultural anthropology, as well as in spirituality, have illuminated sexuality such that its reaches and concerns extend far beyond its mere “genital aspects.” He argues that such developments have shed light on our understanding of both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, and that the church must be informed by these developments.

Kirkpatrick, Patricia. “*Theological and Scriptural Models of the ‘Inclusive Church’: Harmony or Counterpoint*,” accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/files/2011/02/kirkpatrick.pdf>

Kirkpatrick offers a critical look at dependence, not on scripture, but on specific methods of scriptural interpretation, particularly those grounded in patriarchal norms: “If harmony is what we seek, then it will not be found within the confines of the patriarchally defined theologies of the past, which took very little consideration of the perspectives of women and certain other disenfranchised groups spoken of in the Biblical tradition.”

Thorp, John. “*The St. Michael Report: Wrong Question, Wrong Answer*,” Huron University College, 2007. Accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/files/2010/10/ThorpWQWAtalk.pdf>

This is a response to the St. Michael Report’s attempt to clarify what is meant by “doctrine.” Thorp takes special exception with the St. Michael Report’s inclusion of adia-phora (indifferent things, which is taken from the Windsor Report Sections A.36-37 and B.87-96).

BOOKS

Davison, Andrew. *Amazing Love: Theology for Understanding Discipleship, Sexuality and Mission*. Darton, Longman and Todd, 2016.

A calm, theologically and biblically rooted perspective on same-sex love and relationships. It illuminates without heat, and it will enrich the Church’s conversation around these matters.

Dormor, Duncan and Jeremy Morris (Ed.). *An Acceptable Sacrifice? Homosexuality and the Church*. Foreword by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. SPCK Publishing, London, 2007.

A collection of essays by nine Cambridge theologians who view the discussions as important but not church-dividing.

Johnson, William Stacy. *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law & Politics*. Eerdmans, 2006.

Rogers, Jack. *Jesus, the Bible & Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*. Westminster John Knox, 2006.

An examination of biblical issues from a Presbyterian perspective.

Coleman, Peter. *Christian Attitudes to Marriage: From Ancient Times to the Third Millennium*. SCM Press, London, 2004.

An historical overview of marriage through the ages indicating the relationship between society, state, and church from early history to the 20th century.

Dunn, Greig & Chris Ambidge, Eds. *Living Together in the Church: Including our Differences*. Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, 2004.

A collection of essays encouraging the process of dialogue in a time of deep differences.

Nessan, Craig L. *Many Members, Yet One Body: Committed Same-Gender Relationships and the Mission of the Church*. Fortress Press, 2004.

Congregational discussion (Lutheran) of some of the challenges the church is facing. Identifies the nature of the conflicts between opposing views and invites discussion.

ANGLICAN COMMUNION

ONLINE ARTICLES

“*Marriage - Select Articles*,” *Liturgy Canada* (2014). Vol. 9, Num. 3. Accessed on March 5, 2018 <http://liturgy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Lent03.pdf>

This is a collection of articles from a volume of *Liturgy Canada* specifically dealing with marriage and same-sex marriage, including a rite from the Diocese of Rochester for “the celebration and affirmation of a covenant relationship.”

“*Same Sex Blessings Where are we now?*” *Liturgy Canada*. (2011). Issue 51, Volume 13, #3 Accessed on March 5, 2018, http://liturgy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Same_Sex_Blessings_Lent_2011.pdf

Young, Pamela Dickey. “*Same-sex marriage and the Christian churches in Canada*,” *Studies in Religion* 2006 35: 3, accessed March 2, 2018 <http://sir.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/content/35/1/3.full.pdf+html>

Explores the sorts of official arguments regarding same-sex marriages as put forth in public policy venues by Canadian churches and then proceeds to analyze these contributions.

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. “*On a Theological Rationale for a Christian Approach to the Blessing and Marriage of people in permanent, faithful same-gender relationships, and the implications thereof on the Ordination of people in same-gender relationships*,” March 2014. Accessed February 28, 2018, <http://anglicantaonga.org.nz/content/download/33489/175792/file/Doctrine%20Commission.pdf>

This is a report of a commission formed to “explore a theological rationale for same-gender marriage and/or blessings. The report raises many questions for discussion. However, “This Commission would argue that we should position ourselves in favour of the marginalized and for inclusion, while the shape of that inclusion remains debated.”

Doyle, Andrew C. *Unity in Mission*. April, 2012, accessed February 28, 2018, <http://www.epicenter.org/unity/>

This paper from the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas reflects on the anxious division caused by the debates and discussions on sexuality and the blessing of same-sex unions, and planning for reactions and responses to the decision of the diocese to approve same-sex blessings. While the bishop endorses same-sex blessings, he allows specific parishes and rectors to come to a decision on their own as to whether to celebrate such blessings or not.

Goldingay, John E. et. al. “*Same-Sex Marriage and Anglican Theology: A View from the Traditionalists*,” *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 93, no. 1 (2011). Accessed on February 28, 2018, http://www.anglicantheologicalreview.org/static/pdf/articles/Goldingay_et_al.pdf

Goldingay et. al. present a conservative view of modern liberalism regarding homosexuality and same-sex marriage within the church. The authors state fulfillment and unity in Christ are the Christian’s primary aim, associating views towards same-sex marriage and homosexuality with liberal and materialistic proclivities.

Good, Dierdre J. et al. “*A Theology of Marriage including Same-Sex Couples: A View from the Liberals*,” *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 93, no. 1 (2011). Accessed on February 28, 2018, http://www.anglicantheologicalreview.org/static/pdf/articles/good_et_al.pdf

This is a liberal response to the essay by Goldingay, et. al. The authors make the claim that same-sex couples are just as much in need of sanctification as opposite-sex couples, and relates the introduction of same-sex marriage to “God’s grafting wild, Gentile olive branches onto the domestic olive tree of Israel” (Rom. 11.24). Contrary to the conservative claim, “This then is no selfish joy. The spouse learns joy only by teaching the other that he or she is the occasion of joy. This is not individual or even couple-centered joy. It is among the ways that the Church teaches her members that God loves them for Christ’s sake in the Spirit.”

Anglican Theological Review, vol. 93, no. 1 (2011). Accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.anglicantheologicalreview.org/read/issue/48/>

This is an issue of the *Anglican Theological Review* from which the previous two articles were taken. It follows a line of discussion between traditionalist and liberal viewpoints along with several individual authors commenting on same-sex marriage.



Scottish Episcopal Church. “*Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill.*” Accessed on February 28, 2018 http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Scottish_Episcopal_Church_Faith_and_Order_Board_of_the_General_Synod.pdf

These are some responses to questions concerning views about marriage and civil partnership within the Scottish Episcopal Church, with no clear decisions on same-sex marriage, but an openness and expectation of dialogue about it.

Scottish Episcopal Church. “*Same-Sex Relationships: Cascade Conversation.*” 2014. Accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/sex-relationships-cascade-conversation/>

“A dialogue between the Rev Dean Fostekew, Rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Edinburgh, and the Rev Dave Richards, Rector of St. Paul’s & St. George’s Church, Edinburgh, following on from the recent Cascade Conversation on the subject of Same-Sex Relationships.”

Scottish Episcopal Church. “*Scottish Government Consultation on the Registration of Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriage.*” Accessed on February 28, 2018, http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Scottish_Episcopal_Church_Faith_and_Order_Board_of_the_General_Synod.pdf

This is an overview of the Scottish Episcopal Church’s view regarding civil partnerships and same-sex marriage. The Scottish Episcopal Church maintains the view of their Canon on Marriage, which stipulates marriage between a man and a woman.

The Church In Wales. “*Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.*” Accessed on February 28, 2018, http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/faith/believe/bench_samesexmarriage/

This is a statement of the stance of the Church in Wales which acknowledges marriage as between a man and a woman, though accepts same-sex couples and encourages their dignity and welcome within the church.

Church of England. “*House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance on Same-Sex Marriage.*” last modified February 15, 2014. Accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/house-bishops-pastoral-guidance-same-sex-marriage>

This is a response to civil laws allowing same-sex marriage reaffirming the church’s rejection of such practices, but acknowledging that the people affected by the church’s stance are as much in need of the church’s care and concern as ever.

BOOKS

Kydd, Roseanne. *Same Sex Marriage: Is There a Leg to Stand On?* (Oakville: Essence Publishing, 2013).

Kydd presents an examination of the issue of same-sex marriage from both from within and beyond the church, focussing specifically in chapter 4 on the Anglican Church’s involvement. Kydd structures her arguments around the “three-legged stool” of Anglicanism: scripture, reason and tradition, and how they stand under the weight of same-sex marriage. She rejects such a revision to the marriage canon on the grounds that marriage is not something human beings have the ownership of in order to change.

Thompsett, Fredrica Harris, ed. *Encouraging Conversation: Resources for Talking about Same-Sex Blessings.* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2013).

This is a compilation of essays from a range of perspectives on how various churches have approached same-sex marriage, and the reception of the blessings of same-sex unions in various parishes. Many authors offer sincere reflections on what is happening beyond the liturgical aspect of blessing, to the lives of those who are seeking and receiving such blessings.

Hall, Gary R. and Ruth A. Meyers, eds. *Christian Holiness and Human Sexuality: A Study Guide for Episcopalians.* (New York: Church Publishing, Inc., 2011).

The chapter “Scripture and Marriage” by Katherine Grieb presents a scriptural analysis of Genesis 1.27-28’s marital duty of procreation and pairs it with other scriptural passages which shed light and expand the notion that marriage is only valid when procreation is present and acted upon. In chapter 2, “Scripture: Sexuality and Sexual Orientation,” Will Gafney examines biblical texts which “articulate ancestral religious understandings of the human person and innate human relationships.” Marilyn McCord Adams in chapter 3, “Arguments from Tradition,” offers a reflection on the tradition that Anglicans adhere to, not as something fixed, but a significant tool and inspirational force in our ongoing discernment



of God's nature and our relationship with God. Ellen K. Wondra in chapter 4, "Ethics and Moral Theology," looks at human sexuality from an ethical perspective, pointing out what is said, but just as importantly, what is not said and the considerations that are often excluded from such discussions. Louis Weil addresses some concerns raised by same-sex marriage in regards to ritualism in Chapter 5.

Temple, Gray. *Gay Unions: In the Light of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason.* (New York: Church Publishing, 2004).

"Gray Temple presents the argument for the sacramental equality of gay and lesbian couples, which is to say they are entitled to full participation in the sacraments, including marriage. Gray Temple bases his discussion on the Anglican concept of discerning the will of God through scripture, tradition, and reason. ... As a liberal charismatic who prayerfully came to the conclusion that his homophobia was not a stance favored by God, Temple is in a unique position to take on this topic. Gray Temple deeply understands the ethos of conservatism and his understanding of that ethos provokes him to engage conservative arguments with rigor and sympathy."

Marshall, Paul V. *Same-Sex Unions: Stories and Rites.* (New York: Church Publishing, 2004).

"Same-Sex Unions, a contribution to the continuing debate on the church's pastoral care, offers biographical vignettes of two committed couples who have had their unions liturgically blessed in church and also contains complete texts of several same-sex rites, together with liturgical analysis and reference to secondary literature."

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fullam, Lisa. "Civil Same-Sex Marriage: A Catholic Affirmation," *Bondings* 2.0, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.newwaysministry.org/2014/04/15/exclusive-why-catholics-should-affirm-civil-marriage-equality/>

"Here, I consider Catholic moral tradition on civil law: civil law is approached in light of the common good, expressed in contemporary societies in terms of equal civil rights. Second, I examine magisterial contributions to the public debate, which are framed in terms of a reading of natural law based in the Scriptural interpretation of Pope John Paul II. Such religious arguments may serve as normative for marriage within the Church, but do not reflect Catholic norms for civil law. Finally, I offer reasons Catholics might advocate civil same-sex marriage."

"Church Leaders Supporting Same-Gender Couples," *Cardinals, Bishops, and Other Catholic Church Leaders Who Have Made Positive Statements about Civil Unions, Same-Gender Relationships, and Marriage Equality*, last modified January 10, 2018, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.newwaysministry.org/church-leaders-support/>

This is a chronological listing of statements made by Catholic Church leadership in support of civil unions, same-sex relationships and marriage equality. A common thread amongst acknowledgement of equality is that marriage is separate and different from a civil union.

Debernardo, Francis. *Marriage Equality: A Positive Catholic Approach.* (Maryland: New Ways Ministry, 2011). <https://www.newwaysministry.org/issues/marriage-equality/>

"Using statistical data, theological evidence, and historical information, the book describes some of the ways that Catholic attitudes about sexuality have developed into a consensus that justice requires that same-gender relationships should be legalized." It addresses Civil Unions as opposed to Catholic Same-Gender Marriage, but provides support for a Catholic rationale.

Dempsey, Robert J. "The Catholic Church's Teaching About Same-Sex Marriage," (paper presented at the Catholic Medical Association of Chicago, January 27, 2007). <http://dx.doi.org/myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1179/002436308803889684>

"Although the Church teaches respect for homosexual persons in their essential humanity and their basic human rights, this does not and cannot mean the approval of homosexual behavior or the legal recognition of homosexual unions. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behavior, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity. The church cannot fail to defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself."



UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

The United Church of Canada. “*Membership, Ministry, and Human Sexuality*,” United Church Social Policy Positions, 1988, accessed on February 28, 2018, <https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/What%20We%20Believe%20and%20Why/Gender%20and%20Sexuality/Membership%20Ministry%20and%20Human%20Sexuality.pdf>

This is a statement of the United Church of Canada’s position affirming the full and equal inclusion of LGBT people as members of that church and are therefore considering them eligible for ordered ministry: “The [General] Council affirmed that God’s intention for all human relationships is that they be faithful, responsible, just, loving, health-giving, healing, and sustaining of community and self. The implication is that these standards apply to both heterosexual and homosexual couples.”

ROMAN CATHOLIC – UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA DIALOGUE

“*Marriage: Report of the Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue*,” May, 2012. Accessed on February 28, 2018. <https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/What%20We%20Believe%20and%20Why/Ecumenical%20and%20Interfaith%20Relations/Report%20of%20the%20Roman%20Catholic-United%20Church%20Dialogue-Marriage.pdf>

“We wanted to understand the other’s perspectives, to consider similarities and differences in terms of theological method, and to identify areas of convergence and divergence as these relate to a theology of marriage. We wanted to understand how each church came to its unique perspective and the reasons underlying each other’s way of thinking about marriage. Most of all, while remaining honest about real differences, we wanted to discover ways to celebrate and to build upon our important commonalities, where we and others could work together in service to God’s kingdom.”

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Bussie, Jacqueline. “*Scarred Epistemologies: What a Theology of the Cross Has to Say about the Gay Marriage Ban*,” last modified on January 10, 2005. Accessed February 28, 2018, <http://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/638>

“It is my contention that a careful reading of Martin Luther’s classical notion of a *theologia crucis* — theology of the cross — provides us with theological support, grounded firmly in tradition and the gospel, for a convicted rejection of the ban on gay marriage. In Christian terms, the Defense of Marriage Act(s) are violations of agape and justice. In secular terms, the bans on gay marriage are selective discrimination, which is unconstitutional as a violation of the 14th amendment.”

Warner, Stephen R. “*A Conservative Case for Recognition of Gay Relationships in the Church*,” *Let’s Talk* Vol. 8, Num. 2, 2003. Accessed February 28, 2018, <http://mcsletstalk.org/human-sexuality-elca-perspective-struggle/conservative-case-recognition-gay-relationships-church/>

This is an article from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America arguing for inclusion and dignified treatment of LGBT peoples from a conservative perspective.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Tuell, Jack M. “*Doing a New Thing: The United Methodist Church and Homosexuality*,” accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://www.openingssc.org/documents/doing-a-new-thing.pdf>

This is a statement by Bishop Jack M. Tuell on the United Methodist Church’s stance towards homosexuality as one that is affirming and supportive from the four tests of Christian truth from John Wesley: scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

United Church of Christ. “*The Rights of LGBT Parents to Adopt and Raise Children*,” accessed on February 28, 2018, http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/pdfs/2011_THE_RIGHT_OF_LGBT_PARENTS_TO_ADOPT_AND_RAISE_CHILDREN.pdf

This statement of the United Church of Christ argues that, contrary to the claim that same-gender unions are not procreative, LGBT couples in covenantal relationships (as well as single LGBT adopters) have, not only a legal right to adopt children, but also a theological and biblical rationale which recognizes the presence of God in unions between two committed individuals (or a single parent) to nourish a child in the love of God and the fellowship of the Body of Christ regardless of sexual orientation.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Achtemeier, Mark. *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage.* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014).

Achtemeier presents a view of the same-sex marriage debate as a Presbyterian minister reflecting critically on mainstream evangelical and traditional condemnations of homosexual relationships as well as a reflection on biblical interpretation in regards to this issue.

Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly. *Proposed Amendments to the Constitution*, pp. 15-18 (2014) Accessed on February 28, 2018, https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2014-proposed-boa-electronic-version11.pdf

Beginning at section 14.F, "Marriage," the document shows the amendments the Presbyterian Church (USA) has made to its constitution regarding the acceptance and practice of same-sex marriage, stating that the requirements of marriage in their view, love and commitment, are not gender specific. Also included is a conscience clause that no minister will be compelled beyond "the elder's or the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God."

OTHER SOURCES

PERIODICALS

Franck, Matthew J. "Religion, Reason, and Same-Sex Marriage," May, 2011, accessed on February 28, 2018, <http://search.ebscohost.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=ATLA0001834570&site=ehost-live>

Franck presents a view that arguments in favour of same-gender marriage have typically taken a tactic of discrediting opponents by claiming hate or bigotry; whereas reasonably debate must acknowledge that both sides of the debate are in possession of valid arguments.

McCaffrey, Enda. "The Sexual and Theological Ethics of Gay Marriage in France: A Dialectic between Autonomy and Universalism," May 1, 2006, accessed on February 28, 2018. <http://search.ebscohost.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=ATLA0001556078&site=ehost-live>

"The focus of this article is to look at gay marriage from the perspective of contemporary ethical and theological thinking. Specifically, I aim to examine alternative discourses that open up new ways of configuring gay marriage through an examination of concepts of integrity, responsibility and asceticism, and critically the ethical relationship between autonomy and norms."

Young, Pamela Dickey. "Same-sex marriage and the Christian churches in Canada," *Studies in Religion* 2006 35: 3, accessed February 28, 2018. <http://sir.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/content/35/1/3.full.pdf+html> 13

"Same-sex marriage is an important topic in Canadian courts, legislatures and churches today. This paper explores the sorts of official arguments put forth in public policy venues by Canadian churches and then proceeds to analyze these contributions."

Kirby, Andrew et al. "Same-Sex Marriage: A Dilemma for Parish Clergy." *Sexuality & Culture* 21(3). February 2017.

A review of literature focussed on the availability of research about the perspectives held on the issue by individual clergy at parishioner level. These perspectives are important to understand, as clergy hold influential positions as opinion leaders impacting both at individual and social levels, and influence discourses within religion and beyond.

Garcia Oliva, Javier, and Helen Hall. "Same-Sex Marriage: An Inevitable Challenge to Religious Liberty and Establishment?" *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, Volume 3, Issue 1. February 2014.

This article assesses the claim that the recognition of same-sex marriage by the state is, by its very nature, incompatible with religious liberty and also, whether the establishment of the Church of England is at risk as a result.

BOOKS

Ellison, Marvin M. *Same-Sex Marriage? A Christian Ethical Analysis.* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004).

"This critical book is written by a gay man and progressive Christian ethicist who places justice-making at the heart of contemporary spirituality. In dialogue with both legal scholars and theologians, Ellison examines the strengths and weaknesses of how marriage traditional-



ists, advocates of same-sex marriage, and LGBT (lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgender) critics of marriage analyze the issues and frame their arguments. The book offers constructive proposals for revitalizing Christian sexual ethics and moving the debate forward, regardless of whether the right to marry is won or lost.”

Witte Jr., John. *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition.* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.)

This book presents an historical look at the legal, philosophical and religious ideas that have informed the church about the sacrament of marriage. Chapter 7, in particular, examines marriage in the Anglican tradition and its uniqueness in striking a via media between the traditions of the past and the reformations that were happening.

Young, Pamela Dickey. *Religion, Sex and Politics: Christian Churches and Same-Sex Marriage in Canada* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2012).

“...[T]his book analyzes the same-sex marriage debate in Canada by examining the intersections between religion, sexuality and public policy. Furthermore, the various arguments made by religious groups, both for and against same-sex marriage, are discussed, illustrating the range of perspectives on sexuality espoused by Christian groups and the numerous ways in which they influence the outcomes of legislation and court decisions.”

Coren, Michael. *Epiphany: A Christian's Change of Heart & Mind over Same-Sex Marriage* (Toronto, Signal/McClelland & Stewart, 2016).

“.. Michael Coren had a profound spiritual and personal change of heart. Epiphany is about how and why that happened; the reaction from both sides of the fence; and how the Christian doctrine, when studied closely and without bias, heartily supports Michael's findings.” (Penguin Random House 2016)

Chapman, Mark D. “‘Homosexual Practice’ and the Anglican Communion from the 1990s: A Case Study in Theology and Identity.” In *New Approaches in History and Theology to Same-Sex Love and Desire.* Mark D. Chapman and Dominic Janes (Eds.) Palgrave MacMillan, 2018.

New interpretations and original research into the recent history of sexuality that help inform the contemporary debate in the church.

Hensman, Savitri. *Sexuality, Struggle and Saintliness: Same-Sex Love and the Church.* Ekklesia, 2015.

Examines the major shift in thinking on sexuality among Christians that has taken place over the past hundred years. Delving beneath the surface of recent ecclesiastical conflicts, the book looks at how churches can, and do, live with disagreement. This book rejects simple ‘liberal versus conservative’ dichotomies, challenging readers to imaginative transformation.

Song, Robert. *Covenant and Calling: Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Relationships.* SCM Press, 2014.

Rejecting treatments of the Bible which concentrate on a small number of well-rehearsed texts on same-sex relationships to the exclusion of the Bible's overarching narrative, this book provides a fresh interpretation of the Christian tradition and defends a vision of the church which embraces a plurality of callings, to marriage, celibacy, and covenant partnership.

Brownson, James V. *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships.* Eerdmans, 2013.

Develops a broad, cross-cultural sexual ethic from Scripture, locates current debates over homosexuality in that wider context, and explores why the Bible speaks the way it does about same-sex relationships. Fairly presenting both sides, the work analyzes all of the pertinent biblical texts and helpfully identifies “stuck points” in the ongoing debate. Written in order to serve and inform the ongoing debate, will prove a useful resource for Christians who want to form a considered opinion on this important issue.

Groves, the Revd Canon Philip. *The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality: A Resource to Enable Listening and Dialogue.* SPCK: London, 2008.

This is a useful collection of essays with chapters on scripture, tradition, science, and gay spirituality.

Smith, Ted A. (Ed.) *Frequently Asked Questions About Sexuality, the Bible, & the Church*. Covenant Network of Presbyterians, 2006.

Covering practically all of the issues involved in the Church's reflection on homosexuality, the Bible and same-sex marriage, a variety of theologians (mostly Presbyterian) make a case for the Church to accept and provide marriage blessings for same-sex couples.


Linzey, A., and R. Kirker (Ed.), *Gays and the Future of Anglicanism: Responses to The Windsor Report*. John Hunt: Winchester, 2005.

A useful set of essays written as a direct response to The Windsor Report.

Sullivan, Andrew. *Same-Sex Marriage: Pro and Con*. Vintage Press, 2004.

Contains 'pro' and 'con' positions by a first rate list of contributors on a wide-range of topics in the discussion concerning same-sex marriage both in the civil and religious considerations of the subject.





A Word About
**Facilitated
Dialogue**

Appendix 7



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

A WORD ABOUT FACILITATED DIALOGUE

At our last Synod, members were asked what would be most helpful to them in preparing for our discussion at Synod 2018 on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon. The majority of comments focused on the quality of process we hope to see unfolding over the next year.

In particular, there was a deep desire for prayerful, respectful and honest listening and dialogue across our differences. This was a call for kindness and charity, a willingness to listen to strongly held commitments and convictions, to share differing perspectives in good faith, and to build relationships and understanding within the diocese.

In particular, two things were raised up as having particular importance. First, that dialogues include the voices of LGBTQ people within the church; that we hear their ex-

periences and commitments. Second, that these dialogues happen in facilitated, small groups with clear and agreed norms.

Facilitation is a way of providing structure and process to dialogue without taking the reins. A facilitator's task is to support every participant to do their best thinking, sharing and listening. They do this by managing the group's process without being a participant in the discussion. They remain neutral.



Facilitators will help the group manage their discussion so that:

- » *there is a clear sense of purpose and process;*
- » *group norms are set and followed;*
- » *all participants can contribute and feel heard;*
- » *different opinions are expressed and heard respectfully;*
- » *no single individual dominates the conversation;*
- » *assumptions are sensitively surfaced, clarified and tested;*
- » *themes and synchronicities are identified;*
- » *mutual understanding is built;*
- » *there is a sense of transparency and authenticity in the dialogue;*
- » *the discussion moves along at a good pace, time is used well;*
- » *the group stays on topic and on track.*

CHOOSING A FACILITATOR

There are no hard and fast rules about the best facilitator for your situation, but there are a few things to consider as you make this decision.

Not everybody can comfortably or effectively function as a facilitator. For example, people with strong thoughts, feelings or biases on the topic will find it extremely challenging to lead the group without adding their input.

A good facilitator needs to be firm. Facilitation is not passive and it can take a level of assertiveness to keep people and topics on track. You are looking for someone who can be directive without dominating.

It can be difficult or inadvisable for your priest to facilitate - or they might not want to and this should be respected. On the other hand, it is important that the priest not dominate the conversation either by taking a strong leadership or authority role in the discussion or by being the final word on the topic.

FINDING A FACILITATOR

You may have skilled facilitators within the parish who would be willing to put their ideas aside for a few hours to help the group. It's a good idea to have a pair of facilitators (remember Jesus sent his followers out in pairs). Co-facilitators can bring different gifts and skills to bear.

There may be skilled facilitators within your community. People in education, social services or community development often have training and experience in this type of work. The Diocese's Congregational Development Department may also be able to link you with a facilitator. †



Appendix 8

PASTORAL STATEMENT

on Commitment to Diverse Theological Positions in the Diocese of Toronto
by the Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson
Archbishop of Toronto

and endorsed by the Bishops Suffragan of Toronto,
the Right Reverend Peter Fenty, the Right Reverend Riscylla Shaw, the Right Reverend Kevin
Robertson, and the Right Reverend Jenny Andison.

From the earliest expressions of an Anglican way of living out the Christian faith, there has been diversity. That diversity has historically taken many forms, from tension, conflict and violence, to coexistence, indifference, and eventual synthesis. Whatever the witness of the past, however, the Diocese of Toronto is committed to reflecting our own diversity in a way that avoids the conflictual examples with which we are, alas, too familiar.

We believe that there have been positive forms of difference that have allowed the church to flourish in many places and with many people, not only within Anglicanism, but elsewhere. It is this aspect of our heritage that we have valued in this Diocese, and as Bishops of this Diocese, it is a value we wish to affirm strongly and preserve faithfully. Unlike in some periods and places of Anglicanism, here at least our unity does not imply uniformity in all things.

My pastoral decision as Archbishop to make provision to permit the marriage of same-sex couples in prescribed conditions is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church. This is complex, multi-faceted, and unsettling. All churches are dealing with these matters, some more publicly as we are, some internally, but it is a discussion that is global. The Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, with whom we share the historic episcopate, although we are not in communion with each other, and most of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, remain unchanged in their teaching of the historic Christian understanding of marriage as a sacramental covenant between one woman and one man. Some other churches, including Lutheran Churches and Old Catholic Churches with whom we share full communion and a number of Provinces of the Anglican Communion, have adopted changes to include couples of the same sex. There are also divergent views about how people and institutions can and should respond in a period of change when the parameters of those changes have not been fully agreed. The history of Anglicanism as well as of the wider Church has shown that matters of the faith, including those governing sexual morals, are not straightforwardly, consistently or unanimously divided into important and not-so-important. It will undoubtedly take a very long time to come to consensus and may not do so.

In the Diocese of Toronto, we have formally and informally discussed issues of sexuality for nearly 50 years. When our General Synod in 2007 received the St Michael report, it adopted a resolution that same sex commitments have significant doctrinal implications but not at the level of core doctrine, that is, something needing to be held by all as a matter of salvation. A second motion was passed affirming that this is not a communion breaking issue. Obviously, this last motion expresses a hope, not a prescription, since matters of conscience cannot be legislated or coerced. I take the St. Michael report to open the possibility of a newly expanded understanding of marriage but, as a corollary, I believe it implicitly affirms the continuing Christian authenticity and legitimacy of those

who hold a traditional understanding of marriage and the faithfulness of the theology and practice that support it.

In fact, the norm for the Church continues to be the marriage of couples of opposite sex. The Anglican Church of Canada is currently in a discernment process to include the marriage of same-sex couples. Until that decision has been finalised, and as an interim pastoral response, as Bishop of Toronto with canonical authority and responsibility for the pastoral care and oversight of this Diocese, I have permitted a small number of priests, licensed to the cure of souls in a community, to preside in their parish at the marriage of a same-sex couple in certain limited circumstances. Both priest and congregation must concur that this ministry will be offered. No one will be obligated to act against their conscience. Neither parishes nor individual clergy will be required to celebrate marriages contrary to their convictions.

Not all welcome this new development: some because it goes too far, some because it is not enough.

We recognize there are theological and cultural differences across our diocese and within parishes which are strained by both the limits and permission represented in blessing same sex relationships and more specifically marriage.

I wish to reiterate – and this is unanimously affirmed by the Area Bishops – that there is and will be a continued and honoured place in all aspects of diocesan life for those who do not agree to the provisional arrangements for same sex marriages. Theirs is an authentic, sustainable conviction that bears significant and historic weight. It remains a coherent theological and biblical position within our Anglican tradition.

As Bishops we endorse unequivocally the principle that the Diocese of Toronto must honour and safeguard the diversity represented in its parishes and clergy, including those holding to an historic understanding of Christian marriage, so as to maintain the highest degree of communion possible, and together participate in the mission to make the crucified and risen Christ known in the world. We are personally committed to continue the face-to-face conversations that will foster this. This diversity will continue to be reflected in the selection, ordination and appointment of clergy, and in the lay and clerical membership of committees and councils of the diocese. It will also include the honoring of clergy conscience in the celebration and blessing of marriage.

We have seen that there is diversity within parishes that are generally opposed to same-sex commitments, just as there is in parishes that are generally in favour. There is a rich breadth of life in our parishes, with parishioners who are theologically astute, prayerful and deeply committed Christians legitimately holding differing convictions. We are in very different places and have been formed in very diverse contexts, theologically, spiritually, scripturally, experientially. The diversity of our diocesan community is a precious gift, challenging as it might be. It is vital to maintain this as it enriches not diminishes our common witness to the faith in a variety of ways. Though such witness is rooted in differing interpretations and understanding of Holy Scripture and the tradition, these are now within the contemporary spectrum of Anglicanism. They need to be engaged if we are to learn and grow together in fuller maturity in Christ.

All of us need to extend to each the most generous Christian charity that Jesus our Redeemer calls us to exercise as we, together, seek to discern and live out God's will. Unfortunately, this has not

always been the case, and we cannot condone such lack of charity. The Gospel and our baptismal covenant call us to love one another with the love of Christ and treat each other with dignity, respect and forbearance. We need to be tender with one another, recognizing each other as a beloved child of God redeemed by our Saviour Jesus Christ, each one bearing the image of God, each one the desire of God's heart and will.

Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, September 29, 2017

