



The Most Rev. Melissa M. Skelton
Metropolitan

The Anglican Provincial Synod of British Columbia and Yukon

#280- 380 Leathead Rd., Kelowna, BC V1X 1H8
(778)478-8310 ph (778)478-8314 fax
admin@kootenay.info

October 22, 2018

Dear Members of the Council of General Synod,

I write to communicate the mind of the Provincial Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC and Yukon on the matter of the potential changes in the marriage canon. The following is a summary of the conversation and discussion among lay and clergy delegates on that subject at the Provincial Synod of BC and Yukon held at the Sorrento Centre on September 14 to September 16, 2018.

The Provincial Synod of British Columbia and Yukon wishes the Council of General Synod to know that:

- As individual dioceses of the Province we have not and do not desire to host further conversations in our dioceses on the potential changes to the marriage canon. Many of us hosted those conversations prior to and directly after the last General Synod, and we find that our parishes and their leaders have no more appetite for those conversations.
- As dioceses of the Province, our intention is to find a way to walk together as a Province no matter what the outcome on the potential change in the marriage canon is at the 2019 General Synod.
- As the Province, we urge the Council of General Synod to apply its efforts at the 2019 General Synod to find a way forward on the potential change to the marriage canon that a) authorizes the dioceses and bishops who want to offer marriage to same-gender couples to do so and, at the same time, b) allows the dioceses, bishops and priests holding the traditional view of marriage (between one man and one woman) to continue a practice consistent with their belief.

Please know that the people of the Province of BC and Yukon are praying for you as you work in preparing for the important work ahead at the General Synod.

In Christ,

The Most Rev. Melissa M. Skelton

MMS/kel

Amendments to Canon XXI Consideration

Response from the Province of Canada

When the Province of Canada met in June 2018 for its Provincial Synod, we did spend some time around the resolution on the Marriage Canon. First, we had a presentation by the Rev. Dr. Paul Friesen and the Rev. Paul Jennings. Following their presentation there was a short Q&A. We then broke into assigned groups to discuss and had harmonious discussions regarding the motion. We did not seek to find a consensus and therefore do not have a statement as such from our Province. There is, however, a strong desire and commitment to continue to journey together despite the divergent opinions that are held between some.

Attached are the notes taken during the discussion groups' time spent considering the motion.

Blessings,

Trevor

Prolocutor, Ecclesiastical Province of Canada

Table discussion on Marriage Canon

(#2 - Friday evening)

Consideration of Proposed Changes to Canon 21

1) What makes you hopeful about the proposed change to the Canon on marriage, Personally? In your parish or Diocese?

2) What makes you anxious about the proposed change to the Canon on marriage, Personally? In your Parish or Diocese?

Group One

The change to the Canon gives me hope.

Some people are still concerned about people being divorced and married again!!

It is easier to discuss when the same language is used for heterosexual or same sex couples.

A video on Respectful Conversations should be seen by all with differing opinions.

The hope is in our conversations.

Group Two

(Hope) Room for both sides in discussion.

(Hope) There is an effort to include everyone. But that effort will bring brokenness (Concern)

Many clergy against it.

(Concern) This change ties us directly to civil law. Anything the civil law says is marriage, we accept by default.

Maybe we **should** give up our licenses.

(Concern) Freedom of clergy to be fully apart of the greater church is doubtful.

(Hope) Things won't change as much as we think.

(Concern) This is no longer about love. It's about "liberal" and "conservative" ... words which have no true meaning in human existence.

Group Three

Marriage changes from a union between a man and a woman to a marriage between two people.

A lot of people (same sex) do not feel part of the Church.

The only thing can serve the world is love.

There has to be a way these people can be a part of the church.

Hopeful – we are ALL accepted.

Whatever discussion happens is going to separate us.

Decision will separate us as a Church.

We are going to have people walk away from our Church.

Concern is about how each level – person parish and diocese will accept either vote.

Nobody wants to see our church split.

The process on the Marriage Canon had problems – pressure from both sides of the debate will create concerns.

People get attached to the emotional sides of the debate.

Which are we going to do – what plan will get us all to God?

Can we come together on this issue?

Is the way out of this debate to get out of the marriage business?

How can we stay together as a Church?

Group Four

Hope / Concerns - Will the report of the commission allow for passing of the canon. That we are talking about marriage. We are talking about disciple ship not gender. Will it be inclusive enough? Will 1/3 of the church be alienated? Great disbelief at the level of hatred against gay people at a diocesan discussion. Why is marriage the only sacrament we deny? We are behind the time and trying to catch up. Society does not need us to catch up. If it does not pass. Problems in either case. What happens the day after the vote? There will inevitably be a sense of winners and losers. How big is the tent? Is

the conscience clause enough to include those who dissent? Dioceses are proceeding with same sex marriages already and other may if they feel the process has failed? Couples are getting married in other churches (United, Lutheran). Does the language have to change? Older couples marry now who will not have children.

Group Five

Adam & Eve = fruitful and multiply

Christian Marriage – what is it? Think about what you think it should be. Not a question that all are welcome in our churches.

(Civil Marriage)

- Love one another as Christ to all
- Covenant and Sacrament
- How do we keep all together will all feel they are part of the Body
- What is the meaning of Same Sex Marriage – flexibility in the words that are being used

Appeal to Scripture

- Male and female he created us. Only marriage was male and female

Jesus union / no marriage is forever / men and women are all brides of Christ

- Church
- Time to restore to core religion
- Alive in Christ
- We as clergy work by government laws / give up marriage. We can bless marriage
- Canon

No preparation to marriage.

Marriage is a sacrament.

Hard for this to happen in our parish.

Is there an Anglican Communion – this would break us.

Respect the dialogue in the Church.

This motion is very hard to understand. The Canon

Church – do what is right.

Heart is always going to rule over the body.

On Sundays people are there to worship.

How can people react to this Canon?

We don't know how this will work.

Expressions – Come to accept it; accept our children and their friends have to be with love for all. We have to be careful how do we react to the Canon vote.

Is it the way of life. Love.

We will survive.

Group Six (Dream Team)

- 1) Hope: opens the door for a more opening and welcoming community
 - a. Provides opportunity for some to return
 - b. The recent process.... The commission ... more consideration, less divisive, more accommodating, leading the way.
 - c. A more respectful process.
 - d. Have engaged us to look deeper into what is a relationship. What is a holy and sacred relationship?
 - e. That two people in a loving and faithful relationship can have that relationship recognized through making a sacred covenant with God.
- 2) Anxiety: There will be division in the church.
 - a. We are going to keep talking about it.

Provincial Synod
Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario
October 9-12, 2018
Ottawa

**AMENDMENT TO CANON XXI
(THE MARRIAGE CANON)**

Report on Discussions

Prepared by Laura Walton, ODT - Prolocutor

The main purpose of our discussions was to help us to shape thoughts and provide a clear outline to the Council of General Synod (CoGS) request that each Diocese and Province to make a response about the upcoming vote at General Synod concerning the proposed changes to Canon XXI.

Our work was done in two sections. The first section was one of learning and reflection. General Synod Chancellor David Jones, QC joined Ontario's Synod and presented both background and details on the Canon.

He reviewed the directions from 2013 to CoGS to prepare a motion for 2016 with 2 types of amendments. Explaining one to allow the marriage of same sex couples in the same way as opposite sex couples and two, to include a conscience clause. This need to prepare a motion led to the creation of the Marriage Canon Commission who presented its report ("This Holy Estate"). <https://www.anglican.ca/about/ccc/cogs/cmc/> .

Chancellor Jones then explained the Structure of Canon XXI in its current form from 1967 with references. https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/221_canon_XXI.pdf

He then reviewed procedures for changing a canon dealing with doctrine and talked of the 4 changes required to make the wording of Canon XXI gender neutral along with the existing conscience clause.

Chancellor Jones continued explanations of the original version of the Resolution A051 containing the opt-out mechanism and then the amended version with the Opt-in while maintaining that it did not change the existing provision that no minister is required to solemnize any marriage.

The final aspect of the presentation was review of the current wording of A051R2 as passed at first reading by GS 2016 and as the wording that will go forward for the second reading in 2019.

Following this thorough presentation there was an opportunity for Q&A. There were few comments and people felt satisfied in their understanding of where we were and where GS 2019 will be heading in its discussion of Canon XXI.

The second section of the Synod's were for conversations with a focus on listening. Archbishop Johnson asked that members gather in groups of 3 to dialogue and listen to each other. The focus

of discussion was to be on what would one like to say about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon including their hopes and fears and what does it mean to be a diverse people of God as we face the joy and hurt that will come from the results of the Canon XXI vote.

Members were asked to find 2 people that they did not know well and begin their listening process. Following their first group, they were then asked to create another triad with those who they hadn't previously spoken to. Each person of the triads was to take a turn speaking and then listen to the two others. What did they hear from each other and what were their hopes, concerns, thoughts?

Once these 2 discussion times were complete, people were asked to comment and report back to Synod on what they heard in their groups and in the Chancellor's presentation. This is a summary of their responses.

- Members are determined that we will continue to walk together as Anglicans regardless of the Synod vote
- There is anxiety about how we move forward after the vote whatever the outcome.
- There is a feeling that for many this topic needs to be come to some sort of closure.
- We are losing focus on other ministries while we continue to deal with this.
- How do we care for those who are in parishes-diocese contrary to their beliefs?
- How does our church care for those who are hurting when this Canon passes or does not?
- How do we communicate better with one and other?
- How do we build bridges?
- Do we have tools to share within our Diocese/Province that will help heal the Church and let us continue to walk together with differing opinions?

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

From: **Luke, Iain** <iain.luke@usask.ca>
Date: Tue, Oct 9, 2018 at 10:14 AM
Subject: Province of Rupert's Land consideration of Canon XXI amendment
To: Lynne McNaughton <lynne@mcnaughton.org>

Dear Lynne:

Thank you for the prompt to let you know about the outcome of our Provincial Synod consideration of the proposed amendment to the Marriage Canon. I will attach a number of documents with this message. One is the voting analysis from General Synod 2016, which I may have already shared with you. It highlights the distinctive position in which our Province finds itself in relation to the amendment, and it motivated our Provincial Executive to consider carefully how we might bring the question before the Synod which met this past May.

A second document formed the basis for some consultation I was asked (by Executive) to undertake as we prepared a process for consideration at Synod. It shows the kinds of questions we identified as requiring further thought, as well as laying out the particular challenges in our Province as we understood them. This letter formed the basis of a number of one-on-one interviews I conducted, with people identified by Executive as holding particular expertise or experience which would be helpful. These interviews were conducted confidentially, and consequently there is no record that can be shared.

Finally, there is a folder consisting of reports from table conversations at Synod. These reports vary from single-sentence summaries of discussion, to verbatim transcriptions of table talk. However, they manifest both a range and (in some ways) a convergence of perceptions which was evident during the Provincial Synod meeting.

The process which unfolded at Synod consisted of three elements developed by the Executive after receiving the advice of our consultants.

First, and quite separate from any direct consideration of the marriage canon amendment, we made time in the agenda to hear a presentation on indigenous teaching concerning marriage. This was led by Bishop Lydia Mamakwa and an elder from the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh. This was the second session of provincial synod which dedicated time to listening to indigenous teaching on a specific topic, and it is a practice I commend to General Synod as well. The decision to focus on marriage as this year's topic was, obviously, related to the consideration of the marriage canon amendment.

However, it also reflected Executive's view that of all the many voices which have been heard in the church-wide debate, the voice of traditional indigenous teachings continues to be marginalized, and this despite the church's express commitment to honour that voice as part of the work of reconciliation. It further reflected an understanding, expressed by the indigenous bishops prior to General Synod 2016, that traditional indigenous teachings offer a different focus on the meaning and significance of marriage, which is not part of the usually-argued case either for or against the acceptance of same-sex marriage.

The reception of the presentation (and indeed some elements of the presentation itself) illustrated the difficulty of resisting the temptation to reduce anything that is said about marriage to being either for or against; but I believe that was a struggle worth undertaking.

Secondly, the synod agenda made room for the possibility that dioceses or members would bring motions on the topic of the marriage canon amendment, to be debated as memorials to General Synod. Executive neither encouraged nor discouraged the bringing of such motions, and in the event, none were proposed.

Instead, the energy in the gathering seemed to be focused on the questions we put before synod for conversations at diocesan tables, as follows:

“What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach the second reading of the marriage canon amendment in 2019?”

And, “What do we need to do to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?

Discussion of these questions formed the third component of our consideration.

The reports from the table groups are included in the zipped attachment, and participants were advised that these records would be released, without naming individual commenters or dioceses. The reports were posted on the Provincial Synod website.

I have read through the reports and can identify some linking themes, which I have listed below, although you are welcome to form your own view of these.

- A. Ethical considerations about how to deliberate and legislate
 - a. Perceptions of bias in the process so far
 - b. Consciousness of the “win-lose” quality of legislative debate
 - c. Concerns about inappropriate and unchristian behaviour in and around debate
 - d. When is conscientious dissent from (or repudiation of) a vote appropriate?
- B. Frustration about the legislative process
 - a. Recognition of potential for harm and abuse of power
 - b. Lack of space in the church for the concept of “loyal opposition” & role for minority
 - c. Perception that voting highlights the dividedness of the church rather than the fruit of the Spirit
- C. Recognition of how specific groups are affected and might be ill-served

- a. Those who identify with traditional Christian teaching feeling unheard, rejected, or put down
- b. Indigenous communities asking for meaningful respect for their voices, methods and perspectives
- c. Keeping the focus of debate narrow, so that people who identify as LGB2Q do not fear for their place in the church
- d. Each group needs to hear genuine appreciation from the church, rather than accommodation or tolerance/acceptance

D. Specific critique of problems arising in 2016

- a. Voting method must be transparent and accurate
- b. Officers and leadership need to take great care in leading for the whole
- c. Chancellor's intervention (suggesting that the Canon does not prohibit same-sex marriage as it stands) is still unprocessed
- d. Last-minute developments prior to, or at, General Synod make it difficult to be accountable to diocesan communities
- e. Patronizing/racist attitudes towards indigenous dissent

E. What we are learning about being the church

- a. Contexts are so different from place to place, more than we imagine
- b. The role of bishops in promoting unity is vital, both within and across dioceses
- c. Synodical government means that we all have to take responsibility for the whole process of decision-making, not just its outcomes
- d. The indigenous church has something to teach us about discernment in community
- e. Damage has been done to our relationships and to mutual trust
- f. Offering good news, and making disciples, remain at the heart of our mission
- g. Even in the midst of division there is much that we share

F. Substantive comment on same-sex marriage

- a. The differentiated option (as proposed in *This Holy Estate*) is still there

- b. Same-sex couples are not abstractions; they are real people who want to embody their faith and love in marriage
- c. If a new doctrine of marriage is accepted, there needs to be an articulation of how and why the traditional doctrine is still viable
- d. In what ways does the church distinguish itself from social trends on marriage and sexuality?
- e. Remarriage while divorced an important precedent, allowing space for dioceses and individuals to make their own determinations

G. How to prepare for life after second-reading vote

- a. Recognize and prepare for the impact either outcome will have (including having supplementary motions ready to consider)
- b. Give attention to, and learn from, the small number of parishes and dioceses already living with mixed opinions
- c. Talk, before and after, about what it means to stay together
- d. Respect the principles of indigenous self-determination and Free Prior Informed Consent

I hope that summary will be helpful to you, and I trust that there will be meaningful space in the General Synod planning process to take account of this process of consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Luke, Prolocutor
Province of Rupert's Land

Voting by Diocese and Province, A051

Diocese	Bishops		Clergy		Lay		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
E Nfld/Lab	1	0	3	0	3	0	7	0
C Nfld	1	0	1	2	2	2	4	4
W Nfld	1	0	2	0	2	0	5	0
NS/PEI	1	0	3	0	4	0	8	0
Fredericton	0	1	0	3	1	3	1	7
Quebec	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	0
Montreal	1	0	3	0	3	0	7	0
<i>Canada (total)</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>11</i>
Ottawa	1	0	3	0	4	0	8	0
Ontario	1	0	2	1	3	0	6	1
Toronto	3	1	7	0	8	1	18	2
Niagara	1	0	4	0	5	0	10	0
Huron	2	0	5	0	6	0	13	0
Algoma	0	1	2	0	2	1	4	2
Moosonee	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	2
<i>Ontario (total)</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>7</i>
ISMM	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	5
Rupert's Land	1	0	2	1	4	0	7	1
Brandon	1	0	0	1	2	1	3	2
Arctic	0	2	0	3	0	3	0	7
Saskatchewan	0	2	0	2	1	2	1	6
Saskatoon	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	2
Qu'Appelle	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	4
Calgary	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	5
Edmonton	1	0	2	0	2	1	5	1
Athabasca	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	6
<i>R.Land (total)</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>39</i>
Kootenay	1	0	2	0	3	0	6	0
APCI	1	0	0	0	3	0	4	0
Caledonia	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	5
Yukon	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	5
New West.	1	0	3	0	4	0	8	0
BC	1	0	3	0	3	1	7	1
<i>BC/Y (total)</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>11</i>
Non-diocesan	1	0	3	0	6	0	10	0
<i>Youth delegates (included in lay tallies)</i>					<i>15</i>	<i>8</i>		
Grand Total	26	12	52	26	77	30	145	68

Note: there were three recorded abstentions (Toronto-C, E Nfld-L, Quebec-L), and six votes not cast or not recorded (Quebec – 2 clergy, 1 lay; APCI – 1 clergy; Brandon – 1 clergy; non-diocesan – 1 bishop).

Consultation for Provincial Synod Agenda – Marriage Canon

General Synod, meeting in 2016, gave first reading to a motion which would enable the marriage of same-sex couples in the Anglican Church of Canada. The change will take effect if and when it receives second reading at the next session of General Synod, in 2019. It is structured as an “opt in” provision, so that clergy and parishes will only be authorized to marry same-sex couples where they have the permission of their bishop.

In between first and second readings, the church Constitution requires that the proposal be sent to diocesan and provincial synods for consideration. Our provincial synod meets in May 2018, in Edmonton. Provincial synod is not obliged to “consider” the proposal. If we do, the outcome of our consideration will not directly affect the General Synod process. We could choose, though, to send a message, for example, to encourage the General Synod to adopt or reject second reading, or to recommend amendments.

In giving thought to the agenda for 2018, the Provincial Executive acknowledged:

- 1) that there would be an expectation that consideration would receive time in the agenda
- 2) That such time would need careful forethought, not to predetermine the outcome, but to provide an appropriate atmosphere for discussion and discernment
- 3) That there could be a positive contribution to the discernment of General Synod, arising from the distinctive make-up of our province
- 4) And that there is the possibility that the mandate to “consider” could lead to a different kind of conversation, which is not focused on coming to a legislative decision for or against.

The Executive agreed that we should consult with individuals we could identify as having gifts (wisdom, experience, understanding, and compassion) in process and facilitation, to help us shape how we prepare for and undertake our time of consideration. The Executive asked me, as Prolocutor, to undertake that consultation and report back. I am grateful that you have responded to the invitation to participate in this consultation.

There is some background information which it may be important for you to know. The distinctive make-up of our province can be identified in a number of ways, but two are especially relevant to this task. First, the province of Rupert’s Land is significantly more indigenous than other provinces in the church. Two of our ten dioceses are primarily indigenous, two others have explicit commitments to equal partnership between indigenous and non-indigenous cultures within the church, and all the others recognize the presence of indigenous worshipping communities in their midst.

It must not be assumed that indigenous Anglicans in the province are all of one mind regarding same-sex marriage. However, the three indigenous bishops made clear, in preparation for General Synod 2016, that they felt the church’s way of framing the question did not involve adequate recognition of the distinctive teaching about marriage and human sexuality within indigenous cultures. This concern was compounded by negative experiences during the debate at General Synod, which gave little or no heed to indigenous processes of decision-making, and which also left indigenous representatives and advocates for same-sex marriage feeling further apart than they previously had. There is a hope, therefore, that the provincial synod can model a more genuine and respectful meeting of cultures in discussion of this proposal.

Secondly, the province of Rupert's Land contains a different balance of opinion on the admissibility of same-sex marriage, when compared to other provinces. A breakdown of voting at General Synod shows that the members representing dioceses in our province voted 37% in favour of the motion, compared to over 80% from the rest of the country. Again, this does not mean that opinion is uniform within the province. Five diocesan delegations voted largely against, two were largely in favour, and three had mixed views. The backdrop for "considering" the proposal in provincial synod will include the reality that opinion is more varied within our province, and includes substantially more opposition, than elsewhere. This also creates a hope that the provincial synod can model a constructive encounter between people who hold different positions on the issue.

In addition, it may be important to know that the theme of the synod is "Living and Sharing a Jesus-Shaped Life". Our keynote speaker, Bishop Stephen Cottrell, will focus his talks on "Making Disciples".

While I believe that the provincial leadership is genuinely open to any wise advice which may be offered, there are some questions which may help bring some focus. Please feel free to suggest better questions! For now, this is what I have:

1. How do we articulate what we hope to achieve in our work of consideration, without pre-empting or prejudicing its outcome?
2. How do we prepare members of provincial synod to participate and contribute?
3. How do we live out our commitment to reconciliation across cultures, in the midst of a conversation which has already created greater distance?
4. What structures for conversation will best enable the kind of gracious, respectful and constructive encounter we hope to have?
5. What should people in leadership for the synod keep in mind, as they exercise their responsibilities in this matter?

With thanks,
Iain Luke, Prolocutor
Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land

Teaching and Learning ahead of General Synod: send to synod@anglicanyeg.org

- 1) What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach second reading of the Marriage Canon amendment?
 - Communication and explanation of what the proposal actually is and isn't: The change would allow "two people" (ie of the same or different gender) to marry in church, as people's consciences permit. Questions of policy would be for dioceses to decide. In the opinion of the Chancellor at the 2016 GS, the current marriage canon could already permit it and the proposal simply makes explicit what is now implicit. This would still mean it was up to dioceses to decide their policy.
 - Also important to be clear about what the proposal is not: it is not whether LGBTQ2 are made in the image of God, or whether they can be faithful Christians. That has been affirmed many times already.
 - GS should have given the Provinces more direction about how to discuss this important matter! (we got 15 minutes).
 - We're debating a change in the marriage canon,
 - We're talking about people who respect the church, love God, love one another, and want to embody that love in their marriage.
 - Homosexual persons are among us and within our families, workplaces, and communities; these are human lives and relationships, not abstract theological questions.
 - Consider a pastoral resolution for each possible outcome, either affirming the blessing of same-gender civil marriages can continue, or affirming that people can continue to hold a traditional view of marriage if the canon amendment passes. Both need to be on the slate before Synod begins, to be ready for either outcome.
- 2) What do we need to do to best enable ourselves to sustain and nurture good relationships after General Synod makes its decision?
 - stay in the room; go together to the table
 - focus on Jesus as the lynchpin of our faith, not other things
 - pastoral resolutions/resources must be in place to reach out to those who will be hurt, whichever way the decision goes.
 - Tell the bishops when they get home they are shepherds of the whole flock and have pastoral obligations to the whole flock as the implications of the decision sink in.
 - Listen to our youth and pray for grace to receive their gift of clear-eyed, unconditional love.
 - We have a responsibility of explanation and possible mitigation in the media and the wider community including our ecumenical and interfaith partners as well as the community at large.
 - Need to assure all of our people in the diocese that they are all welcome at church and will continue to be so, regardless of what the outcome has been.

- Need to work out locally the Chancellor's explanation that the canon already permits it, meaning a bishop can go ahead without being taken to the Provincial Court? What are we going to do about that?

What would you say to General Synod as we approach the second reading of the Marriage Canon amendment in 2019?

We expect every person to act like a loving follower of Christ, this is a volatile and emotive subject and it is very inappropriate to express victory or defeat reactions in the presence of others.

Due to our diversity, the canon should pass but should not be the thing that breaks the communion. The opt-out clause allows for a variety of responses to the canon, dependent on context and conviction.

2. What do we need to do, to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?

In an act of grace, meet people where they are at, be sensitive to hurts and disappointments that have been experienced and be a person of nurture, love and compassion.

- ❖ At general 2016 there was the first passing of the changes to marriage canon
 - For consideration, for this session, is
 - 2 questions - need a recorder - electronic preferred
 - What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach the second reading of the Marriage Canon amendment in 2019
 - Don't break the marriage canon
 - This isn't the way to deal with these issues, legislation isn't the way to do this because it sets up winners and losers. But don't know how to better approach it.
 - The processes, the ruling of the national chancellor and principles of subsidiarity, etc, means people will do what people will do, anyway so why are we ripping the church apart doing it?
 - Can't judge another's lifestyle
 - Was more angered by the comments away from the room
 - People can't help the way they were born and had family and friends who are same sex and married but had to do it elsewhere - still love them no matter what
 - No qualms about it
 - There are churches already who will do 'marriage' of same sex couples
 - It's hard enough in the small communities to see people who are homosexual/gay. Always mistreated and left home to live in Winnipeg. You can't change their DNA their nature
 - Since this is a decision we are making we have to remember that as the Anglican church we are one body, we need to make decisions we have and respect no matter what comes out of it
 - Affirm that this isn't the way to do it - don't want to dismiss as a non issue, it isn't a non issue, but is it the issue that we want to define us in this way?

And for me this comes down to process more than anything

- Have heard others and the potential pain, and the very real pain, and the whole range
- Don't know what the process is or if another can be used. Don't like the winners and losers, and the fact that it divides the church
- Even yesterday, almost an hour of discussion to change one word, one thing.
- When it come to procedures, it takes a long time. And those who are involved need to be patient, and they have been, they're good christians, in their lives. It's the 'us and them' it's the 'procedures'. Is the marriage canon an actual canon? Or is it man made? It is there to prevent bigamy in the early days of canada, and maybe needs to be changed. But we need t love and continue to love all who are involved. Do we have to agree with them to love them?
 - Feel unloved when ostracized by their lifestyles
 - They're God's people, God put them on earth
- Leaving it up to the bishops, to one diocese
 - Local option will leave it to the conscience of those who are doing, or not doing
- Many days ago, a 'status woman' wasn't allowed to marry Metis or non status and maintain place in the family - but that was the law. And the family eventually took them back although she had lost her 'status.'
- Thank god people change. That's the whole point of the gospel
- Mind your own business
 - Leaves it open to options

- Bishop decides what happens in the diocese and then the priest decides whether they will or won't.
 - If you don't agree with it you don't have to do it
 - Similar with the issue around marriage of divorced peoples
 - People are being asked to open their hearts and love as we are loved by Christ
 - This is reminiscing of the debate over divorced persons is being allowed to remarry in the church
 - And there are greater concerns facing the church, today
 - Our context is different than places where the marriage canon is bringing or not bringing people to the church - we need to answer locally
 -
- What do we need to do to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?
 - We are asked to deal with the issue locally, but not decided locally, although applied locally
 - They will do the same thing they did when they allowed divorced persons to remarry - case by case church by church basis
 - Every church decides every marriage on a case by case basis - every clergy person will make this decisions on a case by case basis
 - This is more about the aspects of life that we're not comfortable talking about
 - Why are we arguing with each other about whether someone is or is not one way or another
 - Need to commit as a diocese to keep walking together, to keep learning, listening, and respect humility and love
 - Brought this to a vestry meeting, once and was told that if break this, then what's the use of having vestry? If the bishop says we're doing this, then it

will break the laws in the church? What is the use of having the vestry, the church

- Don't have to do it if don't want to do it.
Never did a divorced marriage. No one will force that on me. Need to understand it
 - That belief needs to be respected
- What would e more impactful to the community?
Legalities creates ostracism and hate. We enforce love and the ability to love no matter what situation, or lifestyle.
- This has been discussed since 1979 - its been a slow progress in the church, and this shouldn't surprise us. Even the woman's ordination issue has crept up on us. The Indian act meant a time when we couldn't treat people as people. There was a time when the church endorsed slavery
 - Even music? The use of the guitar in the church was another movement of progression in the church
- Wonder, also, given the progression that those not on that progression are not ostracized - cant dismiss those not on this journey, or not in this place on this journey - cant be dismissive, or isolating
- This is typically Canadian. We'll talk about it. It will fester. We'll move inch by inch on it, we will all loose, and eventually we'l say what were we talking about?
- Sustaining and nourishing of relationships?
 - In the Anglican Church but don't officiate over marriage of divorced people - this is a parallel
 - How do you feel about working in a church that has a position you don't hold to
 - An acceptable thing to hold this negative and positive

- Hold point without language of discrimination
- There needs to be protection of conscience on both sides for those who cant and those who can - protection and humility on all sides, all parts
- No one is going to be forced to do anything that is against their conscience
 - All of the major ethical issues before us, are all the fault lines, and will have people on both sides of all of the issues
 - Medically assisted suicide,
 - LGBTQ+ in the church
 - And all of the other issues
- What ever the decisions, someone is going to be hurt. Each diocese needs to have people on the ground to help council, and to walk with those who need to express their feelings and thoughts on this decision
- "An intelligent man is always open to new ideas In fact he looks for them" (Proverbs 18:15)
- AMEN!!!!

What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach the second reading of the Marriage Canon amendment in 2019?

- Ensure that the process of voting is clear & foolproof
- Ensure that every group that wished to express their opinion has the opportunity to do so, understanding that some groups did not feel they had adequate platform at the previous Synod
- Ensure balance both ways, with equal voice to all sides
- Is there any way to address the diocese that have already acted on the amendment?
 - Several Bishops have already authorized liturgies for Same Gendered marriage
- Risk posed by last minute developments – as shown by the last 2 General Synods
 - Concern – be very, very careful about any changes
- Who should be the judge of what's adequate protections for the minority conscious. Can the conscious of the minority be protected to the ends desired by the minority
 - These protections already exist within our governance
- Indigenous ministry – if autonomous ministry, then it can have its own decision on this
- There will be those in favor who will put this into action, and there will be those who do not enact this. We must be conscious of this
- Either way the vote is decided, one group will feel the “Church doesn’t care about me”
 - People feeling like winners & losers
 - How can we keep the Church whole through this?

What do we need to do, to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?

- We cannot “agree to disagree” – we need a plan to grow relationship around the obstacles
- We must still “do things together” and find the objectives we can still share
- There is a fear about what will happen at the local level
- We need to nurture the discipling of people and develop the mission of the church, especially at the diocesan level
- Need to have open dialogue between the two sides – explain their own views and explore them with each other through constructive discussion
- Focus on meeting the needs of the community
- Pay attention to where there is grass-roots recognition of division and the efforts to move through it
- Stop deliberative avoidance
- In our diocese – the Education committee is arranging for discussion time at regional councils. This is the second attempt to develop a structure for these discussions.
- We need to consider the emotional reaction – need to accept need of both sides and appreciation of what they bring, not just “allow” them in the Church “because we love you”
- “when things are tearing you apart, remember what brought you together”
- Take best action to avoid celebration

1. *What would you want to say to General Synod, as we approach the 2nd reading of the Marriage Canon amendment in 2019?*

- We must not forget how God designed marriage, which is to be between one man and one woman. We need to believe what the bible says.
- It is scary to think of what the outcome will be if this passes. Will our church members leave the church?
- It seems most of the church does not understand of what we see as marriage. Our belief is not primitive but is based on biblical and scriptural principles.
- General Synod should not impose their understanding of marriage on us.
- As indigenous peoples, we have to right to maintain and protect our beliefs and traditions.
- No decisions should be made without the 'Free, Prior, Informed Consent' where it involves the Indigenous peoples
- We have been automatically dragged through this process. The UNDRIP states we have the right to our own beliefs and traditions. 49 Calls to Action also states to respect Indigenous right to Self-Determination in spiritual matters...
- This whole issue of changing the Marriage Canon is bothersome and confusing. We question how this happened and why.
- Our Elders will NOT be happy if this goes through.
-

2. *What do we need to do, to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?*

- We will need to continue to love one another, and journey alongside with others.
- We must maintain what we believe in.
- We need to pray for those who lead this lifestyle.
- Stress biblical teaching on the traditional marriage

What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach the second reading?

- Return to Gospel priorities.
- There is a sense of appeasing the world distracts from mission.
- Is our motive in this political correctness as counter to the tenets of the faith? What are we willing to sacrifice to remain true to the gospel and to be known as distinct from society?
- The fruit of the Spirit has been lacking in the process and discussion.
- The voices of the First Nations people have been lacking in the public discussion.
- The catholicity of our Church is threatened by the process.
- Local Option is already the rule of the day.
- “Please don’t break our Church.”
- How can we be true to the gospel in the midst of a multi-cultural experience and expression of the faith?
- Accommodating special interest groups is not effective Christian leadership, either in the Church or in society.
- Focus on our core—God’s mission. Develop our understanding and expression of the fundamentals of the faith. Accommodation is not the path towards evangelism.
- Scripture and tradition have defined marriage, and it is not up to the ACC to change that definition.
- The motion and defending arguments suppose a “Notwithstanding Clause”: notwithstanding what Scripture and tradition have said, we will create a new definition...
- Accommodating the change in definition will not serve evangelism and the faith.
- At what point will we take a stand as opposed to accommodation to societal trends?
- The divisions in thought and practice will make mobility problematical.
- The Church is not perfect, but it is ours. We have to take ownership of our future. We cannot acquiesce to social pressures

What do we need to do to sustain and nourish good relationships after General Synod makes its decision?

- It will depend upon the decision.
- What will be the moral, theological and spiritual standing of those in the Church who cannot accept the change?
- How can we avoid the ideology that the other side is “wrong”?
- We need to allow the freedom (of love) for people to focus on the core of mission, evangelism and the gospel.
- How can we avoid treating the decision as the proverbial “slippery slope”?
- Prepare a toolkit for the bishops in advance.
- Taking a vote is always divisive.
- We need to actually focus on the real issues of the world—poverty, injustice, violence...
- Focus on the core. Avoid this distraction.
- Can the vote actually be avoided? The vote WILL BE divisive.
- We do not want to walk away. “To whom shall we go?”

Marriage canon Discussion.

These statements do not necessarily represent a consensus at the table. They are just various people's remarks recorded as they were spoken.

- Questions:
 - - What would you want to say to general synod as we approach the second reading of the marriage canon amendment in 2019.
 - - Use paper ballots.
 - Be diligent in the voting process.
 - GS2016 was consistently unhappy and stressful except for Sunday morning.
 - - attending to proper procedure.
 - Make sure that the clickers work.
 - regardless of outcome, we've never talked about what it means to stay together. We are facing a bombshell that we are unprepared for.
 - is it fair to move forward if we are not aware of the consequences.
 - Either outcome is a bombshell.
 - The decision of the Indigenous community is that it isn't an issue. (Not everyone at the table interpreted the Indigenous statement that way.)
 - they're Indigenous not going to change regardless of general synod. Changing the canon is the white colonialists telling the indigenous that they are wrong again. There may be changes stating that traditional stances on marriage are not in conflict with the new rules. The Arctic would lose a lot of congregations. In other parts they don't want to leave but they don't want to be told that their position is substandard.
 - this doesn't have to be the hill that we die on.
 - second reading does not have to be identical to the first. Could remove the bishop clause. Could say that it is allowed to hold or teach traditional views of marriage.
 - Melbourne just tabled the motion as the least worst option.

- I'd rather see a different motion that proposes another type of relationship. But that would probably not pass; proponents see it as a social justice issue. Similar to how we handle divorce.
- Needs to be some flexibility. So many cultures in our church.
- What do we need to do to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?
 - - need to have conversations afterwards.
 - transparency is critical.
 - there is damage in relationships between dioceses on this issue.
 - Need to ask, what does it mean to be a community?
 - We're past the point of trying to convince people to be on one side or the other.
 - Don't run GS in a way that raises people's suspicions and makes them distrustful. Primate's sermon wasn't helpful. Only presentation was by a committee in favour of it; shut out the other side.
 - there are people who will say that we have talked about this enough; make a decision.
 - Indigenous groups were really hurt at last GS.
 - Do we have to have open mikes at GS?
 - Do the Indigenous people have a method for reaching hard decisions?
 - - yes, you sit in a circle. Everybody can talk. Everybody can listen. Talk until they get to the point that they reach a decision that everybody can live with.
 - Listen and vote. Don't debate.

Marriage Canon 21

Replies to Questions

Q. What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach the 2nd Reading of the marriage canon.

1. Please don't deal with this legislatively, find another way.

The impression is that there has been a manipulation of the process therefore there is a lack of trust. It is hard to engage. A fairer process would have enabled greater involvement.

Like to say we are on a journey and we have to trust that everyone is trying to be faithful. If we can live together in love and respect on the journey God will lead us into a greater understanding on a number of things. A Via Media approach is an Anglican approach there needs to be room for everyone.

Keep your mind open. Don't let your judgement get in the way. Do not make it something that is out of spite or darkness, choose the light in a way that enables others to understand.

Jesus said a house divided against itself will not stand. We are a house divided the Primate has said that. Do we need to be a house divided against itself or can we recognize the difference but be willing to be together.

Be prayerfully attentive to whether this is a move of the Holy Spirit, or not, and to be guarded against a political, ecclesiastical, personal agenda or preferment.

We have not yet come to a decision as a church as to the difference between Sin and Sacrament in terms of sexual behaviour. The process of reconciling this needs to

Both sides experiencing a no vote at General Synod is in itself a word to the church.

Perhaps a third way option of celebrating a relationship.

The rainbow is a symbol of diversity and yet we try to make marriage to be the same. Liturgies to celebrate the difference of the marital union

What do we need to do, to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships after General Synod makes its decision.

We have to accept the decision and live through it

The government has a loyal opposition. There has to be space for a loyal opposition irrespective of which way the vote goes

There may be things that may emerge that will enable a new way of understanding

We need to listen to what Jesus is saying and loving our neighbour as ourselves and to love as he loved us. We have to go forth in love and forgiveness.

This is an impossible question to answer because it depends on the outcome.

If the decision is opposite to the way I would like or believe. I will not leave this beloved church. I would pledge to stay so long as our church will accept me.

synod@anglicanyeg.org

1.What would you want to say to General Synod as we approach the second one adding of the marriage canon amendment in 2019?

What measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the whole of the ACC. I fear a witch hunt against those with a traditional understanding of marriage.

I have a hard time wrapping my head around this within the context of historic Christian faith.

I am sad, and feel hurt, and unheard, as someone having received the Church's teaching on marriage. I am feeling the sadness over the breakdown of relationships, both within our local church, Canadian church, and global churches.

I pray that there will be no "victory party", regardless of the outcome.

That the indigenous voices would be heard and valued.

Why are we having a second reading if we have accepted the opinion that this is unnecessary? If the primate and the chancellor have given permission and said there is no restriction in our current cano, why are we changing this?

We need to be more cautious with the care of people's souls and the unity of the church?

The leadership of the church needs a way of defining what unites us, I don't think we have done this in a long time: like the Apostles Creed; Jesus as Lord and Saviour; or, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

2.What do we need to do, to best enable ourselves to sustain and nourish good relationships, after General Synod makes its decision?

Honestly examine our motives.

It may be helpful to describe what happened and examine how it happened. We have played chicken with this for 50 years.

We need to ensure that there is room for everyone.

We need to stop using the 'there' and 'not there yet' language, as if one perspective is a particularly enlightened/informed position that everyone needs to will get to.

Ensure that the traditional teaching of the understanding of marriage between one man and one women is orthodox and that it is a viable, defensible and reasonable theological understanding.

Continue teaching about a Jesus

We need to speak for ourselves and listen to each other.

Needs to be a high value put on honesty and charity.

We need to take our opinions more lightly.

