

**From the minutes of the 2007 Synod held October 12–13, 2007**

**MOTION #2**

**Moved by:** Ron Chaplin  
**Seconded by:** The Rev. Canon Garth Bulmer

**That this Synod requests that the Bishop grant permission for clergy, whose conscience permits, to bless duly solemnized and registered civil marriages between same-sex couples, where at least one party is baptized; and that he authorize an appropriate rite and guidelines for its use in supportive parishes.**

In speaking to the motion, Ron Chaplin informed Synod that this motion has been drafted by many people from across the Diocese. He also stated that virtually the same motion will be placed before the Synod of the Diocese of Montreal. This motion in no way interferes with the procedures of General Synod. This motion does not affect the Marriage Canon. The motion refers to civil marriage. While General Synod has not resolved this question, it has taken two very important decisions. In 2004, it resolved to affirm the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same-sex relationships and this year it resolved that the blessing of same-sex relationships was not in conflict with core doctrines of the Church.

In seconding the motion, the Rev. Canon Garth Bulmer remarked that his capacity for perseverance on this issue enabled him to again address Synod. He commented on his pain at hearing the Word of God being used against gay and lesbian people and that there are many ways of interpreting scripture, particularly those passages being used against gay and lesbian people. His second point was that while we often resent the incursion of the secular world into the Church, the fact is that the secular world has recognized that there should be no discrimination against gay and lesbian people and that they have the right, in law, to marry.

In the following discussion, those speaking in favour of the motion spoke of love, that where there is love, there is God. Jesus welcomed the outcast and those on the margins of society and we should be doing the same. Youth Synod Resolution #1 enthusiastically supported the blessing of same-sex unions and encouraged the parishes and the Diocese of Ottawa to act on this as quickly as possible, and they also support the revision of General Synod Canon 21 on marriage. Others spoke of the fact that exclusion of people because of sexual orientation is the same as exclusion of people because of race. This motion permits those who are prepared to move ahead and permit blessing of same-sex unions to do so while respecting that others feel differently. Others said that in understanding the mind of Christ, we should reflect how Jesus welcomed those on the margins of society and that Jesus roots his teaching in love. A speaker noted that change happens in the Church when someone has the courage to step out in faith and then calls us to take that step. Quoting from a statement from the Anglican Consultative Council to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, one speaker stated: “We remain resolute in our solidarity with one another and in our commitment, above all else, to

pursue and fulfill God's mission in all we say and do. Given the global tensions so evident in our church today, we do not accept that there is any one issue of difference or contention which can, or indeed would, ever cause us to break the unity represented by our common baptism; neither would we ever consider severing the deep and abiding bonds which characterize our relationships as Anglican women." Another, speaking in support, stated that it is time to make the open arms of Jesus safe for all people. We were reminded that Jesus flouted the traditional rules of his time, that he befriended women in a time when women were considered chattels, and that he called the children to him in a time when children were considered instruments of a family's economic growth. Speakers reminded us that if we had waited for the Anglican Church to be united on all issues, we would not yet be ordaining women.

Those speaking against the motion raised the concern that approval of this motion would bring us into conflict with the international church, specifically the church in Africa, and would also create conflict with the position held by many aboriginal Canadians. Some spoke of the Bible teaching only about heterosexual marriage and the fact that Jesus rooted his teaching in the Bible. There were those who spoke of faithfulness and that we are called to know the mind of Christ and that Scripture is the road to that. Concerns were raised that if Synod passes this motion, we will do serious harm to the Anglican Communion and that the blessing of same-sex civil marriage is clearly unacceptable to the majority in the Anglican Communion. Others spoke of the fact that the theological work had not been done, that there were still reports to come to General Synod. We are talking about how the Church understands marriage, both civil and sacramental and it is necessary to have a doctrinal ruling and that this is not the appropriate level within the Anglican Communion's system of governance. It was stated that the case for integrity and approval of same-sex unions cannot be made on the basis of lack of conflict with core doctrine. There were many speakers who felt that this motion was too early and that more dialogue was needed.

A motion to vote by secret ballot was defeated.

Bishop John requested a moment of silent reflection before calling the question. He reminded those present that there are no winners or losers as he called the question on Motion #2.

**Carried**

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At the request of the mover, the results of the vote were read out as follows: 177 in favour and 97 against. Bishop John thanked the members of Youth Synod for their participation in the debate.