



Marriage

*An Exploration of Marriage
in Church & Society*

prepared by
Faith, Worship & Ministry



Anglican Church of Canada

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Introduction

Purpose To explore the changing nature of marriage in church and society
To explore marriage through experience, culture and the teaching of the church

The purpose of this study is to explore the changing nature of marriage in church and society. An exploration invites us into different corners of the topic to listen, observe, share, contrast and discuss. An exploration uncovers surprises, maps new territory, confirms commitments and invites us to see a bigger picture. It is not leading to a pre-determined end but invites all to enter the risk of new learning.

The challenges involved in discussing the blessing of same sex unions and the move by civil authorities to redefine marriage to include same gender couples necessitate an examination of our understanding of marriage in the church. This is particularly apropos given the recommendation of the St. Michael report that any discussion of blessing be discussed as analogous to marriage.

Over the last fifty years significant shifts have occurred in the practice of marriage both within and outside the church. The following **six sessions** (1-1/2 – 2 hours each) are an opportunity to explore these shifts and to listen to one another. New insights and/or reaffirmations of traditions will emerge as participants read and discuss together.

For Study Leader(s):

The questions and material offered are **suggestions** for exploring the topic. However, you know your community and know what will work best in your context. You will be engaged in a 'learning conversation' together. Choose the appropriate questions/readings for the group you are working with.

Three guidelines to consider:

- i) Good conversations are reciprocal and involving.
 - engage the study group in the conversation
- ii) The course of good conversations cannot be anticipated.
 - exploring together invites you into unexpected insights, new areas
- iii) Good conversations entail diversity and disagreement.
 - we learn from one another through hearing other viewpoints
 - facilitator's role is set the boundaries on how disagreement is expressed – with respect and care for each member

(From: *Developing Critical Thinkers* by Stephen D. Brookfield p. 238ff)

Christians are expected to reflect theologically on their lives and the world, to examine issues and concerns through our understanding of God. **Theological reflection** uses the lenses of our faith to explore our lives as individuals and as a community.

Keep in mind that people approach discussion and learning in different ways.

- ♦ Some need time to reflect and think in quiet before engaging in public discussion.
- ♦ Others think aloud as they engage in dialogue.
- ♦ Others need to be involved in an activity that assists reflection.

Choose among the alternatives suggested in each session so that different approaches and learning styles are honoured.

Theological Reflection

“There are 3 key sources for our knowledge:

- i) Experience; ii) Culture; iii) Teaching of the church

<p>Teaching of the Church</p> <p>Revealed in the Bible which we must learn to read and understand.</p> <p>Given or handed down in the church.</p> <p>Its heart is the gospel.</p> <p>Seeks the will of God.</p> <p>Tested by time.</p> <p>Grows and changes over time.</p> <p>Provides guidelines and direction.</p> <p>May become distorted, dogmatic or out of touch with the people.</p>	<p>Culture we live in</p> <p>Is the milieu, the atmosphere in which we live, that shapes our lives and our behaviour.</p> <p>There is a great variety of cultures competing with each other.</p> <p>Some of a culture’s values may be evil, exploitative, oppressive.</p> <p>Christians need to develop criteria to evaluate the powerful, pervasive influence of culture.</p>	<p>Meaning of our experience</p> <p>Is individual and personal.</p> <p>Powerful and direct.</p> <p>Provides energy and drive, often warmth and compassion.</p> <p>Yet we rationalize our own desires, deceiving ourselves about the will of God for ourselves and others.</p>
<p>Operates through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Teaching in the church ♦ Liturgy ♦ Church practices and policies ♦ Learnings in our families ♦ Community values and attitudes 	<p>Operates through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Osmosis, we absorb it from our surroundings ♦ Socialization, we breathe it in from early childhood. ♦ Social institutions like school, work, government, church, ♦ Mass media ♦ All our relationships 	<p>Operates through reflection on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Things that happen to us ♦ Consequences of our actions ♦ Joy, pain, hope, guilt, etc.
<p>Requires from us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Willingness to accept and follow ♦ Yet readiness to question ♦ Openness to learn ♦ Prayer, reflection ♦ Discussion to test it ♦ Acting upon it 	<p>Requires from us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Some understanding of social forces and dynamics ♦ Discerning good from evil. ♦ Supporting the good, not being seduced by the evil. ♦ Testing truth against the values of the gospel and in the fellowship 	<p>Requires from us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Trusting our own experience ♦ Yet reflecting on it in light of the gospel ♦ Being willing to change our attitudes and behaviour
<p>The Holy Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Opens our eyes to Jesus Christ by whom we measure truth. ♦ Enables us to live by faith. ♦ Calls us to use our minds to understand, to question, to affirm 	<p>The Holy Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Provides wisdom to discern ♦ Calls us to build up what is good ♦ Enables us to work to change what is evil 	<p>The Holy Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Wrestles with us ♦ Convicts us of our sins ♦ Enlightens our minds ♦ Leads us into truth ♦ Enables us to act with love and justice

Each of these three forms of knowledge gives its own kind of information, has its own validity and yet can be misused. We are called to use all three as we respond to God's will.

The most important for preventing subjectivism is:

- a. That each of the three forms speak to and challenge the others. They need to be related to and integrated with each other.
- b. That the results of our thinking be tested with others in the community of faith."

From: *Living in Covenant with God and One Another* (World Council of Churches)

Format of Study

In light of the above, each study session offers:

- i) **Resources for reading:** At the end of each session readings and/or assignments for the next week are noted. The articles and papers for the following week are attached to the current session. They are examples of thoughtful reflection on issues related to marriage and are offered for the purpose of discussion but are not definitive. If you have or find other resources please include them in the discussion (and note them in the evaluation).

NOTE: Only resolutions and liturgical resources approved by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada represent 'official' statements of the Church.

The material is offered as background for the discussions at the session. Some may be read quickly for general information. Others will require more attention.

- ii) **Suggested discussion questions and/or exercises:** In each of the areas of experience, culture and teaching of the church there are suggested questions for discussion. These are offered to stimulate conversation. They are not exhaustive.
Depending on the size of the study group you may choose to divide into smaller groups (3-5 people) for discussion.
- iii) **Summary Discussion questions** for plenary sharing. Drawing together the information explored in each section participants are invited to integrate their reflections to identify further questions and/or actions needed.

Additional Considerations

- i) Set guidelines for the discussion that allow participants to participate as freely as they wish. Some of the topics will be sensitive and touch on personal experiences. Guidelines should be discussed with the group to establish norms that are comfortable and safe for all.

ii) Frame the discussions with prayers or other spiritual practices that help the community gathered to keep discussion focused on our life as the Church.

See the **Liturgical Resources** for suggestions.

For example: Opening prayer and song; scripture reading;

Prayer, silence, contemplation as appropriate during the study

Closing prayer for one another, the study, ongoing concerns

May your exploration be a rich conversation leading to deeper connections with one another, with our Anglican heritage and with God.

Prepared by: Faith, Worship & Ministry Committee,
General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada



Session One

Marriage • Part 1

Resources Required:

Book of Alternative Services and Book of Common Prayer

Bibles

Magazines – current popular life magazines

Exploration

Experience of Marriage

Whether single or married we bring with us expectations of marriage from personal experience or observation. As a central institution of our society it touches everyone.

- ♦ What is ‘marriage’?
 - i. Has this description changed for you over your lifetime?
 - ii. Describe your understanding of marriage when you were 10 years old? 20 yrs old? Now?
- ♦ Describe the elements of a marriage you know and highly respect. Why?
- ♦ Describe the elements of a marriage you know and do not respect. Why?
- ♦ Explore similarities and differences in expectations between single, married, divorced, widowed – in the group

Culture

- ♦ View movie clips/TV – eg. *Four Weddings & a Funeral*;
- ♦ Discuss images of marriage seen in public media; magazine articles, books – novels & non-fiction
- ♦ Share your responses to the quote below:

The Good Wife’s Guide

Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready for his return.

Prepare yourself. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking.

Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children’s hands and faces. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing their part.

Listen to him. Let him talk first – remember his topics of conversation are more important than yours.

Don’t complain if he’s late for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.

A good wife always knows her place.

– Housekeeping Monthly 13 May 1951

- ♦ Social history – Brainstorm some of the changes in social structure since 1945 and their impact on marriage. (Eg. women working outside the home; equality of women in workplace/world; divorce – easier to get/no-fault/; reliable contraception alternatives)
- ♦ Weddings!!! The way in which a wedding ceremony is celebrated is indicative of the values and meaning given to marriage by the couple and/or their families. Think of weddings you have attended – identify customs used in ceremonies – What do they mean to you?

Teaching of the Church

- ♦ What messages about marriage did you learn from the church?
 - as a child, teen and adult?
- ♦ Read & discuss scripture passages that have informed our understanding of marriage. How have these passages influenced our understanding of marriage?
 - i. Genesis 2:18-24 (Mark 10:6-9),
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 13
 - iii. Ephesians 5:21-33; (Col 3:18,19);
 - iv. 1 Cor 7:1-40
 - v. 1 Peter 3
 - vi. 1 John 3:18-24
 - vii. Matthew 5:31-32
 - viii. See scripture suggestions for weddings: BAS pg. 549ff

Summary Discussion

- ♦ Discuss your hopes and fears for marriage in society and in the church.



For Next Week

Invite all participants to read:

- A. Towards a Theology of Christians in Marriage by Dr. Richard Leggett;
- B. Preface to Canon XXI and
- C. Book review by David Loftus of “Marriage A History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage” by Stephanie Coontz,

Bring a family tree of marriages

For as many generations as you can: list the marriages, divorces, Separations, deaths, subsequent marriages, common-law relationships of your own family.

A. Towards a Theology of Christians in Marriage

Introductory observations

When Graham Cotter turned his hand to provide a guide to Anglican clergy and laity regarding marriage, it is telling that he chose to entitle the book, *Marrying in the Church: A Pastoral Guide*, rather than calling it a guide to *Christian* marriage.¹ A rationale for the title is implicit in the four meanings he gives to the word “marriage”: (a) a union or status in which two persons are bound together by legal ties which may include religious ones; (b) a contract; (c) an institution of human society and (d) a ceremony.² None of the four meanings he gives describes a distinctly Christian or, for that matter, religious institution.

A review of Christian history will show that for a significant period in the early Church marriage was understood as an institution of society into which Christians entered just as their non-Christians peers did.

Attempts to study the history of Christian marriage in the earliest periods of the Church’s life are immediately stymied by the lack of evidence for anything that could be called specifically Christian. This lack, however, indicates rather clearly that apart from the fact that the two persons involved were Christian, there was nothing noticeably different about Christian marriages, about the way they originated, the way they were lived, or (in some instances) in the way they were terminated.³

In this period Christians followed the patterns of the culture in which they lived, although, as Christians, their marriages might be touched by “what it meant for them to be related to one another ‘in the Lord.’”⁴

As our Lutheran partners in full communion undertake a revision of their liturgical rites, including those for the pastoral office, they have re-affirmed this reality of marriage as a social institution into which some Christian are called.

Classic Lutheran theology has long understood the union of a man and a woman in marriage as an order of creation and a gift from God. In such a view, one does not speak of a Christian marriage. Rather, one speaks of a marriage between Christians.⁵

Given our Anglican commitment to being guided by the witness of the early church, it is perhaps appropriate then that we talk about a theology of Christians in marriage rather than a theology of Christian marriage. This approach will lead us to consider how Christians should conduct themselves not only in marriage but also in the many cultural and social institutions in which we are called to live and to serve.

Let me illustrate this point by turning to one author’s discussion of spiritual health. L. William Countryman describes spiritual health as being characterized by centredness; faith; generosity of spirit; a sense of oneself; discipline; integrity and honesty; hospitality; compassion; vulnerability and openness; and continued growth in faith, hope and love. If one were to replace “spiritual health” with “marriage”, one would be likely to concur that these qualities are those we expect in marriages that reflect the Christian gospel. This leads me to argue for a theology of Christians in marriage rather than a theology of Christian marriage, that is to say, a preference for a baptismal theology of Christians in marriage.

Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers?

Marriage, as one of creation’s dependable sign-acts, participates in the *mysterion*, “the revelation of God’s saving self-giving that finds expression in Jesus’ death and resurrection.”⁷ But just as all Christians grow into their baptismal faith and identity, so, too, do Christians grow into marriage. Marriage, whether between Christians or non-Christians, has the potential to reveal the saving love of God. If Christians enter into such a relationship, then they must be committed to a life-time of growing into “‘the new creation’ which they are as individuals and as a couple.”⁸ Furthermore, as Bonnie Schullenberger writes, “We are not faithful in our lifetime pairings because we’re prudes or because we’re scared: we are faithful because God is like that.”⁹

The consequences of baptismal faith for Chris-

tians are several. First, Christians understand their relationships to be public rather than private. In today's climate of romanticism it is easy to forget that our covenantal relationships are more than agreements between two individuals. These relationships have communal and societal dimensions beyond any legal or conventional considerations. By wearing a ring on one's left ring finger, one is declaring to all that he or she has made a life-long commitment. How we conduct our lives comes under closer scrutiny, especially if we further claim that our relationship represents, in some spiritual way, the relationship between God and the world.

Second, Christians seek *companionship*, a person with whom to break bread. One of the more poignant passages in the New Testament is found in the Gospel according to John.

This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.¹⁰

At the heart of all genuinely Christian relationships is friendship that is self-giving and self-revealing. When Christians enter into a marriage, they become companions whose physical nakedness before one another is a sacramental sign of the emotional, psychological and spiritual nakedness that true friends offer one another.

Third, Christians understand the need for a community of support that shares both values and hopes. When red-hot charcoal briquettes are separated from one another, they quickly lose their heat and burn out. If they are kept close together, their heat increases and, in a counter-intuitive fashion, lasts longer. In many ways human relationships function similarly. When couples find themselves in the midst of a supportive community, their own relationship is both reinforced and deepened, enabling them to live out more faithfully their baptismal commitments to each other.

Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

A popular movie from the 1970's contained the line, "Love means never having to say you're sorry."

No falsier statement has ever been made. Love means forever being willing to acknowledge one's faults and to seek reconciliation and renewal.

An adequate theology of marriage must take account of sin. Married, covenanted love is not exempt from hurt and injustice. Thus the religious dimension of marriage involves redemption and reconciliation. Without grace, without the gift of healing and renewal and forgiveness, no potential encounter of transformation will reach its fulfillment. Indeed, it would become a stifling idolatry.¹¹

Christians who enter the covenant of marriage come from a religious tradition that understands the necessity of forgiveness if old hurts and new wrongs are ever to be laid aside in order for the new creation to be revealed in and through us and our relationships. Even the first of the blessing prayers of *The Book of Alternative Services* gives thanks to God for making "the way of the cross to be the way of life," before turning to give thanks for the institution of marriage.¹²

But furthermore, our conduct within marriage should give rise to a greater commitment to a world in which reconciliation takes place between peoples and nations. It is not empty rhetoric when, in the marriage rite of *The Book of Alternative Services*, the first of the two prayers for blessing the couple prays that they will be led "into all peace" and the second prayer "that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace."

As a microcosm of human society, the family should work towards peace within itself; the larger society can scarcely become more peaceful than the units within it.¹⁴

Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

Every Christian is called to embody the good news of God in Christ in whatever vocation or social setting he or she is found. For those called to the married state, the family, whether there are children or not, is a domestic cell within the body of Christ. As such the homes of married Christians become leaven within their neighbourhoods, giving rise to the saving presence of the gospel in places that the formal structures of the Christian church may never reach.

To speak of the family as a community of faith is to stress the active sense of community; it is a sharing of commitment to, hope in, and love of Je-

sus Christ. It involves a shared endeavour to shape life according to the vision of the Gospel. The members of the family are meant to guide, inspire, and support each other in this pursuit. The choice of priorities in their life together are the decisions about shared activities or about the way in which individual activity is to fit into their common life are meant to be grounded in their shared Christian faith.¹⁵

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?

Ephesians 5.21-33 has been frequently misused as a scriptural injunction to subject women to a subordinate role in marriage. Such a use fails to take into account the context in which the text appears and the ‘bookends’ the writer uses to frame his admonitions to husbands and wives. First, he introduces his comments with the powerful statement, “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.”¹⁶ Here there is no distinction between male or female, married or single. All Christians are to consider themselves slaves to all in order to be free for Christ. Furthermore, throughout the text, the author is at pains to stress the necessity of husbands to love their wives, a concept that would have been thought quaint by men raised in a society and culture where marriage dealt with property and familial succession rather than emotional attachments.

Whether one is married or single, the call of the gospel to love one’s neighbour as oneself is the corollary to the love of God. When one partner in a marriage fails to treat the other as one in whom the image and likeness of God is present, then the offending partner has failed in her or his baptismal vocation. It is still the case that gender roles are used to restrict the freedom and growth of marriage partners and, to the degree that such roles are used coercively, to the same degree has the relationship fallen short of the gospel.

4. *The gospel can discern no inequality between men and women as they stand before God’s grace.* The New Testament writers came to accept a good deal of inequality between the sexes in day-to-day life; but this represented an accommodation to existing patterns, not the working out of the gospel principle.¹⁷

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

In Galatians 3.27-28 Paul writes the charter of the baptismal vocation of all Christians: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” In this statement Paul is not necessarily dispensing with the ethnic, social and gender realities of his society, but he is dispensing with any privilege that any of those realities might claim to the grace and knowledge of God. He positing a new reality in Christ which has the power to overcome all the arbitrary restrictions and obstacles that human beings have erected to inhibit the freedom of God’s grace.

Justice-making and peace-making are, for Christians, dependent upon the removal of such arbitrary restrictions and obstacles in order to free all God’s children to experience the fullness of God’s grace made known to us in creation, redemption and sanctification. For Christians, this baptismal commitment is made known by the domestic justice and peace of our relationships whether they are life-long covenanted ones or not. Our domestic justice and peace will inevitably lead us into work towards justice and peace in our communities and, to the degree that we are able, our world, breaking down the ethnic barriers that perpetrate sectarian violence and political discrimination, the economic structures that perpetuate the bondage of workers at home and abroad, and the continued disparity of opportunities and power available to women throughout the world.

Concluding remarks

So, what is distinctive about a theology of Christians in marriage? First and foremost, it is that we are talking about *Christians* in marriage. What is distinctive about our marriages is that we enter into them understanding these relationships to be *an embodiment of our baptismal vocations*. As embodiments of our baptismal vocation they are distinguishable from the marriages of our non-Christian neighbours only to the degree that our relationships become windows into the new creation that God in Christ has revealed to the world. If these windows are opaque or shuttered, then it matters not whether the marriage was performed according to the rite of a Christian community or not. If these windows do not cast light on the quality of life that God calls all

human beings to live, whether married or not, then it does not matter whether the participants in the marriage are church-going or not. As Saint Francis is supposed to have said, “Proclaim the Gospel. When necessary, use words!”

Second, Christians will understand their marriages to be vehicles for personal and communal transformation. All true friendships grow and develop, and the partners in the life-long covenanted relationship of marriage will commit themselves to a life-long process of spiritual maturation that will be a sign of God’s on-going work of sanctification. But because our marriages are a social and public institution, Christians will understand that our marriages are means of transforming the communities

in which we live. Our marriages will resist evil in all its forms and will seek to reconcile those who are estranged. Our marriages will proclaim the good news of God in Christ. Our marriages will reach to our neighbours, regardless of who those neighbours are, because all neighbours come to us as Christ. Our marriages will work for justice and peace among all persons, so that all human beings can become fully alive and show forth the glory of God.

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October 2005*

Endnotes

- 1 Graham Cotter, ed., *Marrying in the Church: A Pastoral Guide* (Toronto, ON: Anglican Book Centre, 1983).
- 2 Cotter 1983, 42-43.
- 3 Bernard Cooke, "2. Historical Reflections on the Meaning of Marriage as Christian Sacrament," in *Christian Marriage*, ed. Bernard Cooke, *Alternative Futures for Worship*, no. 5 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 34.
- 4 Cooke 1987, 34-35.
- 5 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Life Passages: Marriage, Healing, Funeral*, *Renewing Worship*, no. 4 (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 2002), xi.
- 6 L. William Countryman, "Finding a Way to Talk: Dealing with Difficult Topics in the Episcopal Church," in *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies: Sexuality and the Household of God*, ed. Charles Hefling (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1996), 9-10.
- 7 Cooke 1987, 43.
- 8 William Roberts, "3. Theology of Christian Marriage," in *Christian Marriage*, ed. Bernard Cooke, *Alternative Futures for Worship*, no. 5 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 49.
- 9 Bonnie Schullenberger, "What Are the Bishops Really Telling Us?" in *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies: Sexuality and the Household of God*, ed. Charles Hefling (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1996), 24.
- 10 John 15.12-15.
- 11 Cynthia S. W. Crysdale, "Christian Marriage and Homosexual Monogamy," in *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies: Sexuality and the Household of God* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1996), 96.
- 12 *The Book of Alternative Services*, 534, 548.
- 13 *The Book of Alternative Services*, 534, 548.
- 14 Roberts 1987, 53.
- 15 Roberts 1987, 50.
- 16 Ephesians 5.21.
- 17 L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988), 242.

B. Canon XXJ — Preface

On Marriage in the Church

Preface

1. The Anglican Church of Canada affirms, according to our Lord's teaching as found in Holy Scripture and expressed in the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer, that marriage is a lifelong union in faithful love, and that marriage vows are a commitment to this union, for better or for worse, to the exclusion of all others on either side. This union is established by God's grace when two duly qualified persons enter into a covenant of marriage in which they declare their intention of fulfilling its purposes and exchange vows to be faithful to one another until they are separated by death. The purposes of marriage are mutual fellowship, support, and comfort, and the procreation (if it may be) and nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfilment in a community of faithful love. This covenant is made in the sight of God and in the presence of witnesses and of an authorized minister.

2. The Church affirms in like manner the goodness of the union of man and woman in marriage, this being of God's creation.¹ Marriage also is exalted as a sign² of the redeeming purpose of God to unite all things in Christ,³ the purpose made known in the reunion of divided humanity in the Church.⁴

1. Cf. Gen. 1:27-31
2. Eph. 5:31f.
3. Eph. 1:9f.
4. Eph. 2:11-16.

3. The Church throughout its history has recognized that not all marriages in human society conform, or are intended to conform, to the standard here described. For this reason, in the exercise of pastoral care as evidenced in the earliest documents of the New Testament, the Church has from the beginning made regulations for the support of family life especially among its own members.

4. Aspects of the regulation of marriage in the

apostolic Church are recorded in the New Testament. A new standard of reciprocal love between husband and wife was introduced leading towards an understanding of their equality.¹ In preparation for marriage Christians were directed to seek partners from among their fellow believers.² In Christ's name separated spouses were encouraged to seek reconciliation.³ In his name also divorce was forbidden though not without exception.⁴ In certain circumstances a believer already married to an unbeliever might be declared free from such a marriage bond;⁵ in others, and here in the name of Christ, remarriage during the lifetime of a former spouse was described, with one exception, as an adulterous union.⁶

1. 1 Cor. 7:3f, 11:11f, Eph. 5:21-33, cf. Gal. 3:28
Canon XXI 109
2. 1 Cor. 7:39, 2 Cor. 6:14, cf 1 Thess. 4:2-8 (RSV)
3. 1 Cor. 7:10f
4. Matt. 5:31f, Mark 10:2-9, cf. Mal. 2:13-16
5. 1 Cor. 7:12-16
6. Matt. 19:9, Mark 10:11f, Luke 16:18, cf. Ro. 7:3

5. From these principles and precedents the Church, living in many cultures and in contact with many different systems of law, has sought in its rites and canons to uphold and maintain the Christian standard of marriage in the societies in which believers dwell. This standard and these rites and canons pertain to the selection of marriage partners, preparation for marriage, the formation of a true marriage bond, the solemnization of marriage, the duties of family life, the reconciliation of alienated spouses, and to the dissolution of marriage and its consequences.

6. All members of this Church, in fulfilling the obligations of the People of God, share according to their circumstances in the obligation to uphold Christian standards of marriage in human society especially by care for their own families and by neighbourly care for the families of others. Spe-

cial obligations rest upon certain members of the Church as set forth below.

7. The particular duties of the clergy, described in part elsewhere in this Canon, include the provision of education for marriage and family life, the solemnization of marriage, the pastoral care of families, the encouragement of reconciliation of estranged spouses, and the pastoral care of those whose family ties have been broken or interrupted by death, sickness, poverty, enforced absence, human weakness, or by wilful act.

8. The duties of the laity, according to their several circumstances, are to share with the clergy the responsibility for upholding family life, in particular:

- a) by their presence with friends and neighbours at weddings to bear witness to their support of those who marry;
- b) to safeguard the legality of marriages by readi-

ness to allege promptly any cause or just impediment which might make a proposed marriage unlawful;

- c) to promote and encourage the use of the professional skills that serve family life;
- d) as spouses, to be faithful to their own marriage vows;
- e) as parents, guardians, god-parents, teachers, or other fully qualified persons, to guide children and young persons in preparation for family life;
- f) as neighbours, mutually to promote the welfare of families, and to seek the reconciliation of any whose family life is impaired or broken;
- g) as communicants, to uphold the Church's discipline, and to seek the restoration to communion of any who have become alienated or are excommunicate; and
- h) as citizens, to work for the maintenance of just laws for the welfare of family life.

C. Book Review

(Although the following is a review of another book it contains a summary of key elements of the history of marriage and is a useful discussion starter).

Book Review:

Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage by Stephanie Coontz, Viking Press

For Better or Worse

Like the disappearance of the well-mannered and respectful adolescent, the imminent (or, for some commentators, already accomplished) collapse of the institution of marriage has been a popular lament, at least since the mid 1960s.

As so often is the case with social institutions, however, a closer and more longitudinal look suggests that what we took to be the norm was not only regarded as under fire for decades—even centuries—before we came along to worry about it, but may have been a peculiar, uncommon, elastic, and highly contextual norm even then . . . and possibly not even a norm at all.

The central thesis of *Marriage, a History* might have been taken straight from Stephanie Coontz's startling and delightful 1992 book, *The Way We Never Were: America's Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, wherein the professor of history and family studies at The Evergreen State College in Washington state observed: "Some commentators conclude that marriage is becoming less permanent but more satisfying."

According to the arc of her new book, the primary bases for marriage until only a few centuries ago were property and politics (specifically, that a promising workmate and good in-laws were what one hoped to find in a spouse, more than someone who rang one's chimes personally); that love and personal satisfaction only began to be a central factor in choosing one's partner in the 18th century; and that the "perfect" 1950s nuclear family was little more than the last gasp of an ideal right at the moment it began to be fully realized and just before it collapsed, rather than the longtime model for

traditional marriage and family patterns in reality.

That many readers will probably need little convincing at this point is less notable than the fact that the myths cling so fiercely among so many of our fellow Americans. Coontz already took us a long way down this road with her earlier books, yet in the public arena one continues to hear the same tired and largely pointless wailing over extramarital pregnancies, divorce rates, abortion, and single parenthood, and opposition to innovations such as gay marriage.

The devil is in the details, as the saying has it, and to a traditionally-minded American, it might seem that way, but most readers of *Marriage* will more likely delight in the details. Readers may retain some skepticism over Coontz's reading of the larger patterns, but the sheer volume and variety of past marital practices—how they changed across time and geography—make for memorable and instructive reading in themselves.

Even if the facts are new to the reader, familiar patterns emerge:

The hypocrisy of leaders. Caesar Augustus presented himself as a "family values" emperor who sought to raise the birthrate by penalizing Romans who were not married by a certain age, and by giving preference to office seekers who were married and had children. But he was divorced, had affairs, and arranged for the murder of several political rivals. Through the Middle Ages, incest taboos promulgated by the Church were spottily enforced if royal power matches were involved. (For example, in 1152 Louis VII divorced Eleanor of Aquitaine, a cousin four or five times removed, on grounds of "incest" to marry Constance of Castile, an even closer relative).

The mercurial nature of "traditions." For more than a thousand years, the Church did not officiate at marriages, but simply took couples' word for it. It also did not object to no-fault divorce until the 8th century. Long after St. Paul's famously grudging endorsement of marriage ("it is better to marry than

to burn”), various Christian authorities, from Pope Gregory in the 6th century to Puritan pamphleteers in the 18th, warned of the threats of love, carnal pleasure, and other potential pitfalls of marriage which they felt bordered on idolatry and detracted from the love of God.

Throughout most of U.S. history, women worked outside the home (in the fields) or alongside their husbands (as mercantile partners), as did children—many of whom were farmed out to other homes as servants and apprentices, and later recruited into factories; thus, astonishingly, the very first time a majority of American families featured a primary breadwinner father, a nonworking mother, and children who were in school rather than the workforce was the 1920s!

The influence of economics on social practices. The supposed “late” marriages of the past 30 years have nothing on Western European couples of the 16th and 17th centuries, who delayed wedlock (though not necessarily sex) into their 30s and 40s because they were saving to buy a business or start a farm.

The backfiring of well-intentioned social tinkering. Because the punishment for adultery in ancient Greece was so much worse than for prostitution, upper-class married women registered as prostitutes to avoid stiff penalties for their affairs.

Progress is not always forward or permanent. New Jersey gave women the vote two days after the Declaration of Independence was signed . . . and quickly took it back after no other states followed suit. Abortions were common among respectable married women in the mid 19th century United States and still easier to obtain in the 1930s than the 1950s, and same-sex affection, physical demonstrations, and even sleeping together (without sex) were practiced in the U.S. and England without the taint of homosexuality. (Coontz doesn’t mention a famous example from 19th century American history: that Abraham Lincoln shared a bed with Springfield, Illinois merchant and lifelong confidant Joshua Speed for two years when they were in their 20s.) Job segregation and pay discrimination against American women increased in the first 40 years of the twentieth century.

Conservative advocates may have difficulty recognizing marriage as they know it in the prac-

tices of other cultures. The couple must live together? Males among the Ashanti of Ghana and the Minang-kabau of Indonesia continue to live with their mothers and sisters after marriage, and men of the Gururumba people in New Guinea sleep separately from their wives and work different plots of land. A couple raises their own “legitimate” children? Not among many African societies, where one parent’s extended family cares for the children, and a child may even “cease” to be biologically related to the other parent if they divorce. Babies in the Na culture, in the southwestern China province of Yunnan, are created through furtive night-time romantic encounters between couples who otherwise have little or no contact whatsoever: the women continue to keep a household with their brothers and uncles who assist in raising their children.

In some West African cultures, a woman may have a “female husband” who becomes the parent of her later children by marriage or male lover, if the female husband’s extended family takes economic responsibility for them. In China and Sudan, a young person may become a partner in a spirit or ghost marriage, in which their spouse is dead, in order to forge larger family connections. A girl could be married as young as 2 or 3, in the Toda culture of southern India, whereupon she was considered the wife of not only the boy to whom she was married, but all of his brothers as well, and had sex with them once she achieved puberty.

Quaint as the romp through centuries past and other cultures may be, and useful in illustrating the marvelous elasticity of marriages through time, it is the upheavals of the developed West in the twentieth century that inevitably interest us the most, and Coontz devotes the final third of the book to them.

First, she makes it clear that marriage was “in trouble” (at least according to most of the measures favored by social conservatives) before the advent of the Pill, no-fault divorce, women’s lib, and legalized abortion. Premarital sex had been steadily on the rise from the 1880s to the 1940s. U.S. divorce rates started to rise in 1957, a bit before the storm broke, and one in three couples married in the 1950s eventually divorced. The divorce rate in no-fault states was not terribly different from that in states that did not have no-fault divorce (and divorce rates have been on the *decline* since 1981, four years *before* the last states in the U.S. passed no-fault laws).

Coontz describes several American “sexual revolutions” that preceded the one we know from the 1960s. One that occurred in the 1920s meant that 1/3 to 1/2 of American women had had sex before marriage; in 1928 child psychologist John Watson wrote that in another fifty years there would be “no such thing as marriage.”

In a pivotal passage, Coontz writes: “This unprecedented marriage system was the climax of almost two hundred years of continuous tinkering with the male protector love-based marital model invented in the late eighteenth century. That process culminated in the 1950s as the short-lived pattern that people have since come to think of as traditional marriage. So in the 1970s, when the inherent instability of the love-based marriage reasserted itself, millions of people were taken completely by surprise. Having lost any collective memory of the convulsions that occurred when the love match was first introduced and the crisis that followed its modernization in the 1920s, they could not understand why this kind of marriage, which they thought had prevailed for thousands of years, was being abandoned by the younger generation.”

In centuries past, then, property and politics were greater considerations in marriage than personal satisfaction; as Coontz puts it, “love in marriage was seen as a bonus [and often one that turned up long after the nuptials rather than before], not as a necessity.” The expectations we place on marriage today—deeply loving, partner is top priority, couples should be best friends, openly affectionate, talk honestly about problems, sexual fidelity required—is, in her historical survey, “extremely rare.”

Perhaps the most surprising myths are the ones we cherish about ourselves even today. In her final chapter, “Uncharted Territory,” Coontz notes that:

Highly-educated Americans are more likely to think remaining single or having a child out of wedlock is acceptable, but are also more likely to marry and less likely to have children as singles

Conversely, Americans with lower incomes and less education are more likely to view marriage as the preferred state, but less likely to marry. Afro-Americans are less likely to approve of unmarried cohabitation than whites, but more likely to do it. Born-again Christians are just as likely to see their marriages end in divorce as non born-again, and both enjoy a divorce rate only 2 percent lower than

that of atheists and agnostics

Thus, in the Bible-Belt, low-income South, rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock births are higher than anywhere else (and more likely to be regarded with disapproval). Women who hold more traditional views are less likely to divorce, but also less likely to *marry* (and traditionally-minded men are more likely to do *both*).

In reading the facts and the patterns they appear to weave, Coontz is no more sentimental about feminist myths than old-fashioned ones. “I do not believe,” she writes, “that marriage was invented to oppress women any more than it was invented to protect them.”

She is very clear that adjustments in marital practice have inevitably involved tradeoffs; something valuable is almost always lost every time something is gained. “Marriage has become more joyful, more loving, and more satisfying for many couples than ever before in history. At the same time it has become optional and more brittle. These two strands of change cannot be disentangled.”

She is also certain that “contrary to what many marriage promotion activists believe, these dilemmas cannot be sidestepped by making divorce less accessible.” The “tragedy” of no-fault divorce has coincided with a 20 percent drop in married women’s suicides, a general decrease in marital violence, and—between 1981 and 1998—a 2/3 cut in the rate of women who kill their husbands. Would social conservatives accept the return of this bath water with the discarded baby of traditional marriage?

Changes in marital dynamics probably still depend much more upon economic trends and policies than any of us realize. Coontz addresses this to some extent—as she notes, marriage can simply be a bad economic choice for a lower- or working-class setting, where those who marry and divorce suffer higher rates of poverty than those who never marry—but we could use a stricter and more global analysis of this aspect from a theorist with the proper background. Coontz quotes sociologist Frank Furstenberg, who suggests marriage has become almost a “luxury consumer item,” though she modifies this to a “discretionary item that must be weighed against other options for self-protection or economic mobility.”

One might add that while more traditional forms of marriage might have been better for the stability of a society as a whole, the “love match”

(whether it works or fails, and includes wedlock or not) is more fruitful for retail sales rates (from the bridal loot and housing rentals and mortgages to the post-breakup chocolate, alcohol, toys, and therapy—not to mention the boom in single-person households and all the accoutrements thereof), and therefore corporate America really couldn't give a rip that older forms of marriage are endangered species. If business didn't necessarily encourage the death of traditional marriage, it certainly has done little to prevent it.

Stressed-out couples and parents rush to blame their partner's selfishness, women's lib, "essential" gender differences, and other ready demons, but as Coontz observes, "If they had thought about the broader picture, these men and women would probably have agreed that the real problem was the lack of work policies amenable to family life. But in practice their daily tensions turned them on each other rather than on their employers." Funny how those in power, whether unintentionally or not, so often enjoy the convenience of having their underlings go for one another's throats instead of challenging the system as a whole. (Think of the squabbling and shifting alliances between the multiple wives of a mostly faceless master in Zhang Yimou's "Raise the Red Lantern": they could be non-union workers in a Western shop today just as easily as

a passel of Chinese spouses at the turn of the last century.) And too many Americans hardly seem to care that recent administrations—Democratic as well as Republican—have paid much "mouth-breath" to the family, but favored business to the family's detriment.

Coontz does not discuss the same-sex marriage issue at any great length, partly because legally-sanctioned examples from the past (as distinct from quietly tolerated exceptions) are probably rare, and partly due to the fact that its centrality as a policy issue is so recent. But Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, and Canada have forced the matter onto center stage internationally, and my dear home of Multnomah County, Oregon managed a sneak attack that temporarily legalized several thousand gay marriages in 2004. The author's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the older and newer models of heterosexual matches should prove invaluable to this ongoing debate.

If people can manage to calm themselves enough to pay attention.

August 16, 2005

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http://www.calitreview.com/Reviews/marriageahistory_059.htm



Session Two

Marriage ♦ Part 2

Resources Required: (included with Session ONE)
'Towards a Theology of Christians in Marriage' by Dr. Richard Leggett
Preface to Canon XXI
David Loftus' Book Review

Exploration

Experience

- ♦ Invite participants to share marriage stories from their family tree. (As these are personal stories the group should be invited to listen without comment. Using a talking stick¹ would be helpful).
- ♦ Invite them to share any of the joyful, sad, funny, painful as they are comfortable.
(*It would be appropriate to close the sharing with a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of the stories offered.*)

Culture

After reading David Loftus' book review...

- ♦ What aspects of the history of marriage surprise you? Are affirmed? Challenged?

Theology of Marriage

According to Western Christian thought the ministers of marriage are the man and woman who marry each other. From the point of view of the church the role of an ordained minister in a marriage service is to pray for God's blessing on the marriage which the man and woman minister to each other. (From the point of view of the state the minister may have other civil functions to perform.) An ordained minister offers the prayer of blessing because he or she is the appointed leader of the congregation assembled for this particular act of worship."

— (from 'Blessing of a Civil Marriage' Book of Occasional Celebrations of the Anglican Church of Canada, pg. 58)

In relation to:

I. *Towards a Theology of Christians in Marriage*, by Dr. Richard Leggett

- ♦ Surprises? Affirmations? Challenges?
- ♦ Discuss the introductory observation that a 'theology of Christians in marriage' is preferable to a 'theology of Christian marriage'. Agree? Disagree?

II. Preface to Canon XXI

- ♦ How does the view of marriage described in Canon XXI compare to your experience and to the culture around us?
- ♦ Discuss the role of the community in marriages.
- ♦ Where is this upheld well by the church (your own parish and the wider church) and where does it need improvement?

Summary Discussion

The institution of marriage has never been static. In different times and cultures it is practiced in different ways.

- ♦ Reflecting on your discussions what are the essentials of marriage today in society and/or in the church? Are they the same or are there significant differences?
- ♦ What distinguishes Christians in marriage?
- ♦ What kind of marriage preparation is therefore needed in your view?
- ♦ Discuss current marriage preparation practices for your parish/diocese.



For Next Week

Read:

- A. Canon XXI – General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, especially Section IV: Remarriage of Divorced Persons
- B. Resolutions of General Synod 1927-1965. A History of the Anglican Church of Canada discussing divorce.

For additional background on Social Trends see links to StatsCanada articles in Bibliography.

Endnote

- 1 Talking Stick – (or any item) that is passed from person to person. The person holding it at any time is invited to speak. All others are to listen respectfully without comment or interruption, as the story or information being shared is part of the life of the individual speaking.

A. Canon XXJ

Regulations: Sections I, II, III....see: http://www.anglican.ca/handbook/221_canon_XXI.pdf

IV. The Remarriage of a Divorced Person Whose Former Partner is Still Living

26. Application for Permission to Remarry According to the Rites of the Church

- a) An application for permission to marry each other according to the rites of this Church may be made by two persons, one or both of whom has or have gone through a ceremony or ceremonies of marriage with a person or persons now living not a party or parties to the application, if the prior marriage or marriages is or are not questioned under this Canon in the application but has or have been dissolved or terminated by a legislature or legislatures or a court or courts or by another act or acts or event or events according to the law or laws applicable thereto. Where a marriage or purported marriage has been annulled for a defect not mentioned in section 17 of part III of this Canon, and no defect mentioned in that section is alleged in respect thereof, it shall be deemed for the purposes of this Canon to have been dissolved.
- b) The application shall be made to the incumbent of the parish or mission where it is desired that the intended marriage be celebrated. The incumbent shall investigate the application as thoroughly as possible and forward it together with a report thereon to the Ecclesiastical Matrimonial Commission established under Part VI having jurisdiction in the diocese or, in a diocese where there is no Ecclesiastical Matrimonial Commission, to the diocesan bishop. The bishop may delegate the authority to the incumbent or some other person.
- c) An exception to this process may be made:
 - a) where both parties to the intended marriage normally reside at a significant distance from the proposed place of marriage, or
 - ii) where the parties live at a significant distance from each other, or

iii) where other circumstances require special arrangements, in which case the interviews and investigation shall be arranged for by the incumbent through responsible persons who are readily accessible to one or both of the partners to the intended marriage.

- d) The application shall be made in writing and signed by both applicants and shall contain the information required by Schedule C.
- e) The incumbent or the persons responsible for interviews and investigation shall attend to the question of pastoral care of former partners who are not applicants (as required of the Ecclesiastical Matrimonial Commission in Schedule D), and ensure, where needed and possible, that pastoral care is provided from an appropriate source.

27. Permission to Remarry According to the Rites of the Church

Permission to remarry according to the rites of this Church, notwithstanding the marriage Canon XXI 119 or marriages of either or both applicants to another person or persons now living, should be based on a reasonable belief that the applicants understand the nature of Christian marriage as stated in this Canon and intend to enter into such a marriage, and reasonable hope that they will continue in that relationship during their joint lives. Permission may be granted by the Commission or the diocesan bishop to the applicants if the Commission or the diocesan bishop is satisfied that:

- a) any prior marriage in question has been validly dissolved or terminated in accordance with the law properly applicable thereto;
- b) the applicant concerned tried in good faith before dissolution to effect reconciliation with the other party;
- c) adequate provision has been made for a former spouse of a divorced applicant, according to the means and needs of the applicant and the means and needs of the former spouse;
- d) proper provision has been made for the care, maintenance, education and advancement of

minor, disabled or otherwise dependent children of any prior marriage;

- e) if the children of a prior marriage are to live with the applicants, there is a reasonable prospect that the family relationship will be satisfactory;
- f) the applicants understand the Christian Doctrine of marriage as defined in this Canon, and intend to enter into such a marriage, and believe on reasonable grounds that they have the capacity to enter into and sustain the marriage during their joint lives.

28. *Refusal of Permission*

- a) If permission is not granted, the Commission or the diocesan bishop shall, subject to subsection 28c) of this Part, dismiss the application, giving reasons in writing which shall be communicated to the applicants through the incumbent.
- b) On being notified of dismissal of the application, the applicants may, within 30 days after receipt of notice, apply in writing to the Commission or the diocesan bishop for reconsideration of the application. On such reconsideration the applicants may appear personally before the Commission or the diocesan bishop and submit further reasons why the application should be granted or may submit such information and reasons in writing. On such reconsideration the Commission or the diocesan bishop may grant the application or confirm the previous decision. If the Commission or the diocesan bishop confirms the previous decision they shall give reasons in writing which shall be communicated to the applicants through the incumbent.
- c) If the application is dismissed and the decision

is confirmed by the Commission or the diocesan bishop, or if the applicants do not exercise their rights under subsection b), the application may not be renewed before any Commission or diocesan bishop unless further information is provided.

29. *Special Cases*

- a) If the Commission or the diocesan bishop is satisfied that efforts towards reconciliation between the parties to a former marriage would have been ineffective as a result of the fault of either party or for any other reason, the requirement of subsection 27b) may be dispensed with.
- b) If either applicant has entered into two or more marriages that have been dissolved, the Commission or the diocesan bishop shall not grant permission unless special circumstances justifying permission are proved.
- c) If the Commission or the diocesan bishop is of the opinion that a prior purported marriage of an applicant did not constitute a marriage as defined by this Canon, the Commission or the diocesan bishop may refer the application to the Chancellor who may, if the conditions of Part III, section 20, are satisfied, make a declaration under that section in respect of the marriage in question.
- d) If the incumbent of a parish declines for reasons of conscience to solemnize a marriage pursuant to permission given under this Part, the said incumbent shall refer the applicants to another priest designated by the bishop for investigation and report and permit that priest or another priest to solemnize the marriage in his or her Church.

B. Resolutions of General Synod or House of Bishops:

A History of the Anglican Church of Canada discussing divorce.
(GS = General Synod: HB=House of Bishops)

Read the following to gather the flow of the discussions about Divorce over the last 80 years.

Source: GS / 1927 September / Resolution
Report of the Council for Social Service
Moved by: Bishop of Ottawa
Seconded by: Archbishop of Huron

TEXT: Resolved, That the paragraphs of the Social Service Report dealing with the increase of Divorce in Canada be referred to the House of Bishops with the request that steps should be initiated by them to present anew to all members of the Church of England in Canada the need of steadfast loyalty to the Christian ideal of marriage as we find it in the New Testament, in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Canon of this Synod, also to emphasize the menace by which we are confronted in the increase of divorce in Canada and elsewhere and the ways open to us by which this menace can be met and overcome.

Source: GS / 1934 September / Resolution
Marriage Annulments
Moved by: Rev. H.F.D. Woodcock
Seconded by: Rev. F.V. Harrison

TEXT: Resolved, That, the Upper House concurring, this Synod views with alarm the recent annulments of marriages solemnized according to law by duly accredited ministers, and unreservedly condemns such actions as not only a menace to the sanctity of the marriage bond and the security of the home, but as involving civil and religious liberty. MESSAGE MM.

Source: GS / 1943 September / Resolution
Divorce and Remarriage
Moved by: Rev. Dr. R.C. Blagrove
Seconded by: Bishop of Niagara

Prologue: Memorial from Diocese of Niagara re Divorce and Remarriage:

To the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Church of England in Canada in General Synod assembled: The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Niagara memorializes the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada humbly requesting that the Gen-

eral Synod set up a Committee to take under review the whole question of the attitude of the Church in relation to the matter of Divorce and Remarriage to discover whether or not it may be found desirable to alter the Church's traditional rule in that regard; and also to canvass the advisability of making some alterations in the Table of Kindred and Affinity in the Book of Common Prayer.

And your Memorialists will always pray.
Signed and Sealed on behalf of the Synod of Niagara. Wilmot Niagara.

TEXT: That this General Synod respectfully requests His Grace the Primate to appoint a commission to take under review the Church's rules as to remarriage after divorce and also the table of Kindred and Affinity to consider whether at any point any change is desirable. CARRIED in both Houses.

Source: GS / 1946 September / Resolution
Report of the Commission on Marriage and Divorce
Moved by: Very Rev. S.H. Elliot
Seconded by: Rev. S.L. Pollard

TEXT: That this Lower House of the General Synod, having by prolonged discussion shown its awareness of a serious problem regarding the marital status of divorced persons, hereby expresses the view that the first step towards a solution is a renewed proclamation of the necessity for Divine Grace, high qualities of human character, and helpful social conditions, to achieve a nearer approach to the true ideal of Christian marriage. CARRIED unanimously.

Source: GS / 1949 September / Resolution
Marriage and Divorce
Moved by: Rev. Canon W.H.H. Crump
Seconded by: Rev. Canon E.H. Maddocks

Prologue: The following memorial from the Diocese of Calgary was considered.

"That this Synod asks the General Synod to revise its Canon on Marriage and Divorce by legislating to permit the innocent party to a divorce, to re-marry and have the benefit of all the services and sacraments of the Church and in this case immediately to

set up Church Courts to decide which (if either) is the innocent party.”

TEXT: That this Synod concur in the memorial. The motion was put to vote and CARRIED 92 to 76. Message L-30A.

**Source: GS / 1952 September / Resolution
*Report of the Commission on Marriage and Related Problems (p.369)***

Moved by: Very Rev. R.S. Rayson

Seconded by: Ven. A.F. Bate

Prologue: At this point Message U35 from the Upper House, containing a statement of the Upper House on this subject, was placed before the Lower House, as follows:

1. The House of Bishops has already agreed that there are cases in which exceptions should be made to the third rubric in the Marriage Service.
2. It is clear that exceptions should be sanctioned in those cases of divorce in which annulment could have been obtained on grounds recognized by the Canon.
3. With regard to the case of the so-called innocent party mentioned in the Calgary resolution of 1949, the Upper House is unanimous in thinking that the suggested procedure would be an unfortunate one for the Church to adopt. Some bishops believe that permission to marry in Church ought to be given in some instances on the grounds of the exception to the general rule, which is permitted in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9. The problem has been studied and discussed, but general agreement has not been secured.

On motion, the Message was RECEIVED, by vote of the Lower House.

**Source: GS / 1965 August/September / Resolution
*Commission on Marriage and Related Matters (see p.357)***

Moved by: Chancellor R.V. Harris

Seconded by: Mr. J.W. Graham

TEXT: That the following Motion be received:

That Part III of the present Canon XXVII be amended to read:
PART III - REMARRIAGE OF DIVORCED PERSONS

10. Except as hereinafter provided, no clergyman within the jurisdiction of The Anglican Church

of Canada shall solemnize a marriage between persons either of whom shall have been divorced from one still alive.

11. Any person or the intended spouse of any person, whose marriage has been dissolved by a civil court of competent jurisdiction, may apply to the Bishop of the diocese in which said applicant may reside for permission to remarry in the Church.
12. Such applications shall set forth:
 - (1) the particulars respecting all marriages previously contracted by the applicant or by the intended spouse and the reasons for dissolution thereof, whether by death, or decree of divorce or annulment.
 - (2) a certified copy of every decree of any civil court or courts annulling or dissolving any marriage of either party.
 - (3) if required by the Bishop a certified copy of the evidence heard by court in respect of such decree.
 - (4) a declaration that neither the applicant nor the intended spouse was found guilty of adultery by any court.
13. The Bishop shall enquire into any marriage contract or contracts entered into by either of the parties and the proceedings in any civil court having jurisdiction in divorce and matrimonial causes or in any appeal therefrom.
14. If the Bishop finds that the decree of the civil court was one for the dissolution of said marriage on the ground of adultery and that such court did not find the applicant or intended spouse guilty of adultery, the Bishop may issue a certificate granting permission for the applicant and intended spouse to be married by any clergyman of his diocese.
15. The clergyman solemnizing any marriage for which a permit has been issued under sections 14 of this Canon shall endorse on the back of the permit full particulars of any marriage solemnized by him between the applicant and any other person and sign and return the same to the Bishop within three months of the solemnization of such re-marriage.
16. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Canon, any clergyman of this Church may refuse to solemnize a marriage between any person and one whose spouse is still living or one who has not obtained the certificate or permit

referred to in section 14 of this Canon.

17. Nothing herein contained shall be construed as to recognize any decree of annulment or for dissolution of marriage granted by any ecclesiastical court on any ground whatsoever.
18. If the parties to a former marriage which has been dissolved by a civil court or competent jurisdiction for any cause whatever desire to be remarried as husband and wife by a clergyman of this Church, no enquiry under this Canon nor certificate nor permit under section 14 hereof shall be prerequisite to the solemnization of such re-marriage.
19. No clergyman shall refuse either of the Sacraments or other privileges of the Church to the innocent party in a divorce granted for adultery and who under civil sanction has been remarried. CARRIED in both Houses.

Source: HB / 1984 February / Resolution 13-2-84

Pastoral Statement

Revisions of Divorce Laws

Moved by: Bishop Mitchell

Seconded by: Archbishop Nutter

TEXT: That the House give approval to this statement. CARRIED #13-2-84

A STATEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS

On January 19, 1984, the Minister of Justice tabled in the House of Commons a Bill to revise Canada's divorce law. The proposed legislation departs from the provisions of the existing Divorce Act in that it abolishes matrimonial offence as grounds for divorce, and proposes that marriage breakdown should be the sole basis for the legal dissolution of a marriage.

The proposed legislation states that:

“in a petition for divorce, a breakdown of the marriage is established if, and only if (a) the husband and wife assert, in the manner prescribed...that the marriage has broken down; or (b) the husband and wife have lived separate and apart for a period of one year or more that immediately precedes, includes or immediately follows the date of presentation of the petition.”

Questions about the acceptability of the proposed legislation to the Anglican Church of Canada have

been addressed to various leaders of our Church, by the media as well as by members of the public -- including those of our Communion. In response, it must be stated that neither the General Synod of our Church, nor its National Executive Council, has specifically addressed the subject of Canadian legislation concerning divorce. In that sense, there is no “official” national policy of the Anglican Church of Canada relative to proposed changes in the law advocated by the Minister of Justice.

However, there is a Brief which was presented to the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Divorce (February 23rd, 1967) by a committee appointed by the Primate (Archbishop Howard Clark) at the request of the House of Bishops. That Brief states that any change in the law concerning marriage and divorce should (a) continue to uphold the ideal intent of marriage as a life-long union (b) respect the integrity of human personality (c) help to strengthen family life (d) provide for custody and care of children and the protection of any other defenceless victims of divorce. A major part of the Brief is devoted to supporting the principle “that marriage breakdown should be substituted for matrimonial offence as the basis for divorce in any new legislation.” The brief continues:

“It is our opinion that this concept provides a better basis for dealing effectively with the needs of people whose marriages have failed because it requires that a marriage be dealt with in its total social and moral context. We therefore recommend that in dealing with divorce petitions the breakdown of marriage should be recognized as a question of fact and that no rules of law defining marriage breakdown should be established, lest the present recriminatory attitudes and procedures continue to be fostered. Our conclusion is that the principle of marriage breakdown and the methods necessary to determine it as a matter of fact are basically incompatible with the principle of the matrimonial offence, and that marriage breakdown should replace the existing grounds rather than be added as a further ground for divorce.”

The Committee on Marriage and Related Matters is charged with the task of suggesting policy to the Church in relation to contemporary marriage.

That Committee was advised early in 1983 of the intention of the Minister of Justice to introduce amendments to the Divorce Act, and in subsequent meetings has given its attention to the matter. The Committee has recorded its opinion that in any responses the Church may wish to make to the proposed changes, it must affirm marriage and also the reality of forgiveness and the possibility of change in the individuals involved. This Committee also affirms the need to secure justice for dependent spouses and children when marriages have broken down.

While the Anglican Church of Canada has no “official” policy on divorce law reform, the following statements are consistent with our general approach to the matter:

- (a) we reaffirm the principle enunciated by the 1967 Committee of the House of Bishops: viz. that marriage breakdown should be the sole basis for the legal dissolution of a marriage.
- (b) the “waiting period” between breakdown and petition for divorce must not, under any circumstances, be less than one year. A longer period would be preferable.
- (c) legislation should contain adequate provisions for maintenance and child support which apply uniformly in all parts of the country, and efficient enforcement of maintenance orders through the initiative of state agencies, thus relieving the dependent party of the exhausting task of seeking enforcement.
- (d) The provision of divorce based on “no fault” and the reduction of the waiting period will put added pressure on the ideal of the permanence of marriage. Major increased emphasis on marriage preparation and the provision of counselling services by both the churches and community agencies will be even more essential if the proposed legislation is enacted.

The 1967 Brief asserts that:

“before proceeding with hearing for divorce on the grounds of marriage breakdown the court should be assured that every effort has been made to achieve reconciliation and that further attempts would be in vain. This would require exploration concerning the availability and use of professional services and the provision of the same when they do not at present exist.”

In this connection we welcome the assurance of the Minister of Justice that “the new divorce law would promote mediation and counselling services at any stage of the divorce proceedings, to help prevent impetuous divorces where there is hope of saving the marriage.”

- (e) while stressing the importance of provision for counselling services, we do not advocate that mediation procedures be compulsory before court proceedings are initiated. We continue to support a report presented to the General Synod in 1969, which stated that “counselling, by its nature, cannot be made mandatory.” On the other hand we commend counselling and negotiation with a view to arranging property settlements and making agreements for maintenance and custody before presenting the petition.

We appreciate the reasons for the changes in the legislation as proposed by the Minister of Justice — namely a less adversarial, more humane and conciliatory process for dealing with marriages which have ceased to exist in any meaningful way. At the same time, we wish to state as emphatically as we can that the well being of the family as a basic institution in society continues to be a matter of profound concern for the Church. We trust that the new legislation, if enacted, will not convey the impression that the laws of this land treat lightly the seriousness, and the sacredness, of the marriage bond.)



Session Three

Changes ♦ Beginnings & Endings

Resources Required:

Included with Session TWO:

*Canon XXI - General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada,
especially Section IV: Remarriage of Divorced Persons
Resolutions of General Synod 1927-1965. A History of the
Anglican Church of Canada discussing divorce.*

For additional background on Social Trends see links to StatsCanada articles in Bibliography.

Additional Resources:

Included with Session THREE:

*Exhortations & Vows – Book of Common Prayer and Book of Alternative Services
Pie Charts
Popular Magazines*

A. Exploration: Divorce – Remarriage

Experience

- ♦ Share, as you are willing, your experience of divorce – in your own life, in that of others, in the church. *(Please remember that discussion of divorce may trigger painful memories for some people. Sharing in discussion must be optional. Use of a talking stick may again be helpful).*
- ♦ What did you know and/or think about divorce as a child? Young adult? Older adult? Have your views changed over time?

Culture

See suggested articles & statistics in Resources needed.

- ♦ Describe cultural attitudes to divorce in your youth and today. *(eg Some may recall the effect of the abdication of King Edward VIII as he married divorcee, Wallis Simpson).*
- ♦ How were/are those attitudes reinforced in society?
- ♦ Exercise: Bring a set of popular Canadian culture magazines (flip through them and identify images that express attitudes to marriage/divorce – create collages of images about marriage)
- ♦ Compare with attitudes in another culture if possible.
- ♦ From the articles: Surprises? Affirmations?

Teaching of the Church

From: Resolutions of General Synod 1927 to 1965 – Summary

Note the change in tone and attitude in the resolutions as the church wrestled with the acceptability of divorce and subsequent remarriage.

Canon XXI Section IV – Regulations: Divorce & Remarriage.

From 1965 to 2004 divorced people could remarry in the Anglican Church if the partners engaged in the process of review set out by the Matrimonial Commission appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and received permission. At General Synod 2004 the canon was changed slightly to permit the Bishop to delegate the responsibility for that review to others, such as the incumbent of the parish, thus potentially putting the decision at the local parish level.

- ♦ Discuss – surprises & affirmations.
- ♦ Does the intention of the church in its resolutions match your experience of the church in its practice?

Summary Discussion

- ♦ In light of the intention of marriage as understood by the church, how should the Church respond today to the realities of divorce, remarriage?

B. Exploration: Cohabitation – changes in expectation/life style – Sexuality

Fifty years ago it was considered inappropriate, even immoral, to live together and, presumably, engage in sexual activity prior to marriage. Moving in together, ‘shacking up’, was socially unacceptable and the nightmare of many parents. Today social practice has changed significantly with many couples living together, often for years, before entering marriage. There has been little public theological reflection in the church about this change yet it is the experience of many in the pew.

See STATS CAN Pie charts re Family Structures (Attached)

Experience

Cohabiting Vignettes

Sarah & John had been dating during the last two years of university. As they finished their degrees they decided that it would make financial sense for them to move in together to share expenses. They were not sure if this relationship would be a permanent one and move towards marriage, especially as their careers were just beginning and might well take them in different directions. However, they were sexually active. Sarah's parents were very unhappy about this and not sure how to have John as part of family gatherings. John's parents were more philosophical and welcomed Sarah into family gatherings with no expectations.

Dave and Samantha had dated for six months, become engaged and were planning a wedding next year. The lease on Dave's apartment was coming up so they decided to set up a home together now rather than at

the time of the wedding. Both families understood this as a practical decision and welcomed Dave & Samantha in their respective families.

Mark (25) and Roxanne (23) have been dating for a year. Mark wants them to live together but does not want to make any other commitments. Roxanne does not want to live together without knowing whether there is the possibility of a deeper commitment.

Janet (39) was married for 10 years before the marriage ended in a bitter and painful divorce. She is in a new relationship with Tom (41) and is unwilling to jump into marriage again. They have been living together for 4 years.

Charlie (48) had been in a common-law relationship for fifteen years when it broke up. He is now dating Suzanne (divorced after 7 years of marriage, 2 children). They have talked about moving in together as neither wants to get married. She has joint custody of her children who would live with them half of the time.

- ♦ Where does your own experience connect with these vignettes?
- ♦ If you are or have been married, describe your courtship & engagement; ... what decisions marked the change in your lives/relationship?
- ♦ If you are single, what marks the boundary for sexual intimacy?
- ♦ Is there a difference in experience by gender? By generation (under 30; 30-55; over 55)?

Culture

Canada – Statistics

From: General Social Survey 2001

It is estimated that 80% of women are expected to marry at some point in their lives.

There is a 93% probability that women 60-69 and 87% of women 50-59 will have married directly.

40%+ of women (30 and 39) and 53% of women (20 and 29) are expected to choose a common-law union as their first union

Women ranging in age from 30 to 39 are expected to be twice as likely to see their unions end in separation or divorce as women ranging in age from 60 to 69.

Common Law relationships are generally less stable than marriages. More than 30% of Canadian women ranging in age from 40-59 who started their conjugal relationships through marriage are expected to separate, whereas the probability more than doubles (62.1%) among women who started their conjugal relationships through common-law.

Statistics Canada's Internet Site, Changing Conjugal Life in Canada, July 2002 Catalogue no. 89-576-XI:

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-576-XIE/89-576-XIE2001001.pdf>,

Accessed: December 13, 2005

United States – Statistics

The number of unmarried couples living together increased 72% between 1990 and 2000.

– U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

The number of unmarried couples living together has increased tenfold between 1960 and 2000.

– U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

- ♦ Discuss the process of becoming married – stages, experiences, transitions, rituals, (Note any differences according to culture, age, etc.)
- ♦ Exercise: Choose any TV show – (if possible: watch 15 minutes together) – describe the perspectives on marriage, sexual intimacy, cohabiting assumed in the show. (include commercials!)
- ♦ Imagine you arrive in Canada from an isolated, foreign country (or planet!). In order to understand the culture you watch TV & Movies....
- ♦ What do they tell you about marriage, etc?
- ♦ Identify and discuss cultural messages about cohabitation as seen in popular TV shows & movies – current and former – *Desperate Housewives*; *Will & Grace*; *Four Weddings & a Funeral*;

Teaching of the Church

The Church holds that sexual intimacy properly belongs within the bonds of marriage, understood to begin at the time of the wedding and not prior. In Some Issues in Human Sexuality, A guide to the debate published for the Church of England House of Bishops the following (excerpted) summary of human sexuality is offered (pg. 104ff):

- 3.5.2 In this chapter we have seen that this means that, for human beings to find fulfilment, they need to be in relation to the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that this is a relationship of faithful response and a setting aside of our desire for immediate self-gratification, which develops over a lifetime and finds its completion not in this world but in the world to come.
- 3.5.3 We have also seen that this relationship is to be lived out in the community of the Church in which human beings are called to both a ‘vertical’ relationship with God and also a ‘horizontal’ relationship with other human beings. This horizontal relationship with other human beings may take a variety of forms that may legitimately be described as ‘sexual’, and these may well have a ‘sexual’ dimension in the sense of the dictionary meaning of the term quoted earlier (3.4.41).¹
- 3.5.4 However, according to both the mainstream interpretation of the Bible and Christian tradition, the proper context for sexual relations has been and is a permanent and exclusive relationship of love between two people of the opposite sex.
- 3.5.5 This kind of relationship is only one of the vocations to which we may be called by God, since there also exist vocations to either temporary singleness or permanent celibacy.
- 3.5.6 Whatever the vocation to which we are called, it will involve self-denial on our part, both the rejection of inappropriate forms of sexual behaviour, to which all Christians are called, and the specific form of self-denial that our particular vocation involves.

1 3.41 The New Oxford Dictionary of English defines the word ‘sexual’ as an adjective referring to: ‘the instincts, physiological processes and activities connected with physical attraction or intimate physical contact between individuals’.

In light of the above: (see **Exhortations & Vows** – Attached)

- ♦ Discuss the exhortations at the opening of the marriage services of the Book of Common Prayer (1662) and the Book of Alternative Services (1984). What are the predominant views of marriage embedded in each?
- ♦ Describe the similarities/differences in approach.
- ♦ How many weddings are done in your parish where couple have been cohabiting prior to the wedding? How is this approached by clergy? Laity?

Summary Discussion

Duncan Dormor, Dean of St. John’s College, Cambridge, England offers this reflection:

The rise of cohabitation over the past twenty years and the ease with which it has become acceptable to the majority of the population should not, then, be interpreted as ‘the end of marriage’ as some have conceived it, nor as a clear indication of the progressive corrosion of the moral fabric of our society, as others would like to suggest. Rather for most people, ‘...cohabitation is part of the process of getting married and is not a substitute for marriage. Its popularity is, then one example among many, of a well-documented and much broader social shift away from institutional authority and towards a reassertion of the personal and the individual.’

– *Just Cohabiting: The Church, Sex and Getting Married* by Duncan Dormor, pg. 61

- ♦ In light of the divergence between social practice and traditional church teaching:
How should the church approach its teaching ministry in this area?
What changes in practice are needed in your parish and/or the wider church?



For Next Week

Read :

A. “The liturgy for the Blessing of a Civil Marriage”

B. *Liturgy Canada* edition on Marriage/Blessings - <http://www.liturgy.ca/archive/Lent03.pdf>

note: The discussion next week is not on same sex blessings however the articles contain relevant information on the nature of marriage and blessings).

Exhortations & Vows — Marriage Services

Book of Common Prayer: 1662

Exhortation:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this Congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church.; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be enterprized, not taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained,

First, it was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

Vows

I N. take thee N. to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

I N. take thee N to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish and to obey, till death us

do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

Book of Common Prayer, Canada: 1962

Exhortation:

Matrimony was ordained for the hallowing of the union betwixt man and woman; for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and for the mutual society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, in both prosperity and adversity. Pg 566

Vow:

I N. take thee N. to be my wedded wife (husband) to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

Book of Alternative Services (Canada) 1985

Exhortation:

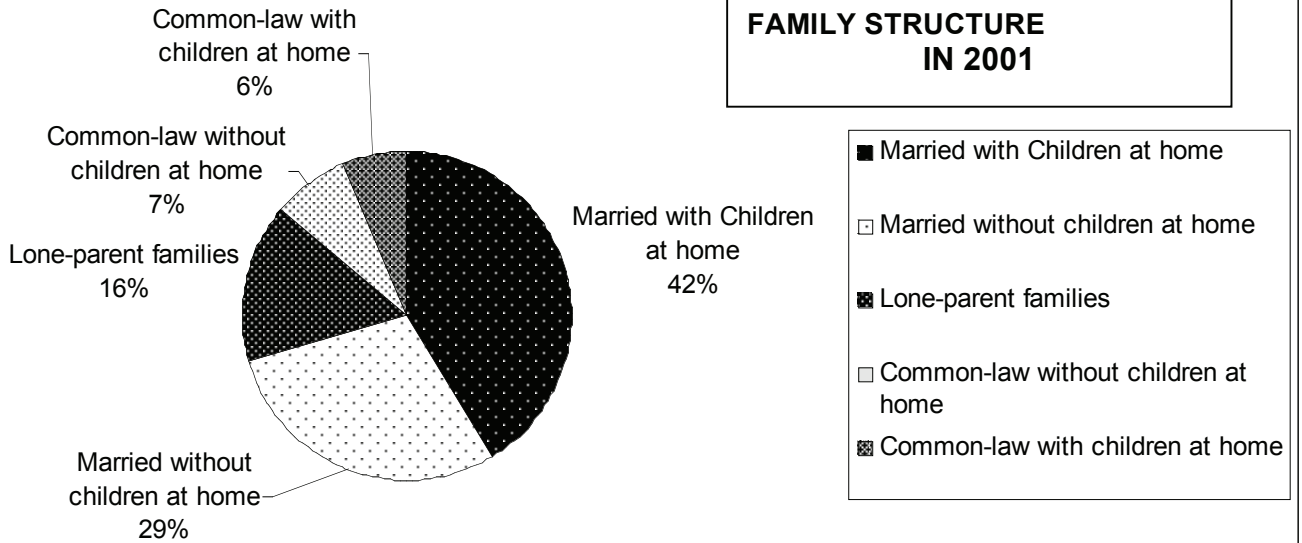
Marriage is a gift of God and a means of his grace, in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love, they shall grow together and be united in that love, as Christ is united with his Church.

The union of man and woman in heart, body and mind is intended for their mutual comfort and help, that they may know each other with delight and tenderness in acts of love (and that they may be blessed in the procreation, care and upbringing of children).

Vow:

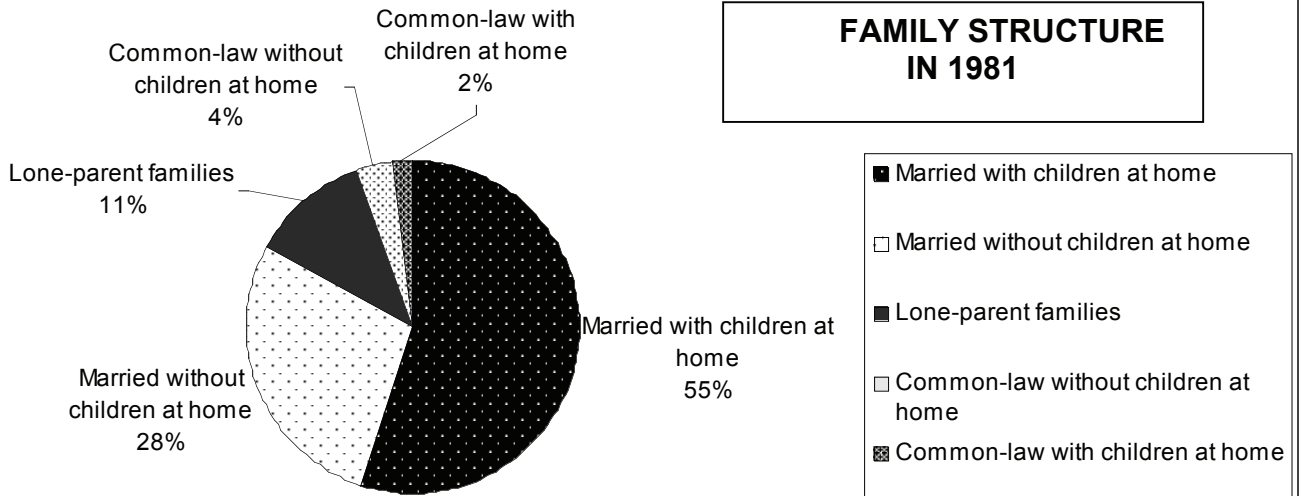
I N take you N to be my wife (husband), to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish for the rest of our lives, according to God's holy law. This is my solemn vow.

FAMILY STRUCTURE IN 2001



Statistics Canada:
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/teacher%27s_kit/activity5_handout1b.cfm
 Accessed: December 13, 2005

FAMILY STRUCTURE IN 1981



Statistics Canada:
http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/teacher%27s_kit/activity6_graphic1.cfm
 Accessed: December 13, 2005

The Blessing and Celebration after a Civil Marriage

(Authorized by General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada, 2004)

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The couple stands before the presiding minister who shall be a priest or bishop.

Presiding Minister The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

People And also with you.

Presiding Minister Dear Friends, we have come together in the
presence of God to celebrate the marriage of _____ and _____
and to rejoice with them.

Marriage is a gift of God and a means of his grace, in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love, they shall grow together and be united in that love, as Christ is united with his Church.

The union of man and woman in heart, body and mind is intended for their mutual comfort and help, that they may know each other with delight and tenderness in acts of love (and that they may be blessed in the procreation, care, and upbringing of children).

In marriage, husband and wife give themselves to each other, to care for each other in good times and in bad. They are linked to each other's families, and they begin a new life in the community.

It is a way of life that all should reverence, and none should undertake lightly.

We pray with them that by God's help _____ and _____ may fulfill his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to these your servants
that loving one another,
they may continue in your love
until their lives' end.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People

Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

Two or three readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Members of the family and friends of the couple may read lessons. A psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem, or period of silence may follow the lessons. Suggested reading may be found on p. 549 (BAS). The readings and the response shall be selected in consultation with the couple.

At the conclusion of reading from the Old Testament and the New Testament writings other than the Gospel, the reader says,

People The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
According to ...
People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

People The Gospel of Christ.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

A sermon may follow.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The couple present themselves before the presiding minister, who asks them in turn the following question, to which each individually makes response.

Response N, do you here,
in the presence of God and of this congregation,
affirm and renew the commitment you made
when you bound yourself to N in marriage?
I do.

Then the couple shall say together

Acknowledging our union to be lifelong,
until we are parted by death,
we ask God to bless our marriage.

The people remain standing. The couple kneels and the presiding minister says one of the following prayers.

Most gracious God,
we give you thanks for your tender love
in sending Jesus Christ to come among us,
to be born of a human mother,
and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life.

We thank you, also, for consecrating
the union of man and woman in his name.
By the power of your Holy Spirit,
pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon this man and this woman.
Defend them from every enemy.
Lead them into all peace.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts,
a mantle about their shoulders,
and a crown upon their foreheads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
in their sleeping and in their waking;
in their joys and in their sorrows;
in their life and in their death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever.

People

Amen.

Or

O God,
you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage
that in it is represented the spiritual unity
between Christ and his Church.
Send therefore your blessing upon these servants,
that they may so love, honour, and cherish each other
in faithfulness and patience,
in wisdom and true godliness,
that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

People

Amen.

The Giving and Receiving of Rings

If rings are to be given and received, the presiding minister receives the rings and addresses the congregation in these or similar words.

Dear friends in Christ,
Let us ask God to bless these rings.

The community may pray silently. The presiding minister then says,

Blessed are you,
God of steadfast love,
source of our joy and end of our hope.
Bless these rings given and received
that they may be symbols of the vow and covenant

_____ and _____ have made in holy marriage,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People

Amen.

Each places the ring on the ring-finger of other's hand and says,

N, I give you this ring
as a symbol of my vow.
With all that I am and all that I have,
I honour you in the name of God.

The presiding minister adds this blessing.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord look upon you with favour
and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace;
that you may faithfully live together in this life,
and in the age to come have life everlasting.

People

Amen.

The couple join right hands.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

People

Amen.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the people may be led by a friend or member of a family of the couple, or by the presiding minister or another minister.

Leader

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
look graciously upon the world which you have made
and for which your Son gave his life,
and especially on all whom you make to be one flesh in holy marriage.
May their lives together
be a sacrament of your love to this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy overcome despair.

People

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader

May _____ and _____ so live together
that the strength of their love

may enrich our common life
and become a sign of your faithfulness.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

[*Leader* May they receive the gifts and heritage of children
and the grace to bring them up to know and love you.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.]

Leader May their home be a place of truth, security, and love;
and their lives an example of concern for others.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May those who have come to join
_____ and _____ in asking for God's blessing
find their lives strengthened
and their loyalties confirmed.

People Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the Lord's Prayer (p. 211 BAS) is said at this time.

The congregation stands.

The Peace

Presiding Minister The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

Members of the congregation, the couple, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts

If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the service continues with the preparation of the gifts. The bread and wine may be presented by the couple.

The Prayer Over the Gifts

When the gifts have been prepared, the celebrant may say the Prayer over the gifts, as follows.

God of the covenant, hear our prayer,
and accept all we offer you this day.
You have made _____ and _____
one in the sacrament of marriage.
May the mystery of Christ's unselfish love,
which we celebrate in this eucharist,
increase their love for you and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People

Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The celebrant continues with the Great Thanksgiving. Eucharistic Prayer 1 on pp. 193-195 in *The Book of Alternative Services* is appropriate. At the conclusion of the Great Thanksgiving, the Lord's Prayer is said.

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant

All

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,
**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive through who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Or

Celebrant

All

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Silence

The Breaking of the Bread

The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread for distribution, and may say,

We break the bread of life,
And that life is the light of the world.

All God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.

The Communion

The celebrant invites the people to share in communion and may say,

Celebrant The gifts of God for the People of God.
People Thanks be to God.

The celebrant receives the sacrament first and then delivers it to the husband and wife, and to such of the congregation as wish to receive communion.

The sacrament is given with the following words,

*The body of Christ (given for you).
The blood of Christ (shed for you).*

Or
*The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.*

The communicant responds each time, **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Celebrant Let us pray.

Standing, the congregation prays in silence. The celebrant then says,

*Gracious God,
may ____ and _____, who are bound together
in these holy mysteries,
continue in one heart and soul.
May they live in fidelity and peace
and obtain the eternal joys
prepared for all who love you;
through your Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.*

People **Amen.**

Then the following doxology may be said.

<i>Celebrant</i>	Glory to God,
<i>People</i>	whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people saying,

<i>Leader</i>	Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
<i>People</i>	Thanks be to God.

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, **Alleluia** may be added to the dismissal and the people's response.



Session Four

Church & State in Marriage

Resources Needed:

The liturgy for the Blessing of a Civil Marriage.

Liturgy Canada edition on Marriage/Blessings

<http://www.liturgy.ca/archive/Lent03.pdf>

St. Michael Report – Paragraphs 38-41 - attached to Session FOUR

Exploration

We often quote the necessity of the separation of church and state, yet in the area of weddings the two have been ‘married’ for some time. In session Two the book review by David Loftus outlined some of the history of marriage and the role of the state and church. This session will explore the relationship between civil marriage and church blessing.

Church & State.....

Marriage is a human, social institution that comes in a variety of forms and expressions. It has historically and primarily been governed by the need for continuity and care in the inheritance of property and the procreation & upbringing of children.

In Canada the Church has a dual role in its participation in weddings. A marriage is publicly declared through the exchange of vows of the couple. The church offers a blessing of the marriage in recognition of the desire of the couple to fulfil the vows made through their commitment to live in accordance with God’s grace/commands. In order that the marriage will be recognized under the law the couple also requires civil registration of the marriage. This is accomplished through making the vows in the presence of a registered agent of the state such as a justice of the peace, judge, or authorized minister of religion. In the Anglican Church of Canada clergy are granted a licence to marry couples through the provincial governments. Therefore, in a wedding they are both ministers of the Church and agents of the state. Couples sign both the marriage register of the parish and a provincial licence at the wedding. Clergy offer the blessing, witness the marriage and submit the appropriate forms to provincial authorities.

If both parties to the marriage are members of a congregation (and not married previously) they may be married through the publication of banns in some provinces (announcement of the pending marriage in services of public worship three times prior to the wedding), without needing a provincial licence. Churches are permitted set their own standards for marriage in addition to the civil requirements (eg. Matrimonial commissions for those divorced; place of marriage; kind of ceremony; records, etc).

In some countries, particularly in Europe, all marriages must be registered civilly. If a blessing by the church is desired it is conducted separately and has no links to the civil ceremony. Church and state are completely separate in the matter of marriages.

In addition, it is clear that fewer and fewer people are choosing to be married in the church at all. Anglican Church of Canada statistics show the following decline in marriages conducted by the church:

Anglican Church: Marriages	Total in Canada
1971	16,197
1981	12,343
1991	9,552
2001	6,009

Experience:

- ♦ Discuss your experience of ‘civil’ vs. ‘church’ weddings.
- ♦ If possible: Have couples share their experience of being married –
 - Civil wedding with a church blessing later;
 - Civil wedding with no church blessing;
 - Church wedding.

Culture:

- ♦ What are current cultural expectations around weddings? Officiant? Ceremony?
- ♦ Where do they occur?
- ♦ What are the essential elements in a wedding?
- ♦ Discuss the influence of social culture on the planning and preparation for a wedding/marriage.

Teaching of the Church

The role of the church is to be the witness to the vows publicly declared by the couple and to offer a blessing for a marriage that will be lived out in light of the Christian commitments of the couple.

From: *Blessing of a Civil Marriage* (Anglican Church of Canada)

The couple present themselves before the presiding minister, who asks them in turn the following question, to which each individually makes response.

N, do you here,
in the presence of God and of this congregation,
affirm and renew the commitment you made
when you bound yourself to N in marriage?

Response I do.

Then the couple shall say together

Acknowledging our union to be lifelong,
until we are parted by death,
we ask God to bless our marriage.

See: Paul Gibson's article in *Liturgy Canada* and
Intro to Blessings in *Book of Occasional Celebrations*, pg 116.
St. Michael Report (Para 38-41) – attached to Session FOUR.

- ♦ What makes a marriage able to be blessed?
- ♦ Check with clergy – how many 'Blessings of a Civil Marriage' has she/he conducted?

Summary Discussion

Reference: LITURGY CANADA articles: by John Hill & Gordon Baker

- ♦ What is the appropriate relationship between church and state in marriage?
- ♦ Should clergy continue to be licensed by the government to perform the legal, civil activities of marrying people or have all marriages civilly registered and clergy only involved in offering a blessing?
- ♦ Discuss the impact of each on the life of your parish and/or the life of the church as a whole.



For Next Week:

Read:

A. The St. Michael Report – especially Paragraphs 30-41:
Sections on 'Human Relationships & Sanctification' & 'Holy Matrimony'

B. The Liturgy for the Celebration of a Covenant Relationship
– Diocese of New Westminster

The St. Michael Report

Report of the Primate's Theological Commission of the Anglican Church of Canada on the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions

Preface

The General Synod of 2004 requested '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'. The Primate, the Most Rev. Andrew Hutchison, made this request of the Theological Commission and stressed the need for timely consideration. Archbishop Hutchison was convinced that in the interests of our church's need to be ready for the General Synod 2007, the Primate's Theological Commission should try to have its report ready by the Fall of 2005. We concurred and eventually committed ourselves to an even earlier timeline of presenting to the Council of General Synod in May, 2005.

The Commission is deeply grateful to the Sisters of the Church as three of our four meetings have been held at their convent, St. Michael's House in Oakville, Ontario. We have greatly appreciated their hospitality and have benefited from joining with them in prayer. It is out of our gratitude that we have named the report 'The St. Michael Report'. The Commissioners come from many different dioceses of the Canadian church. We hold widely different theological positions. We have, however, listened carefully and respectfully to one another and have all grown in understanding as a result. We are especially grateful to the Reverend Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan who staffs the Commission and is of invaluable assistance and support. The Primate chose not to attend the two meetings in which the Commission worked almost exclusively on the Report but we deeply appreciate his prayerful support.

We ask the Council of General Synod to receive and commend the Report to our church for consideration. We believe that we have outlined what needs to be pondered as we seek the way forward together. In particular, we are especially concerned that our church should commit herself to serious engagement with the whole range of theological issues associated with such blessings. Rather than

issuing a general call for more study and discussion, we hope that the Anglican Church of Canada will invite all sides to listen prayerfully and deeply to those who hold different perspectives. In particular, we ask that constituencies refrain from trying to score rhetorical points, or gain influence for the positions they may have already decided are right. We all have much to learn from each other, and in order for that to happen we need to enter into intentional, deep, prayerful listening.

Representing several different theological colleges, universities, parishes and dioceses, we hope that the Commission will be able to help the church further engage in the much needed theological reflection.

We thank the General Synod and our Primate for entrusting us with this task.

The Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews, Chair

Members of the Primate's Theological Commission

- Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Edmonton, Chair (Edmonton, AB)
Rev. Dr. Stephen Andrews, Thorneloe University (Sudbury, ON)
Rt. Rev. Benjamin Arreak, Suffragan Bishop of the Arctic (Kuujuuak, QC)
Dr. Walter Deller, College of Emmanuel and St. Chad (Saskatoon, SK)
Rev. Dr. Wendy Fletcher, Vancouver School of Theology (Vancouver, BC)
Rev. Jamie Howison, St. Benedict's Table (Winnipeg, MB)
Rev. Paul Jennings, Montreal Diocesan College (Montreal, QC)
Rev. Joanne Mercer, Queen's College (St. John's, NL)
Dr. Robert Moore, Christ Church Cathedral (Ottawa, ON)
Rev. Dr. Gary Thorne, St. George's Church (Halifax, NS)
Rev. Madeleine Urion, Wycliffe College (Toronto, ON)
Rev. Lisa Wang, Trinity College (Toronto, ON)

A Brief Overview of the Report

- ♦ The Commission has concluded that the blessing of committed same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine.
- ♦ The Commission understands the term ‘committed same-sex unions’ to mean committed, adult, monogamous, intended lifelong, same-sex relationships which include sexual intimacy.
- ♦ The Commission is particularly concerned to call the whole church to engage in furthering the discussion of this issue in a sustained, prayerful, respectful and non-polemical manner.
- ♦ The Commission recognizes that there is a range of interpretations given to the term ‘doctrine’, and that doctrines develop and change over time. We agree that the blessing of committed same-sex unions is not a matter of what is often referred to as a ‘core’ doctrine, in the sense of being credal doctrine.
- ♦ The Commission does not believe that this should be a communion-breaking issue.
- ♦ The Commission, recognizes that ‘the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation’ (*Book of Alternative Services* p. 645). We acknowledge that the interpretation of Scripture is a central and complex matter and that, at times in the Church’s history, ‘faithful’ readings have led to mutually contradictory understandings, requiring ongoing dialogue and prayer towards discernment of the one voice of the gospel.
- ♦ The doctrine of the Church has always been definitively expressed in its liturgies; such a liturgy of blessing is no exception since in it the Church declares the activity of God towards the object of the blessing.
- ♦ 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.
- ♦ Culture is the context in which Christians live out their faith and formulate doctrine. The challenge facing the Church is to see our cultural norms through the eyes of Christ and then, out of allegiance to him, to promote those norms that honour him and renounce those that do not.

- ♦ Several doctrines are integral to the theological consideration of the blessing of committed same-sex unions: salvation, incarnation, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, theological anthropology, sanctification and holy matrimony.
- ♦ We recommend that any doctrinal discussion of the blessing of same-sex unions should seek a broader consensus on the relationship of sexuality to our full humanity in Christ.
- ♦ 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.

‘But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine.’ (Titus 2.1)¹

1. The Commission has concluded that the blessing of same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine.² In reaching this conclusion, the Commission has been conscious of the range of interpretations given to the term ‘doctrine’, and it has attempted in what follows carefully and prayerfully to understand the complexity of the nature of doctrine and its relationship to this divisive issue. We are particularly concerned to call the whole Church to engage in furthering the discussion of this issue in a sustained, prayerful, respectful and non-polemical manner, in the earnest hope that it will lead to a clearer discernment of ‘sound doctrine’ and to our goal of wholeness in Christ (*Is 55:6; Ps 27:8; Col 1:28; Prov 8:17; Eph 2:10*).
2. The blessing of committed same-sex unions is tied to the question of how all sexuality, as a feature of our bodily existence, participates in our redemption — our entering into the life of holiness to which Christ, through his incarnation, his life, death, and resurrection, is always calling us. Every discovery in human learning, scientific research, and socio-cultural development must be understood in the context of the fundamental reality that all we do and are, including our sexuality and sexual acts of intimacy, is a response in faith to the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, insofar as a monogamous,

intended lifelong, committed same-sex union will be a relationship that will either enable or impair our participation in the life of God through Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is inextricably linked to the core mystery of the triune God, and how we experience God's saving mercy. More categorically, it seems to us that this issue is fundamentally related to the doctrines of salvation (soteriology), incarnation, the work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology), our creation in the image of God (theological anthropology), sanctification, and holy matrimony.

3. The doctrine of the Church, moreover, has always been defined and expressed through its liturgies. The liturgy of blessing is no exception, since in such a liturgy the Church declares the activity of God towards the object of that blessing. The authorization of a particular form of liturgy for the blessing of same-sex couples would infer that the form and content of that liturgy is an expression of Christian doctrine as received and understood by the Anglican Church of Canada. Moreover, we believe that the blessing of same-sex unions is closely analogous to marriage. For these reasons the Commission is convinced that the blessing of same-sex unions should be treated as a matter of doctrinal importance.
4. In its references to Scripture in support of its conclusions, the Commission acknowledges that the interpretation of the Bible is a complex matter, and that at any given point in the Church's history, 'faithful' readings may lead us to mutually contradictory understandings. For example, the understanding of the nature and place of the Law in Jesus' kingdom, and particularly as it applied to Gentiles in the apostolic Church, developed gradually and was the source of controversy and even division (*Acts 15; Galatians*).
5. With regard to the relation between Scripture and doctrine, we note several Anglican themes. The classic formularies (the Solemn Declaration, the Ordination oaths, the Thirty-Nine Articles) state that the Scriptures contain 'all things necessary for salvation'. This is different from asserting that all things contained in the Scriptures are necessary for salvation. Anglican liturgical patterns, particularly those in the *Book*

of Common Prayer, suggest that the normative framework for interpreting the Scriptures is the classic Creeds, and more broadly the themes of doxology, calling, holiness, and liberation, articulated in the repeated use of the canticles and the daily collects. Moreover, the Anglican tradition understands the Scriptures in light of the overall Trinitarian shape of our worship as reflecting a movement from our creaturely acknowledgement of God the Creator, recognition and confession of sin and our own brokenness, proclamation of grace in the salvific work of Christ, and acceptance of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the shaping of lives and communities of wholeness. As we pursue our reading of the Scriptures through the unfolding cycle of the Church Year, this interpretive framework is reinforced.

6. In its own work the Commission has grown in awareness that we all read and interpret the Scriptures through the eyes and understandings of our own cultures. The approaches of various commission members have reminded us that hearing Scripture through our culture can sometimes open us to richer possibilities for faithfulness to the good news of Christ's Reign, and at other times the Scripture can function to open up and explode our culturally engrained assumptions. This interaction of Scripture, culture, and discipleship is not superficial, or easy and predictable.
7. The question of the blessing of same-sex relationships requires us to explore and balance genuine tensions among biblical strands of teaching about the purpose of human sexuality and partnership; the radicalness of the prophetic traditions and their challenge to conventionalized religion and social mores; the shape of individual holiness in relation to communal holiness; the relationship between Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels and as reflected in other parts of the New Testament; our understanding of Law and Grace; and the witness to a community of inclusion that is also a reflection of God's transformative holiness.

Doctrine in the Anglican Tradition

8. Doctrine is formed whenever the Church, as the Church, makes a statement about who God is and how God acts, and insofar as the

blessing of a same-sex union constitutes such a statement about God and how God is active in relation to that union, it must be considered as a doctrinal matter. It must nevertheless be recognized that the term ‘doctrine’ is used in a number of different ways in the Anglican tradition. Doctrine is taken to refer generally to that teaching of the Church which is founded on Scripture, interpreted in the context of tradition, with the use of reason. But a finer distinction is recognized between what may be termed ‘core doctrines’ and what may be termed *adiaphora* (a distinction noted by *The Windsor Report*, §A.36). Core doctrines have been understood (by the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Solemn Declaration, and the Lambeth Quadrilateral) to mean the credal and earliest conciliar explications of Scripture with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity and the person and work of Jesus Christ. *Adiaphora* have been defined as matters ‘upon which disagreement can be tolerated without endangering unity’ (WR §A.36). It should be noted that while *adiaphora* are distinguished from core doctrines, they are nevertheless doctrines.³

9. Furthermore, many teachings appear to occupy a place on a scale between core doctrines and *adiaphora*. In some parts of the Western church (though less prominently in Anglicanism), some teachings may be called ‘confessional’, in that they are perceived as being required of the Church by the Spirit in a particular historical context.⁴ Anglican sacramental teaching (on the nature of the Eucharist, for example, or on marriage) may form another classification, having great authority without excluding different interpretations.
10. We are agreed that blessing of same-sex unions is not a matter of core doctrine in the sense of being credal.⁵ The determination of this question will not hinder or impair our common affirmation of the historic creeds. The Commission acknowledges that for some on all sides of the issue it has taken on an urgency that approaches the ‘confessional’ status, in that they believe that the Church is being called absolutely by the Spirit to take a stand. On the contrary, the Commission does not believe that this should be a Communion-breaking issue. We do believe that this issue has become a matter of such

theological significance in the Church that it must be addressed as a matter of doctrine.

11. The Church aspires to enter into the fullness of truth through her continuing reflection on Scripture and doctrine under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this means that when we seek to be faithful to Scripture and doctrine in changing circumstances, we may find ourselves led by the Spirit to new insights that affirm or contradict our past practices. The Abolition of the British slave trade in the 19th century is a classic example of the church reversing its approval of a practice seen as un-touchably sanctioned in Scripture. Those who spearheaded the campaign against the trade were devout, meticulous, Evangelical, Bible-reading Anglicans who regarded slavery and the slave trade as incompatible with the mind and heart of Christ and the Gospel. For them, this was the ultimate justification for seeking to abolish it. They succeeded so well in winning Parliament, the English public, and finally the Church of England to their cause that soon all of those parties were amazed that they had regarded the slave trade as a moral institution for so long.
12. Other shifts in the Church’s convictions could be cited. The Church at one time sanctioned segregation and civil rights abuses in the United States and South Africa; and the Anglican Church of Canada at one time implicitly allowed a policy of cultural assimilation in its ministry to aboriginal peoples. Our church today has been challenged to be open to the possibility that the blessing of same-sex unions is consistent with the teaching of Scripture and the development of the Church’s tradition. What is required of the Church is to discern the leading of the Spirit in this matter in reasoned and faithful dialogue with Scripture and tradition, and then to respond in love and obedience. It is commonly assumed that doctrinal certainty is required before pastoral actions can be taken, but history also demonstrates that clarity emerges when thought and action occur simultaneously.

Development of Doctrine

13. The history of Christian theology demonstrates that over time doctrines have developed and

changed. Some such developments are viewed as true and some as false. Christians know that doctrine can and does change, but the Church also affirms that such development may never contradict the heart of the gospel. When true development occurs, it ultimately has healthy consequences for the life of the Church.

14. For example, in the early centuries of Christianity, baptism was the sacrament of spiritual rebirth into the Body of Christ, but it was also seen to be the primary if not sole means of forgiveness for profound spiritual disobedience and sin. This early understanding in the tradition led to the common practice of adults delaying baptism until their latter years, or even their deathbed, to avoid falling into sin after baptism without having recourse to forgiveness. In time, repentance, confession, and absolution developed as doctrines in the Church in their own right, but only as the Church was led by the Holy Spirit to a progressive refinement of the role of baptism in the Christian life.
15. For those who maintain that right teaching upholds what was always believed everywhere by all Christians, it needs to be said that conservation of the old is not necessarily the best way to preserve the truth. Furthermore, it is wrong to think that there is no place for originality in the consideration of revealed truth. As new situations and human problems arise, creativity in the rearticulation of traditional doctrine can be part of the voice of divine wisdom. It must also be noted that development of doctrine in a divided Church can lead to further fragmentation, as one part of the Body of Christ discerns a legitimate development that another cannot recognize. As our experience of the Reformation reminds us, when the Church wrestles with a development of doctrine, it can be a painful, lengthy, and even violent process.
16. While much could be and has been written on the ecclesial implications of this issue for the church (e.g., *The Windsor Report*), we would like to offer two questions we see emerging out of the present situation:
 - ♦ Is it theologically and doctrinally responsible for one member church of the Communion to approve a course of action which it has reason to believe may be destructive of the unity of the Communion?

- ♦ Is it theologically and doctrinally responsible to accept unity as the value which transcends all others, and therefore for a member church of the Communion to refrain from making a decision when it believes it has an urgent gospel mandate to proceed?

The Cultural Context

17. Within the Canadian church and beyond, the question of the blessing of same-sex unions brings us face to face with complex issues of how all of us receive, hear, and interpret the gospel, through our Scriptures and tradition, in the context of different cultures. The Church from its early days has recognized that culture is the context in which Christians live out their faith. In the cosmopolitan setting of Athens, Paul uses the context of the diversity of religions as an aid in proclaiming the gospel (*Acts 17.16f*). In a similar vein he writes to the Corinthians that he is all things to all people, for the sake of the gospel (*1 Cor 9:22*). Indeed, inculturation is essential to evangelism. In the present instance of the debate over the blessing of same-sex unions, the world of the Anglican Communion includes both cultures which accept gay and lesbian couples and recognize them as families as well as cultures which judge the public or even private expression of homosexuality as criminal. Within Canada, there is currently a lively debate being conducted in civil society and in Parliament, with some arguing for the legalization of same-sex marriage and others arguing for retaining the traditional definition of marriage. Many on each side are committed Christians, and many have no church or religious affiliation.
18. Furthermore, when the debate speaks of the scriptural view of marriage, it must be recognized that the biblical depictions of marriage are not uniform, and that some of the biblical examples of marriage fall far short of the ideal of Christ's self-giving love articulated in the New Testament (*Eph 5:25f*). Marriage in which the equality of the two persons is recognized is a relatively recent concept in society. Scripture upholds the equality of the two parties (*1 Cor 7:3-6*), and both recognises and challenges the differentiation of roles (e.g., motherhood and fatherhood) (*Jn 4; Prov 31*). It is clear that,

while Christianity has historically upheld the sanctity of the single state, regardless of whether or not it is lived out in the context of a vow of celibacy, there have been and are now many cultures that expect each person to be part of a couple or family, and are suspicious and judgmental of any expression of the single life, including celibate clergy.

19. In some northern and more isolated communities in Canada, the prospect of same-sex unions is deemed a threat because of questions of the viability of the culture and the community. In some countries where Christians are a minority, the very discussion of the blessing of same-sex unions is so inflammatory as to lead to violence against the Christian population. In some parts of the Communion the request for the blessing of same-sex unions has arisen in part from those who have left their country of origin because gays and lesbians have been subject to imprisonment, and private and public violence. For these the discussion is about justice, both politically and theologically. As has been recognised by successive Lambeth Conferences and recent Primates' meetings, the challenge facing the church is to see our cultural norms through the eyes of Christ and then, out of allegiance to him, to promote those norms that honour him and renounce those that do not.

Doctrines Integral to the Theological Consideration of Same-Sex Unions

20. We turn now to a brief consideration of some of the doctrines which must be addressed in a full theological reflection of the blessing of same-sex unions: salvation, incarnation, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, theological anthropology, sanctification, and holy matrimony. Our comments here are necessarily brief, and are intended to identify some of the areas that must be explored by the whole church, rather than to provide answers.
21. The Commission urges that this necessary theological discussion in the church move beyond attempts to justify one side or another of this specific question, and seek a broader consensus on the relationship of sexuality to our full humanity in Christ. This discussion should be carried out with respect for our fellow Anglicans throughout the Communion, and for our ecumenical partners.

It could serve as an important missional resource to a society confused about sexuality.

Salvation

22. The beginning place of God's saving work in and for the world is love (*Jn 3:16*). From the place of God's great love for humanity, God moves toward us through the incarnation. With arms of love outstretched, God reaches across the chasm of our alienation, inviting all creation into the reconciling Word of God's redemption through Jesus the Christ (*Lk 15*). Jesus as Word incarnate enfleshes the meaning of God's redemption and reconciling work. For Christians, Jesus becomes the pathway for our movement into the embrace of God's deliverance. However, despite this self-offering of God, the world persists in its pursuit of death in many forms. The idolizing of human appetites or of certain unexamined cultural norms is ultimately destructive of our relationships with God and with one another. And yet, still the Word of God invites us to move beyond the fragmentation of our personal and collective brokenness to enter the re-making work of God's deliverance which is the reconciliation of us and all creation in the person of Christ (*Col 1:15-20*).
23. Some Anglicans believe that the blessing of same-sex unions strikes at the root of the Church's being and gospel message because they interpret these relationships as contradicting the teaching of Scripture, and thus putting the salvation of people in such relationships in jeopardy (e.g., *Rom 1.18-32; I Cor 6.9*). On the other hand, other Anglicans maintain that a faithful biblical theology calls for same-sex blessings (i.e., that the biblical passages usually cited as prohibiting same-sex relationships do not contemplate the contemporary ideal of life-long committed same-sex unions). They would argue that we fail the Gospel mandate when we uphold social taboos and systems that serve to keep people who seek such from fellowship with God (*Rom 3:21-25; II Cor 5:16-21*). We therefore believe that there is an urgent necessity for a dialogue where participants agree to pay full, careful, and transparent attention to the authority of the whole witness of Holy Scripture and its claim upon the Church.

The Incarnation

24. At the heart of Christian life and teaching lies the mystery of the incarnation. In the life of Jesus, the Word became flesh, and our understanding of both who God is and who we are was re-made. Despite the inclination in certain periods of the history of Christianity at times to embrace a crude dualism which denies the salvation of the body, the unique wisdom of Christianity is rooted in the union of Word and flesh (*Jn 1:14; I Cor 15:12-58*). The union of divine and human in Jesus the Christ⁶ re-makes our apprehension of the *imago dei* (image of God) in which all human beings are created (*Rom 5:12-6:14; II Cor 5:17*). The incarnation is a radical affirmation of the possibility of the sanctification of the flesh. By extension then, human sexuality is cradled within the *imago dei* which we all bear. When we make choices for and with our bodies — what we will eat, what we will wear, and how we will bodily express ourselves in work and pleasure — we are called to make those choices with full awareness that our body and our spirit are one, and together express the ongoing incarnation of the Word made flesh in Jesus (*Rom 8:1-30*). Not all choices express the meaning of love intended in the incarnation. However, all choices are held accountable to that ethic of love which the Word made flesh implies (*I Jn 4; I Cor 6:9-20; Mt 25:31-46; Mt 5:43-48; Jn 8:1-11; Eph 2:11-22*).

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

25. The Holy Spirit acts in the hearts and minds of Christ's followers both to open us to God and to reveal God to us (*Jn 16.12-14; 14.26*). Inasmuch as the Spirit mediates the being of a holy and just God, our encounters with the Spirit will bring to light human waywardness in all its forms (*Ps 50; Is 1; Jn 3.20; 16.8*). At the same time, as the Spirit mediates the gracious love of God we find ourselves being transformed into Christ's likeness as individuals (*Prov 8; II Cor 3.18; Gal 5.16-25*) and into the Body of Christ as God's own people (*I Cor 12.12-13; Gal 3.14, 26-29; Eph 2.1-10; 4.3-16; Jude 20-21*). The question of our sexual behaviour is thus related to what we understand to be the nature of sin and the Christ-like life lived out in the life of the Church. As an agent of creation, inspiration,

and sanctification, we expect that God's Spirit will lead us to the will of God in this matter in a way that honours the truth of who we are in Christ as revealed in Scripture, and will empower us to exhibit the spiritual fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (*Gal 5.22-23; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2*).

Theological Anthropology

26. Theological anthropology, the doctrine of the meaning and purpose of humankind created in the image and likeness of God (*Gen 1.26-27*), within the entire spectrum of creation, redemption, and sanctification, became a focus of Christian theology in the second century. Theological anthropology responds to the question of the nature and purpose of human life, the nature of the image and likeness of God that we bear, and the ways in which this image is both corrupted and restored. The rise of Gnosticism in the 2nd century, with its view that salvation could only occur when the spiritual nature was freed of the physical, drew fire from such different theologians as Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. While various early Christian thinkers addressed these questions in different ways, it became clear that the Christian Church held to the common belief that our physical existence is always important to the fullness of human life. Furthermore, while human sinfulness has destructive consequences, it does not destroy a human being's identity as a creature of God, made in God's image (*Hos 11:1-9; Jn 3:16-17; Luke 15:11-32; Rev. 18-19*).

27. The absolutely fundamental fact of our existence as human beings is, quite simply, the fact of our having been created by God. Of all things in creation, the existence of human beings is a unique kind of existence, for we are brought into being specifically in order to reflect the 'image' and share the 'likeness' of God (*Gen 1.26; Ps 8*). It has been revealed in the event of the incarnation that this sharing in the 'likeness' of God means a sharing in the divine life — God's very self (*II Pet 1:4*). We are therefore, from the beginning of our existence, creatures who stand always already in relation to God as our origin and intended end, whether or not we accept this relation as the basic nature of our

existence. We have been created by God, for God, and to acknowledge and affirm this fact is to acknowledge and affirm it with all that we are and all that we do (*Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 1:15-16*).

28. Our repeated failure to affirm this reality has had ongoing consequences for the life of the world (*Rom 5:12; Rom 8*). Yet God has not abandoned us to the consequences of our separation from God, but has reached out to us in love, and has come to be with us in our brokenness. In the saving mystery of the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, whose Spirit dwells within us, God has forevermore united our humanity to God's self, taking on our life, our sufferings, and even our death – all that we are – so that all that God is may be ours as well (*II Cor 5:21*). This means that Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of what God has intended for us as God's creatures (*Jn 10:10b*). The life which reflects the 'image' of God and shares in God's 'likeness' – in the divine life itself – is the life which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is conformed to the image and likeness of the crucified and risen One (*Gal 2:19-21; Phil 2:1-13*). The life lived 'in Christ' is a life which participates in and is transformed by the reality of God's saving mystery (*Rom 12:2a; II Cor 5:17*). Faithfulness to Christ, then, demands precisely that the human life in its every aspect is subject to this redemptive, re-creative transformation. This, in fact, is what it means to be fully human, as God created us to be.
29. To be drawn into the risen life of Christ extends beyond our individual salvation and transformation. God's desire is that in Jesus Christ, the second Adam, all humanity is to be drawn ultimately into the life and work of God, and all of creation is to be reconciled to God. We are not saved alone, but in company with each other, and for this reason the Church is called out as a sign and precursor of God's loving purpose for all creation (*Rom 5:12; Col 1; Mt 28:19-20*).

Human Relationships and Sanctification

30. Another fact of our existence as human beings is our having been created male or female (*Gen 1:27*). That is, in creating us, God has chosen and willed for us this reality of being male and female, which we hold in common with

many other forms of created life. While men and women, having been created in the image of God, share a perfect equality as human persons, they also participate in the genetic difference of their maleness and femaleness. Historically, many have understood this to be a relationship of complementarity, in which men and women, in being created by God, were created male and female precisely for one another (*Gen 2:18-24*). In their equal dignity as persons, as well as in their difference as male and female, a man and woman may form 'one flesh' in marriage, and thereby make possible the continuation of human life, as ordained and commanded by God (*Gen 2:24; 1:28*). This is understood to be the foundation of the institution of marriage (*Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6*). In creating human beings male and female, then, God created them with the potential not only to 'be united' in a relationship of love and creative complementarity, but to 'be fruitful' in that union. Without either male or female, without both man and woman, the perpetuation of human life in the created order would not be possible. The longing for partnership that manifests itself in the human relationship of a marriage comes to be seen in the Church as a sign of God's restoration of all humanity in the new creation (*Rev 21-22; Eph 5:29-32*). Whether or not we are called to enter the state of marriage, we are created, and we go on, male and female, as God created us. Our longing for community in a partner complementary to us, as a fundamental aspect of our humanity, continues to be a pathway to our participation in the fullness of life to which God calls us in Christ.

31. Questions have been raised about whether this complementarity of male and female is necessary for every godly human sexual relationship. Each person, whether male or female, is made in God's own image. Some, we know, are sexually attracted to persons of their own gender. While same gender couples cannot procreate naturally, they are able to contribute to the community in which they live, and it is possible for them either to adopt children, or, for some, to use artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization. While in earlier ages the greatest evidence of God's blessing was deemed to be the gift of children, procreation is no longer portrayed as

the primary end of marriage in our Anglican liturgies of holy matrimony (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 170; *Book of Alternative Services* p. 528). Healthy, heterosexual Anglican couples may, and some do, decide not to have children. Such relationships bear fruit in community service, Christian ministries, and the pursuit of holiness. Does the lack of gender complementarity in homosexual Anglican couples hinder them from making the same commitment to one another in the eyes of God and in the view of the Christian community? Such same-sex relationships, founded upon mutual dedication and love, seek God's blessing upon their life together, to the exclusion of all others, until parted by death. Thus the Commission understands the blessing that they seek to be analogous to that received in Christian matrimony, rather than, for example, the blessing of a house or home. The question that remains is whether the lack of complementarity of gender in same-sex unions can prevent such a couple from being a means of grace, experiencing spiritual growth, and participating in the life of God.

32. The creation accounts indicate that human beings were meant to live in community: 'Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man⁷ should be alone.''' (*Gen 2:18a*). The longing for relationship ("This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (*Gen 2:23a*)) compels the person to leave the family of origin and to cleave to another, where a new community is established (*Gen 2:24*).
33. Understandings of family are strongly culturally defined and conditioned, and we note that several models of the family exist in Scripture (*Gen 3; Gen 16; Song of Solomon; Ruth; I Sam 1-3; Hos 1-3; Mk 3:31-35*). Yet the Bible invites critique of family structures found in all cultures. Because they are such a powerful force in human life, and because of the strength of family systems, they are one of the places that sin can be most forcefully encountered (*Gen 3:1-4:16; II Sam 11-19; Gen 27*). Equally, the family is often the place where, even in the midst of brokenness, great grace is found (*Gen 27; Gen 37-50; I Sam 1-3; II Kings 4; Ps 133; Hos 1-3; Luke 1-2; Mt 1; I Cor 7:12-17*).
34. The family lies at the centre of the Abrahamic covenant, as God promises to Abraham that in

him all the families of the earth shall be blessed (*Gen 12:3*). The promise that from Abraham's faithful family a faithful nation will spring is seen by Paul as the foreshadowing of the new community formed around Christ (*Rom 9-11; Gal 3:6-9*). Relationships in the context of families are locations in which grace acts to refine and orient us towards Jesus, as in relationships we are confronted with our limitations most intensely. These relationships are often abused in our attempt to exercise power over one another (*Gen 3-4; Num 5; Judg 14-16; Judg 19-20; Col 3:18-19*). This is in direct confrontation with our call to be with and for one another in relationship, as Christ is with and for us (*Song of Solomon; Eccles. 4:9-12; Eph 5:21-6:2*).

35. Throughout the Scriptures, those whose lives are marked by breaches in the conventional familial and social structures – the barren, the widowed, the orphaned, the exiled – are identified as the particular recipients of God's care, mercy, and presence (*Ex 22:31-34; Is 54; Is 56; Ps 68; Ps 113; Acts 8:26-40*). .
36. Belonging to God's covenant people – by birth in the Old Testament (signified for males by circumcision) and by adoption in the New Testament (signified by baptism) – a person is related to the covenant community of Israel and the Church. By faith and obedience to the will of God, we continue to demonstrate our membership, by grace, in the household of God (*Mt 25:40; I Pet 2:17*); and in the communal meal of the eucharist the bonds of our relationship are strengthened as we look forward to the last days when the restored creation, the entire family of God in heaven and in earth, will be gathered around the table (*Is 2:2-4; Is 25:6-8; I Cor 11:17-26; Eph 3:7-21*).
37. In the New Testament, the Christian community has replaced family, tribe, and nation as the primary community of relationship, and whether married or single it is the Body of Christ that lays first claim on us (*Mk 3:31-35; Mt 10:35-39*). Paul's endorsement of celibacy (*I Cor. 7:25-40*), and the tradition of the first millennium, should lead the present church to value, celebrate, and support those called to a single life. There are many who live single lives, either because they feel so called or because personal circumstances dictate (*Mt 19:12*). In a social and cultural

context that has tended to set marriage and family as the norm, it is particularly important for the church to support those whose experience of single or married life is one of loneliness or isolation. It is of the very nature of the Body of Christ that all are to be given a place.

Holy Matrimony

38. In the Anglican Church of Canada, marriage is understood to be a matter of doctrine, both in the Preface to the Marriage Canon and in specific references within the Canon (*section iv.27.f*). Although Article XXV is unwilling to enshrine matrimony as a 'sacrament ordained of Christ', it does acknowledge that it is a state of life 'allowed in the Scriptures', and the Prayer Book liturgy goes so far as to see it as an institution 'signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church' (see also *BAS, p.534; cf. Eph 5:31f*). The 'sacrament of marriage' (*BAS, p. 535*) is understood in the Christian tradition as a good gift of God that is a means of grace (*BAS, p. 534*). As a human institution, Scripture indicates that in the scope of eternity it is a temporary one (*Mk 12:25; Mt 22:30; Lk 20:35*), but it has an eternal significance as a description of the occasion of the heavenly banquet and the marriage of the Lamb (*Rev 19:7-9*).
39. 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. The Commission noted that the change in civil law in Canada to permit the civil marriage of same-sex couples requires a clarification of the validity and sustainability of the distinction between blessings and marriages in the Canadian context.
40. Also in our church, a civilly married husband and wife who have committed to lifelong fidelity may seek the blessing of their marriage by our church. This is significant because the Marriage Canon (*Canon XXI*) of the General Synod recognizes that 'not all marriages in human society conform, or are intended to conform, to the standard here described' (*Preface*). The blessing thus recognizes the civil marriage as Christian marriage or holy matrimony. Moreover the

blessing recognizes that the couple have the intention, and the church the expectation, of the godly behaviour outlined in the Preface to Canon XXI (see *Appendix A*).

41. It is clear therefore that such blessings, offered by the church, are extremely important. In addition to the grace conferred, they recognize a Christian commitment in the marriage that is not assumed by civil marriage.

Conclusion

42. 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.
43. 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.
44. It is often lamented that the Church should become preoccupied in debates on sexual ethics when there are so many more urgent issues that could be ameliorated if only we would redirect our zeal. But the depth of feeling that exists in the Communion on this matter indicates how important it has become. It addresses our identity as sexual beings in community in an intimate and profound way. It also relates to the question of how the gospel of Jesus Christ is

for all human beings, irrespective of our sexual identities. It is now for the church to decide whether or not the blessing of same-sex unions is a faithful, Spirit-led development of Christian doctrine.

Appendix A

*Preface to the General Synod Canon XXI
'On Marriage in the Church'*

The Anglican Church of Canada affirms, according to our Lord's teaching as found in Holy Scripture and expressed in the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer, that marriage is a lifelong union in faithful love, and that marriage vows are a commitment to this union, for better or for worse, to the exclusion of all others on either side. This union is established by God's grace when two duly qualified persons enter into a covenant of marriage in which they declare their intention of fulfilling its purposes and exchange vows to be faithful to one another until they are separated by death. The purposes of marriage are mutual fellowship, support, and comfort, and the procreation (if it may be) and nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfilment in a community of faithful love. This covenant is made in the sight of God and in the presence of witnesses and of an authorized minister.

The Church affirms in like manner the goodness of the union of man and woman in marriage, this being of God's creation.¹ Marriage also is exalted as a sign² of the redeeming purpose of God to unite all things in Christ,³ the purpose made known in the reunion of divided humanity in the Church.⁴

1. Cf. Gen. 1:27-31
2. Eph. 5:31f.
3. Eph. 1:9f.
4. Eph. 2:11-16.

The Church throughout its history has recognized that not all marriages in human society conform, or are intended to conform, to the standard here described. For this reason, in the exercise of pastoral care as evidenced in the earliest documents of the New Testament, the Church has from the beginning made regulations for the support of family life

especially among its own members.

Aspects of the regulation of marriage in the apostolic Church are recorded in the New Testament. A new standard of reciprocal love between husband and wife was introduced leading towards an understanding of their equality.¹ In preparation for marriage Christians were directed to seek partners from among their fellow believers.² In Christ's name separated spouses were encouraged to seek reconciliation.³ In his name also divorce was forbidden though not without exception.⁴ In certain circumstances a believer already married to an unbeliever might be declared free from such a marriage bond;⁵ in others, and here in the name of Christ, remarriage during the lifetime of a former spouse was described, with one exception, as an adulterous union.⁶

1. 1 Cor. 7:3f, 11:11f, Eph. 5:21-33, cf. Gal. 3:28
2. 1 Cor. 7:39, 2 Cor. 6:14, cf 1 Thess. 4:2-8 (RSV)
3. 1 Cor. 7:10f
4. Matt. 5:31f, Mark 10:2-9, cf. Mal. 2:13-16
5. 1 Cor. 7:12-16
6. Matt. 19:9, Mark 10:11f, Luke 16:18, cf. Ro. 7:3

From these principles and precedents the Church, living in many cultures and in contact with many different systems of law, has sought in its rites and canons to uphold and maintain the Christian standard of marriage in the societies in which believers dwell. This standard and these rites and canons pertain to the selection of marriage partners, preparation for marriage, the formation of a true marriage bond, the solemnization of marriage, the duties of family life, the reconciliation of alienated spouses, and to the dissolution of marriage and its consequences.

All members of this Church, in fulfilling the obligations of the People of God, share according to their circumstances in the obligation to uphold Christian standards of marriage in human society especially by care for their own families and by neighbourly care for the families of others. Special obligations rest upon certain members of the Church as set forth below.

The particular duties of the clergy, described in part elsewhere in this Canon, include the provi-

sion of education for marriage and family life, the solemnization of marriage, the pastoral care of families, the encouragement of reconciliation of estranged spouses, and the pastoral care of those whose family tie have been broken or interrupted by death, sickness, poverty, enforced absence, human weakness, or by wilful act.

The duties of the laity, according to their several circumstances, are to share with the clergy the responsibility for upholding family life, in particular:

- by their presence with friends and neighbours at weddings to bear witness to their support of those who marry;
- to safeguard the legality of marriages by readiness to allege promptly any cause or just impediment which might make a proposed marriage unlawful;
- to promote and encourage the use of the professional skills that serve family life;
- as spouses, to be faithful to their own marriage vows;
- as parents, guardians, god-parents, teachers, or other fully qualified persons, to guide children and young persons in preparation for family life;
- as neighbours, mutually to promote the welfare of families, and to seek the reconciliation of any whose family life is impaired or broken;
- as communicants, to uphold the Church's discipline, and to seek the restoration to communion of any who have become alienated or are excommunicate; and
- as citizens, to work for the maintenance of just laws for the welfare of family life.

Appendix B

Terms of Reference

For the Primate's Theological Commission

The Primate's Theological Commission shall consist of 12 members, appointed by the Primate.

The Commission shall:

- encourage and promote theological discussion in the Church by producing statements and study materials on central theological questions
- set its own agenda, in consultation with the

Primate, concentrating on key theological issues

discuss the foundational theological questions underlying matters referred to the Commission by the Faith Worship and Ministry Committee and/or the House of Bishops and/or the Council of General Synod

reflect and respect the diversity of theological opinion in the Church

Members shall be Anglicans with appropriate expertise and representative of the diversity of theological opinion in the Church.

At least one member shall be a member of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. At least one member shall be a member of the Committee on Faith Worship and Ministry of the General Synod.

The Commission shall invite an ecumenical reflector to participate in its meetings, and may invite Anglicans and/or members of other churches to participate in its projects.

The Commission is subject to Sections 43 and 44 of the Constitution.

Notwithstanding section 43(e) of the Constitution, members shall serve for a period of 6 years, whereupon a review of the Commission's work and membership shall be undertaken by the Primate.

Appendix C

Resolution of General Synod 2004

on the Blessing of Same Sex Unions (A134)

The following resolution was adopted: "Be it resolved that this General Synod:

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;

Affirm the crucial value of continued respectful dialogue and study of biblical, theological, liturgical, pastoral, scientific, psychological and social aspects of human 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;

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;

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

Affirm the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same sex relationships.”

MOTION TO DEFER

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.

Celebration of Gay & Lesbian Covenants, Diocese of New Westminster

A Rite for the Celebration of Gay and Lesbian Covenants

Concerning the Rite

Blessing is a common feature of Christian worship. For centuries the church has blessed people, places and things. Every prayer of blessing is thanksgiving for creation and redemption offered in petition for the fulfillment of God's purpose in the world.

All human relationships have the potential to be agents of God's purpose. Regardless of the specific characteristics of the relationship, the act of blessing does not make the relationship more holy but rather, in giving thanks to God and invoking God's holy name, releases the relationship to realize its full potential as an expression of God's love and peace.

The act of blessing recognizes the pre-existent reality of the relationship; confers the community's authority upon the recipients to conduct themselves as formal and

public participants in such a relationship; establishes a communal context of responsibility, accountability and privilege; and petitions God to endow the partners with all such grace and strength necessary to fulfill the vows and commitments being made.

This Rite of Blessing is a public service of the church and is celebrated before God in the body of the church and in the presence of friends, family and the congregation.

Friends and family members are encouraged to participate in the Rite where indicated.

All matters relating to the conduct of the Rite shall be in accordance with the liturgical policy and practice of the diocese.

It is desirable that the order of service be incorporated into the Eucharist wherever possible.

Guidelines for Admission

In order to request this Rite of Blessing each member of the couple must:

- a) be free to enter into such a covenant. That is, they must not be in an existing covenantal relationship, including marriage.

- b) Enter the rite with an understanding that the relationship is to be exclusive of any other partners and have the expectation of permanence.
- c) Satisfy the requirements of any previous relationship. This involves appropriate support of dependants from any previous relationship and the appropriate dissolution and meeting of obligations that arise from the same.

The Celebration of a Covenant

Gathering of the Community

Greeting

As the community gathers, a hymn, anthem, or canticle may be sung. Instrumental music may also be played. The presider welcomes the community.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

After the greeting the presider may continue as follows:

Holy and Eternal One, in the quiet night you have called us each by our own name.

In our very heart you have named us beloved.

You surprise us by your grace.

We are the fruit of your boundless love.

On our exodus way you nourish and free us.

You give us companions for our journey.

You set us apart, shaped by our love, yet call us into the midst of your people,

Where we will be your word of blessing.

Here follows one of the following collects.

Let us pray,

Blessed are you, O Holy One, for you are pleased to dwell among us and to fill our lives with your presence. May N. and N. who seek your blessing upon their covenant be filled with your love. May their life together be to us a sign of your promised reign of justice and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus

Christ our Lord who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Or

Searching and saving God, whose unfailing love alone can satisfy our longing, in your mercy you befriend those who wander in loneliness and shame, those oppressed because of difference, those who do not know the value of their unique and sacred gift. By your Holy Spirit you awaken in them the dignity of human being and the responsibility of embodied love, as perfected by Jesus Christ, who loved and gave himself for us, showing us the way to intimacy with you and with one another. We offer praise and thanks to you, our Creator, Redeemer, and Life-giver, for your love endures for ever. Amen.

Or

Blessed are you, loving God, for you awaken our desire for companionship and our hope for community with you and with one another. In your mercy you call us out of solitary darkness and redeem us to love you with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. Renew in us a sense of true belonging and call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. We pray that the covenant of faithfulness and love we celebrate today will reflect your unending faithfulness and great love for the world. May N. and N. so love one another that they may be a blessing to you and all whom they encounter. We ask these things in thanksgiving and praise to you, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, one God now and for ever.
Amen.

Proclamation of the Word of God

The Readings

Two or three readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. If the Holy Communion is celebrated, then a Gospel reading must be included. Members of the family and friends of the couple may read the lessons. It is appropriate to respond to a reading with a psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem, instrumental music, or silence.

The following readings are appropriate for the celebration of

a covenant. Other readings may be chosen in consultation with the presider.

Ruth 1.16-18; Song of Solomon 2.1-13; Song of Solomon 3.1-4; Song of Solomon 8.6-7; Ecclesiastes 4.9-12; Psalm 100.1-5; Psalm 107.1-9; Psalm 108.1-5; Psalm 111; Psalm 112; Psalm 126.1-3; Psalm 133; Psalm 139.1-18, 23-24; Psalm 145; Psalm 146; Romans 12.9-21; 1 Corinthians 13.1-13; 2 Corinthians 5.16-20; Galatians 5.13-14, 22-26; Ephesians 4.25-27, 29-32; Philippians 2.1-4; Colossians 3.12-17; 1 John 3.18-24; 1 John 4.7-21; Matthew 5.1-16; Luke 6.32-38; John 15.9-17; John 17.1, 18-26.

At the conclusion of readings from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament writings other than the Gospels, the reader says,

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

All stand for the Gospel. The reader says,
The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to...

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,
The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sermon

The Covenant

The presider invites the couple to stand in the full view of the gathered community and addresses the couple in these or similar words.

A covenant is an ancient form of promise, a public declaration of commitment that binds people in an enduring relationship. The Bible tells the story of God's covenant with human beings.

God's covenant with Israel was the basis of the people's liberation from slavery and exile. God's covenant with the followers of Jesus brings us into a

new community where there is no male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, but one people united in Christ.

All our covenants with family and friends are signs of God's faithfulness and love. They are living expressions of God's promises to us and sources of hope to others.

Today we gather to witness and to bless the public commitment of N. and N. to such a covenant.

The presider then addresses the couple as follows.

N. and N., do you believe God has called you into a life-long covenant of love and fidelity?

Couple: We do believe.

Will you live together in love?

Couple: We will, with God's help.

Will you be faithful to one another?

Couple: We will, with God's help.

Will you support one another in love so that you may both grow into maturity of faith in Jesus Christ?

Couple: We will, with God's help.

Will you do all in your power to make your life together a witness to the love of God in the world?

Couple: We will, with God's help.

The presider invites the couple to stand in full view of the congregation and to face each other. Taking each other by the hand(s), each says to the other in turn.

N., I give myself to you. I love you, trust you, and delight in you. I will share your burdens and your joys. I will go with you wherever God calls us. This is my solemn promise.

The Blessing of the Covenant

The presider then addresses the community as follows.

You, friends and members of the families of N. and N., are witnesses to this covenant.

Will you support N. and N. in the promises they have made?

We will.

Will you celebrate the goodness of God's grace evident in their lives?

We will.

Will you stand by them, encourage, guide, and pray for them in times of trouble and distress?

We will.

Do you give them your blessing?

We do.

The presider then says one of the following blessings.

Let us pray.

We give thanks and praise to you, O gracious God, for your unfailing love and wonderful deeds among us: for the splendour of creation, the beauty of this world, the mystery of our lives and the surprises of human love. We give you thanks and praise for N. and N., because you create in them the desire for intimacy and companionship, calling them out of isolation and exile, strengthening them against prejudice and fear, and embracing them in a family of friends and loved ones.

Pour out your abundant blessing upon N. and N. May they grow in love for one another and for all your creation. Lead them into accomplishments that satisfy and delight. Grant that in the years ahead they may be faithful to the promises they make this day, and that in the strength of the Holy Spirit they may grow together in the love, joy, and peace of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Blessed are you, O gracious God, source of all love, now and forever. Amen.

The Exchange of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

(or The peace of Christ be always with you.)

And also with you.

The couple greet each other and then greet their families and friends. If there is no celebration of the Holy Communion, then the liturgy continues with the Lord's Prayer and the Commissioning of the Community.

The Holy Communion

The Prayer over the Gifts

During the preparation of the bread and wine, a hymn, canticle, or psalm may be sung or instrumental music played. The following prayer may be used.

Faithful God, with these gifts you offer us communion in your Servant, Jesus Christ.

May we who celebrate this sacrament be filled with the same self-offering love made manifest in him.

This we ask in Christ's name. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

Any of the eucharistic prayers in The Book of Alternative Services or the three Eucharistic prayers authorized by General Synod 1998 are appropriate for this occasion. If a proper preface is needed, then the following may be used.

Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; you are the source of light and life for all your creation, you made us in your own image, and call us to new life in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The Lord's Prayer

After the Great Thanksgiving, the presider says,

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Or

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The presider breaks the consecrated bread for distribution.

The disciples knew the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

The bread which we break is communion in the body of Christ.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

The Communion

Hymns or anthems may be sung during the distribution of communion.

The Commissioning of the Community

A Litany of Blessing

After communion has been distributed, the presider, a friend, or a member of the family leads the community in the following litany of blessing. Additional petitions may be included if so desired.

Dear friends, N. and N. have been drawn by God into a covenant of mind and body, heart and will. We have celebrated this covenant and pray that the life they share will reflect the love of God for the whole world. Let us join in prayer asking God's blessing upon us as we go forth with N. and N. to proclaim with our lives the reconciling and renewing love of God made known in Jesus Christ.

Abundant God, Lover of all creation, pour out your blessing on us and the covenant we have celebrated.

May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our solitude and our companionship,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our acts of tenderness and intimacy,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our delight at knowing and being known,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our acts of self-sacrifice to build up one another,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our being comfort to each other,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our passion for justice,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In our generosity and tenacity,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

In all our fruitfulness,
May we be blessed by you for ever.

The Dismissal

A hymn or anthem may be sung before the dismissal or instrumental music played. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people.

Glory to God, **whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.**
Glory to God from generation to generation in the church and in Christ Jesus, forever and ever.
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



Session Five

Same Sex Partnerships & Marriage

Resources Needed:

The St. Michael Report

The Liturgy for the Celebration of a Covenant Relationship

— Diocese of New Westminster

Exploration

This is an area of ongoing discussion for our church. The church has been examining the possibility of authorizing the blessing of committed same sex partnerships. In the meantime the government of Canada has authorized same-sex unions as marriages under the law. The St. Michael Report comments, “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.”(Para 39). Discussion of same sex blessings is therefore a part of thinking about the nature of marriage. It is important to listen to a breadth of perspectives in considering the issues.

Please note that this discussion will touch people in different ways. For some it will touch on personal experience & family; for others on deeply held values. It may be necessary to establish guidelines for the discussion for the comfort and safety of all present.

(see Guidelines for Discussion <http://www.anglican.ca/faith/ethics/hsrg/guidelines.htm>)

Experience

From the previous sessions and your exploration of changes to the understanding and practice of marriage in our church and society –

- ♦ What are the essentials of marriage for you?
- ♦ Describe attitudes to homosexuality and/or gay/lesbian people in your lifetime – note changes
- ♦ How has the issue of homosexuality and/or same-sex partnerships touched your life or the life of your parish?
- ♦ If possible, invite a gay couple to speak to your group about their faith and lives.

“Contrary to the stereotype, we do strive for loving, monogamous relationships. We go through the dating ritual, we select a partner, we set up house, we worry about money, we laugh, we cry, we quarrel, we make up, sometimes we break up. These situations occur in any human relationship, homosexual or heterosexual. All human relationships should have depth, commitment, caring love and justice. From my personal experience, I know that these qualities can and do exist in most homosexual relationships. I had a partner, John, for eight years. Unfortunately, ours did not work out, but I know some couples who have been together for more than 25 years. I admit that we are not perfect. There are sinners in the homosexual community just as there are in the straight community....but what makes them sinners is their humanness, not their sexuality.

I have reconciled my sexuality with my spirituality. My hope is that the Church at large can one day do the same. The Chinese say that the longest journey starts with the first small step. I am confident that what we are doing in this Commission will begin that journey.”

— Dennis Lou-Hing – a member of the Commission on Gay and Lesbian Voices formed to help parishes engage in a dialogue process in the Diocese of New Westminster.

Culture

Over the past 35 years....changes in Canada.....

1969 *Consensual homosexual activity removed from criminal code*

1973 *Homosexuality removed from DSM (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) as a mental disorder*

1990's *Recognition of homosexual partners as equal under the law*

late 1990's *Recognition of same-sex civil unions*

2005 *Acceptance of same-sex unions as marriage by federal government*

- ♦ Name other changes you have observed in our culture in your memory.
- ♦ Describe the impact of these changes in our culture/society.

Teaching of the Church

The teaching of the church is that marriage is celebrated between a man and a woman. It is the scriptural metaphor for the relationship of Jesus with the church (bridegroom & bride) and is expected to reflect the nature of the covenant of love between God and people. Some view marriage as a sacrament and others, as a pastoral office of the church. Over the last twenty years there has been much discussion of the possibility of blessing monogamous, faithful same-sex partnerships. This has been controversial and the Anglican Church of Canada has a diversity of opinions across its dioceses.

For some, any relationship between people of the same sex (or unmarried people of opposite sexes) must be celibate to be faithful to God. For others, the nature of the relationship must conform to biblical principles of mutuality, self-sacrificing love and care but do not restrict the relationship to celibacy. For some it is an

issue of biblical faithfulness; for others an issue of human rights and justice while for others it is the struggle of discerning faithfulness in the midst of a changing context.

The St. Michael Report (May 2005) of the Primate's Theological Commission indicated: '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. The Commission noted that the change in civil law in Canada to permit the civil marriage of same-sex couples requires a clarification of the validity and sustainability of the distinction between blessings and marriages in the Canadian context.' (Paragraph 39)

This continues to be an ongoing area of discussion in preparation for General Synod 2007.

Summary Discussion

See the St. Michael Report & Liturgy for a Covenant Relationships

- ♦ How would the blessing of a same-sex partnership be similar or different from the blessing of a civil marriage?

From your understanding of marriage and in light of the articles in *Liturgy Canada*

- ♦ Could a same-sex partnership (monogamous, life-long commitment) be considered 'marriage'?
 - If yes, why?
 - If no, why not?
- ♦ If not, could same-sex partnership be 'blessed' by the church?
 - If yes, why?
 - If no, why not?



For Next Week

Take time during the week to reflect on the learning and discussions through the program.

Identify questions and/or areas of further study that remain for you.

Bring with you something that symbolizes the hopes, fears and/or challenges you see for marriage and the church — a news article; symbol; poem; music; drawing, book, description.....



Session Six

Integrating Reflections

Resources Needed:
Notes, information from previous sessions.
Flipchart paper
Masking Tape
Marking Pens

Exploration

1. Post several sheets of flipchart paper around the room titled with the headings for each of the sessions (Marriage – Parts 1 and 2; Divorce/Cohabitation; Church & State...) Invite participants to mark on them one or two elements of learning, new understanding, surprise, affirmation, challenge that they have experienced. Give sufficient time for all to record as needed.
2. Brief discussion of things noted on the sheets.
3. In silence for 5-8 minutes ask participants to jot down the areas of ongoing discussion, learning and questions they have.
4. Share with larger group.
5. Discuss:
 - i) What message do you want the Church (both local parish, diocese and national office to hear in light of the study?
 - ii) Identify how will you share that message in action – with the parish, diocese and/or national office?
 - iii) What areas would you like to explore further?
6. Offer time to complete the Evaluation forms for the sessions.

Closing Exercise

- ♦ Invite participants to place their item representing hopes/fears for marriage on a table in the centre of the group.

- ♦ Invite each participant to speak briefly about their item (if they wish).
- ♦ Conclude with liturgy (prayer, scripture, song) that gathers up the learning; hopes; fears and questions in community together.

Please take time to:

- i) Evaluate the study See Evaluation Forms following: Participant I & II (let participants choose which form they wish to use) & Facilitators
- ii) Offer your comments, suggestions to the Faith, Worship & Ministry Committee.

Return Comments to:

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Participant Evaluation 1

1. On scale of 1 to 10(high), how helpful was the study in exploring the nature of marriage in church and society?

2. How helpful were the resource materials included? Name particularly helpful/unhelpful readings/materials.

3. In which session would you have like more information/resources or time to explore? What more was needed?

Session 1: Marriage

Session 2: Marriage

Session 3: Divorce/Cohabiting

Session 4: Church & State

Session 5: Same Sex Relationships & Marriage

Session 6: Integrating Reflections

4. What areas were not addressed that you feel should be?

Participant Evaluation 11

Session I liked the best ...

Session I liked the least ...

Because ...

Suggestions for improvement ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I really want to tell you...

Facilitator Evaluation 1

General Information re Study:

Location: _____

Time of Day: _____ Morning _____ Afternoon _____ Evening

Total No. of Participants _____

Average Attendance per session: _____

1. Please describe how you used the study – eg. How closely you followed the format; choices of activities or discussion styles.
2. How useful were the resources offered?

In general the resources (readings etc.) were:

very useful somewhat useful not useful, rarely used

Please comment on specific resources – particularly those that were very useful or not at all.

Suggestions for other resources:

3. What further assistance would be helpful to you and/or your parish in considering the nature of marriage?
4. Other comments :

Bibliography

Statistics:

Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Users are forbidden to copy the data and disseminate them, in an original or modified form, for commercial purposes, without the expressed permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at <http://www.statcan.ca>, and its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.

For social trends in Canada see any of the following articles: (all accessed Dec 13, 2005)

Would you live common-law?

http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/common_law.pdf

Divorce in the 1990s APPENDIX VI

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/divor3.pdf>

Religious Observance: Marriage & Family

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/relig2.pdf>

Child & Family Canada: Facts, Figures and Consequences

http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/vanif/00005_en.htm

An Honourable Estate: Marriage, Same-sex unions, and the Church. Christopher L. Cantlon & Pauline A. Thompson, ed. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1998.

Bothwell, John. *Old-Time Religions or Risky Faith? The Challenge and the Vision.* Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1993. (See Chapter 6: Sex, Marriage and Family).

Brown, Peter, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Christianity.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Coontz, Stephanie. *Marriage: A History.* New York: Viking Press, 2005
A thorough review of the social history of marriage.

Cotter, Graham, ed. *Marrying in the Church: A Pastoral Guide.* Toronto, Canada: Anglican Book Centre, 1983.

A guide to Canon XXI of the Anglican Church of Canada. Although the Canon has undergone some revision since 1983 the core reflections remain helpful.

Divorce: Facts, Figures and Consequences, Dr. Anne-Marie Ambert. http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/vanif/00005_en.htm Accessed: December 13, 2005

Dormor, Duncan. *Just Cohabiting? The Church, Sex and Getting Married.* London, U.K. Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2004.

A reflection on the changing nature of the process of becoming married and the teaching of the church in regards to cohabitation. Written from within the Church of England but equally helpful in a North American context.

- Grenz, Linda and Glover, Delbert, *The Marriage Journey: Preparations and Provisions for Life Together*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications,
- Hanigan, James. "The centrality of marriage: homosexuality and the Roman Catholic argument". *The Ecumenical Review* v.50, Jan 1998.
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- Liturgy Canada Volume IX, Number 3/Lent 2003
 Articles on marriage, blessings, church & state in light of discussions around the blessings of same-sex partnerships.
- Parke-Taylor, Geoffrey. *The Family in Contemporary Society: Theological Considerations and a Canadian Perspective*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1983.
- Primate's Theological Commission. St. Michael Report*, Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 2005. (also: <http://www.anglican.ca/primate/ptc/StMichaelReport.pdf>)
- Thompson, Michael. *Living the Spirit of Marriage*, Toronto, Canada: ABC Publishing, Anglican Book Centre, 2005.
 A short booklet intended for those seeking marriage in the church to explain the liturgy and assist those thinking about marriage.
- Thorne, Gary. "Friendship and Marriage". Paper for The Primate's Theological Commission. Available at: <http://www.anglican.ca/primate/ptc/index.htm>
- Together in Christ: The Hope and Promise of Christian Marriage*, from the Canadian Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Witness. Publ. Novalis 1999.
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- Witte, John Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion and Law in Western Tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press 1997.
- Would you live Common-law?* By Anne Milan Autumn 2003, Canadian Social Trends, Catalogue 11-008
 - http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/common_law.pdf Accessed: December 13, 2005
- Divorce in the 1990s* by Jane F. Gentleman and Evelyn Park. Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/divor3.pdf> Accessed: December 13, 2005

Liturgical Resources

The following are drawn from the *Book of Common Prayer*, *Book of Alternative Services*, other Anglican resources and the hymn book, *Common Praise*. They are offered to reflect an aspect of the theme for each session. They are offered as suggestions only, adapt and use as appropriate for your community.

Sessions One & Two — Marriage

Hymns

Hymn 289	(Common Praise)	Great God, We Praise Your Mighty Love
485, 486	(CP)	Love Divine, all loves excelling
494	(CP)	Not for Tongues of Heaven's Angels
500	(CP)	Sister let me be your servant
489	(Voices United)	When Love is found
491	(Voices United)	O Perfect Love

Scripture Readings:

Mark 10:6-9
1 Corinthians 13
Colossians 3:12-17

Prayers:

The Book of Alternative Services — Celebration of a Marriage, pg. 534 – adapted for general use:

Prayer 1: “By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessings upon all joined in holy matrimony.”

Prayer 2: “Send therefore your blessings upon all your servants joined in holy matrimony...”

The Book of Common Prayer — Solemnization of Matrimony, pg 570 & 571

Any of the prayers can be adapted for general use by replacing ‘these thy servants’ with: “all who are joined in holy matrimony”....

A New Zealand Prayer Book, pg. 802-803

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God of peace, your love is generous,
And reaches out to hold us all in your embrace.
Fill our hearts with tenderness for those to whom we are linked today
Give us sympathy with each other's trials;
Give us patience with each other's faults;
That we may grow in the likeness of Jesus and share in the joy of your kingdom.
Amen.

Creating and redeeming God, it is your love which in marriage makes two persons fully one.
As N and N love each other, may they also grow in love for you.
Walking together with Christ as their companion on the way, may they come
To those inexpressible joys which you have prepared for all who love you. **Amen.**

God, the source of love, we pray now for all who are committed to each other in love. Through their
love may they know your love and so be renewed for your service in the world. **Amen.**

God, the author of love, we pray for all who are married. Through their love for each other may they
know the reality of your love for the whole world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Session Three — Divorce & Cohabitation

Hymns

Hymn 606	(CP)	There's a wideness in God's Mercy
613	(CP)	We lay our broken World
481	(CP)	May the Grace of Christ our Saviour
482	(CP)	Come and Journey with a Saviour
553	(CP)	Ubi Caritas et Amour

Scripture Readings:

Romans 8:31-39

Matthew 11:28-30

Prayers:

adapted from *Book of Occasional Celebrations*, Anglican Church of Canada, pg 68f

God of compassion and healing, we lift to you our grief over relationships that have been broken.
We pray for friends and family who have been divided by divorce. We ask you to bestow the blessing
of your peace on all who mourn. We remember sons, daughters, parents, grandparents, aunts,
uncles, cousins and friends.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of all goodness and mercy, we thank you for the love and friendship of those help others
through the pain of the ending of a marriage. We praise you for the gift of loving friends, for their
support and caring in the grief and loneliness of separation. Give us your healing wisdom and fill
our hearts with the comfort and grace of your strengthening presence.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of care and mercy, be now and evermore our healing and our hope. In your great compassion,
enable all to know and to feel that newness of life is your gift to all your children. Grant us
the blessing of your love, equip us with everything good that we may do your will, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Session Four — Church and State

Hymns:

Hymn 592 (CP) Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life
598 (CP) Go to the World
576 (CP) For the Healing of the Nations
434 (CP) The Love of Jesus Calls Us

Scripture:

Luke 20:20-25 (Mt 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17)

Prayers:

The Book of Alternative Services, pg 678 #10 For the Nation

A New Zealand Prayer Book, pg 635

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Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do to each other, we do to you;
Make us quick to help and slow to hurt, knowing that in our neighbour it is you who receive our
love or our neglect. **Amen.**

Session Five: Same Sex Blessings/Marriage

Hymns:

Hymn 644 (CP) Come Gracious Spirit Holy Dove
438 (CP) O Jesus I have Promised
458 (CP) Seek Ye First

Scripture:

John 16:7-15
Ezekiel 36:23-28
John 14:25-27

Prayers:

The Book of Alternative Services — *Litany* 16, pg 123

The Book of Common Prayer — Pentecost, pg. 205

A New Zealand Prayer Book — *Collects for Pentecost*, pg 604

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Father, you have filled your people with the Spirit who rested first on your Son and united us in your Church; open the channels for your Spirit that we may freely work together, and your kingdom and your rule increase.

Almighty God, you kindled this day the light of your Spirit in the hearts of your faithful people; may we by the same Spirit have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in your love and power; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen.**