

The Report of the Working Group
formed by General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2014

A Way Forward

He Anga Whakamua

Na Sala ki Liu



Recommendations to General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2016

Processes and structures relating to the blessing
by Anglican priests and bishops in the Province of the Anglican
Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
of relationships where a civil marriage has occurred.

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1. Introduction

“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.”

“Kahore he Hurai, kahore he Kariki, kahore he pononga, kahore he rangatira, kahore he tane, wahine ranei, he tangata kotahi tonu hoki koutou katoa i roto i a Karaiti Ihu.”

“E le o i ai se lutaia po o se Eleni, e le o i ai se pologa po o se saoloto, e le o i ai se tane po o se fafine; auā ua tasi lava outou uma ia Keriso Iesu.”

Galatians 3:28

Ka mea a Ihu: *“He ture hou taku ka hoatu nei ki a koutou, kia aroha tetahi ki tetahi, kia rite ki toku aroha ki a koutou.”*

Sa kaya ko Jisu: *“Mo dou vei lomani me vaka kau sa lomani kemudou, mo dou vei lomani vaka kina.”*

Jesus said: *“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”*

John 13:34

Participants at the 61st meeting of the General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui of the province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia meeting at Waitangi in May 2014 engaged at length with the question of rightly-ordered relationships, the doctrine and nature of marriage, and the call from some to ordain partnered gay and lesbian Christians to holy orders. Their discussions culminated in an agreement that a working group would be formed to bring recommendations to the 62nd General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui, scheduled to meet in Napier in May 2016.

That agreement titled *A Way Forward – He Anga Whakamua – Na Sala ki Liu* became known also as “Motion 30”, and is appended to this report. In brief, it affirmed traditional marriage and commissioned the working group to devise:

“a process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is contrary to scripture, doctrine, tikanga or civil law, will not be required to perform any liturgy for the blessing of same-gender relationships, will continue to have integrity within the Church, and will remain compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction;

“a process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is consonant with scripture, doctrine and civil law may perform a... liturgy for blessing same-gender relationships in a manner which maintains their integrity within the Church, is compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction, and can remain in communion under scripture, doctrine and law; including

“a proposal for a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships;

and

“a process and legislation (whether church or parliamentary) by which a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships may be adopted.”



The group was also asked to report on the implications of its recommendations on the theology of ordination (and consequent requirements for ordination), and on the theology of marriage. The direction that General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui of 2014 upheld the “traditional doctrine of marriage”, which it defined as being “between a man and a woman... life-long and monogamous” precluded any provision being made for same-sex couples to be married in Anglican churches.

The working group was formed in May of 2014, and began its work immediately. Some were priests, some bishops, some lay; several had a legal background. All were Anglicans with the desire to see the Church remain united despite differences in response to the challenges presented by same-sex relationships and the Christian men and women most affected by the Church’s regulations.

The members of the working group believe the recommendations contained in this report constitute a complete and workable response to the tasks set out in *A Way Forward – He Anga Whakamua – Na Sala ki Liu*. While working group members agree that they have met the brief given, they were not and are not of one mind on many issues. Their manner of proceeding in unity without unanimity was at times arduous, but their hope is that their work will inform the deliberations of General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2016 in a way that offers the guidance that was sought from them, and a clear understanding of the options the Church can now consider.

The working group does not advocate for or against adoption of the recommendations made in the report. Rather, it offers the recommendations as the appropriate reforms to consider. This report explains the theology on which the recommendations are based and how General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui might see the report as being compliant with our constitution (Te Pouhere), and the Church of England Empowering Act 1928. The explanations are not necessarily the views of every individual member.

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2. Executive Summary

The Anglican Church in this province is governed by a set of guiding documents, the two most significant of which are the Church of England Empowering Act 1928, and Te Pouhere, the Constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.¹ Te Pouhere in turn specifies the Formularies: those documents which guide the Church in its worship and practice. These are the 39 Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer 1662, Te Rawiri, and A New Zealand Prayer Book – He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa. Also specified is an ordinal.²

However, Te Pouhere also makes provision for changes and additions to the Formularies listed above, provided that they do not represent any departure from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as defined in Te Pouhere's own Fundamental Provisions. The process for such a change or addition to the Formularies is set out in the Church of England Empowering Act (1928), and the working group's recommendations for considering additional formularies attend closely to this process.

In this report, the working group proposes two rites of blessing for couples who have been married in a civil ceremony according to the laws of New Zealand and the countries of the Pacific Islands which form part of the The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, and any other national jurisdiction recognised under the laws of these countries. It is the view of the majority of the group that the proposed liturgies do not represent a departure from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ, and are therefore not prohibited by Te Pouhere, however the group also recognises that this will be a crucial matter for debate.

In considering the implications of such a blessing on the canons relating to ordination, the group agreed that a rightly ordered relationship is only one that has been committed to God and received the blessing of the Christian Church. This identified a lacuna in the canons. New Zealand civil legislation has facilitated marriage fully independent of any Christian denomination since the 1970s, yet couples have never been required to have civil marriages blessed in order to be recognised as married by the Church. The group therefore proposes a rite of blessing whereby heterosexual couples who were married in a civil ceremony may have their relationship blessed by the Church, such requirement for a Church blessing not having previously been part of the Church's canons.³ The blessing of a marriage for same-sex couples is presented as a separate rite from that offered for use by opposite-sex couples, although the two rites will be found to be largely similar. It is necessary to present both rites to allow for the possibility of any diocese or amorangi choosing to adopt the rite of blessing for opposite-sex couples only.

Directly related to these rites is a change proposed to the canons relating to ministry standards and an extended definition of chastity, detailed in section 8.

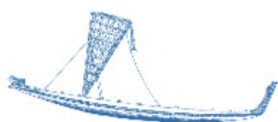
The canons of this Church already make provision for any priest or bishop to decline to perform a rite of marriage.⁴ It is not anticipated by the group that any such minister could be held to be

¹ Te Pouhere is a parallel language document in both te reo Māori and the English language. For the purposes of this report references are taken from the English form only.

² Titled in full: "The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

³ Although Title G, Canon III has previously provided for the blessing of a civil marriage where a couple "desire to have their marriage blessed according to the rites of the church."

⁴ Title G, Canon III, Clause 2.11



non-compliant with any relevant parliamentary legislation through electing not to perform a rite of blessing for a couple married under civil legislation.

The group held the view that it should not be permissible for any visiting priest or bishop to conduct a blessing within a diocese or amorangi that has not itself adopted such a blessing for use. Accordingly, the group proposes an explicit strengthening of the requirement that any priest or bishop travelling outside his or her own diocese / amorangi obtain the permission of the bishop with direct authority over that amorangi / diocese before conducting any service of blessing. With regard to marriage, the current canon describes consultation with “the appropriate authority” as a “matter of courtesy”. The proposed canonical changes relating to restrictions on conducting rites of blessing may be found in section 9.

The working group believes that the proposed rites and canonical changes contained in this report, if adopted, will enable every priest and bishop in the Anglican Church of this province to retain their integrity within the Church: those who believe the blessing of same-sex persons is congruent with scripture, tikanga and doctrine, and those who believe that such a blessing is contrary to these.

Section three explains the theological platform upon which the working group’s proposals are made, while section four explains further how the working group has understood the theology of ordination and marriage, in a way which might permit blessing of same-sex couples who have been married in a civil ceremony, and how such a blessing might affect qualification for ordination. Section five provides an explanation of the schedule to the proposed canon permitting a liturgy to bless those who have entered a civil marriage.

At section six, the working group addresses the question of how Te Hīnota Whānui / General Synod may lawfully adopt the proposals contained in this report, and section seven describes the specific processes by which a change can be made. Section eight goes on to identify and explain the proposal for changes to canons which would be required to enable a person who has entered a civil marriage with a person of the same sex to qualify for ordination. The changes to the canons required to introduce formularies for the new blessings for those who have entered a civil marriage are set out in section nine.

Section ten contains the form of the proposed schedule which would accompany the canonical changes proposed, section eleven is the proposed motion that will be put to General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2016. Section twelve contains the two proposed rites of blessing.

3. The dynamic nature of doctrine, the path of unity

This section explains the theological platform upon which the working group's proposals are made.

One of the Collect prayers in our Anglican tradition says this:

*Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless
till they find their rest in you;
so lead us by your Spirit
that in this life we may live to your glory
and in the life to come enjoy you forever;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

These words recall those of the late fourth and early fifth century church father, St Augustine of Hippo. They derive from his *Confessions*, a work in which Augustine (writing in mid-life) recalls the ups and downs of his youth, and evokes the strong sense of wanting to seek God in his life. Augustine's words and the contemporary prayer evoking them reflect the strong sense that there is a gap in all our lives which can only be filled by experience of God.

As the Church of God in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, sisters and brothers together in our Three Tikanga Church, we acknowledge first our relationship to God the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and through that, our relationship to one another. Above all, we desire to know God more fully and in that, to be ourselves more fully known. A Scriptural passage that evokes strongly this sense of journeying and searching for God is the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. This passage is a poignant reminder of the power of the story and presence of the risen Christ to transform present troubles into fresh insights that remind us of the urgent need to proclaim the Gospel afresh to each and every generation. There is a critical and present mission aspect to our discussions on the matter of same-sex relationships.

There are three critical questions of theological import that require further consideration. These are addressed in turn below.

Q: What does it mean to be human in the now?

In all our work, we acknowledge explicitly that we stand at a particular time in the life of our Church. Human life is lived out in and through history. To be human in the now, is first and foremost to be in relationship with God our creator (whether that is acknowledged explicitly or not), our world, and all that is in it. Relationships create changes within those fundamentals that may give rise to a maturing of insight. Relationship also creates difference. Being human in the now means that we are shaped by the past and present, and live in anticipation of the future. We are the sum of many parts, and stand on the shoulders of generations that have gone before us. Being human in the now also means that there is capacity to be self-transcending. We are capable of doing new things which may appear risky or novel, and which may be positive or negative. We learn more about God and ourselves through this process. We project forward that which indicates what we are creatively coming to be. Reading and interpreting Scripture is part of this process; it is about more than attending to the fixity of the word, and grasping the deeper reality that gave birth to those words. Such insight is rooted



deep in our Judaeo-Christian heritage, and is reflected in the way that we have grown and developed as a Church in these islands.

To be human in the now means we must relate to society. This does not mean that we should agree with myriad directions, but we acknowledge our place within that and the response to the mission of God. We must be open to how fresh insights may lead to change and dynamism. Tradition is dynamic (as is discussed further below) and, as we seek to maintain our fundamental identity, this may be attained only by examining our context and its development carefully over time. This by its very nature is complex, rather than complicated. We have been doing this over several decades with respect to the matter of same-gender relationships. Moreover, the Anglican Communion has also wrestled with it over decades, and continues to do so, at every turn seeking (at times painfully) to discern God's will. Matthew 22:36-40 gives us insight that the call to love God cannot be separated from the call to love our neighbour; those with whom we live and worship. They are equal as gospel imperatives.

To say something is complicated is to propose that there is a system or mechanism by which we can explain and understand it. To say something is complex, leaves open the possibility of the honest reflection as expressed by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, a community that struggled with its differences: 'for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but when we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known' (1 Cor. 13:12).

Q: When we speak of 'two integrities' how can we also speak of the unity of the Church?

The answer to this question begins in comments made above about what it means to be human in the now. We believe that human beings are made in the image of God. The Old Testament expressly forbids the manufacture of images of God, and given the ambivalence over this matter we might suggest that being made in the image of God is more about orientation than about attribute: it is precisely in our weakness that we reflect God's glory. This underpins the Pauline theology of the cross. But there is something else too. We acknowledge the painfully separate differences amongst us when it comes to discussing the blessing of same-sex relationships. But is difference not a weakness that has potential always to be reformed? What would it be like if we as a Church committed to respect one another's differences, held with integrity, in a harmonious way?

This further enables us to attend to the particularities of our context by which we mean the life of our Three Tikanga church. From one marae to another, the kawa or kaupapa may differ. Thus, we can speak of 'my marae; my kawa, kaupapa' and of 'your marae; your kawa, kaupapa.' There are two aspects to appreciate. Firstly, that this understanding grounds an acceptance of difference. Second, the differences themselves, the differing kawa or kaupapa, as important and treasured as they may be, are actually 'second order' matters. This is because they are embedded in a first order patterning of what is tika- (right, just, proper or correct), when it comes to exercising manaakitanga⁵ to manuhiri⁶, providing the manuhiri a deep and reassuring structure to guide them in their expectations and actions.

⁵ Being hospitable, loving, respectful and caring - literally the act of upholding the mana of the 'other'.

⁶ Other, guest, visitor, stranger, neighbour - literally a flock (or single plaited strand) of birds.

An understanding of the process of talanoa in Polynesia is also helpful. Akin to the very best understandings of the notion of dialogue, talanoa is deep listening to each other in a manner that seeks to strengthen relationships that connect people as well as respect the differences between them. Talanoa assumes that the relationship between people is deep and abiding and this leads to a mutually attentive art of patient human interaction. This abiding connection is found in the life of the early church. For instance, the Spirit joins different peoples in a new community in Christ while, at the same time, without erasing the differences - "we hear, each of us, our own native language." Acts 2.9

We give glory to God in our synchrony with one another, more than in our disarray. Whilst the Pauline tendency towards athletic imagery as a way of presenting the Christian life usually has to do with end goal and reward, might it also be another way of what is actually observed when runners compete, namely a tendency to run in synchrony with one another in the midst of competition? To accede to this view requires trust in the observation that two distinct views may be held in integrity. This is not quite the same as the oft-critiqued approach that presents competing views, and leaves it at that, without those views being in active and ongoing dialogue which may permit change in time. It is also not the same as the equally oft-critiqued quest to find a middle-way on issues. We are seeking to achieve more than that in this current process. To become Church takes time; resolving matters is best done over time, and however frustrating that may be, that is precisely what we have sought to do in our present context.

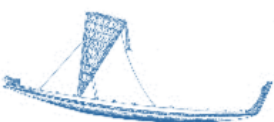
In his farewell discourse in John's Gospel, Jesus says: 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (17: 20-21). Unity is not the same as uniformity. There has never been a unity of the church that has been lost. Indeed, from the beginning the church was marked by diversity. When Paul presents the image of the body in 1 Corinthians 13, he describes the fruit of the Spirit (not the fruits). Unity flourishes through variety and diversity. The prayer that Jesus articulates in John 17 invites us to share in its hope and thus to grow more into more of its reality. That means we are growing into the unity God is gifting to us and through us to God's world. Unity is not about managing the church, but discovering each other. Mission and unity are inseparable. Unity is God's destiny for the church and the world.

So we should let this happen within us while attending to different integrities, rather like the Jewish proverb that 'we bring near the kingdom by each small enacting of Torah.' Unity is about each of us, and the church in its diversity, being turned to God, and letting God show and draw us into the fullness of a unity we sense but can only glimpse. Of course, this requires discussion, and will include disagreement, but it is to recognise that what already holds us together is the Presence of God, in God's triune Being.

Q: What do we mean by saying that Doctrine is dynamic?

The beginning of the Book of Hebrews says this:

'He maha nga wahi, he maha nga huarahi i korero ai te Atua i mua, ara nga poropiti, ki nga matua. I enei ra whakamutunga na tana Tama ana korero ki a tatou, ko tana hoki tera i mea ai mana nga mea katoa, ko tana kaihanganga hoki tera o nga ao; Ko ia te kanapatanga o tona kororia, te tino ahua o tona pumautanga, e whakau nei i nga mea katoa ki te kupu o tona kaha.'



‘Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word’

‘I he kuo hilí na’e tu’olahi mo founa kehekehe ‘a e folofola mai ‘a e ‘Otuá ki he’etau ngaahi kui, ‘o fakafou mai ‘i he kau palōfitá. Ka ‘i he ngaahi ‘aho faka’osi ko ení kuó ne folofola mai kiate kitautolu ‘i hono ‘Aló. Ko hono ‘Aló na’e fakatupu ai ‘e he ‘Otuá ‘a e me’a kotoa pē, pea ‘e ‘i ai e ‘aho ‘e hoko ai e me’a kotoa pē ko ‘ene me’a. ‘Oku hā sino ‘iate ia ‘a e nāunau kotoa ‘o e ‘Otuá, pea ‘okú ne tatau tofu pē mo e ‘Otuá, he ‘okú ne pukepuke ‘a e me’a kotoa pē ‘aki ‘ene folofola māfimafí.

(1.1-3a).

So it is throughout Christian history that Doctrine had to be thought out, and lived out in the worshipping life of the church, with reflections and ongoing decisions made through Councils and Creeds. In such a way, the church has developed a deeper and richer understanding of faith. This development continues today, as the Christian faith is lived out in multiple cultures and contexts. Scripture is read and re-read constantly alongside the tradition of the church, with ongoing debate and discernment. We attend to the phrase *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*; as we worship, so we believe, so we live.

One way of explaining this further may be to use the example of the Creeds. We can approach the reciting of the Creed in different ways: as information (telling us what Christian faith is if we want to believe); as participative (what we all sign up to together as Christians); as narratives (telling us something about the story of our faith); as grammar (as speech about our faith that enables us to make sense of it; note that the alternate declaration of faith in ANZPB-HKMOA adheres to the grammar aspect of Creed); as expression of what is deep within faith (we are continually formed in our faith when we recite the Creed). In the same way, doctrine expresses what holds us in relationship. Doctrine is about an active conversation, and requires that we keep the conversation going. That is classically Anglican, in the pattern of Scripture, reason and tradition.

In light of the above, it is not surprising that central doctrines such as the Trinity were not always clearly understood or expounded. Rather, meaning evolved over time, and arguably continues to evolve. In that way, it is possible to suggest that doctrines always contain potential to mature in ways over time. Doctrinal questions may remain in an undefined state for a considerable period of time.

4. The theology of ordination and of marriage

This section explains how the working group has understood the theology of ordination and marriage in a way which might permit blessing of same-sex couples who have been married in a civil ceremony, and how such a blessing might affect qualification for ordination.

The group perceives a distinction to be made between the Church's *theology* of ordination and of marriage, and the statements in Te Pouhere, the Formularies, and the Canons which collectively express the Church's *doctrine*.

Since the middle of the 20th century the Church's theology has been changing in a variety of ways. What might be broadly called the theology of the body (how the physical body is understood through to an understanding of what it means faithfully to belong to the body of Christ) has received a good deal of attention, as theologians have engaged with advances in biblical studies and church history, in physiological and psychological advances, and in cultural and political analysis. Feminist scholars have enlarged the field of reading scripture, for example, and the Church's theology of baptism has affected congregational life; the list is long.

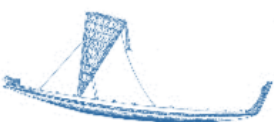
Various sociological and anthropological disciplines influence each other, and a wide range of theology emerges from this work. However, no single theological position emerging from these influences could be held to be that of the whole Church, and certainly not belonging to the whole Anglican Communion. This fact is both consistent with Anglican theology down the centuries, and at the heart of the difficulty that confronts Anglicans today. Anglican differences are now frequently litigiously framed, and doctrine eclipses all else because it is doctrine to which licensed Anglicans register their assent.

Ordination

The proposed changes have an effect on who may be ordained by the Church. This does not come about because of a change in either the Church's doctrine of marriage or a change in its doctrine of ordination. The Church still requires those coming to be ordained to either be celibate or in "rightly ordered" relationships; there is no suggestion that there is a lower standard now required. However the proposals do expand the definition of rightly-ordered relationships to include those who are in a civil marriage and whose relationship has been blessed. The reason for the expanded definition is that the group felt that the Church could not bless a relationship yet not consider it to be "rightly ordered". However as the proposals allow Dioceses/Amorangi to decide which blessing rite will be adopted those that do not adopt a rite to bless same-sex couples will not be subject to an expanded definition of "rightly ordered". Allowing Dioceses/Hui Amorangi this choice is consistent with Anglican ecclesiology and our current doctrine of ordination which vests considerable discretion in Bishops.

The theology of marriage

Because the motion that was passed at General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui in 2014 affirmed the "traditional doctrine of marriage", there is no change to the existing formularies. The group's proposal (in line with its commission) to propose a service for the blessing of same-sex relationships does not (in the view of the majority of the members) impact the current doctrine of marriage. It is accepted that the blessing of a relationship has some similarities with the rites of marriage, but even as the two are alike in many ways they are not the same. Neither would a doctrine of same-sex relationships be the same as the doctrine of marriage.



From a theological point of view, it is suggested that it is reasonable to expect consonance between the virtues lifted up to God in traditional marriage and in same-sex relationships. This is appropriate not least because it is well understood that sexual intimacy is shored up and secured by virtues like fidelity, constancy, honesty, commitment and so on, all of which help to mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities that accompany sexually intimate relationships.

In theological discourse, marriage has hitherto been the only model available to expound a holy, sexually-intimate relationship. As the Spirit guides the Church into truth, the Christian tradition has discerned godliness in modes of friendship and community, but the discourse of marriage is leaned on (to some considerable extent) to inform a Christian understanding of the relatively new phenomenon of same-sex relationships.

The doctrine of marriage

As previously noted, the Church's doctrine is contained in its formularies and canons, and in higher level documents (Te Pouhere and the Church of England Empowering Act 1928). Marriage is not expressly mentioned except in the twenty-fifth article of the 39 Articles:⁷

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures: but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

Thus, it is not strictly accurate for Anglicans to call marriage a sacrament, and it certainly cannot be called a Sacrament of Christ.⁸ It is notable that the Church's formularies and canons are not of one voice with regard to marriage, and therefore neither is the Church's doctrine. Some might describe the stated doctrine as confused (or even contradictory) if one considers, for example, that an amended form of the marriage liturgy from the 1662 Prayer Book was included in He Karakia Mihinare / A New Zealand Prayer Book, but both the 1662 and the 1928 versions of the Book of Common Prayer have been retained as constitutional formularies.

A simple illustration may be found in the bride's vow to obey her husband. This is present in the 1662 liturgy, was omitted from the 1928 revision, but is entirely absent in both word and implication from He Karakia Mihinare / A New Zealand Prayer Book. The mutuality and equality expected and celebrated in marriage today are contained in formularies that are simply set alongside the older ones in which obedience and subjection of the wife to her husband are affirmed. While many clergy might balk at being asked to officiate at the rite of marriage using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer rite of marriage, such a request would in fact be a legitimate one for a couple to make.

The differing depictions of marriage implied by these wedding liturgies create certain doctrinal tensions, but might also be viewed charitably as honouring the Church's history while accepting (embracing, even) the dynamic nature of an evolving doctrine.

⁷ And, for completeness, a homily "of the State of Matrimony" in the thirty-fifth article which would be widely held to represent an archaic view with regard to women's apparel, obedience and subjection, and so on.

⁸ The catechism in He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa / A New Zealand Prayerbook lists marriage as "a sacramental action."

In a further example, one can read in the very last clause of the marriage canon that marriage “was ordained for the increase of mankind according to the will of God.”⁹ In Thomas Cranmer’s exposition of the purposes of marriage in the Book of Common Prayer, this explanation and understanding of marriage was at the top of the list. Yet this clause is now listed very last of six clauses in the current schedule, with a more recent development of understanding taking its original place: “Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship” is now the opening clause in the schedule. These two causes or intentions of marriage are not the same thing, rather it can be seen that the much older phrase has informed and influenced the newer one (and the first has become last!).

It is suggested that General Synod / Te Hīnota Whānui consider whether the principle most important for the Church’s conversations today is the spirit of accommodation already contained in church doctrine, as these examples demonstrate. The addition of a further rite of blessing of a same-sex relationship might therefore be seen as congruent with the Church’s established practice of accommodating previous understandings of holiness in intimate relationships, and retaining them alongside newer understandings as they emerge, despite the diversity of voices they represent.

Pastoral sensitivity

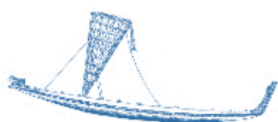
The current doctrine expressed in current canons and formularies makes significant accommodation for pastoral concerns. One most obvious example is the provision that a minister may waive the requirement that at least one of the parties to the marriage be baptised (“in unusual pastoral circumstances in consultation with the appropriate episcopal authority”).¹⁰ This is a significant waiver given the view the Western Church traditionally holds that the marriage rite and the marriage itself is an occasion for baptised Christians to minister to each other.

Similarly, the marriage canon allows for the marriage of a divorced person, “even though the other party to the prior marriage is still living.” This provision is entirely motivated by pastoral sensitivity, in response to the reality of the province’s contemporary context, namely that even though marriage is a life-long commitment, some marriages do end while both parties to them are still alive, and it is deemed by the Church that the parties to such marriages might rightly and properly marry again. This pastoral provision is particularly apposite to the Church’s current conversations about same-sex attracted persons, not least because the scriptural strictures against the possibility of divorce and remarriage (coming as they do from words attributed to Jesus) are arguably much stronger than those against same-sex relationships.

The various pastoral discretions available to ministers in the canons, considered together with the development of new formularies, demonstrate that the doctrine of marriage implicit in both canons and formularies place the love and holiness of a couple’s relationship as prior to absolute or literalistic traditional understandings of marriage. Te Hīnota Whānui / General Synod 2016 is invited to consider whether the addition of same-sex blessings is in concert with this view.

⁹ Title G, Canon III, Schedule II, Clause 6.

¹⁰ Title G, Canon III, 1.6



For the sake of utmost clarity: what is being proposed is the blessing of a relationship that manifests a number of virtues that honour each partner and God (and, thus, can be called a 'Holy Union'). In line with Motion 30, it is the case that such couples also need to be already legally married. The marriage itself will have occurred elsewhere, and the working group acknowledges that this will fall short of some Christian same-sex couples' hopes because they cannot be married 'in church'.

5. An accompaniment to the proposed schedule

This section explains the schedule to the proposed canon permitting a liturgy to bless those who have entered a civil marriage.

The formularies of marriage are provided for by Title G Canon III. That canon also contains a schedule which explains the Church's views of marriage. The working group has included in its report a possible new schedule explaining the views which underlie the proposed rites of blessing.

Clause 1.3 of Canon III (of Marriage) requires that a minister shall provide education to affianced (engaged) couples "on the Christian understanding of marriage" or ensure that such education is provided by "some other competent person". In order to assist with this, schedule II of the same canon sets out a summary of much of the Church's teaching on marriage. It does not attempt to be comprehensive, and directs readers to all the formularies of marriage and the instructions that accompany them, especially in He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa / A New Zealand Prayer Book.

It is the view of the working group that a similar schedule, setting out a theological basis for a Christian understanding of rites of blessing of marriages that were not conducted by a Christian minister, is a necessary accompaniment to the liturgies presented in this report. The proposed form of this schedule is found in section 10. Since such a schedule is necessarily brief, a longer excursus of those summary statements is offered here.

In the case of those who are living in a life-long monogamous relationship, have been legally married in a setting other than the Church, and who have not received a formal pronouncement of the blessing of the God we know in Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Church offers and announces that blessing for five primary reasons:

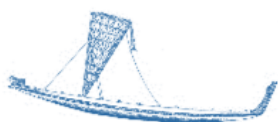
1. Love

We are followers of Jesus Christ and know the blessing that comes through his life, death and resurrection as a result of his self-giving love. We proclaim that "Through Christ, and with all your saints, we offer ourselves and our lives to your service."¹¹ So, in the first instance, as followers of the same Jesus Christ, we lift up to God the greatest elected earthly commitment to love that two people make, as it too is dedicated to and blessed by God. In this manner, a couple who are already married in a civil ceremony orient their chosen love life to the source of love: God. While we affirm that this commitment will be different in the kingdom to come,¹² it is also, in the self-giving love and devotion a couple has one for another, a glimpse and an anticipation of that coming kingdom for which we pray daily. This eschatological dimension is hinted at through language from the Revelation of John in one of the most beautiful phrases in the Nuptial Blessing from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer: "Let their love be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their heads."¹³

¹¹ ANZPB/HKMOA p. 472

¹² Mark 12:18- 25

¹³ BCP 1979 p. 430



We also hold that love that is self-giving is a blessing when we live in this manner with each other. We are blessing the relationship that (along with the life vows of the religious life) is an ultimate commitment to this love. “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”¹⁴

It should be noted that the term ‘self-giving’ is more appropriate than ‘self-sacrifice’ since ‘sacrifice’ is freighted with servility and self-destruction. Margaret Farley writes:

*A love will not be true or just if there is an affirmation of the beloved that involves a destruction of the one who loves. I do not refer to justifiable “laying down one’s life” for the beloved, but rather to letting oneself be destroyed as a person because of the way one loves another.*¹⁵

Moreover, in the depth of faithful and life-long commitment a couple finds in ‘living-for-the-other’ a match for the example of Jesus Christ’s living for the church.

2. Union

In the bond and union of body, mind, and soul, a couple finds in the quality of their companionship a fit such that their individual lives have greater meaning, value and purpose. This is an outworking of the abundant life that Christ promises to all.

It is Jesus who directs us into Genesis when in Matthew 19 he speaks of two becoming one flesh, and this informs our understanding of union. It is certain, however, that the Genesis texts are freighted with more weight than they were designed to bear – and not just in this debate. To go to them to discern what is God’s will for us in creation is always fraught. However, we can recall that the problem in Genesis 2 was ‘aloneness’ and it was this that gave rise to the divine sculpting of the earth-creature, a ‘fit companion’ being created, and then the drama and joy of the world’s first poem (mythically speaking) as the male describes the female as ‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ (2:23).

Following the seminal reading of Phyllis Trible, “these words speak unity, solidarity, mutuality, and equality.”¹⁶ These are the virtues that confirm “fit” and the characteristics we are looking for in a holy union: “a union of strength, sympathy, and delight.”¹⁷ Because the identification of these virtues, mythically speaking, occur from the beginning of the world, the proposed rites speak of “a pattern of mutual support and faithful partnership established from the very beginning.”

We see then that the desire of God for the first earth creature is that it might have a “fit companion” or, as Trible would describe it, a “companion corresponding to it.”¹⁸ This becomes, in turn, the concern of both the same-sex couple and the other-sex couple. But we can see that this desire looks beyond the surface of a binary, heteronormative world. It is expressed not in finding a partner of the opposite sex but a partner of the apposite sex. It is to this partner that one “cleaves” in a union for all of this life.

¹⁴ John 15:13

¹⁵ Farley, p. 201

¹⁶ Trible, P. (1978). *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Vol. 99). Philadelphia: Fortress: p. 99.

¹⁷ ANZPB/HKMOA p. 780

¹⁸ Op cit p. 90

The 'all of this life' cleaving has a convenient double entendre which signals a matter that we should not lose sight of, namely, that the cleaving with an apposite partner is an incarnated cleaving, one of 'all of this life' bodily intimacy. The cleaving in a holy union is not simply an intellectual abstraction, it is becoming 'one flesh.' So, while we speak of a union of unity, solidarity, mutuality, and equality, this is certainly a bodily union, one of intimate physical presence with one's partner. This union of love in a nuptial relationship is one that echoes God's bodily (incarnate) commitment to the loving of the world – "for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" – and the most extended reflection on this 'mystical' union is in Ephesians 5. There is, then, something almost necessary (it has to be always freely chosen) and divine in the bodily union of a couple who are bodily committed to each other's ultimate good (this point is pursued further under the title 'Gift').

3. Covenant

Marriage is a covenant where the couple vow to life-long faithfulness and, with God's help, hope to match the faithfulness of God in keeping covenant with God's people.

A covenant is a sacred commitment. Most often in scripture covenant relationships are between God and God's people, and as such represent commitments of unequal power. They are not like the nuptial relationship. However, it is right to speak of nuptial relationships as covenantal in the sense that they are not like most human contracts and agreements that are based on a conditional 'if you do this, and if I do that, then we are in partnership.' Rather the structure of both divine and human nuptial commitments (and it is this that makes them sacred and covenantal) is one of "Because of the love I have for you, I will ..." In divine terms that is "because of my crucified and risen life, you are redeemed." The human commitment, by the grace of God, parallels that structure: "Because I love you ..."¹⁹

Covenant entails constancy and faithfulness in love, which we know as a blessing from God and a revelation of God's self. A.K.M. Adam writes eloquently on this matter:

[T]he central theological importance of marriage – as the church's institution for the blessing and support of human intimacy – lies in constancy. Only our trust in God's constancy can make possible the radical commitment that accepts Jesus' call to discipleship ... likewise, only our trust in a spouse's constancy can make possible a radical commitment to a relationship whose theological significance lies in its capacity to represent God's self-giving, forgiving, intimate, constant love for us.²⁰

Precisely because the institutional blessing authorises what is theologically mimetic (that is, it mirrors or represents the character of God) we can understand that constancy allows, and even demands, that existing polygamous marriage relationships of converts are most properly to be honoured, and second and third wives are not sent away. The Anglican Church was correct when it made this possible, not simply because it avoided possible pain and persecution of the women in such marriages in particular, but because it mirrored God's constancy in love and faithfulness. Likewise, while it seems irregular to some, to

¹⁹ See Rogers, E *Sexuality and the Christian Body: their way into the triune God* p234ff

²⁰ Adam, A K M, 'Disciples Together, constantly' p128.



others it may appear that same-sex couples can manifest a godly constancy through committed life-long relationships.

We cannot underscore sufficiently that the life-long constancy that is spoken of here is not just a hedge for our safety – psychological, physical and even spiritual – as important as those matters are. Covenanted constancy is how the Divine is revealed in the world, and we are created in that image.

[T]he marital covenant is an icon of the covenant of grace between God and humanity, as the force of marriage metaphors in scripture illustrate... [S]cripture repeatedly makes the theological point that relations of utmost human intimacy ought to communicate something about God's relation to humanity ... God's love for God's people is manifest in a constant, undying commitment; so our relationships with one another, when we avow them in a theological context, should be constant and undying.²¹

4. Gift

The giving of oneself and the receiving evidenced in marriage is a particular instance of the truth that God creates us to receive our lives as 'gift', both from God and from the community we inhabit. When we gather at the table/ altar we proclaim that "all that is in the heavens and the earth is yours and of your own we give you."²² The intimacy of marriage is an intense form of this giving and receiving of selves in the interplay of gift and giving. The nuptial relationship is a life of donation of one's self into the care of another. The donation (or gift) of self is a bodily gift. Liturgically this is symbolised by the careful rubrics around the holding of hands at the exchange of vows in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.²³ The resonances are obvious - "This is my body given for you."

Here we return to the notion of desire only touched upon briefly under 'Union.' Part of the complex interaction in the receiving of a gift is recognising that this is a gift one wants to receive; that is, it is a donation of self, a body, that one desires, and, further, the giver desires that the other desire his/her body, and desires that the giver apprehends this desire, and so forth.

Rowan Williams' essay "The Body's Grace" sets out what we might mean theologically when we speak of desire. This essay has been described as representing "the best ten pages written about sexuality in the twentieth century."²⁴ The origin of bodily desire is in God's desire for us. As Williams puts it:

The whole story of creation, incarnation, and our incorporation into the fellowship of Christ's body tells us that God desires us, as if we were God, as if we were that unconditional response to God's giving that God's self makes in

²¹ *ibid* p127.

²² ANZPB/HKMOA p. 420.

²³ "The Minister, receiving the Woman at her Father's or Friend's hands, shall cause the Man with his right-hand to take the Woman by her right-hand, and to say after him as followeth... Then shall they loose their hands; and the Woman, with her right- hand taking the Man by his right- hand, shall likewise say after the Minister..."

²⁴ Rogers, E *Theology and Sexuality: classic and contemporary readings*, p309

*the life of the Trinity. We are created so that we may grow into the wholehearted love of God by learning that God loves us as God loves God.*²⁵

This is important because it rightly frames our desire, including our sexual desire, as a good gift from God. It also places desire not as some aspect of our lives that in order to be holy needs to be channelled towards some worthy instrumental purpose (for example, procreation), rather, our desire for each other can simply be for the joy and delight of each other and this is the divinely purposed end of desire. So, we are divinely shaped, like the persons of the Trinity, to bring joy to each other. The further layer to this gift is that it is not so much that we are to get joy from each other as to give joy to each other. We thus perceive and receive each other as occasions for joy. This is the blessing that we rejoice in and pronounce in a life-long relationship. So, Rogers offers the following as part of a “Charge for a Wedding:”

*In desire God says to us, “You have ravished my heart.” God declares of Israel, “I will allure her.” As Jacob worked twice seven years for Rachel; as Ruth seduced Boaz upon the threshing floor; as the soul of Jonathon was knit to the soul of David; as these two of God’s human creatures desire each other, so God desires us. Grace like desire transforms us by showing us to be perceived in a certain way: as significant, as desired.*²⁶

5. Household

As a household, a ‘little church’ or ‘micro-basileia’, the married couple is first, through their love for one another, a sign (*mysterion*) of Christ’s love for the world. Indeed, as Ephesians 5 suggests both a church and marriage is a sign and a re-membering (*anamnesis*) of Christ’s love. Marriage, like a church, is a purposed household. Its purpose is for the sanctification of its members. Our Marriage Liturgy Second Form makes this mutual ministry of sanctification in marriage plainest: “Those who marry are God’s ministers to each other of reconciliation and change.”

If we are to think of a household purposed for sanctification it is very helpful to draw the parallels between the monastic life and the married life. We can speak of marriage as an ascetic vocation.²⁷ Drawing on the great Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov, Rogers writes:

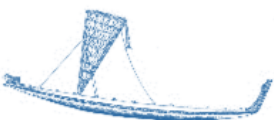
*Both marriage and monasticism are for sanctification; both involve a commitment to living with others in which one cannot escape being transformed by their perceptions, which by the grace of God, will be for the better. In both cases, “to marry, just as to become a monk, means to take an absolute risk.”*²⁸

²⁵ Williams, R “The Body’s Grace” in *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies: sexuality and the household of God*, Hefling Charles (ed) p. 59

²⁶ Rogers, E *Sexuality and the Christian Body: their way into the triune God* p. 274

²⁷ *Ibid* p. 79

²⁸ *ibid* p. 78



Just as monastic orders are schools for Christian virtue, likewise marriage is a school of Christian formation with disciplines of love, prayer and devotion. Pius XI's Encyclical *On Christian Marriage* puts it this way:

*[Love] must have its primary purpose that husband and wife help each other in forming and perfecting themselves in the interior life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more in virtue; ... this mutual inward moulding of husband and wife ... can in a very real sense ... be said to be **the chief reason and purpose** of matrimony.²⁹*

So it is the case, when we assemble to bless a civil marriage to be dedicated to God, that we have a present and future confidence that a couple, same-sex or opposite-sex, will sanctify each other through their household of shared faith, hope, and love and, in that way, will be life-long ministers of God's grace and blessing.³⁰

Finally, in receiving the pronouncement of God's blessing, and asking for that blessing to continue and deepen in their life together, it is the expectation of the couple that they become a greater blessing to one another and, in the overflowing generosity of God, become a blessing to the world.

The tenor of formal blessings offered in public worship is plain: God is the one who blesses, so that the bishop or priest and the assembly are both asking for and announcing God's blessing upon some person or persons. The blessings are not the Church granting God's blessing, but seeking and declaring God's continued blessing that is already present. This involves confidence and trust that God is pleased to bless what we are blessing. In the case of blessing a couple it involves a confidence that we recognise God's blessing already at work in the lives of the couple, and are right to ask for God's continued blessing.³¹

At a most basic level this confidence rests in St Irenaeus's famous observation that "the glory of God is the human being fully alive."³² That is, we recognise that we are blessing a couple who in word and deed witness to the truth that they are more fully alive in and through their shared life. Further, we trust that this is will become more true through a lifetime of commitment to that shared life. So, we recognise the fullness and blessing that can be found for some people in a mutually loving and intimate relationship.

²⁹ Quoted in Rogers, *E Sexuality and the Christian Body: their way into their way into the triune God* p. 77, (emphasis added, editing by Rogers).

³⁰ 1 Cor 7:14

³¹ This comes from: A Report of the Commission on Doctrine & Theological Questions to the General Synod Standing Committee and the 'Ma Whea? Commission' of The Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia *On a theological rationale for a Christian approach to the blessing and marriage of people in permanent, faithful same-gender relationships, and the implications thereof on the ordination of people in same-gender relationships*.

³² *Gloria Dei est vivens homo* is "the glory of God is the living human being" and the "fully alive" has been co-opted by cults of self-fulfilment, but Irenaeus continues to write of the beatific vision of glory in heaven and earth and in that sense "fully alive" is correct.

6. Of “The Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ”

This section addresses the question of whether General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui may lawfully adopt the proposals contained in this report. The working group does not seek to predict what others, such as a tribunal established to consider the lawfulness of any change, may do. Rather, the working group explains here how a tribunal may come to think a change is lawful.

Te Pouhere clearly sets out that General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui is bound to hold and maintain “the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as the Lord commanded in Holy Scripture and as explained in

The Book of Common Prayer 1662

Te Rawiri

The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons

The Thirty Nine Articles of Religion

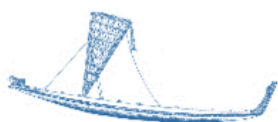
A New Zealand Prayer Book – He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa”

Change to the formularies is permitted, but with the proviso that any change “shall not empower or be deemed to empower the General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui to depart from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as defined in the Fundamental Provisions of this Constitution.”

The members of the working group are not themselves in agreement over the question of whether a rite of blessing of same-sex relationships, which would then be regarded as rightly-ordered, would represent a departure from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ. For General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2016 it is on precisely this question that divergent views are certain to be focussed.

Therefore, for the guidance of the members of General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui, several observations are offered:

1. The formularies are clear that the Sacraments of Christ are Baptism and Holy Communion alone. Marriage is expressly excluded as a sacrament by articles 25 and 39 of the Articles of Religion. The addition of a liturgy for the blessing of same-sex relationships would not therefore have sacramental import.
2. Precisely what is meant by “the Doctrine of Christ” (and what is *not* meant) is less obviously established. The phrase may mean a particular body of teaching *about* Christ, or Jesus’ own particular teaching. Some might assert it is the core matters of faith in Christ as they bear upon the matter of redemption accomplished by and in him. Others may hold that the Doctrine of Christ means all that we read in scripture regarding the whole of life as lived to God in faithful response to the gospel. This last possibility demonstrates the differing interpretations of scripture that are set out in the report of the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions that was delivered to the Standing Committee of Te Hīnota Whānui / General Synod and the Ma Whea? Commission in March 2014.
3. Some are likely to understand the phrase “the Doctrine of Christ... as the Lord has commanded in Holy Scripture” as meaning that every part of scripture is “the Doctrine of Christ.” Others will understand that reading the Doctrine of Christ through the formularies will lead us to understand that Doctrine as involving the essential matters



that are dealt with in the Creeds, for example, and that matters outside of these are not covered by Te Pouhere in referring to the Doctrine of Christ.

If the Church, represented by the participants at General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2016, decides that the addition of a rite of blessing for rightly ordered same-sex relationships does not contradict the Doctrine of Christ, then the way forward proposed in this report suggests a process and structure that may serve to achieve this change while upholding the integrity of those who cannot agree.

The working group notes that provision is made in the Church of England Empowering Act 1928 for a tribunal to be formed, should such a decision be reached. Specifically, there is an appeal period specified of up to one year from the date of the adoption by General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui of any new formulary, its having been approved by a majority of dioceses / amorangi, and returned to a following General Synod / Hīnota Whānui (a “two-round” process that is illustrated further below).

Therefore, again for the guidance of the Church, two observations are made about that appeal process. Firstly, the Church of England Empowering Act 1928 is legislation of the New Zealand Parliament and has not been updated to reflect the structure of the three tikanga Church. The requirement to refer any proposed changes to the formularies to all amorangi and dioceses for their consideration is the process that is now followed, however the Act itself refers only to “the Dioceses of New Zealand.”

The working group’s second observation is made in regard to the composition of any tribunal convened under the Act to consider an appeal to any decision made to change or add to the formularies. Under the Act, the house of bishops (which sits on any tribunal formed) currently only includes those from the New Zealand dioceses.

Accordingly, the working group has made recommendations to the Archbishops and Standing Committee to assist with resolving possible issues should this process be invoked. It is noted that these issues to do with equity and full inclusion of all dioceses, amorangi, and bishops from all tikanga, are a separate concern. However, it is the expressed view of the group that these issues ought to be resolved regardless of the decisions of General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2016 in relation to the rites proposed and the associated canonical amendments.

7. The processes of change

This section of the report describes the processes by which a change can be made.

Introduction

The working group has recommended that the process be made over at least two General Synods / Hīnota Whānui. The group recognises that some believe that even if the Church decides to make a change, it should take longer than this to do so. The group has drafted this section in order for General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui to see what will be involved in a change which is made as quickly as possible. However, it is entirely for General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui to determine the pace at which any change should be considered. If General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui wishes to pause to consider the proposal, then it can defer consideration of this report.

There are two parallel processes that would follow if General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui were to adopt the proposals set out in this report. These are: changes to the canons, and the adoption of formularies (commonly called liturgies). Ordinarily, changes to canons do not require a multi-stage process, whereas changes to formularies do. However, the group recommends the canonical changes proposed in this report follow the same path as the consideration of the formularies offered. This would enable diocesan synods / amorangi to consider all the proposals as a whole: both canonical and liturgical.

These processes are described below, and summarised in a flow chart on page 23.

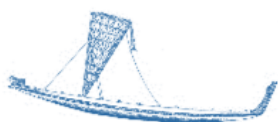
Changes to the Canons

Several changes to canons are required. Te Pouhere allows for canonical changes to be made by motion to General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui, and are passed by a simple majority. The working group suggests all the proposed canonical changes are best confirmed by General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui in 2018, concurrent with final approval of the proposed rites of blessing, assuming these have been approved by a majority of the dioceses / amorangi in the intervening period. The canonical changes proposed would have no application or meaning were the formularies not to be adopted, in which case neither set of proposals would proceed; each set of changes is dependent on the other.

Adoption of new liturgies

As already discussed, the adoption of a new rite or liturgy is a change to the formularies, and the procedure to effect such alterations is set out in section four of the Church of England Empowering Act 1928. A change to the formularies of the Church of this province requires a “two-round” process of General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui.

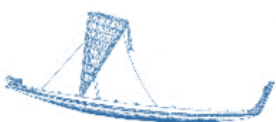
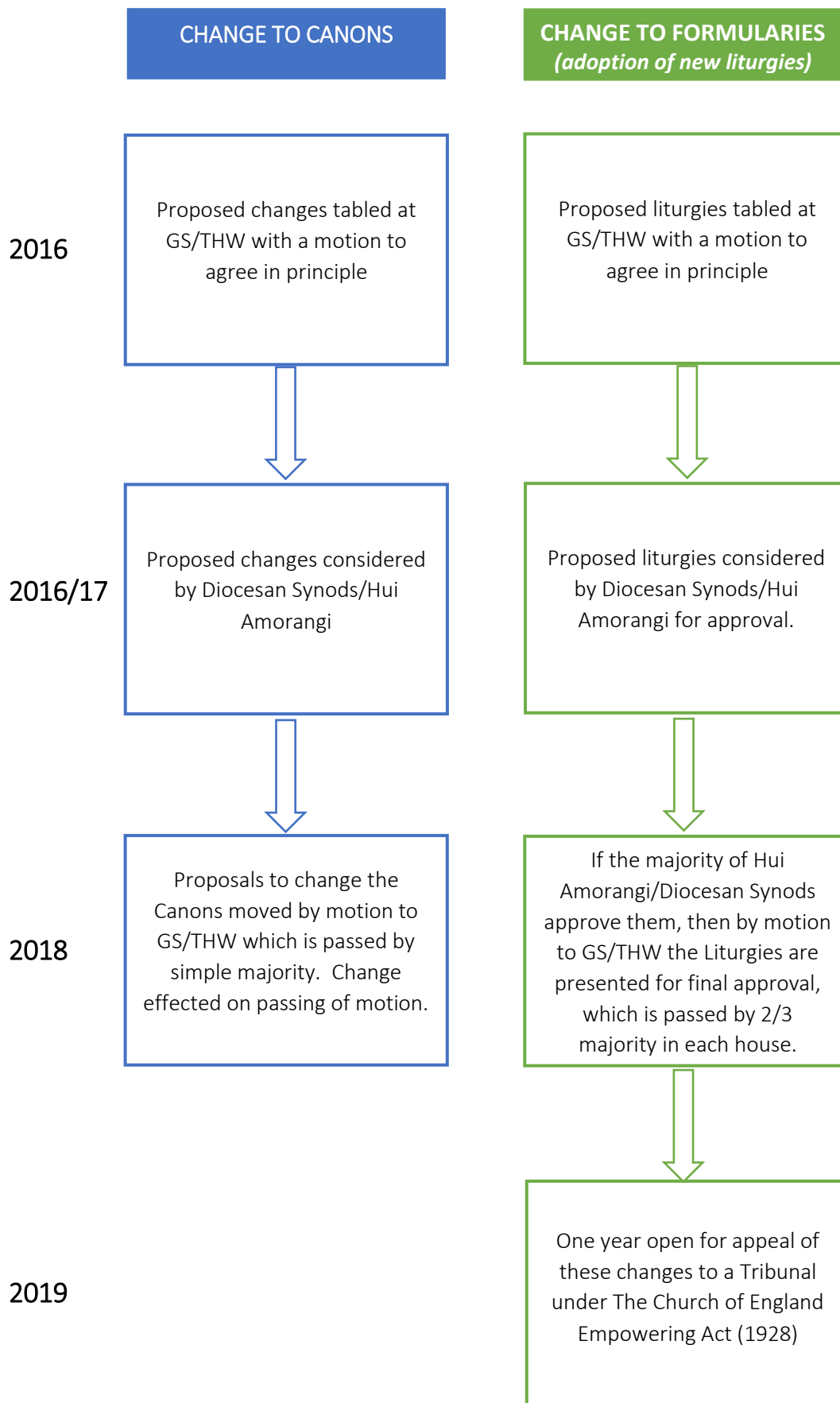
The first step is for the proposed changes to be considered by General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui in 2016, and if passed by simple majority, referred to diocesan synods / amorangi for consultation and approval during the period before General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui meets again. In order to proceed to final approval at the meeting of Te Hīnota Whānui / General Synod in 2018, they must have been formally approved by a majority of the diocesan synods / amorangi. Finally, in order to be passed at General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui 2018, a two thirds majority in each house (bishops, clergy, and laity) is required.



If General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui meeting in 2016 wishes to pursue the proposal contained in this report, it is suggested the meeting consider the motion indicated in section 11 of this report, which is an agreement in principle and indication of intent to refer the proposed rites of blessing to dioceses / amorangi for their approval, and to make the proposed canonical changes in 2018, depending on the proposed formularies having been approved according to the process described above.

It is important to note that both processes depicted on the following page are necessary, and they would be simultaneous.

SIMULTANEOUS PROCESSES



8. Changes to Title D Canon I

This section of the report identifies and explains the proposal for changes to canons required to enable a person who has entered a civil marriage with a person of the same sex to qualify for ordination.

It is proposed that Clause 10.4 of Title D Canon I, Chastity, be amended to read:

Chastity is the right ordering of sexual relationships. Rightly ordered relationships are those in which ministers:

are celibate; or

are married pursuant to Title G, Canon III, Part A; or

are in a civil marriage that has been blessed pursuant to Title G, Canon III, Part B, provided that this definition of chaste does not apply in any Diocese or Amorangi that has not authorised a service or blessing of civil marriages in accordance with that Canon.

At present ministers who are celibate or who have been married by the Church are considered to be in rightly ordered relationships. This amendment enables those who have entered a civil marriage and have been blessed also to be rightly ordered. Those in civil marriages will not be considered to be in rightly ordered relationships unless the marriage has been blessed by a service authorised in the diocese / amorangi in which they minister.

This change has three implications. Firstly, it means that those who are in an existing civil marriage that has not been blessed through an authorised service will not be considered to be in a rightly ordered relationship for the purposes of Title D Canon I.

The second, and associated, implication is that all dioceses / amorangi will need to adopt an authorised service of blessing for heterosexual couples in order to ensure that ministers in existing civil marriages will be able to have their marriages blessed, and thereby to be considered as in a rightly ordered relationship.

Thirdly, those in same-sex civil marriages which have been blessed will only be considered to be in a rightly ordered relationship in dioceses / amorangi that have authorised a liturgy to bless same-sex marriages. In dioceses / amorangi that have not authorised such a service, those in same-sex civil marriages will not be considered to be in rightly ordered relationships. This enables individual dioceses / amorangi to decide whether or not they authorise the service, and accept candidates for ordination who are in same-sex civil marriages which have been blessed.

9. Changes to Title G Canon III

This section of the report explains and then identifies the changes to the canons required to introduce formularies for the new blessings for those who have entered a civil marriage.

Title G Canon III is the existing canon “of Marriage”. There are two changes proposed: amendments to the existing provisions of the canon, which becomes Part A, Marriage, and the addition of a set of provisions relating to the blessing of existing marriages in a new Part B, of Civil Marriages.

The amendments to the existing canon are limited. The first change is a simplification, rather than a substantive change. Currently, the canon contains (in Schedule I) a list of “forbidden marriages” which are also contained in the Marriage Act 1955, and there is a prohibition on conducting a “forbidden marriage” under that Act. It is proposed the canon be simplified to prohibit marriages that are not permitted under state law, rather than retaining a separate obligation for priests and bishops to check that any marriage is not a “forbidden” one. The current Schedule I would be deleted, the current Schedule II would be renamed as Schedule I, and the following amendment adopted:

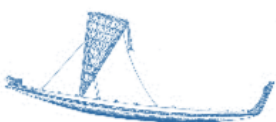
Part A Clause 1.2 has added '... and may not marry any couple where that marriage is prohibited by the laws of the State.'

And the current Clause 1.5, referencing the forbidden marriages in the current Schedule I, is deleted, and subsequent clause is renumbered.

The second amendment would result from the addition of the new provisions. Clause 2.10 of Title G Canon III presently allows for the blessing of civil marriages. This clause would be deleted as it would be (in substance) replaced by new provisions contained in Part B of the Canon, supported by a schedule setting out a summary of the Church’s teaching on life-long covenantal relationships.

The Executive Summary at section 2 referred to proposed restrictions on conducting rites of blessing. This refers to Canon III, Part B which provides at clause 1.1 that a blessing of a civil marriage is possible where the General Synod/ Te Hīnota Whānui has authorised a service, and the synod of the Diocese / Amorangi in which the minister holds a licence has done so as well. The group recommends that services be strictly in accordance with this canon. At clause 3.3 it is required that a visiting minister consult appropriate authorities before conducting a service. Also expressed is the doctrine that no minister may be compelled to officiate at a service where their conscience prevents them from doing so.

This report sets out the proposed new Title G Canon III in its entirety.



CANON III
OF MARRIAGE AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

2000

PART A: MARRIAGE**1. Pre-requisites For Marriage**

- 1.1 Those intending to marry shall give adequate notice to the minister. *Notice of Marriage*
- 1.2 The minister shall be assured of the right of the parties to contract a marriage according to the laws of the State and may not marry any couple where that marriage is prohibited by the laws of the State. *Right to marry and restrictions on marriage*
- 1.3 The minister shall provide education to the parties seeking marriage on the Christian understanding of marriage, or see that such education is provided by some other competent person, in accordance with any Guidelines that General Synod may from time to time issue. In particular the minister shall ascertain that the parties understand that Christian marriage is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into in the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind and will, and with the intent that it be lifelong. The Church's teaching on Christian marriage is enshrined in the Formularies of the Church and is expressed in all the marriage services in the Formularies and in the introduction for the congregation to Christian marriage in *A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, (See Schedule I of this Canon). *Education about Marriage*
- 1.4 The minister shall be satisfied that the parties to the marriage freely and knowingly consent to such marriage, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to identity of a partner, or mental reservation. *Consent*
- 1.5 The minister shall ascertain that at least one of the parties to the marriage has been baptised or is intending to be baptised provided that the minister may waive this requirement in unusual pastoral circumstances in consultation with the appropriate episcopal authority. *Baptism*
2006

2. The Marriage Service

- 2.1 It is usual for the marriage service to be conducted in a church or customary place of worship. Nevertheless for pastoral reasons, a clergy person may use discretion in agreeing to the service being conducted in another appropriate place. An appropriate record of the marriage register shall still be entered in a marriage register held by a church. *Location of Marriage*
2008
- 2.2 As a matter of courtesy, any minister conducting a marriage service in a place of worship in which he or she does not ordinarily conduct worship shall do so only after consultation with the appropriate authority. *Courtesy in alternative locations*

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2.3 | There shall be at least two witnesses present in addition to the officiating minister. | <i>Witnesses</i> |
| 2.4 | The minister shall be a priest or bishop and shall have been nominated by the appropriate church authority to the relevant civil authority as an officiating minister. | <i>Officiating Minister</i> |
| 2.5 | The minister shall comply with all instructions issued by the relevant civil authority from time to time for the conduct of marriage ceremonies and for the registration of the marriage. | <i>Compliance with State Law</i> |
| 2.6 | The minister shall use one of the marriage services or a composite of the required elements of the authorised services provided in the Formularies of the Church. | <i>Use of Formularies</i> |
| 2.7 | The minister officiating at the service shall have responsibility for all matters relating to the conduct of the service. | <i>Responsibility for the service</i> |
| 2.8 | A record of the marriage shall be entered in the Marriage Register provided by the Church. | <i>Record of the Marriage</i> |
| 2.9 | The marriage service of a person who has been divorced may be conducted by a minister even though the other party to the prior marriage is still living. | <i>Marriage of divorced persons</i> |
| 2.11 | Any minister shall have full discretion to decline to conduct any marriage service. | <i>Discretion to decline</i> |

PART B: OF CIVIL MARRIAGES

1. Authorisation of the blessing of civil marriages

- 1.1 A minister may conduct services blessing a civil marriage that has occurred under the Marriage Act 1955 (for services to take place in Aotearoa, New Zealand) or the similar legislation applying in the countries of Tikanga Pasifika (for services to take place in Pasifika) or the laws of an overseas country where that marriage would comply with the Marriage Act 1955 or the similar legislation applying in the countries of Tikanga Pasifika :

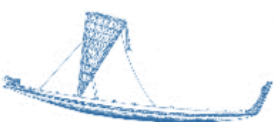
a. the General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui has authorised a service for the blessing of such a civil marriage in accordance with Te Pouhere/the Constitution and these Canons; and

b. the Synod of the Diocese / Amorangi (including the Synod of the Diocese of Polynesia) in which the minister holds a licence has authorised the use of any service authorised by the General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui in that Diocese or Amorangi for such a civil marriage.

- 1.2 Any service blessing a civil marriage must be conducted in accordance with this Canon.

2. Pre-requisites For Blessing

- 2.1 Those wishing to have their civil marriage blessed must give adequate *Notice of blessing*



notice to the minister.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| 2.3 | The minister shall provide education to the parties seeking blessing on the Christian understanding of life-long relationships, or see that such education is provided by some other competent person, in accordance with any Guidelines that General Synod may from time to time issue. The Church's teaching on life-long covenanted relationships is as set out in Schedule II of this Canon. | <i>Education about life-long relationships</i> |
| 2.4 | At least one of the parties must be baptised or must be intending to be baptised before a blessing can take place provided that the minister may waive this requirement in unusual pastoral circumstances in consultation with the appropriate episcopal authority. | <i>Baptism</i> |
| 3. The Blessing Service | | |
| 3.1 | It is usual for the blessing service to be conducted in a church or customary place of worship. Nevertheless for pastoral reasons, a clergy person may use discretion in agreeing to the service being conducted in another appropriate place. An appropriate record of the blessing service must be entered into the services register of a church. | <i>Location of Service</i> |
| 3.2 | Notwithstanding clause 2 of Title A Canon II no minister may conduct a blessing service in a Diocese / Amorangi where the Synod of the Diocese / Amorangi has not authorised the use of that blessing service. | <i>Need for authorisation in Diocese/Hui Amorangi</i> |
| 3.3 | As a matter of courtesy, any minister conducting a blessing service in a place of worship in which he or she does not ordinarily conduct worship shall do so only after consultation with the appropriate authority. | <i>Courtesy in alternative locations</i> |
| 3.4 | The minister shall be a priest or bishop. | <i>Officiating Minister</i> |
| 3.5 | The minister must use one of the blessing services that has been authorised by the General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui in accordance with the Constitution and has been authorised by the Synod of the Diocese / Amorangi in which the service is proposed to take place. | <i>Use of Formularies</i> |
| 3.6 | The minister officiating at the service shall have responsibility for all matters relating to the conduct of the service. | <i>Responsibility for the service</i> |
| 3.7 | As a matter of doctrine any minister has the right to decline to officiate at a service blessing civil marriages (whether involving divorced persons or where the couple are of the same sex) and may not be subject to any disciplinary proceedings for doing so. | <i>Right to decline</i> |

SCHEDULE I

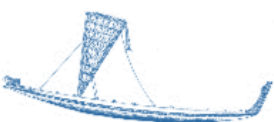
The following are the major relevant excerpted sections from the Formularies to be read in conjunction with the Canon, clause 1.3. The teaching enshrined in the Formularies is further enlarged by considering the whole of the service to be used at any specific wedding.

1. Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship - God's blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and bad. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, made and celebrated in the presence of God and before a priest and congregation. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 779)
2. Marriage is a gift of God our Creator, whose intention is that husband and wife should be united in heart, body and mind. In their union they fulfil their love for each other. Marriage is given to provide the stability necessary for family life, so that children may be cared for lovingly and grow to full maturity. Marriage is a way of life to be upheld and honoured. No one should enter into it lightly. It involves a serious and life-long commitment to each other's good in a union of strength, sympathy and delight. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 780)
3. Praying is an outlook, a sustained energy, which creates a marriage and makes love and forgiveness life-long. Eternal love never fails; our love needs to forgive and be forgiven. As we pray and forgive we minister reconciliation. Those who marry are God's ministers to each other of reconciliation and change. As they grow together, wife and husband foster one another's strengths, they provide each other with reassurance and love needed to overcome their weaknesses. From this beginning God draws them now to a completely new life. They become awake to each other, aware of each other, sensitive to each other's needs. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 785f.)
4. Marriage is the promise of hope between a man and a woman who love each other, who trust that love, and who wish to share the future together. It enables two separate people to share their desires, longings, dreams and memories, and to help each other through their uncertainties. It provides the encouragement to risk more and thus to gain more. In marriage, husband and wife belong together, providing mutual support and a stability in which their children may grow. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 790)
5. Marriage involves caring and giving. It involves learning to share one's life with another person, forgiving as Christ forgives; enjoying the love and meaning which can be found together. It involves facing together whatever adversity may arise. (*A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 790)
6. [Marriage is to be entered into in the fear of God], duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.

First, It was ordained for the increase of mankind according to the will of God, and that children might be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained in order that the natural instincts and affections, implanted by God, should be hallowed and directed aright; that those who are called by God to this holy estate, should continue therein in pureness of living.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and in adversity. (*Book of Common Prayer*, 1928).



10. Proposed Schedule to Part B of Title G Canon III

Of Christian blessing of civil or non-Christian marriages

The following is a brief consideration of the reasons for the provision of a blessing of an existing marriage that was conducted by a civil jurisdiction or by a religious authority other than Christian, and an understanding of the nature of such a blessing.

The tenor of formal blessings offered in public worship is plain: it is God who blesses, so the bishop or priest and the assembly are both seeking and announcing God's blessing upon some person or persons. These blessings are not the Church *granting* God's blessing, but declaring it. This involves confidence and trust that God is pleased to bless that which the Church blesses. In the case of blessing a married couple, that confidence is expressed in recognising God's blessing already at work in the couple's lives and rightly asking for God's continued blessing.

In the case of those who have been legally married in a setting other than the Church, and who have not received a formal pronouncement of the blessing of the God we know in Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Church offers and announces that blessing for five primary reasons:

1. Love

We are followers of Jesus Christ and know the blessing that comes through his life, death and resurrection as a result of his self-giving love. We also know this kind of love is a blessing when we live in the same manner with each other. Marriage is emblematic of this love. Moreover, in the depth of faithful and life-long commitments a couple finds a 'living for the other' that reflects the example of Jesus Christ's living for the Church.

2. Union

In the bond and union of body, mind, and soul, a couple finds in the quality of their companionship a fit such that their lives have greater meaning, value and purpose. This is an outworking of the abundant life that Christ promises to all.

3. Covenant

A covenant is a sacred commitment. Marriage is one kind of commitment where the couple vows to life-long faithfulness, and hopes to emulate the faithfulness of God in keeping covenant with God's people. Covenant entails constancy and faithfulness in love, which we know is a blessing from God.

4. Gift

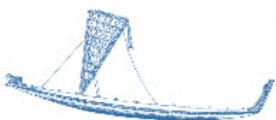
The giving of oneself and receiving that is evidenced in marriage is a particular instance of the truth that God creates us to receive our lives as a gift both from God and from the community we inhabit. The intimacy of marriage is an intense form of this giving and receiving of selves in the interplay of gift and giving.

5. Household

As a household, a 'little church' or 'micro-basileia', the married couple is, through their love for one another, a sign (*mysterion*) of Christ's love for the world. Indeed, they are

both a sign and a remembering (*anamnesis*) of Christ's love. The couple is both an example of Christ's self-giving love, and the parties themselves model their love on Christ's example.

Finally, in receiving the pronouncement of God's blessing and asking for that blessing to continue and deepen in their life together, it is the expectation that a couple become a greater blessing to one another and in the overflowing generosity of God, become a blessing to the world.



11. Proposed motion for General Synod / Te Hīnota Whānui 2016

The motion which the working group offers for the consideration of General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui is set out below.

That the General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui, having been presented with the report of the *A Way Forward – He Anga Whakamua – Na Sala ki Liu* working group, resolves to:

receive the report;

accept the recommendations in the report;

endorse in principle, for consideration, the proposed new formularies for use in public worship, and the changes to the canons of the Church set out in the report,

forward the proposed changes to the canons of the Church to the Dioceses of New Zealand, Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa, and the Diocese of Polynesia, and request them to advise General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui, before it meets in 2018, of their assent or otherwise to the proposed changes;

and

request that the proposed changes to the canons set out in the report be brought forward for consideration by General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui in 2018.

Moved: The Rt Rev'd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

Seconded: The Rev'd Don Tamihere

12. The proposed rites of blessing

The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 1)

The Gathering of the People

All standing, the presiding priest or bishop says

Grace to you and peace from God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of Life,
the love at our beginning and without end,
in our midst and with us.

**God is with us,
here we find new life.**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God.

God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have abundant life.

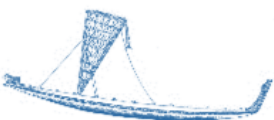
God is love,
Those who live in love, live in God, and God in them.

E ōku hoa aroha (Dear friends),
we have gathered in the presence of God
to recognise the marriage of N. and N. before Christ's church,
to pray God's blessing on them,
to share their joy,
and to celebrate their love.

In the beginning, when God created the first human,
God declared that it is not good for us to remain alone.
Out of compassion, God created a companion
flesh of flesh and bone of bone,
so that two people could comfort and care for each other,
and thereby a pattern of mutual support and faithful partnership
was established from the very beginning.

[In God's love for creation,
God made a covenant with all people,
saying to Noah, "When I see the bow in the clouds I will remember my everlasting covenant
between me and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

God promised descendants to Abraham and Sarah, as numerous as the stars,
and led the chosen people out of bondage into freedom.
Ever faithful in love, God gave the law,
taught, and warned Israel by the holy prophets.



God showed the help and blessing
that can come to us in the best of friendships
Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David brought great blessing to each other.
Christ said to his disciples, "No longer do I call you servants but I call you friends."

God's faithful love was manifest in fullness
in the redemption of the whole world by our Lord Jesus Christ.
In Christ a new covenant has been established
by the laying down of his life for his friends.
In Christ the poor are invited to the heavenly marriage feast.
In Christ our humanity is wedded to God forever.]

With God's faithful purpose in mind
we have come together to ask God to bless N. and N.,
who have made binding commitments of love and faithfulness to each other,
in accordance with civil law.

We will pray that the Holy Spirit may comfort, guide and strengthen them,
that they may remain faithful to God and to each other
through the promises they have already made,
and that, by God's help and with the support of the Church,
they may fulfil God's purposes
for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

Silence may be kept

Most loving God, creator and redeemer,
we love because you first love us.
you remain faithful to us through all our life,
even when we turn our faces from you.
In your mercy, pour your blessing on N. and N.,
who come this day to seek your guidance and protection for their life together.
Bestow upon this couple, who have been joined together in lawful union,
the gifts of peace, trust, and steadfast love.
And grant to us all the knowledge of your grace,
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may know we are bound to you, whatever life may bring;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

A suitable reading (or readings) follows here.

After the reading a minister may speak to the people.

The Declarations

The priest or bishop asks the couple

Do you attest to God's blessing in your life?

God has blessed us richly.

What do you ask of God?

We ask for God's blessing on our life together.

We ask for God's help to remain faithful to our promises.

We ask for God's gifts of constancy and love.

What do you ask of the Church and from each of us gathered here?

We ask for your prayers, your love, and your support.

The priest or bishop continues

You have made promises (and given a ring/ rings) in token of your love for each other.

Do you attest before God and before this congregation that you are duly and legally married and that you honour the promises you made to each other in accordance with civil law?

We do.

The congregation stands. The couple faces their family and friends.

E ōku hoa aroha (Dear friends), do you recognise this lawful marriage?

We do .

Will you uphold and support this couple now and in the years ahead?

We will.

The priest or bishop asks the couple to declare their commitment to each other before the congregation.

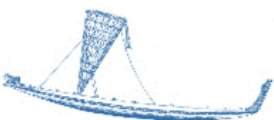
N. and N., in the sight of God and of this congregation, I invite you to declare your commitment to each other and to God.

**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

The priest or bishop addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation
N. and N. have given testimony of their lawful marriage
and have now affirmed the commitments they made.



The Prayers

The priest or bishop or lay person leads the prayers:

Let us pray:

Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
hear us as we pray for N and N.

May their union be life-giving and life-long,
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in tenderness, faithfulness, respect, and trust.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to strangers and friends alike;
may their love for each other
in good times and bad
overflow to neighbours in need.

May they celebrate with the joyful,
befriend the lonely
and comfort those in sorrow.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

By your word and sacraments
may they be filled with your grace
and may your Holy Spirit
grant them insight and patience to discern your will
the courage and the strength to follow it.
May they come to know the joy that you have prepared for all people when,
at the end of this life, you receive us all into your eternal kingdom.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

May their life together be a sign of your love for this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy triumph over despair.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

The Lord's Prayer

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

Kua akona nei tātou e tō tātou Ariki,
 ka inoi tātou

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
 Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
 Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
 Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
 ki runga ki te whenua,
 kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
 Hōmai ki a mātou āiane
 he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
 Murua ō mātou hara,
 Me mātou hoki e muru nei
 i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
 Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
 Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
 Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
 me te korōria,
 Āke ake ake. Āmine.

or

Eternal Spirit,
 Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
 Source of all that is and that shall be,
 Father and Mother of us all,
 Loving God, in whom is heaven:
 The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
 The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
 Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
 Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
 sustain our hope and come on earth.
 With the bread we need for today, feed us.



In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
 In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
 From trials too great to endure, spare us.
 From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
 For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
 now and for ever.
 Amen.

The Blessing of the Couple

The couple kneels. The priest or bishop prays one of the following blessings:

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of the universe,
 for you have created all things
 and you surround us with signs of your faithfulness.
 Pour now the abundance of your blessing on N. and N.
 who have committed their lives to each other.
 Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
 and a crown upon their heads.
 Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
 awake and asleep,
 in joy and in sorrow,
 in life and in death.
 Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that heavenly marriage feast,
 where your saints feast for ever more.
 Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

God the Father,
 God the Son,
 God the Holy Spirit,
 bless, preserve, and keep you;
 God grant you abundant grace
 that, living together in faith and love,
 you may be a blessing to each other
 and may receive the blessings of eternal life.

Amen.

or

Most gracious God,
 we praise you for the gift of human love.
 We give you thanks for N. and N.,
 and the promises of faithfulness they have made.
 Pour out the abundance of your Holy Spirit upon them.
 Keep them in your steadfast love;
 protect them in all danger;

fill them with your wisdom and peace;
and lead them in service to each other and the world.

May the blessing of God the Father
God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you,
that you may always be a blessing to each other
and to all whom you meet. **Amen.**

Or

Eternal God,
you create us out of love
that we should love you and one another.
Bless N. and N., each made in your image,
whose commitment to each other
is a sign of your faithful love to us
in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

By your Holy Spirit,
fill them both with wisdom and hope
that they may delight in your gift of love
and enrich one another in love and steadfast faithfulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bring them to that table
where your saints celebrate forever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

or

May God who has made covenant with us
keep you in love with each other
so that you will be a sign
and an example of God's never-failing love.

May God give you friends and family
to help you live in peace with all people.

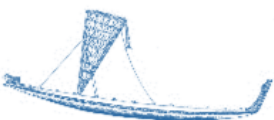
May you always bear witness to the love of God
so that the afflicted and the needy will find welcome in your home.

And may the Almighty God bless you: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Dismissal

The priest or bishop may give a blessing



The service may be concluded with the following or other appropriate words

Grace be with you.

Thanks be to God.

Go in peace.

Amen. We go in the name of Christ.

This service may only be conducted for a couple that is legally married in a prior civil marriage or in a prior ceremony of another religious tradition.

If the Eucharist is included it occurs after the Prayers and before the Blessing of the Couple. If that is the case the Lord's Prayer may be omitted after the Prayers and be in the usual places in a Eucharist.

Some Suggested Readings

Genesis 9:12-17

Ruth 1:16-17

1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a;

or 1 Samuel 18:1-4 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7

Micah 4:1-4

Romans 12:9-18

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Galatians 5:14, 22-26

Ephesians 3:14-21

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-16, 21

Matthew 5:1-16

Mark 12:28-34

Luke 6:32-38

John 15:9-17

John 17:1-2, 18-26

The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 2)

The Gathering of the People

All standing, the presiding priest or bishop says

Grace to you and peace from God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of Life,
the love at our beginning and without end,
in our midst and with us.

**God is with us,
here we find new life.**

Beloved let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God.

God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have abundant life.

God is love,
Those who live in love, live in God, and God in them.

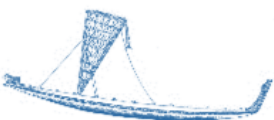
E ōku hoa aroha (Dear friends),
we have gathered in the presence of God
to recognise the marriage of N. and N. before Christ's church,
to pray God's blessing on them,
to share their joy,
and to celebrate their love.

In the beginning, when God created the first human,
God declared that it is not good for us to remain alone.
Out of compassion, God created a companion
flesh of flesh and bone of bone,
so that two people could comfort and care for each other,
and thereby a pattern of mutual support and faithful partnership
was established between a man and a woman from the very beginning.

[In God's love for creation,
God made a covenant with all people,
saying to Noah, "When I see the bow in the clouds I will remember my everlasting covenant
between me and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

God promised descendants to Abraham and Sarah, as numerous as the stars,
and led the chosen people out of bondage into freedom.
Ever faithful in love, God gave the law,
taught, and warned Israel by the holy prophets.

God showed the help and blessing
that can come to us in the best of friendships



Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David brought great blessing to each other.
Christ said to his disciples, "No longer do I call you servants but I call you friends."

God's faithful love was manifest in fullness
in the redemption of the whole world by our Lord Jesus Christ.
In Christ a new covenant has been established
by the laying down of his life for his friends.
In Christ the poor are invited to the heavenly marriage feast.
In Christ our humanity is wedded to God forever.]

With God's faithful purpose in mind
we have come together to ask God to bless N. and N.,
who have made binding commitments of love and faithfulness to each other,
in accordance with civil law.
We will pray that the Holy Spirit may comfort, guide and strengthen them,
that they may remain faithful to God and to each other
through the promises they have already made,
and that, by God's help and with the support of the Church,
they may fulfil God's purposes
for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

Silence may be kept

Most loving God, creator and redeemer,
we love because you first love us.
you remain faithful to us through all our life,
even when we turn our faces from you.
In your mercy, pour your blessing on N. and N.
who come this day to seek your guidance and protection for their life together.
Bestow upon this couple, who have been joined together in lawful union,
the gifts of peace, trust, and steadfast love.
And grant to us all the knowledge of your grace,
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may know we are bound to you, whatever life may bring;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Ministry of the Word

A suitable reading (or readings) follows here.

After the reading a minister may speak to the people.

The Declarations

The priest or bishop asks the couple

Do you attest to God's blessing in your life?
God has blessed us richly.

What do you ask of God?
We ask for God's blessing on our life together.

We ask for God's help to remain faithful to our promises.

We ask for God's gifts of constancy and love.

What do you ask of the Church and from each of us gathered here?

We ask for your prayers, your love, and your support.

The priest or bishop continues

You have made promises (and given a ring/ rings) in token of your love for each other. Do you attest before God and before this congregation that you are duly and legally married and that you honour the promises you made to each other in accordance with civil law?

We do.

The congregation stands. The couple faces their family and friends.

E ōku hoa aroha (Dear friends), do you recognise this lawful marriage?

We do .

Will you uphold and support this couple now and in the years ahead?

We will.

The priest or bishop asks the couple to declare their commitment to each other before the congregation.

N. and N., in the sight of God and of this congregation, I invite you to declare your commitment to each other and to God.

**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

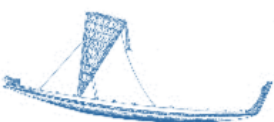
The priest or bishop addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation
N. and N. have given testimony of their lawful marriage
and have now affirmed the commitments they made.

The Prayers

The priest or bishop or lay person leads the prayers:

Let us pray:



Faithful God,
 holy and eternal,
 hear us as we pray for N. and N..

May their union be life-giving and life-long,
 enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
 may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
 in tenderness, faithfulness, respect, and trust.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

May the hospitality of their home
 bring refreshment and joy to strangers and friends alike;
 may their love for each other
 in good times and bad
 overflow to neighbours in need.
 May they celebrate with the joyful,
 befriend the lonely
 and comfort those in sorrow.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

By your word and sacraments
 may they be filled with your grace
 and may your Holy Spirit
 grant them insight and patience to discern your will
 the courage and the strength to follow it.
 May they come to know the joy that you have prepared for all people when,
 at the end of this life, you receive us all into your eternal kingdom.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

May their life together be a sign of your love for this broken world,
 so that unity may overcome estrangement,
 forgiveness heal guilt,
 and joy triumph over despair.

God of love / E te Atua aroha

Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou ĭnoi.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

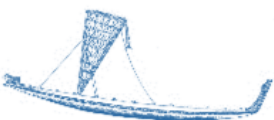
or

Kua akona nei tātou e tō tātou Ariki,
 ka inoi tātou

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
 Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
 Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
 Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
 ki runga ki te whenua,
 kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
 Hōmai ki a mātou āiane
 he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
 Murua ō mātou hara,
 Me mātou hoki e muru nei
 i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
 Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
 Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
 Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
 me te korōria,
 Āke ake ake. Āmine.

or

Eternal Spirit,
 Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
 Source of all that is and that shall be,
 Father and Mother of us all,
 Loving God, in whom is heaven:
 The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
 The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
 Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
 Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
 sustain our hope and come on earth.
 With the bread we need for today, feed us.
 In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
 In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
 From trials too great to endure, spare us.
 From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
 For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
 now and for ever.
 Amen.



The blessing of the couple

The couple kneels. The priest or bishop prays one of the following blessings:

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of the universe,
 for you have created all things
 and you surround us with signs of your faithfulness.
 Pour now the abundance of your blessing on N. and N.
 who have committed their lives to each other.
 Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
 and a crown upon their heads.
 Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
 awake and asleep,
 in joy and in sorrow,
 in life and in death.
 Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that heavenly marriage feast,
 where your saints feast for ever more.
 Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

God the Father,
 God the Son,
 God the Holy Spirit,
 bless, preserve, and keep you;
 God grant you abundant grace
 that, living together in faith and love,
 you may be a blessing to each other
 and may receive the blessings of eternal life.

Amen.

or

Most gracious God,
 we praise you for the gift of human love.
 We give you thanks for N. and N.,
 and the promises of faithfulness they have made.
 Pour out the abundance of your Holy Spirit upon them.
 Keep them in your steadfast love;
 protect them in all danger;
 fill them with your wisdom and peace;
 and lead them in service to each other and the world.

May the blessing of God the Father
 God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,
 be with you and remain with you,
 that you may always be a blessing to each other
 and to all whom you meet.

Amen.

Or

Eternal God,
you create us out of love
that we should love you and one another.
Bless N. and N., each made in your image,
whose commitment to each other
is a sign of your faithful love to us
in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

By your Holy Spirit,
fill them both with wisdom and hope
that they may delight in your gift of love
and enrich one another in love and steadfast faithfulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bring them to that table
where your saints celebrate forever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

or

May God who has made covenant with us
keep you in love with each other
so that you will be a sign
and an example of God's never-failing love.

May God give you friends and family
to help you live in peace with all people.

May you always bear witness to the love of God
so that the afflicted and the needy will find welcome in your home.

And may the Almighty God bless you: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Dismissal

The priest or bishop may give a blessing

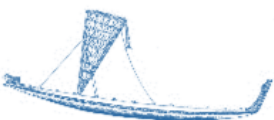
The service may be concluded with the following or other appropriate words

Grace be with you.

Thanks be to God.

Go in peace.

Amen. We go in the name of Christ.



This service may only be conducted for a couple that is legally married in a prior civil marriage or in a prior ceremony of another religious tradition.

If the Eucharist is included it occurs after the Prayers and before the Blessing of the Couple. If that is the case the Lord's Prayer may be omitted after the Prayers and be in the usual places in a Eucharist.

Some Suggested Readings

Genesis 9:12-17

Ruth 1:16-17

1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a;

or 1 Samuel 18:1-4 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7

Micah 4:1-4

Romans 12:9-18

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

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Galatians 5:14, 22-26

Ephesians 3:14-21

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-16, 21

Matthew 5:1-16

Mark 12:28-34

Luke 6:32-38

John 15:9-17

John 17:1-2, 18-26

Appendix 1 – Motion 30

A way forward - He Anga Whakamua - Na sala ki liu.

Ka kawea mai e ahau i te karere pai me te hari nui mō koutou”

‘Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy’

“Oku ou ha’u mo au a’e Talafungani ‘oe Fiefia” Luke 2:10.

On Christmas Day, 1814, the Rev'd Samuel Marsden and Ruatara proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time on the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand. Thus for two hundred years, the good news of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. But the good news of God reaches back into the story of our created world. We speak and experience the Gospel in this time and in this place, but hold the witness of Scripture in its articulation of God's work in history through Jesus Christ, Son of God and servant of all, and in the movement of the Holy Spirit. We are held in the now and the not yet, trusting in the promises of God. We are filled with grace and hope, and Scripture commands us to live in prayerful anticipation of the promises of resurrection into eternal life, when we shall all be changed.

Scripture teaches the creation of male and female in the image and likeness of God and the love of God for all people regardless of individual faith or calling. In Christ all are invited into faith in the new covenant in which the forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ is received. Called to be members of the Body of Christ, the power of the Spirit empowers the church to be the hands and feet; the voice and heart of Christ. Jesus Christ is the centre of all that we are and all that we do.

“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.”

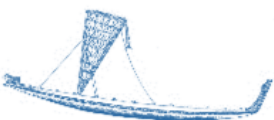
“Kahore he Hurai, kahore he Kariki, kahore he pononga, kahore he rangatira, kahore he tane, wahine ranei, he tangata kotahi tonu hoki koutou katoa i roto i a Karaiti Ihu.” “E le o i ai se lutaia po o se Eleni, e le o i ai se pologa po o se saoloto, e le o i ai se tane po o se fafine; auā ua tasi lava outou uma ia Keriso Iesu.” Galatians 3:28

In this letter, the Apostle Paul writes to a community who were themselves experiencing critical issues of division in their doctrine and common life, that their distinct identities were not collapsed, but rather surpassed and transformed by Jesus Christ.

“All have sinned and all have fallen short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23. Nevertheless Christ is the Good Shepherd (John 10) and seeks to bring home to the fold every person. God never gives up on us (Luke 15).

It is the call of the church in every place to proclaim God's love and invite people to become disciples of Christ. Christian teaching calls every disciple to a life of repentance as well as seeking to do God's will to love and serve others in the world Christ died to save.

At the General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui held at Waitangi in May 2014, the Three Tikanga of our Church met and engaged in a number of important issues. One major focus of energy and debate was the doctrine of marriage. In the midst of the articulation of many theologies and cultural influences, our unity in Christ was never-the-less evident even when we disagreed. The Church has received and articulated an understanding of intimate human relationships which it



expresses through her doctrine of marriage between a man and a woman, and is life-long and monogamous.

We uphold this traditional doctrine of marriage.

Over many years our Church has become increasingly aware of the pain of the LGBT community. All too often our Church has been complicit in homophobic thinking and actions of society, and has failed to speak out against hatred and violence against those with same-gender attraction.

We apologise unreservedly and commit ourselves to reconciliation and prophetic witness.

We recognise a diversity of voices about what constitutes a right ordered intimate relationship between two persons regardless of gender. At this time it is the will of the General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui to respond to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Although we are far from unanimous in seeing the way forward, there is a broad recognition of the dynamic nature of doctrine, and the call of the prophetic word to be attentive to the movement of the Spirit. There is no questioning the depth of love and commitment in some gay and lesbian relationships and their commitment to serve the wider community and to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Therefore we present the following resolutions of General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui and share a possible timeline for the development of new liturgies, change of formularies and possible parliamentary action, keeping in mind the present legal restrictions in some jurisdictions.

- 1. This General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui resolves** to appoint a working group to bring and recommend to the 62nd General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui:
 - (a) A process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is contrary to scripture, doctrine, tikanga or civil law, will not be required to perform any liturgy for the blessing of same-gender relationships, will continue to have integrity within the Church, and will remain compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction;
 - (b) A process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is consonant with scripture, doctrine, tikanga and civil law may perform a yet to be developed liturgy for blessing same-gender relationships in a manner which maintains their integrity within the Church, is compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction, and can remain in communion under scripture, doctrine and law; including
 - (i) A proposal for a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships;
 - (ii) A process and legislation (whether church or parliamentary) by which a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships may be adopted;

and

- 2. Recognising** that this work has the potential to impact on the Church's theology of ordination and marriage, asks the group to report for our future on:
 - (a) The theology of ordination to Anglican orders and requirements for that; and
 - (b) The theology of marriage.

3. This General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui commits itself to continued dialogue/talanoa/wānanga which respects and protects diversity with the option of change.

4. And further:

“By one Spirit we were baptised into one body”

He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa/A New Zealand Prayer Book

We are disciples of Jesus Christ who took a towel and basin and bid his disciples to serve and care for all.

We are acutely aware of the desire of some clergy to make further response pastorally and prayerfully to LGBT people in their faith communities.

Therefore General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui resolves that:

Clergy who so wish are permitted to recognise in public worship a same-gender civil union or state marriage of members of their faith community:

- (a) with the permission of their licensing Bishop; and
- (b) with the permission of their Vestry or equivalent leadership body.

Such recognition cannot be marriage or a rite of blessing of a same-gender relationship.

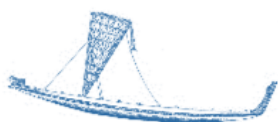
We recognise that this may cause even further distress. Noting the commitment of the Church demonstrated in clauses 1 to 4 above, we ask the LGBT community to recognise that any process of change within our Church takes time.

Ka mea a Ihu: *“He ture hōu tāku ka hoatu nei ki a koutou, kia aroha tētahi ki tētahi, kia rite ki tōku aroha ki a koutou.”*

Jesus said: *“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”*

Sa kaya ko Jisu: *“Mo dou vei lomani me vaka kau sa lomani kemudou, mo dou vei lomani vaka kind”*

John 13:34



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