

MA WHEA ?
MEI FE KI FE ?
WHERE TO ?

ANGLICAN GENERAL SYNOD
COMMISSION ON SAME GENDER
BLESSINGS AND ORDINATIONS

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD/TE HĪNOTA WHĀNUI | MAY 2014

CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Section 1	The Task.....	6
Section 2	How the Commission Went About the Task.....	11
Section 3	Submissions and Presentations	14
Section 4	Structure and Church Governance.....	17
Section 5	Biblical and Theological Context – the Three Tikanga Church.....	22
Section 6	Societal Developments	27
Section 7	Other Church Developments in New Zealand.....	29
Section 8	International Developments	31
Section 9	Human Rights Aspects	33
Section 10	Scientific Background	36
Section 11	Conclusions and Options	38
Footnotes	42
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Appendix 1	Material Referred to the Commissioners	45
Appendix 2	Submitters	49
Appendix 3	Individuals Who Made Presentations or Who Took Part in Group Presentations.....	52
Appendix 4	Report to the Commission from Reference Group	54
Appendix 5	Report of the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions... ..	61

FOREWORD

There will, indeed, always be some to whom change which has been hallowed by long use seems grievous and fraught with danger. They would stand on the old paths and follow in their worship of God the patterns which their fathers set. In truth however they cannot quite so worship because they cannot any more than those around them be blind to what has been happening during the two hundred and fifty years. .

Excerpt from the *Preface to The Proposed Book of Common Prayer (1928)*

The Anglican Church made its first appearance in New Zealand in 1814 with the arrival of the Reverend Samuel Marsden at the Bay of Islands where he preached the first sermon in the country on Christmas Day. The Bishop of Australia William Grant Broughton arrived in the Bay of Islands for a visit in 1838 and held confirmations in both English and Māori. The Anglican Church became officially established in New Zealand after the proclamation of British sovereignty over New Zealand which enabled the appointment of a Bishop of New Zealand by Royal Letters of Patent to be made. George Augustus Selwyn was appointed. The Anglican Church in New Zealand became autonomous in 1857 when a constitution was established at a conference of bishops, clergy and laity in St Stephen's Chapel in Auckland.

Excerpt from *New Zealand Encyclopedia on the entry 'Anglican Church' (1984) Bateman Press*

These two quotations conveniently describe a backdrop for the work of the Ma Whea? Commission during most of a two year period between 2012 and 2014. The principal themes in the quotations are legacy and change.

In the immediately past 50 years, modern New Zealand has come more and more to acknowledge the role and position that Māori and Polynesian tradition play in our everyday lives. New Zealand and those who live here have fostered relationships of many kinds with our geographical neighbours. Within New Zealand, a number of mechanisms have been developed to resolve long held grievances and to reach understanding and completion – for example Waitangi Tribunal processes. The process of talking through our problems has also come to be described as a part of *the Pacific way*. The word *talanoa* connotes this.

This process of endeavouring to resolve problems can therefore take its place, alongside legacy and change as a third element of backdrop to our work.

The central reality we confronted is that on the issue of same gender relationships the Anglican Church is in fact more than one church. There are those who adhere to a traditional approach in terms of biblical interpretation and practice and who regard homosexual acts as sinful and that those who engage in them ought not be the proper subjects of blessing or ordination. Equally there are others who see people of all backgrounds being acceptable in the church

community whatever might be their background or sexual orientation. These views we accepted were sincerely held in good faith on both sides. Something that the Commission readily understood was a significant body of opinion in the middle ground whose proponents do not necessarily engage in debate. Many of these people are looking to their church for guidance and leadership.

The Anglican Church, which remains a strong and committed body within New Zealand society, has prided itself on its broad appeal and ability to accommodate difference and to embrace change. Attitudes towards divorced people and to women becoming priests and bishops and how these have changed provide evidence of this.

The issue of admitting people engaged in same gender relationships to blessing and ordination has however proved to be a problem that has been debated and prayerfully considered, but not resolved internally – hence the appointment of an external group empowered to listen, read, discuss and provide a description of pathways for the Church to make an informed decision or series of decisions.

The process the Commission has followed has been to solicit as many views as possible and to engage in discussions with bishops, priests and lay people on the issue and to read as widely as we could before discussing the matters raised among ourselves.

The alternatives, if some rapprochement between the competing views is not achieved, appear to be inevitable. There could be ongoing exertion of wills by some groups with a result that people of the opposing persuasion might find it necessary to leave the Church. They could perhaps re-form in smaller groups with whom there might be a community of view or adopt other options. There could on the other hand be a change of approach which might accept that attitudes and practices of the present day warrant an accommodation that will keep both sides within the same Church ensuring its continuing capability to deal with other important contemporary issues for society including equality of opportunity, championing diversity and security from malnourishment and poverty.

A way forward seems to call for the articulation of criteria which will find general acceptance in the Church community. These could include having easily intelligible rules and continuing the benefit of things that do not require change and making change only where that is accepted as necessary or desirable.

If the criteria, or new rules, are not set in place there will be a continuation of grievance, with bureaucratic and legal steps being taken to preserve positions and unhappiness, disillusionment and even dismemberment being the result. On the other hand if a way forward can be found, the result could be a church community re-invigorated by a more inclusive approach.

The period of intense discussion which will follow delivery of the report will call for an examination of the cruciality of beliefs, and the extent to which they maintain validity in a 21st century sense. In those respects where current validity is not maintained, traditional thinking will need to be put to one side and a different approach considered.

This report and a series of options are thus presented for consideration by the church community.

We thank General Synod for the generosity of spirit and privilege involved in our appointment as Commissioners and we wish the General Synod well in the deliberations and decisions that will follow.

Anand Satyanand (Chair)
Mele Taliai

Judith Potter
Paul Trebilco

Tamati Reedy

May 2014

SECTION 1 | THE TASK

The task, generally, was to consider and report to General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui on issues surrounding the blessing and ordination of those in same sex relationships. The proposed report from the Commission as to how the Anglican Church might approach the matter of people in different relationships in a caring and researched manner, would offer, for consideration by the church, a variety of models and the implications of each model, in the hope that the chosen way forward will not create a rift in the Church in this province. The Commission was charged with obtaining a helicopter view of opinions which would lead to an objective analysis and considered perspective of the ground as the Commission saw it. The Commission was to describe the various options to present to General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui without prescribing any one option in particular.

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia has adopted innovative change in significant areas of Anglican practice in the past. The ordination of women priests and the consecration of women Bishops fit into this category.

Background to the Task Internationally

Since the 1970s controversies over issues of human sexuality have become increasingly divisive and destructive throughout Christendom. Within the Anglican Communion the intensity of the debate on these issues at successive Lambeth Conferences has demonstrated the reality of these divisions.¹

The 1978 Lambeth Conference discussed the question and affirmed the Christian ideal of chastity². These conferences involve bishops from throughout the Anglican Communion. Lambeth 1988 reaffirmed Lambeth 1978. At Lambeth 1998 a report was produced and as a result the recognition of same sex relationships was debated. Clause (e) of Resolution 1.10³ endorsed by a majority of 526 to 70 states that *This Conference cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions.*

The Anglican Communion was thrown into crisis in 2003 by the decision of the Episcopal Church in the United States to give consent to the election, through correct canonical procedures, of Bishop Gene Robinson to the Diocese of New Hampshire, in New England on the eastern seaboard. He was consecrated in 2003 and was thus a bishop living in an open homosexual relationship. This was the first time this had been agreed to in any province of the Anglican Church. The concern at the time was that Gene Robinson, as well as being nominated as bishop in his own Diocese, had been nominated as bishop by the whole church and as bishop for the whole church - a connection which could not be ignored. At much the same time the Anglican

Church of Canada authorised a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions. In addition, bishops elsewhere had been performing episcopal functions in jurisdictions other than their own without the permission of the incumbent bishop.

Because these actions were seen to ignore the instruments of communion and unity and the Anglican foundation of the authority of scripture, parts of the Anglican Communion worldwide felt betrayed and some were contemplating establishing another church, the Bible being the focus of their concern. There was such world wide debate through the media that the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 2003, established a Lambeth Commission charged with the task of seeking a way forward which would encourage *responsibilities for our common life before God* within the Anglican Communion – a way to address relationships between its component parts in a true spirit of communion. This Lambeth Commission produced the Windsor Report in 2004⁴ and proposed The Anglican Communion Covenant. This covenant⁵, mandated by the Anglican Consultative Council and tested around the world, was thought to be a way to contain the tensions. However, the fourth section of the Covenant has proved to be contentious in that the dispute resolution process proposed would result in *a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from*, that Instrument of Communion.⁶ The General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui believed that two clauses in Section 3⁷ involving mediated conversations were an adequate remedy. The Covenant has been turned down by the Church in England and Scotland and partially turned down in Wales and in New Zealand.

Background to the Task Nationally

This issue of blessing and ordination of people in same gender relationships has been alive in New Zealand for some time. In May 1998 a Tikanga Pakeha Commission on Sexuality of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Chaired by the Rt Rev Dr David Coles, provided a report, *Encouraging the Dialogue*, to the Inter Diocesan Conference. The report encouraged on going debate. Tikanga Māori also established a Commission⁸ to continue the Listening Process in Te Pihopatanga as had been recommended in Lambeth Resolution 1.10 of 1998 (refer footnote 3) and echoed in the Windsor Report of 2004. This report concluded that the blessing of homosexual people did not contravene the doctrines of the church⁹ and said that *takataapui* (homosexual persons) were also able to be called to God’s service although, as with all ordained, there are standards of behaviour that must be applied to everybody.

In 2007, in accordance with the recommendation of the Windsor Report, for the Communion to engage in an in-depth study of the way Anglicans interpret the Bible, the Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia began a hermeneutical process. Representatives from the three tikanga participated in four hui held in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013. Representatives from each tikanga included clergy and laity and as far as was possible, an equitable gender balance participated.¹⁰ While previous hui had looked at methodologies and then explored how Anglicans can look at scripture as a Church, the last hui sought to consider themes and principles upon which the Church in general is agreed. It became clear during these hui that there were different perspectives and different theologies held by groups and individuals.

With the international tensions as a back drop, in 2011 at least one Diocesan Synod in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia asked the Bishops and Diocesan representatives to General Synod Standing Committee to clarify as to whether there was a moratorium on the

ordination to the diaconate or priesthood of persons who might be in a same sex relationship. The Diocese then went on to ask whether a Diocesan Bishop, within the parameters of the Canons, might have ultimate responsibility for the discernment of vocations within their Diocese and might therefore be free to decide who to ordain to the diaconate and to the priesthood. General Synod Standing Committee was also aware of at least three potential motions coming to General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui in 2012 around issues of same sex relationships, blessing, and ordination and a petition urging bishops to end their discrimination against homosexuals and lesbians.

A Way Forward

The General Synod Standing Committee suggested a way forward. A Reference Group and a Commission would be formed to research the matter. The Reference Group was to comprise three representatives from each tikanga, being people who were experts in the field and who could carry out theological reflection. The Commission was to consist of a small group of eminent persons with ability, credibility and a commitment to work in prayerful collegiality and with a track record of brokering difficult issues. The General Synod Standing Committee in November 2011 agreed to these proposals and formulated the Terms of Reference for the Commission. The Reference Group were to be available to offer the Commission advice and to undertake particular research if called upon to do so. Following the final hui the Reference Group was asked by the Commission to summarise the different perspectives and different theologies that were evident in the presentations at the various hui. Its report is published in Appendix 4. Also, following the final hui, the General Synod Standing Committee at its meeting in February 2013 appointed a Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions charged with the task of exploring *the theological rationale for a Christian approach to the blessing and marriage of people in permanent, faithful same gender relationships, with a view to assessing such a rationale in this Church*. Both the Reference Group and the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions along with the Bishops and various other Church bodies were to interface with the Commission to ensure appropriate theological input. The report from the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions is in Appendix 5. The Commission was to report progress to the General Synod/ te Hīnota Whānui in 2012 but in any event to complete its work and report to General Synod/ te Hīnota Whānui by 2014.

Composition of the Commission

Sir Anand Satyanand, Chair - a lawyer, judge and ombudsman before serving as New Zealand's 19th Governor General

Dame Judith Potter – a High Court Judge (retired in 2012) and former President of both the Auckland District and New Zealand Law Societies

Emeritus Professor Sir Tamati Reedy - an educationalist who was the founding Professor of the University of Waikato's School of Māori and Pacific Development, and former head of the Department of Māori Affairs

Mrs Mele Tali'ai - a Tongan New Zealander lawyer involved in a wide range of health, legal and

Pacific Island advocacy work

Professor Paul Trebilco - Professor of New Testament Studies in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago

The Commission appointed Mrs Elizabeth Smaal, Administrative Secretary to the Inter Diocesan Conference and former Administrator of the Diocese of Wellington, as Executive Secretary to coordinate, record and minute the work of the Commission.

At its first meeting the Commission considered the Terms of Reference and after consideration, agreed to ask the General Synod Standing Committee to ratify the inclusion of a further clause which is set out in (e) below.

The General Synod Standing Committee agreed to this proposal and the Terms of Reference were modified. It is noted that the Terms of Reference do not include the issue of marriage and that no amendment to the Terms of Reference were made following the passing of the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013. Nor do the Terms of Reference relate to the wide range of sexual arrangements and practices identified in the Pilling Report (refer footnote 11). The agreed Terms of Reference read:

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR
AN ANGLICAN GENERAL SYNOD COMMISSION ON
SAME GENDER BLESSINGS AND ORDINATIONS**

The General Synod Standing Committee, at its meeting in November 2011, establishes a Commission made up of a small group of eminent people with ability, credibility, and a commitment to work in prayerful collegiality, to report to General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui on:

- (a) A summary of the biblical and theological work done by our Church on the issues surrounding Christian ethics, human sexuality and the blessing and ordination of people in same sex relationships, including missiological, doctrinal, canonical, cultural and pastoral issues; and
- (b) The principles of Anglican ecclesiology and, in light of our diversity, the ecclesial possibilities for ways forward for our Three Tikanga Church; and
- (c) The implications of (a) and (b) on the place of our Three Tikanga Church as a whole within the worldwide Anglican Communion, and
- (d) What care and protection there would be for those who could be marginalised, and
- (e) The Commission should consider and report on other issues and matters that may arise from their consideration of the above.

The Commission is to report progress to the General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui in 2012 but in any event to complete its work and report to General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui by 2014.

That various bodies of this Church, through the terms of reference, be available to offer the Commission advice on specific matters or questions, including the Doctrinal Commission, the Judicial Committee, the Liturgical Commission, as well as the bench of Bishops. The Commission will be free to take such advice and any other advice that it deems appropriate and to receive submissions.

Composition of the Reference Group

The Very Rev Lynda Patterson – Christchurch Cathedral

The Rev Dr Sue Patterson – Bishopdale College, Nelson

Ms Karen Spoelstra – Auckland Diocesan Youth

The Ven Turi Hollis – Waipounamu/ Auckland

Dr Moeawa Callaghan – St John’s Theological College

The Rev Dr Frank Smith – St John’s Theological College

Composition of the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions

The Rev Dr Andrew Burgess – Dean of Bishopdale Theological College

Dr Moeawa Callaghan – St John’s Theological College

The Most Rev Dr Winston Halapua – Archbishop of Polynesia

The Rt Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley – Diocese of Waikato

The Rev Dr Eseta Mateiviti-Tulavu – St John’s Theological College

The Rt Rev Te Kito Pikaahu – Pihopa o te Tai Tokerau

The Rev Thomas Poata – Vicar, Parish of St Faith, Rotorua

The Rev Sione Uluilakepa – Principal, St Andrew’s High School, Tonga

The Rt Rev Jim White - Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Auckland

SECTION 2 | HOW THE COMMISSION WENT ABOUT THE TASK

A Name for the Task

The Commission came to an early view that the title *Anglican General Synod Commission on Same Gender Blessings and Ordinations* would be daunting for many. People were more likely to respond to a simple name which was not challenging.

The name agreed upon was Ma Whea? : Mei Fe Ki Fe? : Where to? to better describe the Commission's remit and approach of listening and describing pathways to adopt.

Time Available for the Work

It was agreed that the work of the Commission would commence officially in August 2012 with the bulk of the work to be carried out over a 12 month period with a report being called for early in 2014. Meetings would be held once every 5 to 6 weeks, where possible on a Saturday, with time set aside at each meeting to engage with submitters and the main players both within and outside the church. If necessary, conference calls and Skype and video conferencing would be considered.

Meeting Procedures

The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Chair, provided agendas for each meeting, managed the receipt and distribution of papers provided for information and submissions from across the Church. All material was available electronically but substantial documents were circulated as paper copy. It was agreed that people who met with the Commission would be asked to keep conversations *in house* so that discussion could be free and frank. This was accepted and adhered to. It was also agreed that Chatham House Rules should apply and that no comment would be attributed to any one person.

Publicity

The Church announced the appointment of the Commission through *Taonga* in June 2012 and advised that the Commission would receive submissions to be sent to the Commission via the

General Synod Office. The Dioceses and Hui Amorangi were also advised that submissions were welcome. The cut off date for receiving submissions was set at 1 June 2013. It was agreed that the Commission not interact with the media during the course of its deliberations. The Chairman made a short film clip, posted on the Anglican Church website, in which he described the work the Commission intended to do, and the way it hoped to go about that work. Later he made a second film clip describing progress.

Documents Provided as Background Material

The papers provided for background reading were categorised under seven headings, entered into a spreadsheet and a short synopsis provided. The general headings were hermeneutics hui material, Biblical/doctrinal material, international material, legal material, General Synod/ te Hīnota Whānui/Inter Diocesan Conference material, reports from *Taonga* and other papers of interest. A list of these documents is recorded in Appendix 1.

Written Submissions Received

A total of 199 submissions were received via the General Synod Office and forwarded in electronic format to the Executive Secretary who acknowledged receipt of each submission, when contact details were known, by emailing or writing a letter to the submitter. The submissions were recorded in a spreadsheet providing date, name, synopsis of material contained in the submission and whether or not further action was required. The submissions were forwarded to Commissioners either electronically or as hard copy and considered by Commissioners at meetings held over the months. The names of those who provided a submission are recorded in Appendix 2.

Date and Venue of Meetings

Saturday	9 June 2012	Wellington
Saturday	1 September 2012	Wellington
Saturday	13 October 2012	Auckland
Saturday	8 December 2012	Wellington
Saturday	2 February 2013	Auckland
Saturday	27 April 2013	Wellington
Saturday	8 June 2013	Auckland
Saturday	3 August 2013	Christchurch
Saturday	21 September 2013	Wellington
Saturday	5 October 2013	Wellington
Tuesday	5 November 2013	Wellington
Tuesday	10 December 2013	Auckland
Saturday	21 December 2013	Wellington
Saturday	15 February 2014	Wellington
Wednesday	19 February 2014	Wellington
Saturday	1 March 2014	Conference Call

Tuesday	4 March 2014	Conference Call
Friday	28 March 2014	Wellington

Format of Meetings

Commissioners undertook a considerable amount of reading prior to each meeting and every effort was made at meetings to highlight the key issues which had been raised by the submissions received to date. Most meetings involved face to face contact with submitters who asked to appear before the Commission.

SECTION 3 | SUBMISSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Commissioners were impressed with the high quality of submissions received. Considerable thought and research was evident in many. They ranged from a one page personal point of view to a many page in-depth and detailed treatise on the issues at stake. Some expressed a wish that the Church provide leadership and guidance. Others were saying *get on with it*. Others were fearful that any change in the present position would split the Church. Another concern was the inability to tap into the middle ground.

In summary, the statistics of what was received can be described as follows. There were 199 submissions from individuals and from groups of individuals. 198 people, 9 parishes, 1 Archdeaconry and 1 Diocese supported no change. There were 9 neutral submissions. 72 people, 1 parish and 2 Dioceses sought change. The names of those who made a presentation either as an individual or as part of a group are recorded in Appendix 3.

People with whom the Commission Engaged

At the outset, the Commission considered the names of individuals and groups who might be asked to speak with the Commission. There were also a number of groups and individuals who, on presenting a submission, sought an opportunity to speak with the Commission. Every effort was made to accommodate all such requests. Submitters were asked that what passed between the Commission and the submitter would stay in the room but that they, the submitters, would be free to promulgate their own views. The Commission would not respond but rather simply listen to submitters and ask any questions.

Significant meetings were also held with the bishops, the Reference Group, the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions (CDTQ) and legal advisors for Dioceses and Hui Amorangi. The Reference Group acted as a sounding board and provided helpful guidance. The outcome of the work being done by the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions (refer Appendix 5) was critical to the work of the Ma Whea? Commission. Similar comments apply to the views of the bishops and legal advisors across the tikanga. The Chairman accepted an invitation to attend the 60th General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui held in Nadi, Fiji in July 2012 and described the Commission's work to date. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to meet with all the above groups face to face.

Summary of Presentations

The submitters brought forward their ideas and insights with the Commission's encouragement. In some cases people spoke at considerable personal cost and many accounts indicated hurt and distress at the way they had been treated by the Church. Commissioners were often very moved by the listening experience and considered it a privilege to have been involved. The Commission was mindful of the New Zealand tradition, characterised by the Waitangi Tribunal processes, of talking through issues without needing to express any judgments. In the end, without diminishing the individual nature of any submission, it can be said that a spectrum of views were put forward. A remarkable similarity of experience was encountered by the Bishops' Working Group which recently published the Pilling Report¹¹ in the United Kingdom. That report conveniently expresses the matter as follows:

30.¹² It would be impossible, without a very long report, to encompass all the beliefs and opinions that were expressed by those we met through this process. As we shared our experiences of the listening process within our working group, the most significant and telling points were as follows:

- *Opposition to gay and lesbian relationships was a generational matter. It simply was not an issue for most young people.*
- *The Church of England's current teaching and practice were deeply off-putting to those outside the Church therefore a serious impediment to mission.*
- *A key issue was the different ways in which Scripture was read and the harm done to people by some ways of reading it.*
- *It could be as difficult, if not more difficult, to be a Christian in a gay or lesbian environment as to be gay and lesbian in the Church.*
- *Not all gay and lesbian Christians felt comfortable with aspects of the current gay and lesbian culture in this country.*
- *The Church needed to learn to live with diversity over sexual practice and theological understandings of sexuality.*
- *It was important for gay and lesbian Christians to receive affirmation from the Church. The lack of such affirmation was a contributory factor to the bullying and lack of self-worth experienced by many gay and lesbian people, especially teenagers.*
- *Not all gay and lesbian Christians wanted to enter into civil partnerships. Some wanted to be single and others wanted some form of recognition (preferably blessing) from the Church and not just legal recognition from the State. Many gay and lesbian Christians would opt for marriage when this became available.*
- *The Church's current discipline, with regard to ordinands and clergy, was inconsistently applied, encouraged a culture of dishonesty within the Church, and was particularly difficult for the partners of the people concerned. Some clergy in committed relationships chose not to be in civil partnerships so as not to be asked questions about their sexuality.*

- *Gay and lesbian clergy still found some difficulty in securing appointments and this compared unfavourably with the positive support for diversity among secular organizations. The Church authorities were prevented from doing more in this area because of the views of conservative groups and congregation members.*
- *The Church of England's current teaching and practice was helpful to those with same sex attraction who believed that Scripture forbade same sexual relationships because it assisted them in resisting sexual temptations. They would experience any change in a more permissive direction by the Church of England as a betrayal.*
- *The issues raised by the transgendered people we encountered were not primarily about sexuality as such, but about feelings of shame and exclusion in relation to gender.*

These viewpoints we found to be helpful as we came to deal with the expression of ways forward.

SECTION 4 | STRUCTURE OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Introduction

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia is a voluntary association of persons. All of its activities are primarily governed by the provisions of the Constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

The 5th recital of the Constitution informs of the Church's beginnings in New Zealand when Ruatara introduced Samuel Marsden to his people at Oihi in the Bay of Islands in 1814, first as te Hahi Mihinare in the medium of the language and in the context of tikanga Māori, and secondly after the arrival of George Augustus Selwyn in 1842 as a Bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland in the medium of the English language so leading to a development which found expression in tikanga Māori and tikanga Pakeha.

The 6th recital acknowledges the Treaty of Waitangi to be the basis for the future government and settlement of New Zealand with the implications of partnership between Māori and Pakeha and bicultural development within one nation.

The 7th recital acknowledges also that in 1840 the people of New Zealand were free to hold and practise their religious faith according to their own customs.

The 8th recital records that in 1857 there was a General Conference when bishops, clergy and laity agreed to a Constitution for the purpose of associating together by voluntary compact for ordering of the affairs, the management of the property, the promotion of the discipline of the members and the inculcation and maintenance of sound Doctrine and true Religion to the Glory of Almighty God and the edification and increase of the Church of Christ.

The 9th recital confirms that from that first General Conference a representative governing body called the General Synod should be selected from within the heritage and custom of the participants in the 1857 General Conference. The General Synod should be the manager of all church affairs.

The 12th and 13th recitals refer to the principles of partnership and bicultural development. In the General Conference in November 1990 Te Runanganui o Te Pihopatanga and the General

Synod covenanted with each other and agreed to certain amendments and revisions of the Constitution to implement and entrench the principles of partnership between Māori and Pakeha and bicultural development and to incorporate and extend the principal provisions of the Church of England Empowering Act 1928. In the 1992 General Synod, the Diocese of Polynesia was acknowledged to be a partner in the Church. Thus the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia is made up of te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa, Dioceses in New Zealand, and the Diocese of Polynesia.

The Constitution

The Constitution is divided into several parts:

- A The Fundamental Provisions;
- B Further Provisions and in particular of the Formularies;
- C Provisions which are not fundamental;
- D Of Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa;
- E Of Dioceses in New Zealand;
- F Of the Diocese of Polynesia;
- G General

Part A - Fundamental Provisions of the Constitution

Significantly, the preamble to this part states that nothing expressed or implied in any other part of the Constitution shall detract from or diminish the full force and effect of the provisions of Clauses 1, 5, and 6 of the Constitution which provide as follows:

- 1 This Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland in New Zealand doth hold and maintain the Doctrine and Sacramental of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in His Holy Word, and as the United Church of England and Ireland hath received and explained the same in the *Book of Common Prayer*; in the *Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, and in the *39 Articles of Religion*. And the General Synod hereinafter constituted for the government of this Branch of the said Church shall also hold and maintain the said Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ, and shall have no power to make any alteration in the authorized version of the Holy Scriptures, or in the above-named Formularies of the Church.

- 5 There shall be a Representative Governing Body for the management of the affairs of the Church to be called the General Synod of the Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland, in the Colony of New Zealand, which shall consist of the three distinct Orders, viz the *Bishops, Clergy and the Laity*, the consent of all of which Orders shall be necessary to all acts binding upon the Synod and upon all persons recognizing its authority.
- 6 The above provisions shall be deemed fundamental, and it shall not be within the power of the General Synod, or of the Diocesan Synod, to alter, revoke, add to, or diminish any of the same.

Part B – Further Provisions

Subject to the provisions of the Church of England Empowering Act 1928 and to the Fundamental Provisions the Church holds and maintains the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as the Lord has commanded in Holy Scriptures and as explained in:

The Formularies of the Church which are:

- *The Book of Common Prayer* which contains the liturgies for different ceremonies including of marriage and of ordinations;
- *The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons*; and
- *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*

According to the Fundamental Provisions 1 above the substance of the Formularies cannot be altered or changed in any way.

Church of England Empowering Act 1928

Section 3 of the Act provides:

Power to alter Formularies for use in any part of the Province

It shall be lawful for the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Church, in General Synod assembled, from time to time in such way and to such extent as may to them seem expedient, but subject to the provisions in this Act contained, to alter, add to, or diminish the Formularies, or any one or more of them, or any part or parts thereof, or to frame or to adopt for use in the Church or in any part of the Province or in any Associated Missionary Diocese new Formularies in lieu thereof or as alternative thereto or of or to any part or parts thereof and to order or permit the use in public worship of a version or versions other than the Authorised Version of the Bible or of any part or parts thereof: provided that the provisions of this section shall not empower or be deemed to empower the General Synod to depart from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ as defined in clause one of the Constitution.

The Fundamental Provisions make it clear that this power cannot be used by General Synod to depart from the Doctrine and Sacraments of Christ. However, various interpretations of the Fundamental Provisions have been taken into account in devising the pathways or options as to the way forward.

The Code of Canons

The Code consists of a systematic and universal set of laws by which the Church operates. It is divided into Titles A to G and each title is subdivided into Canons. The most significant for the purposes of the Commission’s work are Titles A, C and D.

Title A has two Canons the first of which refers to the appointment of bishops generally and the second concerns the licensing of pastors. Significantly clause 5.6.9 of Canon I and clause

3 of Canon II of Title A require each person to be ordained or licensed to make a declaration affirming allegiance to the above stated Fundamental Provisions. The declaration in terms of clause 5.6.9 is:

**THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND and POLYNESIA
DECLARATION (as required in terms of Clause 5.6.9)**

I,.....

Being about to be ordained to the holy order of bishop
And/or instituted to the office of

DO SOLEMNLY MAKE THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION:

I believe in the faith, which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Catholic Creeds, as this Church has received and explained it in its Formularies and its authorised worship.

I assent to the Constitution/te Pouhere of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

I affirm my allegiance to the doctrine to which clause 1 of the Fundamental Provisions, and clauses 1 and 2 of the Part B bear witness.

In public prayer and administration of the sacraments I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by lawful authority.

I will uphold the covenant and partnership expressed in the Constitution/te Pouhere between te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa as a whole and through its constituent parts and the Dioceses in New Zealand together and severally and through their constituent parts and with the Diocese of Polynesia as a whole and through its constituent parts.

I will be obedient to the ecclesiastical laws and regulations applicable to the above described office.

The foregoing declaration was made and subscribed by the above named

On the day of in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and

Signed:

In the presence of:

Title C is entitled *OF LEGISLATION* and is divided into 5 Canons.

Canon I concerns the steps to be taken on alterations to the non-fundamental clauses of the Constitution.

Canon II concerns *Standing Orders and Resolutions*

Canon III concerns the steps of *Enactment, Amendment and Repeal of Canons*.

Canon IV concerns the establishment by General Synod of the *Judicial Committee* to deal

with any doubt which shall arise in the interpretation of the Constitution, any Canon or Statute already passed or to be passed by the General Synod; to act as an appellate tribunal other than itself on any issues raised by any member across the three tikanga of the Church.

Canon V concerns the establishment of *a Tribunal on Doctrine*. The prime purpose of this tribunal is to address all questions of doctrine referred to it under Part C of the Constitution which is to do with *Non-Fundamental Provisions*.

Title D is entitled *OF STANDARDS* and it is divided into 5 Canons.

Part A of Canon I is concerned with the *Obligations of Office*. It prescribes the standards to be maintained by bishops and ministers. In short clauses 1 and 2 of this Canon expect all bishops and ministers to lead an *exemplary way of life* including public and private sides of life.

Clause 10 expects all ministers to be chaste.

Clause 10.4 states that chastity is the right ordering of sexual relationships. The Formularies recognise only a heterosexual marriage as the right ordering of sexual relationships.

Clause 10.4.1 states that Ministers are to be chaste.

The definition of *chastity* and the interpretation of that definition goes to the heart of the issue before us.

Part C2 of Canon I is entitled *OF MISCONDUCT* and it sets out a list of acts or omissions that can be subject to disciplinary proceedings which include:

Convictions in a Court of Law or any act which is a crime punishable by imprisonment...

3.1.2 Any act of adultery;

3.1.3 Any act or habit of corruption or immorality;

3.1.4 Any act or habit of sexual or other harassment or disregard for responsible personal relations;

3.1.5 Misuse of drugs, alcohol or other substances;

3.1.6 Any culpable disregard of the obligations recognized by law in reference to family relationships

3.1.7 Any breach of standards and any breach of ethical standards of the tikanga of the Episcopal Unit in which they minister.

In the event that there is a complaint against a minister including a bishop or office holder, the procedure is set out in this Title D.

SECTION 5 | BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT— THE THREE TIKANGA CHURCH

Many very helpful papers, which argue for a range of points of view, were presented at the four Hermeneutical Hui which centred on biblical interpretation. These papers remain available to the Church and we warmly commend them for on-going study.

In this section we seek briefly to highlight the variety of opinions in the Anglican Church community. Underneath this diversity of opinions on the matter before us is considerable diversity about other matters:

What is the authority of Scripture? And how does Scripture relate to tradition and to reason, the latter being understood to include experience? In thinking about the questions before us, do we start with Scripture or with lived experience? And is Scripture God’s written Word to humankind, or something different such as a collection of ancient human thoughts about God? To what extent should the Church change its positions over time in relation to different views in society, different understanding of science and so on? (refer Reference Group Appendix 4)

Tikanga Māori Approach

The summary view of the Tikanga Māori of the Church from voices heard and papers presented to the Ma Whea? Commission is one of acceptance that the ordination of *takataapui*¹³ is consistent with the kaupapa that are embedded in our tikanga.¹⁴ One scholarly voice clearly demonstrates the deeply Māori understanding of the spiritual and physical reality of life¹⁵. This view reflects the importance of the two Commandments to love God and love one’s neighbour and that the term *neighbour* includes everyone.

The Tikanga Māori 2007 Komihana (Commission) that issued the Statement on Ordination observed that the *exploration of biblical texts will continue. It will inevitably come to the*

common ground of agreement that the approach and interpretation of scriptural passages that scholars arrive at, differs greatly..... In scripture there are many examples of people, both male and female who were called to God's service. It is God who calls. It is a gift of God.

Referring to the importance of the Listening Process, the 2007 Commission affirmed that *takataapui* can exercise all forms of ordained ministry. The report notes that the views expressed are those of the members of that 2007 Commission, but there has been no change in this position since the 2007 report and Statement.

Tikanga Pasefika Approach

Tikanga Pasefika is made up of parochial units in Fiji, American Samoa, Tonga and Samoa. The general law in these respective countries on the question of same sex practice differs. Fiji decriminalised same sex practice in February 2010 so sodomy is no longer a crime in that country. American Samoa, a territory of the United States of America, had as long ago as 1889 legalised same sex practice. However, section 136 of the Criminal Offences Act of Tonga as revised in 1988 still lists sodomy as a criminal offence punishable by a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment as does the Crimes Act 2013 of Samoa by virtue of section 67. The offence of sodomy in Samoa carries a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment. This therefore places prospective candidates for ordination and same sex couples seeking to be blessed openly in the Church in jeopardy of criminal prosecution in the latter two countries. Additionally, taking into account the relevant provisions of Title D of the Church Constitution double jeopardy arises in both Tonga and Samoa for any member of tikanga Pasefika who is in a committed same sex relationship and who wishes to apply for ordination or to be blessed.

However, in order to engage in God's mission in the 21st century, tikanga Pasefika is committed to and energized by the common theme *In Christ We Move Together*. The theological response places God's immense deep love beyond all human construction and theologising. Integral to the way of life of the tikanga is *talanoa* (conversation). *Talanoa* requires sharing and deep listening and it is a sacred task. *Talanoa* means openness to the stories of others and the willingness to share with respect. In this context, the tikanga identifies the heart of the triune God in relation to the issue of same sex relationships. It is here that Pasefika's response is to be located.

Despite the differences in the respective criminal law as stated above, there is further diversity in the voices of Pasefika which began with the traditional teaching on sexuality by the missionaries. This teaching has shaped attitudes to expressions of sexuality. Currently five out of seven units in these four nations are against the blessing of same sex unions and ordination but two are still in *talanoa*. It is recognised that there is room for further exploration and dialogue and that *talanoa* in this regard needs to continue.

Tikanga Pakeha Approach

This can be summarised through two views.

The view that argues that the Church should change its position and bless and ordain those in same gender relationships

Some holding this view argue that Scripture does not address our issue, since, it is suggested, Biblical writers did not envisage faithful, committed, life-long, same gender relationships, and so the Scriptural injunctions are not relevant.

Others argue that Scripture regards homosexuality as sin, but go on to argue that experience must enter into dialogue with Scripture. It is then noted that people in same gender relationships experience God's grace and demonstrate that grace in their lives, receive gifts of the Spirit including gifts for ministry, and experience what they understand to be a call to ministry. This leads to a hermeneutical approach that seeks to re-interpret Scripture, or to read Scripture in such a way that permits the validation of homosexual practice, or to consciously go beyond Scripture. This then leads to various ways of reading Scriptural texts.

At this point, some argue that there are analogies between adopting this overall view regarding blessing and ordaining those in same gender relationships and the way the early church argued for the inclusion of Gentiles, or the way the Church now reads what the Scriptures say about slavery, divorce, or the ordination of women. These are subjects on which the Church has altered its practice through a re-reading of Scripture in the light of changed situations in society or changed understandings, or in the light of a fresh hearing of the Gospel.

This view may also note that many people in same gender relationships do not consider their sexuality as something that they have chosen. Many people in same gender relationships do not experience homosexuality as a chosen lifestyle but rather as part of who they are, as a fundamental expression of their identity, and a part of how God has created them. They go on to affirm their homosexuality as part of God's good creation. This also leads them to reinterpret Scripture.

Others holding this position would give fundamental priority to principles of justice, mercy or equality. Hence, this leads to the view that the Church should not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation or sexual practice.

This view may also seek to give significant weight to scientific evidence, and to changing societal attitudes.

The view that argues that the Church should retain its current position, or should state clearly that it does not bless or ordain those in same gender relationships

This view starts from Scripture and sees Scripture as uniformly testifying that any form of homosexual practice is sinful. It also notes that there are no specific texts that speak in favour of homosexual practice. Accordingly, homosexual acts, even in the context of a committed monogamous relationship, are regarded as sinful.

This view also argues that Jesus affirmed that marriage is between a man and a woman, and that in doing so Jesus invokes the order of creation, as outlined in Genesis 2. Within this view, some also point out that the argument from analogy (the Church changed its mind on slavery, divorce and the ordination of women) is not compelling because in each of these cases, some Scriptural texts can be taken to argue for and others against the particular issue and so Scripture does not speak with a united voice. On this issue, by contrast, Scriptural texts only argue against homosexual practice and the Scriptural witness clearly contends that a covenanted marriage relationship can only be between a man and a woman.

Some argue differently with respect to the argument from analogy. They note, for example, that within Scripture we find the seeds that lead to the abolition of slavery, for in Scripture all humans are regarded as brothers and sisters in Christ. In addition, an important argument within this view, often related to the ordination of women, is the argument that approving same gender partnerships is a *first order* issue because same gender sexual acts (understood to be sinful), are related to salvation (according to 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) whereas women in leadership is a *second order* issue, because in Scripture it is nowhere related to the issue of salvation.

This view goes on to argue that to accept homosexual practice would be to go against the uniform witness of Scripture and so to undermine Scripture's authority in all matters of faith and life. It is also noted that not blessing or ordaining those in same gender relationships has been the historic, official position of the church catholic. This view also considers experience to be a subsidiary guide only, often ambiguous and easily subject to manipulation and of insufficient authority to over-ride what is regarded as the clear witness of Scripture.

Some holding this position would also note that humanity is created in the image of God as male and female. The diversity and complementarity between male and female imaging the diversity and complementarity within the Trinity, with marriage - the *one flesh* unity of male and female - images the unity of the Trinity. Same gender relationships do not express this diversity-in-unity and so, it is argued, this is a key reason why they are not accepted within Scripture.

It is also argued that for the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia to change its view on this matter would have considerable ramifications with regard to its relationships throughout the Anglican Communion, especially in many mission situations around the world. Other ecumenical relationships could also be adversely affected.

Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions

After the fourth Hermeneutics Hui, held in February 2013, the General Synod Standing Committee convened the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions (CDTQ) with the following Terms of Reference:

- 1 That this General Synod Standing Committee receives the biblical and theological work of all the Hermeneutics Hui;
- 2 That this General Synod Standing Committee notes a recommendation at the conclusion of the fourth and final Hui, encouraging the Church to make enquiry into the theological rationale for a Christian approach to the blessing and marriage of people in permanent, faithful same gender relationships, with a view to assessing such rationale in this Church;

- 3 That this General Synod Standing Committee asks the General Secretary to convene the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions under Canon B XVII, for the purpose of exploring the theological rationale above given the implications thereof on the ordination of people in same gender relationships; and
- 4 That the Doctrine Commission seeks the discernment of members of this Church in response to its work and reports such work and its responses to the GSSC and the Ma Whea? Commission by the end of 2013.

The Ma Whea? Commission met with the Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions in December 2013, when the latter group was nearing the conclusion of its discussions. It is clear that the CDTQ's work is integrally related to that of the Ma Whea? Commission. However the Terms of Reference for the CDTQ extend to *the blessing and marriage of people in permanent, faithful same gender relationships* while the Ma Whea? Commission's Terms of Reference do not. The *ecclesial possibilities for ways forward* expressed at the conclusion of this Ma Whea? report do not therefore include the consideration of the doctrine of marriage.

SECTION 6 |

SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENTS

*The academic conversation about scripture and homosexuality is more than 50 years old if we date it, as is usually done, from the publication of Derrick Sherwin Bailey's *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* in 1955.¹⁶ The ecclesiastical conversation among Anglicans ... is younger; but not by much, for the British Wolfenden Report of 1957 made the topic one that the Church of England could not altogether avoid. The two conversations, academic and ecclesiastical, are entangled with each other.*

So observes L William Countryman in his foreword to *Five Uneasy Pieces: Essays on Scripture and Sexuality*.¹⁷ The conversations he refers to, academic and ecclesiastical, have continued for over half a century against a background of significant development and change in society and the secular world. In this section we provide a brief summary of these developments and changes which provide important background to the issues before us.

- 1533** The English parliament passed the Buggery Act, making the act punishable by hanging. This was extended in 1885 to include any sexual activity between males.
- 1861** The death penalty was abolished in England but the illegality remained.
- 1948** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Subsequent international human rights covenants recognise that the rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person.
- 1957** The Wolfenden Report recommended that homosexual acts between consenting adults in private be no longer a criminal offence. In his support of the report, the Archbishop of Canterbury said... there is a sacred realm of privacy into which the law generally speaking, must not intrude. This is a principle of the utmost importance for the preservation of human freedom, self- respect and responsibility.
- 1961** The death penalty for illegal homosexual activity [part of the law of England inherited in New Zealand] was abolished in New Zealand.

- 1967** Homosexual acts between consenting males were legalised in Great Britain.
- 1973** American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder.
- 1986** Homosexual acts between consenting males were legalised in New Zealand by the Homosexual Law Reform Act. Over a period of the 16 months debate, opinion in the country was polarised.
- 1990** World Health Organisation declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder.
- 1993** Human Rights Act (NZ) makes discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful in New Zealand (with an exception for the purposes of organised religion in s39).
- 2004** Civil Union Act (NZ) provides for two people, whether of the same or different genders, to enter into a civil union.
- 2013** Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Act (NZ) came into force on 19 August 2013 and clarifies that for the purpose of New Zealand secular law, a marriage is between two people regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The amendment did not change the doctrine of any church regarding marriage as conceived by that church.

Over the last 60 years, while the academic and ecclesiastical conversations have continued, the laws and attitudes of society and the secular world have developed and changed in recognition and reflection of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. The Preface to The Proposed Book of Common Prayer (1928) states: *We are living in a new world; it is ours, if we are true to the faith that is in us, to seek to make it a better world.* As is demonstrated by the above brief history the new world contemplated in 1928 has developed apace in the following 86 years.

SECTION 7 | OTHER CHURCH DEVELOPMENTS IN NEW ZEALAND

The Commission requested information from the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches within New Zealand relating to this matter. The Commission’s understanding is that these are the churches to have debated the issue over a lengthy period of time.

The Methodist Church of New Zealand

The Conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand debated this issue a number of times from the 1980s. In 1997, the Conference agreed by a majority vote to accept into Full Connexion a minister who was in a same gender relationship. In 2003, the Conference agreed to a *Memorandum of Understanding*; under its terms, *those with markedly different beliefs* on the issue of ordaining those in same gender relationships *were able to remain in relationship with each other within the church*. The Memorandum acknowledged *the diversity of the church [and] the integrity of differing beliefs*. It stated that *The purpose of this Memorandum is to put in place protocols that respect the integrity of those who oppose the ordination of gay and lesbian people and at the same time to enable the church to move forward on this issue*¹⁸.

However, a number of ministers, congregations and individuals left the Methodist Church over this issue during the years in which it was debated. Most notably, the Wesleyan Methodist Movement was formed in 1997 and this became the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand in 2000, and several other congregations were established by people who had formerly been Methodists.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand also debated this issue for a number of years, beginning in 1985. In 2004, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church agreed to exclude from offices such as minister and elder anyone in a sexual relationship outside marriage. The ruling did not apply to homosexual persons who had been licensed, ordained or inducted prior

to 2004. The ruling reads:

...this church may not accept for training, license, ordain, or induct anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage between a man and a woman. In relation to homosexuality, in the interests of natural justice, this ruling shall not prejudice anyone who, as at the date of this meeting [that is, General Assembly 2004], has been accepted for training, licensed, ordained or inducted.¹⁹

General Assembly 2004 voted to adopt this ruling *ad interim*, meaning that it applied immediately but was also sent to Presbyteries to vote on before final approval at General Assembly, 2006. The General Assembly in 2006 confirmed the decision made in 2004, which meant it then became a binding rule.

The matter has been discussed at several General Assemblies since 2006, but the 2004 ruling remains in place.

SECTION 8 | INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The matter of homosexuality and its acceptance has been a question of debate within the Anglican Communion in various countries for a number of years. In many jurisdictions within the Anglican Communion, same sex activity remains a criminal offence.

In England the matter has been advanced either by the bishops meeting in circumstances styled the Lambeth Conferences or in specific studies completed and reported upon, such as the Windsor Report.

As examples of this, the 1978 Lambeth Conference discussed the question and affirmed chastity and requested a study of homosexuality. The 1988 Lambeth Conference re-affirmed what had been said ten years before but requested a study of biological, genetic and psychological issues.

In 1998 a report was produced on the matter of recognising same-sex relationships but after debate, the bishops endorsed the traditional Christian position.

Pressure has been applied in a number of Anglican communities in favour of recognition of homosexual people as proper candidates in their own right for blessing and ordination. This pressure for a change has been particularly applied in the United States but also in Canada.

What can be described as the English approach of supporting prayerful discussion and advancement is to be contrasted with a more active response in parts of the New World.

In Canada, the Diocese of New Westminster authorised a rite for blessing of same sex unions at its 2002 Diocesan Synod.

Matters came to a head in November 2003 when the Episcopal Church in New Hampshire in the United States consecrated Bishop Gene Robinson who was in a homosexual relationship and had made that plain.

This caused the Primates of the Anglican Church to meet at Lambeth Palace and to discuss the ramification of this for the entire Anglican Communion. They made it clear that the actions in Canada and the United States *did not express the mind of the Communion as a whole* and that the decisions *jeopardised sacramental fellowship...*

This led to the formation of a Commission to work and report back in 12 months. This work became the Windsor Report of October 2004 which studied the matter of unity in the Anglican Church in the light of what had taken place in Canada and the United States. The Windsor Report did not specifically adopt a view on homosexual practice but recommended a moratorium on further consecrations of bishops in same sex relationships. Part of the Windsor Report proposed an Anglican Communion Covenant, the stated purpose of which was to commit Anglican Church authorities in many parts of the world to ratify a way of working and to commit to consulting other parts of the wider communion when making major decisions.

This Covenant has not been accepted everywhere, including in New Zealand, because of a lack of agreement about a clause in the Covenant enabling dismissal from the Anglican Communion, if agreement with a majority view is not forthcoming. The view taken in the New Zealand church is that whereas conversations to try and achieve agreement might be mandatory, any further sanction is thought to be too draconian.

While we have been discussing international Anglican developments in this section, we also note that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has voted to affirm a traditional position on sexuality but congregations are able to appoint ministers in civil partnerships provided an appropriate period of consultation was held. There are a number of procedural steps remaining to be considered (including that of ordaining new ministers) before any final approval by the General Assembly comes into play. The matter will next be considered in 2015.

In New Zealand there has been ongoing discussion within the Anglican Church itself with remits being raised at periodic synods in favour of holding that sexual orientation ought not be an impediment to blessing and ordination of gay members of the church. Matters stand adjourned pending the discussion of these issues at the General Synod in 2014 when the report of the Ma Whea? Commission will have been made available.

Thus in the Anglican Church internationally, there have been initiatives both towards the creation of groups with an avowedly traditional approach and for those in favour of a more liberal approach.

To date however, any outright schism has been avoided.

SECTION 9 |

HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS

Human Rights Act 1993

This Act consolidates and amends the Race Relations Act 1971 and the Human Rights Commission Act 1977 to provide better protection of human rights in New Zealand in general accordance with the United Nations Covenants or Convention on Human Rights. Its provisions attach to acts and omissions which are inconsistent with the right to freedom from discrimination affirmed by section 19 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. There are certain exceptions relevant to the matter in issue.

Scheme of the Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act makes unlawful discrimination on 13 prohibited grounds which include the following:

- (a) sex
- (b) marital status
- (c) religious belief
- (d) ethical belief which means the *lack of a religious belief, whether in respect of a particular religion or religions or all religions*
- (e) sexual orientation which means *a heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation*

The anti-discrimination prohibitions only apply in certain areas and outside of these areas, the prohibitions have no application. The specified areas relevantly include:

- (a) employment which includes applying for a job as an *independent contractor* or an *unpaid worker*;
- (b) the conferral of qualifications or authorisations relevant to carrying on an occupation;

Generally speaking, it is unlawful for a person seeking employment or entry to a calling to be treated differently by reason of any of the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Discrimination and Exceptions

Section 22 of the Act provides that it is unlawful for an employer to refuse or omit to employ an applicant based on one of the prohibited grounds as stated above. There are a number of exceptions to the general rule. It is debatable that clergy are *employed* for the purposes of the Act. But if they fall within the provisions of the Act, section 28 provides that nothing in section 22 shall prevent different treatment based on sex *so as to comply with the doctrines or rules or established customs of the religion*.

However, in the Anglican Church, as in most churches, conferral of a formal qualification and authorisation is a pre-requisite for entry to the Ministry. Section 38 makes it unlawful to discriminate on any of the prohibited grounds in conferring any approval, authorisation or qualification. Section 39 provides an exception: nothing in section 38 shall apply where the authorisation or qualification is needed for or facilitates engagement in a profession or calling for the purposes of an organised religion and is limited *so as to comply with the doctrines or rules or established customs of that religion*.

There are several questions of fact which will require answering in each case before looking at the exceptions to determine the ultimate question of whether or not the protections offered by the Act can be invoked. For example, is the refusal of candidates for ordination because of their sexual orientation or sexual practice?-

It may be concluded that:

- 1 The Human Rights Act 1993 allows churches to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation with respect to the engagement of homosexual and lesbian clergy; and
- 2 Provided the Church's disapproval of homosexuality can be properly described as a matter of religious belief, such discrimination is within the exception in section 39 of the Act.

A recent case under the Act before the Human Rights Review Tribunal was *The Gay and Lesbian Clergy Anti-Discrimination Society Inc. v The Bishop of Auckland*.²⁰

At the centre of this case was the meaning of the word *chaste*. Chastity is defined by the Canons of the Church as *the right-ordering of sexual relationships*. Such relationships can only occur within a Christian marriage which is defined by the Formularies as a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman. Thus a person seeking to enter the ordained ministry of the Anglican Church must either be single and celibate or in a heterosexual marriage. Being homosexual or lesbian is not itself a bar to ordination. But any candidate not in a marriage between a man and a woman must be celibate.

The facts of this case involved an application to the Bishop of Auckland to participate in the process of discernment (the process of selection of those who will be trained for ministry). The applicant was in an unmarried relationship and a homosexual. His application to the Bishop was declined because of those facts. The applicant then applied to the Human Rights Commission for relief claiming that he suffered both direct and indirect discrimination.

The primary issue for determination by the Tribunal was whether the exception in section 39 of the

Act applied. The fact that the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 clarified for the purpose of New Zealand secular law that marriage is between two people regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity was not relevant to the determination of the issue. However, the Tribunal was concerned to hear evidence from the Church as to the *doctrines or rules or established customs* of the Anglican Church to make this determination. Archbishop Richardson gave comprehensive evidence as to the Constitution of the Church and as to the *doctrines or rules or established customs*.

The evidence stressed the meaning of Christian marriage in the Formularies to be 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. There is an obligation by bishops and ministers to lead *an exemplary way of life* hence ministers are expected to be *chaste*. On this topic the Archbishop stated:

Gays and lesbians can be ordained into the Anglican priesthood provided they elect to be celibate. If any such candidate is in a long term committed relationship he or she would not be chaste. Neither would a heterosexual candidate living in a de facto relationship.

The evidence further acknowledged that some bishops have made discernment and ordination decisions inconsistent with the doctrines of the Anglican Church. However, these decisions did nothing more than state that they are inconsistent with the doctrines.

On the evidence of Archbishop Richardson, the Tribunal found that the doctrines or rules or established customs of the Anglican Church permit entry into the ministry of only those who are celibate or in a Christian marriage as defined in the Formularies of the Church. Ordained ministers are also required to be *chaste*. There was no element of unlawfulness when the Bishop of Auckland declined the application to enter the discernment process because section 39 (1) applied on the facts.

In its concluding remarks dismissing the application, the Tribunal stressed that it is not the function of the Tribunal to serve as a forum for exploration of the theological understanding of the nature of committed lifelong, monogamous same sex relationships. Only the Anglican Church is competent to determine that issue through its institutions of governance and in accordance with its Constitution.

SECTION 10 | SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

Is homosexuality innate or learned ?

Is homosexuality a biologically fixed condition or changeable ?

Is homosexuality open to change ?

Our investigations reveal that the answers to these questions are inconclusive. While science has provided a variety of possible explanations for homosexuality, the evidence is far from determinative. Environmental factors including cultural norms, relationships with both parents, emotional upbringing and personality characteristics, are important, and potential contributors.

Few submissions we received addressed this aspect with any specificity but there is an abundance of relevant published material.²¹ The explanation, at least in part, is possibly the absence of conclusiveness in the scientific research and investigation.

Dr N E Whitehead made a submission as part of the submission by AFFIRM, a group opposed to any change in the position of the church on the blessing and ordination of persons in same sex relationships. Dr Whitehead is a biochemist who has published widely on homosexuality and related subjects.²² Drawing on studies of identical twins, he maintains the predominant cause of human sexuality (at least 63% for adults and 100% for adolescents) is non-shared environment, not prenatal causes. He claims that because twin studies *reflect all possible causes* the result will not change. He contends on the basis of evidence from surveys that sexual orientation is fluid, not fixed, and in adolescence is *notoriously changeable*.

At the other end of the spectrum the Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG, in his introduction to *Five Uneasy Pieces*,²³ refers to *inconvenient truths* and *the human disinclination, in the face of new knowledge, to adjust to the necessities of new-thinking*. He refers to the revelations of Alfred Kinsey²⁴ from which, he says, it appeared that the sexual inclinations of minorities (mostly homosexuals and bisexuals), were *the very expression of their nature*, and that later research suggested that in some (perhaps many) cases they *were actually the product of genetic hard-wiring*.

The Commission found it difficult to access dispassionate, neutral, objective scientific investigation and research. Much of the research and analysis is directed or interpreted to support a particular belief or view, so its value is limited. However we found helpful, as best meeting these criteria, Part 4 of *The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality* edited by Philip Groves.²⁵ Part 4 addresses *The Witness of Science* and comprises contributions by the Rev Dr David de Pomerai, a biologist and Professor Glynn Harrison, a psychiatrist, both holding University professorships.

Dr de Pomerai addresses *Biological Mechanisms in Homosexuality*. He concludes:²⁶

Biology is complex; therein lies its perennial fascination. If nothing else, this should teach us to beware of simplistic explanations and over-generalisations... In relation to homosexuality, all the evidence cited earlier points to a multiplicity of redundant and often overlapping mechanisms. Homosexuals are not a single category of people who can be pigeonholed for convenience – they are as varied and complex as the sexual majority... As for causation, some may perhaps choose homosexuality, but for some it is most likely innate. Finally, homosexual inclinations (SSA²⁷), whether repressed or overt can change over time for some individuals, but not for all.

There is clearly a great deal that we do not yet know about the biology of homosexuality.... Only a complex and highly variable mixture of underlying mechanisms – some biological, as well as some psychosocial - seems adequate to explain the reality of homosexuality in human society, and no single mechanism can claim to hold the key to homosexuality. This is the biological reality with which theologians must grapple.

Professor Harrison asks whether it is possible for people with unwanted same-sex attraction to experience significant changes in their sexual feelings and desires. He concludes:²⁸ ... *there is evidence that some individuals can achieve significant changes in patterns of unwanted SSA.* He notes the risk of harm from inappropriate interventions and the potential significance of *religious beliefs and values in human mental life*. These, he says, are ... *theological and ethical issues for which science and psychology have no privileged insights.*

It seems clear that the available scientific evidence does not provide conclusive answers as to the causes of or reasons for homosexuality. But even if it did, definitively - nature (genetics) rather than nurture (psychosocial); or nurture rather than nature – what would be the impact on the considerations and deliberations on the issue before us? Science cannot have the determinative word on an issue which must engage the spiritual, theological and intellectual concerns and positions of the Anglican Communion. Scientific knowledge and understanding is only one aspect of this complex and important issue.

SECTION 11 | CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS

The Commission now comes to express the conclusions of its work and to describe what the Terms of Reference call *the ecclesial possibilities for ways forward for our Three Tikanga Church*. We present ten options.

Option A Affirming Traditional Understanding

Traditional understanding involves a man and a woman being the fundamental and orthodox participants in any sexual relationship. Celibacy and chastity, to the extent they are relevant, are envisaged in the context of men and women being the participants. In other words, any arrangements involving sexual matters without men and women, are considered unorthodox and not permissible in terms of Bible tradition or church practice. If this option were to be adopted no changes would be called for in the expression of the Canons or in the definition of what is to be regarded as *chaste*.

This option would require a General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui motion, or legislation, designed to clarify the current debate and to opt for a traditional interpretation. This would have the effect of disenfranchising people who identify as homosexual and lesbian in the Anglican community, and possibly others who support their inclusion in the Anglican community. It would be a necessary consequence that there would be no protection from being marginalised available for those of either a gay orientation or for those believing that gay people ought to be catered for. As a final note it would be necessary for the Church to consider the status of those priests known to be in same sex relationships.

Option B Preserving Present Circumstances

At present there is the well known framework of the Church's Constitution, Formularies and Canons which have lent themselves to interpretations which differ. In the course of our discussions with church groups we learned that some Bishops and legal advisors believe that the status quo leaves room for same gender blessings whilst others do not share that view. If things were to be left as they are, the debates would continue and there would arise cases being brought for hearing and determination before Judicial Committees or other Tribunals. There is also the

possibility that cases would be brought before the regular courts. On the plus side it could be argued that debate and occasional recourse to litigation has always been part of the Anglican Church in operation. People are able to engage with traditional understanding and feel as much part of the Anglican Communion as those people who are gay and feel that the Anglican Church is as much for them as for anyone else. On the negative side, uncertainty about whether people can be blessed is problematic. Many are dismayed by the lack of clarity in the present processes and that statements made affecting gay people pay lip service to their inclusion in the Anglican community but not much more than that.

Option C Bishops to Determine What Equals *Right Relationships*

At present the meaning of chastity and being involved in a rightly ordered relationship is a matter of general interpretation and of course gives rise to differences of views and debate. That could be overcome if individual bishops were given the responsibility of determining what constitutes a right relationship. The bishop would have the ability to remove uncertainty. Possibly more than one Bishop could be required to approve any one right relationship. In other words General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui would confer authority to a bishop or bishops to make these decisions. General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui would need to be satisfied that it has the power and authority to make such delegation.

Clarity would result from this approach. The bishop(s) would also have the protection of the church in making decisions that had been promulgated by the General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui. Church communities would however have to face the possibility that a bishop or bishops might sanction the availability of blessings for those in same sex relationships. Under this option there would be room for people in same gender relationships to advance their cause and to feel acknowledged by the church if a bishop(s) ruled in their favour. There would be downsides in the event of different interpretations being applied by different bishops.

Option D Delegate to Diocesan Synods/Te Runanganui Power to Determine *Right Relationships*

Whereas Option C provides for bishops to have the power to determine a right relationship, another approach is to give this power to various Diocesan Synods/Te Runanganui. For example, in Vancouver, Canada, the New Westminster Diocese authorised a rite for the blessing of same sex unions. The authority of the Diocesan Synod decision would determine whether people in same sex relationships would be given the opportunity to have blessings. General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui would need to be satisfied that it has the power and authority to make such delegation.

There would be inconsistencies if different Synods made different decisions. However bishops could deal with individual cases, one by one, in the knowledge that the Synod had given the necessary sanction. A downside would be that people in same sex relationships would be forced to argue their case for achieving blessing. Another downside would be that in the event of a Diocesan Synods/Te Runanganui not agreeing, people in same sex relationships would continue to be marginalised in that Diocese.

Option E Adopt a New Understanding

The new understanding would stand behind the idea that God’s love extends to people of all kinds whether they are heterosexual or engaged in a same sex relationship. This understanding would not present any bar to those seeking blessing who were engaged in a same sex relationship. A rightly ordered relationship could include those in a same sex relationship. The church community would provide for all of its members, as a matter of justice and equity and human dignity, the same access to all of its rituals. Under this option those possibly experiencing disenfranchisement would be Anglicans wishing to adhere to a traditional interpretation of the Bible.

Option F The Anglican Church Having Two Views

The Ma Whea? study has established that in New Zealand, as well as overseas, there are sincere and dedicated Anglicans whose views fall on either side of the line in this issue regarding those in same sex relationships. We have heard many views expressed from people on both sides who can be regarded as being faithful to an internal, consistent biblically based approach to relationships. As a matter of history the Anglican Church has long embraced people with different views. If both views were to receive approval the church could continue with some Bishops in favour of providing blessing to those in same sex relationships and others not. The advantages would be that gay people could always seek out and connect with a Bishop and setting where they felt safe and welcome. People of a different view would either need to come to terms with this or possibly become disenfranchised.

This option could perhaps lead to the development of a new structure, such as an additional Tikanga, to ensure that the two views could be accommodated within recognised structures.

Option G Dual Episcopacy

Previous pathways expressed have envisaged bishops exerting powers and in the alternative, Diocesan Synods/te Runanganui exerting powers. Carrying that forward, General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui could provide for bishops to minister to the two views that are a result of varying approaches to scripture. A person in a same sex relationship seeking blessing would make that known to their individual priest. There would be a programme put in place for a bishop inclined as well as licensed to come and provide the blessing in the event that the local bishop felt unable to act. Alternatively each Diocese could have two bishops or some similar restructuring.

Option H Planned Dismembering

General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui would agree that the different views are irreconcilable and would acknowledge that parting was inevitable. This option would mean the end of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia as it is presently known and consideration of different bodies being constituted and provided with the legal authority to own property and conduct religious ceremonies and rites.

Option I Anglican Church to Add a New Rite of Blessing by Priests of Those in a Same Sex Relationship.

This option would address a precise need for a group of individuals for whom there is no provision in the Constitution, Formularies and Canons. There might not need to be any change made to existing Canons or definitions. There could simply be added a new rite with a name to be settled of blessing people in a same sex relationship.

This option would not compromise or seek to supplant any existing rite such as baptism or marriage. It would introduce a new rite to sit alongside the others to permit the blessing of those in stable, committed and faithful same sex relationships. The new rite could be introduced on a transitional basis. An exception could be considered to permit clergy to elect not to perform blessings of persons in same sex relationships.

Option J Adopt a Two Year Period of Focused Discussion within Church Communities With a View to Making a Decision in (say) 2016

This option would take account of the views of the Pilling Commission which furnished its report in England in November 2013. This work highlighted the fact that although various appointed groups of people had conducted studies and made reports, there had not been intensive discussions held within the church community itself. The Pilling Report called for what it described as facilitated discussions over a two year period which would winnow out the issues with even more clarity. The down side of this approach of further facilitated discussion would be the expenditure of even more time. Synod would need to consider the extent and quality of debate to date within the church community and also the opportunity to make submissions to and appear before the Ma Whea? Commission. On the other hand, moving forward in concert with the Anglican Church in England might be considered warranted especially if it lead to a clearer result affecting more parts of the Anglican community.

It is to be noted that these options include six options developed by the Bishops. They have been supplemented by certain options proposed in submissions and further considered by the Ma Whea ? Commission.

FOOTNOTES

1 Foreword, *The Lambeth Commission on Communion, The Windsor Report 2004*, The Anglican Communion Office, London, UK

2 Lambeth 1978 Resolution 10

Human Relationships and Sexuality

The Conference gladly affirms the Christian ideals of faithfulness and chastity both within and outside marriage, and calls Christians everywhere to seek the grace of Christ to live lives of holiness, discipline, and service in the world, and commends to the Church:

1 The need for theological study of sexuality in such a way as to relate sexual relationships to that wholeness of human life which itself derives from God, who is the source of masculinity and femininity.

2 The need for programmes at diocesan level, involving both men and women,

(a) to promote the study and foster the ideals of Christian marriage and family life, and to examine the ways in which those who are unmarried may discover the fullness which God intends for all his children;

(b) to provide ministries of compassionate support to those suffering from brokenness within marriage and family relationships;

(c) to emphasise the sacredness of all human life, the moral issues inherent in clinical abortion, and the possible implications of genetic engineering.

3 While we reaffirm heterosexuality as the scriptural norm, we recognise the need for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research. The Church, recognising the need for pastoral concern for those who are homosexual, encourages dialogue with them. (We note with satisfaction that such studies are now proceeding in some member Churches of the Anglican Communion.)

3 Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10 *Human Sexuality* This Conference:

a commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality;

b in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage;

c recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual

persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;

- d while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;
- e cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;
- f requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;
- g notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.

4 *The Lambeth Commission on Communion The Windsor Report 2004*, The Anglican Communion Office, London, UK

5 *The Anglican Communion Covenant 2004* – the Ridley Cambridge November text

6 (4.2.5) and (4.2.6) *The Anglican Communion Covenant*

7 (3.2.6) *in situations of conflict, to participate in mediated conversations, which involve face to face meetings, agreed parameters and a willingness to see such processes through.*

(3.2.7) to have in mind that our bonds of affection and the love of Christ compel us always to uphold the highest degree of communion possible.

8 *Komihana Whakatau I Nga Take Hokaka*, Te Ripoata ki Te Runanganui o Pihopatanga o Aoteroa, 2 November 2007

9 Statement on Ordination, page 7, *Komihana Whakatau I Nga Take Hokaka*

10 *The Hermeneutical Process in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, new Zealand and Polynesia*

11 *Working Group on Human Sexuality - Report of the House of Bishops* Pilling Report November 2013

12 *Pilling Report*, page 6

13 *Takataapui* - homosexual person

14 *Komihana Whakatau I Nga Take Hokaka*, 2007

15 Rev Don Tamihere's paper: *He Atua! He Tangata! Towards a Maori Theory of Sexuality* 2013

16 Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Tradition* (London: Longman Green, 1955)

17 *Five Uneasy Pieces: Essays on Scripture and Sexuality* ed Nigel Wright (ATF Theology, 2012).

18 *2003 A Memorandum of Understanding* provided by The Methodist Church of New Zealand

19 Timeline on decisions relating to homosexuality and leadership in The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand', provided by that Church

- 20 *The Gay and Lesbian Clergy Anti-Discrimination Society Inc. v The Bishop of Auckland* [2013] NZHRRT 36
- 21 We were referred to *A Reader entitled Same - Sex Relationships, Bible and Church* June 2013, prepared for discussion in the Wellington Diocese. This useful compilation presented in two parts, is of a wide range of publications and papers, some of which refer to scientific issues, including :
- Brett Cane *The Bible and Homosexuality* (an article based on two sermons) at <http://www.anglican.ca/faiht/files/2010/10/10cane-1.pdf>
- Sid Durbin *Same Sex Relationships: Views on the issues*. A summary and analysis of a range of books and papers from diverse perspectives.
- Richard Hays *Affirming Spring* 1996
- Stanton Jones *Same-Sex Science: the social sciences cannot settle the moral status of homosexuality*. at <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2012/01/same-sex-science> This is a condensed version of his longer paper with citation, *Sexual Orientation and Reason: On the implications of False Beliefs about Homosexuality* at <http://www.wheaton.edu/CACE/Hot-Topic>
- 22 For example ‘ Neither genes nor choice: Same-sex attraction is mostly a unique reaction to environmental factors’, *Journal of Human Sexuality, Vol.3, pp.81-114, 2011*
- 23 *Five Uneasy Pieces: Essays on Scripture and Sexuality*, Ed Nigel Wright, ATF Theology, 2011 at page xxiii
- 24 *The Kinsey Reports 1948 (male) and 1953 (female)*
- 25 *The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality*, edited by Philip Groves, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, UK, 2008
- 26 At page 290
- 27 Same Sex Attraction
- 28 At page 328

APPENDIX 1

Material Referred to the Commissioners

FROM HERMENEUTICS HUI

Background Anglican Documents to Hermeneutics- Notes for Respecting and Using the Bible
The Most Rev Sir David Moxon

The Hermeneutics Process in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia -
The Most Rev Sir David Moxon

Themes and Principles
Steering Group of the Bible in the Life of the Church Project

The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church
Henry Wansbrough

Authority and Inspiration of the Bible
The Rev Dr Peter Carrell

I AM AM I? Scripture, Vocation, Discipleship and the Theology of Sexuality
The Rt Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

Scripture and the Theology of Sexuality
The Rev Canon Dr Tim Meadowcroft

Toe tima'le Upega: The Bible, Sexuality and the Church
The Rev Dr Frank Smith

Scripture and the Theology of Sexuality
The Rev Dr Sue Patterson

Biblical Models of Marriage
The Rt Rev Victoria Matthews

Scripture and the Theology of Sexuality: A Question of Discernment
James E Harding

Towards a Māori Hermeneutic
The Rev Don Tamihere

BIBLICAL/DOCTRINAL MATERIAL

Theology of Sexuality and 1 Corinthians 5-7
Professor Paul Trebilco

Same Sex Relationships and the Interpretation of Scripture: An Exploration of Key Issues
Professor Paul Trebilco

Report of the Primate's Theological Commission on the Blessing of Same-Gender Unions - The St Michael Report May 2005
Anglican Church of Canada

Open Letter to the House of Bishops of the Church of the Province of New Zealand/Te Haahi o te Porowini o Niu Tirenī and the Archbishops' reply
Rev Michael Hewat and cosigned by 10 clergy and endorsed by the Executive of the Latimer Fellowship, Mainstream and the Council of the NZ Church Missionary Society

Marshall Memorial Lecture 2012 Religion and Sexuality: Uncomfortable Bed Fellows
The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG

INTERNATIONAL MATERIAL

Pastoral Guidelines for Blessing of Same Gender Commitments
College of Bishops, Canada, 28 October 2010

Civil Partnerships and same sex relationships - Anglican Communion News Service
House of Bishop, Church of England 1 July 2011

The Windsor Report 2004
The Lambeth Commission on Communion

The Anglican Communion Covenant
Anglican Consultative Council

Resources for Blessing Same-Gender Relationships
The Episcopal Church Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music January 2012

Communiqué from the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation 2010
International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC)

Common Worship Marriage Liturgy
Trevor Lloyd, Archdeacon of Barnstable

The Wedding Cup
Bryan D Spink, Yale Divinity School

Rites Relating to Marriage, A Statement and a Resource and supporting papers
International Anglican Liturgical Consultation and supporting papers written by Charles Sherlock, Richard Leggett, Winston Halapua, Mdimi Mhogolo and Simon Jones

The Witness and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant
Liturgy authorised for provisional use by the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church of USA, July 2012

Anglican Theological Review
Ellen K Wondra Editor in Chief and Ellen T Charry Guest Editor

Press Release - The Church of Scotland
Katherine Weber

Working Group on Human Sexuality - Report of the House of Bishops
Pilling Report November 2013

LEGAL MATERIAL

Title D Process

Judge Chris Harding March 2011

Handbook of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui

Defining a Chaste Relationship

Judge Chris Harding, 28 August 2012

GENERAL SYNOD/TE HINOTA WHANUI/ INTER DIOCESAN CONFERENCE

Motions from General Synod

Dioceses of Auckland and Waiapu

Thinking Theologically about the Blessing of Same Gender Relationships

Diocese of Waiapu

Motions from General Synod as amended

General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui

Tikanga Pakeha Commission on Sexuality of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Report from Commission to Inter Diocesan Conference (IDC), May 1998

Komihana Whakatau I Nga Take Hokaka

Report from a Commission set up by Te Runanganui o Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa November 2007

Ordination of Women

Copy of sections of minutes from GS 1972, 1974 and 1976

Commission to Review Title D

Memorandum extracted from archives date June 1999

REPORTS FROM TAONGA

White Collar Crime

Anglican Taonga, 25 May 2012

Discussion on General Synod Motions 3, 20, 21 and 23 at General Synod

Anglican Taonga, July 2012

Auckland Anglican Bishops comment on billboard

Anglican Taonga, 30 August 2012

New Guidelines for Marriage Rites

Anglican Taonga, 29 August 2012

Same-Sex Relationships, Bible and Church

Two Readers prepared for discussion among clergy, Synod representatives and parishes of the Diocese of Wellington in preparation for discussion at Synod in September 2013

OTHER PAPERS OF INTEREST

How Did We Get Here?

Rev Paul Williamson, April 2012

Permanent, Faithful, Stable

Comments and reviews by Dean Jeffrey John

A History of Sorts

A summary of legislation in relation to homosexuality.

Of God and Gays and Humility

Article from Time - what the Episcopal Church's handling of same sex unions can teach the rest of us.

Breaking up the Echo

Cass R Sunstein, Professor of Law at Harvard

A Queer Kind of Faith - Religion and Spirituality in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual New Zealanders

Sexuality, Religion and Authority: Towards Reframing Estrangement

Managing Multiple Identities in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual New Zealand

Three research papers written by Mark Henrickson

Timeline on Decisions relating to homosexuality and leadership in the Presbyterian Church in Aotearoa New Zealand

Compiled by Peter Cheyne, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church

Methodist Church Memorandum of Understanding and Media Statement

Provided by David Bush

On estimates of length of gay/lesbian relationships

Dr Neil Whitehead

Sermon preached at St Peter's, Onehunga

Rev Anne Priestley

The Gay and Lesbian Clergy Anti-Discrimination Society Inc. v The Bishop of Auckland

B D Gray QC and Professor P T Rishworth

Canon Philip Groves on Human Sexuality

Canon Philip Groves

BOOKS FOR READING

The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality

Edited by Philip Groves

Homosexuality and the Bible - Two Views

Dan O Via and Robert A J Gagnon

Discerning the Word - The Bible and Homosexuality in Anglican Debate

Paul Gibson

More Than a Single Issue

Edited by Murray A Rae and Graham Redding

Outspoken - Coming Out in the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Liz Lightfoot

Brain Sex – Chapter 8

Anne Moir, Ph.D. and David Jessel, Dell Publishing 1989, 1991 ISBN: 0-385-31183-4

APPENDIX 2

Submissions Received From Individuals, Parishes and Groups

Abi Vickers — Methven
Adam Coxon — Lower Hutt
AFFIRM Paper
Alan Jamieson — Kapiti Coast
Alison M Tait — Hamilton
Allan Bean — Christchurch
Allan Burnett — SJC for 5 students
Allan E Webb — Lower Hutt
Allan M Spence MNZM JP — Auckland
Amanda Clarke-Prebble — Dunedin
Andrea Small
Andrew Makin — Christchurch
Andrew Wallis — Auckland
Archdeaconry of Tonga
Basil Wakelin — Wellington
Beccy Heale — SJC for 10 students
Bill Capamagian — Tauranga
Bill Carter — Hibiscus Coast
Bonnie Miller Perry — Central Otago
Brian and Julianne Sauer
Bruce and Patricia Fordham
Captain Paul Stanaway — Chaplain, NZDF
Captain Peter Lloyd — Auckland
Celia Gibson — Epsom
Chantelle Keith — Methven
Cherie Rameka — St John's College
Chris Barfoot — Auckland
Christopher and Alataua Palliser — Hamilton
Colin and Joy Penno — Methven
Dale Ogilvie — Christchurch
David A Bremner — Auckland
David and Maria Thompson — Christchurch
David Blaker — Epsom
David Earle — Wellington
Diocese of Dunedin
Diocese of Nelson
Diocese of Waiapu
Dr Don Mathieson QC — Wellington
Dr John W Palmer — Nelson
Dr Neil Whitehead — Wellington
Dr Sarah Harris — Auckland
Elizabeth Cole — St John's College
Elizabeth Hay — Canterbury
Father Ron Smith — Christchurch
Fay Aitken — Auckland
Gerald Minnee
Fiona Bell — SJC student
Garth Jones — Auckland
George and Judy Deans — Auckland
Glen and Gail Young — Auckland
Graeme MacCormick — Auckland
Guy Savage — St John's College

Heather Rogers — Epsom	Parish of All Saints — Methven
Helen Hardcastle — Whangaparaoa	Parish of Holy Trinity — Nelson
Helen L Tait	Parish of Massey — Auckland
Henderson Parish AGM — Auckland	Parish of Shirley — Christchurch
Ian Ellwood — Henderson	Parish of St Francis — Hamilton (37 signatures)
Ian Nelson — Canterbury	Parish of St Mark — Hamilton
Jethro Day — St John's College	Parish of St Saviour's — Christchurch
John — Auckland	Parish of St Saviour's — Kaitaia
John Bryant — Christchurch	Parish of the Saviour — Auckland
Jon Staniland — Auckland	Parish of Whangaparaoa Peninsular
Jonathan Bayliss — Wellington	Paul Jones — Methven
Jonathan Jong — Oxford, UK	Peter Day — Hamilton
Jonathan Wood — Dunedin	Philip Brown — Auckland
Julia Guest — St John College	Philip Saysell — Auckland
Kelly Morgan — Nelson	Prof Margaret Bedgood — Auckland
Kerry Davis — St John's College	Rob Hawley — Wellington
Kevin Harris — Christchurch	Robyn Bridgman — Auckland
Kevin J Hodges — Hamilton	Robyn Reeves — Kaitaia
Kevin Pope	Rosemary Neave Auckland
Latimer Fellowship	Rosemary Pritchard — Hamilton
Learne McGrath — Auckland	Russell Vaughan — Christchurch
Liz Hermse and Cathy Monsborough — Auckland	Ruth Wildbore — Christchurch
Lyn Frazerhurst — Te Awamutu	Shari Early — Ashburton
Malcolm Brears — Ashburton	Sophie Febery — Methven
Margaret Butterfield — Christchurch	St Andrew's Youth — Auckland
Mars — Auckland	The Rev ABS Black Christchurch
Martin Armour — Methven	The Rev Alec Czerwonka — Rotorua
Martin Platt	The Rev Andrew Allan-Johns — Christchurch
Martin Prokopetz — Laidlaw College	The Rev Anne Moody — Auckland
Mary Kempster — Wellington	The Rev Barbara Vincent — Christchurch
Matthew Ockleston — Auckland	The Rev Bill and Mrs Wendy Bennett — Napier
Michael D R Irwin — Wellington	The Rev Bob Scott and Frantisek Riha Auckland
NZ Protestant — Auckland	The Rev Bosco Peters — Christchurch
Ormond Wilson — Christchurch	The Rev Brian Dawson — Wellington
P J Goodyear — Tauranga	The Rev Bruce Richardson — Auckland

The Rev Charlie Hughes — Henderson	The Rev Max Scott — Auckland
The Rev Chris Honoré — Auckland	The Rev Michael Hewat — Hamilton
The Rev Chris Spark — Christchurch	The Rev Mike Hawke
The Rev Clare Barrie — Auckland	The Rev Mike Keith — Methven
The Rev David Pearson — Levin	The Rev Paul Gravelle — Auckland
The Rev David Pickering — Christchurch	The Rev Paul Williamson — Tauranga
The Rev David Steele — Auckland	The Rev Peter A Collier — Christchurch
The Rev Dino Houtas — Kaitaia	The Rev Peter Minson — Taupo
The Rev Dr Andrew Burgess — Nelson	The Rev Ray and Jocelyn Sturley
The Rev Dr Christopher Holmes — Dunedin	The Rev Ren Kempthorne — Nelson
The Rev Dr Derek Tovey — St John’s College	The Rev Richard Bonifant — Auckland
The Rev Dr Don Battley — Massey	The Rev Ron Hay — Canterbury
The Rev Dr E and Mrs S Prebble — Auckland	The Rev Stephen Baxter — Auckland
The Rev Dr George Armstrong — Auckland	The Rev Stephen Maina — NZCMS
The Rev Dr Graham O’Brien — Nelson	The Rev Stephen White — Mosgiel
The Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley — SJC	The Rev Terry Timutimu — Hamilton
The Rev Dr Jenny Dawson — Waiapu	The Rev Tim Lloyd — Waikato
The Rev Dr Mark Henrickson — Auckland	The Rev Tim Mora — Greymouth
The Rev Dr Peter Carrell — Christchurch	The Rev Winton M Clancey — Christchurch
The Rev Dr Susan Patterson — Nelson	The Rt Rev John Bluck — North Auckland
The Rev Esther Clarke-Prebble — Dunedin	The Rt Rev Richard Ellena — Nelson
The Rev Father Ian Hanley — Hamilton	The Rt Rev Richard Randerson — Wellington
The Rev Gayanne Frater — Auckland	The Ven Stuart Crosson — Dunedin
The Rev George Stonehouse — Auckland	Tim Frank — Christchurch
The Rev Gerard C Jacobs — Christchurch	Timothy Dack — St John’s College
The Rev Glynn Cardy — Auckland	Tony and Sue Kerr — Auckland
The Rev Ian Hardcastle — Whangaparaoa	Trevor G Smith — Tauranga
The Rev Ian Render — Auckland	Valmai Wilson — Methven
The Rev Jacynthia Murphy — SJC	Vaughan Shepherd — Auckland
The Rev James de Costobadie — ChCh	Vivian Pollock — Auckland
The Rev Joel Rowse — Waikato	Vivienne Sutton — Wellington
The Rev Karen Dack — Tirau	Warren Brookbanks — Epsom
The Rev Kris Heale — Auckland	William Andrew — Methven
The Rev Malcolm Falloon — Dunedin	Wynston Cooper — Invercargill
The Rev Matt Watts — Christchurch	

APPENDIX 3

Individuals Who Made Presentations or Who Took Part in Group Presentations

AFFIRM

Allan Burnett — SJC for 5 students

Andrew Wallis — Auckland

Beccy Heale — SJC for 10 students

Captain Peter Lloyd — Auckland

Cherie Rameka — St John's College

Chris Barfoot — Auckland

Diocese of Nelson

Diocese of Waiapu

Dr Don Mathieson QC — Wellington

Dr Sarah Harris — Auckland

Dr Neil Whitehead — Wellington

Elizabeth Cole — St John's College

Evan Turbott — Waiapu

Fiona Bell — SJC student

Gerry Rogan — Auckland

Jethro Day — St John's College

John — Auckland

Judge Andrew Becroft — Wellington

Julia Guest — St John College

Kelly Morgan — Nelson

Kerry Davis — St John's College

Latimer Fellowship

Kevin Harris — Christchurch

Learne McGrath — Auckland

Liz Hermse and Cathy Monsborough — Auckland

Mars — Auckland

Matthew Ockleston — Auckland

Parish of St Saviour's — Kaitaia

Prof Margaret Bedggood — Auckland

Rosemary Neave — Auckland

St Andrew's Youth — Auckland

Suzanna Shelton — Waiapu

The Rev ABS Black — Christchurch

The Rev Bob Scott and Frantisek Riha — Auckland

The Rev Brian Dawson — Wellington

The Rev Chris Honoré — Auckland

The Rev Clare Barrie — Auckland

The Rev Dr Andrew Burgess — Nelson

The Rev Dr Don Battley — Massey

The Rev Dr George Armstrong — Auckland

The Rev Dr Graham O'Brien — Nelson

The Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley — SJC

The Rev Jo Crosse — Waiapu

The Rev Dr Mark Henrickson — Auckland

The Rev Dr Susan Patterson — Nelson

The Rev Glynn Cardy — Auckland

The Rev Jacynthia Murphy — St John's College

The Rev James de Costobadie — Christchurch

The Rev Jay Behan — Christchurch

The Rev Learne McGath

The Rev Max Scott — Auckland

The Rev Michael Hewat — Hamilton

The Rev Paul Gravelle — Auckland

The Rev Philip Lyes — Christchurch

The Rev Stephen Donald — Waiapu

The Rev Stephen Maina — NZCMS

The Rev Tim Mora — Greymouth

The Rt Rev David Coles — Wakatipu

The Rt Rev David Rice — Waiapu

The Rt Rev Richard Randerson — Wellington

The Ven Monty Black — CLLC

Timothy Dack — St John's College

Vaughan Shepherd — Auckland

APPENDIX 4

REPORT TO THE MA WHEA? COMMISSION FROM THE REFERENCE GROUP SUB--COMMITTEE

30TH MAY, 2013

PREAMBLE

Our brief was to study the collated Hui papers to identify and summarize the *theological agreements, theological differences, areas of potential agreement, and areas of ongoing disagreement*. As the first step in our research, we identified the major topic areas from these papers and compared statements across these topics (see the accompanying chart).

In our analysis we have located some common ground, but extremes not represented in the Hui process are not included in this common ground, so this report cannot claim to cover all the bases in the Church. We also identified some issues not dealt with by the Hui process, however as consideration of these lies beyond our brief, they are not addressed here.

A Creation and sexuality

1. *It is agreed* that human sexuality is a gift that is fundamental to and reflects the goodness of God's creation.
2. *An area of potential agreement* is that celibacy is also a gift, which anticipates resurrection life in the world to come. As the purpose and goal of creation is its fulfillment and perfection in the new creation, sexuality as a good of this creation may be understood as a relative or transitional good which awaits its transformation in the new creation. New Testament texts identifying celibacy or singleness as a higher good may indicate the transience and relativity of this--worldly human sexual fulfilment in the light of the in--breaking reality of God's kingdom.

3. The deprioritizing (relativising) of sexual fulfillment by the priority of serving God could become an *area of potential agreement*, yet there are likely to be significant differences over just what this relativising means – whether it means saying no because of a greater yes, or whether it means according a lesser importance to the particularities of how we order our lives sexually.

4. *Areas of theological difference:*

- a. Whether male--female sexuality is seen as integral to humanity's creation in the image of God, or whether this image of God is understood in terms of the 'I--thou--ness' of relationship which is an appreciation of otherness.
- b. Whether sexuality, while a gift of God's creation, is nevertheless marred in various ways by brokenness and sin (where that brokenness or

sinfulness may be the individual's own doing or the result of the wrong--doing of others or of a culture or society as a whole), or whether all human sexuality is able to reflect God's intention for creation in a good and unbroken way.

5. *Areas of ongoing disagreement:*

- a. Whether sexuality as a gift of God's creation is confined to male--female relationships, or whether the gender of participants is immaterial;
- b. Whether marriage between a man and a woman is therefore an ordinance of creation, and,
- c. Whether, accordingly, Jesus' teaching on marriage, which links back to the Genesis accounts is binding on the church.

B Christian life and leadership

6. *It is agreed* that discipleship in the service of Christ's kingdom of justice and mercy is primary for all Christians. It follows that the call of discipleship relativises all else in our lives. It must be second to nothing. This is made clear in the teachings of Jesus, as is the teaching that the way of discipleship is the way of the cross. This is an *area of potential agreement*, but just what does it mean to follow Christ? Are we to be guided by a plain reading of the biblical text or by principles derived from it? The issue is one of biblical interpretation and this is a significant area of theological disagreement (see under C below).
7. *An area of implied agreement* is that as disciples we are all Christ's witnesses. Mature disciples, including ordained leaders, lead by example. Again, just what constitutes good witness relates to the way we read the biblical text – a significant area of theological disagreement (see under C below).
8. Our Canons define the word 'chastity' as the right ordering of sexual relationships. Just what this 'right ordering' should include or exclude is an *area of ongoing disagreement* which connects back to the areas of theological disagreement identified under A above.

C The Interpretation of Scripture

1. *It is agreed* that there are two horizons to biblical interpretation: that of the text and that of its reader.

2. *An area of significant theological difference* is which of these horizons has priority -- whether interpretation begins with the lived experience of the reader or with the biblical text.
3. *This theological difference* means that there will be *ongoing disagreement* over how we extract Christian ethical guidelines from Scripture. Do we search the life and teachings of Jesus for broad ethical principles -- e.g. love of the marginalized?
 – to guide the way we deal with the issues that arise in our and others’ lives, or do we take the *particularities* of those teachings as ethical directives which address the *particularities* of how we deal with this life--issues?
4. *There is agreement* that Scripture witnesses to the authority of Christ. Christ is the centre of Scripture. Christian life (personal and communal) is to be lived in mutual accountability and submission to Christ.
5. *A potential area of agreement* is that the church needs to focus next on those New Testament passages which deal with the resolution of conflict in the church and the imperative of unity in the Body of Christ.

Conclusions:

Underpinning all this is a fundamental theological difference relating to authority. What is taken to be primary determines the starting point for theology. Do we start with a theology based on our own and others’ experience of living in the world, or with a theology based on the authority of Scripture? This priority regarding authority determines in turn where we are to locate general principles and detailed moral guidelines for living. If our theology prioritizes human experience and issues arising therefrom (such as justice and mercy), the detail will be located there; if we begin with the authority of Scripture, we will look for the detail there. Whichever we take as primary authority will relativize the other which may then be used to provide the framework of broad principles to which we relate the moral working out of our lives. Hence a focus on human experience as primary will seek principles from Scripture (e.g. in relation to justice and mercy) to inform that experience. A focus on Scripture will look to locate in human experience principles relating to living in the world to enable the application of Scripture to Christian living.

Lynda Patterson

Karen Spoelstra

Sue Patterson

Appendix: Chart of Topic Areas According to Presenters

AC = Amy Chambers CM = Chris Marshall EW = Elaine Wainwright FS = Frank Smith

HK = Hone Kaa

HP = Howard Pilgrim JH = James Harding JTP = Jenny Te Paa MHS = Moana Hall Smith

PC = Peter Carroll PL = Peter Lineham PT = Paul Trebilco

Sepi = Sepiuta Hala’api’api

SP = Sue Patterson TH = Tim Harris

TM = Tim Meadowcroft

+V = Bishop Victoria

Biblical interp.	Celibacy	Christ	Community Church	Creation	Culture	Disciple=ship	Marriage, SS relation=ships	Sin, Re=pentance
We can read biblical silence as lack of condemnation [AC]	Celibacy as higher good [+V, JH]	New creation in Christ transcends gender [+V, JH]	As the Body of Christ we are answerable to one another.[JH] Leaders accountable to Body of Christ as a whole [TH]	Homosexual activity natural [AC, FS]	Paul has confused 'unnatural' with customary practices [JH]	Discipleship as priority relativises marriage and family [+V, JH]	Marriage as covenantal symbol [+V]	As we meet God through Scripture 'we grow, bit by painstaking, repentant bit, into the fullness of God's image in Christ.' [JH]
We hear the scriptures on the basis of our own background [PL]	Celibacy also as gift - to be preferred for eschatological reasons? Mission is paramount for Paul and single life gives freedom for that. [PT]	It is all about being transformed as the Body of Christ into the likeness of the one who is God's image, in whom alone is unity. [JH]	It is all about being transformed as the Body of Christ into the likeness of the one who is God's image, in whom alone is unity. [JH]	Sexual orientation as gift [AC]	Value of procreation has changed from biblical and pre-European tribal times [MHS]	'...the patient, painstaking growth ... into the likeness of the Christ in whom God's fractured image is restored.' [JH]	'faithful, stable same=sex relationships can be just as much a remedy against unbridled sexual incontinence as opposite=sex relationships, if the partners are not graced with the 'gift' of continency.' [JH]	We need to repent of our ideological idolatries [JH].
'... a joint commitment to hearing and obeying God as God speaks in scripture, to discovering more of the Jesus Christ to whom all authority is committed, and to being open to the fresh wind of the Spirit who inspired Scripture in the first place' [JTP]	The Anglican church needs a robust theology of celibacy and a higher doctrine of friendship [JH].	Jesus Christ is at the centre of scripture. 'Jesus Christ the hinge on which the meaning of Scripture turns.' 'in the person of Jesus Christ a new expression of the authorial authority of God comes to humanity. [PC]	'... does the church – you and me – live with Christ at the centre of our life together? Are we open to the Spirit and Scripture informing our mind as one body so that we can say with Paul, 'But we have the mind of Christ'? [PC]	The Genesis accounts show that sexuality is intrinsically male/female and this is central to human imaging of God. [SP]	Changing patterns of sexuality and relationships : modern ideas of homo=sexuality a result of the modern idea of marriage as companion=iate and by choice [PL]	Hold firm to essentials of discipleship: 'So do not let your 'good' be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.' [CM]	Paul's prohibitions do not address committed, faithful, permanent, same=sex relationships as these are qualitatively different from the categories of people and actions he lists. [JH]	Romans 1 tells us that the real danger of sin is that God may give us over to it, and the very sin that we think we are enjoying will actually begin to have power over us and eventually we will not be able to get out of it or not even want to and it will have us.' [SEPI]

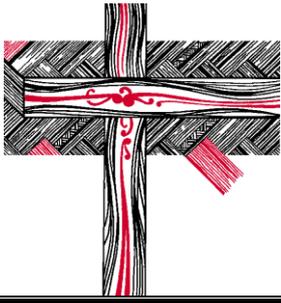
Biblical interp.	Celibacy	Christ	Community Church	Creation	Culture	Disciple-ship	Marriage, SS relationships	Sin, Re- pentance
<p>Two mutually interpreting hermeneutical horizons [EW, HP, MHS]</p>	<p>It is clear that '...chastity or temperance and faithfulness is called for in the area of sexuality' [TM]</p>	<p>Another challenge is whether we will accept the authority of this [Christ's] 'mind' over our life together.' [PC]</p>	<p>Paul: Accept legitimate diversity. Conservatives 'don't 'judge', liberals 'don't 'despise'. Practice mutual hospitality... with crucial qualifications: 'submission to Christ's Lordship, conscious dependence on him, living out convictions in his honour, thankfulness to God'. [CM]</p>	<p>Accounts of creation fundamental to Paul's view of marriage and sexuality [PT]. Sexuality as part of goodness of creation [PT]</p>	<p>Sexuality and normality as socially constructed [PL]</p>	<p>'... begin with the question what does it mean to be a disciple? Just what is the cost of discipleship for us in the Church, and are we really able to shoulder our cross?' [JH]</p>	<p>Marriage, sexual relationships, and the procreation of children are not the key issues of the Gospel, and the Gospels certainly cannot be used faithfully to support the idea that monogamous, heterosexual marriage leading to the procreation and nurture of children is a Christian ideal' [JH]</p>	<p>'Should we automatically regard same-sex relationships as evidence of our corrupt sinful nature and thus as "fornication" by definition, or should we look at what characterises particular relationships and ask whether those marked by life-long commitment and sacrificial love are in fact evidence of the fruits of the Spirit?' [JH]</p>
<p>In NT issues were decided according to key 'kingdom' principles of righteousness, justice, mercy [EW]</p>		<p>Being a new creation in Christ means cleaning out the old immorality [PT]</p>	<p>As a Church we should be reading those texts which talk about how to resolve conflicts! It is paramount to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. [JH]</p>	<p>'our nature as differentiated sexual beings is pretty central to our bearing of the image of God.' [TM]</p>			<p>For Paul sexual relations are within marriage (enduring union of both body and spirit) but not simply for procreation - other mutual benefit. Our bodies belong to the Lord - temple of the Holy Spirit. [PT]</p>	

Biblical interp.	Celibacy	Christ	Community Church	Creation	Culture	Disciple-ship	Marriage, SS relationships	Sin, Re-pentance
<p>Bible gives meaning to my/our experience [MHS, EW]</p>		<p>Jesus interprets Israel's Scripture -repackages ethics (sermon on mount), identifies himself as the centre of this Scripture (in road to Emmaus. [PC]</p>	<p>'... a joint commitment to hearing and obeying God as God speaks in scripture, to discovering more of the Jesus Christ to whom all authority is committed, and to being open to the fresh wind of the Spirit who inspired Scripture in the first place'[JTP]</p>		<p>Church needs to be born again as indigenous -abandoning its original culture and reading the Bible anew with indigenous eyes. The indigenous church has to liberate theology from the academy which stifles creativity [HK]</p>		<p>It is clear that '...chastity or temperance and faithfulness is called for in the area of sexuality' [TM]</p>	<p>'We are all in some way broken or incomplete sexually, whether from our own sin or the effect on us of others' sin or simply by the fact that the world is broken (the old triad: the world, the flesh and the devil). This can express itself in myriad ways' [TM]</p>
<p>'I find myself wondering what conclusions we might reach if we only had access to the Gospels as material for which we claim some ethical authority. We would end up with impossibly high standards of integrity and purity around every aspect of human inter- action, but would also have a strong sense that Jesus welcomes all sorts into the kingdom. Such exclusion as he indulges in normally relates to the 'pure' religious insiders.' [TM]</p>		<p>'I find myself wondering what conclusions we might reach if we only had access to the Gospels as material for which we claim some ethical authority. We would end up with impossibly high standards of integrity and purity around every aspect of human inter- action, but would also have a strong sense that Jesus welcomes all sorts into the kingdom. Such exclusion as he indulges in normally relates to the 'pure' religious insiders.' [TM]</p>	<p>'In the matter of sexuality, there is a call to model a better way I believe. It is not that we are innately better people than others. But the level of account- ability is higher. Jesus was quite clear on that point, especially with respect to leadership. 'We might expect that growth towards Christian maturity will include growth towards a state of more or less having our act together as sexual beings.' [TM]</p>		<p>Sexual orientation not a biblical concept [FS]</p>			

Biblical interp.	Celibacy	Christ	Community Church	Creation	Culture	Disciple-ship	Marriage, SS relationships	Sin, Re-pentance
Biased interpretations are handed down and cemented [PL]		Gospel as Christocentric [+V]	'Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding[CM]		Justice and rights language must be suspected because it is so open to manipulation [JH].			
			In NT issues were decided according to key 'kingdom' principles of righteousness, justice, mercy [EW]					
		Christian identity is only and entirely found in unity with Jesus Christ in baptism... the markers of identity that could cause division or create differentiations of status in the Church have been decisively transcended in Christ' [JH]	'... a joint commitment to hearing and obeying God as God speaks in scripture, to discovering more of the Jesus Christ to whom all authority is committed, and to being open to the fresh wind of the Spirit who inspired Scripture in the first place' [JTP]					

APPENDIX 5

A REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON DOCTRINE & THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS



**The Anglican Church in Aotearoa,
New Zealand and Polynesia**

**Te Hāhi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tirenī,
ki Ngā Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa**

**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***

March 2014

It is a privilege to offer this Report to the Church through the General Synod Standing Committee.

We have been asked to consider the nature of Marriage and Blessing in regard to same-gender couples. Reflection on both these matters reminds us of and points to the blessing of Christ who desires relationship with the Church (Ephesians 5). We are also confronted with the need to understand of our own desires and love for God and each other. We have been ever mindful of the difficulty we have in approaching these intimate subjects.

So many of the elements of the issues before us pivot on discerning the movement of the Spirit that we are promised will lead us into Truth. We are grateful the leading that has brought us to this point.

The Report itself represents the outcome of a longer than expected process of meetings and dialogue. We have met in person over days and then continued discussion of matters over the wires.

We know that ongoing *Talanoa* is going to be required of us all. Such *Talanoa* needs to occur in ways that does not create polarization and division nor impair our fellowship with one another. We believe that our belonging together in Christ is deeper and more profound than any division that we might feel and to this unity in Christ we should cling more closely. We hope and pray that this Church will be able to go forward in such unity.

We hesitated to produce an Executive Summary for the Report because we are fearful of the very real possibility that it will be all that is read. This would be a shame. One of the issues we were conscious of as we worked together is the vast amount of material that is already in existence but the obvious lack of broad engagement in our Church with that material.

We would like to record our particular thanks to the Rev'd Michael Hughes.

We commend this work to the Church we seek to serve.

The Rev'd Dr Andrew Burgess
Dr Moeawa Callaghan
The Most Rev'd Dr Winston Halapua
The Rt Rev'd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
The Rev'd Dr Eseta Mateiviti-Tulavu
The Rt Rev'd Te Kito Pikaahu
The Rev'd Thomas Poata
The Rev'd Sione Uluilakepa
The Rt Rev'd Jim White (Chair)

Executive Summary

The primary task of this commission was to explore a theological rationale for same-gender marriage and/or blessings.

The rationale can be made (section B). It can be argued that it is a faithful response to scripture and has theological merit.

The rationale can also be scripturally and theologically rebutted. This can be done by a critique of the actual argument in favour of the rationale (C.4.) and by the weight of tradition in the form of our Constitution, Formularies, and received reading of scripture (C.3.). How we decide between that rationale and the rebuttal is up to the whole church, but the discussion must go significantly deeper than simply asserting that we have always spoken about ‘man and woman’. The debate involves deep arguments regarding the nature of our humanity before God and the nature of the Gospel in relation to sexuality and marriage.

It has been acknowledged at more than one point that the perspective one brings to the theological task, scriptural interpretation, and hermeneutics heavily influences the outcome of that same work. This Commission would argue that we should position ourselves in favour of the marginalized and for inclusion, while the shape of that inclusion remains debated.

A further question we have raised is whether, given the fact that it is likely that at present we cannot conclusively agree or reach consensus on an assessment, whether we might be permissive in some way and await the test of time and fruits that are brought forth by covenanted same-gender relationships.

None of the above forecloses on the need for ongoing discussion. Indeed, the heartfelt contribution from the Diocese of Polynesia expressed the desire for further *Talanoa*.¹

Marriage is the way in which the church has recognized God’s blessing in a couple’s life. To invent another form of disciplined and covenanted relationship is a difficult matter for this Church. A same-gender marriage would clearly be deemed as marriage in every sense. The whole point of the traditional argument is, however, that it is not the same as marriage as this Church has practiced it, and cannot be the same, because it is same-gendered. This gives rise to the question whether a same-gender blessing might instead be sanctioned as a new rite.

We recognize that changes in practice could be contrary to the Constitution and this would need to be addressed through due processes. If this Church believes that a change in practice is required by the revelation of God and the movement of the Spirit it will seek ways to accomplish that change.

¹*Talanoa* is comprised two words: ‘... *tala* meaning talking or telling stories and *noa* meaning without concealment. ... *Talanoa* embraces our world views of how we can and ought to live and work together collectively, and relate to one another in a good relational way as different cultural members of society.” Winston Halapua, “Moana Waves: Oceania and Homosexuality.”

Contents

A. Introduction to the Report.....	2
A.1. The task of this Commission	2
A.2. The present circumstances	3
A.3. The Commission’s Task and Method.....	4
B. Offering a Rationale for same-gender marriage in this Church.....	5
B.1 ‘Why would our Church affirm and celebrate such relationships in this way?’	5
B.2 Does scripture permit such a rationale?.....	7
B.3 Supports for stepping beyond our tradition.....	10
B.4 Could same-gender 'marriage' be called marriage?.....	12
B.5 Can we change our understanding of marriage?	16
C. Assessing the above rationale for change.....	18
C.1. Introduction to Part C.....	18
C.2. The question of “fundamental doctrine”	18
C.3. Assessment with regard to scripture and doctrine.....	19
C.4. A theological engagement with the rationale offered.....	23
D. Responding to section C	31
D.1 Four broad concerns	32
E. The Blessing of Same-Gender Relationships instead of marriage?	33
E.1. What is at issue?	33
E.2. In what way does the Church ‘bless’, and what is ‘the blessing of a relationship’?.....	33
E.3. The Marriage Service itself as a ‘Blessing’	35
E.4. Blessing permanent, faithful, same-gender relationships?	35

Note: Within this document the term ‘this Church’ refers to the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

A. Introduction to the Report

A.1. The task of this Commission

A.1.1. In February 2013 the Standing Committee of Te Hinota Whanui/The General Synod of this Church created a Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions. This Commission is a response to a call ‘to make enquiry into the theological rationale for a Christian approach to the blessing and marriage of people in permanent, faithful same gender relationships, with a view to assessing such rationale in this Church’, and exists specifically ‘for the purpose of exploring the theological rationale above’.¹

A.1.2. The remaining introductory paragraphs prepare the ground for the key matters the body of the report addresses.

A.1.3. On the 19 August, 2013, a civil law change came into effect in Aotearoa-New Zealand: the Marriage Amendment Act (2013) removed the requirement for the two parties to a legal marriage to be of opposite gender. This change clearly allows the possibility for this Church to undertake the celebration of same-gender marriages and is also shows a significant shift in societal understandings. It is obvious, therefore, that a civil law change which opens the possibility of the Church officiating in same gender marriage should require particular attention and be the occasion for sustained debate.

It must be immediately noted that the civil laws of Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga (national territories served by this Church) do not allow for same-gender marriage. However, given that priests of this Church are licensed as marriage celebrants by the civil authorities of Aotearoa-New Zealand, the question arises as to whether priests in this Church should conduct marriages between same-gender couples in Aotearoa-New Zealand, as the civil law allows.

A.1.4. In the remainder of this report ‘permanent, faithful same-gender relationships’ will be written as ‘same-gender relationships’.

A.1.5. The Three-Tikanga Church

A.1.5.1. The Church’s theological statements on what it means to be church have emerged from the context and experience of being bicultural in Aotearoa-New Zealand and have provided a model for the wider regional Three-Tikanga Church. The Three-Tikanga Church reflects a postcolonial structure and an incarnational theology. We whakapapa to Christ through our baptism in Him which defines all our identity, our relationships and our connectedness with one another. Our whanaungatanga in Christ is affirmed through the stories and experiences of individuals and communities through the generations. In the Three-Tikanga Church we have the precedent for individuals and for communities to whakapapa to Christ through baptism.

- A.1.5.2. Baptism is the basis of the Church. A baptism model of church is ‘non-hierarchical, corporate and communal.’ All baptised persons are fully members of the Church and this is our primary form of identity. Our identity in baptism is expressed faithfully and powerfully in our context according to our tikanga.
- A.1.5.3. The Three-Tikanga Church is shaped on Gospel teachings and a Trinitarian belief of unity and diversity, and relationship between community and its members. An egalitarian, inclusive, whakapapa-based structure reflects our Christian belief and identity where differences are valued and respected within one Body/Whanau.
- A.1.5.4. Our Church’s Constitution/Te Pouhere is locally grounded in the Nation’s founding document, Te Tiriti/The Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty recognises and establishes the principle of partnership. The intention of the Treaty, as covenanted, is to provide protection; freedom to action; and guarantee rights and interests. These principles go far beyond the Treaty agreement and, while partnership and bicultural development are an essential part of the foundation of our Church, they are imperatives for living day to day according to the Gospel. Thus, this covenanted Church is founded on a high sense of moral and spiritual value based on Gospel and Treaty principles for just action in the search for truth. As such, the principle of partnership and bicultural development calls the Church to:
 - a. organize its affairs within each of the Tikanga;
 - b. be diligent in prescribing and in keeping open all avenues leading to the common ground;
 - c. maintain the right of every person to choose any particular cultural expression of the faith that is true to the Gospel.
- A.1.5.5. A theology of covenant, applied in context as above (A.1.5.4 a-c) provides a foundation for, but not limited to, our local theologies.

A.1.6. **The Hermeneutical Hui Process**

- A.1.6.1. The Three-Tikanga Church has shared in four Hermeneutical Hui. Through these Hui the Church has examined various biblical texts relating to human sexuality, and same-gender sexuality in particular. These Hui have produced significant discussion and a great deal of engagement between members of all Three Tikanga.
- A.1.6.2. A clear outcome of the Hui has been the reality that exegetical and hermeneutical study of scripture, and debate, has not produced agreement over questions of human sexuality.

A.2. **The Present Circumstances**

- A.2.1. Worldwide parts of the Anglican Communion have been wrestling with questions relating to the blessing of same-gender relationships, and more recently same-gender marriage. We must also recognize that this discussion and changes in practice in some parts of the Communion have been the occasion of considerable strife and pain for many people on both sides of the debate. Voices within this Church have been calling for some years for the creation of a liturgical form of blessing for same-gender couples. These calls come with the

understanding that couples be committed to monogamous and lifelong partnership. However, there have also been replies that the blessing of same-gender partnerships is not something this Church can undertake, regardless of the commitment of the parties. This debate has been located within a wider discussion within the Church on sexuality, and particularly same-gender sexual relationships.

A.3. The Commission's Task and Method

A.3.1. The Standing Committee of Te Hinota Whanui/General Synod requested the Commission to investigate a theological rationale for change. The first section of what follows will, therefore, outline a rationale in favour of a change in practice in order to undertake the marriage of same-gender couples in this Church. (We will indicate this rationale with a capital ... i.e. 'Rationale').

A.3.2. The second section involves sustained assessment of that Rationale, both as Christian theology, and especially in relation to the received doctrine of this Church.

Our task is then to discern fundamental doctrine as it arises from the sources specified and examine the impact of that doctrine upon the request for a change in practice.

A.3.3. The key questions therefore are these:

A.3.3.1. What Rationale is there for this Church to adopt the practice of marrying same-gender couples?

A.3.3.2. Is this Rationale that is coherent, sustainable, and against critique?

A.3.3.3. What, if anything, do the sources of fundamental doctrine have to say regarding the change in theology and practice being sought?

A.3.3.4. If, then, fundamental doctrine does enter into view, is the change sought in conflict with that fundamental doctrine, and constitutionally problematic; or is it not?

A.3.3.5. Further, the Commission is also required to wrestle with the most basic question, irrespective of constitutional matters; is freedom to celebrate same-gender marriage to be affirmed theologically, or it is to be declined? And on what basis?

A.3.3.6. Rather than marriage, should this Church offer same-gender couples a blessing of their relationship?

B. Offering a Rationale for same-gender marriage in this Church

The primary task of this group is to address the Rationale for same-gender marriage. The first question that such a rationale has to address is:

B.1. ‘Why would our Church affirm and celebrate such relationships in this way?’

B.1.1. The first response rests on the observation and testimony of some in our number that God appears to be at work in such relationships in a way that parallels our experience in heterosexual couples’ lives.

B.1.1.1. That is, God is blessing open same-gender relationships and through them blessing the church and the world. There is no question that this is a new thing for the Church to officially recognize. It would have been inconceivable for previous generations in terms of scripture or tradition.

B.1.2. This “inconceivability” is a deep point. It explains why, in a certain sense advocates for same gender marriage are willing to set aside some of what appears to be scriptural prohibitions – because it is held that they do not address the inconceivable - that is, faithful, prayerful Christians whose desire is to live in life-long, mutually consenting, loving relationships before God with a person of the same gender is simply inconceivable in the ‘mind of scripture.’ This is entirely analogous to the shift to the heliocentric universe after Copernicus. That the earth was not at the centre of the solar system (and Universe) was inconceivable to the church of the sixteenth and seventeenth century and required a radical re-reading of scripture.

B.1.2.1. To elaborate on this point somewhat: standardly there are a handful of texts that seem to directly block the way to the merest entertainment of a rationale for same-gender marriage, thus a rationale would be ruled as profoundly ‘against scripture.’ However, this is not necessarily the case.

B.1.2.2. Space does not permit the careful and full discussion of one of the texts, let alone all of them. Nonetheless, illustrative of the stance just indicated, we might take the much cited passage from Romans 1:18 – 32 – very briefly:

In the passage Paul is describing a culture in moral collapse. The people have turned from God and because they have been so wilful in this turning, God “gave them up in the lusts of their impurity.” (v.24) Lacking any sense of truth and living absolute lies (the principle lie being the denial of God) they give up their “natural relations” and “were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men.” In short, in complete absence of God and the truth, moral collapse ensues. Part of that moral collapse is seen in “envy, murder, strife, deceit ...” (v.29) and in the giving up of ‘natural desires’ for the good, including one’s natural sexual desires for the good.

All this begs the question: is what being described as “men committing shameless acts with men” anything like the same-gender relationships that we are being asked to affirm? What is being described by Paul is a world of damnation free of all truth; but what of people who of their nature find their life and their love affirmed in a caring mutual relationship with someone of the same gender? The point is that what Paul is addressing is a

serious issue for us all, but it has no particular bearing on the same gender relationships we are addressing since we are addressing relationships that avowedly are devoted to the good of each partner.

- B.1.2.3. It may well not be the case, then, that same-gender relationships, such as we are considering, are against scripture. Scripture does not directly address same-gender relationships as we have prescribed them in this discussion. It is the case that scripture has a great deal to say about ‘right relationships’ and, thus, Christian advocates of same-gender relationships are not abandoning scripture’s authority in these matters. This might be disappointing that we do not have some directly applicable texts on this matter, but this is the nature of the well-known “hermeneutical gap” between our world and the world of scripture. Put simply, some things in the present world do not directly correspond with the world of scripture.
- B.1.2.4. Unsurprisingly, scripture has nothing direct to say that is positive about same-gender relationships under consideration either. They are not beyond scripture, but in an important sense, not directly addressed by scripture.
- B.1.2.5. Following on from the discussion of Romans 1:28ff, and, because so often discussions return to this matter, we should ask the question: “what counts as “natural relations?” If scripture doesn’t offer the direct assistance some would hope for, we might turn to science to assist us. However, the recently published *Pilling Report*ⁱ warns us that the evidence turns out to be “complex and contested.” Further, “[T]he idea that science can give us a clear and unequivocal answers, even on its own terms let alone in the field of morality, turns out to be overly optimistic.” (§218) Nonetheless, we note that the American Psychiatric Society has long since deleted homosexuality from being a mental illness and thus an expected variation in the normal human population. Moreover, the Pilling Report itself counsels: “Rather than thinking about the human population in terms of a fixed binary division between two sets of people, those who are straight and those who are gay, it seems that we need to accept that while there is large majority of people who only ever experience heterosexual attraction and a smaller number who only experience homosexual attraction, there is also a significant minority of people who either experience some form of bisexual attraction or move between heterosexual and homosexual attraction at some point or points in their life.” (§200)ⁱⁱⁱ
- B.1.2.6. In sum, it would seem a good deal of scientific evidence would support people who claim to have same-gender attraction and reporting that this is “natural” to them and it would be “unnatural” for them to deny this desire or seek to desire people of the opposite sex. The point that there is not complete consensus should not surprise us as there is not scientific consensus on other controversial (moral) issues, such as global warming, but this does not stop (most of) us from altering our behaviour.

B.2. Does scripture permit such a rationale?

If scripture does not ban such relationships, then the question might be: does scripture permit such a rationale? The answer, according to advocates is, 'yes.'

- B.2.1. When we look at the life witness of Jesus, our Lord, the argument is that Jesus is radically inclusive. Richard Burridge writes:
“In seeking to follow Jesus, we are called not merely to obey his ethical ‘strenuous commands’ in the pursuit of holiness but also imitate his deeds and words, which call his hearers to merciful and loving acceptance of everyone, including and especially those whom some consider to be sinners, without preconditions.”^{iv}
Thus, if the ‘same mind’ is to be in us,’ then we would not deny the church’s presence through the sacrament of marriage in the lives of same-gender couples - since Christ has already gone ahead of us.
- B.2.2. There is also a much broader scriptural argument that supports the rationale for inclusion. In outline (for that is all that is possible here) a number of threads should be noted because the constant objection from those who would oppose a rationale for blessing and/or marriage of same-gender relationships is that it is “contrary to scripture.”
- B.2.3. In Hebrews 1:1 we read: 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'. This text while pointing its readers to a future as yet experienced, is none-the-less preoccupied with the history that precedes it, namely the history of the people of Israel contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Old Testament. The hoppers who constitute this recited history are people in Israel who could imagine beyond present circumstances to 'things not seen'. Thus faith might be described as much forward-looking, as rooted in a particular story, time and place. This is a theological thread of great importance that runs throughout Scripture, sometimes known as 'eschatology'. It is also a thread that creates a tension between living faithfully to what has been revealed, yet being open to the possibility that things: people and institutions, may change in the future, a future predicated but not wholly dependent on present realities.
- B.2.4. It has been pointed out that same-gender marriage may be described as being a step further than any question about attitudes to homosexuality, and any discussion of homosexuality within Scripture.^v It may also be said to introduce female-female intimate relationships back into the discussion although the biblical laws do not prohibit female-female sexual intimacy. The Old Testament does not discuss same-gender marriage, and arguably does not even address marriage at all. Although Genesis 2:24 is often cited as a foundation text for marriage between a man and a woman: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh," it is argued that such a text is not a commandment to be married, nor even a definition of marriage. Rather, given the broader context of the Genesis narrative as attempting to give meaning and understanding to origins (the literary term is an aetiology), this verse is explaining why it is that women and men become intimate. It does not, by definition, exclude homosexual intimacy, nor does it exclude the possibility that men and women will become sexually intimate with more than one individual.

- B.2.5. Scripture is clear in its mandate for inclusion and justice. Indeed, it may be suggested that there is a deep and urgent thread running throughout which searches for inclusion, that all God's creation be given dignity, respect, safety and a sense of belonging. The so-called 'Golden rule' (Lev. 19:18; and Matt. 7:12//Luke 6:31) provides a foundation for the basic importance of loving one's neighbour as oneself. In Isa. 56, the prophet witnesses to inclusion by insisting that foreigners and eunuchs are to be welcomed into God's presence: 'Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and do not let the eunuch say, "I am just a dry tree." For thus says the LORD: To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.'
- B.2.6. In Acts 10, Peter was visited by God in a dream and urged to accept what his own community had considered 'unclean': 'The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane".' Paul too, understood the urgent need for the Church to reach out beyond the boundaries, drawing the conclusion in Romans 10:12 that 'there is no distinction between Jew AND Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him.' From this, there developed a trajectory of inclusiveness in the Early Church and beyond.
- B.2.7. In the letter to the Ephesians there is offered a new characterization of holiness that is not related to grace, ethnicity or any other category of uncleanness, but rather to participation in a community of grace, tenderness, forgiveness and generosity: 'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children' (Eph. 4:30-5:1).
- B.2.8. Anglican priest and New Testament scholar AKM Adam asks: 'Why does God care about our relationships? First, God cares because the character of our relationships with one another is inseparable from the character of our relationships with God...The intensity and intimacy of a relationship increases its importance as a barometer of our relation to God'.^{vi} If we make marriage the starting point for our discussion, when we look to the New Testament witness what emerges is a focus on the theological importance of the character of marriage as a commitment that binds two people together for life. This is the case when we examine the words of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 19:6, for example), and Paul (1 Corinthians 7, for example). This aspect of the character of commitment bears a relationship with paragraph 1 above, because it has an eschatological dimension. It appears not to extend beyond the earthly dimension of believers' lives (Luke 20:35-36). In addition, the character of commitment is related to the character of God. Just as God is committed to human beings, a commitment intensified through the incarnation, so our relationships to one another, when covenanted in a sacred context, should be constant and life-long. God's commitment is not based on gender distinction, nor is God's call upon us made because of our gender, but because we are human: made in God's image. The call to constancy is important, because it does

not depend on one gender or another, rather the proclaimed willingness to be with the other for life, as God commits to humanity in Christ. All participants in the discussion on marriage should acknowledge that marriage is a human institution which changes throughout history. Indeed, this has been itself a constant and gradual change throughout the history of Israel and the Church. It follows that there is no reason in the Church's definition of marriage that should not permit change with regard to couples of the same-gender. It may be that the criterion of constancy, itself an aspect of discipleship, may provide a way to shift an impasse that sees on prohibition on same-gender marriage as the only clear line in Scripture, when in fact it is not so clear-cut.

- B.2.9. As noted above, there is no way to recount all the scriptural argumentation supportive of a rationale in the space of this report. The point is simply that the rationale cannot simply be dismissed as “contrary to scripture” since that is a matter of considerable debate.
- B.2.10. Advocates for same-gender marriage take further confidence from observing that the Church engaged in deep disagreement in the interpretation of scripture in relation to other issues, such as the support of apartheid, the subjugation of women in society, the exclusion of women from Holy Orders, divorce and remarriage, and slavery. While there are differences in each of these cases, the driving force for advocates for change to these policies has been the sense of radical inclusive love of God shown forth in the life of Jesus, that continued in the outworking of the Holy Spirit that poured out onto Gentiles, and has, the argument continues, been poured grace into the lives of same-gendered couples. In each of these cases, beginning at least with Jesus and the scriptural debate he had with the Devil in Luke, scripture has been used to oppose the radical grace of God.
- B.2.11. This returns us to the question that we opened with: ‘Why would our Church affirm and celebrate same-gender relationships with a marriage service?’ Mindful of the fact that it is always actually God who joins the marriage couple, the answer to the question is that we have the testimony of same-gender couples and those around them that, indeed, God has joined them in holy love. If this is true, and we knew it to be the case, it would be decisive, but it presents us with an epistemological problem- that is, ‘how can we really know what God is doing in the life of a couple?’
- B.2.12. Clearly, we cannot be sure of such claims any more than we can be sure about the limits of God’s loving action. It goes without saying that we cannot believe such claims ahead of experience but equally we cannot deny such claim as false ahead of experience because to do so would be to limit the omnipotence of God. In theological enquiry (and in hermeneutics) it cannot be that we simply affirm the answer we want (and equally it cannot be that we deny or exclude claims because they are not what we want). This might lead us to side with our tradition. However, we must ask, how long should we do so? Advocates for same-gender marriage say that it is time to allow change.

B.3. Supports for stepping beyond our tradition

Advocates for change claim two related supports for stepping beyond our tradition.

B.3.1. **First support**

B.3.1.1. The first of these supports comes from the epistemological observations just made, that there is no conclusive test prior to the facts of experience that we can have in these matters. Jesus offers guidance though suggesting that we should test ‘after the fact’ - “By their fruits you shall know them... (Matthew 7:16 – 18). This would suggest supporting the proposal of making the institution of marriage available, with all its disciplines and graces, is something that the Church should do and, in the fullness of time, really test the claim of same-gender couples that “God has joined them in love.”

B.3.1.2. It is worth recalling that indirect illumination on these matters is suggested by the developments Acts chapters 14 and 15. This was a moment in the life of the Early Church when the leadership was being tested to discern the possible outworking of the Holy Spirit which, if it were found to be so, would be against scripture and tradition. Likewise, Jesus’ teaching on the keeping of the Sabbath command in the Ten Commandments suggests that we can look for the work of the Holy Spirit outside scripture when challenged by a new situation or pastoral crisis.^{vii} Clearly, this is not a perfunctory jettisoning of scripture and the existing tradition, but a following of the Spirit into Truth and requires the deepest levels of discernment for the Church to ‘hear what the Spirit is saying’.

B.3.2. **Second support**

B.3.2.1. The second support for the stepping beyond current practice is that ‘we would be inclined to believe their testimony because an epistemological preference for the poor.’ This is a deep point about theological method. We are acutely aware in this part of the world that we need to forge theology that is not born of the singular oppressive experience of patriarchal, white, heterosexual men; we choose to privilege the experience of the ‘other’ – the outcast and the stranger. In short, it is our calling “to go to other side of the road” and do our work standing in the ditch. This is methodological approach is basically “liberationist” and as such, shares the strategies of liberation theologies of the last six decades (or more) in that it prioritizes the testimony and experience of the marginalized, while at the same time, exercising a ‘hermeneutic of suspicion’ in relation to the tradition that excludes those same marginalized persons and groups.

B.3.2.2. The Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008 encouraged the members of the Communion to ‘listen to the experience of homosexual people.’ It is clear that same-gender couples report that God blesses them in and through their same-gender relationships. That is, their experience is that the Holy Spirit is at work in their committed relationships and they want the Church to recognize this aspect of their experience.

- B.3.2.3. If we are to “listen” to the experience of same-gender couples and it is counter to the accepted view, the question arises: whose experience is taken to be normative or determinative? (Now Archbishop) Winston Halapua’s comment in his writing about “Moana Waves: Oceania and Homosexuality” is apposite: “Whose theology do we maintain in relation to human sexuality and sexual orientation? Whose ideological context is theology informed by working in partnership with science and other disciplines? Is theology contextual, allowing for different voices including those of indigenous peoples?”^{viii}
- B.3.2.4. In a certain sense this issue is exacerbated when we have what is acknowledged a minority proportion of the population whose experience is never going to be “normal” or “typical” in a majoritarian definition of those terms. Our Three-Tikanga experience should make us alert to the domination of the white-patriarchal tradition and the definition, in this case, of ‘normal’ or ‘normative’ by the heterosexual majority.
- B.3.2.5. Thus, the inclination to believe the testimony of same-gender couples and their supporters is a matter of ‘theological methodology.’ This methodology would be honest about this ‘preference for the poor’ in the approach, extending the institution of marriage to same-gender couples, and await the outcome of the ‘fruits test’ as suggested above.
- B.3.3. Finally, against advocates for same-gender marriage it might be argued that their case would seem to not preclude bigamist marriage. The response, however, is that, by definition, advocates are arguing for a monogamous relationship that is mutually consenting and non-exploitative. It is accepted that some relationships are ‘by definition’ structurally unsound and bigamist relationships are in that category – along with, say, the marriage of minors.
- B.3.4. In sum, advocates for ‘the rationale’ believe that the answer to the question: ‘why would the Church offer same-gender marriage to same-gender couples?’ is:
- The testimony of these couples and others in the Church is that God is joining them in holiness and love.
 - There is no convincing scriptural block to us entertaining such claims.
 - There is the life and witness of Jesus that encourages us to believe that God would be pouring out his love on all, including those who find themselves ‘oriented’ as GLBT and drawn into a same-gender relationship.
 - We are inclined to believe the testimony of these same-gender couples and those around them as a matter of ‘theological methodology’.
 - We need to make the institution of marriage available to same-gender couples who desire it, with all its joys and responsibilities, in order to know in time whether, in fact, God does join these couples in love.
- B.3.5. The questions that arise at this point are twofold: would a life-long and loving same-gender relationship conform to the shape of marriage as we know it today – or, at least, as is laid out in our Prayer books? If it did not (potentially) conform then it would seem that we would have a substantive difficulty.

Secondly, we might also enquire, ‘what is marriage for?’ or, ‘what might we expect from married couples?’ in order that we can determine that they are bearing the ‘good fruit’ of the institution?’

B.4. Could same-gender ‘marriage’ be called marriage?

B.4.1. If, in a kind of ‘thought experiment,’ we were to take the heterosexual nature of a traditional marriage as not being a necessary condition of a marriage, and then we were to set out the key theological qualities and purposes of a marriage relationship as developed in our Prayer books (the place where it is often said our Anglican theology is to be found) we might see if a same-gender relationship conforms to the same pattern. So, for a same-gender relationship, the question would be: can we set forth something that is theologically coherent and in continuity with our traditional understanding of marriage? At the same time, we might put pressure on the claim that the heterosexual identity of the couple is, in fact, an a priori necessary condition for a Christian marriage.

B.4.2. **Union**

The First Form of Marriage Liturgy gives expression to one of the key theological characteristics of a marriage, namely ‘union’: *Marriage is the gift of God, 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.* Given this is one feature of marriage that Jesus identifies in his dialogue in Mark, we might start here.

B.4.2.1. There is no doubt that the union into one flesh has historically manifested itself in a subordination of the woman’s identity into the man’s.^{ix} We do not hold to such an understanding today. Following the seminal reading of Phyllis Tribble, we hear the relevant Genesis passages that serve as the basis of Jesus “one flesh” response to the Pharisees as being: “In the very act of distinguishing female from male, the male describes her as ‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ (2:23). These words speak unity, solidarity, mutuality, and equality.”^x Of course, this begs the question: do all these conditions or qualities depend on the necessary condition of heterosexual differentiation? What same-gender couples report is that they do not. Recall that the problem that brought about the creation of Eve was aloneness (2:18) and there was no companion ‘fit’ for the earth creature. So it is that GLBT couples report they find ‘fit’ companions in their same-gender partners.

B.4.2.2. A second element of union in marriage is that it represents a particular intensification relational aspect of being human and imaging the divine Trinity. The exclusiveness and totality of the marriage union becomes a sign of the depth of the commitment of one for another. It is a quintessential expression of ‘living-for-other.’ Because of the totality of the commitment in marriage, a commitment of body, mind, and spirit, marriage mirrors the union of Christ with the Church and it is no surprise that Paul should reach for this metaphor in Ephesians 5. It would be wrong, however, to see the metaphor as pointing to some ontological heterosexual structure to right relations. Clearly, the marriage metaphor is used for those taking religious life vows regardless of the gender of the religious which indicates that the power and value of the image is in the totality and

exclusivity of the commitment made incarnate in the life of the couple or the religious person.

- B.4.2.3. A third element of the nature of the union and the totality of it is that it is in this context, and this context alone, that we believe sexual intimacy can happen – this is how a sexual relationship should be rightly ordered. Such intimacy is not required in a marriage but, because sexual intimacy catches us at our most vulnerable and most at risk of exploitation and misunderstanding, a relationship that presupposes the permanence and faithfulness of a lifelong union is appropriately the right relationship for such intimacy. Given same-gender couples enjoy sexual intimacy; it is in the context of a union that this should occur.

B.4.3. Procreation

A consequence of sexual union can be the procreation of children.

- B.4.3.1. In the 1662 Prayerbook we are told that the first purpose of marriage is that “It was ordained for the procreation of children,” but this has been rightly amended in our later liturgies so that we have the likes of: “In marriage, husband and wife belong together, providing mutual support and a stability in which their children may grow.” The shift has occurred because the procreation of children: may be desired in many marriages, but not desired in all, and not desired as a result of every sex act, and not possible for some who are infertile; and these variables often don’t diminish, and certainly don’t necessarily diminish, the quality of the marriage partnership in any way.
- B.4.3.2. We live in a world that understands sexual love, and erotic desire expressed between lifelong partners, differently than it did in 1662. Much of what would have been defined as “fornication” in 1662 would now be acceptable in a mutual sexual relationship. Our present liturgies acknowledge more overtly that the procreation of children is just one ‘good’, but not the only ‘good’ to come through that love and desire.^{xi} It is true the 1662 acknowledges those who are beyond childbearing age having a legitimate marriage, but it could not, and clearly does not, conceive of a world where contraception is a reality and sexual intimacy, as a result, takes on a different quality as being for joy of the sexual encounter alone.
- B.4.3.3. We might recall that humankind is charged with the responsibility to “fill the earth” (Gen 1:28) but clearly same-gendered couples are ‘by nature’ excluded from what appears to be divine intention in marriage coupling. But, firstly, we note that it is humankind as whole that is charged with this responsibility, not individual couples. Secondly, if we conceive of marriage as the relationship for expression of rudimentary biological essentialism and heterosexual complementarity, then it narrows the notion of procreation too much. There are other ways relationships can be ‘procreative.’ We see exactly this in the lives of exemplary service and love of, say, Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Same-gendered relationships have us consider the ways that marriage is a kind of relationship that we expect to be purposefully directed towards the flourishing of humanity. However, because marriage is a “blessed” union we expect, like other blessed relationships, the couple will

be a blessing, not just for themselves but for the whole of the kingdom in some way – that is, part of both deeper and wider flourishing in creation. We have same gender-couples in the Church who are evidence of this ‘blessedness.’

- B.4.3.4. It is the case that GLBT couples successfully care for children they either adopt, or have by way of birth-technology, such as surrogacy or sperm donation. Of course, such couples will be faulted parents just like heterosexual couples, but given the advantage children have in a two-parent family one imagines (and no doubt there is research on-going about this matter) that growing up with homosexual parents is statistically better than growing up in a single parent family. It is the case that marriage creates a household that is particularly well shaped for child rearing and this is something we can continue to hold regardless of whether the couple is heterosexual or homosexual. There is also the deeper point we would want to affirm that married couples who choose not to have children, or are unable to have children, would still evidence a kind of ‘fecundity.’ That is, marriage is a relationship that is fruitful – it is a blessed relationship and in turn and brings further blessing to the world (that blessing may or may not be children).^{xii}
- B.4.3.5. Finally, one has to register a certain caveat when speaking of the marriage relationship, being a faithful and lifelong relationship, as ideal in so many respects for the raising and protection of children. One would not want to imply any judgment of implicit failure on single parents, many of whom do a fabulous job of being parent to children. Nor would one want to suggest that there is an implicit critique of extended family arrangements, particularly in Maori or Pacifica cultures, that provide a stable and rich ‘other-than-nuclear-family’ context for children to grow and flourish.

B.4.4. Covenant

- B.4.4.1. Another key feature of the Marriage Liturgies is their covenantal nature. The couple makes personal declarations and life-long promises to each other – “I plight thee my troth.” In today’s world it would be an easy mistake to read this aspect of the liturgy in terms of contract. However, it is so much more than a contract; it is a sacred commitment where the couple vow to life-long faithfulness that hopes to match the faithfulness of God in keeping covenant with God’s people. Covenant entails constancy and faithfulness in love. This is obviously a countercultural witness in a world that tends towards the casualization and commodification of relationships – including sexually intimate ones. Since relationships sometimes become strained because of failure and inadequacy in one or other partner, covenant inevitably demands qualities of mercy and forgiveness. All couples, heterosexual or homosexual, should be given utmost support in such a commitment.
- B.4.4.2. Covenant is a central and constant theme in scripture and, as already noted, the constancy of God’s people is lamentable at a number of points – perhaps paramount in our minds is the Book of Hosea, which throughout the book runs an extended metaphor of a faithless marriage between Hosea/ God and Gomer/ Israel. It is worth noting that scripture that is

replete with covenants between human individuals are rare in scripture, but the standout example is the oath Ruth makes to her Mother-in-law, Naomi. Because of the remarkable nature of this commitment it is a suggested reading in Wedding Services. We do well to further note it is the quality of the commitment Ruth makes to her Mother-in-law that makes it entirely appropriate for a marriage between two people regardless of their gender.

B.4.5. Gift and Giving

- B.4.5.1. While it is not required in our liturgies, it is often the case that the marriage couple exchange rings or some other symbolic items. These are acknowledged as tokens of the greater gift of their lives with each other. The joyous dynamic of giving and taking is expressed when the two humans meet each other – “this last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this shall be called *ish* for out of *ishshah* this one was taken.” This dynamic, which is more than just ‘taking’ as in the vows of the 1662 BCP, is more adequately captured in the vows “N, I take you to be my wife. All I have I offer you; what you have to give I gladly receive”. In a same-gender marriage relationship the giving to each other is just as it is in a differently gendered relationship.
- B.4.5.2. The giving of oneself and 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. We are not self-made, nor self-sustaining. Even the language in which we think and express ourselves is given to us in the profound interrelation that God-given human existence involves. The particular intimacy of marriage is a particular intense form of this giving and receiving selves in the interplay of gift and giving.
- B.4.5.3. The Divine life of the Trinity, with us from the beginning, made incarnate in Christ, celebrated in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, shown forth in Spirit-filled ministry, is revealed in joyous and mutual giving and taking. Given the overflowing, abundant, and inclusive nature of this Divine giving in Persons, within the giving of each-to-the-other a same gender couple experience the life of the Divine.

B.4.6. Forming a Household

- B.4.6.1. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife...” There is no doubt that marriage has, in some measure, represented the forming of a new and distinct household and this has sometimes been in an amount of tension with the fact it is often the joining of families. Parental consent/blessing has superseded the ‘giving away’ by the Father, which (aside from features noted above) denoted family blessing on the union. As important as this feature of marriages can be (especially in some cultural settings) the blessing/support from the couple’s respective family is at best desirable and the couple can form a household apart from the wishes of their family. That the couple intentionally and freely form such a household is very significant though. It has already been stated above that a married relationship is an ideal context for the nurture of children; it achieves this good nurture by being a stable and loving household. It is also true that stable loving households are ‘building

blocks' of a good society and as such marriage has been rejoiced in as a 'good' of society. Same-gendered relationships participate in these same goods and this participation would be celebrated by the Church in their marriage ceremony.

- B.4.6.2. One of the key features of a marriage is that it is this covenanted forming of a household, a micro *basileia*, and as such it shares with other covenanted households (e.g. religious orders)^{xiii} the hope it will share in the blessings of the first church after Pentecost – “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.” Acts 4:32ff – and the ultimate hope of the kingdom to come.
- B.4.6.3. The analogy between the marriage household and the religious household is worthy of further consideration^{xiv}. A key element of both kinds of household is the discipline and purpose of each is for 'sanctification.' To often our discussion of marriage focuses on the purposes of procreation and/ or faithfulness but it is clear that sanctification is the third leg in what might be described as a 'third leg' in a 'three-legged' stool of the good purposes of marriage. As a sanctifying discipline with a ancient roots in the church and beyond, marriage has been the way couples have taken on and lived out the discipline as a couple. Again, given many other religious households are single-sex, why not the married household?
- B.4.6.4. As a household, '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 re-remembering (anamnesis) of Christ's love. The couple is both an example of Christ's self-giving love and is to model their love on Christ's example. Given Christ's example, it is an odd requirement to say that the marriage relationship, a covenanted household, can only be a valid re-remembering of self-giving love if it is heterosexual in nature.

B.5. Can we change our understanding of marriage?

- B.5.1. Christian marriage liturgies have always been an amalgam of Christian texts and the 'texts' provided by the prevailing culture and cultures of the families of the couple.^{xv} Historical study of Christian marriage shows that “in the earliest periods of the Church's life” there is a “lack of evidence for anything that could be called specifically Christian.”^{xvi} Thus, “there was nothing noticeably different about Christian marriages, about the way they originated, the way they were lived, or (in some instances) in the way they were terminated.”^{xvii} Marriage was the last sacrament accepted into the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. For Anglicans it is not usually considered a sacrament, certainly not a “Sacrament of Christ.” The distinctiveness of (so called) Christian Marriage comes from the Christian individuals in the marriage and this is attested to in the fact that our Province requires that one or both of the couple are baptized. It is worth noting that the recent conferences of The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation preferred to speak of “the marriage of Christians rather than of 'Christian marriage.’”^{xviii} The idea that marriage is either uniquely Christian or a sacrosanct, timeless, immutable institution is misplaced.

- B.5.1.1. The first thing to note is that it could not be claimed that, taken diachronically, the Church has spoken univocally about marriage. Rather, our understanding of marriage has changed significantly (as one might expect) over the centuries and this is reflected in the differences between the 1662 Prayerbook and the 1989 Prayerbook. For instance, in the 1662 Prayerbook, the second in the threefold declared purpose of marriage is: It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.
- B.5.1.2. This comes directly from 1 Corinthians 7:2 ff. But this declared intention does not appear in any of the liturgies of the 1989 Prayerbook,^{xix} perhaps because it is hard to find a positive evaluation of marriage in this chapter of 1 Corinthians. Reference to that passage of scripture and the principles arising from it has been largely erased from our current theology.^{xx} More significantly though it is worth noting that (in as much as liturgy is not just words but words and actions) the fact that the question (and the ensuing drama between the father of the bride, and the bridegroom) “Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man?” is no longer present in the 1989 Prayerbook. This is indicative of a deep change in our understanding of marriage. We no longer think of women as chattels nor as subordinates^{xxi}, but as equal and mutual participants in marriage. This shift in our understanding (and, in particular, our reading of Ephesians 5) cannot be overstated. Only the most perverse resolve to ignore the profound importance to humankind that the liberation of women entails could claim that this is an insignificant change in our expressed theology.^{xxii}
- B.5.1.3. We need to note then that our theology of marriage has not been static. It has changed. The argument for the inclusion of GLBT couples into institution of marriage is that it is further progressive and liberative change.^{xxiii}
- B.5.1.4. Marriage patterns a feature found in some species in nature, namely pair bonding. Some versions of it can be found in many human cultures. These two observations give rise to a judgment about the innate ‘naturalness of marriage’ and an easy utterance of “marriage is a gift of God in creation.”^{xxiv} The risk, however, is to hear this statement as a foundational claim. That is, that marriage is somehow a first principle made manifest at the beginnings of human existence. Moreover, this statement borrows all too easily on limited observations in nature and in human cultures and can hardly be thought to be sound inductive reasoning. Marriage is, in large measure, a cultural invention and can and does change as culture and theology changes.

C. Assessing the above rationale for change

C.1. Introduction to Part C

While part B has offered a rationale for change and it must be assessed. Such a rationale is certainly a matter of debate, and will give rise to differing theological responses. Moreover, as earlier, the rationale offered must also be weighed with regard to the fundamental doctrine of this Church within the frame laid out by the constitution.

In the following sections this report offers engagement with the rationale on the basis of key questions:

- I. How does the rationale measure against the authorities enjoined in its Constitution: the formularies and the core authority of Holy Scripture? To address this two questions are asked:
 - a. Is the change, or the rationale, ‘contrary to the doctrine of this Church?’ (C.3.1. below)
 - b. Is the change in practice recommended in the rationale, or the rationale itself, ‘contrary to scripture?’ (C.3.2.)
- II. Further, given that the Church is at liberty to decide whether it has been wrong in the past, and whether its doctrine ought to be changed (whatever legal process might be entailed), the rationale ought to be critiqued on a biblical and theological basis independent of questions of constitutional and legal matters as such. A critique of the rationale must be offered, and an opposing view elaborated in order for the proposal to be properly engaged. (C.4.)

Before turning to examine the doctrine of this Church as it relates to marriage, explanation must be made of the place of doctrine and scripture in the Constitution.

C.2. The question of “fundamental doctrine”

- C.2.1. The constitution of this Church defines a body of core belief essential to its faith and practice, and even defines its identity. This body is the “fundamental doctrine”, which is not detailed in any specific confessional statement (unlike the Reformed Westminster Confession, for example), but is rather defined by references to its sources. In a fashion reminiscent of Hooker’s method, this Church is directed to Christian scripture, and in particular to the witness of scripture to “the doctrine of Christ”. In order to discern the “doctrine of Christ” this Church determines that scripture is to be read with the enabling of the formularies – named as “The Book of Common Prayer (1662); Te Rawhiri; The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons; The Thirty Nine Articles; A New Zealand Prayer Book – He Karakia Minehare o Aotearoa”.
- C.2.2. Within the Constitution this identification of core doctrine is protected from change. In the view of this Commission, to alter this Church’s theology and practice in a way which contravenes this entrenched doctrine is not possible without changing that doctrine, but such change is not permitted by the constitution itself. Certain changes from received practice and theology are not

problematic, and have continuously occurred across our history, but *not when those changes are in any specific or identifiable conflict with the fundamental doctrine as identified by the Constitution*. The Constitution itself lays out the process for determining whether any particular change to the formularies involves a change to fundamental doctrine and this process finally relies upon appeal to the Tribunal on Doctrine. Once all relevant bodies have consented to a change (including two of General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui) the Tribunal on Doctrine is available to hear any appeal that is made and to determine whether the change made has contravened the received fundamental doctrine.

- C.2.3. Therefore, in the view of this Commission, for this Church to make changes to fundamental doctrine may be possible, most likely via a process involving an Act of the Parliament of New Zealand in order to change the Constitution. Further, we may note the liturgies for ordination of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, which are directly mentioned by the Constitution. Within these liturgies significant emphasis is laid upon the maintenance of doctrine ‘as this Church has received it’. For ordained officers of this Church to act in a way that is contrary to the fundamental doctrine they have undertaken to ‘hold to’, ‘set forth’ and ‘maintain’ raises significant challenge^{xxv}.

C.3. Assessment with regard to scripture and doctrine

C.3.1. **Is the proposal contrary to the doctrine of this Church?**

If the proposal is contrary to the thrust of scripture then that itself is enough to indicate that it is contrary to the doctrine of this Church. For example, the marriage charge in the 1662 prayer book specifically places marriage within the context of biblical teaching:

I require & charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful.

Nonetheless, it is well worth exploring further the formularies, and the doctrine enshrined in them, in order to fully engage with the rationale offered in Part A. Moreover, doing so further illuminates this Church’s reading of scripture as the formularies provide the lenses through which to discern the witness of scripture in contentious matters.

C.3.1.1. **The existing doctrine of this Church and fundamental doctrine in regard to marriage.**

C.3.1.1.1. The historic Anglican Church, rooted in the Church of England, has always seen marriage as between a man and a woman. Not only is marriage between two men or two women a matter of silence, same-gender sexual relationships have, themselves, been regarded as incompatible with scripture and therefore outside of church practice. The issue then is: is the gender of the parties to marriage a matter of “fundamental doctrine” or one of those more incidental matters in which the received theology and practice may readily be revised?

- C.3.1.1.2. In broad terms there is no doubt that marriage is in some way a matter of fundamental doctrine for this Church. The existence of the marriage ceremonies in both the Book of Common Prayer (1662) and A New Zealand Prayer Book – He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa, indicates that certain matters relating to marriage will belong to fundamental doctrine, but does not indicate that every matter that might arise is covered. Further, the Thirty Nine Articles only speak of marriage in rejecting marriage as a “sacrament of the gospel” (XXV) and to allow for the marriage of Deacons, Priests and Bishops (XXXII).
- C.3.1.1.3. However, given the way the Constitution of this Church entrenches fundamental doctrine, the formularies in existence at the time of the enactment of the Constitution seem to be the most significant. This is because any formulary, such as A New Zealand Prayer Book – He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa, must be regarded as agreeing with the existing formularies when it was legitimated – constitutionally it cannot have revised the doctrine in existing formularies, and were it hypothetically argued to have done so, by definition it did not and must be read in agreement with them. In light of this, we turn directly to the marriage service of the Book of Common Prayer (1662).
- C.3.1.1.4. The service for the solemnisation of marriage in the Book of Common Prayer (1662) is quite explicit in describing the parties to marriage as a woman and a man, notwithstanding potentially neutral references to companionship and “a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication”. (Of course, the first purpose ascribed to marriage is procreation, but later the service recognises that marriages will occur within which there can be no hope or intent for procreation and instructs in such cases that the priest omit a prayer for fruitfulness in childbearing. Procreation is therefore not essential to marriage, and marriage that cannot result in it is not by nature problematic.)

Naming of the parties as a man and a woman occurs in the introductory paragraph, where the congregation is welcomed and the purpose of the ceremony is declared: “to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, an institute of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church”. More follows, referencing St Paul and Christ's miracle at the wedding in Cana.

Throughout the exchange of vows the man-woman nature of marriage is assumed in both the instructions and directions and within the declarations and vows themselves in the use of “man” and “woman” and of “husband” and “wife”.

Throughout the prayers that follow references to marriages blessed by God in scripture provide the anchor for praying blessing upon the man and woman joined in the ceremony.

The final obligatory act of the service, given that the sermon text and Holy Communion are both optional, is two prayers of benediction. The first names the parties as a man and a woman, and the second looks to Eve and Adam as the prototype of marriage.

C.3.1.1.5. Marriage in 'A New Zealand Prayer Book' - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

Notwithstanding that the primacy accorded the Book of Common Prayer (1662) in framing doctrine we turn to a brief glance at He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

A few key references demonstrate the emphasis on the most fundamental point of doctrine: that the parties to marriage are a man and a woman, and this is so because God has created humans in this way and ordained the union of man and woman in doing so.

While there are three marriage rites available, and therefore a significant variety of words at varying points, all three rites name the partners to marriage as husband and wife and we might say it is assumed the partners to marriage are a woman and a man.

So, for example, the final blessing is to be chosen from one of four offered independent of which rite is utilised. The two English language blessings are specific in praying for God's blessing on the marriage because God has created humans as man and woman and on this basis God's blessing is appropriate:

All praise and glory to you most gracious God, for in the beginning you created us men and women. Grant your blessing then, we pray, to N and N, so that in marriage they may be a source of blessing to each other and to all, and live together in holy love until their lives' end. Amen.

All praise and blessing to you, God of love, creator of the universe, maker of man and woman in your likeness, source of blessing for married life. All praise to you for you have created courtship and marriage, joy and gladness, feasting and laughter, pleasure and delight. May your blessing come in full upon N and N. May they know your presence in their joys and in their sorrows. May they reach old age in the company of friends and come at last to your eternal kingdom. Amen.

We note the two blessings offered in te reo Maori simply designate the couple as 'korua'. This should not be taken as implying a different doctrinal understanding.

- C.3.1.1.6. Bearing in mind the Constitution, and the establishment of "the doctrine of Christ" witnessed in scripture and read through the formularies, the scriptural material and the role it plays in the framing of the service is doctrinally of greatest significance in the marriage rite. The assumption throughout is that the parties to marriage are a man and a woman and this is not incidental. The service turns upon references to the creation of humans as male and female and marriage as a creation blessing of God uniting a woman and a man, and further that such opposite-gender union is an estate which is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church. Whatever differing views, both for

and against, members and leaders of this Church currently hold, in regard of same-gender marriage the fundamental doctrine of the Book of Common Prayer (1662) is plain, and so is that of A New Zealand Prayer book – He Karakia Minihare o Aotearoa: marriage is between a woman and a man, and is not conceived of otherwise within the frame of the rite and the scripture it gathers up.

C.3.2. Is the proposal ‘contrary to scripture’?

The fundamental provisions of the Constitution of this Church enshrine scripture as the final authority for the faith and practice of this Church. Scripture is to be read with the guidance of the existing formularies and received doctrine, and governs the life of this Church.

- C.3.2.1. The Anglican New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia He Mihinare o Aotearoa states in the formularies before the marriage liturgy: 'A wedding is one of life's great moments, a time for good wishes, feasting and joy. St. John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion, and gave there a sign of new beginnings' (p. 779). At the end of these (and following words) there is an unacknowledged quotation from the Apostle Paul: 'Love is patient and kind. Love never comes to an end' (1 Corinthians 13:4, 8). Contained with the three forms of the marriage liturgy, with varying degrees of emphasis, is an affirmation of marriage being a gift of God the Creator; of marriage being a sign of unity between husband and wife; of marriage being a stable environment within which children may grow; and marriage being a serious and life-long commitment. While the presence of Scripture is not always overt in the words of the liturgy, its presence is clear. Scripture is consistent with its affirmation of the particular relationship and complementarity of the woman and the man.
- C.3.2.2. Scripture does not provide a neat and recognisable definition of marriage. We should not necessarily expect it to do so. The books of the Bible were written over a period of many years, in different genres, and by different individuals who wrote from, and into social, cultural, and political contexts far removed from our own. While the 'beads' of Scripture are many and varied, the 'thread' that binds them together appears to indicate a consistent hallowing of gender difference in human relationships.
- C.3.2.3. The 'beads' that indicate the importance of gender difference in relationships may be presented as follows: Genesis 1:27-28, 2:22-24, 24:67, 29:22,23; Deuteronomy 24:5; Judges 1:12; Ruth 4:13; 1 Samuel 17:25, 18:20,21, 25:40-42; Esther 2:16-18; Proverbs 5:18-19, 12:4, 18:22, 19:14, 20:6-7, 30:18-19, 31:10; Song of Songs; Isaiah 54:5; Malachi 2:14,15; Matthew 19:3-7; Mark 10:6-9; Luke 2:4,5; John 2:1,2; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18-19; Hebrews 13:4-7; Revelation 19:7-9, 21:9-14. Immediately it is important to acknowledge that these 'beads', when taken individually do not point to what is understood as Christian marriage in its fullest sense today. So caution must be paid to simply lining the beads up in order and leaving it at that. Worth noting none-the-less, is the predominance of references about male and female (presumably intimate) relationships in the book of

Proverbs and the Song of Songs. Both books derive from the Jewish Wisdom tradition, a tradition which broadly speaking, contains observations on life, and instructions about how to live. The point is that regardless of the meaning or discomfort at some of the observations and apparent 'wisdom', we find the stress on intimate relationships between the man and the woman. This is not of course to exclude other possibilities, but we tend to observe what was perhaps considered to be faithful to God's will in creation, and what was considered determinate for how humans should properly relate to one another in intimacy.

C.3.2.4. The 'thread' that binds these texts (or pericopes) together is the narrative arc of Scripture which is central to the way this Church has expressed itself in the marriage liturgies of 1662 and 1989. The narrative arc strongly suggests there is something of great significance in the creation of two beings, male and female. It also suggests there is something about this creation indicative of God's overall plan for creation and for the continuance of that created order through reproduction. The procreation of humans perpetuates God's relationship with creation, a relationship manifest in presence of God in humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

C.3.2.5. The presence of the story of Jesus' miracle at the wedding at Cana in the marriage liturgy is both interesting and significant, and demands our attention. It is significant that John chooses this miracle as the opening one in his Gospel. This miraculous creation of the wine from the water is both rooted in the narrative arc of Scripture, and transcendent of it. It builds on the creation account in Genesis, where every created thing points beyond itself to something new and potentially new after that. Creation happens in pairs: heaven and earth, light and dark, sun and moon, sea and dry land, animals and plants, and finally humans, male and female. The thread that runs throughout John's gospel is the incarnation, the joining of divinity and humanity, of heaven and earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The eschatological wedding feast presents a transcended view of that incarnational joy. The union of male and female in marriage, including sexual intimacy, is therefore determined as normative and indicative of God's intention in creation. It is a thread constant throughout Scripture, even if at times it wavers or frays.

C.3.2.6. According to this reading of scripture, overall the proposal for change in the practice of this Church is here assessed as contrary to relevant scriptural texts and to the overall thrust of scripture regarding marriage and sexual intimacy.

C.4. **A theological engagement with the rationale offered.**

It is important the assessment of the Rationale for marriage of same-gender couples offered in Part A includes a substantial critique. If we ask 'can we make a case for changing our practice?' the answer is undoubtedly 'yes, of course we can argue a case'. Some sort of case can be made for all sorts of changes. The vital question is this: does argument stand up, or are its flaws too great? We do not attempt a 'knock-down argument' so much as indicate some important lines of theological debate.

- C.4.1. Two strands of engagement are offered here: first, a strong challenge is made against the claim that scripture does not speak directly on the matter of same-gender sexuality, and second, there is a challenge to the overall thought that human identity as male and female is not significant for marriage.

Can the Spirit lead us in new ways? Absolutely! Can we discern the Spirit leading us where the scripture as a whole is consistent in forbidding? As above, the Doctrine of this Church would tell us ‘No’, and for good reason. The authority of scripture belongs to our understanding that scripture witnesses to us the revelation of God, and we cannot contradict scripture when it speaks with one voice on any matter. Clarity and honesty in listening to what the Spirit has to say to the Church in scripture is, therefore, of utmost importance. This is surely what the doctrine and Constitution of this Church enshrine as ‘Anglican’.

C.4.2. A brief challenge to the way the Rationale of Part A must read scripture.

C.4.2.1. Reading particular passages such as Romans 1

- C.4.2.1.1. It is certainly true that an enormous amount of material, both scholarly and popular, has been written on the few scriptural texts that mention homo-sexuality/same-gender sexual activity. Debate rages about the reference of particular Greek words in the New Testament, and what the author was talking about. Much of this debate appears ideologically driven – the desire to promote a particular view on sexuality can overly influence the way texts are read. Scholars simply do not agree, and we recognise that here.
- C.4.2.1.2. What then of the texts that have always been read as speaking against same-gender sexual expression? A brief discussion of Romans 1 is offered in the Rationale above, and a brief response is required here.
- C.4.2.1.3. Overall the Letter to the Romans outlines the good news of God in Jesus Christ, and particularly expands on the way that Jesus is the fulfilment of all God has been doing to save the world from the beginning of history and beyond. The early chapters involve an attempt to show that Jew and non-Jew alike are in need of Jesus, and that a Jewish relationship with God through the covenant and Old Testament law does not mean Jesus is any less essential.
- C.4.2.1.4. At the heart of all this is the problem of human sin. As Paul writes to the Church in Rome he describes sin in a way which pictures a distortion of our fundamental being and inclinations. On this basis we may read Paul’s list as ‘the sort of things that express the fact that ALL of us are in the same place on this’. Reading Romans 1 this way lines up with the claim that Jesus did not reduce our understanding of our sinfulness – actually He increased it, so that we know all-too-well we are all ‘sinners’.
- C.4.2.1.5. The list of Romans 1 includes a very simple mention of same-gender sexuality alongside such behaviour as gossip, deceit, and the great evil of murder. For many readers these things fall within a vast range of distortion which is actually quite ‘natural’ to humans. Paul’s use of ‘against nature’ can be read in a confusing fashion, but it is on this

basis it seems plainest to understand he means ‘against God’s intent in creation’ rather than ‘against what comes naturally’ to any given person. This is because Paul’s whole point is claimed to be that what comes naturally to us does not necessarily fit with God’s purpose.

C.4.2.1.6. There is no doubt this is a ‘text of terror’ for many people. To read of oneself in such terms is frightening and even offensive. Those who read the text as above will remind us that every one of us is included in that list, and this list itself is merely illustrative of a field as wide as human experience. Thus, we agree there is absolutely no room for any phobic hatred of any person on the basis of them being a ‘sinner’. So Paul turns and says ‘Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgement on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.’

C.4.2.1.7. Does this mean God ceases to command us to abandon the things listed? No, not at all. But it certainly does mean we are to all see ourselves in the same boat and the same need to be rescued from ourselves – what comes naturally to us is not always what is right before God. What feels most important to us may not be so before God.

C.4.2.1.8. A challenge to the rationale of Part A might then be that it reads Romans 1 is as if a ‘sinner’ is a person who will manifest the whole list of vices together. It seems as if to fall inside this list a person must be murderous as well as engage in same-gender sexual activity. On the basis of the explanation offered here that is not what the passage says or implies. Rather our reading here would say every one of us finds ourselves on the inside of the list. So the passage simply includes same-gender sexual activity alongside lying and envy as things we may do, perhaps because we are very deeply inclined to, but which do not fit our creation and direction by God.

This leads us to move to the next question: is it correct to say scripture ‘does not address the inconceivable’ reality of committed, monogamous, covenantal same-gender relationships?

C.4.2.2. **The overall clarity of scripture on sexual activity**

C.4.2.2.1. It is absolutely true scripture has been misused, or mistakenly used, in many ways over centuries. Using scripture to underpin apartheid in South Africa is an obvious and abhorrent example. When injunctions against same-gender sex are maintained, with the outcome that same-gender marriage is also declined, is scripture being misused? Scripture would certainly be misused if it were true that it does not address same-gender relationships as they have developed more recently in some societies. Is that claim true?

C.4.2.2.2. It is clear no scriptural text describes a same-gender sexual relationship equivalent to the relationships of those who seek same-gender marriage in this Church. But, as the Rationale above states,

this does not mean such relationships are not addressed. The issue is this: do the injunctions against same-gender sex apply here? *If* we read Romans 1 as in the section above we will not simply say the authors of scripture couldn't imagine such relationships, or that we are faced with a new thing that such texts do not address. Rather, this way of reading will lead to the view that scripture consistently sees same-gender sexual activity as outside of God's purpose.

- C.4.2.2.3. An additional part of this view holds that scripture's voice on sexual life is not to be reduced to a few texts which mention this or that sexual matter. This report has already made clear the overall thrust of scripture throughout is toward monogamous heterosexual marriage, with diverse expressions and varying cultural realities included, like the less than ideal polygamy of some biblical characters. Engaging with the Rationale might involve raising the claim that sexual expression rightly occurs inside such marriage, and not elsewhere. The rationale invites us to set this aside in the light of a wider trajectory toward inclusion, but it could be responded that such an important theme as inclusion does not overwhelm the specific nature of God's commands. We might also note Jesus included everyone in His call to come in to the kingdom – and still does – but in doing so intensified the claim of God's commands upon us, not reduced them.
- C.4.2.2.4. Certainly Acts 14 and 15, with the removal of certain matters regarding foods for new gentile believers is highly significant. Other commentators would encourage us to remember Jesus Himself had already 'declared all foods clean', while if anything He heightened the requirements of sexual purity. This is something we see clearly worked out in the rest of the New Testament.
- C.4.2.2.5. A critique of the Rationale would therefore claim there is a clear trajectory of scripture in regard to sexuality and this Church cannot set it aside.
- C.4.2.2.6. If this critique is correct, does this mean LGBT people are excluded from Christ? Absolutely not. In agreement with the Rationale, no form of judgementalism or 'homophobia' has any place in God's Church. But those who offer such a critique would hold that LGBT people, and indeed all people, come to Christ with our deepest and most fundamental being placed at His disposal. No doubt many who would argue for the rationale would agree.

C.4.3. Challenging the Rationale on broad grounds

- C.4.3.1. The rationale offered in Part A puts aside any assumptions heterosexuality is essential to marriage and examines same gender covenant relationships to determine if such relationships evidence 'the key theological qualities of a marriage relationship'. An engagement with this rationale could well involve point by point discussion of the merits of each idea discussed, but it would not be fair or helpful. However, this very brief section of further engagement is designed to frame discussion in a wider theological perspective, and offer a counter view. So, the following paragraphs involve:

- I. An indication of some theological matters that might inform our theology of marriage and how those matters bear upon the question before this Church, but in doing so they also offer;
 - II. An inherent questioning of the assumptions that underpin the project, especially the important idea that by discarding the ‘a man and a woman’ aspect of marriage we might find the key markers of marriage are still present. This is an important area of debate for this Church as it examines the issues that generate this report. What follows offers a critique and should not be read as simply a ‘knock-down proof’. Decisions will need to be made as to the best theological response to the questions before this Church.
- C.4.3.2. By noting a key text such as Genesis and theologically exploring the outcomes in Jesus’ own teaching and the Church’s theology we look to see how marriage is to be understood and why it can be claimed that ‘male and female’ matters a great deal.
- C.4.3.3. Genesis 1 and 2 and God’s Creation of humans**
- C.4.3.3.1. Much has been contributed on this matter at the various hui. Across the hui papers a basic agreement marks a broad reading of these key chapters, containing the description of God’s creation of humanity. We also note the significant paper on marriage offered by Bishop Victoria at the final hui. What follows seeks to follow that broad reading, although with particular decisions made at key points about which way to go.
 - C.4.3.3.2. For the sake of being brief the focus here is on Genesis 1:26 and 27 and the particular narrative of humans as woman and man, male and female. What claim does this text make upon us, and what understanding is demanded of us? Or is there no such strong content here? In focussing on these two verses we should not lose sight of the fact they stand for the sweep of biblical material relating humanity to identity and diversity as male and female, we do not have space however, to go far beyond these verses. Two opposing readings of the significance of male and female will be briefly addressed, and these two bear strongly upon the rationale of Part A (above).
 - C.4.3.3.3. Firstly the Church’s wide and longstanding reading takes the creation of male and female as central to being human, and the inter-relation of male and female to be of utmost importance. This reading is the dominant reading across East and West through Christian history (and indeed is the dominant Jewish reading also). Within this breadth there is significant disagreement about the detail of the relationship between male and female and there are also some very sexist approaches throughout. It is important, however, to distinguish sexist, and rather poor, treatments of the text from the fundamental intent to take the narrative seriously, and what that yields.
 - C.4.3.3.4. Should we say we cannot depart from the ‘old’ reading of the text? No, if there are good reasons to do so we constantly revise our readings. But one of the key roles of the tradition is to anchor us

against going too far in matching the trends of our society, culture, and time. The extraordinary energy of the sexual revolution of the late twentieth century should cause us to pay extra attention to the tradition and listen all the more humbly to scripture in relation to these matters. This does not automatically mean we cannot change, but that great care is needed in wrestling with the strong influence of a fast changing society.

- C.4.3.3.5. For the purposes of a critique glances at Phyllis Tribble's work, and toward others such as Wenham, Grenz, and Barth will serve. This approach takes us through the creation of humans as female and male and offers a particular understanding of marriage and the broad field of human relations. The following paragraphs should be read as offering an alternative to and therefore an engagement with the Rationale of Part B.
- C.4.3.3.6. In the creation of man and woman God creates humanity; the narrative makes it clear there is no genuine or 'good' humanity prior to this or apart from it. So the creation of woman is as the 'saviour' of humanity, through which the first step of God's creation of humanity, the ha'adam, is altered and becomes woman's partner, now called 'man'.^{xxvi} The relationship between man and woman, male and female, here transcends the relationships and sexed bodies of the animals. The physicality of the 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh' includes the spirituality of being made together in the image of God. On this reading the purely material question of reproduction by itself is not enough to answer the need of the one who is alone and for whom no help can come, even from fellowship with God. God responds with further creative work and brings about the formation of humanity as female and male. The fellowship of humanity with God then also somehow involves the mutual interrelation of male and female. 'In God's image God created them, male and female God created them' is shorthand for a great deal.
- C.4.3.3.7. Within this account of humanity as constituted in male and female interrelation what then would we say about marriage? After all, the close of the creation narrative at the end of Genesis 2 follows immediately on from the man's recognition of his counterpart (perhaps even saviour!) in the woman by stating 'therefore a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they shall become one flesh' (Genesis 2:24 NRSV). The words are those of the narrator, but it may be claimed they are clearly intended to indicate the view of God upon the matter.
- C.4.3.3.8. Beyond this, we must note immediately Jesus' exaltation of the state of marriage and at the same time His teaching that marriage will pass away in the new creation. For our purposes attention to male and female, and human community, in the eschatological vision is particularly important. Two points arise: first, that marriage is not an ultimate reality but penultimate – marriage will pass away in the eschaton. This does not make marriage 'bad', but it does limit its role, and enables us to see more clearly marriage itself is not an

enclosed imaging of God by two in their isolated relationship. Marriage itself is shown to open outward in a wide field of relationships that include the married and the celibate, and a self-giving and receiving among many along numerous lines of relationship. Until the eschaton marriage is an essential part of human community and the fundamental basis of families, but not the exclusive calling of all disciples. Secondly, the eschatological ceasing of marriage does not imply the end of female and male, any more than singleness and celibacy does so.

- C.4.3.3.9. To pursue this line further we might add: When it is assumed the total meaning of being female and male is fulfilled, and therefore exhausted in the marriage relationship then it is a short step to think 'no more marriage' means no more male and female, but this need not be so and actually should not be our conclusion. God's covenant with humanity can be seen as expressed within the frame God fashions in our creation, and our calling functions along a line of fulfilment of that creation, not its destruction or its being overcome. Against the Greek tendencies of thought evident still in much Western philosophy, our spiritual fulfilment does not involve the overcoming of our physicality or the 'transcendence' of the limitations within which we are created. Those very conditions, including being male and female in God's image, are central to God's purpose for us, while marriage will pass away.
- C.4.3.3.10. Overall, the key outcome of our discussion so far is that we cannot discard 'male and female God made them'. Neither can we discard marriage as between a man and a woman. We cannot accept these things do not matter as long as features such as 'union' and 'procreation' can be argued to be met. Delving into an approach that sets aside 'male and female' may open this up further.
- C.4.3.3.11. To explain, a very different reading of male and female in scripture sees the core of the creation of humanity in God's image as manifest in an essential relational character. Such relationality is expressed in the relationship of male and female, but not necessarily so. Fundamentally relationality only requires two different people be joined in order for God to be imaged. In some ways this is like the Rationale of Part B. Within the Genesis narrative male and female are seen as offering a symbol for a reality broader than the particularity of male and female as such. The symbol points towards the principle of two who are 'other' being joined as one. Within this view the key to a Christian theology of marriage is the identification of two different 'bodies' uniting. Rather than focussing on a particular man and woman, or, more significantly, on the bodies of men and women, some see sexual difference as a 'figure of speech, a symbol', pointing toward the significance of 'otherness' in intimate relationships.
- C.4.3.3.12. Such a theology moves beyond the biology of male and female bodies and instead focusses on the 'gap' between persons that is overcome in becoming 'one flesh'. So, same-sex erotic love is sometimes claimed

to be theologically a more illuminating form of eroticism than female-male relationships. The claim is that same-sex eros reveals precisely that biology is not essential – what matters is two bodies, and the distance between them. Because the obvious biological difference of male and female is lacking in same-sex attraction we are led to see the difference that matters is not controlled by ‘nature’. Whatever it may in fact be, the difference (‘interval’) overcome is not such that we can define it; however it must be there for attraction to occur.

C.4.3.3.13. In critiquing this approach we might well say such theology looks rather like those Corinthian Christians who thought the particular reality of our bodies was less important than the spiritual reality of resurrection in Christ. In responding the Apostle Paul holds the two together and refuses to diminish the spiritual reality of our physical creation, life and worship. Wairua is not divorced from the tikanga of our everyday lives and our bodies. Therefore we might say the concrete and physical reality of the two sexes/genders cannot be superseded by a spiritualisation which looks for realities such as ‘union’ or ‘reciprocity’, procreation’ or even ‘trinitarian unity in difference’ (even though those things are visible in God’s creation of male and female).

C.4.3.3.14. Of course, in ‘the real world’ there are those of us who do not fit easily into social constructions of gender and gender roles, and those of us who cannot see ourselves marrying someone of the opposite gender. There are those of us who are born with unusual bodies, and chromosomal differences. On a different tack, some of us also cannot imagine sexual faithfulness as possible. We may all agree we are together called by God to seek God first whatever our circumstances, in joy and also in deep pain. This is no light thing, but a matter that requires extraordinary courage and depth of discipleship and in which we will all be changed.

C.4.3.4. **Same-gender marriage?**

C.4.3.4.1. As above, the broad tradition of the Church has insisted on the centrality of the claim ‘in the “image of God” God created them, male and female God created them.’ Although this tradition has undoubtedly made mistakes regarding the interrelation of man and woman, and in many ways has maintained a fallen view in this regard, we can see the commitment to the centrality of this relationship that has marked the theology of this Church.

C.4.3.4.2. While we have argued here marriage is an eschatologically conditioned reality, while being male and female is not, nonetheless the scriptural witness can be very strongly argued to point toward sexual celibacy and male-female marriage as the two forms of rightly ordered sexuality. Both these ways of being male and female are then seen to be located within the frame of the Christian community and beyond, and take their place within the complex web of interpersonal relation across lines of gender, race, age, culture, gifts and so forth. Both hetero-sexual marriage and celibacy are to be ordered by

attention to the eschatological direction of our creation, and toward covenant fulfilment in the new creation. In this way both could be described (with the Apostle Paul) as ways of ‘doing well’, although celibacy may be argued to be better as a form of becoming a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom.^{xxvii}

C.4.3.4.3. In looking at marriage in the way we have in this section the Church would therefore find herself directed to the important matter of celibacy, and therefore largely at odds with a society that sees the denial of sexual desire as the denial of the very essence of self and self-expression. However, we could also claim denying the self and taking up the cross lie at the centre of Jesus’ call to all disciples.

C.4.3.5. **Conclusion to this critique**

C.4.3.5.1. Although the Rationale of Part A can be made, it can be subjected to critique, scripturally and doctrinally. We may say this raises significant questions especially for this Church with its emphasis on the authority of scripture in all matters of faith and practice. This Church will have to decide whether critique of the Rationale reveals too much difficulty in sustaining it as good theology and too many scriptural problems for it. It may certainly be argued that scripture witnesses to a different way for us.

D. Responding to Section C

Just as Section B has been critiqued in Section C, it is true that Section C can also be critiqued. Thus, the debate that the Church has been undertaking in the past decades is joined. There is no way to canvas the depth and range of that debate here neither will we launch into a point by point response to Section C, which may appear as tiresome.

D.1. What can be done here is point to four broad concerns.

D.1.1. There is thread of argument that runs through C that takes the following form:

A. Marriage has always been between a man and a woman.

Therefore,

B. Marriage must always be between a man and a woman.

This is obviously debatable and begs the question before us.

D.1.2. To state that the gender difference of a couple is “the most fundamental point of doctrine” (C.3.1.1.5.) when considering marriage is disputed and advocates for same-gender marriage would hold that it is a secondary matter and there other characteristics or qualities of a marriage relationship that make it a hallowed relationship.

D.1.3. So much depends upon whether we determine that same-gender relationships as we see them evidenced today and as we have defined them sit outside the mind of scripture or not. The argument for those who advocate for same-gender marriage or blessing is that they are a new phenomenon. As a new phenomenon those texts that appear to address homosexuality are less applicable than some would have it. Nowhere in Section C are we shown scripture directly addressing as same-gender relationship as it has been defined.

D.1.4. Section C emphasizes the authority of scripture. (C.3.2.) and implies that the authority favours only one side of the debate. This is not the case. As stated above, there is a great deal of authority from scripture calling for inclusion.

E. The Blessing of Same-Gender Relationships instead of marriage?

E.1. What is at issue?

E.1.1. The Commission was asked to enquire into a rationale for ‘the blessing and marriage of people in permanent, faithful same gender relationships’ (A.1.1.). Thus far this report has focussed on the question of priests in this Church celebrating the marriage of same-gender couples. What then of an alternative, namely, the ‘blessing’ of same-gender relationships which display the characteristics normally associated with marriage or preparation for marriage? ^{xxviii}

E.1.2. There are indicators that some members of this Church approach the blessing of same-gender relationships differently from the way they approach marriage of same-gender couples.

We may note that in 2013 the Synod of the Diocese of Auckland voted not to pursue a path toward same-gender marriage but voted in favour of a path toward a liturgy for blessing same-gender sexual relationships. The margin of disparity in voting on the two relevant motions before the Synod indicates that in the minds and hearts of a significant number of those voting there is a difference between ‘blessing’ and ‘marriage’. In other words: clearly for some Anglicans a blessing of a same-gender relationship is acceptable when same-gender marriage is not.

E.1.3. We may therefore ask whether this perception of a distinction between same-gender marriage and blessing same-gender relationship indicates an emerging wisdom or discernment from a gathered church, which at this point we cannot quite articulate.

E.1.4. Moreover, is it possible the field of committed relationships is in fact wider than we usually describe, so we understand marriage as one type of committed relationship among others? The relationship between Ruth and Naomi might be a good example of a covenanted relationship blessed by God, but which is not marriage. Same-gender relationships could be seen as another such covenanted relationship, without being understood as marriages.

E.1.5. What follows is a brief examination of some of the issues that arise.

E.2. In what way does the Church ‘bless’, and what is ‘the blessing of a relationship’?

E.2.1. Much language of ‘blessing’ in use liturgically quite rightly expresses a prayer and expectation. Such words are a prayer because ‘The Lord bless you’ is not spoken as an act of granting blessing but of requesting and announcing *God’s* blessing. Such words are spoken in faith and expectation that God wishes and intends to bless. Various commonly used blessings at the close of public worship are spoken in exactly this fashion: ‘The blessing of God be upon you and remain with you always’ cannot be seen as a blessing bestowed directly by the Priest, but as the person invoking blessing from God. We pray for blessing, for God alone gives God’s own benediction.

E.2.2. Blessing a relationship.

In the formularies marriage is the only form of relationship to receive a liturgical blessing. For this reason important material relevant to a 'blessing of permanent, faithful same-gender relationships' is to be found in this Church's theology and practice in 'blessing' marriages.

God's blessing on the couple being married is mentioned, and sought, frequently in marriage liturgies of both the Book of Common Prayer (1662) and A New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa. The following samples are by no means a complete collection of those places in which blessing are mentioned, but represent the key moments of blessing within the liturgies.

The Book of Common Prayer (1662):

The blessing prayed at the moment of giving the ring:

O ETERNAL God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life: Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that, as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, (whereof this Ring given and received is a token and pledge,) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The blessing prayed following the pronouncement of marriage:

GOD the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favour look upon you; and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

A New Zealand Prayer Book/ He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa:

A blessing is mandated at the conclusion of the service, whichever of the forms of marriage has been used, and is to be chosen from four options:

All praise and glory to you most gracious God, for in the beginning you created us men and women. Grant your blessing then, we pray, to N and N, so that in marriage they may be a source of blessing to each other and to all, and live together in holy love until their lives' end. Amen.

Ma to Atua Matua, ma to Atua Tama, ma to Atua Wairua Tapu, korua a manaaki, a tiaki; ma to Ariki tohu a titiro atawhai ki a korua, e whakakii o korua ngakau ki nga mea pai katoa o to wairua; kia pai ai to korua nobo tabi i tenei ao, kia whiwhi ai hoki korua ki to ora tonu i tera ao atu. Amine.

All praise and blessing to you, God of love, creator of the universe, maker of man and woman in your likeness, source of blessing for married life. All praise to you for you have created courtship and marriage, joy and gladness, feasting and laughter, pleasure and delight. May your blessing come in full upon N and N. May they know your presence in their joys and in their sorrows. May they reach old age in the company of friends and come at last to your eternal kingdom. Amen.

Ma to Atua Kaha rawa, nana nei o taton tupuna, i banga i to timatanga i whakatapu, i hono hoki i runga i to marena; Mana a riringi ki runga ki a korua tona kaha nui, mana korua a whakatapu, a manaaki, kia paingia ai a is o korua tinana, o korua wairua, kia nobo tabi tonu ai korua i runga i to aroha hara-kore, a mate noa. Amine.

E.2.3. The tenor of these blessings is plain: God is the one who blesses, so that the Priest and congregation ask for God's blessing upon the parties to the marriage. The blessings are not the Church granting God's blessing, but seeking and declaring God's continued blessing. As above, this involves confidence and trust that God is pleased to bless what we are blessing.

E.2.4. 'Blessing' is future focused in two important respects. We expect that, with God's help, the couple will be a blessing to each other, they will be 'ministers' to each other of God's love and forgiveness and thus be a source of God's blessing one to another. We also expect the relationship will, again, by God's grace, bear fruit and be a blessing to others. These expectations are at least partly born of witnessing and knowing the goodness of God's blessing already present in the lives of married couples and, importantly, knowing that God has already blessed this couple in some measure.

E.3. **The Marriage Service itself as a 'Blessing'**

Although the marriage service contains specific prayers of blessing, as above, it also might be argued that the service as a whole – the very fact of the marriage taking place before a Priest and congregation – constitutes a 'blessing' of the marriage.

In celebrating a marriage this Church makes an implicit statement: 'We witness and expect God's blessing on your marriage.' Such a statement in action very clearly involves a sanctioning of the relationship: 'This marriage is of a sort that God blesses.' The converse applies when this Church will not conduct a marriage service. So, for example, a bigamist relationship cannot be 'blessed' because this Church does not believe such a relationship is one God blesses.

E.4. **Blessing permanent, faithful, same-gender relationships?**

The call for this Church to authorise the blessing of permanent, faithful, same-gender relationships is, therefore, a call to see such relationships as blessed by God. This is a fundamental question in this discussion and a key matter of disagreement is whether this Church discerns that God does bless such relationships.

E.4.1. If the following question is put: 'Can this Church bless that which God does not bless?' The answer can only be: 'No, the Church can only give its 'blessing', by sanctioning the relationship, and can only pray God's blessing when it expects and discerns God's blessing to already be present.'

The decisive question here is this: can and should this Church see 'permanent, faithful, same-gender relationships' as blessed by God?

It is very important to note this is not the same question as 'Does God wish to bless people who are in such same-gender relationships?' Holy Scripture would lead us to say 'Yes, absolutely.' The same answer must be given if we ask 'Does God wish to bless people in bigamist marriages, or people in unmarried partnerships?' God wishes to bless all people, and is even at work blessing all, but God does not sanction all relationships. Therefore, the Church has an obligation to decide what forms of relationship it will bless, as evidenced clearly in the Book of Common Prayer listing a significant number of forbidden marriages. ('A table of kindred and affinity, wherein whosoever are related are forbidden by the Church of England to marry together.')

This Church is not asking whether God blesses homosexual persons, but it is asking the question ‘Does God sanction same-gender sexual relationships?’ Only if the answer to this question is ‘Yes’ can the Church ‘bless’ permanent, faithful, same-gender relationships.

- E.4.2. It is not an insignificant matter for the Church to also say God cannot bless a same-gender relationship. To do so confronts the experience of those Anglicans who identify such relationships as in fact both ‘blessed’ and a ‘blessing’. It also would run perilously close to sounding like a claim about the impossibility of God’s action in such a relationship.
- E.4.3. A significant further matter arises. Can this Church authorise a blessing of any intimate sexual relationship that is not marriage?

The existing doctrine of this Church is unquestionably that right ordering of a relationship that includes sexual intimacy is within marriage and nowhere else. Thus, for example, this Church has insisted its licenced office bearers are to be either married or celibate and this is the meaning of ‘chaste’ within its canons. Marriage alone is the covenantal relationship given for the expression of rightly ordered sexual activity and intimacy, and thus ‘was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication’. All other forms of sexual intimacy are not accepted as rightly ordered.

This doctrinal stance is deeply embedded in the Church’s theology and practice. It seems clear that for this Church to authorise another form of sexually intimate relationship alongside marriage would be a departure from received doctrine. As earlier in relation to marriage, the Church can change its mind, the question becomes ‘should she?’

- E.4.4. As noted at E.1.2. there appears to be some popular discernment that ‘marriage’ should and does enjoy some special status and protection from any altered understanding – principally that marriage should apply to opposite gendered couples only. It might be granted the popular discernment in favour of blessing appropriate same-gender relationships is locating an important difference that we fail to fully understand at this time and this is reason to propose another ‘class’ of sexually intimate relationship that this Church recognises as blessed.^{xxix}
- E.4.5. Some would argue that, given the history of the institution of marriage is understood across time and cultures as a heterosexual institution, and the Church has upheld this understanding of the institution, marriage should remain unchanged as the proper ordering of a heterosexual relationship.
- E.4.6. Recognizing same-gender relationships and blessing them requires a new kind of institution given that it is new thing. Some more strident advocates for same-gender theology and politics point out that ‘marriage’ is so corrupted with a patriarchal and heterosexist legacy that same-gender couples ought to have nothing to do with the institution of marriage. If it is possible to bring these disparate voices together, there could be wisdom in having ‘A Blessing of Same-Gender Relationship’ as a separate service or rite in our Church.

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ⁱ The Standing Committee also noted 'the implications thereof on the ordination of people in same gender relationships', but those implications must be understood as an outworking of the task of the Commission in its work upon doctrine and theological questions rather than a matter for the Commission to report upon directly.

ⁱⁱ This is the 'short title' given to "Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality," November 2013 which was chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling.

ⁱⁱⁱ Italics added. See also: The American Psychological Association, "What causes a person to have a particular sexual orientation? There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation. Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors. Many think that nature and nurture both play complex roles; most people experience little or no sense of choice about their sexual orientation." <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sexual-orientation.aspx> accessed 16/1/14

^{iv} Burridge, R. A. (2007). *Imitating Jesus: an inclusive approach to New Testament ethics*: p.40.

^v Richard Elliott Friedman and Shawna Dolansky. (2011). *The Bible Now*. Oxford University Press: p. 40

^{vi} AKM Adam (1996). 'Disciples Together, Constantly' pp. 123-132 in *Homosexuality and Christian Community* ed. Choon-Leong Seow, Westminster John Knox: pp. 125-126.

^{vii} Of course, the direction to look to the purpose of the Torah directs us back to, amongst other things, a deeper reading of scripture.

^{viii} Halapua, W. *Moana Waves: Oceania and Homosexuality*: p32

^{ix} The very significant statement by Jesus (Mark 10:6ff.) easily supports the subordination of women. The woman is made from the man's flesh and the man recognizes this. Thus Paul argues: "Man is the image of God, and the mirror of his glory, whereas a woman reflects the glory of a man. For man did not originally spring from woman but woman was made out of man, and man was not created woman's sake, but woman for the sake of man." (1Cor 11:7ff)

^x Tribble, P. (1978). *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Vol. 99). Philadelphia: Fortress: p99.

^{xi} It is important to hear these oft cited words from Rowan Williams: "In a church that accepts the legitimacy of contraception, the absolute condemnation of same-sex relations of intimacy must rely either on an abstract fundamentalist deployment of a number of very ambiguous biblical texts, or on a problematic and non-scriptural theory about natural complementarity, applied narrowly and crudely to physical differentiation without regard to psychological structures."

^{xii} This point emerged in conversation with Bishop Victoria Matthews. She speculatively asked the question: if a fertile couple chose not to have children (perhaps because they didn't want to, perhaps because they decided that the 'earth was filled') but instead gave their time and talent to community in a variety of self-giving and 'fruit-bearing' ways, would we commend that? Bless that?

^{xiii} As something of an excursus: “It’s worth wondering why so little of the agitation about sexual morality and the status of homosexual men and women in the Church in recent years has come from members of our religious orders; I strongly suspect that a lot of celibates do indeed have a keener sensitivity about these matters than some of their married fellow Christians. And anyone who knows the complexities of the true celibate vocation would be the last to have any sympathy with the extraordinary idea that sexual orientation is an automatic pointer to the celibate life; almost as if celibacy before God is less costly, even less risky, for the homosexual than the heterosexual.”

Williams, *The Body’s Grace* p65.

^{xiv} Consider, for instance, the vows of ‘poverty, chastity, and obedience’ and how they mirror the vows ‘for richer for poorer, to have and to hold, forsaking all others.’ There are many parallels that are worthy of deep reflection, not least because those engaged in the Religious life have reflected with a great deal of rigour on what these mean in our current contexts.

^{xv} Marriage ceremonies, along with other rites of passage, are a central way in which culture is communicated and maintained.

^{xvi} Cooke, Bernard, ed. *Christian Marriage. Alternative Futures for Worship*, no. 5. Collegeville, MN. The Liturgical Press, 1987. p.34

^{xvii} *ibid.*

^{xviii} IALC ‘Rites Relating to Marriage A Statement and Resources from The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation. “It is as baptized persons, forgiven and reconciled with God through Christ, that we come to marriage, bringing with us the graced possibility of having our relationships reflect the intimate, life-giving love that is the community of the Holy Trinity.” p.77 The virtue of the couple is what makes for a marriage and likewise it is often held that the couple, not the priest, who are the ministers at the marriage ceremony.

^{xix} Unless one were to read the following from the “Second Form,” “As they grow together, wife and husband foster one another’s strengths, they provide each other with the reassurance and love needed to overcome their weaknesses” as a reframing of the same passage. That is, marriage is an ‘occasion for grace’ as much as it is ‘the avoidance of sin.’

^{xx} Such ‘erasure’ (which overstates the case) is justifiable on the grounds that the whole passage works with the contextual assumption that we have largely set to one side the imminent return of the Lord and given this marriage and other worldly commitments are unnecessary distractions.

^{xxi} The explicit teaching in 1662 Prayerbook is of the subordination of wives to husbands:

“Hitherto ye have heard the duty of the husband toward the wife. Now likewise, ye wives, hear and learn your duties toward your husbands, even as it is plainly set forth in holy Scripture.

Saint Paul, in the aforementioned Epistle to the Ephesians, teacheth you thus; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. And again he saith, Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.

And in his Epistle to the Colossians, Saint Paul giveth you this short lesson; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”

^{xxii} It might be argued that we Anglicans speak with a ‘forked tongue’ on this issue given that to speak of both mutuality (1989) and submission of wives (1662) is inconsistent and contradictory.

^{xxiii} A full survey of changes in marriage would have to examine other aspects that stand outside the actual liturgical texts to the proper use of them. Here one particularly thinks of our shift in understanding of remarriage of divorced persons

^{xxiv} BCP – check 1662

^{xxv} This is not a justification to inhibit proper engagement in theological and doctrinal debate.

^{xxvi} Significantly other uses of *ezer* - the word often translated ‘helper’ or ‘helpmeet’ - in the Old Testament are dominated by references to God, so that the term can equally well be translated ‘deliverer’ and normally functions as a parallel for ‘saviour’.

^{xxvii} The claim here would also be that eschatology does not only mean that ‘God does new things’, as the Rationale implies, but means that everything is shaped toward God’s goal in the new creation.

^{xxviii} This question is asked on the basis that marriage is the only such relationship this Church currently and historically blesses – the characteristics would be permanence and faithfulness as the General Synod Standing Committee put it.

^{xxix} Some might be immediately anxious that service of blessing is ‘second class;’ this is obviously not necessarily the case, it would simply be different.