

The Standing Liturgical Commission

MEMBERSHIP

The Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold (Chicago) 2000, *Chair*
The Rt. Rev. Orris G. Walker, Jr. (Long Island) 1997
The Rt. Rev. Geralyn Wolf (Rhode Island) 2000 replaced
The Rt. Rev. Keith L. Ackerman (Quincy)
The Very Rev. M.L. Agnew, Jr. (Western Louisiana) 2000, *Executive Council Liaison*
The Rev. Bruce W.B. Jenneker (Washington) 2000
The Rev. Canon Leonel L. Mitchell (Northern Indiana) 2000
The Rev. Joseph P. Russell, III (Ohio) 1997
Mrs. Edna Brown (Southwest Florida) 1997, *Vice-chair*
Mrs. Phoebe Pettingell (Fond du Lac) 2000, *Secretary*
The Rev. Dr. Clayton L. Morris, *ECC Staff Liaison*

Representatives at the General Convention

Bishop Frank Griswold and Deputy M. L. Agnew are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The Standing Liturgical Commission met four times during the triennium.

A Rationale for the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer

The 71st General Convention affirmed Resolution 1994 A051a:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That this 71st General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to prepare a rationale and a pastorally sensitive plan for the next revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and report to the 72nd General Convention

When the Standing Liturgical Commission was set up by the 1928 General Convention it was charged to continue the work of liturgical revision, which they understood to be ongoing. Just as they realized that the 1928 Prayer Book was not to be a permanent and unchanging liturgy for the Episcopal Church, so we must realize that neither is the Book of Common Prayer 1979 perfect and unchangeable. The work of liturgical revision remains ongoing. There are many reasons why this is so.

The first is that, although the gospel does not change, the world in which we live does. What communicates well in one time and place does not necessarily do so at all times and in all places. Languages change. Culture changes. Our worship is conditioned by both, and must change in order to remain the same. It can neglect neither its history nor its future orientation, but it must be accessible to those who live in the present or it ceases to do what Christian worship is meant to

do, which is to be our encounter with Jesus Christ in the power of his death and resurrection.

A second reason for revision is that the church's understanding of itself and its worship is constantly growing and unfolding. In the last twenty-five years, for example, we have grown into a new understanding of the centrality of baptism to Christian life and ministry, and a new awareness of the place of women in the church. This has led to suggestions for changes in our worship.

A third reason for liturgical change is to take advantage of the work that has been done by others since 1976. Most of the other churches of the Anglican Communion and many other denominations have produced new service books which contain much worthwhile material.

It is important to recognize that in a real sense it is the success of what has already been done that produces the demand for more change. It is the changes already made in the 1979 Prayer Book which have brought about the recognition of the centrality of baptism and eucharist in the life of the Christian community, not merely as theological abstractions but as living realities. It is the emphasis which the 1979 Prayer Book places on the prayers of the people and the importance of offering the actual concerns of the worshipping congregation at the Eucharist which causes us to criticize the formality and hierarchical bias of the forms of those prayers we most often use. It is the insistence of the catechism of the 1979 book that "[t]he ministers of the Church are *lay persons*, bishops, priests and deacons" which has sparked the emphasis on total ministry.

In other sections of this report, ongoing projects which are preparing the church for Prayer Book revision are described. These include work on the lectionary, *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, *The Book of Occasional Services*, *Supplemental Liturgical Materials* and participation in the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation.

It is inevitable, then, that the Prayer Book be revised. The first pastoral question is when should this be done? Prayer Book revision is a complicated and expensive process requiring the action of two General Conventions. What this means practically is that to decide to begin the process is not to suggest that we stop printing 1979 Prayer Books, but to decide to look realistically and systematically at ways to improve the Book of Common Prayer for the church of the twenty-first century.

As a first step in this process, the Standing Liturgical Commission has invited a number of liturgists, both academic and parochial, to suggest in a series of essays what they see as the issues in Prayer Book revision. These have been published by the Church Hymnal Corporation as *Liturgical Studies 3: A Prayer Book for the 21st Century*. These issues may be grouped under four headings.

1. *Things in the present Prayer Book which need to be changed.* This is, of course, the area in which the demand for immediate revision is greatest. Most people agree that these areas exist, such as provision for the transitional diaconate in the "Ordination of Deacons," and a revision of the "Celebration of a New Ministry" to reflect the ministry of all the baptized, but there is no universal list. For some the removal of the *filioque* clause ("and the Son") from the Nicene Creed to correspond to the ecumenical text is crucial. For others the elimination of masculine pronouns to refer to those who are not

male has the highest priority. Still others find problems in the rubrics or texts of various services which are either unclear or misleading.

2. *Things we would like to see changed in the Prayer Book.* This list includes all of the items on the first list for those people who do not feel that strongly about them, and a great many others: rubrics which are unclear or difficult to follow, things that do not work well in practice, little improvements we have all thought of since we began using the rites in the 1979 book.
3. *Things we would like to see in the Prayer Book.* These may include additional eucharistic prayers, canticles, prayers of the people, services from other prayer books, etc. In most cases this would simply be a convenience. The material either is or can be authorized for immediate use in other ways.
4. *Things about which decisions need to be made.* Should we, for example, produce a new book, or a collection of electronic files for congregations to print out? Are there services in the Book of Common Prayer which should be in the *Book of Occasional Services*, and visa versa? When the Prayer Book is revised is the time to decide about such things.

As the balance of this report makes clear, revision is already underway through a process of supplemental and trial use, local development, and inter-Anglican and ecumenical liturgical consultation. It is therefore premature to propose to the church a formal plan to revise the 1979 Book of Common Prayer until the present and proposed provisions for trial and supplemental use have brought us to a place of greater clarity and consensus.

The Lectionary

The Revised Common Lectionary

The Common Lectionary, published by the Consultation on Common Texts in 1983, sought to harmonize and improve upon the lections appointed for Sunday and seasonal reading by those denominations using the three year lectionary adapted from the Roman Catholic *Lectionary for Mass*. Episcopalians and Lutheran were the first to adapt the Roman Catholic model, but other denominations began to use the system as they saw the tremendous advantages inherent in the three year lectionary. Variations to the readings came as denominations made their own adaptations to the *Lectionary for Mass*.

The Revised Common Lectionary was published in 1992 as a response to criticism and evaluation arising out of experimental use in a number of denominations including the Episcopal Church. Improvements were made to the lectionary as a result of that critique. Further, an emphasis was placed on including texts that highlight the role of women in the history that unfolds in the Bible.

The Revised Common Lectionary is becoming the standard for a growing number of denominations around the world. In this country the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Christian Reformed Church in North America are among those who have officially adopted the lectionary. The Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Church of Scotland, and the Council of Churches in the Netherlands are other examples of a spreading practice.

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The 71st General Convention authorized trial use of the *Revised Common Lectionary*, and the Standing Liturgical Commission has monitored such use in selected congregations. The positive response to the lectionary across the church leads the commission to recommend further trial use. Further information about the *Revised Common Lectionary* will be published by the commission from time to time to help congregations understand the rationale for the differences between the Prayer Book lectionary and the *Revised Common Lectionary*.

Resolution A072 Revised Common Lectionary

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the reading and psalms of the *Revised*
- 2 *Common Lectionary* be authorized by this 72nd General Convention for continued trial use for
- 3 study and evaluation during the triennium, beginning with the First Sunday of Advent 1997, as
- 4 authorized by the Ordinary.

Explanation

This Lectionary, produced by the Consultation on Common Texts, composed of a wide number of church bodies, is a revision of the *Common Lectionary*, which was authorized for trial use by the 67th and 68th General Conventions. This revision reflects the concerns about the *Common Lectionary* communicated to the Consultation on Common Texts through the Standing Liturgical Commission as a result of the trial use. It also reflects issues addressed by Resolution A088a of the 70th General Convention directing the Standing Liturgical Commission to study revision of the Sunday lectionary of the Book of Common Prayer.

The *Revised Common Lectionary* is becoming the common lectionary among Christian denominations. Positive responses from congregations who have used the lectionary and the growing number of denominations and provinces of the Anglican Communion using the lectionary lead the commission to recommend this further trial use.

Weekday Readings, A Daily Eucharistic Lectionary

Resolution 1991: C025s resolved, That the daily eucharistic lectionary as provided in the Church of England and the Anglican Church of Canada be referred to the Standing Liturgical Commission for consideration.

After a thorough study of the daily eucharistic lectionaries named above, the commission decided to recommend authorization of the Canadian/Church of England lectionary for Advent through the First Sunday after the Epiphany. *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* already included the Canadian/Church of England lectionary for Lent and Easter.

The commission recommended, and the 71st General Convention authorized, trial use for study and evaluation of *Weekday Readings: A Daily Lectionary for the Weekdays following the First Sunday after the Epiphany and the Feast of Pentecost*. This lectionary offers a six-week cycle of short, succinct, thematic lections for weekday Eucharists. These lections can be used daily for six-week segments, but it is more likely that they will be seen as a corpus of suggested texts to be used at random. Two brief readings and a psalm are provided for each day along with recommended Collects from the Book of Common Prayer.

The commission monitored experimental use in selected congregations. Positive responses from congregations leads the commission to recommend adoption of this lectionary for general use.

Resolution A073 Weekday Readings, Daily Eucharistic Lectionary

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the following changes be made in *Weekday*
2 *Readings, A Daily Eucharistic Lectionary for the Weekdays following the first Sunday after*
3 *Epiphany and the Feast of Pentecost.*

4 *Week One*

5	1. Monday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 9, page 230 or 7 Epiphany, page 164
6	2. Tuesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 14, page 255
7	3. Wednesday	Suggested Collect -	6 Epiphany, page 216
8	4. Thursday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 9, page 230
9			Psalm 119:1-6 replaces Psalm 119:1-8
10	5. Friday	Suggested Collect -	Of the Holy Cross, page 252
11	6. Saturday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Saturday, page 99 or 1st Sunday after
12			Christmas, page 213.
13			Psalm 104:25-32 replaces Psalm 104:25-36

14 *Week Two*

15	7. Monday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 18, page 233
16			Psalm 147:5-12 replaces Psalm 147
17	8. Tuesday	Suggested Collect -	Collect #2, Of the Holy Spirit, page 251
18			Psalm 147:5-12 replaces Psalm 147
19	9. Wednesday	Suggested Collect -	1 Advent, page 211
20			Ephesians 6:10-18 replaces Ephesians 6:13-18
21	10. Thursday	Suggested Collect -	Collect #10, page 254
22	11. Friday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Fridays, page 99
23			Psalm 66:7-11 replaces Psalm 66:1-11
24	12. Saturday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 3, page 229
25			Psalm 33:6-11 replaces Psalm 8

26 *Week Three*

27	13. Monday	Suggested Collect -	8 Epiphany, page 216
28			Psalm 24:1-6 replaces Psalm 24
29	14. Tuesday	Suggested Collect -	Collect #21, For Social Justice, page 260 or #22, For
30			Social Service, page 260
31			Psalm 22:22-26 replaces Psalm 22:22-30
32	15. Wednesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 15, page 232
33			Psalm 146 replaces Psalm 33:1-11
34	16. Thursday	Suggested Collect -	Easter 6, page 225
35			Change heading from <i>Living for the Kingdom of God</i> to
36			<i>Living for the Gospel</i>
37			Galatians 6:14-16 replaces Hebrews 13:20-21
38			Title for Galatians: <i>A new creation is everything!</i>
39			Matthew 13:44-46 replaces Matthew 13:44-50
40	17. Friday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Fridays
41			Psalm 13:1-6 replaces Psalm 145:1-9

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42	18. Saturday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Saturday, page 99
43	<i>Week Four</i>		
44	19. Monday	Suggested Collect -	Tuesday of Holy Week, page 220
45			Psalm 55:1-7 replaces Psalm 55:1-7, 17-18
46	20. Tuesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 20, page 234
47			Psalm 47 replaces Psalm 146
48			Matthew 11:2-6 replaces Matthew 15:29-31
49			Title for lection: <i>Jesus performs the works of the coming</i>
50			<i>Messiah</i>
51	21. Wednesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 24, page 235
52	22. Thursday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 17, page 233
53			Psalm 34:1-6 replaces Psalm 34:1-8
54	23. Friday	Suggested Collect -	Of a Saint (#3), page 250
55	24. Saturday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Saturdays, page 99
56	<i>Week Five</i>		
57	25. Monday	Suggested Collect -	Lent 4, page 219
58			John 15:4-1 replaces John 17:20-26
59			New title for the gospel lection: "I am the vine, you are
60			the branches."
61	26. Tuesday	Suggested Collect -	#4, page 252
62	27. Wednesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 2, page 228
63	28. Thursday	Suggested Collect -	#2, page 251
64	29. Friday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Fridays, page 99
65	30. Saturday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 10, page 231
66			Psalm 65:9-14 replaces Psalm 32:8-12
67	<i>Week Six</i>		
68	31. Monday	Suggested Collect -	#21, page 260
69			Psalm 50:7-15 replaces Psalm 43
70	32. Tuesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 17, page 233
71	33. Wednesday	Suggested Collect -	Proper 21, page 234
72			Psalm 130 replaces Psalm 19:7-14
73	34. Thursday	Suggested Collect -	Collect at the Easter Vigil, page 290
74	35. Friday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Fridays, page 99
75			Psalm 126 replaces Psalm 130
76	36. Saturday	Suggested Collect -	Collect for Saturdays, page 99

77 *Note:* The page numbers refer to the Book of Common Prayer.

78 ; and be it further

79 *Resolved*, That the *Daily Eucharistic Lectionary* be authorized for use on the weekdays following
80 the First Sunday after the Epiphany and the Feast of Pentecost, and be it further

81 *Resolved*, That the *Daily Eucharistic Lectionary* be printed in the next edition of *Lesser Feasts*
82 *and Fasts*.

Explanation

This action completes the process to fulfill the 70th General Convention's directive to the Standing Liturgical Commission to develop a daily eucharistic lectionary. Evaluation of the lectionary indicates that it is finding a central place in the worship life of congregations which celebrate frequent weekday Eucharists.

Supplemental Liturgical Materials

In 1994 the 71st General Convention directed the Standing Liturgical Commission to continue to study, develop, and evaluate supplemental expansive language texts as previously directed by the 68th, 69th, and 70th General Conventions (Resolution A068).

The Expansive Language Committee has considered responses to the *Supplemental Liturgical Materials* first approved by the 1991 General Convention and subsequently reauthorized by the 1994 General Convention. In addition, the committee has devoted significant time to the development of new liturgical materials.

Expansive liturgical language uses a diversity of images to convey the inexpressible mystery of God. Corporate liturgical prayer presumes that we can express our knowledge and experience of God. Yet the texts of worship must also acknowledge our limits, that is, that human knowledge of God is partial and finite, that God is hidden as well as revealed. The use of many different images and names acknowledges that no single name or image conveys all that is God and thus points to the ultimate incomprehensibility of God.

In developing new texts, the committee drew upon some of the riches of scripture and the Christian tradition, which include an abundance of images of God. The committee sought language and imagery which would speak to the diversity of people who worship in the Episcopal Church today, both those who are well steeped in the tradition and those whose knowledge of scripture and the Christian tradition is fragmentary and to whom much traditional liturgical language is puzzling. The goal was to employ evocative language which would lead worshipers deeper into the mystery of God.

The same criteria were applied to the current *Supplemental Liturgical Materials*. *Supplemental Liturgical Materials*, first published by Church Hymnal Corporation in 1991, was republished in an Expanded Edition in 1996. In addition to the same previously authorized liturgical texts (with the same pagination), the Expanded Edition includes new introductory materials, music for texts for the Holy Eucharist, an explanatory note on the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed, and a study guide for adults and children. While few evaluations have been received, the demand for a new edition and informal conversations suggest that the texts are being used around the country. The format of a collection of texts, any one (or several) of which may be incorporated into a Rite II Eucharist, seems to have allowed much wider and ongoing use than the previous supplemental materials, *Prayer Book Studies 30: Supplemental Liturgical Texts* (1989), which were complete liturgies for use in their entirety.

In proposing revisions to *Supplemental Liturgical Materials*, the committee has taken account of evaluations received. Additionally, comments should be collated for consideration at the time of future revisions.

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The committee has also reviewed other recent revisions, particularly *A New Zealand Prayer Book* (1989), *Celebrating Common Prayer* (a version of the Daily Office produced in 1992 by the Society of St. Francis in the Church of England), and the Psalter and canticles produced in 1994 by the Roman Catholic International Consultation on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). In developing an expanded collection of canticles, the committee consulted all three books; many of the canticles proposed in this report are taken directly or adapted from one or more of these sources. The committee also commends these three books for study.

The committee recommends that the revised supplemental liturgical materials and the newly developed materials be authorized for use during the next triennium for the purposes of study, evaluation, and continued development and perfection of expansive language texts (note that copyright permissions must be secured for those materials taken from other sources). In addition, the committee recommends that the ICEL Psalter, *The Liturgical Psalter: Text for Study and Comment* (Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), and *Psalter for the Christian People* by Gail Ramshaw and Gordon Lathrop (Liturgical Press, 1993) be authorized for experimental use as alternatives to the 1979 Prayer Book Psalter.

Resolution A074 Supplemental Liturgical Materials: Texts for Study and Use

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 72nd General Convention approve for
- 2 study and occasional use, under the direction of the diocesan bishop or ecclesiastical authority,
- 3 *The Liturgical Psalter: Text for Study and Comment* (Liturgy Training Publications, 1994) and
- 4 *Psalter for the Christian People* by Gail Ramshaw and Gordon Lathrop (Liturgical Press, 1993)

Resolution A075 Supplemental Liturgical Materials: “Enriching our Worship”

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 72nd General Convention authorize these
- 2 editorial changes and additions to *Supplemental Liturgical Materials* for use during the next
- 3 triennium; such use always under the direction of the diocesan bishop or ecclesiastical authority;
- 4 and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That the Standing Liturgical Commission is directed to publish this material as
- 6 *Enriching Our Worship*.

Proposed changes and additions to *Supplemental Liturgical Materials*

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

Opening Sentences

In addition to all texts in *Supplemental Liturgical Materials*, pp. 16-17, add:

Advent

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also. *Isaiah 45:8*, NRSV

Easter

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! *2 Corinthians 5:17*, NRSV

Delete all notes, *SLM*, p. 17.

Absolution

Include *SLM* text, p. 17; omit note, p. 18.

Opening Versicle

Include *SLM* text with note, p. 18.

Antiphons

Include all texts in *SLM*, p. 19.

Replace notes, p. 20, with:

The translation of the second half of these antiphons is taken from the Canadian *Book of Alternative Services*. The Latin original, “Venite adoremus,” contains no pronoun specifying the object of worship; hence the translation is a more literal translation of the original text while still providing the number of syllables required for Anglican chant.

The alternative Lenten antiphon “Today...” is derived from the text of Psalm 95.

The antiphon for Trinity Sunday is similar to the medieval Latin antiphon, “The true God, One in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, O come let us worship,” appointed for Trinity Sunday.

Invitatory Psalms

Add new alternative text of **Venite**:

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before God’s presence with thanksgiving *

and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.

For you are a great God; *

you are great above all gods.

In your hand are the caverns of the earth, *

and the heights of the hills are yours also.

The sea is yours, for you made it, *

and your hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee, *

and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For you are our God,

and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand. *

Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!

The following verses are added when Psalm 95 is used as the Invitatory:

Let us listen today to God’s voice:

Harden not your hearts,

as your forebears did in the wilderness, *

at Meribah, and on that day at Massah,

when they tempted me.

They put me to the test, *

though they had seen my works.

Forty years long I detested that generation and said, *

“This people are wayward in their hearts;

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they do not know my ways.”
So I swore in my wrath, *
“They shall not enter into my rest.”

Note: This text has been revised to use direct address to God, in a manner similar to The Song of Zechariah and The Song of Mary prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (see below, Canticles 15 and 16).

Include texts and rubrics for Psalm 63 and Psalm 67, *SLM*, pp. 20-21.

Replace notes, pp. 20-21, with:

Psalm 63 is a traditional morning psalm used in many ancient forms of the morning office. It appears as an alternative to *Venite* or *Jubilate* in the Canadian *Book of Alternative Services*.

Psalm 67 is provided as a morning psalm in the new Roman Catholic *Liturgy of the Hours*.

Evening Psalms

Add alternative metrical version of the *Phos hilaron*:

Light of the world, in grace and beauty,
Mirror of God's eternal face,
Transparent flame of love's free duty,
You bring salvation to our race.
Now, as we see the lights of evening,
We raise our voice in hymns of praise;
Worthy are you of endless blessing,
Sun of our night, lamp of our days.
(from *Celebrating Common Prayer*, p. 230)

Include texts and rubrics for Psalm 134 and Psalm 141, *SLM*, p. 22.

Replace notes, p. 22, with:

Psalm 134 is a traditional evening psalm used as an invitatory in the *Alternative Service Book* of the Church of England and in the Canadian *Book of Alternative Services*.

Psalm 141 is the opening psalm in the oldest known forms of the evening office. It occupies this same position in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and in a number of other modern service books.

Antiphons for Morning and Evening Psalms

Include texts, rubrics and notes in *SLM*, p. 23.

Add alternative antiphon and note on Psalm 67 (the current antiphon is the last verse of the psalm):

On Psalm 67

Day by day we bless you; we praise your name for ever.

Note

The text is from Psalm 145:2.

The Lessons

Cross-reference to alternative response to the lessons provided for The Holy Eucharist.

Canticles

Canticle 12: A Song of Creation (*SLM*, pp. 24-5)

Use the title *Song of the Three* (used in CCP), instead of *Song of the Three Young Men*. Omit note, *SLM*, p. 25.

Canticle 15: The Song of Mary (*SLM*, p. 26)

Include ELLC text in *SLM*, p. 56. Include only second and third paragraphs of notes, i.e., those notes which explain modifications of the ELLC text.

Canticle 16: The Song of Zechariah (*SLM*, p. 26)

Include ELLC text in *SLM*, p. 55. Omit notes.

Canticle 18: A Song to the Lamb (*SLM*, p. 26)

Include text in *SLM*, p. 26. Omit notes.

Canticle 21: We Praise You O God (*SLM*, p. 27)

Include ELLC text in *SLM*, p. 54. Omit notes.

Additional Canticle A: A Song of Wisdom (*SLM*, p. 27)

Include text in *SLM*, p. 27.

Replace note, p. 27 with:

This is a translation from the original Greek of a text which is also included as a canticle in the Canadian *Book of Alternative Services*.

Additional Canticle B: A Song of Pilgrimage (*SLM*, p. 28)

Include text in *SLM*, p. 28.

Replace note, p. 28 with:

This canticle is from the Mozarabic (medieval Spanish) Psalter and is a new translation from the Latin.

Additional Canticle C:

The Song of Hannah

1 Samuel 2:1-8

My heart exults in you, O God; *
my triumph song is lifted in you.

My mouth derides my enemies, *
for I rejoice in your salvation.

There is none holy like you, *
nor any rock to be compared to you, our God.

Do not heap up prideful words or speak in arrogance; *

Only God is knowing and weighs all actions.

The bows of the mighty are broken, *

but the weak are clothed in strength.
Those once full now labor for bread, *
those who hungered now are well fed.
The childless woman has borne sevenfold, *
while the mother of many is forlorn.
God destroys and brings to life, casts down and raises up; *
gives wealth or takes it away, humbles and dignifies.
God raises the poor from the dust; *
and lifts the needy from the ash heap
To make them sit with the rulers *
and inherit a place of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are God's *
on which the whole earth is founded.

Additional Canticle D:

A Song of the Wilderness

Isaiah 35:1-7,10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, *
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
It shall blossom abundantly, *
and rejoice with joy and singing.
They shall see the glory of the Lord, *
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weary hands, *
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear! *
Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you."
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, *
and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.
Then shall the lame leap like a deer, *
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness *
and streams in the desert;
The burning sand shall become a pool *
and the thirsty ground, springs of water.
The ransomed of God shall return with singing, *
with everlasting joy upon their heads.
Joy and gladness shall be theirs, *
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Additional Canticle E:

A Song of Jerusalem Our Mother

Isaiah 66:10-14

Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her *
all you who love her,
Rejoice, rejoice with her, *

all you who mourn over her,
That you may drink deeply with delight *
from her comforting breast.
For thus says our God, *
“I will extend peace to her like a river,
the wealth of nations like an overflowing stream.
“You shall nurse and be carried on her arm,
and you shall nestle in her lap.
“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; *
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
“You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, *
you shall flourish like the grass of the fields.”

Additional Canticle F:

A Song of Lamentation

Lamentations 1:12,16; 3:19,22-24,26

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? *
Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow,
Which was brought upon me, *
inflicted by God's fierce anger.
For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears, *
for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage.
Remember my affliction and my bitterness, *
wormwood and gall!
The steadfast love of God never ceases, *
God's mercies never end.
They are new every morning; *
great is your faithfulness.
“God is my portion,” says my soul, *
“therefore will I hope in God.”
It is good that we should wait quietly *
for the coming of God's salvation.

Additional Canticle G:

A Song of Ezekiel

Ezekiel 36:24-28

I will take you from among all nations; *
and gather you from all lands to bring you home.
I will sprinkle clean water upon you; *
and purify you from false gods and uncleanness.
A new heart I will give you *
and a new spirit put within you.
I will take the stone heart from your chest *
and give you a heart of flesh.
I will help you walk in my laws *
and cherish my commandments and do them.

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You shall be my people, *
and I will be your God.

Additional Canticle H:

A Song of Hosea

Hosea 6:1-3

Come, let us return to our God, *
who has torn us and will heal us.
God has struck us and will bind up our wounds, *
after two days revive us,
On the third day restore us, *
that in God's presence we may live.
Let us humble ourselves, let us strive to know the Lord, *
whose justice dawns like morning light,
its dawning as sure as the sunrise.
God's justice will come to us like a shower, *
like spring rains that water the earth.

Additional Canticle I:

A Song of Jonah

Jonah 2:2-7,9

I called to you, O God, out of my distress, and you answered me; *
out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.
You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, *
and the flood surrounded me;
all your waves and billows passed over me.
Then I said, "I am driven away from your sight; *
how shall I ever look again upon your holy temple?"
The waters closed in over me, the deep was round about me; *
weeds were wrapped around my head at the roots of the mountains.
I went down to the land beneath the earth, *
yet you brought up my life from the depths, O God.
As my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, O God, *
and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.
With the voice of thanksgiving, I will sacrifice to you; *
what I have vowed I will pay, for deliverance belongs to the Lord!

Additional Canticle J:

A Song of Judith

Judith 16:13-16

I will sing a new song to my God, *
for you are great and glorious, wonderful in strength, invincible.
Let the whole creation serve you, *
for you spoke and all things came into being.
You sent your breath and it formed them, *
no one is able to resist your voice.

Mountains and seas are stirred to their depths, *
rocks melt like wax at your presence.
But to those who fear you, *
you continue to show mercy.
No sacrifice, however fragrant, can please you, *
but whoever fears the Lord shall stand in your sight for ever.

**Additional Canticle K:
A Song of Our Adoption**

Ephesians 1:3-10

Blessed are you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *
for you have blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
Before the world was made, you chose us to be yours in Christ, *
that we should be holy and blameless before you.
You destined us for adoption as your children through Jesus Christ, *
according to the good pleasure of your will,
To the praise of your glorious grace, *
that you have freely given us in the Beloved.
In you, we have redemption through the blood of Christ,
the forgiveness of our sins,
According to the riches of your grace *
which you have lavished upon us.
You have made known to us, in all wisdom and insight, *
the mystery of your will,
According to your good pleasure which you set forth in Christ, *
as a plan for the fullness of time,
To gather together all things in Christ, *
things in heaven and things on earth.

**Additional Canticle L:
A Song of Christ's Humility**

Philippians 2:6-11

Though in the form of God, *
Christ Jesus did not cling to equality with God,
But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, *
and was born in human likeness.
Being found in human form, he humbled himself *
and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.
Therefore, God has highly exalted him *
and given him the name above every name,
That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, *
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *
to the glory of God the Father.

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Additional Canticle M:

A Song of Faith

1 Peter 1:3-4, 18-21

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *
by divine mercy we have a new birth into a living hope;
Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *
we have an inheritance that is imperishable in heaven.
The ransom that was paid to free us *
was not paid in silver or gold,
But in the precious blood of Christ, *
the Lamb without spot or stain.
God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory *
so that we might have faith and hope in God.

(source: *Celebrating Common Prayer*, p. 222, adapted)

Additional Canticle N:

A Song of God's Love

1 John 4:7-11

Beloved, let us love one another, *
for love is of God.
Whoever does not love does not know God, *
for God is Love.
In this the love of God was revealed among us, *
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through Jesus Christ.
In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us *
and sent his Son that sins might be forgiven.
Beloved, since God loved us so much, *
we ought also to love one another.
For if we love one another, God abides in us, *
and God's love will be perfected in us.

Additional Canticle O:

A Song of the Heavenly City

Revelation 21:22-26, 22:1-4

I saw no temple in the city, *
for its temple is the God of surpassing strength and the Lamb.
And the city has no need of sun or moon to light it, *
for the glory of God shines on it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
By its light the nations shall walk, *
and the rulers of the world lay their honor and glory there.
Its gates shall never be shut by day, nor shall there be any night; *
into it they will bring the honor and glory of nations.
I saw the clean river of the water of life, bright as crystal, *
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The tree of life spanned the river, giving fruit every month, *
and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations.

All curses cease where the throne of God and the Lamb stands,
and all servants give worship there; *

there they will see God's face, whose Name shall be on their foreheads.

(source: *Celebrating Common Prayer*, pp. 227-8, adapted)

Additional Canticle P:

A Song of the Spirit

Revelation 22:12-17

"Behold, I am coming soon," says the Lord,

"and bringing my reward with me, *

to give to everyone according to their deeds.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, *
the beginning and the end."

Blessed are those who do God's commandments,
that they may have the right to the tree of life, *
and may enter the city through the gates.

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to you, *

with this testimony for all the churches.

"I am the root and the offspring of David, *

I am the bright morning star."

"Come!" say the Spirit and the Bride; *

"Come!" let each hearer reply!

Come forward, you who are thirsty, *

let those who desire take the water of life as a gift.

Additional Canticle Q:

A Song of Christ's Goodness

Anselm of Canterbury

Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you; *

you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride, *

tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgment.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds, *

in sickness you nurse us and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying, we are born to new life; *

by your anguish and labor we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness; *

through your gentleness, we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead, *

your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy, heal us; *

in your love and tenderness, remake us.

In your compassion, bring grace and forgiveness, *

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for the beauty of heaven, may your love prepare us.
(source: *Celebrating Common Prayer*, p. 232)

Additional Canticle R:

A Song of True Motherhood

Julian of Norwich

God chose to be our mother in all things *
and so made the foundation of his work,
most humbly and most pure, in the Virgin's womb.
God, the perfect wisdom of all, *
arrayed himself in this humble place.
Christ came in our poor flesh *
to share a mother's care.
Our mothers bear us for pain and for death; *
our true mother, Jesus, bears us for joy and endless life.
Christ carried us within him in love and travail, *
until the full time of his passion.
And when all was completed and he had carried us so for joy, *
still all this could not satisfy the power of his wonderful love.
All that we owe is redeemed in truly loving God, *
for the love of Christ works in us;
Christ is the one whom we love.

(source: *Celebrating Common Prayer*, p. 235)

Additional Canticle S:

A Song of Our True Nature

Julian of Norwich

Christ revealed our frailty and our falling, *
our trespasses and our humiliations.
Christ also revealed his blessed power, *
his blessed wisdom and love.
He protects us as tenderly and as sweetly when we are in greatest need; *
he raises us in spirit
and turns everything to glory and joy without ending.
God is the ground and the substance, the very essence of nature; *
God is the true father and mother of natures.
We are all bound to God by nature, *
and we are all bound to God by grace.
And this grace is for all the world, *
because it is our precious mother, Christ.
For this fair nature was prepared by Christ
for the honor and nobility of all, *
and for the joy and bliss of salvation.

(source: *Celebrating Common Prayer*, p. 236)

The Apostles' Creed

Include ELLC text in *SLM*, pp. 50 and 51. Omit notes.

Alternative to the Salutation

Add introductory rubric:

The officiant introduces the prayer with one of the following.

Include text in *SLM*, p. 29, printed in parallel column with:

Officiant God be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Include note, *SLM*, p. 29.

Suffrages

Include text in *SLM*, p. 29. Change "Let not the oppressed be shamed and turned away" to "Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away."

Use only second sentence of note ("Sources are...").

Concluding Sentence

Include text in *SLM*, p. 30; omit note.

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR THE EVENING

Opening Acclamations

Revise text, *SLM*, p. 30, as follows:

The Officiant greets the people with these words

Stay with us, Christ, for it is evening.

People Make your Church bright with your radiance.

In place of the above, from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost

Officiant Christ is risen. Alleluia.

People And has appeared to the disciples. Alleluia.

In Lent and on other penitential occasions

Officiant Blessed be the God of our salvation:

People Who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.

Omit notes.

Evening Psalms

Include cross-reference to Evening Psalms and alternative to the *Phos hilaron* for Evening Prayer.

Blessings

Include cross-reference to blessings for The Holy Eucharist.

THE GREAT LITANY

Add new text:

It is traditional to use sections I and VI. Other petitions may be added from sections II, III,

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IV and V. The first petition in section III is used as an introductory petition when petitions are included from section III, IV and/or V.

I.

Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,
Have mercy on us.

Holy and Mighty, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Holy Immortal One, Sanctifier of the faithful,
Have mercy on us.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, One God,
Have mercy on us.

II.

From all evil and mischief; from pride, vanity and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred and malice;
and from all evil intent,
Savior deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness and love of money; from hardness of heart and contempt for your
word and your laws,
Savior deliver us.

From sins of body and mind; from deceits of the world, flesh and the devil,
Savior deliver us.

From famine and disaster; from violence, murder, and dying unprepared,
Savior deliver us.

In all times of sorrow; in all times of joy; in the hour of our death and at the day of judgment,
Savior deliver us.

By the mystery of your holy incarnation; by your birth, childhood and obedience; by your
baptism, fasting and temptation,
Savior deliver us.

By your ministry in word and work; by your mighty acts of power; by the preaching of your
reign,
Savior deliver us.

By your agony and trial; by your cross and passion; by your precious death and burial,
Savior deliver us.

By your mighty resurrection; by your glorious ascension; and by your sending of the Holy
Spirit,
Savior deliver us.

III.

Hear our prayers, O Christ our God.
Hear us, O Christ.

Govern and direct your holy Church; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which

is your will.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give us boldness to preach the gospel in all the world, and to make disciples of all the nations.

Hear us, O Christ.

Enlighten your bishops, priests and deacons (especially ____) with knowledge and understanding, that by their teaching and their lives they may proclaim your word.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give your people grace to witness to your word and bring forth the fruit of your Spirit.

Hear us, O Christ.

Bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived.

Hear us, O Christ.

Strengthen those who stand; comfort and help the fainthearted; raise up the fallen; and finally beat down Satan under our feet.

Hear us, O Christ.

IV.

Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give your wisdom and strength to _____, the President of the United States, ____ the Governor of this state, (and _____, the Mayor of this city) that in all things they may do your will, for your glory and the common good.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give to the Congress of the United States, the members of the President's Cabinet, those who serve in our state legislature, and all others in authority the grace to walk always in the ways of truth.

Hear us, O Christ.

Bless the justices of the Supreme Court and all those who administer the law, that they may act with integrity and do justice for all your people.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory and for the good of all.

Hear us, O Christ.

Bless and keep all your people,

Hear us, O Christ.

V.

Comfort and liberate the lonely, the bereaved (especially ____) and the oppressed.

Hear us, O Christ.

Keep in safety those who travel (especially ____) and all who are in peril.

Hear us, O Christ.

Heal the sick in body, mind or spirit (especially ____) and provide for the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

Hear us, O Christ.

Guard and protect all children who are in danger.

Hear us, O Christ.

Shower your compassion on prisoners, hostages and refugees, and all who are in trouble.

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Hear us, O Christ.

Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts.

Hear us, O Christ.

Hear us as we remember those who have died (especially _____) and grant us with them a share in your eternal glory.

Hear us, O Christ.

VI.

Give us true repentance; forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance and our deliberate sins; and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your word.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One

Have mercy on us.

(Adapted from *Celebrating Common Prayer*, pp. 249-52)

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Opening Acclamations

Include texts in *SLM*, p. 31; omit notes.

Add:

as an alternative to "Blessed be the one..."

Celebrant Blessed be our God.

People For ever and ever. Amen.

during Advent

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People You come to your people and set them free.

Omit notes, *SLM*, p. 32.

Song of Praise

Replace rubric, *SLM*, p. 32, with the following:

The rubrics of the Prayer Book (p. 356) provide that "some other song of praise" may be used in place of the hymn Gloria in excelsis. The supplemental canticles (pages 000-000) or those in the Prayer Book (pp. 85-96) are among the appropriate alternatives.

Salutation

Replace the text, *SLM*, p. 32, with the following:

Celebrant God be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Omit note, *SLM*, p. 32.

Collect of the Day

Add rubric and texts:

During the season after the Epiphany and the season after Pentecost (except the First Sunday after the Epiphany, the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, Trinity Sunday and the Last Sunday after Pentecost, i.e., Proper 29), one of the following collects may be used instead of the appointed Collect of the Day:

Christ our true and only Light: receive our morning prayers, and illumine the secrets of our hearts with your healing goodness, that no evil desires may possess us who are made new in the light of your heavenly grace. AMEN.

(source: *Gelasian Sacramentary*)

O God our shield and armor of light, whom we adore with all the angelic host: defend us from evil; watch over any who are in danger this night and give your angels charge over them; and grant that we may always rejoice in your heavenly protection and serve you bravely in the world; through Jesus Christ our Savior. AMEN.

Holy Wisdom, in your loving kindness you created and restored us when we were lost: inspire us with your truth, that we may love you with our whole minds and run to you with open hearts, through Christ our Savior. AMEN.

(source: Alcuin of York, Mass of Wisdom)

God our rock and refuge: keep us safe in your care and strengthen us with your grace, that we may pray faithfully to you and love one another boldly, following the example of Jesus, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives for ever and ever. AMEN.

(source: *Veronese Sacramentary*)

Sun of Righteousness, so gloriously risen, shine in our hearts as we celebrate our redemption, that we may see your way to our eternal home, where you reign, one holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. AMEN.

Beloved God, as we approach your Presence, guide and stir us with your Holy Spirit, that we may become one body, one spirit in Jesus Christ our Savior. AMEN.

Loving Jesus: Protect and sustain us with your hand. Open the door of your love that, sealed with your wisdom, we may be free to serve you with joy. AMEN.

(a prayer of St. Gertrude)

Jesus, you are the way through the wilderness: show us your truth in which we journey, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit be in us the life that draws us to God. AMEN.

(source: F.B. McNutt, *The Prayer Manual* [London: Mowbray, 1961], p. 29, adapted)

Jesus, the true bread that comes down from heaven: leaven us with your Holy Spirit, that the world may know the abundance of life in your new creation. AMEN.

God of unchangeable power, when you fashioned the world the morning stars sang together and the host of heaven shouted for joy; open our eyes to the wonders of creation and teach us

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to use all things for good, to the honor of your glorious name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

(source: *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, p. 569)

Lessons

Add rubric and text:

After each Reading, the Reader may say

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

People Thanks be to God.

(source: *A New Zealand Prayer Book*)

Gospel Announcement

Include *SLM* text, p. 32; omit note.

Nicene Creed

Include ELLC text in *SLM*, pp. 51-2. Omit notes, *SLM*, pp. 51-2; include “An Additional Note on the Nicene Creed,” Expanded Edition, pp. 67-8.

Prayers of the People

Include text in *SLM*, pp. 33-4.

Confession of Sin

Add rubrics and text:

The Deacon or Celebrant says

Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

God of all mercy,

we confess that we have sinned against you,

opposing your will in our lives.

We have denied your goodness in each other,

in ourselves, and in the world you have created.

We wholeheartedly repent of the evil we have done

and the evil done on our behalf.

Forgive, restore, and strengthen us

through our Savior Jesus Christ,

that we may abide in your love

and serve only your will. AMEN.

Absolution

Retain cross-reference to text in materials for Morning and Evening Prayer.

The Peace

Include text in *SLM*, p. 34; omit note, *SLM*, p. 35.

Eucharistic Prayer 1

Include text in *SLM*, pp. 35-8.

Replace notes, *SLM*, pp. 38-9, with the following (in reference to all three eucharistic prayers and both Forms for the Eucharistic Prayer):

The use of “all” (“My Blood...poured out for you and for all”) in the institution narrative emphasizes that forgiveness of sins is made available to all through Christ’s sacrifice. While the Greek word is literally translated “many,” biblical scholars have pointed out that in the context of the passage it means that the sacrifice is made not just for a large number of persons, but for all humanity. (A similar use of “many” occurs in Matthew 20:28, where it is written that Jesus would give his life as “a ransom for many.” 1 Timothy 2:6, looking back on the event, says he gave himself as a “ransom for all.”) New eucharistic prayers in both the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church use “all” rather than “many.”

Eucharistic Prayer 2

Include text in *SLM*, pp. 39-42; on p. 40, omit “male and female,” i.e., “You made us in your image and taught us to walk in your ways.”

Omit notes, *SLM*, p. 42.

Eucharistic Prayer 3

Presider The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Presider

All thanks and praise
are yours at all times and in all places,
our true, loving and everliving God;
through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word,
the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things.
You laid the foundations of the world
and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb;
You brought forth all creatures of the earth
and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing,
all that you create stands as a sign of hope for our journey;
And so as the morning stars sing your praises
we join the heavenly beings and all creation
as we shout with joy:

Presider and People

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

or,

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of
power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one

who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

heaven and earth

are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one

who comes in the
name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Presider continues

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all,

your Word has never been silent;

you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations,

you delivered them from bondage

and led them to a land of promise.

Of your grace, you gave Jesus

to be human, to share our life,

to proclaim the coming of your holy reign

and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus our Redeemer,

you have freed us from sin,

brought us into your life,

reconciled us to you,

and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us

Jesus took bread,

and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it,

gave it to his friends and said:

“Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine,

said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:

“Drink this, all of you:

this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood,

poured out for you and for all

for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

And so, remembering all that was done for us:

the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension,

longing for Christ’s coming in glory,

and presenting to you these gifts

your earth has formed and human hands have made,

we acclaim you, O Christ:

Presider and People

Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Christ Jesus, come in glory!

The Presider continues

Send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon these gifts of bread and wine
that they may be to us
the Body and Blood of your Christ.
Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power,
may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ,
and in the fullness of time gather us
with [blessed _____, and] all your people
into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
we worship you our God and Creator
in voices of unending praise.

Presider and People

Blessed are you now and for ever. AMEN.

Notes

The underlying pattern of this eucharistic prayer is thanksgiving and supplication. Thomas Talley, Professor Emeritus of the General Theological Seminary, has argued that this basic structure underlies the diversity of classical eucharistic prayers in both the eastern and western liturgical traditions prior to the Reformation (see Prof. Talley's article, "The Structure of the Eucharistic Prayer," in *A Prayer Book for the Twenty-first Century*, Liturgical Studies 3 [Church Hymnal Corporation, 1996], pp. 76-101; see also the findings of the fifth international Anglican Liturgical Consultation, which met in Dublin, Ireland, in August 1995: David R. Holeton (ed.), *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist* [Grove Books, 1996], pp. 25-27).

In this classic pattern of eucharistic prayer, praise to the Creator leads into the *Sanctus*. This is followed by thanksgiving for redemption, climaxing in the narrative of the institution and leading into a memorial oblation, that is, remembering the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus and offering gifts of bread and wine. Following this oblation, the prayer shifts to supplication, with an invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine and upon the gathered community.

To underscore that the institution narrative is part of the thanksgiving for redemption, this eucharistic prayer introduces the institution narrative with the words "We thank you." To strengthen the unity of the thanksgiving for redemption and the memorial oblation, an acclamation by the people follows the oblation and leads into the supplication.

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The text of the opening dialogue (*sursum corda*) is that of the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), which consists of representatives of major English-speaking churches throughout the world. The final line, “It is right to give our thanks and praise,” renders a Latin and Greek text which is literally translated “It is right and just,” a wording that seems rather curt in English. “To give our thanks” was chosen as a reflection of “Let us give our thanks” in the previous line; the context makes clear that the thanks and praise are being given to God. The ELLC text has been widely adopted by Anglican churches as well as in other denominations.

Two alternatives are provided for the *Sanctus*. “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord” follows the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible in translating Psalm 118:26 and Matthew 21:9 (and the parallel texts, Mark 11:9 and John 12:13) as “Blessed is the one.” However, in the context of the eucharistic prayer the quotation refers specifically to Jesus our Savior and not to everyone who comes in God’s name. For this reason the ELLC text reads “Blessed is he.”

The language of the preface is derived from Job 38:4-11 and Wisdom of Solomon 9:1-2. The identification of Jesus as eternal Word and Wisdom, while not widely known in the late twentieth century, is evident in the New Testament and the writings of the early Church. During the intertestamental period (the second and first centuries B.C.E.), personified Wisdom came to be understood as a manifestation of God, an agent of creation and salvation. Some New Testament scholars argue that early Christians interpreted Jesus’ life, death and resurrection in light of the already familiar language and ideas of divine Wisdom. The third-century writers Origen and Tertullian identified Jesus as Wisdom, and two centuries later Augustine of Hippo, in a treatise on the Holy Trinity, named Jesus as Word and Wisdom.

The phrase “Holy One of Blessing” originated in a Jewish congregation as a contemporary reformulation of the traditional Jewish invocation “Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.”

Forms for the Eucharistic Prayer

Include Form A and Form B, *SLM*, pp. 43-6, and notes, p. 47.

Memorial Acclamations

Omit Memorial Acclamation A and B and notes, *SLM*, pp. 47-8.

Fraction Anthems

Add new introductory rubric:

Any of the following, or a Fraction Anthem from The Hymnal 1982, # S167 - # S172, may be said or sung in place of the anthem “Christ our Passover” (BCP, p. 364).

Include anthems in *SLM*, p. 48.

Omit notes, *SLM*, p. 48.

Postcommunion Prayer

Omit text and notes, *SLM*, p. 49.

Add new texts:

God of abundance,

you have fed us
with the bread of life and cup of salvation;
you have united us
with Christ and one another;
and you have made us one
with all your people in heaven and on earth.
Now send us forth
in the power of your Spirit,
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world
and continue for ever
in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a forgiven, healed and renewed people,
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

Blessings

Omit first and second forms, *SLM*, p. 49.

Include third form, *SLM*, p. 49.

Add new forms:

God's Blessing be with you,
Christ's peace be with you,
the Spirit's outpouring be with you,
now and always.
(source: Celtic)

The Wisdom of God
the Love of God
and the Grace of God
strengthen you
to be Christ's hands and heart in this world,
in the name of the Holy Trinity.
(source: Celtic)

Live without fear: your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Go in peace to follow the good road and may God's blessing be with you always.
(source: from Saint Clare)

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Resolution A076 Test Local Materials (“Rite III”)

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the Standing Liturgical Commission urge all
2 congregations, with the permission of their Ordinary, to make use of materials offered in the
3 Report to the 72nd General Convention (Blue Book) as well as local material produced in the
4 context of “An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist” (“Rite III”), and to share experiences
5 and results with the Standing Liturgical Commission.

Resolution A077 Funding for Supplemental Liturgical Materials

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the Standing Commission on Church Music
2 and the Standing Liturgical Commission be directed to continue to develop, collect an edit
3 supplemental liturgical materials and musical settings; and be it further
4 *Resolved*, That the sum of \$125,000 be appropriated for this triennium toward the expense of
5 preparing these materials.

Explanation

Since the Expansive Language Committee of the Standing Liturgical Commission has produced materials, such as new canticles, which require musical settings, this Resolution encourages the continuing collaboration between these two bodies in providing further materials for the use of the church. Note: this resolution also appears in the Standing Commission on Church Music report.

Structure

The November meeting of the SLC was held concurrent with a meeting of the Standing Commission on Church Music. In the course of that meeting, a joint session to discuss the report of the Committee on the Structure of the Church was held. Two resolutions were affirmed by the combined membership of the two commissions. One, reported below, dealt with the meeting schedules and working structures for the commissions. A second, concerning the development of liturgical resources, is included in the report of the SCCM.

Resolution A078 Study Merger of SLC and Church Music

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 72nd General Convention direct the
2 Standing Commission on Church Music and the Standing Liturgical Commission to schedule their
3 meetings concurrently, arrange their agendas to maximize possibilities of collegial consideration
4 of issues, and to investigate the possibilities of the merger of these bodies into a single
5 Commission on Worship; and be it further
6 *Resolved*, That specific questions about the organization of a new Commission on Worship be
7 addressed by a sub-committee representing both commissions, their findings to be reported to the
8 73rd General Convention; and be it further
9 *Resolved*, That programmatic initiatives requiring the appointment of task-forces and funding of
10 projects be proposed jointly by the two commissions.

Explanation

The Report to the 72nd General Convention from the Committee on Structure has wisely recommended that the work of the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Standing Commission on Church Music would be better facilitated by a single commission on worship, to incorporate the current work of the two existing commissions.

Because of the expectation that these bodies continual produce materials for publication and engage in the development of educational resources, a period of transition will be necessary to assure continuity in the delivery of services as the structure is reformed.

While both commissions recognize the significant advantage of a combined commission, they also see the need to move into the new structure with deliberate care.

The joint session concluded with the adoption of *Norms for the Common Life of the SLC and SCCM*

- Spend time at each meeting as a praying community.
- Make it a goal to know and to love each other better by the end of each meeting.
- Try to model and mirror what we should be as the essence of our time together.
- Continually acknowledge that we have a ministry of servanthood.

Filioque

In response to Resolution A028a, concurred at the 71st General Convention, the SLC included in that 1996 edition of *Supplemental Liturgical Materials*, an Appendix C: *An Additional Note on the Nicene Creed*, which outlines the history of the controversy.

International Anglican Liturgical Consultation

The Episcopal Church participates in conversations about the development and revision of Books of Common Prayer with other Provinces of the Anglican Communion every four years. The fourth meeting on this consultation was held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in August of 1991 with 23 Provinces of the Communion represented. The Rev. Dr. Leonel Mitchell represented the SLC. The Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers served as a member of the steering committee for the Consultation, and the SLC was also represented by the Rev. Sr. Jean Campbell. The topic considered at this meeting was Christian Initiation. The 71st General Convention commended to the Church for the purposes of study and discussion the Recommendations of the Fourth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (Toronto, 1991): *Christian Initiation in the Anglican Communion, the Toronto Statement, "Walk in Newness of Life."* (Published in Grove Worship Series No. 118.)

The fifth meeting of the consultation was held in Dublin, Ireland, in August of 1995, with 19 Provinces represented. Representing the Standing Liturgical Commission was the Rev. Dr. Leonel Mitchell. The Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers again attended as a member of the steering committee. Liturgical Officer, The Rev. Dr. Clayton L. Morris, was also in attendance. The topic considered at the meeting was the Eucharist. The papers and statement from that gathering are published in *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist, Findings of the Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*. (Published in Grove Worship Series No. 135.)

Resolution A079 Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 72nd General Convention commend to the
- 2 Church for the purposes of study and discussion the Recommendations of the Fifth International
- 3 Anglican Liturgical Consultation (Dublin, 1995): *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist, Findings of*
- 4 *the Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation* (Grove Worship Series No. 135.)

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Explanation

As the church focuses on the renewal of eucharistic worship, this sampling of views from around the globe provides expressions of both the unity and diversity characterized by Anglican Christians.

Consultation on Common Texts

The commission has been a regular participant in the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), which is the ecumenical dialogue on liturgical materials in North America. The Revised Common Lectionary has been a major work of this group and is recommended to the Convention. The Rev. Joseph Russell has represented the commission on the CCT. He currently serves as its president. Future work of the CCT includes the development of common eucharistic prayers, Collects for the Revised Common Lectionary, and issues concerned with inculturation.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 1995-1997 TRIENNIUM

	1995	1996	1997
<i>Income</i>			
Budget	\$18,333	\$30,961	\$18,333
<i>Expenses</i>			
Non-staff/Consultants	\$2,463	\$2,595	\$5,000
Administrative	104	542	750
Full Committee Meetings	9,605	18,045	9,000
Sub-Committee Meetings	945	7,200	3,000
	-----	-----	-----
<i>Total</i>	\$13,117	\$28,382	\$17,750 *

*estimated

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING TRIENNIUM

The Calendar

Resolution A074a, concurred by the 71st General Convention, set out new guidelines for the addition of names to the calendar in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. Notably, those guidelines expect that before a person is considered for national recognition only after a strong, lengthy local commemoration has attracted the attention of neighboring dioceses. Thus, except for those names which will be proposed for inclusion in the calendar, having been adopted for trial use during this triennium (Emery, Luther, Bonhoeffer, Macrina, Stanton, Bloomer, Truth, Tubman, Ignatius, Jones, Crummell, Hildegard, and Becket), no new names have come before the commission. During the next triennium, the SLC will systematically review the material in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, in order to determine whether biographies, collects, and lections require revision. The current calendar will also be examined to determine whether some commemorations should be deleted.

Resolution A080 Approve Commemorations for Liturgical Calendar

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the commemorations of Julia Chester Emery,
2 Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Macrina, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer,
3 Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Ignatius of Loyola, Paul Jones, Alexander Crummell,
4 Hildegard, and Thomas Becket, proposed by the General Convention of 1994 (Journal, page 684)
5 and approved for trial use, be now finally approved and entered in the Calendar of the Church
6 Year (Book of Common Prayer, pages 15-30).

Resolution A081 Teresa of Avila

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the commemoration of Teresa of Avila, Nun,
2 be moved from October 14 to October 15, in order to conform to the calendars of other churches
3 and provinces of the Anglican Communion.

The Book of Common Prayer and Supplemental Liturgical Materials

At its final meeting in November, the Standing Liturgical Commission agreed that a major focus for the next triennium will be the question of Prayer Book revision. The commission intends to pursue that question in three distinct projects: One will examine and evaluate the Book of Common Prayer, *Supplemental Liturgical Materials* and *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* in order to determine how the materials contained in these volumes needs to be edited and what additions or deletions are appropriate. The second project will continue to develop a strategy for the production of liturgical materials for the church of the 21st century. The third project will be the continued collection and publication of liturgical materials, including musical setting.

Liturgy and Music

As a result of the enthusiasm expressed at their November joint session by members of the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Standing Commission on Church Music for a collaborative working arrangement, all work in the arena of worship will be pursued in cooperative ventures between the two commissions.

Racial and Cultural Diversity

In response to Resolution A081a, concurred at the 71st General Convention, the SLC has, in its gathering of liturgical texts and right, made note of the need to ... *raise up our racial and cultural diversity*... The ongoing work of gathering, evaluating and encouraging the use of new materials will hold this need in mind.

BUDGET APPROPRIATION

	1998	1999	2000
Non-staff/Consultants	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Administrative	750	750	750
Full Committee Meetings	10,000	10,000	10,000
Sub-Committee Meetings	5,000	5,000	5,000
	-----	-----	-----
Total	\$17,750	\$17,750	\$17,750

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Note: Resolution A077 seeks an appropriation of \$125,000, in addition to the above appropriation, to support the development of supplemental liturgical materials.

Resolution A082 Standing Liturgical Commission Budget Appropriation

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 72nd General Convention appropriate, in
- 2 the Budget of the Convention for the triennium 1998-2000, the sum of \$53,250 for meetings of
- 3 the Standing Liturgical Commission.

Report to the General Convention on the Blessing of Same-Sex Relationships

This report was prepared in a collaborative process between members of the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops. The membership list of the Standing Liturgical Commission appears in their Blue Book report. The membership list of the Theology Committee follows.

The Rt. Rev. Frederick H. Borsch, *Chair*
The Rt. Rev. William Carl Frey
The Rt. Rev. Joe Morris Doss
The Rt. Rev. Craig Anderson
The Rt. Rev. David Standish Ball
The Rt. Rev. Jane Holmes Dixon
The Rt. Rev. Charles Farmer Duvall
The Rt. Rev. John Shelby Spong
The Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting

A minority report submitted by Bishops Ball, Duvall, and Frey and follows the report which was approved by the remaining members of the Theology Committee and the entire membership of the Standing Liturgical Commission

Introduction

The General Convention, meeting in Indianapolis in August of 1994, affirmed Resolution C042s.

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 71st General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops to prepare and present to the 72nd General Convention, as part of the Church's ongoing dialogue on human sexuality, a report addressing the theological foundations and pastoral considerations involved in the development of rites honoring love and commitment between persons of the same sex; and be it further

Resolved, That no rites for the honoring of love and commitment between persons of the same sex be developed unless and until the preparation of such rites has been authorized by the General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the sum of \$8,600 be appropriated to support this work, subject to funding considerations.

Following a meeting of the Standing Liturgical Commission in January of 1995, at which plans for consultation between the SLC and the House of Bishops Theology Committee were discussed, Bishops Borsch and Griswold appointed two members of each body to serve as a committee to produce the report. Bishops Epting and Duvall were appointed from the theology committee. The Rev. Joseph Russell and The Rev. Bruce Jenneker were appointed from the SLC. (Because of scheduling conflicts, Bishop Duvall was forced to resign. He was replaced by Bishop Doss.) The bishops also asked Dr. Timothy Sedgwick of Seabury-Western Seminary and The Very Rev. Philip Turner of Berkeley Divinity School to provide bibliographies of study material for the

committee's use. In November of 1995, the study materials were distributed to the committee, which held its first meeting in March, 1996.

At the committee's first meeting, in March, questions grouped under fifteen topical headings were drafted as a way of eliciting data to form the report's content. Discussion of possible strategies for the production of the report concluded with the decision to ask each of the eleven Episcopal seminaries to name an interdisciplinary team to draft a response to the questions. The committee then decided to engage a consultant to review the seminary responses, and on the basis of that study draft a report for the committee to review, edit and submit to the SLC and the Theology Committee for approval. The Rev. Dr. Charles Winters and Ms. Flower Ross were engaged to draft the report.

Invitations were mailed to the seminaries in April of 1996. The consultants received the seminary responses in September. In October, the committee held its second meeting to review a first draft of the report. An edited version was then sent to members of the SLC and the Theology Committee for their review. At the November meeting of the SLC, editorial suggestions from committee members were considered in the production of a final draft, which was reviewed by the members of both bodies and approved as a final draft. It follows.

ON THE BLESSING OF SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Is Sacramental Marriage the Issue?

A major issue that some respondents raised is the meaning of the language of the Resolution. Is some vague, non-official, non-sacramental "blessing", such as that given to fishing boats and animals implied? Or does the Resolution envision something approaching – perhaps reaching – the status of full sacramental marriage? Two opposite ends of the spectrum of opinion are in virtual agreement that sacramental marriage is, indeed, what is at stake, while others occupy various positions not willing to interpret the intent of the Resolution so narrowly.

The stance that is opposed to what it perceives to be the intent of the Resolution – sacramental marriage – asserts that the wording of CO42s is euphemistically evasive. The "love" and "commitment" it speaks of are words whose meanings need to be more closely delineated. The "love" implied is not simply friendship or companionship but erotic desire, and "commitment" too easily bespeaks a merely subjective and temporary attitude. And the Resolution speaks of "honoring" without indicating the more precise meaning the word acquires in its context, which is "blessing." When these words are looked at closely, it becomes clear that the Resolution "is aiming to legitimate a new relationship which may include friendship, affection, and compassion, but which is constituted by *erotic love and genital acts*." (Italics in the original.) And marriage is the only way such acts can be legitimated, whether homosexual or heterosexual."

The view from the other end of the spectrum agrees that marriage is the issue, but from a hopeful stance. Whether or not the Resolution's framers so intended, its wording *should* be seen to refer to marriage – "one sacramental, ecclesial, and covenantal rite of marriage for two women, two men, or a woman and a man." To see the Resolution as referring merely to a "blessing of same-sex unions" different from marriage would be a tortuous attempt to side-step the real issue. Blessing a union without recognizing the vows "is to deny the validity of their relationship and

commitment.” To “honor love and commitment between persons of the same sex” is to honor those persons’ vows of love and commitment. And this is marriage. So, both ends of the spectrum agree that marriage is the issue. The division is over whether or not same-sex marriage is possible and/or desirable within the Christian context.

These polar opposites, however, were not the only views expressed. There is a middle ground occupied by three similar but not identical positions:

- Those who would very much like to see the church authorize same-sex blessing and/or marriage but do not see a consensus that would allow it without unacceptable divisions within the church. For pragmatic reasons they counsel patience and further work to obtain greater awareness and sensitivity to the issues of love and justice involved.
- Those who think same-sex unions are valuable and should in some way be “blessed” but that they are not and cannot properly be seen as “marriage.” They call for some kind of rite that would honor the unions but maintain a difference from official marriage rites.
- Those who, while favorably disposed to honor the integrity of faithful same-sex relationships, are, at least at this time, reluctant to go in any direction that would suggest official sanction. From this stance, any kind of rite that the church, at least at the national level, might compose, would implicitly constitute such sanction.

All five of these locations on the spectrum of views contain understandings of what “marriage” itself is. This report will look more closely at this issue under “Theological Considerations” below.

The Biblical Evidence

The biblical references cited most frequently in the debate about same-sex unions cluster around two issues: heterosexual marriage as the norm for sexual relationships, and condemnation of homosexual relationships.

Regarding the former, the normative status of heterosexual marriage, the primary site is Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they became one flesh.”

The primary texts condemning homosexual relations are:

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” (Leviticus 18:22) “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.” (Leviticus 20:13) “... and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.” (Romans 1:27) “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ...” (1 Corinthians 6:9)

(References to the Genesis account of “the sin of Sodom” (Genesis 18:5ff) are generally seen as too ambiguous about exactly what constituted the “sin” to merit inclusion in this list.)

The Genesis 2 text, to which Jesus refers in reply to the question about divorce (Matthew 19:4-6) is cited by opponents of same-sex marriage as *the* biblical basis for marriage. And, indeed, scholars on all sides of the question agree that the Bible's norm for marriage is a heterosexual one. The division on this issue, as on the condemnation of homosexual relationships, occurs over how the passages are to be interpreted relative to today's issues.

On the one hand, opponents of any form of liturgy that suggests recognizing the legitimacy of same-sex unions maintain that what is at stake is the authority of the Bible itself. Articles VI and XX of the Articles of Religion, the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral, and the Ordination Vow, all unanimously affirm the Bible to be "the word of God written" which contains inherent authority over the church and its members. It contains doctrinal and ethical norms that can be appealed to as a rule and standard of faith. And its revelational unity applies not only to the Old and New Testaments but extends to the church today in its life and councils. To maintain that the Bible can legitimately be interpreted differently in the light of today's conditions by the guidance of the Holy Spirit opens the door for church leaders to impose their own agenda without need to justify it from the express warrant of Scripture.

Countering this position, proponents of same-sex marriage argue that the Bible must not be used out of its context to resolve present-day issues. Many respected biblical scholars would agree. In spite of the apparent unanimity of the biblical passages, Scripture and tradition do not speak to the question *as it is being posed today*. Certainly marriage in biblical times was seen as exclusively heterosexual. Concern about marriage, however, was much more focused on matters of legitimacy – property inheritance and succession – than about ethics or personal relationships of love and commitment. In the ancient Near East, marriage was a property relationship in which the husband owned the wife; it had little to do with a relationship of partners. Nothing in Scripture deals directly with faithful life partnerships between two people of the same sex. Israel reframed the concept of marriage in successive stages and the Christian Church has continued to do so.

And while biblical material that refers at all to same-sex sexual intercourse is almost always hostile, the texts all presuppose a *heterosexual* person engaging in "unnatural" sexual activity. In none of this is the question of faithful life partnerships between two people of the same sex addressed. The faithful commitment of same-sex partners, *who are by their nature homosexual*, is not at all the same as the promiscuous engagement by heterosexual men in sexual relationships with boys or men. When the Bible does not address the questions being asked today, the only alternative to seeking the *Spirit* of Scripture, which proponents deem most appropriate, is to impose ill-fitting prescriptions and proscriptions that suit the agenda of those who impose them.

Theological Considerations

The church's theology of marriage according to its purpose and nature has been open and evolving historically. In terms of the purpose of marriage, from the time of Augustine until the Reformation, the church taught that marriage had three purposes: *fides* (fidelity), *proles* (offspring), and *sacramentum* (mystery or solemn obligation). But in the Parson's Tale in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, there is introduced the concept that marriage was for three slightly different purposes, – first, for the procreation of children, then for a remedy against sexual frustration, and finally for companionship. In the introduction to the marriage rite in the first Book

of Common Prayer (1549) Cranmer presented the same list which had appeared in Chaucer. But Martin Bucer, commenting on Cranmer's 1549 rite, argued that "three causes for matrimony are enumerated, that is children, a remedy, and mutual help, and I should prefer what is placed third among the causes for marriage might be in the first place, because it is first."

In the introduction to the rite in the 1928 American book this list of three purposes did not appear and, instead, marriage was simply called "an honorable estate, instituted of God, signifying unto us the mystical union betwixt Christ and his Church." It was not until 1949 that, in the face of an increasing rate of divorce, General Convention mandated the signing of a Declaration of Intent at every marriage and in the Declaration listed companionship as the first purpose of marriage. In the Canadian prayer book of 1959, the three reasons were listed in a different order, with procreation in the second place. Then in the 1975 draft of the English book, Cranmer's third reason was put first, thus at last taking up Bucer's suggestion that the companionship aspect of marriage be listed as primary and most important. The 1979 American book followed suit by listing the purposes as the couple's "mutual joy ... the help and comfort given one another ... and, when it is God's will, the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord" (BCP, 423). Thus, while marriage for Cranmer was above all for the procreation of children, our modern rites emphasize the significance of relationship and the joys of sexuality.

There are, thus, an erotic purpose ("mutual joy"), a social purpose ("help and comfort given one another"), and a biological purpose ("procreation of children"). Proponents of same-sex marriage note that in the order of precedence preferred by Bucer and adopted in the present Book of Common Prayer same-sex persons fulfill the first two purposes at least as well as heterosexual couples. Indeed, given the history of subordination and not infrequent abuse of women in heterosexual marriage, homosexual partners have an admirable record of honoring these purposes. In the view of the proponents, only if the third purpose, the procreation of children, is insisted upon as essential to marriage can denial of marriage to same-sex couples be supported. In many people's rethinking, companionship takes precedence over procreation, and fidelity over fertility.

But can the procreative purpose be easily put aside? "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the Earth.'" (Genesis 1:27, 28) It would seem, therefore, that the purpose of marriage is, simply, the survival and flourishing of the human race.

But unless – as even the present Prayer Book rite does not maintain – there must be biological offspring from the marriage union, the generativity displayed by many same-sex couples in extending their nurturing and creative care to persons beyond their own exclusive union may well be seen as fulfilling this third, procreative, purpose of marriage.

Appeal is, indeed, made to the Jahwist account (Genesis 2:4b-3:24, earlier chronologically than the Genesis 1 Priestly version) which describes the creation by God of man and woman as being for companionship, instead of being tied to nature or to forming a people. Here is the basis for the emphasis on care for one another.

As for the erotic purpose, when in Genesis 2:24 the man says “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” is his response only a recognition of *another* human being, or is it the longed for *opposite*. Is the erotic level in marriage concerned with the yearning the male senses for the female form, and the female receiving those attentions, as some opponents suggest? Is this solely a sexual-genital attraction, or can it be an expression and a means for its transmutation into a relationship of love that cares for the other for the other’s sake? And, if it can, could also the erotic yearning between persons of the same sex be so elevated? It is in answering these questions that the polar ends of the theological spectrum differ.

A major contention of those scholars opposed to same-sex marriage is that same-sex marriage is so bound up ideologically with “the ethic of intimacy” that it cannot be adapted to the requirements of classical Christian marriage but will further confuse Christians struggling with the allurements of contemporary culture. Citing Tim Stafford, *The Sexual Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989) pp. 15-19, “the ethic of intimacy” is characterized by an invariably positive view of sex, personal and repeated consent to sex by autonomous individuals, the search for “compatibility” among partners, sex as a private matter, sex with no necessary consequences, no double standard between men and women, and “maturity” (age 16 and above) as a prerequisite for sex. In marriage, sexual intimacy is one goal of a larger design, whereas, it is maintained, in other relationships sexual intimacy is the instrument of self-realization.

Long-time same-sex partners, not surprisingly, reject this characterization of their relationships. Faithful monogamous relationships between same-sex partners are built on much stronger foundations than mere “self-realization.” The loving care given to AIDS-afflicted partners, enduring with compassion the suffering of the beloved, testifies to the depth of the relationship.

The social purpose, “the help and comfort given one another,” flows out of the “erotic,” which is a physical expression of this greater spiritual reality. While marriage may be preceded by erotic courtship and fulfilled in sexual delight, the union of man and woman brings about a new reality, a society. As Christian circles developed their thinking about marriage and the metaphor of the marriage between Christ and his Church took the fore, the new society created by marriage was seen as a “little church” within the larger Church. Marriage, then, is an ecclesial matter and not one simply between the two persons.

Can same-sex marriages fill this social/ecclesial purpose? Not if, as some maintain, the relationship between the two partners is a merely erotic one. Engaging in physical acts of love is not the same as marital communion because the union would not be of two sexes into one flesh. Homosexual partners, however, regard such an argument as a circular one – the necessity of two sexes is built into the definition, not derived by any kind of logic – and it is a view that shows no awareness of the depth of love, tenderness, and caring that such partnerships contain. To suggest that the kind of intimacy shared by homosexual persons is always to be equated with the “ethics of intimacy” thus defined is insulting. Such generalizations are as unfair to homosexual persons as they would be if similarly applied to heterosexual persons.

Citing Roger Scruton, *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic* (New York: Free Press, 1986, p. 81), some assert that an essential feature of mature sexual desire is “the opening of the self to the mystery of another gender”:

Desire directed toward the other gender elicits not its simulacrum but its complement. Male desire evokes the loyalty which neutralizes its vagrant impulse; female desire evokes the conquering urge which overcomes its hesitations. Often, of course, this complementarity can be re-created, either momentarily, in play, or permanently, by members of the same sex.

. . . but to say that complementary desire can be “recreated,” some point out, admits a fundamental difference between a natural and an artificial impulse.

This argument concentrates on the genital and gender aspects of marriage. *Eros*, love as desire, can, indeed, be directed to the sexual otherness that exists between male and female; it can also be directed toward the more radical otherness that exists between any two persons *as persons*. The Divine Trinity is a relationship of love between *personae* who are distinguished, not by gender, but by their sheer otherness. Is it not more true to the nature of married love at its best that the married partners open themselves to the mystery of another person? And – once again in married love at its best – with the erotic desire is commingled the *agape* in which the other is loved for his or her sheer otherness.

It is this transformation of sexuality that forms the basis of the movement from contract to covenant. And when referring to marriage it is no longer in order to achieve or realize something else, but is a mutual commitment to love one another for better or for worse, regardless of any consequences.

In the 1979 American book, for the first time in the history of the Prayer Book marriage rites, marriage is called a “covenant.” How the Episcopal Church came to this new covenantal understanding of the nature of marriage is not exactly clear. Perhaps the term was attractive because, both biblical and patristic in origin, it seemed to provide a genuine way forward for both Roman Catholics and Protestants trying to find common ecumenical ground in an increasingly alien society. Or perhaps the term – far more than that for a contract, with its individualistic connotation – made sense because seen as a covenant, marriage carried an ecclesial meaning: in the scriptures the *berith* established at Sinai was between God and all the people of Israel.

“Covenant” implies a superior who offers the covenant and a subordinate who accepts it. So God extends the covenant to Israel and Israel is bound to the terms of God’s covenant. As applied to the relationship between God and Israel and between Christ and the Church this implication is foundational. Within marriage, however, the covenant metaphor is two-edged. On the one hand, marriage itself can be seen as a covenant offered by God to the couple who, in accepting it, form a “mini-church.” On the other, as Paul demonstrates, the marriage covenant between Christ and his Church can be extrapolated to the dominance of husband over wife. The latter imagery is being roundly rejected, not only by “liberationists” but by the language of the Prayer Book rites of recent years.

Is marriage a sacrament? A sacrament is an act of committed union between an individual and either another individual or an institution. In antiquity it was by means of a *sacramentum* that by an oath one bound oneself to and became a soldier of the Roman army. A sacrament is also a communal act. Like a covenant, it can never be a merely individual matter, nor can it involve only two or more individuals *as individuals*. Both opponents and proponents of same-sex unions agree

that the issue is an *ecclesial* one. The church implies that the liturgical celebration of a marriage is a public ritual blessing on what has taken place and will continue to unfold, by God's grace, in the lives of the couple. The ritual is the outward sign of the interior grace of the presence and action of God in their lives.

Is "what has taken place and will continue to unfold" the fruit of "the interior grace of the presence and action of God" in the case of same-sex unions? Or is the very fact that these unions are homosexual sufficient grounds for denying their graced nature? If one takes the stance that biblical texts cannot be contextually interpreted – that such "interpretation" is really "revision" – the answer is clear. Homosexual acts are *per se* sinful and cannot be blessed. On the other hand, a significant number of biblical scholars – addressing the hermeneutical question in general, without any particular agenda – insist that the only appropriate way to understand the Bible is to understand it in its context.

Pastoral Considerations

The sinfulness or lack of sinfulness of homosexual acts is an issue that at present is up in the air. Evidence that homosexuality is genetically caused is suggestive but not conclusive. The virtually unanimous testimony of homosexual persons, however, is that homosexuality as they experience it is not a volitional choice. If morality has to do with choice, then, being homosexual cannot be considered sinful. This is the position taken in General Convention resolution commending the homosexual persons to the church's ministrations and pastoral care. But while a person may have no choice about his or her sexual orientation, the same cannot be said about acting out that orientation in genital behavior.

If one allows that the biblical condemnations of homosexual acts are aimed at the promiscuous activities of heterosexual men and the issue of sexual activity on the part of persons whose given state is homosexual is left unaddressed, how is the moral question to be resolved? For some people the immediate answer might seem to be that homosexual acts are "unnatural."

Although there is reference to natural law among those doing theology on the subject of same sex relationships – the Thomist idea of natural law as containing a number of detailed moral prescriptions – there is little precedent in classical Anglicanism for an appeal to natural law as a mode of moral discourse. The Anglican idea of natural theology is not a fixed set of laws but an ability to reason, expressed almost instinctively in the requirement to honor God and all persons made in God's image. The details of how to act this out in specific circumstances are left to our discernment in the company of the Spirit.

To call something "unnatural" in the sense of "contrary to nature" would require, first, that there be a continuing and unchangeable "nature" that uniformly and constantly underlies and defines the reality in question. It is now, however, widely recognized that much if not all of what had in earlier times been assumed to possess this quality is in fact "socially constructed." Something is "unnatural" if it violates the culturally accepted norms of "what ought to be."

In the case of homosexual acts such norms are not to be lightly ignored. On the other hand, they cannot carry the weight of eternally binding moral laws. Seemingly a large number of people in our nation view homosexual acts as not "what ought to be." Over the last few years, however,

there has been a noticeable shift regarding this. Where a majority of the nation as a whole, according to most polls, is opposed to legal regularization of same-sex unions, there is evidence that a sizeable number of members of the Episcopal Church may be favorably disposed to the blessing of same-sex unions. (This information comes from the church's study of human sexuality, reported in the Blue Book for the 71st General Convention, page 338. It does not represent a general sampling of the entire church, but of those who participated in the Church-sponsored dialogues on human sexuality.)

Polls, no matter how carefully crafted, cannot be allowed to dictate moral issues. However, to claim that homosexual acts in all cases, even between faithful, committed, monogamous persons, are immoral is a position that many faithful Christians cannot take. Other equally faithful Christians do take it. Clearly, there is no immediately available alternative that will satisfy all.

What alternatives or options might be considered?

Options the Church Might Consider

A. Continue to emphasize the teaching that the right and proper context for genital sexual relations is within heterosexual marriage.

This position would affirm the traditional teaching of the church and offer a clear message to all persons with regard to the purposes of human sexuality. It is in line with the teaching of most of the other churches and would affirm the understanding of many Christians. Gay and lesbian persons would continue to be given all other pastoral ministries of the church and would be supported in their full civil rights and protections.

B. Have the Standing Liturgical Commission devise a rite or rites of marriage to be authorized for use equally with heterosexual or homosexual couples.

This is an option favored by a number of gay and lesbian persons on the grounds that it affirms the equal and identical nature of unions between any two people who are willing to commit themselves to a faithful and life-long union. Obviously this would not meet with the approval of those who are opposed to any official sanctioning of same-sex unions. Even within the homosexual community there are difficulties with it as expressed here. The primary sticking point is with the commitment to a *life-long* union. The issue is not about unwillingness to *intend* that the relationship be "until death us do part." It is rather the absence, as canon law now stands, of any provision comparable to that offered to heterosexual couples for situations in which the marriage has died. Without such provision, homosexual marriages containing such a vow would force the couple either to living out a relationship that was no longer alive or to violating their vows.

Those who aver, either fearfully or hopefully, that full-blown sacramental marriage for same-sex persons would mean a rethinking of the nature of marriage are clearly correct. The present canonical provisions for remarriage after divorce were arrived at in piecemeal fashion, without due consideration of what they implied for marriage itself. Furthermore, in allowing remarriage after divorce without providing any liturgy for ritualizing the passage from married to single state the church has failed at another level to think through its theology of marriage. More than that, the different imaging that homosexual and heterosexual marriages would hold up for the church

require that marriage as such needs rethinking. This could offer an occasion to reexamine the nature and purpose of human relationships in general and to explore ways in which marriage practices have been oppressive, especially to women. It could allow us to think through afresh the relation of sacramental and civil goals. Clarifying the similarities and differences between marriage and the blessing of same sex unions could result in an improved theology and pastoral care for both groups.

Thus, this alternative, besides being completely unacceptable to a portion of the church's membership, would require more thorough background thought about the nature of marriage than could be hoped for by a simple commissioning of the construction of a new rite.

On a yet more obvious level, until or unless the civil authorities decide to license same-sex marriages, with all the legal and financial implications that would be involved, the question of the church's use of a marriage rite for same-sex couples is moot. It does, however, point up the issue of the close linkage between church and civil authorities and whether it is appropriate for the church to continue being an agent of the state.

C. Have the Standing Liturgical Commission develop a rite or rites that would officially bestow the church's blessing on same-sex unions but would clearly not be the same as sacramental marriage.

Once again, people opposed to the church's sanctioning same-sex unions could not accept this alternative. It is not at all certain that many gay and lesbian couples would accept it either. Gay men and lesbians would probably react in a variety of ways to the provision of such a rite. Some intensely alienated from organized Christianity might be hostile to *any* attempt by the church to pronounce on the legitimacy of their relationship. A half-way measure such as this would certainly not decrease their alienation. Others would find such a blessing of their unions unnecessary. Comfortable in their relationship, they would see no merit to an action that did nothing about their civil and financial rights.

An alternative that would provide official, church-wide blessing of same-sex unions could not be adopted without creating division – possibly schism – to a degree that many Episcopalians would find unacceptable. Doubtless many others would support such a move. Such Christians would be heartened by the church's courage in offering such a rite. They would experience relief at what they would experience as the church's movement toward increased justice for her gay and lesbian members. They would rejoice to see same-sex couples afforded the same, or at least comparable, opportunity for support within the church that is currently offered to heterosexual couples.

D. Accept the ambiguity of the present situation and affirm the duty of local pastors to respond pastorally to the needs of their parishioners.

If it be not possible for the church at this time officially, with the sanction of General Convention, to bless same-sex unions, what is to be done about the consciences of Christian people? People who are asked to act against their consciences are being asked to act against themselves. Their self-understanding and life are then separated. Alienation and loss of identity are the result. For this reason moral theology ranks the honoring of conscience among the most fundamental of obligations, both for individuals and for the community.

In this issue, at least two sets of persons are having their consciences threatened: those who view same-sex unions as contrary to Christian faith and those who are presently required to live in circumstances that refuse to honor their conscientiously adopted relationships. This, as the earlier question of the ordination of women, pushes the church to think more deeply about its own nature. The question of blessing same-sex unions raises more than issues of sexuality. It raises the question of the church itself.

In this regard, theological principles genuinely central to the Christian faith are a profitable place to focus, such as the Trinity and the reign of God. Many theologians have suggested that the Triune community is the model for every human society. The Trinity is a story about how three very different Persons can yet be one God. No matter how intimate the union between the three Divine Persons may be, through the Spirit, in particular, they invite all creation to share in their love. Human communities called into being by the Triune God must learn how to maintain true union in spite of great differences. The church, as the community of the Holy Spirit is preeminently such a community.

Yet the further question remains: how much acceptance and support can the community provide and remain a community? In this sense, the conflict of conscience poses the larger question of the nature of Christian faith that binds the church together as a community of individuals and as a communion of particular communities. As Wayne Meeks (*The Origins of Christian Morality*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993, page 216) has asked, restating the question of the early church, “How much unity is achievable? How much diversity is tolerable?”

Within the boundaries of these, as yet, unanswered questions, the “pastoral duty” of local pastors might be approximately delineated in these terms:

- a. Action should be taken with the full knowledge of the bishop.
- b. Action should be taken only when persons known and respected within the congregation present themselves. Deciding an issue in the abstract can be mischief-producing rather than educative.
- c. Action should be taken only after careful airing within the congregation of the issues involved – again, not in the abstract, but in regard to the specific situation at hand. The question of conscience, for all the members of the congregation, should be discussed along with the questions of justice and love.
- d. When the willingness of the congregation to stand with their gay or lesbian couple, not only within the boundaries of congregational life but also in the community at large has been established, the union may be blessed in a public rite.
- e. The rite used should be composed in such a way as to allow the couple to affirm their love and commitment to each other and to their intent that the union be life-long. Prayers asking God’s blessing on them and God’s grace in assisting them to live together in love and fidelity would be appropriate.

Such a more pastoral approach, however, would satisfy no one completely and might cause some to leave the church.

The ambiguity involved in such a position is also both a curse and a blessing. It often feels uncomfortable not to have clear answers and authoritative direction. Some believe the church has a duty to provide guidance by making clear and definitive answers to each of the complex questions of life. In this case the arguments from both opposing ends of the spectrum make it clear that ambiguity prevails. Ambiguity can be seen as sometimes a blessing in that it gives little ground and no support for win-lose decisions. If the church were to decide to condemn homosexual unions, some would have won, but others would have lost.

But this would not reflect the strength of our Anglican heritage. England underwent centuries of experience learning the essential value of compromise and “loyal opposition.” Anglicanism has refused to adopt an authoritative *magisterium* or confessional stance. It has never insisted on deciding for one side of a truly ambiguous question at the expense of the values represented in its opposite.

Anglicanism’s authority has consistently grown from pastoral decisions rather than ideological ones. We have decided what most faithfully cares for the life and unity of the church and its people by prayerfully responding to the concrete problems and concerns of the people as they arise. In the Episcopal Church in the United States, the diocese has historically been the basic unit of the church. Thus, typically, such responses occur at the level of parish and diocese.

A Minority Report in reference to Resolution C042s

The Theology Committee of the House of Bishops has apparently met only once, and briefly, since the 1994 Convention, but a joint sub-committee of the Theology Committee and the Standing Liturgical Committee met and solicited a survey from various scholars who, as the Majority Report indicates, “represent a wide spectrum of opinion on the subject under consideration.” The results of this survey were then given to the sub-committee which was asked to write a first draft of the report. This was circulated and suggestions were solicited from the full membership of both groups late in the Fall of 1996. The time for response was very brief before a second draft was produced and circulated in early December. This second draft is the Majority Report. For various reasons, at least some of them economic, full meetings to address the issue were never held. Understanding the difficulties involved in getting the two groups together to engage in serious dialogue does not remove the sense that the report has not been given the serious attention it deserves. The issue under consideration is admittedly a controversial one. Both sides of the debate would be willing to admit that to recommend the approval of a change in the current policy of the church would be a major departure from the long-standing ecumenical consensus on the subject. It is disappointing to receive a report which deals with so weighty a matter in such summary fashion.

This Minority Report springs from concern about the process by which the Majority Report was produced, from questions about the methodology of the report, and from frank disagreement with the tilt or bias of the report.

A community of faith becomes a community of faith when it agrees to a set of formative or foundational beliefs. A dialectical approach to a theological question in which one of its foundational teachings can be characterized as simply one of the “extremes” can lead in only one direction, and that is the eventual denial of the foundational teaching.

It would be wrong, of course, to place the traditional Christian teaching about marriage and sexual behavior along side the major foundational beliefs of the Christian community, such as the Resurrection and the Incarnation. But since that teaching traces some of its roots to the Seventh Commandment, and to Jesus' teaching about marriage, it is equally irresponsible to place it among the "adiaphora," in such a way as to make it simply optional.

Methodology

The result of such a Hegelian or dialectical approach can be seen in the presentation of a number of "options," theological, moral, and political. They may be categorized in the following way:

Theological and Moral

Traditional	No Same-Sex Marriages or Blessings Ever
Liberationist	Same-Sex Marriage Now
Mediating # 1	Marriage or Blessings Later
Mediating # 2	No Marriage but Blessings
Mediating # 3	Unofficial, local option, perhaps Blessings later

Political

Traditional	Heterosexual Marriage only
Liberationist	Develop Same-Sex Marriage Rites
Mediating # 1	Develop Same-Sex Blessing Rite
Mediating # 2	Live with present ambiguity

This approach, as attractive as it may seem to those faced with a very difficult decision, is wrong in that it hides the historic priority of the traditional teaching in a thicket of "options," treating it as one of the "extremes." The result is to make a departure from that teaching appear as the classic Anglican "via media." In fact, just the opposite is true.

The true Anglican *via media* is to seek unity in doctrinal essentials and to respect the historic traditions of the church, requiring the burden of proof to come from those who would make radical alterations. That such a burden of proof has not been forthcoming is admitted by the Majority Report when it says, "The sinfulness or lack of sinfulness of homosexual acts is an issue that at present is up in the air." To a body which must give moral and ethical guidance to its members, such a statement should be a red flag advising extreme caution.

Despite all of the controversy of the past twenty years, official Episcopal Church statements, including those from the 1994 General Convention, have followed such a caution when faced with challenges to the church's traditional teaching. The priority of the this teaching has, of course, been disputed by many bishops supporting the "Koinonia Statement," but their views have not been endorsed by the General Convention. The Righter verdict did not alter the traditional teaching, but only denied that dissenters could not be presented for trial.

The spectrum approach is misleading in that it minimizes the weight of all previous church teaching. The presentation of "mediating positions" is illusory, since they are not mediating at all. All of them are in agreement with the liberationist principle that the male/female criterion of

marriage is optional, and all lead to the eventual authorization of same-sex unions, whether called marriages or not. Local option may sound reasonable, but to permit it is to obligate the whole church. We offer no local option on racism, for example. To use a somewhat flawed analogy, if states were given the option of devaluing the currency to meet their own fiscal needs, the economy of the whole nation would be affected.

Sacramental Marriage is the Issue

There can be little doubt that marriage is the issue. The entire report is couched in terms of marriage, and the language commending those living in committed, monogamous, homosexual relationships is marital language.

The Majority Report points out that both “extremes” agree that Resolution CO42s involves the revising the church’s doctrine of marriage. Traditionalists argue that the nature of the man/woman relationship, and the terms of the marriage covenant are God-given, and that the Church lacks authority to make such a change. Liberationists argue that marriage is culturally relative, and that therefore the church does have such authority.

The need to be clear about the meaning of marriage, or of any rite that looks like marriage, is crucial to the self-understanding of the Christian Church. As the Prayer Book, says, marriage “signifies to us the mystery of the union of Christ and his Church.” It should be evident to all that revision of that powerful symbol is “not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly.”

The Majority Report, on the other hand, seems to indicate that by experimenting with semi-official same-sex unions, the “experience” of what marriage really is in our day and time will somehow be “clarified.” “...The different imaging that homosexual and heterosexual marriages would hold up for the church *require* (italics added) that marriage as such needs rethinking.”

A theological methodology which recommends, “do it first, then think about it” is hardly a responsible one.

Even more troubling is the paragraph on same-sex marriages where the normative nature of heterosexual marriage is questioned. It states, “the necessity of two sexes is ...not derived by any kind of logic.” Quite apart from the issue of whether it might be derived by revelation, such a line of reasoning would leave little room for the church to question other forms of sexual configurations, such as polygamy and bisexual relationships.

The Biblical Evidence

The report admits that “the Bible’s norm for marriage is a heterosexual one.” However, it goes on to suggest that the biblical norm does not address today’s situation. In one place, it even suggests that conservative scholars fail to see that “the only appropriate way to understand the Bible is to understand it in its context.” This is ingenuous.

The report’s minimal selection of “primary texts condemning homosexual relations” make it appear that they are very few. In fact, if all texts referring to adultery and fornication were to be included, the list would be a great deal longer.

The contention that the texts hostile to homosexual intercourse “all presuppose a heterosexual person engaging in ‘unnatural’ sexual activity” is a highly suspect and debatable interpretation. Besides which, the unspoken assumption that if a particular behavior can be shown to be “natural,” it must be approved, if not encouraged, by the Christian community is a red herring which unnecessarily confuses the issue. In our fallen state, virtue is always “unnatural.”

The only place in the New Testament where the words “natural” and “unnatural” are used with regard to sexual behavior are in Romans 1:26-27, where Paul uses them in reference to the Creation story where unfallen nature is represented by male and female.

Elsewhere, the teaching of the Gospels and of the Pauline letters is univocal in asserting that condemnation is reserved for what, in the fallen creation, has become “natural,” and praise is bestowed on the “unnatural.” “The works of the flesh (‘natural’ fallen humanity) are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, etc. (Gal. 5:19-21) And praise is reserved for those who ‘have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires,’ and therefore produce the fruit of the Spirit (not the fruit of ‘nature’) such as ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.’”

The words of Jesus are similar, “out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander.” (Matt. 15:19) And at the Last Judgment, those who have engaged in the “unnatural,” i.e., chosen and Spirit-led, acts of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, etc. are the ones to hear, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father.”

The fact that such virtues as courage, integrity, fidelity, and honesty are almost universally applauded is indicative of the value we place on unnatural activity. Courage has no meaning unless our natural tendency is to be cowardly, and fidelity is an empty word unless we are naturally unfaithful.

Pastoral Considerations

The Majority Report inadvertently confuses the issue when it says, “If the church were to decide to condemn homosexual unions, some would have won, but others would have lost.” The language is unnecessarily inflammatory. No question of “condemning” has been raised. To decline to authorize something is far from condemning it. If anything, the Episcopal church has taken great pains in recent years to affirm that, in the words of the Majority Report, “gay and lesbian persons would continue to be given all other pastoral ministries of the Church and supported in their full civil rights and protections.” The phrase also seems to indicate that by failing to authorize same-sex marriages, something would be taken away from gay and lesbian people. That simply is not true. A thing that has not been given cannot be taken away.

The primary pastoral consideration is how the church, as a community of faith, deals with those of its members who experience a discontinuity with the church’s teaching. Needless to say, that includes all of us at one time or another. All people, inside and outside the church are to be treated with great love, humility, and respect. There is no room for self-righteousness on anyone’s part.

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

At the present time, and under its current official teaching, this means that the church must struggle to find the most appropriate form of extending the love of Christ to its homosexual members. That this is done well in many individual cases is beyond dispute, and no doubt a heightened awareness of the pain suffered by many such people will lead us to continue and improve such pastoral care.

In T.S. Eliot's play, "Murder in the Cathedral," Thomas a Beckett, wrestling with his conscience, cries, "This is the last and greatest treason, to do the right thing for the wrong reason."

The tilt or bias of the Majority Report offers perhaps an even more dangerous seduction, "to do the wrong thing for the right reasons."

The "right reasons" would be a desire to alleviate the suffering experienced by many people whose sexual behavior has often made them the object of covert ridicule and overt persecution, to correct past injustices perpetrated in the name of religion against homosexual people, and to demonstrate compassion and "inclusivity" toward those so frequently marginalized by both church and society. The "wrong thing" would be for the Christian Church to capitulate to the current pressure to normalize or bless same-sex marriages.

A temporary moratorium might not satisfy any of the parties to the debate, but would appear to be the only responsible way ahead. Given the complexity of the issue, and of the enormous ecumenical implications of attempting to alter unilaterally such a fundamental church teaching, serious conversation with other parts of the Anglican Communion, as well as with our ecumenical partners appears to be urgently required.

Respectfully submitted on January 8, 1997 by the following members of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops:

David S. Ball, Charles F. Duvall, William C. Frey