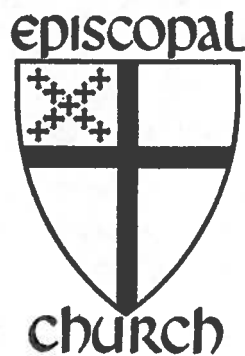


CHURCH AND SOCIETY
SOCIAL POLICY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Executive Council
and
General Convention
December 1967—April 1979



ADDENDUM
General Convention 1979

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The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church
815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

1973 General Convention

Moved that Canon 1.17 be repealed and that a new Canon 1.17 be enacted, as follows:

New
Marriage
Canon
1.17

- Sec. 1. Every Minister of this Church shall conform to the laws of the State governing the creation of the civil status of marriage, and also to the laws of this Church governing the solemnization of Holy Matrimony.
- Sec. 2. No Minister of this Church shall solemnize any marriage unless the following conditions are complied with:
- (a) He shall have ascertained the right of the parties to contract a marriage according to the laws of the State.
 - (b) He shall have ascertained that both parties understand that Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will, and with intent that it be lifelong.
 - (c) He shall have ascertained that both parties freely and knowingly consent to such marriage, without fraud, coercion, mistake, as to indentify of partner or mental reservation.
 - (d) He shall have ascertained that at least one of the parties has received Holy Baptism.
 - (e) He shall have instructed both parties as to the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony, or have ascertained that they have both received such instruction from persons known by him to be competent and responsible.
- Sec. 3. No Minister of this Church shall solemnize any marriage unless the following procedures are complied with:
- (a) The intention of the parties to contract marriage shall have been signified to the Minister at least thirty days before the service of solemnization; Provided, that, for weighty cause, the Minister may dispense with this requirement, if one of the parties is a member of his Congregation, or can furnish satisfactory evidence of his responsibility. In case the thirty days' notice is waived, the Minister shall report his action in writing to the Bishop immediately.

(continued)

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Social Policy of the Episcopal Church

1973 General Convention

- (b) There shall be present at least two witnesses to the solemnization of the marriage.
- (c) The Minister shall record in the proper register the date and place of the marriage, the names of the parties and their parents, the age of the parties, their residences, and their Church status, and the witnesses and the Minister shall sign the record.
- (d) The Minister shall have required that the parties sign the following declaration:

"We, A.B. and C.D., desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the liturgical forms authorized by this Church. We believe it is for the purpose of mutual fellowship, encouragement, and understanding, for the procreation (it it may be) of children, and their physical and spiritual nurture, and for the safeguarding and benefit of society, and we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto."

Sec. 4. It shall be within the discretion of any Minister of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage.

Moved that Canon 1.18 be repealed, and that a new Canon 1.18 be enacted, as follows:

Canon 18. of Regulations Respecting Holy matrimony: Concerning Preservation of Marriage, Dissolution of Marriage, and Remarriage.

New
Marriage
Canon
1.18

Sec. 1. When marital unity is imperiled by dissention, it shall be the duty of either or both parties, before contemplating legal action, to lay the matter before a Minister of this Church; and it shall be the duty of such Minister to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

Sec. 2.(a) Any member of this Church whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a civil court may apply to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which such person is legally or canonically resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church. Such judgment may be a recognition of the nullity, or of the termination of the said marriage; Provided, that, no judgment shall be construed as affecting in any way the legitimacy of children or the civil validity of the former relationship.

(continued)

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Every program and policy of the church should be formed and planned in light of their impact on family life. The church should advocate industrial and public policies to include family impact statements.

Report -
Family
Life
Conference

The following recommendations are made to the parishes, dioceses, and General Convention of The Episcopal Church:

1. Continuation of a National Task Force on Families;
2. A Family Life Commission in each parish and diocese;
3. Establishment of a Family Ministries Office and Staff at The Episcopal Church Center;
4. The identity of achievable programs supporting and advocating family concerns, and the strategy and budget to realize them;
5. Intentional goals and objectives for nurturing and enhancing Christian family life.

II. To The Institutions of Government in the U.S.A.

The family in America continues to be the basic unit to which government must respond and upon which government must base its policies. Yet, while the family survives, it is profoundly affected by our self-image, history and the policies which have grown out of these in ways that place it under severe stress.

It is for this reason that government -- and the institutions that share the governing -- must make that basic unit the highest priority in setting goals and seeking to meet the needs of people.

The first step in this should be the same commitment to that human resource as is made to our material resources. Laws must be created that will require all policies and programs to produce a statement on the impact on the family of those proposed actions.

Further, social services and programs need to be reframed to encourage families to remain intact. Financial assistance, human rights laws, medical programs, counseling services and transportation facilities should be channels to enhance the values of families rather than barriers to them.

A basic examination of family life is also called for; one that is open to emerging models that may well enhance the values that are sought.

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WHEREAS, the 1978 Lambeth Conference passed a resolution reaffirming Christian family life, and

Family
Life
Conference

WHEREAS, there is a continuing need for the Church to emphasize Christian family life, and

WHEREAS, a National Conference on Family Life was held in Denver on November 13-16, 1978 under the auspices of the Church in Society Program; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Executive Council commend to all members of the Church for study the policy/strategy statement passed by the National Conference on Family Life in November, 1978 (annexed as Exhibit A).

Exhibit A

A National Conference of Episcopalians on Families

Report
From
Family
Conference

Denver, Colorado

November 13-16, 1978

"A Policy/Strategy Statement"

1. To The Episcopal Church

The family, under God, is alive and well in its many forms. The Gospel of Jesus Christ speaks positively to the members of all families affirming that love means both support and judgement.

There are many facets of family life: nurture, growth, support, response, relationships, communication, pain, solace, judgment, brokenness and reconciliation. These reflect our Gospel heritage and our continuing response to the Gospel.

The continued affirmation and support of the family must become the Church's top priority. The Judaeo/Christian tradition holds the family as the basic foundation of society. As such, concerns of and for the family are crucial to the maintenance of a society through which the Gospel of Christ can be proclaimed.

Our basic assumptions about family need re-examination. The theology, myths, liturgy, history, and culture which affect our family values need evaluation. Some of our past may be causal to some of today's family stress. Other aspects of our tradition may need reaffirming and lifting up. The Church as the Family of God is mandated to better understand and nurture the families in God.

(continued)

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- (b) Every judgment rendered under this Section shall be in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the Archives of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Minister of this Church shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been the husband and wife of any other person then living nor shall any member of this Church enter into a marriage when either of the contracting parties has been the husband or wife of any other person then living, except as hereinafter provided:

- (a) The Minister shall have satisfied himself by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.
- (b) The Minister shall have instructed the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.
- (c) The Minister shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop prior to, and shall report to the Bishop the solemnization of any marriage under this section.
- (d) If the proposed marriage is to be solemnized in a jurisdiction other than the one in which the consent has been given, the consent shall be affirmed by the Bishop of that jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. All provisions of Canon 17 shall, in all cases, apply.

WHEREAS, the desire of the presently proposed Marriage Canons places this Church's concern for those seeking marriage decisions into a pastoral context; and

WHEREAS, Canon V.1, Section 5, provides a means whereby a Canon passed by the General Convention may come into effect prior to January 1 of the following year; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the House of Deputies concurring, that the effective date of the newly adopted Canons regarding Marriage be hereby declared to be November 1, 1973, or such later date prior to January 1, 1974, as any Diocesan Bishop shall declare them to be applicable in his Diocese.

Implemen-
tation
date of
New
Marriage
Canons

(continued)

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Social Policy of the Episcopal Church

February 1979 Executive Council

WHEREAS, the family under God is basic to the nurture of the children of God; and

Family Life
Programs to
Continue

WHEREAS, the family is coming under stress as it seeks new expressions; and

WHEREAS, the Episcopal Church has held a National Conference on Family Life reminding us that "The Church as the Family of God is mandated to understand and nurture the families in God"; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Executive Council continue the process of identifying and addressing issues facing family life today; and be it further

RESOLVED, that every program and policy of this Church at the national, diocesan or local level, be formed with a conscious concern for its effect on family life, and be it further

RESOLVED, that each diocese is urged to establish a Family Life Commission.

(The above was received and endorsed.)