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The original motion as amended by the House of Bishops was then presented to the House by the Bishop of Ohio as the resolution:

The House of Bishops recognizes that during this triennium a Joint Commission of the General Convention has been instructed to explore the problem of human sexuality. While we await the report of this Commission two years hence, questions on human sexuality vex and perplex the Church today.

Bishops, commissioned as pastors and teachers of the Church, charged with interpreting the canons, and serving as chief liturgical officers in a diocese, are asked on occasion to rule on the use of the marriage service for persons of the same sex. Bishops, likewise, as guides for prospective ordinands and as the ordaining minister, have encountered in the past, and may in the future encounter, persons seeking ordination who acknowledge their homosexual orientation and, in some instances, overt homosexual behaviour.

### **CONCERNING HOLY MATRIMONY**

Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the understanding of sex is rooted in the conviction that the divine image in humanity is incomplete without both man and woman. Hence, the aim of sexuality, as understood in Christian terms, is not merely satisfaction or procreation but completeness. Interpersonal completeness – “The two shall become one” – is the ancient prescription, a union of differences. This does not mean simply genital differences, but all the differences biological and cultural that distinguish male and female all gathered into the symbol of “two shall become one.”

The biblical understanding rejects homosexual practice. Heterosexual sex is clearly and repeatedly affirmed as God’s will for humanity. The teaching of Jesus about marriage, the teaching of Paul and other biblical writers are unanimous and undeviating in portraying heterosexual love as God’s will and therefore good and normative at the same time keeping in mind our Lord’s recognition (*cf.* Matthew 19:12) that there is also virtue in the celibate life. It is clear from Scripture that heterosexual marriage is unanimously affirmed and that homosexual activity is condemned. It is not clear from Scripture just what morality attaches to homosexual orientation, but the Scripture just what morality attaches to homosexual orientation, but the Christian message of redemption and sanctification is one of graceful acceptance leading to graceful wholeness for all people.

The Church, therefore, is right to confine its nuptial blessing exclusively to heterosexual marriage. Homosexual unions witness to incompleteness. For the Church to institutionalize by liturgical action a relationship that violates its own teaching about sex is inadmissible.

The Church’s liturgical action is corporate. It is also public. It witnesses to what the Church stands for – and to what it advocates as good for society as a whole.

### **CONCERNING THE ORDINATION OF HOMOSEXUALS**

With respect to the question of ordaining homosexuals it is crucial to distinguish between (a) an advocating and/or practicing – (wilful and habitual) homosexual and, (b) one with a dominant homosexual orientation only.

In the case of an advocating and/or practicing homosexual, ordination is inadmissible; First, because ordination is a corporate act which proclaims our understanding of ministry, the Church thereby sets forth its values, not simply for itself, but in evangelistic terms for the social order. The ordination of an advocating