

MEMORIALS TO GENERAL SYNOD 1998

Diocese of Brandon

The following actions from the Thirty-eighth Synod, held October 17-19, 1996, are reported:

1. *Matrimony*

That General Synod be memorialized to create a special task force to study and make recommendations as to a process which would clarify and separate the identifiable role of the Church and State in the area of Matrimony, particularly involving distinctly separate processes for civil marriage, administered by an official of the Crown, and the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony, administered by the Church.

Rationale

The present combination of civil and ecclesiastical processes clouds the distinct issues between the sacrament of marriage and the civil and legal bond of marriage. We understand the former to include the intentional welcome by Christian believers of the triune God and the celebration of God's presence within their marriage relationship. We understand the latter to function by design for the creation a new legal entity in the eyes of the State.

The intent of civil marriage is for the ordering and good of society and is consistent with Christian standards and teaching. However, the intent of the sacrament of Christian marriage is to establish a covenantal relationship with God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Church, both mystically and locally. This intent is increasingly not consistent with the society in which we live.

One of the foundational understandings of Christian marriage, according to our liturgies, is that Christian marriage is lived in the context of a local church - the Body of Christ. The confusion created by the mixing of civil and ecclesiastical (not to mention sacramental) standards and expectations often has the effect of diminishing this foundational understanding.

The fact that in most locations there are few, if any, aesthetically pleasing alternatives for a marriage ceremony except in a Church facility, has meant that couples who wish to observe a civil marriage in a location other than a judge or justice's chambers, and yet do not share the Christian faith, come to the Church for marriage. The increasing prevalence of absence from Christian worship and fellowship by more and more couples often prior to and commonly following the ceremony suggests that they do not wish to establish and celebrate a covenantal relationship with God and His people, but that they simply want a "nice" wedding in a pleasing setting.

2. *PWRDF - Canadian Program Funding Increase*

That the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) be requested to consider a substantial increase in its Canada Program.

That this be communicated as a memorial to General Synod.

Rationale

Canadian projects have always been part of the Primate's Fund, benefitting disaster victims, poverty self-help groups through PLURA (an inter-church coalition) and First Nations through land claims advocacy, and economic development projects. However, the percentage of funds allocated to this part of the budget is low compared to the rest of the program.

3. *Standards of Sexual Conduct*

That the General Synod proceed cautiously in considering standards of sexual conduct in the church and give strong ear to the following statement, being Statement #14 of the Standards of Sexual Conduct in the Montreal Declaration of Anglican Essentials:

"God designed human sexuality not only for procreation but also for the joyful expression of love, honour and fidelity between wife and husband. These are the only sexual relations that biblical theology deems good and holy.

Adultery, fornication and homosexual unions are intimacies contrary to God's design. The church must seek to minister healing and wholeness to those who are sexually scarred, or who struggle with ongoing sexual temptations, as most people do. Homophobia and all forms of sexual hypocrisy and abuse are evils against which Christians must ever be on their guard. The church may not lower God's standards of sexual morality for any of its members, but must honour God by upholding these standards tenaciously in face of society's departure from them.

Congregations must seek to meet the particular needs for friendship and community that single persons have."

Diocese of Calgary

The following action from the Executive, at a meeting held January 27, 1998, is reported:

4. *The Continuing Education Plan*

That the requirements for the special Sabbatical Continuing Education funding be

broadened to include rest and reflection.

That this be communicated as a memorial to General Synod and that National committees concerned with the issue be notified of it.

Diocese of Quebec

The following action from the Synod, held September 19-21, 1997, is reported:

5. *National Group Insurance Policy*

That a memorial be sent to General Synod urging it to take whatever steps are necessary to establish a national group insurance policy which Anglican churches could opt into if they so desired.

Rationale

This has to do primarily with church building insurance, though not necessarily exclusively that, and the expectation that insurance costs could be considerably reduced if there could be a single group policy available from one insurance firm for the whole of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Diocese of Saskatchewan

6. *The Book of Alternative Services*

That this Synod call upon the General Synod to revise the Book of Alternative Services in such a way as to be inclusive of the legitimate concerns - linguistic, cultural and theological - of diverse traditions and contemporary movements within the Church.

Diocese of Toronto

The following action from the Executive, at a meeting held January 10, 1998, is reported:

7. *The New Hymn Book*

That a "words only" edition of the new hymn book be produced as soon as possible after the release date of the "music" edition.

Rationale

To allow for easy use by both seniors and young people in parishes where weight is an issue. It would also allow for larger words to be printed for those who have vision difficulties.

Province of Canada

8. *Amendment to the Constitution*

That a new section be added to the Constitution to include Prolocutors of Provincial Synods in the membership of the General Synod.