

## In Conclusion

In all, the marriage of a man and a woman, together with the family it enables, is a holy expression of the image and glory of God. In the marriage of a man and a woman the Old Testament sees a reflection of the covenant relationship between God and his people, and the New Testament sees the splendour of the union of Christ and his Church.

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# Marriage



## **Marriage – An ACC Statement**

Marriage is not an exclusively Christian concept. As a human experience between a man and a woman it is witnessed in all countries, and in all faiths. Nevertheless, there are many features that are common throughout time and culture. Here we speak of Christian marriage which is understood as “a gift of God and a means of grace. In the life-long union of marriage we can know the joy of God, in whose image we are made, male and female. ... Husband and wife, in giving themselves to each other in love, reflect the love of Christ for his Church.” ... (‘Declaration of Purpose’, *Marriage* Order of Service, The Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, Sydney, 2005)

**This Christian understanding of marriage has several features. These are:**

### **1. Marriage is a central part of God’s wonderful creation**

Jesus pointed to the foundation of marriage as being in God’s creation of humankind: male and female in his own image (Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:3-5). As part of God’s creation, marriage was provided then and now for mutual comfort, love and support. It also provides the fundamental basis for society and good order.

### **2. Marriage is between a man and a woman**

In the most basic sense of our being (ontology) a man and a woman provide the only complementary basis for a marriage. Simply put, a woman and a man are made to fit together, and by their union are bonded together and can receive the blessing of children born from their mutual sexual love.

### **3. Marriage is a public acknowledgement of the love and commitment of a woman and a man to each other**

Marriage involves a public ceremony. The couple’s mutual decision to marry each other leads to the two being joined together with and before God and witnessed by family and friends. There is a public acknowledgement of the relationship.

### **4. Marriage is meant to be life-long**

This life-long covenant is a gift from God, whose love is unending. God has eternally covenanted himself to the people called into a relationship with him, and married couples are called to model that love and life-giving forgiveness (Hosea, Ephesians 5).

### **5. Marriage is monogamous**

Sexual love in marriage is a glorious and holy gift. It is not meant to be devalued by casualness before a marriage, or adultery after the bonds are created. Sexual love strengthens and unites the covenant union of the couple as they express the full complementarity of their man-woman relationship (Genesis 2:23-25, 1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

### **6. Marriage involves an openness to children**

Children are a blessing from God, and families provide the basis of our society. As God provides for his children, parents provide for their children and should model the strength, love, generosity and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:9-12). Marriage enables children to live and grow up together with their mother and father in a secure covenant family.

## Marriage—Under the Lordship of Jesus

In **Matthew 19:4**, Jesus responded to a question about marriage by directing people back to Genesis, to God's purpose within creation. This one-flesh, male-female union is the Key.

**“Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’, 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”**

Christianity began as a small minority group under the Lordship of Jesus. *He is Lord over all*. Since then, Christians have been highly influential, in spreading the Word of God, and the way of Jesus, in every continent of the world. Christian teaching has influenced every aspect of our lives in Australia. **This is not so in Saudi Arabia, China or Bhutan.**

Christian teaching has been the platform of Australia's law on marriage. Laws keep changing. Some for the better. Some for the worse. Look at laws for Aboriginal people, teaching, child safety, gambling, smoking, divorcing, public speech, drug and alcohol consumption, voting, retiring, receiving unemployment benefits, wearing a bike helmet and homosexuality. The Prime Minister, Opposition Leader, and Greens all want to change Australian Marriage law. Many are demanding the *definition of marriage* be changed to include homosexual partners.

Jesus teaching regarding marriage—as male-female—has indirectly been the basis for our society. This may change. I hope that it does not. In every age, Christians must learn to live simultaneously in several realms at once. As a Jew, under Roman rule, Jesus taught people to discern exactly what they were doing: **‘Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.’ (Matt. 22:21).**

We are citizens of many realms at the same time:(1) The Kingdom of God (2) our human families, (3) the Christian Church (4) the Uniting Church, (5) local community (6) State of South Australia, (7) Australian Federal Government. We may even appeal to the (8) Commonwealth of Nations Privy Council, and (9) United Nations human rights.

Our calling is to proclaim Christ as Lord, as the light of the world, to pray for blessing upon our community, even our enemies. We want to make known the significance of Jesus death, resurrection, teachings, Lordship and way of *agape* love. This often conflicts with society.

**Prayer:** *O Lord Jesus, your teaching on marriage is clearly for our good, for our blessing as families, parents, children and as a society. And yet, you told us of the prodigal Son, how he and his family, had to learn, via the long, sad, hard, painful way. Lord have mercy. Trevor*