

## **Marriage Discussion Paper Response.**

Instead of being shaped by changing cultural trends based on personal rights, perceptions of equality or public opinion, we believe the Uniting Church will only have a credible witness in the world while “she hears the Word of God by which her faith and obedience is nurtured and regulated.” We also believe that “when the church preaches Christ, her message is controlled by the biblical witness.”

**We agree with Para, section 13. “The interpretation of the Creation Story”** and that male-female union must be upheld and not compromised because it is “at the heart of the Divine purpose.”

While the Byzantine Church has blessed two friends of the same gender, as with the biblical David-Jonathan relationship, it cannot be assumed that this implies these relationships were the equivalent to a same-gender marriage or a sexually active relationship.

**We agree with Para, section 14 “The Purpose of Marriage” and section 16 “The Public Purpose of Marriage”**

We believe that in many ways Uniting in Worship 1 reflects a better understanding of Christian Marriage than Uniting in Worship 2.

Although it is possible that the Commonwealth will eventually change its definition of marriage we believe any sexual relationship outside of male-female marriage is in conflict with the creational order, is less than God’s intention and outside the true message entrusted to the church.

While friendships of mutual consent between same genders can be recognized as valuable and supportive, the Church must uphold a distinction between a *meaningful friendship* and a *marriage relationship*.

It can do that by recognising *meaningful friendships* of a non-sexual nature rather than accommodating a same-gender, sexually active relationship as an alternative to male-female marriage. Nor should it create confusion or expect meaningful friendships to be a life long commitment in the same way that Christian marriage is.

**We believe the Uniting Church should strengthen the sacred bonding of relationships in the family as envisioned in Christian marriage. A public Service of Blessing of this nature should be addressed with a greater urgency and priority before or at least at the same time of any recognition of adult same-gender friendship of a non-sexual nature.**

Prepared by the Cranbourne Cluster of the ACC. Victoria.  
Submitted July 2014