

Unfold for more content

We invite readers to sign the Christian Marriage Commitment overleaf and to continue receiving information from the Healthy Marriage Working Group.

Our goal is to see a significant reversal in the marriage and divorce stats, both within and outside of the church, and to see marriage re-established as an important and desirable institution in our country.

All levels of church leadership need to be engaged in this endeavour from national denomination leadership through to local church small groups and 'grass-roots' Christians. The working group will therefore develop a broad-ranging communication strategy involving personal meetings, articles in magazines, websites, emails, social networking, and broadcast media to engage the widest audience possible.

Significant resources (research, books, audio, video, conferences, and speakers) will be identified and promoted through all levels of church leadership. These will cover a range of topics including marriage preparation and enrichment, as well as how to respond when marriages go into crisis and threaten to fail.



Marriage Week (7-14 February, ending on St Valentine's Day) presents a special opportunity to celebrate marriage not only in New Zealand, but with others around the world.

As a starting point, documents will be prepared explaining the essence of the current crisis in marriage, outlining some of the key benefits stable marriages offer to society, and a clear theological explanation of God's plan and purpose for marriage. The papers will have input from appropriately qualified people, with the intention of gaining endorsement from a wide range of church and community leaders. Within the Church, the working group will aim to encourage Christian leaders, pastors and ministers, to preach and teach regularly and sensitively on the topic of marriage, recognising the many pastoral issues involved, and taking opportunities to celebrate marriage within local churches. Where possible such celebrations would engage local communities more widely, engaging other community leaders in the discussion and seeking their input.

Towards a Strategy

The Church has a responsibility to be involved in this issue not only to seek the wellbeing of society (c.f. Jeremiah 29), but as a witness to the ways of God and the difference God makes in people's lives. This will involve a double approach, both promoting marriage within Christian communities and working with other community groups to develop strategies for encouraging healthy marriages and recapturing the importance of marriage. A working group will develop these plans, and facilitate communication and action. Such a group might include representatives of the community concerned about the decline of marriage, academics, theologians, pastors, and practitioners.



Marriage

Towards a Strategy for Building a Healthy Marriage Culture

NZCN | Note M14-02

The passing of the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill in April 2013, and the evidence of declining marriage numbers over the past 30-40 years, have been a cause of increasing concern for many people in New Zealand.

This resource addresses what is needed to build or rebuild a healthy marriage culture in New Zealand.

Christian Marriage Commitment

Because marriage is a gift of the Creator, uniting a man and a woman, and affirmed by Jesus himself, intended for the birth and nurture of children and for building up human families in mutual support and care, it is a lifelong commitment. Such marriages generate growth in oneness of heart, body, and mind and provide stability to family life, so that children are cared for lovingly and grow to full maturity. In this way marriage is foundational to a good society.

BECAUSE I WANT TO PROMOTE MARRIAGES LIKE THIS, AND AS FAR AS I AM ABLE, I WILL...

- ◆ *Promote this understanding of Marriage, and encourage others to do likewise*
- ◆ *Preach and teach regularly on the topic of Christian Marriage, or seek to ensure that it is preached/taught regularly in my church*
- ◆ *Encourage people being married in my church aspire to the sort of marriage described above*
- ◆ *Encourage people being married undergo a recognised course of training and pre-marriage counselling*
- ◆ *Seek to provide or advertise opportunities for marriage enrichment*

Signed _____

Date _____