

Marriage

Part I

We will consider marriage to be a sacrament in this study. There is some difference of opinion in this matter. A marriage ceremony is not necessarily a religious event since it is under the regulation of the state and may be performed by officers of the state. On the other hand, when marriage is approached through the church, it becomes a sacrament in every sense:

1. Marriage is commended by God.
2. Its covenant is given before God.
3. It is administered by priesthood.
4. Its symbol is the joining of hands.
5. Its sacrifice is the joining of two lives as one.
6. It is a public ceremony.
7. There are prescribed words given.

If any part is left out it becomes only a ceremony, possibly religious in nature.

We should note that God, not man, instituted the marriage covenant. And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it is not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him."¹

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."²

"I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry, is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh."³

Exact words are given which must be used in the ceremony of uniting two in marriage:

"You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives?"⁴

And to this ceremony the words of benediction are given:

"May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and for ever. Amen."⁵

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

A study of the Scriptures suggests that a primary Purpose of marriage is that the race may be perpetuated. The following Scriptures touch on this point.

"And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."⁶

This statement made to our first parents was repeated to Noah and his family after the earth had been depopulated by the flood:

"And a commandment I give unto you, Be ye fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly on the earth, and multiply therein."⁷

A similar statement was given to the church in these latter days: "Marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made."⁸

A further Purpose of the marriage covenant is that the children conceived may be raised to maturity in an atmosphere conducive to their proper training and care. Obviously, children may be begotten outside of marriage, but such situations are unstable, to say the least. Marriage is the stabilizing force in the child's environment which brings into play the qualities of love which can lead the child into right relationship with God and fellowman.

There is a third important Purpose of the marriage covenant. "All things work together for good to them that love God."⁹ This is true of the experiences of marriage as it is true in many other experiences in life. An important Purpose of the marriage experience is to promote the growth of the marriage partners toward God.

The establishment of a satisfactory marriage relationship involves elements of self-surrender. As a matter of common experience, everyone who makes the covenant needs to learn to surrender his own will to that of the marriage partner at times. He needs to appreciate that he is not free to choose always as he wishes. He must now consider the conflicting wishes or needs of the other person. He must realize that firmly established personal habits must be modified so that harmonious relations can be carried out.

Jesus said, "Whosoever will lose his life in this world, for my sake, shall find it in the world to come."¹⁰ This principle can be applied to marriage. In the subordination of self to the marriage union, we learn something of what it means to subordinate self to the will of God. By learning self-surrender in marriage, we are better able to surrender self in other ways.

The experiences of bringing forth and caring for our children call for further subordination of self-interest. As we watch our children grow, we learn to feel for them in somewhat the same manner Christ feels for us. There are times when our children suffer as a result of their actions. When they are hurt, we hurt with them. Part of the hurt is that we can see in advance the result of their choices, and know we cannot always compel them to choose the course which would avoid the hurt. We suffer for them as they make choices which tend to lead them away from God. We may even lose sleep and shed tears over them. Yet, we appreciate that they must be given the freedom to make more and more choices of their own as they grow into maturity.

One young man, raised in a devout church family, told his father that he was old enough now to make up his own mind. He had determined that he would not attend church any more because he had all of the church he wanted. His father's reply was, "You are right. You are old enough to make up your own mind about these things. But there are two things you can't keep me from doing. One of them is loving you. The other is praying for you."

As we have many and varied experiences with our children, we may learn to appreciate the deep concern which Christ exercises for his children. We can begin to understand what it meant for Christ to weep over Jerusalem. We can comprehend what it meant for Christ to suffer when his people rejected him. We may comprehend the joy of the Lord when our children choose to love and obey us. This deeper insight brings us closer to God and helps us to understand more and more about our relationships with God.

MAINTAINING THE COVENANT

The word of God is strict on the matter of maintaining the marriage covenant. "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out."¹¹

"Verily I say unto you, that whatever persons among you having put away their companions for the cause of fornication, ... ye shall not cast them out from among you; but if ye shall find that any persons have left their companions for the sake of adultery, and they themselves are the offenders, and their companions are living, they shall be cast out from among you. And again I say unto you, that ye shall be watchful and careful, with all inquiry, that ye receive none such among you if they are married, and if they are not married, they shall repent of all their sins, or ye shall not receive them."¹²

"Have ye not read, that he who made man at the beginning, made him, male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. . . . Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away, doth commit adultery."¹³

In these days of easy divorce these may sound like harsh sayings. In the light of the purposes of marriage, however, we can see why the marriage covenant is considered a sacred vow. God is concerned that we should do our utmost to live up to the terms of the marriage covenant.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARRIAGE

On August 17, 1835, a general assembly of the church unanimously adopted a resolution setting forth the church philosophy on marriage. This appears in Section 111 of Doctrine and Covenants. This section is not a revelation, but it is the most comprehensive statement adopted by the church. It still stands today as our authoritative statement on marriage.

MARRIAGE IS A PUBLIC CONCERN

"We believe, that all marriages in this Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints should be solemnized in a public meeting."¹⁴

A..... not done covertly or clandestinely. Even though it be a 'private home wedding,' it is in a sense 'public' in that it is not secret but is known to the neighborhood."¹⁵

Society has a stake in every marriage and has a perfect right to take cognizance of marriages and to legislate to govern them in ways beneficent to society, since the family thus established is an integral part of society; and further because the offspring of the union may become a burden or a menace to society on the one hand or pillars of church and state on the other hand.

MARRIAGE AND THE HOME

Since marriage is ordained of God, and when properly entered into and practiced, brings us closer to him, we believe that marriage is essentially a religious ceremony. We believe, therefore, that it ought to be performed by priestly authority in the church. Moreover, it, like other ceremonial ordinances, is best performed in a public place of worship. The wording of Section 111:1 provides that we recognize marriages performed by other authorities and in other places. This recognition, however, is not the recognition of sacramental qualities but the laws of the land.

If for some reason it is not practical to have a public ceremony in a house of worship, then the next choice is to have it performed in a chapel, in the home of the minister, or in the home of one of the participants. It should be entered into with adequate preparation-not a hasty ceremony. There is some merit in concern over any marriage wherein the first contact with the minister is on the same day, and sometimes at the same hour, that the ceremony is supposed to occur. It is poor ethical practice to agree to such arrangements.

While we recognize the legality of marriages performed under other circumstances, we feel that marriages performed on television shows, or in any way intended to be exhibitions or publicity stunts, are not in keeping with the Purpose and spirit of the ceremony. Ministers of the church are urged to refrain from officiating in such services.

MARRIAGE WITHIN THE CHURCH

"We believe it is not right to prohibit members of this church from marrying out of the church, if it be their determination so to do, but such persons will be considered weak in the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."¹⁶

To understand this passage, which has caused some mis-understanding, the situation of the church in 1835 should be noted. The church was undergoing severe persecution in the Kirtland area. The first "expose" of Mormonism was written and published by Mr. Howe, editor of the Painesville *Telegraph*, who had become bitterly opposed to the church as a consequence of his wife becoming a member. The church members had good reason to fear the outcome of religious conflicts in the home. Feeling ran high between church members and nonmembers. Those not of the faith were sometimes referred to as "Gentiles" or the "enemy." Under such circumstances as these, this phrase "weak in the faith" was perhaps more meaningful than in this day when such persecution and feeling is largely foreign to our experience. Under such conditions, one who married someone outside the faith was less likely to remain in the faith than one who marries a nonmember today.

This passage was not intended to prohibit such marriages, however, and should not be so interpreted. There are times when some person of the church for just reason fails to find another church member to whom he wishes to be married. There are many outlying regions where the range of choice among church members is extremely limited. Under such circumstances the choice may lie between marrying "out of the church" or remaining unmarried.

It is the responsibility of parents and church leaders to see to it that our young people have every reasonable opportunity to meet a variety of other church young people. Such opportunities are provided in district and regional gatherings, youth camps, Graceland College, and other group activities and events which provide for intermingling of our young people. We should not think of these gatherings as marriage bureaus, but they do provide opportunity for wholesome fellowship among the young people of the church at a time when they are choosing their life partners.

It is true that marriage out of the church decreases the chances of the church member remaining in the faith. Several years ago, a study was made by Brother Olson showing how marriage affects church activity. It showed that Latter Day Saint men with Latter Day Saint wives have an activity rating of 42.5 percent, while Latter Day Saint men with non-Latter Day Saint companions have an activity rating of 12.5 percent. Single men have an activity rating of 35 percent; widowers or divorced men have an activity rating of 20.5 percent. This would seem to indicate that your best opportunity for really becoming an active Latter Day Saint is to have a good Latter Day Saint wife, otherwise it is better not to have had a wife at all. Your next is to have lost your wife, and the poorest chance you have is when you have married a woman who is not a member of the church.

In this same study it was found that if a woman is married to a church member, her activity rating is 46.5 percent. If her husband is not a member, her rating is 17.5 percent. If she is unmarried, her rating is 48.5 percent and if she is a widow, her rating is 50 percent. Although these statistics might cause us to assume that to be a widow one would make a better church member, this is influenced by the fact that most of these sisters have already fulfilled their family duties, and of course this releases them from certain duties which decrease church participation. It is significant that marriage within the church shows a very strong leading toward the church, while marriage with someone who is not a member leads away from the church.

This problem is not unique with our faith. It is shared by all churches. The committee on marriage and the home, appointed by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, in its report of March, 1932, stated:

"Wherever human wedlock is regarded as possessing a sacred character and denotes a conjunction of souls and minds as well as physical union, it becomes apparent that harmony in their religious sentiments is of first importance to those united in marriage. . .

Not only for the sake of their own happiness but also for social reasons, for the sake of the stability of the new family created by their union, it is greatly to be desired that there should be agreement in religious faith on the part of those who marry, and it is essential that there should be mutual respect and forbearance.

..

"It is evident that the problem of mixed marriages is not simple, and that it is not susceptible of easy solution. Religion is a basic interest in human life, and differences in religion, if these are fundamental, are aggravated by ecclesiastical interference. . .

"Statistics bearing upon the matter are not adequate, but there is reason to suppose that marriages of this sort are highly unstable; furthermore, that in very many cases they lead either to the departure of both parents from the practices of religion or at least to the abandonment of any attempt on their part to provide for the religious education of their children."

Let it be noticed that marriage in the church is no guarantee of a happy marriage. Common understanding about religion and sharing of spiritual ideals is an important factor making for stability of the home, but it is only one factor. Other factors to be considered have been set forth in great detail by those who have written authoritatively on the subject of marriage. Such factors include common interests and friends, common social background, common mature comprehension of the principles of finance in the home, as well as common religious beliefs.

It should be further recognized that marriage in the church does not exempt either party from the usual and necessary adjustments required to make the marriage successful. Marriage is not so much a matter of finding the right partner as being the right partner, as the old saying goes. In one sense this is very true. Each partner must undergo self-surrender for the sake of the new union. Where both partners have a common covenant with God by way of baptism, and when they are endeavoring to live up to the terms of this covenant, this should help considerably in adjusting to married life. Each party should exert himself toward such an end, however.

Many persons become members of the church after they have become married and a number of persons, because of lack of spiritual development, choose to be married according to standards below the concepts taught by the church. We believe there is no substitute for a marriage properly consummated under the ideals promulgated by the church. We are also concerned that all marriages of members of the church shall embrace the fullest measure of spiritual oneness possible.

The late Elbert A. Smith has stated, "A sacrament involves a sacred covenant either explicitly stated or tacitly accepted." It seems possible that marriages of church members not fully consummated in harmony with

all of the requirements outlined in this treatise may attain sacramental conditions through tacit acceptance of and abiding in the standards of Latter Day Saint marriage and home life.

Let us summarize:

1. Other things being equal, the chances of both having a happy marriage and of continued growth spiritually are improved by marriage in the church.
2. Entering into marriage is a significant event. We can expect help and direction by constant prayer.
3. All young church members should seek wide fellowship among other church youth.
4. Marriage within the church is of itself no guarantee of a happy union. Other factors which make for a stable marriage must also be considered.
5. The nonmember whom the church member proposes to marry should understand how the member feels about his church prior to marriage.
6. The church member should endeavor to win his nonmember partner to the faith prior to marriage rather than hoping that marriage will tend to bring him into the fellowship. This is best done by demonstration of what his faith means to him and requires the exercise of patience, persistence, and selfless love.

"FOR EACH OTHER AND FROM ALL OTHERS"

The key clause of the marriage contract is "For each other and from all others." It has both positive and negative aspects. In the past we have tended to stress the negative feature of the contract. We have considered the contract violated if one of the partners commits adultery. Indeed, it is violated in such case. It is broken also, if one of the partners fails to keep himself *for* the other. A man who squanders the family income in ways detrimental to his wife and children violates the clause "keeping yourselves wholly for each other." A wife who grossly neglects her household duties to the detriment of her family does likewise. It is possible to so adulterate the marriage covenant with excesses of intoxicants, gambling, or any other type of self-interest, that the covenant is no longer what it should be.

The constructive aspect of the marriage covenant requires both parties to give their best intelligence and maturest understanding to the problem of happy, mutual adjustment.

The practice of the church where one partner has grossly violated either part of the marriage covenant is to recognize this as a valid reason for divorce. It should be understood, however, that each situation is judged upon the particular circumstances concerned. Even when one member of the contract violates either the positive or the negative aspects, it is not required that the other partner seek a divorce. There is much to be said for the attitude of repentance, of forgiveness, and of compassion. Work always should be considered toward reestablishing that which was lost.

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." This immediately leads to another question: Who has God joined together? Surely in the light of what we know about Christ we can see that this does not include all who share in a marriage ceremony. Just as the act of going down into the water and coming forth again does not constitute baptism unless accompanied by an inner spiritual change, so also the act of being united in a ceremony of marriage does not initiate a spiritual union unless the spiritual elements which should accompany it are present. The real marriage of which Jesus spoke is initiated by the marriage ceremony but is accompanied by mutual affection and, in time, by a definite belonging together; a oneness which it is obviously most iniquitous to dissolve.

"In these days of hasty and thoughtless marriages, many people who live together cannot conceivably have been joined together by God. A large proportion of such 'marriages' are recognized by the courts to be not marriages at all, and are annulled. Others, which are legally binding, have never carried the sanction of Divinity. Consider, for a moment, the large number of hasty and disastrous war weddings entered into in an atmosphere of personal and patriotic emotion shot through by fear. Consider again the case of clean and splendid women married and thereby immediately infected with a disease the existence of which they were previously only technically aware. Consider again, the large number of people married for considerations of wealth, position, and safety. God is willing to join together even those persons who marry under these conditions if, recognizing their situation, they join him in strengthening the bonds that unite them and in creating still other bonds. But here is the point: these bonds ought to be created before the marriage ceremony is performed; and persons who embark upon a marital career without such bonds of union between them are not joined by God and run grave risk that they never will be.

"Marriage is a spiritual enterprise which can only be made effective by truly Christian people. For others it may be a physical and legal union blessed by mutual affection of the highest possible order, but unless it has the spiritual quality which is achieved by persons who live in the light of Christ, it lacks the full measure of divine sanction and lacks also some-thing of the stability and permanence which was contemplated in its institution."--F. Henry Edwards, *Fundamentals*, pp.270, 271

Part II

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Since the rite of marriage is sacred in the sight of God, a grave responsibility is laid on the priesthood of this church, especially on the officiating minister, to give premarital instruction and to properly administer the rite of marriage. The success or failure of marriage largely depends upon how well the contracting parties have been prepared for this holy estate. It becomes necessary, therefore, for the minister to set forth in simple, understandable terms some of the requirements and the instructions which will help make this event blessed in the sight of God. To aid the minister in this task, we feel it will be helpful to give some instruction to him concerning his responsibility in this matter.

A minister of this church in the discharge of his duties as related to the rite of marriage shall fulfill the following requirements before solemnizing a marriage:

1. He shall recognize that the presiding elder is the chief administrative officer of the congregation. All marriages in this church should be conducted under the direction of the presiding elder even though some other elder or priest is to officiate at the wedding proper.
2. Immediately upon receiving the request to perform a marriage, the minister should consult the presiding elder. He will then provide the minister with a set of rules for church weddings (if such rules have been prepared for the use of the church buildings, and so forth). The minister should then arrange for lessons of instruction as outlined in the statements of policy that are set forth.
3. The minister shall solemnize a marriage only if the contracting parties shall have given him sufficient time in their request before the date set for the marriage. He shall ascertain the right of the parties, according to the laws of God and this church, to contract a marriage, by asking if either party has had any previous marriage. If there has been a previous marriage, a complete inquiry shall be made by the minister. Where a divorce has been involved, sufficient time will be required for the necessary

research through the proper church channels before there is an authorization of this marriage.

4. The minister shall conform to the laws of the state as well as to the laws of the church.
5. Since it is obvious that only a limited amount of instruction can be given and assimilated in a few days, the minister should prepare for these periods of instruction with considerable care so that he will be as thorough as possible in his ministry.
6. The minister shall make the following records and reports:
 - a. Fill in all information, sign, and obtain signatures as required on the marriage certificate of the state in harmony with the laws of this state. These signatures shall be obtained immediately following the ceremony.
 - b. Make a report of the marriage for the church statistician on the regular report form and see that the report is sent in to the statistician.
 - c. The minister should keep a personal record of all marriages solemnized by him. The laws of some states require such a record to be kept. This is true about marriages which take place outside of the auspices of the church, which involve nonmembers, as well as members of the church.

PREMARITAL INSTRUCTION

We believe that marriage means the blending of two personalities of the opposite sex in mutual companionship for the remaining portion of their lives. This is for the mutual well-being of each other and so that children may be born, nurtured, taught, and reared with every advantage possible toward Christian development.

The minister who is called upon to counsel with couples should make the arrangements for one or more of these counsel meetings so that he will have time to adequately instruct them and discuss with them the matters that pertain to marriage in addition to the information he needs on his first contact. These counsel sessions ought to include only the young couple and the minister. The following ought to be discussed in these sessions:

1. The meaning and the implication of the marriage vow which is found in Doctrine and Covenants 111:2.

2. The sanctity of marriage as found in the Scriptures. In this a discussion may be held to help interpret such passages of Scripture as Matthew 19:4, 5, 6; Genesis 2:23, 24; Ephesians 5:25-33; Doctrine and Covenants 49:3; Jacob 2:36, 55, 57 (Book of Mormon).

3. We marry for companionship. In these matters it should be pointed out that woman is no longer compelled to be dependent upon her husband for support nor is man compelled to be dependent upon his wife to do all of his laundry, cleaning, and cooking; that our desire and the capacity for companionship needs to be a wholesome thing; and that good companionship requires definite understanding of one another. A short courtship followed by a short engagement and a hasty marriage does not as a rule hold much promise for permanency. A courtship should be long enough so that each person is assured he or she has learned to know the other well.

The adjustments to his family and her family ought to have been made with the realization that the persons who are to become in-laws are going to have some influence on the happiness of the family. This companionship should be considered as one which will last for a lifetime. Such questions as the following should be answered in the course of the interview.

- a. How long have you known each other?
- b. Do you have the same type of friends?
- c. Do your families think well of each of you?
- d. What interests do you have in common?
- e. What interests do either of you have that are not shared by the other?
- f. How much difference can I live with and still be happy?

It must be pointed out that for true companionship to be attained there must be a real sense of cooperation in the home. The enemies of good marriages are lack of trust, suspicion, dishonesty, deceit, selfishness, and so on.

4. In order for a marriage to be happy and successful the couple need to think straight about sex. They must realize that sex is a plan of God and not just an animal-level experience, which can be very vulgar and debasing.

Sex is a spiritual experience. It is the culminating act of love between a husband and wife. The giving of oneself in this expression of intimacy requires a preceding spiritual unity which makes them one.

Two books which can be recommended for reading are *The Christian Understanding of Sex* by Reverend Harry H. Kniener, which may be obtained through the Council of Churches and *Sex without Fear* by S. A. Lewis and John Gilmore.

Supplementing the interview with the minister, the young couple should be advised to have an interview with a medical doctor whom they consider to be competent and in whom they have considerable trust.

It would be helpful for every minister to take a course in the art of ministerial counseling. This covers such things as marriage counseling as well as other areas in which the minister is called to counsel the flock.

Part III

A Sample of Rules Which May Be Adopted by Congregations Regulating the Use of Church Buildings for the Solemnizing of Marriage

Weddings which are solemnized in the buildings of the church should harmonize with certain basic standards in harmony with the teachings of the church concerning marriage. These rules are adopted for the Purpose of enhancing the rite of marriage rather than for the Purpose of arbitrary regulation.

A USE OF THE CHURCH

1. The church sanctuary is available to members of the church without charge as a part of the ministry of this church to them.

It may be well to keep in mind that there are two classifications of weddings in churches. One uses the sanctuary only and no social or reception is involved. The other kind makes extensive preparation for a social and reception. In this No. 2 type of wedding the church does not assume the obligation and the engaging parties will be expected to care for the expense of such preparations and care.

Persons not affiliated with this church may use the buildings for weddings when proper applications and standards of marriage are presented to the administrative officer. (See paragraph on receptions for

information when this type of service is to be held.)

2. Applications for use of the church shall be filed with the presiding elder and engagements will be granted on a first come, first served basis.

3. The church shall be respected at all times as the house of God. The use of rice, confetti, or old shoes in or around the building is a pagan custom and is prohibited. The use of tobacco is not permitted in any part of the building. Should persons attend rehearsals or services while intoxicated or smelling offensively of liquor, they should be asked to leave.

4. Decorations, including floral installations, should be appropriate and modest. Elaborate and ornate decorations are discouraged. Simplicity with minimum expense, in harmony with good taste, will always be the standard. The presiding elder, or in his absence, the deacon in charge, has authority to rule out any decoration. White carpeting down the aisle is permitted but is not necessary.

5. Sunday weddings may be scheduled only between the hours of 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. on days when no other church function has been previously scheduled for the building.

6. The regular deacon in charge of the congregation, or someone else duly assigned, shall be present at all rehearsals and should supervise the ushering at the service. Wedding ushers should dress and deport themselves according to our standards of church ushering.

7. Photographs may be taken of the bride as she enters the nave and of the couple as they pass down the aisle after leaving the chancel. No pictures should be taken during the ceremony.

Afterward, the wedding party may return to the chancel and pose for pictures.

8. Receptions. When a reception is desired, and the kitchen and social hall are to be used by members or friends of the church, the following suggestions should be helpful:

- a. When a women's circle quotes a price for the service rendered at the reception it should include a reasonable fee, agreed upon with the presiding elder and custodian, for the proper cleaning of the church following the wedding.
- b. The conditions as set forth in this possibility contemplate that a family may be extremely limited in financial means and thereby would desire to clean the church. This does not contemplate professional caterers. If professional caterers are used, a regular fee should be added for cleaning. If our own people plan on doing their own cleaning because of money problems, this also should be worked out in cooperation with the presiding elder and the custodian.
- c. The congregational leader of women or someone else duly assigned should supervise the use of and cleaning of the kitchen.

B INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants agree to receive a course of instruction on the meaning of Christian marriage from the minister. This will involve appointments in addition to the preliminary interview and rehearsal. A standard set of instructions is available through any presiding elder within the stake or district.

A good booklet on marriage and home building should be presented to each couple with the understanding that the book is theirs and that it is to be read by them before the wedding.

C MUSIC

Applicants will be allowed to select musicians of their choice for the organ, piano, or solos. If they have no special choice, the regular director of music for the congregation will give assistance in making these selections.

The music should follow the standards outlined in *Guidelines* dated July-August, 1951, pages 31-35, or *Stride*, March, 1960, "Do You Want a Church Wedding?" and the book *O Worship the King*, pages 151-160 as prepared by our General Church Department of Music. As a suggestion, the organ or piano prelude should start at least fifteen minutes before the service is to start.

Secular compositions such as "Because,," "I Love You Truly," and similar songs should not be used in the church, as they are more appropriate at receptions.

D REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are usually necessary and they will be held at a time agreeable to the minister and participants. In order to free the church for other activities on the same evenings, rehearsals should be held punctually and limited to one hour. The contracting parties will be responsible for the attendance of all participants.

The officiating minister should be the director of the rehearsal. He will, on some points, ask for suggestions from the party and arrange for whatever special plans are appropriate. The deacon in charge, or someone duly assigned in his stead, should be present at the rehearsals.

E THE MINISTER

All wedding ceremonies are under the direction of the presiding elder of the congregation where the ceremony is performed. This holds true whether the rite is performed in the church building, in a home, or in other places. Because of the solemn nature of the rite we recommend that the church building be used unless there is some special reason for not doing so.

Where the bride and groom are not residents of the congregation in which the marriage is to take place, the minister will establish contact with the presiding officer of the home congregation so that accurate recording of the ceremony will be made.

There is no fee charged for weddings. If the groom desires he may make a gift to help defray some of the extra expense of the minister or he may show his appreciation for the service which is provided by the organist, janitor, deacon in charge, soloist by giving an appropriate gift. This, however, is completely at the discretion of the giver and is not solicited.

Part IV

THE SERVICE OF MARRIAGE

Many times the propriety of certain arrangements of the service introduces perplexing problems. The

following suggestions on etiquette and form are presented, knowing that there is not just one way to direct a wedding service and that this is not the only good way or the best way. We are sure that all of the principal points herein should become a part of all marriage services, with modifications in harmony with individual tastes.

A. Cost involved

Inexpensive weddings are advisable under all circumstances. All weddings should be directed to the church when possible-for both the poor and the rich. If those with means persist in "putting on a lavish show" it only creates a direct comparison with those who cannot afford such, or causes those without means to obligate themselves beyond their means. The couple's friends will admire and approve moderation. They will criticize lavishness, which is poor taste and poor stewardship. Let the minister advise on decoration-not those who are in the business of making money from lavish displays.

B. Ushers and attendants

We have already said that the deacon in charge of the church should supervise the ushering. However, the candidates may select their close friends to usher and become a part of the wedding party as attendants. The minister should see that the candidates and attendants are made aware of the standards of the church as contained in the previous chapter.

C. Ministers

Any elder or priest in good standing in the church is authorized to perform a marriage ceremony. (In Canada and some states of the Union a special license issued by the province or state is necessary.)

Any minister who is requested, to perform a marriage should immediately contact his presiding elder, who will assist him and give valuable aid in arranging an impressive service.

D. Dress and Makeup

Remember, this is the house of the Lord. Avoid either startling costumes or "uncovered" immodest attire. Heavy makeup is accepted in the theater, but is poor taste at church.

E. The Wedding at the Church

1. The ushers should arrive about one hour before the time for the ceremony. The deacon in charge will have already arrived to open the church. Ushers offer their right arm to the lady in each arriving party, escorting her thus down the aisle.
2. The front pews are reserved for the family and relatives.
 - a. Parents of the groom sit in the first pew on the *right*.
 - b. Parents of the bride sit in the first pew on the *left*.
 - c. Behind each sit their relatives. (In case of a large wedding it may be advisable to reserve seats for the close relatives.)
 - d. The organist, soloist, or choir enters in advance of the hour.
 - 1) The organist begins the prelude from fifteen to thirty minutes prior to the scheduled hour.
 - 2) A choir is a lovely addition to a wedding and its use should be encouraged! The choir may be used instead of or in addition to a soloist. These musicians should enter just preceding the lighting of the candles (if candles are used).
(It would also be in order for the congregation to sing a hymn.)
 - e. The groom, the best man, and the minister wait in the vestry or study.
 - f. After relatives are seated, the candles (if used) are lighted.
 - g. On the appointed hour the doors are closed.
 - h. The groom's mother is then escorted to her seat by the usher. It is proper for the father to

- follow behind and take the seat by the side of his wife.
- i. The bride's mother is then escorted to her seat by the usher.
 - j. The white runner is then unrolled in the aisle (if one is used, but this is neither recommended nor necessary).
 - k. The organ plays suitable prelude music during all of this arrangement.
 - l. The choir or soloist may then sing one or two numbers as desired or they each may sing one.
 - m. The organ then plays for the processional of the minister, groom, and his best man.
(Do not be restricted to the rules of etiquette on this entrance. The other male attendants may also enter with the groom and best man, or they may come down the aisle and take their places after the groom has entered.)
 - n. Simultaneously the bride's procession commences.
 - 1) The bridesmaids may either take their places by coming down the aisle, as do the male attendants, or may proceed in step about eight paces apart, single file, with the maid of honor last.
 - 2) The flower girl and ring bearer (if any) enter.
 - 3) Then enters the bride on her father's right arm, with a reasonable space between them and the persons immediately preceding them in the procession.
 - o. The groom goes to meet the bride. He slips her right hand through his left arm. Usually they stand at the foot of the stairs facing the chancel.
 - 1) The organ music stops.
 - 2) The father has remained where the bride left him, on her left and a step or two behind her.
 - 3) The minister usually asks, "Who gives this woman in marriage?" or "Who presents this woman for marriage?" The father then says, "I do," or "Her mother and I," or some appropriate remark such as this. The father then takes his seat beside his wife. (This whole step is not a requirement and some omit this act.)
 - 4) The soloist or choir may again sing, if desired, preceding the service. The bride and groom take their places in front of the altar. The minister faces the congregation; the bride is on the groom's left arm; both are facing the minister. The other attendants may be arranged as desired, the ladies on the side of the bride and the men on the side of the groom.
After the bride's father has been seated and the soloist or choir has sung, the minister then gives the prefatory remarks or challenge to the congregation and to the couple, impressing upon them the sacredness of the marriage rites and of the obligation devolving upon the contracting parties.
Following this prefatory statement it is proper to have a prayer with the couple either standing or kneeling, as desired by them. (The laying on of hands is not a part of the rite of marriage.)
 - 5) After the wedding is blessed the bride and groom may salute each other with a kiss. For this act the maid of honor may turn back the veil and then returns the bride's bouquet.
 - p. The bride, with her bouquet in her right hand, places her left hand on the groom's right arm. The recessional is played and the procession goes out in reverse order-the bride and groom first, followed by the maid of honor; the bridesmaids follow and then the ushers. (The best man usually disappears into the vestry-he usually does not walk down the aisle with the maid of honor-but this arrangement is optional.)

- q. Ushers return to escort the people from the church.
 - 1) The bride's mother always is escorted out first.
 - 2) The groom's mother follows next.
- r. The minister then pronounces a short benediction on the service.
- s. Ushers finish escorting the people from the church.
 - 1) All of the immediate families are next.
 - 2) All of the rest of the guests leave from the front to the rear of the church.

F. The Reception

1. When the marriage takes place in a church and there is no reception following, the bride and groom may wait after the recessional in the narthex or entry of the church to receive the good wishes of the congregation.
2. When there is a reception in the church parlors it is usually a good plan to proceed there immediately following the recessional and form a receiving line at the beginning of the social hour.
3. By previous arrangement someone will be hostess at the reception and a varied program may follow with refreshments and musical numbers.

The church has no set form for a marriage ceremony except the requirement that the "joint vow" as contained in Section 111 of the Doctrine and Covenants shall be used verbatim in all marriages performed in this church.

Knowing this, we are presenting herein a marriage ceremony which may serve as a guide and advising that each minister should make one or more ceremonies of his own and that they should be amended to fit individual needs.

Another service is outlined in the *Priesthood Manual*. It is recommended as another source material to aid the minister.

The address and preface remarks used in both of these ceremonies should not become stereotyped in our minds but should be kept fresh and appropriate to each individual wedding.

Bibliography for further reading:

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Stelcde, L. C.

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Harper and Brothers Publishers, N.Y., 1949

Wellington, Paul A.
So You're Getting Married
Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, 1956

A SUGGESTED WEDDING CEREMONY

PRELUDE

Mothers to be ushered to their places

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

HYMN-"O Lord, around Thine Altar Now" (*The Hymnal*, No. 42)-Solo or Congregation

INVOCATION

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS ON MARRIAGE

SOLO (See suggestions in *O Worship the King*)

PROCESSIONAL (See suggestions in *O Worship the King*)

Appropriate Remarks by Minister: (such as)

On this happy occasion I am authorized to join _____ and _____ in the sacred bonds of marriage. In recognition that this ordinance is a provision of our heavenly Father and something more than a legal ceremony we ask you now to bow your heads in prayer.

(Prayer)

THE CHARGE

_____ and _____, you come now before God and these witnesses to be joined in marriage. It is fitting that we reflect for a few moments on the meaning of this occasion.

Marriage is ideally a sacrament. At the heart of this sacrament is a covenant which you make with each other, and which you make together with God. This is a holy occasion, being a sacramental one, for something of God is revealed for your benefit, and your hearts shall be warmed and welded by the power of his Spirit. He is willing, if love is present, to honor marriage by his presence, even as his Son graced the wedding at Cana.

You recognize that life for each of you will be incomplete without the other. You have declared your devotion for each other. Now, with mingled feelings of joy and soberness you undergird your expressed affection with promises of fidelity and allegiance. In spite of untoward circumstances each will sustain the other. Joy shall be a mutual experience. Sorrow, too, is to be shared. This occasion is a pledge of accepted responsibility.

Even as you pledge your fealty to each other, a promise is made by our heavenly Father. He will sustain you through the years with joy, and with strength for hours of sadness. Strive to merit the matchless gift of the Spirit of God. Let it be your mutual Purpose to establish his cause in your hearts, in your home, and wherever you may labor.

Although these are seldom mentioned at times of marriage, remember that the principles of the gospel are guarantees of wedded joy. Faith in God and in each other is the foundation of happiness. The spirit of repentance will help you to for-sake self-justification, and, keeping you humble, will open your eyes to the needs and heartaches of the other. Perhaps there is no other single quality which smooths the pathway of adjustment as the spirit of repentance does. To be immersed in accomplishing God's purposes brings significance to individual life and even more profoundly to family life. To receive the influence of the Holy Spirit as an abiding comforter guarantees that you may constantly rise together in newness of life and understanding. You are admonished to base your married life on eternal values, and to

exercise judgment and wisdom in your experience together.

While this is your marriage, it also belongs to God. We would remind you of the supreme value of prayer in the home. Add the activity of prayer to your own freedom of conversation with each other and you have an unbeatable combination toward understanding and lack of tension.

Cultivate the graciousness of a healthy sense of humor that you may smile at yourself, and with each other.

Find occasions for recreational expression which shall be at once creative and relaxing. The values of carefree association during the courtship need to be recaptured frequently to leaven and lighten the days of responsibility.

Let tenderness and patience abound, remembering the counsel of the apostle Paul concerning love:

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

. . . Faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

THE MINISTER SHALL SAY:

_____ (groom=s name), it is the privilege and duty of the husband to be the companion, counselor, and protector of his wife, shielding and caring for her, and heeding the divine command that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Let your love be constantly revealed in thoughtful consideration, always qualifying your wishes and will by your concern for her welfare.

_____ (bride=s name), the wife should be the faithful companion and solace of her husband having for him an abiding affection, sharing with him life's problems as well as its joys, remembering the scriptural admonition that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God.

THE WEDDING COVENANTS

_____, will you declare your wedding vow?
(groom's name)

The groom shall say:

_____, I take thee to be my wedded wife, to love
(bride's name)

and to cherish, to have and to hold, and forsaking all others, will cleave to thee and thee only so long as we both shall live."

The minister shall say:

_____, will you declare your wedding vow?
(bride's name)

The bride shall say:

_____, I take thee to be my wedded husband, to love
(groom's name)

and to cherish, to have and to hold, and forsaking all others, will cleave to thee and thee only so long as we both shall live."

The minister shall say:

_____, do you have a ring? Place this token of your
(groom's name)

everlasting love upon the third finger of your bride's left hand and seal your marriage vows.

The groom shall place the ring on the bride's ring finger, saying:

"With this ring I seal our marriage vows. The minister shall say:

_____, do you have a ring? Place this token of your
(bride's name)

everlasting love upon the third finger of your groom's left hand and seal your marriage vows."

The bride shall place the ring on the groom's ring finger, saying:

"With this ring I seal our marriage vows."

The minister shall say:

_____, _____: You both mutually agree to be
(groom's name) (bride's name)

each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives?" The bride and groom shall reply, "Yes." Then the minister shall continue:

THE PRONOUNCEMENT

Forasmuch as you have consented to live together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and these friends, and thereto have pledged your faith to each other; therefore, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of this state, and of the church, I pronounce you husband and wife. *May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and for ever. Amen.* What God has joined together let no man put asunder.

THE BENEDICTION

Let us pray. Our heavenly Father, thou hast kindled in these hearts the fire of a divine love. Wilt thou keep it always aflame upon the altar of their souls. Wilt thou make their borne a place of light and truth, a place of beauty, a place of joy and happiness all the days of their lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SOLO: "Wedding Prayer"

PRESENTATION of Mr. and Mrs. _____

RECESSIONAL: (See *O Worship the King*)

1. Gen. 2:23, 24

2. Gen. 2:30

3. D. and C. 49:3

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4. D. and C. 111:2b
 5. D. and C. 111:2d
 6. Gen. 1:30
 7. Gen. 9:14
 8. D. and C. 49:3
 9. Rom. 8:28
 10. Matt. 16:28
 11. D. and C. 42:7d
 12. D. and C. 42:20
 13. Matt. 19:4-6, 9
 14. D. and C. 111:1
 15. *Marriage and Home Building* - by Elbert A. Smith
 16. D. and C. 111:1