**MOTION 30**

**A way forward - He Anga Whakamua - Na sala ki liu.**

*Ka kawea mai e ahau i te karere pai me te hari nui mō koutou”*

*‘Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy'*

*“Oku ou ha’u mo au a’e Talafungani ‘oe Fiefia”* Luke 2:10.

On Christmas Day, 1814, the Rev'd Samuel Marsden and Ruatara proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time on the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand.  Thus for two hundred years, the good news of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia.  But the good news of God reaches back into the story of our created world.  We speak and experience the Gospel in this time and in this place, but hold the witness of Scripture in its articulation of God's work in history through Jesus Christ, Son of God and servant of all, and in the movement of the Holy Spirit.  We are held in the now and the not yet, trusting in the promises of God.  We are filled with grace and hope, and Scripture commands us to live in prayerful anticipation of the promises of resurrection into eternal life, when we shall all be changed.

Scripture teaches the creation of male and female in the image and likeness of God and the love of God for all people regardless of individual faith or calling.    In Christ all are invited into faith in the new covenant in which the forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ is received.  Called to be members of the Body of Christ, the power of the Spirit empowers the church to be the hands and feet; the voice and heart of Christ.  Jesus Christ is the centre of all that we are and all that we do.

*“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”*

*“Kāhore he Hūrai, kāhore he Kāriki, kāhore he pononga, kāhore he rangatira, kāhore he tāne, wāhine rānei, he tāngata kotahi tonu hoki koutou katoa i roto i a Karaiti Īhu.”*

*“E le o i ai se Iutaia po o se Eleni, e le o i ai se pologa po o se saoloto, e le o i ai se tane po o se fafine; auā ua tasi lava outou uma ia Keriso Iesu.”* Galatians 3:28

In this letter, the Apostle Paul writes to a community who were themselves experiencing critical issues of division in their doctrine and common life, that their distinct identities were not collapsed, but rather surpassed and transformed by Jesus Christ.

“*All have sinned and all have fallen short of the glory of God”* Romans 3:23.   Nevertheless Christ is the Good Shepherd (John 10) and seeks to bring home to the fold every person. God never gives up on us (Luke 15).

It is the call of the church in every place to proclaim God's love and invite people to become disciples of Christ.   Christian teaching calls every disciple to a life of repentance as well as seeking to do God's will to love and serve others in the world Christ died to save.

At the General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui held at Waitangi in May 2014, the Three Tikanga of our Church met and engaged in a number of important issues.  One major focus of energy and debate was the doctrine of marriage.  In the midst of the articulation of many theologies and cultural influences, our unity in Christ was never-the-less evident even when we disagreed.  The Church has received and articulated an understanding of intimate human relationships which it expresses through her doctrine of marriage between a man and a woman, and is life-long and monogamous.

We uphold this traditional doctrine of marriage.

Over many years our Church has become increasingly aware of the pain of the LGBT community.  All too often our Church has been complicit in homophobic thinking and actions of society, and has failed to speak out against hatred and violence against those with same-gender attraction.

We apologise unreservedly and commit ourselves to reconciliation and prophetic witness.

We recognise a diversity of voices about what constitutes a right ordered intimate relationship between two persons regardless of gender.  At this time it is the will of the General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui to respond to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Although we are far from unanimous in seeing the way forward, there is a broad recognition of the dynamic nature of doctrine, and the call of the prophetic word to be attentive to the movement of the Spirit.  There is no questioning the depth of love and commitment in some gay and lesbian relationships and their commitment to serve the wider community and to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Therefore we present the following resolutions of General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui and share a possible timeline for the development of new liturgies, change of formularies and possible parliamentary action, keeping in mind the present legal restrictions in some jurisdictions.

**1. This General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui resolves** to appoint a working group to bring and recommend to the 62nd General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui:

1. A process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is contrary to scripture, doctrine, tikanga or civil law, will not be required to perform any liturgy for the blessing of same-gender relationships, will continue to have integrity within the Church, and will remain compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction;
2. A process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is consonant with scripture, doctrine, tikanga and civil law may perform a yet to be developed liturgy for blessing same-gender relationships in a manner which maintains their integrity within the Church, is compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction, and can remain in communion under scripture, doctrine and law; including

(i) A proposal for a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships;

(ii) A process and legislation (whether church or parliamentary) by which a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships may be adopted;

and

**2. Recognising** that this work has the potential to impact on the Church’s theology of ordination and marriage, asks the group to report for our future on:

(a) The theology of ordination to Anglican orders and requirements for that; and

(b) The theology of marriage.

**3.** **This General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui** commits itself to continued dialogue/talanoa/wānanga which respects and protects diversity with the option of change.

**4. And further:**

*“By one Spirit we were baptised into one body”*

*He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa/A New Zealand Prayer Book*

We are disciples of Jesus Christ who took a towel and basin and bid his disciples to serve and care for all.

We are acutely aware of the desire of some clergy to make further response pastorally and prayerfully to LGBT people in their faith communities.

**Therefore General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui resolves that:**

Clergy who so wish are permitted to recognise in public worship a same-gender civil union or state marriage of members of their faith community:

1. with the permission of their licensing Bishop; and
2. with the permission of their Vestry or equivalent leadership body.

Such recognition cannot be marriage or a rite of blessing of a same-gender relationship.

We recognise that this may cause even further distress. Noting the commitment of the Church demonstrated in clauses 1 to 4 above, we ask the LGBT community to recognise that any process of change within our Church takes time.

Ka mea a Ihu: *“He ture hōu tāku ka hoatu nei ki a koutou, kia aroha tētahi ki tētahi, kia rite ki tōku aroha ki a koutou.”*

Jesus said: *“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”*

Sa kaya ko Jisu: *“Mo dou vei lomani me vaka kau sa lomani kemudou, mo dou vei lomani vaka kina”*

John 13:34