

**Article reprinted from *Cross†Way* Issue Winter 1999 No. 75**

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**That which *GOD* has joined together**

David Phillips

Over recent months marriage has been under discussion in both Church and society. Early in 1999 the Government issued its report *Supporting Families*. Whilst this was notable for its failure to define what a family is (thereby anyone to define it as they wish) it did dare to use the M word which had become taboo in politically correct circles. Despite the best efforts of many modernists the idea of marriage will not go away. This is hardly surprising since marriage is a part of God's purpose and plan for mankind and is therefore written not only in His word but in the hearts of all people.

It is widely recognised that marriages and families are under strain. More than one in every three marriages now ends in divorce and the survival rate amongst Christians does not seem any better. In order to help and strengthen marriage it is important not only to look at what can keep marriage alive but also to recognise the importance of marriage and its place in God's loving purposes.

The Bishops of the Church of England recently released a report simply entitled *Marriage*. This is a significant statement but it has been overshadowed by the expectation of a further report on remarriage early in 2001. The Bishops will be initiating debate and discussion on marriage in the dioceses over the next year or so.

In the background the new Common Worship marriage service has received final approval at the November General Synod. Though it is not as radical as many had pushed for, the service has some interesting developments in it.

For all these reasons marriage, divorce and remarriage are very much on the agenda in society and in the Church both nationally and locally. It is important that a clear biblical voice is heard in these discussions and therefore the bulk of the articles in this edition of *Cross†Way* are focussing on these subjects.