

Weddings

1. Civil Character

1) Civil Officiant

Only occasion that a clergy acts as the representative of both the church and the state.

2) Bible

: No mention about weddings

3) Early Church

A. Let the local marriage customs continue.

B. Roman betrothal ceremony

: Sequence

Promise and ring

Roman wedding ceremony

Wedding Cake

C. Christian Marriage

a. Followed the Roman betrothal.

b. Specialty

a) Christians marry Christians.

b) Christian blessing substituted the sacrifices to a

pagan deity.

D. Northern Europe customs

a. Pagan rituals

a) Throwing of the rice

: Symbol of fertility

b) Giving away the bride

c) Veil on the bride and the bridesmaids

: Against evil spirits

- b. Place
: Homes and taverns

4) Involvement of the church and the clergy

A. Record person

- a. A written record was needed in the legal purpose.
- b. Priests: Only literate person
Had to be present to record.

B. Nuptial Mass

Nuptial mass after marriage.

- a) The church took more initiative later.

- b) Marriage vow

- 1. Largely public legal thing

- 2. Content

- Lawyer talk, not ecclesiastical.

C. Wedding Place

- a. At the door or front of the church.

- b. In 16th c., the full wedding service took place inside of the church in the England.

2. Views of the Marriage

1) Roman Catholic

- : Decree to Arminians

Purpose of the marriage

- A. Begetting children and bring them up in the Lord

- B. Marital faithfulness

- C. Indissoluble character of marriage

2) Reformers

- A. Procreation of children and bring them up in God

B. Remedy against sin (lust)

C. Mutual help and comfort in prosperity and adversity.

3) Puritans

Reverses the order of Reformers.

4) Romantic Period

: Romantic aspects of the marriage

The church has stressed more on the covenant than on the contract.
Unconditional promise

3. Should the church do the marriage ceremony?

1) Points of consideration

A. Every occasion is the opportunity to worship.

Implication

: Non-Christians are not supposed to marry in the church.

B. The rituals used by the society guide people through life's most difficult transition.

a. Rites of passage

a) Give meaning to the change and provide equilibrium for the change.

b) Three phases

1. Separation

2. Transition: Engagement

3. Reincorporation

: Establishment of a new house.

b. Rituals do educate people, not just the couple.

2) Problems

A. Civil character: Legal union

B. Pagan root

C. Very earthly: Mark sexual union

3) How do you make it Christian?

A. The marital sex is no problem in the Bible.

B. The problem is the pagan root of rituals.

a. The Christian wedding should be the worship service:
Focus on God, not on the couple

b. It should be an corporate affair, not a private affair.

a) Joining two families, not just two people

b) Also involving the church

4. Practical Considerations in the Wedding Service

1) Pastors should maintain the control and set things up.

: Get input from the couple and family in advance but once input done, you will take the control.

2) Lay it like a worship service including Christian music vs. romantic music.

3) Go carefully through the marriage for its practical and theological importance.

4) No photographers during the service.

5) Don't do non-Christian marriage service, esp. in the church.

6) Have the couple do some reading of spiritual literatures about a Christian marriage.

7) Usually don't allow them to write own vow.

: Traditional vows are done very nice. Meaningful. Better than a personal vow written. If they insist, make sure that you edit it.

8) Christian marriage belongs to the church.

: Use of the church building

9) Focus on God and Christian meaning of marriage in your sermon or homily.

10) Encourage them to throw bird's seed instead of rice.
: Rice is pain in the neck to remove. Bird seeds will be eaten by
birds.

11) Don't agree to marry until you talk to them.
: Necessity of Pre-marital counseling.

12) Know the marriage law of the state.
: Licensing, witnessing, signature,...

13) Have a stated policy concerning use of the church building.
: Janitorial fees,...
Wedding coordinator in your church.

14) Always have rehearsal.