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The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. George L. Carey
Archbishop of Canterbury
Lambeth Palace
London SE1 7JU

Dear Archbishop Carey:

I should like to add my brief, personal testimony to your files - even though personal comments in themselves do not justify a position. My partner and I have been a family since we were 18 years old; we are now 60 and retired from Connecticut. We met as freshmen at Trinity College (Connecticut) and carefully navigated the perilous waters of church and state. Bob and I are healthy (apart from typical aches and pains of the "near elderly"). For well over thirty years he served as a much beloved high school teacher and department chairman of mathematics. I was a philosophy professor and vicar of a small, rural parish, later a staff member at Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford. On my last Sunday at the cathedral in 1994, the Dean concluded his generous remarks about my service with: "And we wish Dick and Bob godspeed as they leave this week for their retirement home in Florida." The multi-cultural congregation stood and applauded vigorously.

In 1996 Bishop Calvin Schofield (diocesan, Southeast Florida) blessed our home with fellow clergy and some parishioners from the Church of Bethesda-By-The-Sea, Palm Beach, celebrating with us. Last Sunday Bishop Arthur Walmsley (retired Connecticut diocesan) spent the afternoon and early evening with us. Bishop Clarence Coleridge (CT) has been most supportive of us pastorally, and Bishop Andrew Smith (suffragan, CT) is a long-time acquaintance. Bob and I have, for the most part, lived mainstream lives - with prudent compromises.

By the way, we don't need to be "married" - in fact, after these 42 years we'd feel foolish asking a blessing within the Church on a relationship God blessed some time ago without a liturgy. And, we believe that the word "marriage," given its heritage, might be reserved for traditional heterosexual commitments. A different term(s) could be established. (Just because something is not in Scripture does not preclude its institution.)

I hope that in the coming Lambeth Conference varying informed interpretations of human sexuality will be discussed with warm hearts and open minds. Remarks from some Anglican leaders, as reported in the American press, have fallen short with regard to biblical scholarship and psychological data. I have been appalled at the assumptions made regarding certain (physically harmful) sexual practices, as if they were intrinsic to a male, homosexual orientation.

Let us pray for each other, that we Anglicans will rediscover our fundamental unity in our shared baptism and Eucharistic worship, and agree to differ on what we can as faithful members of our Communion.

Respectfully yours,