**Brides**

**THE WEDDING COVENNAT**

**Introduction: What are the True Meanings of Wedding Traditions?**

1. **Why do Ushers seat the family and friends of the bride and groom on opposite sides of the auditorium?**

**Answer:** This provides a covenant setting. Marriage is established by God as a covenant, not a contract.

Mal.2:14 “…yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. (See also Prov. 2:16- 17)

* The definition of the Hebrew word for covenant means: “In the sense of cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh.”
* When God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, He established a covenant with them in which the people were to pass between he pieces of a calf. (See Jer. 34:13,18)
* Seating families and friends on each side of the auditorium symbolizes the sacrifices which they have made in order for the bride and groom to enter into this covenant.

1. **What is the Significance of a white runner in the aisle?**

**Answer:** It is a symbol of walking on holy ground. A covenant is not made merely between two people and their witnesses. It is made in the presence of God, and He is actively involved in the agreement, since it is God that joins them together. (See Matt.19:6)

Ex**.** 3:5 “… put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

1. **Why are the parents of the couple given special seating?**

**Answer:** The parents of the bride and groom are part of the marriage covenant. The commitments they make during the ceremony are just as binding as the vows of the couple.

* The final responsibility of parents for their sons and daughters is to determine with them God’s will for a life partner. Thereafter, they serve in a chain of counsel for them and their children. Thus, parents enter in **the line of authority**, and they leave in **the line of counsel.**
* Prov. 23:22 “Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.”

1. **Why does the groom enter the auditorium first?**

**Answer:**  By entering first, the groom signifies that he is the covenant initiator. This is important because whosever initiates he covenant assumes greater responsibility for seeing it fulfilled. God initiated covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David. God is still at work to fulfill His covenants. The Christ initiated the covenant of salvation with us. Christ will soon appear with sound of trumpets to consummate the wedding with His bride, the Church. (See I Thess. 4:14-17)

1. **Why does the father walk with the bride down the aisle?**

**Answer:**  The action has a twofold significance. The father is saying to the bride, “I am endorsing this young man as God’s very choice of a husband for you, and I am now bringing you to him.”

* At the same time the father is saying to the young man, “I am presenting to you a daughter whom I have earnestly endeavored to train up as a pure bride.” In Scripture the father is responsible for the purity of the daughter before marriage. (See Deut. 22:13-21)
* II Cor. 11:2 “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

1. **What is the real significance of the white wedding dress?**

**Answer:** The white wedding gown symbolizes the purity of heart and life of the bride and for which the husband is responsible in the life of his wife. During the marriage, he is to cleanse her by the Word of God, just as Christ purifies believers by the Word. (See Eph. 5:25-28)

1. **Why does the minister ask the question, “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?”**

**Answer:** This question and its response symbolizes not only the full blessing of the parents, but also the transfer of responsibility to the groom by the father. A daughter is under the authority and responsibility of her father until she is married. (See Num. 30:4-8) It is therefore the father who transfers this responsibility to the groom.

I Cor. 7:38 “So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well…”

1. **Why do the bride and groom take each other’s right hand during the wedding vows?**

**Answer:** The open right hand offered by each party symbolizes their strength, resources, and purpose. By clasping each other’s right hand, they are pledging these to each other. Just as we depend upon the saving strength of God’s right hand,” so each partner can depend upon all the resources that the other brings to the covenant relationship. (See Psalm 20:6)

1. **Why does the groom make the vows first?**

**Answer:** He must be the leader and assume the greater responsibility to fulfil the marriage covenant. As covenant initiator, he must commit himself to the purposes of marriage which God established in the beginning.

1. **What is the real significance of the wedding ring?**

**Answer:** It symbolizes transfer of authority, strength, and protection. In scripture, the ring is a symbol of authority and the resources which go with it. (See Esther 8:2)

1. **What is the special meaning of the bride’s veil?**

**Answer:** The veil represents modesty and respect. It symbolizes the sanctity and the exclusiveness of the marriage covenant. It reminds the couple and the witnesses that the physical relationship is only to be entered into after the vows are completed. The bride is saving herself for her husband to be.

* There is further significance in the veil as it relates to salvation. When Christ fulfilled the conditions of His covenant for our redemption, the veil in the temple was taken away. (See Matt 27:50-51)
* Similarly, when a nonbeliever receives Jesus Christ as his Savior, the veil between him and Christ is removed. (See II Cor. 3:14)

1. **Why is the couple pronounced husband and wife?**

**Answer:** The pronouncement of husband and wife establishes a definite point in timefor the beginning of the marriage. These words are to remove any doubt in the minds of the couple or the witnesses about the validity of the marriage.

* The establishing of a point in time is also important in salvation. When we confess with our mouths Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead , we are united with Christ in Salvation. (See Rom. 10:9-13)
* Public baptism and the authority of His Word then give the official Holy Spirit pronouncement that we are saved. (See John 1:12)

1. **What is the purpose of introducing the new couple?**

**Answer:** The introduction of the new couple establishes their change of names. In the marriage, the wife takes on the name of the husband, and the man becomes known as the husband of the wife… Christian. This name change is clearly illustrated in the covenant between Jehovah God and Abram (See Gen. 17:4-5)

1. **Why does the couple sign wedding papers?**

**Answer:** The couple signs the wedding papers to establish a public document. It is a continuing public record of the covenant.

* God wrote out the testimony of His covenant in Scripture. When Laban made a covenant with Jacob, a heap of stones became a witness. (See Gen. 31:43-55)

1. **What is the significance of signing the guest book?**

**Answer:** The guests become the official witnesses to the covenant. By signing their names they are saying, “I have witnessed the vows, and I will testify to the reality of this marriage.” The witnesses can also serve as God’s reminders to the couple to be faithful to their marriage vows.

Because of the significance of signing the guest book, it should be done after the wedding than before it.

1. **What is the purpose of the receiving line?**

**Answer:** The guests give their blessing to the couple and their parents in the receiving line. When Boaz entered into covenant with Ruth to be his wife, all the people that were in the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses.” (See Ruth 4:11, 14, 15)

1. **Why is a special invitation given for the reception?**

**Answer:** The invitation for thereception symbolizes the invitation to salvation. In the teaching ministry of Christ, He used the invitation to the wedding feast as an illustration of inviting people to partake of salvation. The wedding feast was free to the invited guests, just as salvation is free to all who will receive it (See Isaiah 55:1)

All who respond to Christ’s invitation, both good and bad, must enter on His terms. The man who came without proper wedding attire in the parable was cast into the outer darkness. (See Matt.22:1-14)

1. **What is the meaning of serving food at the reception?**

**Answer:** Food is part of the covenant celebration. One of the root meanings of the word covenant is “to feed.” Following the marriage, a feast was customary to further symbolize the unity of the couple. Entering into a meal is itself a form of covenant. It is significant that the first event of Christ’s ministry was attending a wedding feast, and His first miracle took place during that occasion. (See John 2:1-11)

1. **Why does the couple feed cake to each other?**

**Answer:**  This act symbolizes their bodies becoming one flesh. By feeding cake to each other, they are saying, “This represents my body. As you eat it, I am becoming a partof you, and as I eat the cake that you give to me, you become part of me.”

* A New Testament illustration of this type symbolism is in the Lord’s Supper. Jesus took bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying, “… Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you… After the same manner also He took the cup…” I Cor. 11:24-25

1. **Why do the guests throw rice at the couple?**

**Answer:** This gesture symbolizes marriage fruitfulness. When a covenant was completed, both parties would often establish a memorial garden.

* In the marriage covenant, the garden represents children who are to grow up as olive plants around the family table. (See Psalm 128:3) It is in the children that the two parents achieve their ultimate oneness, and it is through the children that God desires to enrich and reward the marriage covenant. Psalm 127:3-5

**SIX PURPOSES OF MARRIAGE:**

1. **Companionship-** True companionship grows out of a oneness of spirit. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”
2. **Enjoyment-**The principle behind enjoyment is self-control. “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Heb. 13:4
3. **Completeness-**God designed Eve to complete that which was lacking in Adam’s life. “And Adam said… she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Gen. 2:23
4. **Fruitfulness-**God’s first command in Scripture is “…Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.” Gen. 1:28
5. **Protection-**The husband is to protect the wife by laying down his life for her. (See Eph. 5:25) The wife is to protect the home. (See Titus 2:4-5) Parents are to protect their children to raise up a Godly seed. (See Mal. 2:15; Psalm 112:1-2)
6. **Typify Christ and the Church-** Marriage is to be human object lesson of the divine relationship between Christ and believers, (See Eph. 5:31-33)