

I just don't know what the world is coming to, but the inevitable has happened again. This time, a mainline clergyman and wife--Ken and Jeanadele Magner--have come out with a nonmarriage wedding service for a year of what we used to call "trial marriage" (and they call, as chap.11 of their LIBERATED SEX [Berkley Medallion/77], "The Year of Testing" or "a consortium year"). In spite of sloppy logic and sticky sentimentality, the thing has enough merit to justify a thinksheet. I'm tempted to provide you with a very critical commentary on the whole idea and on the text below, but I'll leave that to you. If in your counseling you come upon occasion for such a rite, this form will provide a base for (1) deciding whether such a rite is a proper extension of evangelic sacramentalism and (2) shaping, if you decide yes, your own form with the nonbride and nongroom.

### BLESSING OF A CONSORTIUM OF LOVE

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as the first act of your consortium and partnership under God, you have chosen to come with your family and your friends to declare your intent and to publicly exchange your promises to each other.

As we ask God's blessing upon this step the two of you take this day, we in no way demean or debase the sacred estate of marriage. It is, rather, to exalt marriage. You hold it in such honor, and you prepare the way in this year of your living together, for you yourselves to be joined in marriage.

In this, your consortium year, you give three trusts to each other--mind and body and spirit. As you accept these trusts from the other, you promise a mutual esteem and love, offering the other your strength for the other's weaknesses. Your honest answers to the other's questions and curiosity. Your energy at home and at work as you provide for each other. You will show patience in any hours of stress.

You promise always to protect against the eventuality of pregnancy.

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These two have come here to declare they wish to be as one for a year together. It is proudly and happily an experiment in full-time union. No legal or moral obligations will be incurred in this time to continue beyond the consortium year.

They have selected \_\_\_\_\_ as sponsor and will turn to him/her as counselor in their relationship.

At the conclusion of the twelfth month, they will conclude the consortium, or translate it to marriage.

Forasmuch as these two, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, present themselves to ask our blessing on their adventure in oneness, if there be any present who know any cause why they may not be so joined, I ask you now to make it known.

I charge you both, before the great God, Searcher of all hearts, that if either of you know any reason why you may not lawfully enter this relationship, you do now confess it, for only as persons are joined in honor before God, is their union blessed by Him.

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*John Livingston*

Who gives this woman to become partner in this consortium of love? (Father, guardian or friend of the woman will put her right hand in the hand of the minister and acknowledge, "I do.")

(The minister links the right hand of the woman to that of the man, who says after the minister:)

"I \_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_, as my love and my intended wife. I do promise and covenant, to you and these witnesses before God, to cherish and protect you in this year of our trust."

(Hands still clasped, the woman says after the minister:)

"I \_\_\_\_\_, take thee \_\_\_\_\_, as my love and my intended husband. I do promise and covenant to you and these witnesses before God, to cherish and share all with you in this year of our trust."