

Community of Christ

**Educational Materials for 2010 World Conference
Legislation regarding Same-Sex Marriage and
Homosexuality Issues**

**An Overview of Relevant Policies, Doctrine, and
Resolutions**

Addendum November 2009

Same-Sex Marriage and Homosexuality Issues in the Church
An Overview of Relevant Policies, Doctrine, and Resolutions

Addendum November 2009

WCR 1182

Adopted April 6, 1984

Whereas, The church affirms that marriage is ordained of God (Doctrine and Covenants 49:3a; 150:10; Genesis 2:27-30); and

Whereas, “Monogamy is the basis principle on which Christian married life is build” (Doctrine and Covenants 150:10a); and

Whereas, The church believes that God intends that husband and wife remain married to each other for as long as they both shall live (Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b, 4b); and

Whereas, Voluntary termination of marriage has become increasingly common occurrence in many cultures; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the church reaffirms marriage as an institution, a covenant, a sacrament ordained of God, and a legal contract; and be it further

Resolved, That the church supports the following principles for guidance to all persons:

1. Marriage is a vital institution in all cultures of the world. It helps provide opportunities for healthy, constructive development of persons. Monogamous marriage provides a setting for a relationship of enduring love and mutual companionship, thus nurturing a social environment in which the couple support and strengthen each other as persons of worth.

2. Marriage is a sacred covenant between husband and wife in which God participates with sanction, blessing, and guidance. The church is committed to providing premarital preparation and other caring ministries to strengthen and nurture faithful marriage relationships.

3. Marriage is sacred when it expresses the nature of God through the relationship of husband and wife. The marriage ceremony, when performed by the authority of the church, is intended to be a solemnization and public witness of the covenanting couple with God, and is thus considered a sacrament. The marriage partners, the officiating minister, and all others participating in the ceremony should approach it with mature consideration and adequate preparation. They should expect that God will bless them in the fulfillment of their various responsibilities.

4. The church upholds the validity of a legal marriage authorized by civil and religious authorities and affirms the potential for sacred relationships which can result. However, the church recognizes that authorized ceremonies, whether in the church or by other authorities, do not guarantee the development of a sacramental relationship. In a marriage where the sacred aspect of covenant is felt to be lacking, the couple are encouraged to resolve before God to strengthen their relationship. The preparation, the ceremony, and the continuing marriage can testify of the sacredness of the marriage covenant.

5. As a legal contract, marriage imparts to both parties certain legal rights and duties which are generally enforceable in the various states and nations of the world. In addition to legal enforceability, such rights and duties impose ethical and moral responsibilities on

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the parties. This contractual nature of marriage is an important consideration prior to and throughout the marriage relationship.

6. The church recognizes that in some cases either or both partners may have legal and/or moral grounds for termination of the marriage. Termination of marriage by divorce or other legal dissolution formalizes the termination of the marriage covenant. The church affirms that its primary function in these situations is to provide ministry rather than to render judgment. It should respond in the spirit of Christian caring to the needs of persons for support and understanding. The church should facilitate and mediate a ministry of healing to persons as they explore all avenues for reasonable reconciliation. If either or both partners decide to terminate the marriage, the church should continue to provide caring ministry for all persons involved.

7. In cases of the termination of marriage where priesthood status or possibility of charges related to unchristian conduct are involved, the church has a legitimate concern in conducting a review of the circumstances. In these cases, special attention of the administrative officers of the church will be required with healing and reconciling ministry as the primary goals.

8. The remarriage of a person whose previous marriage has been terminated should be approached with the same careful consideration and preparation as that appropriate for every marriage. In cases where the previous marriage was terminated by legal action the officiating minister should insure that marital preparation will include an exploration of the factors that characterized the marital history; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution supersedes WCR 1034.

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WCR 1226 HUMAN DIVERSITY

Adopted April 10, 1992

Whereas, The 1988 World Conference requested that the issues of prejudice and racism be studied and recommendations developed as guidance for church members and jurisdictions; and

Whereas, The Human Diversity Committee was asked by the First Presidency to continue this study and to develop a policy statement for use by the church in dealing with issues of prejudice and racism; and

Whereas, The Human Diversity Committee has developed an "Affirmation of Human Diversity" which is included in its report to the 1992 World Conference; and

Whereas, This statement expresses valued principles of the RLDS faith and provides positive guidance to church members throughout the world in understanding and combatting prejudice and racism; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 1992 World Conference endorse the following "Affirmation of Human Diversity" and encourage its use in educational materials, worship resources, and leadership training.

The gospel of Jesus Christ reveals the unqualified love of God and the inestimable worth of all persons. An awareness of God's love and of the love of others is essential to human fulfillment. For these reasons, we celebrate the rich diversity of human life.

However, human beings often fear, hate, and abuse each other because of ignorance about such factors as socioeconomic status, culture, race, gender, age, size, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability. Such prejudicial behavior undermines the personal and spiritual development of both abuser and abused and denies the mutual benefits of shared giftedness.

As persons of faith, we confess our own imperfections in attitude and action. Nevertheless, we accept the responsibility to resist fear and hate in all forms and to strive continuously to eliminate expressions of prejudice and discrimination.

We declare our belief that "all are called according to the gifts of God to them." We therefore acknowledge and affirm human diversity by creating a spirit of openness and peace within our congregations where all persons may find acceptance and the opportunity to share their giftedness.

We commit ourselves to work with all persons of goodwill to promote mutual respect, appreciation, and peace in all relationships.