

Community of Christ

2010 World Conference Legislation

World Church leaders acknowledge that the following resolutions may cause individuals and groups pain and frustration because of differences in their personal, scriptural, theological, legal, and sacramental perspectives. As an international community of faith, this issue is further complicated by the diverse customs and languages of our members.

As the body of Christ, it is imperative that the church approaches these legislative issues with great care, understanding, and sensitivity to the voices and perspectives of members throughout the world. As an international church represented in nearly fifty nations, it is important that we learn to talk about divisive issues without separating from the body.

We have been counseled as a church to “Listen together to one another, without judgment or predisposition. Do not assume that the answers to matters of conflict have yet been perceived. There is much labor to be done. Reason together in love, and the Spirit of truth will prevail” (Doctrine and Covenants 162:5c).

While the church seeks agreement or common consent in important matters, we must commit to ongoing dialogue and lovingly upholding our common faith in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church.

G-1 MARRIAGE COUPLE

Submitted by Canada East Mission Centre

Whereas, the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims that all persons are of equal worth in the sight of God (D&C 16:3c–f; James 2:1–13); and

Whereas, God calls people according to their giftedness and not specifically by gender, race, economic or educational status (D&C 119:8b); and

Whereas, The sacraments symbolize God’s gracious interaction within the life of the church as a whole and within the individual life of each disciple, and

Whereas, The sacrament of marriage symbolizes a sacred covenant between two people seeking to make a lifelong commitment of mutual support, love, and faithfulness to one another; and

Whereas, Instructions given in former times are applicable in principle to the needs of today, and the principles are to be evaluated and to be interpreted anew (D&C 147:7); and

Whereas, WCR 1182 and WCR 272 contain principles of relationships involving marriages that apply to any person but which currently contain wording that could exclude some disciples; therefore, be it

Resolved, That WCR 1182 be amended by replacing the words “husband and wife” with the words “marriage couple”; and

Resolved, That WCR 272 be amended by replacing the words “husband and wife” with the words “marriage couple.”

G-2 PRIESTHOOD AUTHORIZED TO OFFICIATE AT SAME-SEX MARRIAGES WHERE LEGAL

Submitted by Canada East Mission Centre

Whereas, WCR 386 identifies the First Presidency as the “leading interpreters and teachers of the laws and revelations of God”; and

Whereas, The sacrament of marriage symbolizes a sacred covenant between two people seeking to make a lifelong commitment of mutual support, love, and faithfulness to one another, and

Whereas, Some civil jurisdictions recognize same-sex marriages in their laws; and

Whereas, The church recognizes such same-sex marriages for its members in its records; and

Whereas, Wording within Doctrine and Covenants 111 referring to “husband and wife” can be interpreted as scriptural justification for prohibiting priesthood within the *Community of Christ* from officiating at the sacrament of marriage for same-sex couples; and

Whereas, The current practice within the church of prohibiting priesthood members from officiating at the sacrament of marriage for same-sex couples in those areas where it is legal to do so amounts to a prohibition of sacramental ministry on the basis of sexual orientation; therefore, be it

Resolved, It is an expression to the First Presidency of the faith and earnest desire of this conference that priesthood within *Community of Christ* be allowed to officiate at the sacrament of marriage for same-sex couples in those areas of the church where such marriages are legally recognized.

G-3 REQUEST FOR PERIODICALLY UPDATED INFORMATION

Submitted by Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center

Whereas, The Church has been involved on one level or another in discussions about matters related to homosexuality for nearly fifty years; and

Whereas, Various methods (Temple School classes, Listening Circles) have been tried to facilitate the continuing conversations; and

Whereas, The civil and other human rights of homosexual persons are being advanced at an accelerating rate in many of the world’s nations; and

Whereas, We have been recently advised that the First Presidency, in consultation with other World Church leaders and the Standing High Council, are discussing what the most helpful processes may be for engaging the church in evaluating present church policies related to human sexuality; therefore be it

Resolved, That the First Presidency be requested to provide the Church an annual update on the progress and results of their consultations, using the *Herald*, the church Web site, and other appropriate World Church communications.

G-4 LEGAL MARRIAGE AND THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Submitted by Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center

Whereas, The Community of Christ is an international denomination providing ministry in diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds around the world; and

Whereas, Marriage customs, traditions, and legal requirements vary throughout the world; and

Whereas, Marriage is a legal contract (marriage license) between the couple and the government which imparts to both parties certain prescribed rights and duties that are generally enforceable in various states and nations of the world, such as property rights, inheritance, and kinship; and

Whereas, The Sacrament of Marriage is a sacred covenant between the couple and God in which the church participates with sanction, blessing, support, and guidance; and

Whereas, In some locations the minister can act as both an agent of the government as well as representing the Church, while in other locations a separate civil government agent must also be involved; and

Whereas, The wording in Doctrine and Covenants Sections 17, 49, and 111, and WCR 1182 referring to “husband and wife” has been interpreted as justification for prohibiting priesthood within the Community of Christ from officiating at the sacrament of marriage for same-sex couples; and

Whereas, The Sacrament of Marriage symbolizes a sacred covenant between two persons seeking to make a life-long commitment of mutual support, love, and faithfulness to one another; therefore be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of this World Conference that in jurisdictions where such is authorized by laws that Community of Christ priesthood be permitted to perform the Sacrament of Marriage for all couples seeking to enter into a sacred covenant before God in a long-term monogamous committed relationship; and be it further

Resolved, That this World Conference authorize the First Presidency be authorized to make appropriate editorial changes to WCR 1182 and the *Handbook for Church Administrators*, page 59, paragraph 4, making them inclusive of same-sex couples as well as opposite-sex couples; and be it further

Resolved, That this World Conference request the First Presidency provide interpretive comment in the *Handbook for Church Administrators* that provides contextual material to help understand for Doctrine and Covenants sections 17, 49, and 111 in regard to the Sacrament of Marriage and this World Conference action.

G-5 POLICY ON PRIESTHOOD

Submitted by Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center

Whereas, The Community of Christ is an international denomination providing ministry in diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds in many nations of the world; and

Whereas, All are called according to the gifts of God unto them; and

Whereas, The scriptural standard for calls to the priesthood is called of God as was Aaron and acceptance by the people; and all other standards are cultural in nature and tend to vary from one culture to the next; and

Whereas, There is no record of Jesus giving any specific instruction about sexual orientation, but Jesus did instruct us to love one another, and in both word and action taught us to embrace marginalized persons; and

Whereas, The current World Church policy on sexual orientation with regards to priesthood ministry is inconsistent with World Conference Resolution 1226, which states that “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, gender identity, 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”; therefore be it

Resolved, That this conference affirm that the fundamental requirement for one to be called to priesthood office is that he or she be called by one having appropriate administrative authority and approved by the sustaining vote of the proper jurisdictional conference or business meeting; and, be it further

Resolved, That it is the sense of this World Conference that the Standing High Council Statement on Homosexuality (March 18, 1982), and the World Church Leadership Council document “Community, Common Consent, and the Issue of Homosexuality” (October 2002) which prohibits the ordination of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) members should be rescinded by those bodies responsible to do so; and, be it further

Resolved, that it is the sense of this World Conference that calls for priesthood for LGBT members should be processed through the normal procedures, and be it further

Resolved, that it is the sense of this World Conference we encourage all jurisdictions to welcome LGBT members as priesthood members when appropriate calls are approved through normal and administrative and legislative channels, but in no way does this World Conference seek to mandate priesthood calls for LGBT members in those jurisdictions where culture and understanding inhibit, or the law prohibits homosexuals from full participation.