

# Community of Christ

## 2010 World Conference Legislation

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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.

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### **G-1            Marriage Couple**

*From the Canada East Mission Centre and the Arizona USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims that all persons are of equal worth in the sight of God (Doctrine and Covenants 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 (Doctrine and Covenants 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 (Doctrine and Covenants 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**

*From the Canada East Mission Centre and the Arizona USA Mission Center:*

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 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**

*From the Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center and the Arizona 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**

*From the Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center and the Arizona USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, 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 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**

*From the Eastern Great Lakes USA Mission Center and the Arizona USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, 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.

## **G-6 Equal Access to Church Sacraments**

*From the Coastal Bend USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, Community of Christ proclaims a loving God and affirms the worth and giftedness of all persons; and

Whereas, The sacraments of the church—baptism, confirmation, the Lord’s Supper, marriage, blessing of children, laying on of hands for the sick, ordination to the priesthood, and the evangelist’s blessing—symbolize and reveal God’s grace to us, and are integral to the spiritual development of the entire body of the church; and

Whereas, The “Affirmation of Human Diversity” endorsed by the church in 1992 recognizes the harmful effect of prejudicial behavior on the spiritual health of the community and declares our desire to create within our congregations a spirit of openness and peace and to “eliminate expressions of prejudice and discrimination”; and

Whereas, The church continues to fall short of reaching this goal by denying some persons the opportunity to participate in certain sacraments because of factors such as sexual orientation; and

Whereas, Recent scripture counsels the church anew to embrace the reconciling purposes of God, and cautions: “... That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. ...” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:3c); and

Whereas, There is increasing awareness amongst the leadership and membership of the church of the need for Community of Christ, as an international organization which upholds “unity in diversity” as an Enduring Principle, to administer policies in ways that are respectful and appropriate to the varying cultures that exist within the diverse nations, communities, and congregations of the church; and

Whereas, Many congregations desire to create a culture of peace and justice where all persons are accepted, all gifts are celebrated, and all members may participate fully in the spiritual life of the community; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the right to full and equal participation in the sacraments of the church be made available to all persons, regardless of socioeconomic status, culture, race, gender, size, sexual orientation, gender identity, and mental or physical disability; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this practice be implemented by the First Presidency in a culturally respectful manner in each jurisdiction of the church, with consideration for the people’s discernment of the divine will for their own unique time and place.

## **G-7 Policy on Same-sex Marriage**

*From the Gulf USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, Policy within Community of Christ is not dictated by societal trends, but by adherence to scriptural instruction; and

Whereas, Community of Christ has been instructed in Doctrine and Covenants 163:3b to “Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purpose of God;” and

Whereas, The letter by First Presidency dated May 22, 2009, addressed the church’s policies and procedures and stated that no language in the guiding documents, referenced therein, provides for same-sex marriage; and

Whereas, This letter made clear that Community of Christ priesthood members are not authorized by the church to officiate in same-sex marriages, even where it is legal to do so; and

Whereas, Due to the mobile nature of the world’s populations and the close fellowship among the various cultures and nations within the church’s membership, implementation of a regional approach to resolving this issue would prove difficult and divisive, and contribute to continued confusion among the membership and the general population; and

Whereas, The church was encouraged by the Presiding Evangelist, under the “prompting of the Spirit,” on April 3, 2004 (2004 World Conference), that “the time has come when the church must forsake deadlines that anticipate resolution of this question at each emerging World Conference and allow God to bless the church in God’s own way, in God’s own time;” therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That all legislation regarding the issue of same-sex marriage, be referred without prejudice to the First Presidency so as to not hinder or limit the continuing dialogue on this issue within the church; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the First Presidency develop strategies that will lead to more effective widespread dialogue throughout the church on the issue of same-sex marriage.

## **G-8 Policy on Ordination of Homosexuals**

*From the Gulf USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, The Community of Christ Standing High Council issued a Statement on Homosexuality, dated March 18, 1982; and

Whereas, This statement affirms the worth of all persons and also requires the full acceptance of individuals with homosexual orientation into the life of the church; and

Whereas, This statement recognizes that both heterosexual and homosexual persons, both priesthood and among the general membership, are called to adhere to high moral standards regarding sexual activity; and

Whereas, This statement allows individuals who define themselves as homosexual, and abstain from homosexual acts, an opportunity to respond to God’s call to ordination in Community of Christ; and

Whereas, The World Church Leadership Council (September 2002) issued a statement entitled “Community, Common Consent, and the Issue of Homosexuality,” reaffirming the 1982 guidelines regarding calling and ordination; and

Whereas, The church has been encouraged by Presiding Evangelist Danny Belrose on April 3, 2004 (2004 World Conference), under the “prompting of the Spirit” that “the time has come when the church must forsake deadlines that anticipate resolution of this question at each emerging World Conference and allow God to bless the church in God’s own way, in God’s own time;” and,

Whereas, The 2007 Committee on Homosexuality and the Church report includes statistics and analysis that indicate listening circles have not been well received across the church; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the First Presidency continue to develop new strategies that will lead to more effective widespread dialogue throughout the church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That all legislation regarding the issue of homosexuality as it relates to ordination, be referred without prejudice to the First Presidency so as to not hinder or limit the continuing dialogue on this issue within the church.

## **G-9                    Resolution on Human Rights**

*From the Rocky Mountain USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, There have been many attempts on resolutions to the World Conference for and against homosexuality, and

Whereas, Homosexuality remains a controversial issue in the world and within Community of Christ, and

Whereas, Reports have been given over the years to help the worldwide body of Community of Christ to deal with the issue of full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) persons within Community of Christ; and

Whereas, We are committed to being a worldwide church—loving, respecting, and appreciating theological, cultural, and socioeconomic differences; and

Whereas, On December 18, 2008, the first declaration on gay rights was presented to the United Nations General Assembly declaring that “we reaffirm the principal of nondiscrimination which requires that human rights apply equally to every human being regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity;” and

Whereas, Community of Christ has a presence in many nations and cultures where homosexuality is not a barrier to equal rights; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That we address global homosexuality as an issue primarily from a human rights perspective; and be it further

*Resolved*, That we take courageous steps to be in the forefront of those organizations which are helping to bring to bear just solutions to human rights violations for GLBT persons in the world, and be it further

*Resolved*, That Community of Christ answer its calling as a prophetic church, and that leaders act courageously and with spiritual insights, seeking resolution to eliminate all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against GLBT persons; and be it further

*Resolved*, It is the sense of this Conference that full inclusion of GLBT persons in the life of Community of Christ be allowed where accepted in nations, states and territories, and Community of Christ congregations; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the First Presidency be encouraged to actively support programs to help congregations become more welcoming and more effective in resisting discrimination in all forms, including those against GLBT persons.

## **G-10 Human Trafficking**

*From the Human Rights Team:*

Whereas, Human trafficking, a form of modern slavery taking place in all countries with at least 13 million victims at any time trapped in degrading, dangerous enslavement, is an international industry producing such large profits that it is conservatively the third largest illegal enterprise in the world, beginning to eclipse drug trafficking as a source of income for organized crime; and

Whereas, Human trafficking is destructive to individuals, families, and communities and is fundamentally incompatible with the life given to us by our loving Creator; and

Whereas, Our Eternal Creator weeps for and with those so enslaved and desires for us to act individually and as a church with a worldwide presence through individual and corporate efforts to confront and abolish slavery and end human trafficking; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That members of Community of Christ, in organized groups or as a part of their individual stewardship, investigate what resources exist in their area to help them fight slavery and assist victims, and participate in those activities as appropriate given local considerations. Such activities might include participation in

- Rescue and Restore Coalitions (in the United States);
- groups such as Fight the Traffik, Polaris Project, Not for Sale, and the International Organization for Migration;
- gathering supplies for basic needs like food preparation, toiletries, and basic housekeeping to offer to freed victims through rescue groups;
- sponsoring community training on victim recognition;
- organizing and hosting movies, book clubs, or journal reading to sensitize and educate church members and community members; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Human Rights Team identify and recommend resources to assist local congregations and mission centers to advocate for victims, assist with efforts to rescue and restore victims, and prosecute traffickers, and to participate in other appropriate ways to dismantle and abolish this modern day slavery.

## **G-11 Abolition of Nuclear Weapons**

*From the Central USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, The World Conference of Community of Christ has not passed legislation concerning nuclear weapons since 1982, at that time a) urging members and administrative representatives to “inform

the appropriate governmental officials of the need for responsible reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear armaments,” b) encouraging members to “set aside one day per month to pray and fast for peace and disarmament,” c) urging “the conversion of resources of war to productive forms of human development,” and d) urging the church to “join with other organizations that are constructively promoting a reduction of instruments of mass destruction” (World Conference resolution 1178); and

Whereas, The threat of nuclear weapons in the nearly three decades since has grown significantly, as measured by the “Doomsday Clock” of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, which in 1980 was set at seven minutes to midnight to symbolically represent the imminent threat of catastrophic nuclear destruction, and has since advanced to five minutes to midnight when last adjusted in 2007 ([www.thebulletin.org](http://www.thebulletin.org)); and

Whereas, There are an estimated 20,000 nuclear weapons or more in the world’s arsenals today, most with destructive capacities far greater than the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan—even a thousand of which could arguably result in global nuclear winter and the omnicide of planet earth (*The New Nuclear Danger*, Dr. Helen Caldicott, p. 11); and

Whereas, The number of nations that have nuclear weapons has grown from six in 1982 to eight or more today, with numerous other nations and groups actively seeking to join them (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, [www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)); and

Whereas, The possession of nuclear arms provokes proliferation, which in turn heightens the possibility of their acquisition and use by terrorist groups, leading many observers like Jonathan Schell to conclude that “with each year that passes, nuclear weapons provide their possessors with less safety while provoking more danger” (*The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger*, Jonathan Schell, p. 204); and

Whereas, Numerous informed policymakers from nuclear-weapons nations like the United States of America—such as former Secretary of Defense William Perry; former Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Sam Nunn; and former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger—have in recent years declared in favor of “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” saying, “Reliance on nuclear weapons for [deterrence] is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective” (*The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2007); and

Whereas, The World Council of Churches, a global fellowship of some 340 denominations collectively representing about 550 million Christians, has declared: “We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds. Furthermore, we appeal for the institution of a universal covenant to this effect so that nuclear weapons and warfare are delegitimized and condemned as violations of international law” ([www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)); and

Whereas, Numerous mainline Christian denominations have condemned the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons, such as the United Methodist Church, declaring: “We reaffirm the finding that nuclear weapons, whether used or threatened, are grossly evil and morally wrong. As an instrument of mass destruction, nuclear weapons slaughter the innocent and ravage the environment. When used as instruments of deterrence, nuclear weapons hold innocent people hostage for political and military purposes. Therefore, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is morally corrupt and spiritually bankrupt. Therefore, we reaffirm the goal of total abolition of all nuclear weapons throughout Earth and space” (*The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church*, p. 503); and

Whereas, Community of Christ has been specifically commissioned to “lift up an ensign of peace, and make a proclamation for peace unto the ends of the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 102:11) and instructed to “be in the forefront of those who would mediate this needless destruction while there is yet day” (Doctrine and Covenants 150:7); therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That Community of Christ calls for abolition of all nuclear weapons throughout Earth and space, and joins other faith communities in declaring, on ethical and theological grounds, that the production, deployment, use, or threatened use of nuclear weapons are crimes against humanity; and be it further

*Resolved*, That, wherever possible, Community of Christ administrators, members, and friends contact appropriate government officials in those nations where the church has a presence—particularly the nuclear-weapons nations—to convey the church’s support for abolition of all nuclear weapons, urging them to pass legislation and to adjust national policies toward that end; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Community of Christ administrators, members, and friends be urged to envision and support interim steps toward the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, such as (but not limited to) reduction of nuclear weapons stockpiles, no-first-strike pledges by nuclear-weapons states, election of world leaders who envision a world without nuclear weapons, no expanded use of nuclear weapons, signing of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, additional nuclear-weapons-free zones like enacted in most of the southern hemisphere, and support for a mutual and verifiable freeze on the development, testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and delivery systems; and be it further

*Resolved*, That resources be developed and made available for distribution by 2011 to church administrators, members, and friends to foster consciousness-raising and responses of conscience to the growing threat of nuclear weapons and the imperative of their abolition; and be it further

*Resolved*, That a copy of this legislation, approved by delegates of the 2010 World Conference and representing 240,000 members of the international church in more than 50 nations, be delivered as a witness of Community of Christ to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Conference to be held in New York City in May 2010 and other such events in ensuing years, as deemed appropriate by the First Presidency; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this resolution become a part of the World Church Peace and Justice Team agenda.

## **G-12 Full Inclusion**

*From the Headwaters USA/Canada Mission Center:*

Whereas, Christianity’s traditionally hostile view towards homosexuals and homosexual behavior has been a source of inhospitality, causing our homosexual brothers and sisters not only to feel unwelcome, but also devalued, invisible, and shamed; and many have left our fellowship; and the loss of these individuals deprives us of their unique witness, ministry, and gifts, making our community poorer by their absence; and

Whereas, We find that the few passages of scripture that suggest homosexuality is incompatible with Christian life reflect a cultural setting that did not understand homosexuality rather than speaking the truth of the gospel; and the overwhelming witness of scripture is that God’s love is universal and is showered on each person without regard to sexual orientation; and

Whereas, Community of Christ has never taught that the scriptures are inerrant nor that they should be interpreted literally; and

Whereas, The church has been instructed (Doctrine and Covenants 163:3b) to “Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purpose of God;” and

Whereas, we recognize the need in the lives of many homosexuals for the ministry of the gospel, as well as the need of the church for the ministry of homosexuals; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the church affirms that homosexual, bisexual, and transgendered persons are fully welcome in our fellowship; and be it further

*Resolved*, That, where culturally acceptable, jurisdictions of the church are encouraged to publish the following or similar statement in appropriate media such as weekly bulletin, on posters, etc.:

“The community of Christ values diversity and celebrates differences as part of God’s Creation. We welcome and include persons from a variety of family structures, without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity;” and be it further

*Resolved*, That, where culturally acceptable, leaders are encouraged to contact homosexual, bisexual, and transgendered church members who have been inactive and invite them to return.

### **G-13            Policy on Priesthood**

*From the Headwaters USA/Canada Mission Center:*

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

Whereas, The scriptural standard for calls to the priesthood is to be called of God and accepted 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 the 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 restrict the ordination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members should be rescinded by those bodies responsible to do so; and be it further

*Resolved*, That calls for priesthood for LGBT members should be processed through the normal procedures, and be it further

*Resolved*, that when appropriate calls to LGBT persons are approved through normal administrative and legislative channels, jurisdictions are encouraged to welcome those called as priesthood members, but in no way does this mandate priesthood calls for LGBT members in those jurisdictions where culture and understanding inhibit, or the law prohibits homosexuals from full participation.

#### **G-14            Legal Marriage and the Sacrament of Marriage**

*From the Southern California USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, 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 other 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 a couple and God in which the church participates with sanction, blessing, support, and guidance; and

Whereas, In some locations the minister acts as both an agent of the government as well as a representative of the church, while in other locations a separate civil government agent must also be involved; and

Whereas, The sacrament of marriage institutes a sacred covenant between two persons seeking to make a lifelong committed relationship; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, In jurisdictions where such is permissible by local law, that appropriate Community of Christ priesthood be authorized to perform the sacrament of marriage for two consenting individuals seeking to enter into a sacred covenant before God in a long-term monogamous committed relationship.

#### **G-15            World Trade Day**

*From the Michigan Blue Water USA Mission Center:*

Whereas, Community of Christ is a worldwide church dedicated to the pursuit of peace, reconciliation and healing of the spirit; and

Whereas, according to Jimmy Carter, a former U.S. President, and Jennifer Smith Stepanek, Mattie J.T. Stepanek's mother, the late peace activist and poet Mattie J.T. Stepanek spoke about and pursued peace all the days of his young life through his "Heartsongs" poetry (*Reflections of a Peacemaker*) and as he continues to impact the world through *Just Peace: A Message of Hope* that was published after he died on June 22, 2004; and

Whereas, in response to the World Trade Center tragedy he wrote a 9/11 Anniversary composition proposing a true World Trade Day that would annually occur on September 11, hoping that people around the world would find some way to trade something significant with someone else. This act of kindness and sharing could help unite people with each other, and spread the message of hope and peace around the planet. This new World Trade Day could foster relations between and among people of all ages and nationalities and beliefs. In commemorating this tragic event in a way that promotes positive growth, we can move beyond our anger and fears without forgetting the truth of the past. By celebrating World Trade Day with a respectful and future-oriented attitude, we are paying the highest honor to those who suffered on September 11, 2001, and we are planting seeds of peace for all those who will live through the future of September 11 each year; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that Community of Christ designate September 11 as World Trade Day throughout the church in honor of Mattie J.T. Stepanek and the victims of the 9/11 tragedy and seek to implement his proposal throughout the world as we continue in our pursuit of peace.

#### **G-16 Request to Authorize Ordinations**

*From the Australia Mission Centre:*

Whereas, Community of Christ has affirmed repeatedly that individuals are called by God according to their giftedness (Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b; 156:9b-c and WCR 1226 Affirmation of Human Diversity), and

Whereas, Some members of the church are being denied opportunity to serve in priesthood specifically because of their sexual orientation even when a call has been discerned by the appropriate leaders; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That this World Conference ask the First Presidency to consider allowing for the ordination of individuals regardless of their sexual orientation in those jurisdictions of the church where such priesthood calls are received, or have been received and duly processed and approved by the appropriate leaders, and where such ordinations are accepted by the will of the congregation and/ or mission center or World Conference.

#### **G-17 Abundance**

*From the Pacific Islands Mission Centre:*

Whereas, God's generous gifts to humankind include spiritual, mental, emotional, and material aspects, and as disciples of Christ we are called to magnify and develop all such good gifts; and

Whereas, The current stewardship program of the church, "A Disciple's Generous Response," provides good guidance for using God's generous gifts wisely, but lacks guidance on how to create, magnify, and accumulate material abundance; and

Whereas, The mission and ministry of the church depend on the creation, collection, and effective deployment of such material abundance for the sake of others; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That an appropriate resource development team be identified to explore the feasibility of developing culturally sensitive and language specific teaching materials and practical guidelines to encourage and enable members to develop healthy and righteous attitudes and practices toward creating, magnifying, and accumulating material abundance; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Conference requests the Presiding Bishopric to explore sources of funding both inside and outside the budget to fund such a project; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the resource team and the Presiding Bishopric report their findings at the next World Conference.

## **G-18            Blessing of Committed Relationships**

*From the Pacific Islands Mission Centre:*

Whereas, The mission of Community of Christ is to proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace; and

Whereas, The ministry of Jesus Christ is promised to all persons and each person is recognized as a child of God; and

Whereas, “Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a); and

Whereas, There are committed relationships throughout the world through civil or common law unions due to local law, convenience, and economic reasons; and

Whereas, The church can honor these committed relationships by allowing them to be blessed by the church; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That we recommend that the First Presidency authorize any priesthood member to perform culturally appropriate blessings in which any two adults may promise their exclusive commitment to each other before God and their community and receive the blessing of God through the church.

## **G-19            Referring Matters of Ordination**

*From the Kenya Mission Centre:*

Whereas, Community of Christ has been counseled in Doctrine and Covenants 162:5c to “Listen together to one another, without judgment or predisposition” and to not assume that the answers to matters of conflict have yet been perceived as there is much labor to be done with a need to reason together in love and that the Spirit of truth will prevail; and

Whereas, Further counsel has been given in Doctrine and Covenants 163: 11b that “There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church. However, the challenge before a prophetic people is to discern and pursue what matters most for the journey ahead;” and

Whereas, An important part of being Community of Christ, a true worldwide community, is learning to talk about divisive issues without division through a process that incorporates healthy decision making and common consent that is seen, regardless of the outcome, as fair by those who have different views; and

Whereas, As a worldwide community we are always confronted with challenges such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, orphans and vulnerable children, social injustice, and issues related to human sexuality, etc.; and, on such important matters, a spirit of trust should prevail in order to avoid situations where one side is closed to the other’s situation or point of view, making it difficult, if not impossible, to hold meaningful discussion; and

Whereas, In some states and nations the law of the land needs to be considered in these discussions so that inappropriate decisions do not adversely impact the mission of the church and put at risk the well-being of the church’s ministers in those areas; and

Whereas, As an Enduring Principle, Community of Christ affirms the worth of all persons, understanding that God views all people as having inestimable and equal worth wanting them to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships; challenging unjust systems that diminish human worth; and joining with Jesus Christ in bringing good news to the poor, sick, captive, and oppressed; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That Community of Christ members and ministers work with communities to affirm homosexual persons as no less than heterosexual persons as individuals of sacred worth and continue their support for the rights and liberties of homosexual persons as an issue of justice; and be it further

*Resolved*, That all the legislation to the 2010 World Conference pertaining to matters of ordination of homosexual persons be referred to the First Presidency for consideration, looking for the means by which these matters could be considered more fully in a culturally contextual manner by the mission centers of the church rather than the World Conference determining a universal stance for the entire church.

## **G-20            Referring Matters of Marriage**

*From the South Central Africa Mission Centre:*

Whereas, Community of Christ has been counseled in Doctrine and Covenants 162:5c to “Listen together to one another without judgment or predisposition” and to not assume that the answers to matters of conflict have yet been perceived as there is much labor to be done with a need to reason together in love and that the Spirit of truth will prevail; and

Whereas, Further counsel has been given in Doctrine and Covenants 163: 11b that “There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church. However, the challenge before a prophetic people is to discern and pursue what matters most for the journey ahead;” and

Whereas, An important part of being Community of Christ, a true worldwide community, is learning to talk about divisive issues without division through a process that incorporates healthy decision

making and common consent that is seen, regardless of the outcome, as fair by those who have different views; and

Whereas, As a worldwide community we are always confronted with challenges such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, homelessness, orphans and vulnerable children, social injustice, and issues related to human sexuality, etc.; and, on such important matters, a spirit of trust should prevail in order to avoid situations where one side is closed to the other's situation or point of view making it difficult, if not impossible, to hold meaningful discussion; and

Whereas, In some states and nations the law of the land needs to be considered in these discussions so that inappropriate decisions do not adversely impact the mission of the church and put at risk the well-being of the church's ministers in those areas; and

Whereas, As an Enduring Principle, Community of Christ affirms the worth of all persons, understanding that God views all people as having inestimable and equal worth, wanting them to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships; challenging unjust systems that diminish human worth; and joining with Jesus Christ in bringing good news to the poor, sick, captive, and oppressed; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That Community of Christ members and ministers work with communities to affirm homosexual persons as no less than heterosexual persons as individuals of sacred worth and continue their support for the rights and liberties of homosexual persons as an issue of justice; and be it further

*Resolved*, That all the legislation to the 2010 World Conference pertaining to matters of same-sex marriage be referred to the First Presidency for consideration, looking for the means by which these matters could be considered more fully in a culturally contextual manner by the mission centers of the church rather than the World Conference determining a universal stance for the entire church.

## **G-21 Common Consent on Definition of Marriage**

*From the Central America Mission Center:*

Whereas, Concepts expressed in Section 111 of the Doctrine and Covenants have guided Community of Christ on matters of marriage since at least 1835; and

Whereas, Section 111: 2a–c of the Doctrine and Covenants refers to marriage as being between a man and a woman (husband and wife); and

Whereas, World Conference Resolution 1182 repeatedly uses language referring to marriage as being between a husband and wife; and

Whereas, The Bible provides no other model for marriage than that of between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:7, Ephesians 5:31); therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That WCR 1182 be amended so that in the first sentence in the fourth point the word “heterosexual” be inserted so it reads, “The church upholds the validity of a heterosexual legal marriage...;” and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 2010 World Conference indicate through common consent their understanding that marriage be defined as between one man and one woman (husband and wife).

**G-22 Common Consent on Officiating Same-sex Marriages**

*From the Central America Mission Center:*

Whereas, a growing number of nations, states, and provinces have begun to allow same-sex marriage; and

Whereas, The preface to Section 111 of the Doctrine and Covenants states that “the church knows no other law of marriage than that which is set forth here;” and

Whereas, Section 111: 2a–c of the Doctrine and Covenants refers to marriage as being between a man and a woman (husband and wife); and

Whereas, World Conference Resolution 1182 repeatedly uses language referring to marriage as being between a husband and wife; and

Whereas, The Bible provides no other model for marriage than that of a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:7, Ephesians 5:31); and

Whereas, No language in the basic guiding documents used by the church provides for same-sex marriage; therefore, be it

*Resolved,* That the 2010 World Conference indicates through common consent the understanding that Community of Christ priesthood members should not be authorized by the church to officiate in same-sex marriages, even where it is legal to do so.

**G-23 Common Consent for Not Ordaining Homosexuals**

*From the Central America Mission Center:*

Whereas, The church is to be faithful to the demands of the gospel, going beyond the boundaries of certainty to explore its implications in a complex world; and

Whereas, God’s people are called to live together in love and to embrace the rich diversity of our global family; and

Whereas, The body of Christ will always be challenged to seek unity within the body and to increase in understanding; and

Whereas; since its beginning, the church has never permitted the calling and ordination of persons involved in sexual relationships with persons of the same sex; and

Whereas, The World Church Leadership Council declared in 2002 that the church would not make exceptions to the 1982 guidelines on calling and ordination unless those guidelines be first adjusted through the common consent of the people; therefore, be it

*Resolved,* That this 2010 World Conference indicates through common consent support for continuing the policy of not permitting the ordination of homosexuals involved in a sexual relationship with another person of the same sex.