



## World Conference Legislation

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### 2016 World Conference Common Consent Proposal

The First Presidency plans to use a multistep common consent process at the 2016 World Conference. The church will gain experience with a decision-making approach that allows ample time for expressing varied perspectives, asking more questions, exploring additional options, and achieving broader consent. This common consent process will consider the following proposal from the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric over portions of four days at World Conference.

#### **I-1 Mission, Tithing, and Priesthood Response**

*Submitted by the First Presidency and the Presiding Bishopric*

Whereas, It is imperative the mission of the church be funded more fully throughout the world to fulfill our calling; and

Whereas, Achieving common consent of the people about the definition of tithing is vital so: "people may come to provide more fully and joyfully for the great work to which all are called" (Doctrine and Covenants 154:5b); and

Whereas, Priesthood members should teach and demonstrate the principles of A Disciple's Generous Response;

*Therefore, it is proposed,* This definition of tithing be endorsed by the World Conference:

#### **Definition of Tithing to Support Mission**

Tithing is offerings to support local, mission center, and worldwide church ministries. Tithing is a disciple's generous response to God's grace and generosity revealed in Jesus Christ. A disciple's calling is to give according to true capacity as a witness of God's generosity and as a spiritual practice that helps disciples grow in relationship to God.

Disciples strive first to share 10 percent or more of their annual income as tithing before saving and spending. We recognize that for some people, there is not enough annual income to meet basic living expenses. Then tithing is an

offering of any amount or item desired, including offering one's life in service to Christ and the church.

Tithing is given to local and worldwide church ministries in equal amounts. The concept of "community tithe" no longer is included in the church's definition of tithing. Giving to church affiliates is a priority after tithing, not a substitute for tithing. Contributing to other charitable organizations that recognize the worth of people and are committed to bringing Christ's ministry to them is highly encouraged as an expression of community-minded discipleship.

As understanding of God's grace grows with true capacity to give through wise savings, responsible spending, and debt reduction, disciples make additional tithing contributions. This often includes contributions and estate gifts to church endowments that ensure one's legacy as an ongoing generous contributor to Christ's mission.

*Furthermore, it is proposed* That this definition of tithing be taught throughout the church and that emphasis be placed on the importance of all priesthood members demonstrating generosity as regular contributors to mission tithes (local, mission center, and world ministries) according to their true capacity.

## **Background**

At the 2002 World Conference the Presiding Bishopric introduced the six principles of A Disciple's Generous Response. An expanded definition of tithing was presented that included mission tithes and community tithes. Feedback from the World Conference was received.

Over the following years as the church journeyed with the six principles of A Disciple's Generous Response, the Presiding Bishopric and First Presidency received additional feedback about confusion created by the tithing definition. As the Presiding Bishopric reflected on the feedback and prayerfully considered the words of counsel given at the 2013 World Conference, it was determined that additional clarification was needed.

In October 2014 a clarified definition of tithing was presented that included mission tithes and removed the concept of community tithes. This clarified definition of tithing now will be considered through "due deliberation" with the goal of "full consent of the body" as called for in Doctrine and Covenants 154:5a:

The Presiding Bishop and his counselors are encouraged to continue to seek ways of effecting a greater understanding of the meaning of the stewardship of temporalities as a response to my grace and love so that the understanding of the principle may stir the hearts of the people as never before.

Redefinition of terms within the basic law of temporalities, for clarification and to meet the needs of a growing church, is in harmony with my will. However, let this be done with due deliberation and with full consent of the body after sufficient study and discussion, all to the end that the people may come to provide more fully and joyfully for the great work to which all are called.

Also at the 2013 World Conference the First Presidency introduced Covenant Principles of Faithful Priesthood. One principle emphasizes the importance of priesthood members modeling generosity as regular contributors to mission tithes (local, mission center, and world ministries) according to true capacity. Some have questioned this principle. So, review and World Conference action would clarify priesthood member expectations regarding mission support and tithing.

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## 2016 World Conference Resolutions

The following resolutions have been submitted to the World Conference after approval by mission center conferences, World Church quorums, or World Church teams that support the World Conference. These resolutions will be considered according to parliamentary procedures as defined in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 11th Edition and the standing rules of the 2016 World Conference.

### A-4 Community of Christ Bylaw Revisions

*From the First Presidency*

**Summary:** This resolution would allow field jurisdictions to experiment with innovative field organization structures and leadership models from 2016 to 2019 in response to changing circumstances. Field organization experiments would require approval by the First Presidency in consultation with the World Church Leadership Council. Field organization experiments would be evaluated with a report to the next World Conference.

Whereas, The need for experimentation with field organization exists from time to time due to unusual missional opportunities or administrative and financial necessities; and

Whereas, The World Church has faced the need to reduce budget and therefore field staff, and

Whereas, Some provisions of the Bylaws of Community of Christ do not provide sufficient flexibility to allow experimentation with the new field ministry and administrative models; now, therefore, be it:

*Resolved,* That the World Conference approve the following proviso to be added to the Bylaws of Community of Christ from 2016 to 2019; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the adoption of this proviso shall require the same 60-day notice in the Herald and a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the World Conference as if it were an amendment to these bylaws.

#### **Proviso**

During the next inter-Conference period, field organization, including the use of various leadership models, may be adjusted to provide the flexibility to accommodate changing missional opportunities, administrative and financial necessities, or other

unique situations throughout the church. The First Presidency, in consultation with the World Church Leadership Council, has the authority to temporarily adjust field organization, including various leadership models to allow the trial of new methods of ministerial support and missional outreach. When adjustments are authorized, those parts of the Bylaws of Community of Christ that restrict these temporary adjustments shall be considered suspended.

## **C-4 Time for Introduction of New Business**

*Submitted by the World Conference Organization and Procedures Team*

**Summary:** This resolution would change the deadline for submitting resolutions for regular World Conferences to one year before the next Conference. This change would allow more time for translations and discussions throughout the international church that are essential for preparation and common consent. This change will not affect the clause in WCR 1290 that provides that “with the approval of the First Presidency legislation from councils, quorums, the Presiding Bishopric, and orders of the World Church and of authorized caucuses may be submitted during the World Conference if such legislation is of an urgent nature or is required because of actions taken during the current World Conference.”

### **Resolution**

Whereas, Ample time for study, discussion, and prayerful consideration of World Conference business is essential to being a prophetic people and making well-informed decisions by the body; and

Whereas, The current deadline to introduce business for World Conference (120 days before Conference) is still too short to provide adequate time for translations, discussion, and prayerful consideration by delegates; therefore be it

*Resolved,* That WCR 1290 be amended in the second resolved paragraph by substituting the words “one hundred and twenty (120) days” with “one year” so that it reads “*Resolved,* That for legislation to come before World Conference, such legislation must be submitted to the First Presidency no later than one year before the opening of each World Conference.”

## **C-6 World Conference Resolution Publication**

*Submitted by the World Conference Organization and Procedures Team*

**Summary:** This resolution would allow the First Presidency to update World Conference resolutions still in “force and effect” for posting on the World Church website while keeping a collection of all General and World Conference resolutions in the World Church Archives for historical and research purposes. This updating process has occurred several times in the past.

### **Resolution**

Whereas, Due to financial constraints, the book of *Rules and Resolutions* has not been republished since 2000, and *World Conference Resolutions* was not published after the World Conferences of 2004, 2005, 2007, 2010, and 2013; and

Whereas, Several hundred World Conference resolutions are obsolete or have been rescinded or superseded by later Conference actions; and

Whereas, The World Conferences of 1934, 1936, 1952, and 1970 authorized major adjustments to *World Conference Resolutions* by removing resolutions that no longer had current force and effect; and

Whereas, It is expensive to reproduce *World Conference Resolutions* in a printed form every 10 years and to produce supplements to it after every World Conference; and

Whereas, Many existing resolutions in *World Conference Resolutions* contain language that is obsolete (i.e., references to former field organization models, use of the church's other legal name—RLDS—and related terms, as well as descriptions of processes and procedures no longer in use in the church); and

Whereas, Continuing the printing of *World Conference Resolutions* in its current form is not helpful because often individuals reading this books find WCRs that are no longer of current force and effect, which gives a false impression of current World Church policy and procedure: now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the First Presidency be requested to maintain a log of all World Conference enactments with copies maintained in the church's archives for the use of historians and researchers; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the World Conference request the First Presidency to make a selection of the WCRs that have current force and effect for church governance and policy making and that this selection be kept up to date following each World Conference; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the First Presidency be authorized to update the language usage in the resolutions that have current force and effect to reflect current usage in the church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the World Conference request the First Presidency to place those WCRs with current force and effect in English on the church's website and in French and Spanish as these become available.

## **C-7 and C-7a Dates for the 2019 World Conference**

*Submitted by the First Presidency*

**Summary:** This resolution would set the dates for the next World Conference. The First Presidency would facilitate a discussion of the alternatives and survey World Conference delegates to determine which resolution has the highest level of probable support. That resolution then would be introduced for formal consideration and action.

### **Resolution C-7**

Whereas, The Bylaws of Community of Christ specify that Conferences meet "as agreed upon by those who constitute their membership" (Article IV, Section 1); therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the dates for the next World Conference be April 6–13, 2019

**Or**

### **Resolution C-7a**

Whereas, The Bylaws of Community of Christ specify that Conferences meet “as agreed upon by those who constitute their membership” (Article IV, Section 1); therefore, be it

*Resolved,* That the dates for the next World Conference be June 8–15, 2019.

## **D-4 World Church Budgeting and Audit Process**

*From the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric:*

**Summary:** World Conference Resolution 1289 would be rescinded and replaced entirely by this resolution. The World Church Finance Board would have authority to approve annual World Church audits. Also, the procedure for nominating and voting for members of the World Church Finance Board would change so the electronic response system could expedite voting.

### **Resolution**

Whereas, WCR 1289 authorized the World Church Finance Board to approve the annual World Church budget; and

Whereas, An essential part of a responsible budget-approval process is for the body approving the budget also to have the authority to review and approve the report of the auditors for the account period immediately prior to the budget being considered; and

Whereas, The practice of the church since 1918 has been for the First Presidency to appoint an “auditor or auditors” (WCR 787) and for this audit to be presented to and approved by the World Conference; and

Whereas, The World Conference meets only once every three years, which means the annual report of the auditors cannot be approved in a timely manner to help in budget development and approval; and

Whereas, The World Conference of 1994 authorized the Presiding Bishopric to consolidate church funds in support of mission through creation of a Stewardship Foundation; and

Whereas, The Presiding Bishopric determined that income to the World Church budget generated by the Stewardship Foundation funds should be made available to the budget as an annual allocation without the necessity of the Stewardship Foundation, oversight committees (Executive Committee and Mission Support Fund Committee), and related administrative processes; and

Whereas, In 2010, The Corporate Body of the Presidency, Presiding Bishopric, and president of the Council of Twelve Apostles in consultation with the World Church Finance Board dissolved the Stewardship Foundation in accordance with the Operating Guidelines of the Stewardship Foundation; and

Whereas, The electronic response system makes it difficult to elect persons to the World Church Finance Board in groups of 15; now, therefore, be it  
*Resolved*, That WCR 1289 be rescinded in its entirety and replaced by the following:

### **World Church Audit and Budget Development Policy**

1. The World Conference shall establish a World Church Finance Board, which shall have responsibility for annually reviewing and approving the World Church audit, approving the annual World Church budgets, and making recommendations to the World Conference concerning special appropriations. The board shall present projections to each World Conference for annual budgets for the next inter-Conference period. These projections shall be based on the best estimates of potential church income and expenses, but they shall not bind the World Church Finance Board in developing and approving annual World Church budgets should circumstances change and income levels vary. The World Conference shall discuss these projections, and the input gained shall be considered by the World Church Finance Board in the formulation and final approval of these annual budgets.
2. The World Conference may establish parameters to be followed by the World Church Finance Board in developing and approving the annual World Church budgets.
3. The World Church Finance Board shall be presided over by the First Presidency and shall be composed of up to sixty (60) persons as follows:
  - First Presidency (3)
  - Council of Twelve (12)
  - Presiding Bishopric (3)
  - Bishops elected by the Order of Bishops (9)
  - President, High Priest Quorum (1)
  - Senior president of seventy (1)
  - Presiding evangelist (1)
  - Thirty (30) members elected by the World Conference to represent the church at-large, with each being elected for a six-year term with terms staggered so fifteen (15) are elected at each World Conference.
4. The First Presidency is authorized to appoint board members when vacancies occur between World Conferences.
5. Elected members of the World Church Finance Board shall be church members in good standing and may not serve more than twelve (12) years on the board.
6. Funds to cover the travel expenses of members of the World Church Finance Board shall be provided from the World Church budget.
7. Nominations for the members of the World Church Finance Board to be elected by the World Conference shall be made by the First Presidency in consultation with the Presiding Bishopric. These candidates shall be nominated in three groups of five positions. In addition to these nominees, each World Conference shall provide for other nominations to be made from the floor sufficiently in advance of the election to allow biographical sketches of the nominees made available to the World Conference prior to the election. Delegates offering a

nomination from the floor shall indicate the group for which the candidate is being nominated. If more than 15 nominees are received from the floor the First Presidency is authorized to adjust this process to accommodate the nominations while still allowing the electronic response system to be used for the election process. In the nomination process, attention shall be given to balanced representation, including such factors as vocation, geographic residence, age, gender, church leadership experience, and church jurisdiction. The five nominees receiving the most votes in each of the three groups shall be declared elected.

8. A team will be appointed by the First Presidency and shall provide the necessary preliminary preparation of the budget. This committee will be composed of World Church personnel responsible for church programming, finance, and field ministries.
9. The annual audit and budget shall be made available on the church website. An annual report on the audit and budget shall be published in the *Herald*, and a summary report shall be made to each World Conference.

## **G-1 Issues of (Priesthood) Morality**

*Submitted by the Canada East Mission Centre*

**Summary:** This resolution would recommend the First Presidency consider revising World Church policy by allowing questions about the appropriateness of applying administrative sanctions to priesthood members involved in alleged immoral behavior to be resolved on an individual basis by local church officers in consultation with mission center or World Church representatives. It recommends the “values” expressed in Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a–b be considered when making such decisions.

### **Resolution**

*Resolved,* This World Church Conference recommends to the First Presidency that they consider changes to policy regarding administrative action toward priesthood members, keeping the following in mind:

When questions arise involving morality (personal behaviors, interpersonal relationships, or corporate practices), they be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In cases where no harm is known and the values expressed in Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a–b are revered in word and in action, local church officers, in consultation with the appropriate mission or World Church representatives, be given the ability to determine in each case what administrative action or actions will uphold the worth and giftedness of all people and protect the most vulnerable. The First Presidency will review administrative handbooks and policies, providing revisions and clarifications of past and present statements to uphold this “values based” administrative model.

## **G-2 Closed Captioning**

*Submitted by the South Central States Mission Center*

**Summary:** This resolution would request the First Presidency to explore ways and means to provide closed and open captioning in English, French, and Spanish for all World Church videos and to implement the intent of this resolution as soon as possible. It would recommend that skilled volunteers be used for making this ministry available.

### **Resolution**

Whereas, There are members, friends, and seekers of Community of Christ who are deaf or have difficulty hearing; and whose capacity of receiving and sharing ministry, as well as their sense of being a member of this community, is diminished by the lack of captioning of video resources.

Whereas, There are many products and services available to allow quick and accurate captioning; some are inexpensive and easy to use by those with limited technical skills. Therefore, in the spirit of our Enduring Principles of Worth of All Persons and Unity in Diversity, be it

*Resolved,* That the First Presidency investigate the use of closed or open captioning on all church-produced videos in English, French, and Spanish with the goal of all official church videos to be captioned and request the First Presidency to investigate the cost and implement as soon as deemed feasible; and be it further

*Resolved,* That a call be made for volunteers with the talent, skills, and experience to help in the ministerial process of transcribing and captioning church videos.

## **G-3 Review of Policy Concerning Priesthood Members Living with Partners prior to Marriage**

*Submitted by the Canada West Mission Centre*

**Summary:** This resolution would request the First Presidency review all pertinent statements, policies, and scriptures pertaining to priesthood member cohabitation. (Cohabitation refers to living in a marriage-like relationship and the same household without being married.) After the review, clarifications or policy revision recommendations would be brought to the next World Conference.

### **Resolution**

Whereas, Significant concern has been expressed in various areas about sanctioning priesthood members who have chosen to live with their partners before marriage; and

Whereas, Much of that concern results from a lack of understanding of the church's position on such a lifestyle when it generally is accepted in Western society at-large today; and

Whereas, There is a long history in Community of Christ specifically and in Christendom generally of considering premarital cohabitation to be "living in sin;" therefore, be it

*Resolved,* That the First Presidency be asked to review the current statements, resolutions, policies, and scriptural bases of Community of Christ toward cohabitation by priesthood members; and be it further

*Resolved,* That recommendations for revisions or clarifications of the church's positions be brought to the next World Conference for consideration.

## **G-4 Cultural Considerations and Issues of Priesthood Morality**

*Submitted by Canada West Mission Centre*

**Summary:** This resolution would state that applying administrative sanctions specified in World Church policies in matters of priesthood morality would be determined on an individual basis. Such determination would be made by local church officers in consultation with the First Presidency. If "no harm is known" by local church officers, priesthood members might continue to serve in priesthood ministry.

### **Resolution**

*Resolved,* That when questions arise involving priesthood morality they be evaluated on a case-by-case basis; and, be it further

*Resolved,* That in cases where no harm is known, local church officers, in consultation with the First Presidency, be permitted to allow ministers to continue in priesthood service.

## **G-5 Opposition to Predatory Loan Practices**

*Submitted by the Central Mission Center*

**Summary:** This resolution would state that payday and title-loan practices create a predatory financial threat to those most vulnerable to them. We are called to protect those who are most vulnerable. Understanding the threat is the key to involving the church in organized efforts for reform. It is also the key to finding alternative resources to address the needs of those who use these loans.

### **Resolution**

Whereas, The Hebrew Bible in several instances speaks to the immorality of high usury, e.g., Nehemiah shouts out, "Let us stop this taking of interest" (Nehemiah 5:10 NRSV); and

Whereas, Genesis 7:23 (IV) says, "And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them"; and

Whereas, Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a says, "God the Eternal Creator weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God's will..."; and

Whereas, Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a says, "...God the Creator of all, ultimately is concerned about behaviors and relationships that uphold the worth and giftedness of all people and that protect the most vulnerable"; and

Whereas, Around the world various predatory loan practices flourish; and

Whereas, Each year predatory loans catch countless people in a "debt trap" by making short-term, high-interest loans at triple-digit interest rates, driving households into sustained poverty; therefore be it

*Resolved,* That Community of Christ condemns predatory lending practices as immoral and sees them as a threat for luring vulnerable individuals and families into a debt trap that often pulls them into poverty; and be it further

*Resolved,* That Community of Christ partner with other faith groups and community organizations to advocate for reform of short-term, high-interest loans (such as payday and title loans) at national and sub-national levels around the world; and be it further

*Resolved,* That Community of Christ work with other faith groups, non-profit organizations, and financial institutions to create new options for individuals and families to get affordable, small loans for justifiable emergency expenses and to develop training for these individuals to help them effectively manage their financial affairs; and be it further

*Resolved,* That members and friends of Community of Christ be encouraged to use their time, talents, and treasures to develop and support resources for small loans with affordable interest rates and terms and to recognize this as work that pursues the mission of Jesus Christ; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the First Presidency be requested to collect success stories from the worldwide church to be reported periodically in the *Herald* and other church media to create moral economy models for others to follow and to help members and friends recognize the blessings of ministry to those who are most vulnerable financially; and be it further

*Resolved,* That Community of Christ's leadership be requested to look for ways to assimilate these success stories into a model that can be replicated by congregations and communities throughout the world as appropriate.

## **G-6 Palestine and Israel**

*Submitted by the World Church Peace and Justice Team*

**Summary:** This resolution would state Community of Christ's belief in God's love for Muslims and Jews. It would denounce all Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. It would instruct the church to join with other religious and secular peace movements to call for peace in Israel and Palestine with the following conditions: the right of Israel to exist within secure borders; the end of Israeli occupation and settlements in the West Bank; and the recognition of the State of Palestine.

### **Resolution**

*Resolved,* That Community of Christ specifically declares its belief in the love of God for Muslims and Jews, and we denounce all Islamophobia and anti-Semitism; and be it further

*Resolved,* That Community of Christ join with other Christian, Jewish, Muslim, ecumenical, and secular peace movements in the call for peace in Israel and Palestine. We, with other Christians, call for the right of the State of Israel to exist in secure borders; for the cessation of Israeli military occupation and illegal settlements in the West Bank; and for the recognition of the State of Palestine (in accordance with

1947 UN General Assembly Resolution 181/II, 1967 UN Security Council Resolution 242, and 1988 UN General Assembly Resolution 43/177).

## G-7 Supporting Indigenous Peoples

*Submitted by the Human Rights Team*

**Summary:** This resolution would request the First Presidency to issue a statement renouncing the “Doctrine of Discovery,” urge governments, where appropriate, to ensure their laws and practices comply with international conventions, and work with ecumenical groups. It also would make the rights of indigenous peoples a priority for the World Church Human Rights Team, consult indigenous groups in advocacy, and seek opportunities for further education.

### Resolution

Whereas, Indigenous peoples are distinct from other sectors of societies and subject to unjust domination; and

Whereas, The indigenous include communities, nations, and peoples who lived on the lands for generations, including before settlers “discovered” and claimed the lands as their own; and

Whereas, Indigenous peoples, as non-dominant sectors of society, resolve to preserve, develop, and transmit their ethnic identity to future generations, assuring their continued existence as peoples in harmony with their cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems; and

Whereas, Community of Christ upholds the Worth of All Persons and affirms indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples and always have been; and

Whereas, Community of Christ also affirms that indigenous peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures and therefore to the common heritage of humankind; and

Whereas, We as a church affirm that doctrines, policies, and practices that promote superiority of individuals or peoples based on national origin or racial, religious, ethnic, or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable, and socially unjust; and

Whereas, laws, policies, and practices sanctioned by what some call the “Doctrine of Discovery” allowed the conquest and domination of original peoples through the use of genocide, taking assets, and other dehumanizing injustices still pervasive today; and

Whereas, our Mission Initiatives, from Luke 4:18–19 NRSV, call the church “to let the oppressed go free”; therefore, be it

*Resolved,* that the 2016 World Conference officially renounce the Doctrine of Discovery and ask the First Presidency to issue a statement to be published in official church publications, including the church website; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the World Conference request the First Presidency, where appropriate, to urge the governments of the world to ensure that their policies, regulations, and laws that affect indigenous peoples comply with international

conventions, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organisation's Convention 169; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the First Presidency include a working group focused on global justice issues for indigenous peoples as a key priority for the World Church Human Rights Team for 2016–2019; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the First Presidency be encouraged to contribute to ecumenical and interfaith advocacy actions in various countries based on principles in this resolution; and be it further

*Resolved,* That actions taken by the First Presidency be done in consultation with representatives of the particular indigenous group(s) being supported by the specific advocacy activity; and be it further

*Resolved,* That members of Community of Christ seek opportunities for further education on the principles of this resolution and engage in local advocacy opportunities with indigenous groups.

Read ["The Christian Doctrine of Discovery"](#) by Dan Whittemore for additional information about this issue.