



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 24, 2013

## Disciples of Christ Vote to Embrace Homosexuality

Another mainstream Christian denomination has caved in to the homosexual agenda. The [Disciples of Christ](#) (DOC) — also known as the “Christian Church” — voted at its recent General Assembly in Orlando, Florida, to affirm openly homosexual individuals as welcome members and leaders in the life of the denomination. In a resolution passed at the DOC’s July 13-17 leadership assembly, gender identity and sexual orientation were equated with race and ethnicity as categories the denomination would now embrace. However, the Rev. Sharon Watkins, the DOC’s president, [emphasized in a letter](#) to members and leaders that individual churches throughout the denomination would not be required to receive homosexuals as members, perform same-sex marriage ceremonies, or allow a homosexual pastor.



The denomination’s controversial resolution called upon “the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to recognize itself as striving to become a people of grace and welcome to all God’s children though differing in race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, physical or mental ability, political stance or theological perspective.” The resolution further called upon members and churches “to affirm the faith, baptism and spiritual gifts of all Christians regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.” The resolution insisted that neither sexual orientation nor gender identity “is grounds for exclusion from fellowship or service within the church, but we celebrate that all are part of God’s good creation.”

The [Christian News Network](#) reported that among the churches and organizations that lobbied for the change were Midway Hills Christian Church in Dallas, Texas; Foothills Christian Church in Wichita, Kansas; Bethany Christian Church in Gastonia, North Carolina; and St. Andrew Christian Church in Berkeley, California. Additionally, a homosexual group within the denomination calling itself the Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples Alliance took an active role in pressuring for the change.

While the resolution represents a major shift in the denomination’s view of who may join in ministry, the Rev. Watkins insisted that individual churches that embrace the biblical mandate against homosexual behavior would not be required at this time to change their views or policies. Watkins assured DOC members that the new policy “is not a statement of ‘unwelcome’ for Disciples who did not support the resolution.” She added that it was also “not a policy change. The congregation where you worship and serve will not be requested to establish (or change) a policy on gay or lesbian persons in the life of the Church. The region where your congregation is affiliated is not required to change its policies on ordination. Your pastor is not required to bless same-gender marriages.”



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Additionally, she claimed, the resolution did not represent “a theological mandate. It does not say that we have the same biblical understanding of sexual orientation or gender identity. Disciples, prayerfully and with biblical study and other research, come to their own understanding on these matters.”

She added, however, that the resolution did carry “symbolic importance in the life of our Church. It reminds us that our baptism into the living Christ continues to be our common ground. It points out that within the broad membership of Disciples, among the many congregations in covenant with each other, there have always been gay and straight, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender persons who participate fully in the life and leadership of the church.” In other words, the resolution served as a declaration that openly homosexual individuals would now be affirmed and sanctioned for full participation in DOC ministry activities.

Mark Tooley of the [Institute on Religion and Democracy](#), which has charted the scriptural compromise of several mainline denominations over the years, said that the DOC’s resolution represents a slide into “sexual liberalism and Gnosticism” for the denomination. “The mainstream of U.S. and global Christianity still holds strongly to traditional Christian teaching upholding the marriage of man and woman as the standard for Christian sexual behavior,” he said, adding that “universal Christianity also rejects the Gnostic idea that ‘gender identity’ is fluid and self-determined. By embracing sexual liberalism and Gnosticism, the Disciples have further sidelined their church. Exalting Western notions of radically individual moral autonomy above shared understandings of the faith alienates many of the denomination’s own members.”

Tooley noted that the DOC, which has lost nearly a million and a half members from its high of two million in the 1960s, joins such mainline liberal denominations as the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church in rejecting biblical integrity in favor of political correctness. “Liberal Protestants have long believed that they will win favor and popularity by abandoning biblical teaching and accommodating secular fads,” Tooley told the [Christian Post](#). “But liberal Protestantism has been imploding globally for 50 years with no reversal in sight. Liberal religion echoes secular culture but it rarely, if ever, wins respect. The Disciples are the fastest declining liberal denomination, and their latest resolution helps ensure their spiral sadly will continue.”

*Image: Disciples of Christ logo*



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