



Heights Worship Center

Statement of Final Authority for Matters of Faith and Conduct

Heights Worship Center International Ministries (HWCIM) in Hacienda Heights, California, states the following regarding final authority for matters of faith and conduct.

We believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct. [2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Peter 1:21]

We understand authority to mean that everything the Bible affirms and teaches is true. As God's disclosed will and purpose, it is determinative for belief and behavior. Therefore, the affirmation that the Bible is the "authoritative rule of faith and conduct" is understood to call for accepting the Scriptures as the final and unchanging authority for doctrine and ethics.

God has inspired the Biblical writers by the Holy Spirit and in that process have been given for our direction and guidance texts that are fully reliable to guide us to salvation, worship, and service. The Scriptures define the believer's worldview, morality, and ethics. Moreover, the Scriptures are not simply one authority among others; they are the final authority. In addition, the final human interpretation will reside with the Pastoral team and elected Board members.

To read more on this issue, click the following link:

<https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Inspiration-Inerrancy-and-Authority-of-Scripture>

Position Regarding the Sanctity of Life

HWCIM bases its understanding of the nature of human beings on the Bible, which reveals that God created the universe, the world, and all living things (Genesis 1:1,11,21,25). Humans are the highest form of God's creative activity, and He is intentional in both their creation and destiny.

"'Let us make man in our image'... So God created man in his own image,... male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:26,27).

"The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).

By making human beings in His own image, God set them above all other forms of life on earth. The term "image of God" signifies that, like their Creator, men and women are personal and spiritual beings, rational and relational. It implies that humans are intended for eternal fellowship with their Creator and requires both sexes for full expression. Though marred when the first human pair fell into sin (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12), the image of God is still intrinsic to human nature (Genesis 9:6), insuring that men and women are capable of response to their Maker. Creation in the divine image is not only an expression of the incalculable value God places upon

human life, it also signifies that God has sovereign power over life. He is both giver and sustainer of life; He alone has the power to determine its beginning and ending.

The nobility of human beings is seen in the divine mandate:

“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:28).

Superior to all other life forms, humans are to assume the role of responsible custodians of the earth.

Every human life, from conception through death, is therefore to be valued, respected, nurtured, and protected. Every human life is to be lived in obedience to God and His Word. The Bible describes a moral order to which all persons are responsible. At the end of life, all persons will stand before God to give account for their actions.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore, human beings are responsible to bring the light of God’s Word to decisions that bear on the sanctity of life.

To read more on the Biblical stance and therefore the basis of our policy, including perspective on contraception, abortion, in vitro fertilization, reproductive cloning, euthanasia, click the following links:

<https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Sanctity-of-Human-Life-Abortion>

<https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Sanctity-of-Human-Life-Suicide-Euthanasia>

What We Believe About Human Sexuality and Marriage

We believe, based on the teaching of the Scriptures, that marriage is an institution established and ordained by God and intended to be a lifelong covenant union between one man and one woman. This understanding is supported by the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 where God created man in His own image, both male and female, and together they were husband and wife and had “no shame” or sin in their union with each other (Genesis 2:15-25)

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ also re-affirmed this when He said in Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven’t you read, He replied, that at the beginning the creator made them male and female and said for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

In the epistles, the Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 5:22-32 that marriage is not only a divine institution created by God, it is also a metaphor to illustrate the union between Christ and the church. Since marriage has such a profound meaning, the Scriptures teach the believers to stay

pure sexually and flee from all practices that are sexually immoral (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Romans 1:18-22). These practices includes but are not limited to fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, pedophilia, polygamy, and bestiality. Not only that, we see lewd conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation or distribution or viewing of pornography, behaviors that are incompatible with God's original intention.

Based on the above religious beliefs, HWCIM is called to teach these scriptures and corresponding values and beliefs to our church community. Although we strive to live peacefully with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage, we must ultimately obey God rather than man, if the two come into conflict.

Our Faith Based Policy on Human Sexuality and Marriage

As a result of the above described religious beliefs and values, it is our policy that the facilities of HWCIM may not be used for any ceremony that in any way approves of, supports, or allows any union of any nature that are considered biblically immoral (such as same-sex union, polygamist union, or any union which in some way constitutes child abuse). It is also the policy of the church that no pastor or member of the church staff shall officiate any ceremony designed to approve of or support any such union or ceremony.

At the same time, HWCIM recognizes that we all struggle with sin. Therefore, we hope to provide an environment that welcomes people who struggle with sexual sin, offering them a safe place to learn and grow in their knowledge and understanding of these Biblical scriptures and beliefs. We will show the love of Jesus to all who desire to attend HWCIM and point them to the forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ, His death on the cross and His resurrection, which also offers salvation and a new beginning in Christ.

Church Practices Derived from This Policy

Clergy

Ordained clergy or licensed ministers employed by the church shall affirm the statement of faith on human sexuality and marriage adopted by this church.

Only ordained or duly licensed clergy approved by this church shall officiate marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.

Clergy employed by the church shall be subject to dismissal and/or loss of ordination for violating this statement of faith on human sexuality and marriage or by officiating a marriage ceremony that violates this policy.

Applicants for weddings performed by church staff:

Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a member of our clergy or use of the church facilities for their wedding, shall affirm the statement of faith regarding human sexuality and marriage, and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

Applicants shall participate in premarital counseling by clergy or counselors employed by this church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church, have the appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling. All pastoral staff, counselors or other persons providing premarital counseling shall affirm the statement of faith of this church on human sexuality and marriage.

Use of Facilities:

Any marriage performed on church premises shall be officiated by an ordained or duly licensed member of the clergy. Any officiant not employed by the HWCIM shall serve at the discretion of the pastor or the Board.

Clergy officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the statement of faith on human sexuality and marriage adopted by this church and shall conduct them in a manner that is consistent therewith.

Clergy and staff assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this Marriage Policy may, in his or her discretion, decline to provide church facilities for, and/or decline to officiate a ceremony when in his or her judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

Membership, Leadership and Staff:

Every minister, board member, or employee, hired by the church shall affirm their agreement with HWCIM's statement on human sexuality and marriage and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

The Board will be asked to affirm their agreement with this policy on human sexuality and marriage and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

Church leaders, teachers and members are expected to teach and live in a manner that is consistent with this policy.



To read more regarding the policy and position of HWCIM regarding marriage, sexuality and other associated issues, please click the following links:

<https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Homosexuality-Marriage-and-Sexual-Identity>

<https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Transgenderism-Transsexuality-and-Gender-Identity>

Final Statement

If you are interested in learning more about what we believe please feel free to click the link below to head over to the official AG (Assemblies of God) Website for further reading. Please feel free to contact us through our website (www.hwcim.org) if you have any questions.

Assemblies of God Position Papers: <https://ag.org/beliefs/position-papers>