

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Forum on Homosexuality and the Church of God
Monday, June 14, 1993

WHEREAS, We, whose signatures appear below, believe that all human beings, including those with a homosexual orientation, are persons of dignity and worth and deserve to live in a loving, caring, affirming environment in which they will not be subjected to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behavior; and

WHEREAS, There is much evidence of damaging prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors being continually directed toward gays and lesbians in our society; and

WHEREAS, Gays and lesbians and their families, many of whom are in Church of God congregations and many others who would be in our churches if they did not feel ostracized, are suffering intense pain, confusion, and frustration as a result of these prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors; and

WHEREAS, We believe that the traditional stance of the Church of God movement toward persons with a homosexual orientation does, though perhaps not intentionally, contribute to this pain and suffering and does, in reality, lend support to society'S prejudicial attitudes and behaviors; and

WHEREAS, We believe that the traditional stance of the Church of God movement toward persons with a homosexual orientation is based upon fear, misinformation, lack of understanding as to the possible origin and nature of a homosexual orientation, and negative values and attitudes prevalent within the general society; and

WHEREAS, We believe that the traditional stance of the Church of God movement toward ,persons with a homosexual orientation is not biblical and is not in keeping with the teachings of Jesus; and

WHEREAS, We believe that all persons within the church, and particularly pastors and other church leaders, need to be well-informed as to the latest biological, psychological, sociological, and theological research in the area of homosexuality and in ways of relating to and ministering to gays and lesbians and the parents and friends of gays and lesbians; and

WHEREAS, We have far more knowledge today about homosexuality and more enlightened interpretation of scriptural references to homosexuality than we had when the 1979 General Assembly approved the resolution entitled, "Statement Against Homosexuality;" and

WHEREAS, The 1979 "Statement Against Homosexuality" and other such resolutions passed by the General Assembly are perceived to be binding upon all church agencies, state ministerial associations, and local congregations, they become, in effect, credal statements-a policy opposed by the Church of God movement from its beginning. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 1979 resolution, "Statement Against Homosexuality" be rescinded; be it further

RESOLVED, That any other resolution that has come or may yet come before the General Assembly either be withdrawn or tabled until an in-depth study can be completed for the purposes of coming to (1) a deeper understanding of homosexuality through the examination of scientific findings; (2) a deeper understanding of the thoughts and feelings of gays and lesbians and the families of gays and lesbians in our churches; (3) a clearer understanding of biblical references to homosexuality; and (4) a clearer understanding of more effective and more Christian ways of relating to and of ministering to gays and lesbians and to the families and friends of gays and lesbians; be it further

RESOLVED, That the Leadership Council be instructed to appoint a special task force for the purpose of making such an in-depth study, that appropriate funding be made available to the task force for conducting its study, and that the task force be given three years to complete its study and bring a report of its findings, first to the Leadership Council, and then to the General Assembly; be it further

RESOLVED, That the task force should consist of a fair distribution of persons in regard to race and gender and that it contain at least one Old Testament scholar, one New Testament scholar, one Church of God minister, one person with at least a master's degree in one of the social and behavioral sciences, one person with at least a master's degree in the biological sciences, one person with a known homosexual orientation, and one person from a family in which there is a person with a homosexual orientation; be it further

RESOLVED, That _____ be requested by the persons whose signatures appear below to read this resolution to the 1993 General Assembly of the Church of God and to move the following statement as a substitute motion for the motion to accept the "General Assembly Statement on Homosexuality: "

I move that the 1993 General Assembly rescind the 1979 "Statement Against Homosexuality;" that it instruct the Leadership Council to appoint a special task force (with membership as specified above) to make a three-year in-depth study of homosexuality for the purposes stated above; and that neither it nor any future General Assembly will give consideration to any resolution on homosexuality until the in-depth study is completed.

(Signatures began on Page 3)