

OFFICIAL STATEMENT — 10 JANUARY 2014

Church Instructs Leaders on Same-Sex Marriage

SALT LAKE CITY —

Following recent court actions bearing on same-sex marriage, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles today sent the following instructions and guidance to congregational leaders throughout the United States. Leaders were asked to share this information with their members in appropriate settings.

On December 20, 2013, a federal district judge in Salt Lake City issued an order legalizing same-sex marriage in Utah, striking down century-old state laws and a state constitutional amendment that defined marriage exclusively as between a man and a woman. The United States Supreme Court has put that ruling on hold pending consideration of the issue by an appellate court. During the interval between the district court ruling and the Supreme Court stay, numerous same-sex marriages were performed in Utah. Legal proceedings and legislative action in some other states and countries have given civil recognition to same-sex marriage relationships.

As we face this and other issues of our time, we encourage all to bear in mind our Heavenly Father's purposes in creating the earth and providing for our mortal birth and experience here as His children. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" ([Genesis 1:27–28](#)). "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" ([Genesis 2:24](#)). Marriage between a man and a woman was instituted by God and is central to His plan for His children and for the well-being of society. Strong families, guided by a loving mother and father, serve as the fundamental institution for nurturing children, instilling faith, and transmitting to future generations the moral strengths and values that are important to civilization and crucial to eternal salvation.

Changes in the civil law do not, indeed cannot, change the moral law that God has established. God expects us to uphold and keep His commandments regardless of divergent opinions or trends in society. His law of chastity is clear: sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are

legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We urge you to review and teach Church members the doctrine contained in “[The Family: A Proclamation to the World](#).”

Just as those who promote same-sex marriage are entitled to civility, the same is true for those who oppose it. The Church insists on its leaders’ and members’ constitutionally protected right to express and advocate religious convictions on marriage, family, and morality free from retaliation or retribution. The Church is also entitled to maintain its standards of moral conduct and good standing for members.

Consistent with our fundamental beliefs, Church officers will not employ their ecclesiastical authority to perform marriages between two people of the same sex, and the Church does not permit its meetinghouses or other properties to be used for ceremonies, receptions, or other activities associated with same-sex marriages. Nevertheless, all visitors are welcome to our chapels and premises so long as they respect our standards of conduct while there.

While these matters will continue to evolve, we affirm that those who avail themselves of laws or court rulings authorizing same-sex marriage should not be treated disrespectfully. The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us to love and treat all people with kindness and civility—even when we disagree.

As members of the Church, we are responsible to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to illuminate the great blessings that flow from heeding God’s commandments as well as the inevitable consequences of ignoring them. We invite you to pray that people everywhere will have their hearts softened to the truths of the gospel, and that wisdom will be granted to those who are called upon to decide issues critical to society’s future.

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