

Priesthood Release for Cause

Adopted April 11, 2019

Rescinds WCR 1192

1316. Whereas, “The demands of a growing church require that [instruction given in former years] shall be evaluated and subjected to further interpretation” (Doctrine and Covenants 147:7); and

Whereas, WCR 1192, Ministerial Silences and Appeals (adopted 1986) needs to be updated to reflect current terminology and understandings; and

Whereas, The church has been given additional understanding into God’s vision for priesthood ministry; therefore, be it

Resolved, That WCR 1192 be rescinded; and, be it further

Resolved, That the World Conference affirms the following provisions for the development of policies and procedures regarding priesthood release for cause:

I. Principles

- a. All disciples “are called according to the gifts of God unto them” (Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b). Some are called to priesthood ministry as a focus of their call as disciples.
- b. The priesthood should “be made up of those who have an abiding faith and desire to serve [God] with all their hearts, in humility and with great devotion” (Doctrine and Covenants 156:8a).
- c. “Priesthood is a sacred covenant involving the highest form of stewardship of body, mind, spirit, and relationships. The priesthood shall be composed of people of humility and integrity who are willing to extend themselves in service for others and for the well-being of the faith community” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:6a).
- d. Priesthood members are expected “to continually magnify their callings through spiritual growth, study, exemplary generosity, ethical choices, and fully accountable ministry” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:6c).
- e. God “ultimately is concerned about behaviors and relationships that uphold the worth and giftedness of all people and that protect the most vulnerable. Such relationships are to be rooted in...Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a).
- f. Church policies “provide a clear way for disciples to respond to [priesthood] calling. They also define the difference between a sense of call as potential and the need to align one’s life with principles of moral behavior and relationships that promote the well-being of the church community” (Doctrine and Covenants 165:4b).
- g. All presiding administrative church officers should uphold the “worth and giftedness” of all persons impacted by administrative actions and

“protect the most vulnerable” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:6).

II. Mutual Understandings

- a. Priesthood members agree to serve according to the church’s expectations for Christian and ministerial conduct and to uphold the current version of “Covenant Principles for Faithful Priesthood Ministry” as found at www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/priesthood/Covenant-Principles-English.pdf.
- b. Priesthood members provide affirmative ministry consistent with current versions of the church’s official documents such as the current version of *Sharing in Community of Christ*. When there is personal disagreement with a position, priesthood members are guided by *Faithful Disagreement: Definition and Principles* at www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/FAITHFULDISAGREEMENT-PRINCIPLES.pdf.
- c. A priesthood member can be released from priesthood by presiding administrative church officers for established causes outlined below in Section III.
- d. Releasing a priesthood member for cause is an administrative action that does not affect church membership.
- e. Administrative policies and procedures should assure that a priesthood member subject to release:
 - i. Is informed of the allegations in writing. Where possible, personal contact by the presiding administrative church officer is encouraged.
 - ii. Has reasonable time to consider the allegations.
 - iii. Has opportunity to resolve the relevant issues, if possible and appropriate, before administrative action is taken.
 - iv. Has opportunity to appeal the decision to release for cause to the next-higher presiding administrative church officer.
- f. All priesthood status changes will be reported to the World Church Secretary through established procedures.

III. Causes

1. Causes for release include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Conviction of a serious crime as defined by applicable laws.
 - b. Deliberate disregard of church law as expressed through church bylaws, relevant World Conference Resolutions, First Presidency official rulings, and current World Church policies and established practices.
 - c. Deliberate disregard of the properly exercised authority, action, or direction of a presiding administrative church officer.
 - d. False, misleading, or malicious statements meant to harm the church. This includes print, broadcast, and social media (electronic)

communications.

e. Deliberate failure to preserve confidential information given with the expectation of ministerial confidentiality, with the understanding that reporting mandated by law or when physical harm of self or others is likely are exceptions.

f. Such other disregard for the principles of ministerial conduct as may result in the loss of power and standing to minister effectively.

2. An additional cause is priesthood inactive status for at least three years.

And, be it further

Resolved, That the First Presidency is responsible for developing and maintaining administrative policies and procedures related to priesthood release for cause and appeal in harmony with this resolution.