

Why George O. Wood Isn't Buying World Vision's Same-Sex Marriage Moves

On behalf of the General Council of the **Assemblies of God**, I am writing to express disappointment with the recent policy change of the U.S. branch of World Vision permitting its employees to enter legally valid **same-sex marriages**.

In an interview with *Christianity Today*, World Vision President Richard Stearns characterized the move as a “very narrow policy change,” which he hoped would be “symbolic not of compromise but of [Christian] unity.” He further stated, “This is not an endorsement of **same-sex marriage**. We have decided we are not going to get into that debate. Nor is this a rejection of traditional marriage, which we affirm and support.”

Recognizing legally valid **same-sex marriages** is not a narrow policy change. It is a fundamental shift away from a normative biblical understanding of marriage as the lifelong union of a man and a woman. Far from promoting Christian unity, the policy change enlists World Vision on the liberal Protestant side of the **same-sex marriage** debate as opposed to that of Pentecostal and evangelical churches in the U.S., not to mention Pentecostal and evangelical churches worldwide. And the policy change cannot be construed as anything but an endorsement of same-sex marriage. World Vision requires its employees to practice sexual abstinence outside of marriage. If it now permits its employees to enter legally valid same-sex marriages, then it has explicitly taken a position opposite of Scripture.

Because of this policy change and the need to maintain continuity of care for the people who most need our help, I encourage **Assemblies of God** churches and individuals to begin gradually shifting their support away from the U.S. branch of World Vision to Assemblies of God World Missions and other

Pentecostal and evangelical charities that maintain biblical standards of sexual morality.

Above all, I encourage **Assemblies of God** churches and individuals to remember and continue to put into practice James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (NIV). An ever-expanding compassion for the last, the lost and the least as well as an ever-deepening commitment to holy living should be the hallmarks of our movement.

George O. Wood *is general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.*