

The Layman ONLINE

Amendment O defeated

By Paula R. Kincaid

The Layman Online

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Amendment O, which would prohibit Presbyterian Church (USA) ministers from conducting same-sex unions, has been defeated in a referendum among the denomination's 173 presbyteries.

"No" votes on March 13 by four presbyteries – New Brunswick, Utica, Pacific and Cincinnati – ran the unofficial tally to 87-63 against the amendment. Presbyteries will continue voting through April.

The defeat of Amendment O means that the *Book of Order* remains unchanged. The denomination's constitution says that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman. Other forms of blessings for same-sex couples are allowed, as long as they are not called marriages or do not resemble marriages, according to an interpretation by the General Assembly's Permanent Judicial Commission, the highest court in the denomination.

"We regret to acknowledge that 87 presbyteries have cast their votes in opposition to Amendment O, a proposal intended to affirm the sanctity of marriage," The Presbyterian Renewal Leaders Network said in [a statement issued March 14](#).

Signed by 12 leaders of various renewal organizations, the statement said, "As leaders of renewal organizations in the Presbyterian Church (USA), we declare that the lordship of Jesus Christ and his requirement that we obey the moral law are not negotiable. Church leaders who openly defy Biblical faith and ethics are pushing our denomination perilously towards schism. We confess that we cannot – and we will not – compromise the integrity of God's Word."

The amendment would have added a section, W-4.9007, to the *Book of Order* stating:

"Scripture and our Confessions teach that God's intention for all people is to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or in chastity in singleness. Church property shall not be used for, and church officers shall not take part in conducting, any ceremony or event that pronounces blessing or gives approval of the church or invokes the blessing of God upon any relationship that is inconsistent with God's intention as expressed

God upon any relationship that is inconsistent with God's intention as expressed in the preceding sentence."

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