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MEDIA STATEMENT

METHODIST CHURCH AFFIRMS MARRIAGE AS THE UNION OF ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN

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The Methodist Church in Fiji affirms its doctrinal position that marriage is a sacred covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman.

Church General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Epineri Vakadewavosa said that the Church believes that God's blessing rests upon such marriage.

"The Church will continue support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman."

"We also reject cultural and social practices that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage which reinforces a negative stereotyping of women as subservient and leads to domestic violence and spousal rape."

Rev. Dr. Vakadewavosa also affirmed the call last year by current Church President, Rev. Dr. Tevita Banivanua that as the largest Christian community in Fiji, the Methodist Church is called to respect the dignity of all human beings as created by God and in God's image, acknowledging that all of us are broken images of the same perfect divine being.

"As Methodists, we must continue to reflect on the need to practice unconditional love and compassion towards all, including those who have different values from them and those whom they don't understand."

"Stigma and discrimination can only be vanquished by the practice of unconditional love. Unconditional love is unconditional, you cannot choose whom to have love and compassion for," said Rev. Dr. Banivanua in his 2014 message for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

"The 2013 Constitution and its predecessor both affirm the right for all people, irrespective of gender, religion or race to be free from discrimination. This fear and prejudice we have for people who are different from us are shameful. Instead, we must work for inclusion, tolerance, and peace for all people. We are challenged by Jesus to love those different from us, including those that we may consider "sinners"; after all we are all sinners in some way."

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