

There's been some confusion lately about whether the role of women in our community—especially when it comes to priesthood certificates and women's councils—should be considered a form of “government.” But if we take a closer look at how things are actually set up, and what Denver has consistently taught about avoiding church hierarchy and formal offices, it becomes clear that “government” is the wrong word.

Let's start with priesthood certificates. Getting a certificate to act publicly as a priest isn't something a man is automatically entitled to. It's not a “right.” It's something a man **elects to do**—he chooses whether or not to seek that trust from his community. As Denver's 2017 paper *The Holy Order* explains:

“If you have already been ordained then you have the right to continue to minister to your family as a matter of right. But outside your family it is different... For any who would like to qualify to minister outside his family, he must meet in a community and obtain a sustaining vote of a minimum of seven women.”

So when a man wants to serve publicly, he's basically saying, “*I would like to represent the faith and trust of this community.*” And it's the **women**, through their stewardship, who respond by saying, “*We believe you're worthy of that trust.*” That trust is recorded through a certificate, which serves as a **symbol of a mutual agreement**—a kind of **contract** between a man and his community, carried out by women who act as **guardians** of that trust.

Women's councils come into play when that trust is in question. They are not governing bodies. They don't legislate, pass judgment, or control what people can or can't do. Their role is something much deeper and more protective. Women's councils are there to evaluate concerns, prevent abuse, and **protect the vulnerable**. They offer **balance, accountability, and care**—not control.

This idea is reinforced in the *Pure in Heart* transcript:

“The women's council is empowered to remove a man's certificate, which does not remove priesthood; it only prevents the man from ministering outside his home during a period of suspension.”

So the certificate isn't priesthood—it's community trust. And when that trust is damaged, it's the women—acting as stewards—who convene a council of **at least 12 women** to discern whether the man has upheld his part of the contract. If they **unanimously** agree that trust has been broken, they can remove the certificate. Again, not his priesthood—just his ability to act as a public representative during that time.

Calling this process “government” misses the mark. Government implies the **power to rule, enforce, or legislate**, and Denver has made it clear we are not to follow the same structure as traditional churches or institutions. In this community, there is no top-down leadership. Instead, we are to be **self-governing**, accountable to each other and to God.

A better word than “government” for what the women do is “**stewardship**.” Or you might say **they act as guardians**—protecting the sacredness of priesthood use, preserving trust, and ensuring the community is safe from harm. That’s not control. That’s care.

And in this way, women play a vital role—not because they hold power over men, but because they help ensure that anyone representing the priesthood in public is **trustworthy, accountable, and supported** by the community.

When it comes to women’s councils and the weight of their unanimous decisions, we need to understand something at the heart of how God has designed this system: it’s built on **trust**—trust in the women, trust in the Spirit, and trust in the process. The requirement for *unanimity* is not a loophole or an obstacle—it’s a safeguard. It protects both the man and the community. It ensures that a serious decision like suspending a priesthood certificate is never made lightly or impulsively.

As Denver explained in his blog post [Questions About Women’s Council \(Jan 12, 2024\)](#), the unanimity requirement is so significant that even **one single “no”** vote is enough to **stop** a council from taking action:

“Requiring unanimity among the twelve women is a very high standard. If a single one of the twelve disagrees, then no action should be taken.”

This tells us something important: **when twelve women agree unanimously**, we must **treat that decision with honor and weight**. It’s not a casual outcome. It reflects serious deliberation, unity of heart, and the Spirit’s presence.

But what happens when a community member disagrees with the result of a women’s council or the validity of it? Can we go back and undo it? Re-litigate it in the court of public opinion? The answer is clearly **no**. According to the revelation received on **June 20, 2024**, the Lord makes clear that while we can learn from past experiences and improve the process going forward, we are **not given authority to undo past councils**.

[Full text here](#)

The Lord has shown that He trusts women to follow this process with care and sincerity—and so should we. We must not assume that women are gathering in secret or acting with the intention to harm men. Even if a council isn’t conducted perfectly or there are perceived injustices, trusting the process means believing that if a man were to humbly approach the original twelve women and ask for reconsideration, those women would respond in kind—with humility, grace, and a willingness to genuinely hear him out. Until and unless that happens, the broader community—especially women not involved in the original council—should not be debating or discussing the details of that council. It is not our place to relitigate what we did not witness. It is our place to support the process, encourage humility on both sides, and trust that the Lord’s instructions are sufficient to bring about justice and healing.

In other words, if there's been pain or injustice, we address it through humility, discussion, and maybe process improvements—but not through reversing past decisions that were **unanimously** reached by those entrusted to make them. Why? Because none of us—not the broader community, not even the WCF organizers—can truly discern every detail or feeling that was present in that original council. Trying to "overturn" it by voting on its legitimacy just adds confusion and undermines the authority the Lord has already established.

And we don't need to guess what to do if a man believes a mistake was made. The Lord has already told us **exactly** how to handle reinstatement:

"Reinstatement of the man's authority must be considered by the same council of twelve women when the man petitions for the decision to be rescinded, and requires seven of the twelve to agree upon his reinstatement."

— [T&C 157](#)

Trying to override or "nullify" the decision by taking a vote of the larger group is not part of what's been revealed. It introduces confusion, disrupts order, and ultimately undermines the trust that we are meant to place in those women and in the Lord's process.

This is a beautiful solution. It invites humility from the man and gives room for repentance, growth, or correction—**without undermining the Lord's process** or placing judgment in the hands of the crowd.

So while we absolutely **can** and **should** talk about how to make women's councils more fair, transparent, and guided by wisdom, we must not overstep the bounds the Lord has already set. The decision of a council is not "government." It's not control. It's **guardianship**—a deeply sacred trust that women are called to uphold. That trust must be respected, even when it's hard, even when it stings. It's the Lord's design, and **we shouldn't add to it or take away from it.**

Let's move forward together in faith, love, and trust—honoring both the Lord's instructions and the women of the community that He has entrusted to carry out this critical work.

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