



Re: 01-057

DOMESTIC RELATIONS: MARRIAGE GENERALLY  
CONSTITUTION OF VIRGINIA: LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNTY AND CITY  
OFFICERS)

There is requirement that circuit court clerks investigate proof of facially valid ordinations or certificates to determine the authenticity of a given religious society or denomination. Clerks have discretionary authority to make orders authorizing ministers to celebrate the rites of matrimony.

1 April 2010

Kenneth T. Cuccinelli, II  
Office of the Attorney General  
900 East Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 786-2071

Dear Mr. Cuccinelli:

Almost a decade ago, your predecessor sent his opinion to Thomas M. Moncure Jr., Clerk, Circuit Court of Stafford County on 29 November 2001; The court clerk inquired whether individuals issued "credentials of ministry" by the independent Universal Life Church of *Modesto, California*, may qualify as ministers pursuant to § 20-23 of the Code of Virginia. They were told, "[c]onsequently, it is my opinion that it is within the discretion of the clerk of the circuit court to make an order authorizing such minister to celebrate the rites of matrimony".

Universal Life Church Monastery Storehouse in Seattle, WA. is a legally separate entity from the Universal Life Church of Modesto, Ca.—the two organizations are entirely independent of one another although we do have similar belief systems. Consequently, various state circuit court clerks have invoked an impermissible flawed policy to deny all of our Universal Life Church Monastery ministers in the performance of their sacerdotal role of performing weddings. Your office is in contravention of established constitutional and federal law. We here at The Monastery, hold that Virginia Court clerks are individually and unjustly exposed to legal suit. I had a discussion with one the clerks wherein I warned that if this egregious violation of federal law continues we will file suit against each. As individually named co-defendants, such could adversely affect their credit records, mortgages, etc.







For your edification, please review the following resolutions:

“...an Honorary Doctor of Divinity is a strictly religious title with no academic standing. Such titles may be issued by bona fide churches and religious denominations, such as plaintiff, as long as their issuance is limited to a course of instruction in the principles of the church or religious denomination... The statute is silent as to recognize honorary titles conferred for some meritorious recognition.”

“...Certainly the ordination of ministers and the chartering of churches are accepted activities of religious organizations... The fact that the plaintiff distributed ministers’ credentials and Honorary Doctor of Divinity certificates is of no moment. Such activity may be analogized to mass conversions at a typical revival or religious crusade.”

“...neither this court nor any branch of this government will consider the merits or fallacies of a religion. Nor will the court compare the beliefs, dogmas, and practices of a newly organized religion with those of an older, more established religion. Nor will the court praise or condemn a religion, however excellent or fanatical or preposterous it may seem. Were the court to do so, it would impinge upon the guarantee of the First Amendment.”

*Universal Life Church, Inc. vs. United States, 372 F. Supp. 770, 776 (E.D. Cal 1974)*

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." *The First Amendment to the United States Constitution*

Additionally, see; *Universal Life Church v. Utah, 189 F. Supp. 2d 1302 (D. Utah 2002)*

The Universal Life Church Monastery serves as a clear voice of Heaven’s new mandate to all: to integrate all human belief systems into a common ecumenical principle under which "we are all children of the same universe". We here at the Monastery, through our ecclesiastical teachings and rationalist doctrine, instruct our congregants "to do the right thing", whatever they believe this to be, insofar as it does not impinge on the rights of others and is within the law. If we as a united people, fail in this endeavor and continue with the



We are all children of the same universe

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# UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH HEADQUARTERS



## MONASTERY STOREHOUSE

Presiding Chaplain, Br. Martin

existing cornucopia of elitist religious dogmas, religious condemnation, reliance on archaic religious pretexts for violence,... myriads "divinely inspired" books which encourage segregated Sunday services, death to infidels, killing non-virgins, sacrificing animals, stoning rape victims to death, executing homosexuals, inculcating guilt, and, finally, instructing innocent children that they are born with defective souls immersed in sin--in short, if our world continues to embrace such mayhem and sanctioned insanity--we surely will arrive at Armageddon's door.

It is our mission to dispel this myth and welcome everybody into the Universal Life Church Monastery fold. We recommend that you visit our online [minister's network](#), [blog](#), [forum](#), and [bookshop](#) to review our reading materials; it is both enlightening and liberating. Our sincere hope is that you will join us in our effort to allow all citizens to be the minister of his or her own family, friends, and conscience...be it in a time of joy or a time of sorrow. That is the fundamental principle on which this church and country was forged upon.

This letter will act as our church's *Official Notice for the Record*, asking that you desist in any further denials regarding our ministers' right to officiate sacerdotal duties in your jurisdiction. We are sending a copy of this letter to each of your associates, asking that all Court Orders that have been issued thus far be Remanded and Rescinded via *sua sponte notice*. Further, we ask that this Court Decree *en banc* that the Universal Life Church Monastery is a recognized church and entitled to all privileges under the law.

Sincerely,

G. Martin Freeman, Presiding Chaplain.  
Universal Life Church Monastery Storehouse  
1425 Broadway  
Seattle, WA 98122  
206-478-9500

*A religion old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the universe as revealed by modern science, might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths. Sooner or later, such a religion will emerge.... Carl Sagan*



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