

Schuller disparages ban on gays in church's choir

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [April 19, 2011](#) issue

Crystal Cathedral founder Robert H. Schuller says he never would have approved a recent covenant that the church's choir members were asked to sign urging them to be Christian and heterosexual.

"I have a reputation worldwide of being tolerant of all people and their views," Schuller told the *Orange County Register*. "I'm too well educated to criticize a certain religion or group of people for what they believe in. It's called freedom."

The covenant describes choir members as people who confess Jesus as their savior, consider the Bible "authoritative and infallible" and understand the cathedral's position that marriage is "between one man and one woman."

Schuller told the newspaper he agrees with the covenant's stance on homosexuality, but "that doesn't mean that we are going to start a crusade against homosexuals."

In a March 15 statement on its website, the Southern California church, now led by his daughter and senior pastor Sheila Schuller Coleman, described the covenant as an attempt to explain expectations of ministry leaders. It apologized to those that might be hurt by the covenant's language.

Another daughter told the newspaper that the elder Schuller is bound to differ with church leaders at times. "But the organization and his voice are no longer seamless," said Carol Schuller Milner. "It can never go back to being that way."

The dispute is the latest controversy for the Garden Grove, California, church, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in October and saw the 2008 resignation of Schuller's son, Robert A. Schuller, as senior pastor. —RNS