

General Conference 2016: Resolution Regarding Use of Language, *Book of Discipline* , ¶161F and , 310.2 (d)

As per the resolutions below, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference proposes that an amendment be made in Book of Discipline ¶161F and footnote 3 of ¶310.2(d) regarding the use of “incompatibility”.

1. A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO CHANGE LANGUAGE IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

WHEREAS, a fully welcoming UMC is a testament to God’s gift of persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

WHEREAS, a fully welcoming UMC allows all United Methodists to offer their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness to further Christ’s mission.

WHEREAS, the current language stands in direct conflict with Christ’s teaching of God’s universal love.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference join together to move the United Methodist Church to a position of welcoming all of God’s children and be it further resolved that we recommend amending the Book of Discipline, ¶161F as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶161.f Human Sexuality — We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, ~~heterosexual~~ marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, ~~or~~ sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

1.B A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO CHANGE LANGUAGE IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

WHEREAS, clergy are required to uphold the highest standards of holy living in the church and in the world.

WHEREAS, the same expectations of Christian conduct apply regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the clergy person.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference recommend a change in the Book of Discipline to amend footnote 3 ¶1310.2 (d) [on page 228 of the 2012 BOD] as follows:

BOD 2012 footnote 3 ¶1310.2 (d) The General Conference has made it clear in the “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” (Part II of the Discipline) that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are our guidelines. “United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine.”

~~In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that “we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.” Furthermore, the The Social Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between two persons—a man and a woman. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage.” Also, “we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because they are single.”~~

Submitted by the Church Council of United Methodist Church at Mt. Tabor and the Church Council of the United Methodist Church of the Rockaways

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General Conference 2016: Resolution Regarding Marriage and Marriage Ceremonies

Book of Discipline, ¶161B, 341.6, and 162.J

As per the resolutions below, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference proposes that amendments be made in Paragraphs 161B, 341.6, and 162.J, regarding marriage, civil unions, marriage ceremonies and the rights attenuating thereto.

1.A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO REMOVE FROM THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE THE RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE REGARDING MARRIAGE

WHEREAS, Jesus taught us to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

WHEREAS, United Methodists “commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.” ¶161.F

WHEREAS, gay and lesbian couples, including many who are active members of our United Methodist Churches, are being denied marriage-related ministries available to straight couples

WHEREAS, “All persons, regardless of age, gender, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured . . .” ¶161.F

WHEREAS, lesbian and gay couples prepared for marriage are being denied the opportunity for a service of Christian marriage officiated by their United Methodist pastor, in their local churches

WHEREAS, as marriage equality becomes reality state by state, more and more United Methodists are being driven from the church and forced to turn to their only option for marriage, secular ceremonies in local court houses

WHEREAS ,legal experts anticipate the U.S. Supreme Court to rule for marriage equality for all of the United States as a constitutional right by the end of July 2015

WHEREAS, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling for marriage equality will leave the United Methodist Church, in the historic record, as an institution that opposes this basic civil right.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference support marriage equality for all prepared couples and join together to move the United Methodist Church to acceptance with a recommended change to the Book of Discipline amending ¶161B as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶161B) Marriage--We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between two persons ~~a man and a woman~~. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as a union of two persons—~~one man and one woman~~.

1.B A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO CHANGE THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE TO OFFER SERVICES OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE TO ALL PREPARED COUPLES

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline currently prohibits United Methodist clergy from officiating services of Christian marriage for prepared gay and lesbian couples, therefore prohibiting clergy from “being in ministry for and with all persons.” ¶161.F

WHEREAS, the current prohibition denies prepared lesbian and gay couples pastoral care (as related to marriage) from their local church pastor, forcing them to seek care from a pastor with whom they have no existing relationship.

WHEREAS, the current prohibition denies gay and lesbian couples the opportunity to be married in their local churches, surrounded by the support and witness of their local church families.

WHEREAS, the current prohibition can have a negative effect on the relationship between members of church families, perpetuating “us” and “them” categories based on ministries available to some but not all.

WHEREAS, the current prohibition places some United Methodist clergy in a position of violating their ministerial integrity, Christian conscience, and pastoral calling.

WHEREAS, the current prohibition forces an unnecessary strain on the “covenant relationship” between United Methodist clergy.

WHEREAS, United Methodist clergy are not currently required to officiate services of Christian marriages for any and all couples who request such a service, but are authorized to discern the preparedness of each individual couple, and counsel and officiate based on the couples preparedness.

WHEREAS, United Methodist clergy should not be required, but authorized to officiate services of Christian marriage for all prepared couples, regardless of sexual orientation, in their congregations and communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the Book of Discipline to amend ¶341 by deleting ¶341.6 as follows:

~~BOD 2012 ¶341.6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~

1.C A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO UPDATE THE EQUAL RIGHTS IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

WHEREAS, it is now time for the United Methodist Church to fully embrace and accept members of the denomination regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶162J as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶162J *Equal Rights regardless of Sexual Orientation* — Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting the rightful claims where people have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, civil marriage, civil unions, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

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General Conference 2016: Resolutions Regarding Standards and Conduct for Ordained Clergy

Book of Discipline, ¶304.3, ¶2702.1, ¶310.2 (d)

As per the resolutions below, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference proposes that amendments be made in BOD 2012 ¶304.3, ¶2702.1, and Footnote 3 of ¶310.2(d), removing the barrier for ordination and service within The United Methodist Church.

1.A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO REVISE THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE REGARDING THE MORAL STANDARDS OF CLERGY

WHEREAS, clergy are required to uphold the highest standards of holy living in the church and in the world.

WHEREAS,, the same expectations of Christian conduct apply regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the clergy person.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference recommend a change in the Book of Discipline to amend footnote 3 ¶310.2(d) [on page 226 of the 2012 BOD] as follows:

~~BOD 2012 footnote 3 ¶310.2(d) The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination, reaffirms the present language of the Discipline regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.~~

1.B A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO UPDATE THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE REGARDING CHARGEABLE OFFENSES FOR CLERGY

WHEREAS,, the United Methodist Church expresses concern about the recruitment of clergy candidates, especially young persons.

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Church affirms that God's grace is available to all. We seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving and loving one another as Christ has loved and accepted us (BOD 2012 Called to Inclusiveness ¶140).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the Book of Discipline to amend ¶2702.1 of the Book of Discipline as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶12702.1 A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶1369), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶12702.4)* with one or more of the following offenses: (a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage ~~(b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;~~ (c) crimes;....

1.C A RESOLUTION CALLING THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO AMEND THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE REGARDING QUALIFICATIONS FOR ORDINATION

WHEREAS,, all clergy are called to maintain the highest standards of holy living.

WHEREAS, individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities are fully competent, and possess the gifts and graces necessary to carry out the duties of ordained ministry in the UMC.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the Book of Discipline to amend ¶1304.3 as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶1304.3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. ~~The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.~~

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General Conference 2016: Resolution Regarding Use of Church Funds
***Book of Discipline*, ¶613.19 and 806.9**

As per the resolutions below, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference proposes that amendments be made in Paragraphs 613.19 and 806.9 regarding the use of United Methodist funds.

RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO FOSTER HOLY CONFERCING IN UNITED METHODIST ORGANIZATIONS

WHEREAS, holy conferencing and education are valued processes for United Methodists to discuss current issues before the membership.

WHEREAS, the requested deletion allows for, but does not require duly elected, employed, or appointed annual conference boards, agencies, commissions, and councils to resource the church as is their charge.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶613 deleting portions of ¶613.19 as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶613.19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall ~~give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or~~ violate the expressed commitment of the UMC “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶161.F). ~~The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events where the Church’s official position is fairly and equally represented.~~

AND THEREFORE BE IT RESOVLED, that the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶806 by deleting portions of ¶806.9 as follows:

BOD 2012 ¶806.9. It shall be responsible for ensuring that no board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall ~~give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or~~ violate the expressed commitment of The United Methodist Church “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶161.F). ~~The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures.~~ It shall not limit the Church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.

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