

**Resolution to the 2014 Texas Annual Conference**  
**Submitted by Randolph H. Scott, Lay Delegate,**  
**Bering Memorial United Methodist Church**

**1. RESOLUTION REGARDING USE OF LANGUAGE**

As per the resolutions below, the Texas Annual Conference proposes that an amendment be made in Paragraphs 161F and footnote 3 of paragraph 310.2(d) regarding the use of “incompatibility” in describing homosexual practice. This resolution comes with the support of the Texas Annual Conference Social Principles Implementation Ministry (SPIM) Committee, requesting that this resolution 1, parts 1.A and 1.B, be approved by the 2014 Texas Annual Conference for submission by this Conference to the 2016 General Conference. SPIM is authorized to edit this resolution in all of its parts prior to submission to the 2016 General Conference for the purpose of conforming it to General Conference formatting requirements if needed.

**1.A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO REMOVE THE CONDEMNATORY LANGUAGE ON HOMOSEXUALITY FROM 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 allow all Methodists to use their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness to further Christ’s mission.

**Whereas**, the current position of the UMC is in direct opposition to a basic Wesleyan tenet that we are to “Do no harm” because individuals, families, and the church have been hurt continuously by the current stance of the UMC.

**Whereas**, the current language in the *Book of Discipline* is judgmental, condemnatory and is in conflict with the present state of scientific knowledge and the work of the Holy Spirit in our society.

**Whereas**, most importantly, this language stands in direct conflict with Christ’s teaching of God’s universal love.

**Therefore** be it resolved, that the members of the Texas Annual Conference United Methodist Church join together to move the United Methodist Church to a position of welcome and acceptance and leave the judgment to God, and be it further resolved that we recommend amending the *Book of Discipline*, ¶161F as follows:

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, 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 consider 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 TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY FROM THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

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

**Whereas**, clergy of all sexual orientations and gender identities are fully capable of fulfilling these standards. 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 Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend footnote 3 ¶310.2 (d) [on page 228 of the 2012 BOD] as follows:

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, between 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."

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**2. RESOLUTION REGARDING STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FOR ORDAINED CLERGY**

As per the resolutions below, the Texas Annual Conference proposes that amendments be made in Paragraphs 304.3, 2702.1, and Footnote 3 of ¶310.2(d), removing the category of sexual orientation or practice as an impediment for ordination and service within The United Methodist Church.

This resolution comes with the support of the Texas Annual Conference Social Principles Implementation Ministry (SPIM) Committee, requesting that this resolution 2, Parts 2.A, 2.B, and 2.C be approved by the 2014 Texas Annual Conference for submission by this Conference to the 2016 General Conference. SPIM is authorized to edit this resolution in all of its parts prior to submission to the 2016 General Conference for the purpose of conforming it to General Conference formatting requirements if needed.

**2.A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO UPDATE THE MORAL STANDARDS OF CLERGY 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**, clergy of all sexual orientations and gender identities are fully capable of fulfilling these standards. 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 Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend footnote 3 ¶310.2(d) [on page 226 of the 2012 BOD] as follows:

~~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.~~

**2.B A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO UPDATE THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE TO END DISCRIMINATION IN CHARGEABLE OFFENSES OF CLERGY**

**Whereas**, the United Methodist Church repeatedly expresses concern about the recruitment of superior 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.

**Therefore**, be it resolved that:

The members of the Texas 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:

A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶369), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶2702.4)\* 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;....

**2.C A RESOLUTION CALLING THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMOSEXUAL CLERGY IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

**Whereas**, independent of sexual orientation or gender identity and independent of partnered status, clergy are called to maintain the highest standards of holy living.

**Whereas**, the *Book of Discipline*, ¶304.3, this paragraph, presents a barrier to keeping qualified clergy of all sexual orientations and gender identities from serving our church.

**Whereas**, in times of need for a rebirth of the United Methodist Church, we are forcing these very talented and gifted individuals to other denominations. Individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities are fully competent to carry out the duties of ordained clergy in the UMC.

**Therefore**, be it resolved that the members of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶304.3 as follows:

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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**3. RESOLUTION REGARDING USE OF CHURCH FUNDS**

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

This resolution comes with the support of the Texas Annual Conference Social Principles Implementation Ministry (SPIM) Committee, requesting that this resolution 3, Parts 3.A and 3.B be approved by the 2014 Texas Annual Conference for submission by this Conference to the 2016 General Conference. SPIM is authorized to edit this resolution in all of its parts prior to submission to the 2016 General Conference for the purpose of conforming it to General Conference formatting requirements if needed.

**3.A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO END DISCRIMINATION AND CONFUSION CONCERNING FUNDING OF UNITED METHODIST ORGANIZATIONS**

**Whereas**, holy conferencing and education are valued processes of United Methodists.

**Whereas**, the current paragraph in the *Book of Discipline* creates confusion and impairs holy conferencing regarding our relationship with our homosexual brothers and sisters.

**Whereas**, the requested deletion frees 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 Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶613 deleting ¶613.19 as follows:

~~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.~~

### **3.B A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO END DISCRIMINATION AND CONFUSION CONCERNING FUNDING OF UNITED METHODIST ORGANIZATIONS**

**Whereas**, holy conferencing and education are valued processes of United Methodists.

**Whereas**, this current paragraph in the *Book of Discipline* creates confusion and impairs holy conferencing regarding our relationship with our homosexual brothers and sisters.

**Whereas**, this deletion from the *Book of Discipline* frees 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 Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶806 by deleting ¶806.9 as follows:

~~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.~~

## **4. RESOLUTION REGARDING MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE CEREMONIES**

As per the resolutions below, the Texas 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.

This resolution comes with the support of the Texas Annual Conference Social Principles Implementation Ministry (SPIM) Committee, requesting that this resolution 4, Parts 4.A, 4.B and 4.C be approved by the 2014 Texas Annual Conference for submission by this Conference to the 2016 General Conference. SPIM is authorized to edit this resolution in all of its parts prior to submission to the 2016 General Conference for the purpose of conforming it to General Conference formatting requirements if needed.

### **4.A A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION GENERAL CONFERENCE TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE ON MARRIAGE FROM THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

**Whereas**, the current position of the UMC is in direct opposition to a basic Wesleyan tenet that we are to "Do no harm" because many individuals, families, and the church have been hurt continuously by the current stance of the UMC.

**Whereas**, the current language in the *Book of Discipline* is in conflict with the present state of scientific knowledge and societal acceptance. Such language puts United Methodism at odds with the positions of other denominations with which we are most closely related.

**Whereas**, as Methodists, "We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons." ¶161F

**Therefore** be it resolved that the members of the Texas Annual Conference United Methodist Church join together to move the United Methodist Church to one of acceptance and inclusion and leave the judgment to God, and further be it resolved that we recommend a change to the *Book of Discipline* amending ¶161B as follows:

B) 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 one man and one woman.~~

#### **4.B A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO PETITION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO CHANGE THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE TO OFFER THE BLESSINGS OF MARRIAGE TO HOMOSEXUAL COUPLES**

**Whereas**, homosexual families bring blessings to our churches.

**Whereas**, United Methodist clergy have conducted union services for families in their congregations since our denomination's formation. United Methodist clergy need to be allowed to conduct union services in our congregations.

**Whereas**, the current *Book of Discipline* prohibition of same-sex weddings presents a double standard which impedes pastoral care.

**Whereas**, this discrimination undercuts evangelism to all God's children and our efforts to recruit and maintain qualified clergy.

**Whereas**, the United Methodist Church risks ignoring the work of the Holy Spirit in American society as the civil society moves to full acceptance of its citizens.

**Whereas**, it is clear that Jesus Christ sincerely reached out to embrace all of humanity, even those marginalized by society, the UMC clearly states: "We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons." ¶161F (2012 BOD)

**Whereas**, a basic tenet of John Wesley is "Do no harm," and this position of the UMC does harm to the individuals, families, and the church.

**Whereas**, the UMC needs to affirm the Christian bonds of love and commitment between adults as they build their lives and families together.

**Therefore**, be it resolved that the members of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶341 by deleting ¶341.6 as follows:

~~6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~

#### **4.C A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE TEXAS 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.

**Whereas**, from the experience at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, Houston, Texas, our members, independent of sexual orientation or gender identity, are shouldering the responsibilities and obligations in our congregation, performing all the functions of any other member, and contributing to the betterment of this congregation in the church and their personal lives.

**Whereas**, the UMC needs to stand with all of our members in obtaining and sustaining their civil legal standing and equality in current society and within the church regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Therefore**, be it resolved that the members of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church recommend a change in the *Book of Discipline* to amend ¶162J as follows:

*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.