

# 2016 Book of Discipline Statements

## Regarding the ministry of the ordained

- ¶ **304.3:** 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.
- ¶ **341.6:** Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.
- ¶ **2702:** Chargeable Offenses (a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage;<sup>11</sup> (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings,<sup>12</sup> including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;<sup>13</sup>

## 2016 Book of Discipline Statements Regarding United Methodist funds

- ¶ 613: The [conference council on finance and administration] shall have authority and responsibility 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" (¶ 161F).
- ¶ 806.9: [The General Council on Finance and Administration] 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' (¶ 161F).

# Social Principles

Located in the BOD Part V

The Social Principles, while not to be considered church law, are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions. They are a call to faithfulness and are intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. The Social Principles are a call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice.

# **Social Principles**

## 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.

# Social Principles

## Human Sexuality

- 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.

# Social Principles

## Human Sexuality

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.<sup>1</sup>

## Social Principles

### 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, 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.

# Social Principles

## Marriage

We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity 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. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

# 2016 Book of Discipline Statements

## Regarding church membership

- **¶ 4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church:** The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.
- **¶ 214. Eligibility:** All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶ 4).