

2010 ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

AC14a

TITLE:

Confronting Bias against the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community

ACTION

At every church and charge conference in the Rocky Mountain Conference there shall be discussion and commitment to confront bias against the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community through the affirmation of the following statement:

We reaffirm that all people are children of God and of sacred worth and because of the mystery of human sexuality, people differ in how they express it.

RATIONALE:

Many of our churches are seeking new ways to expand their ministries as they face changes in the communities they serve. At the same time, some churches in our three states that discriminate against gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people repel many youth and young adults, limiting the evangelistic ministry of churches in transitional communities.

Paragraph 212.2 in the Book of Discipline states, In communities of transition, the local church shall be regarded as a principal base of mission from which structures of society shall be confronted, evangelization shall occur, and a principal witness to the changing community shall be realized.

We have affirmed that all are children of God and of sacred worth, and the mystery of human sexuality even as we differ on homosexual expressions of it (2008 AC40). To the youth and young adults of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, we say: "Come join us!" We need your clarity and energy as we realize the goal of every local church becoming a base for the mission of confronting unjust heterosexist structures and embracing people long told they are not welcome at church. Together, we witness God's inclusive love for all people.

2010 ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

AC15

TITLE: Affirmation of Inclusiveness in Local Church Leadership

ACTION:

Each year, the nomination committee of every local church in the Rocky Mountain Conference will affirm their commitment to inclusiveness by reading the specified paragraph below in the rationale before considering people for leadership positions.

RATIONALE:

The Rocky Mountain Conference has called for inclusion in our ministries (most recently in two petitions to the 2008 General Conference, GC53 and 54, which called for ending discrimination in membership of our churches). The constitution of our United Methodist Church has inclusiveness built in. Successive General Conferences have specified that "Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the church, the community and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination," and adding that "the mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supportive of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community and the world." [Paragraph 139, 2008 Discipline]

There are some in our worldwide church who have argued that non-heterosexual persons should be excluded. Some have promoted legislation that gay men and lesbians should be imprisoned or killed for loving each other. We insist now before God, the church and the world, that this is against the spirit of The United Methodist Church and the spirit of Christ's welcoming Grace.

We therefore urge members and clergy of the Rocky Mountain Conference to safeguard the constitutional requirement of inclusiveness, avoiding "every semblance of discrimination" as we represent the church and administer its business.

Specified paragraph to be read before nomination committee:

"Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the church, the community and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination," and adding that "the mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supportive of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community and the world." [Paragraph 139, 2008 Discipline]

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AC 40 RESOLUTION on Human Sexuality in The Rocky Mountain Conference

ACTION

Be it resolved that The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference affirms the statement known as The Majority Report, adopted by the Human Sexuality Sub-Committee and the larger Church & Society II Legislative Committee of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church on April 27, 2008.

A Statement on Human Sexuality (The Majority Report)
as adopted by Church & Society II Legislative Committee
General Conference, April 27, 2008)

We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church, and society. We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this gift. We also recognize our limited understanding of this complex gift and encourage the medical, theological, and social science disciplines to combine in a determined effort to understand human sexuality more completely. United Methodists, along with other Christians, have struggled to find principles for applying traditional teachings to contemporary understandings of human sexuality.

We recognize that sexuality is part of the larger human mystery, to be received and acknowledged in grateful responsibility. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us. We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sexual relations, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. We call for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for children thus abused. We believe that the Church family should support all families in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We challenge all members of our community of faith to commitment, integrity and fidelity in their sexual relationships.

We know that all are God's children and of sacred worth; yet we have been, and remain, divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Faithful, thoughtful people who have grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another; yet all seek a faithful witness. We continue to reason and pray together with faith and hope that the Holy Spirit will soon bring reconciliation to our community of faith. The fire in our disagreements points to a deeper human mystery than we knew. We believe that the Spirit has brought our collective conscience to acknowledge this mystery more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before God and our neighbors. We therefore ask the Church, United Methodist and others, and the world, to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices as the Spirit leads us to new insight. Let us seek to welcome, know, forgive, and love one another as Christ has accepted us, that God may be glorified through everything in our lives.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008.

TERMINATION DATE: Permanent

GC 53 PETITION TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION IN RECEIVING MEMBERS INTO UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATIONS

Amend Paragraph 214.4 of The Book of Discipline

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Secretary of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church will petition the 2008 General Conference to amend paragraph 214 of the Discipline to insert the following sentence after the words "in any local church in the connection" (Par. 4): **NO PERSON SHALL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR REASONS RELATED TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, ECONOMIC CONDITION, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR GENDER EXPRESSION.**

RATIONALE:

Whereas, the United Methodist Church (UMC) has historically welcomed into membership "all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition" per Article IV of the Constitution; and

Whereas, the United Methodist Discipline ¶102 of our Doctrinal History states the following: "Beyond the essentials of vital religion, United Methodists respect the diversity of opinions held by conscientious persons of faith. Wesley followed the time-tested approach: 'In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.' ... The crucial matter in religion is steadfast love for God and neighbor, empowered by the redeeming and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit"; and

Whereas, the United Methodist Social Principles in the Discipline paragraph 161(g) states, "Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance 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. Although we do 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 implore families and churches not to reject or condemn their lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons"; and Whereas, the United Methodist Church has implemented the advertising strategy "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors" which includes a "Diversity Expression" that "by communicating the myriad beliefs and cultural diversity of the church, this expression invites anyone to attend, wherever they are on the journey toward finding a spiritual home" (United Methodist Communication's Website: <http://www.ignitingministry.org/advertising/diversity.aspx>); and

Whereas, John Wesley preached that the church is the means of dispensing the grace of God to all who seek it; Romans 15:7 says "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you"; Romans 14:13-14 says "Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another."; Luke 8:1-3 describes the numerous female followers of Jesus; 1 Corinthians 12:13a says "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"; Galatians 3:28 says "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"; and John 13:35 says "everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another;" and

GC 54 PETITION TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION IN RECEIVING MEMBERS INTO UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATIONS

Amend Paragraph 4 Article IV of The Book of Discipline

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

Amend Article IV, as follows: "The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, economic condition, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR GENDER EXPRESSION, 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 the vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, economic condition, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR GENDER EXPRESSION."

RATIONALE:

Whereas, the United Methodist Church (UMC) has historically welcomed into membership "all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition" per Article IV of the Constitution; and

Whereas, the United Methodist Discipline ¶102 of our Doctrinal History states the following: "Beyond the essentials of vital religion, United Methodists respect the diversity of opinions held by conscientious persons of faith. Wesley followed the time-tested approach: 'In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.' ... The crucial matter in religion is steadfast love for God and neighbor, empowered by the redeeming and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit"; and

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AC 18 CLERGY AFFIRMATION OF PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP

The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference invites its pastors to affirm publicly that they voluntarily relinquish the new authority granted them by the judicial Council decision 1032 and that they agree to receive any person into professing membership who – after a reasonable period of instruction and training – affirms vows of membership and to accept any member in good standing as per paragraph #225 of the Discipline.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2006

TERMINATION DATE: June 30, 2007

AC35 AFFIRMING INCLUSIVE INTENT AND SPIRIT OF "We Shall Not Be Silent"

The Rocky Mountain Conference affirms the inclusive intent and spirit of the Western Jurisdiction's "We Will Not Be Silent," declaration. We urge each local congregation to consider ways they can implement this vision "to be in ministry with all God's children and celebrate the gifts diversity brings" so that "we will continue to feast at table with all God's children." Conversations must continue within our conference and in congregations about how we can work against discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons and encouraging full participation of all peoples at all levels in the life of the church and society. We ask each congregation to consider posting the "We Will Not Be Silent" declaration so members and visitors might know our quest for inclusiveness. Further, we ask the Conference web-site to include regular updated information about what the conference and congregations are doing to creatively address this challenge.

Effective Date: July 1, 2002

Termination Date: Not Applicable

AC-5 "WE WILL NOT BE SILENT" ADOPTION OF DECLARATION

We commend the Declaration from the Western Jurisdiction to all congregations of the Rocky Mountain Conference for prayerful reflection and thoughtful dialogue, led by the appointive clergy and lay leaders during 2001-2002. A copy will be mailed to each congregation. Following the discussion, a report confirming the dialogue must be submitted to the Committee on Peace with Justice.

Exhibit A

DECLARATION FROM THE WESTERN JURISDICTION

We of the Western Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church have heard the call of the prophet Micah "to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." We have heard Jesus' invitation for all to come to the banquet table of God's abundant grace.

Certain actions of General Conference 2000 have caused tremendous pain for individuals and communities and have resulted in an attempt to suppress our prophetic and pastoral ministries among all people, regardless of sexual orientation.

The votes may have been cast but our voices will not be silent. Our jurisdictional vision calls us to be "a home for all God's people, gathered around a table of reconciliation and transformation." Affirming the statement of United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church, "We acknowledge that there may be differences of opinion among us, but this does not require that we wait on justice." We cannot accept discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons and therefore, we will work toward their full participation at all levels in the life of the church and society. Valuing the voices of those who disagree, we will continue to be in dialogue as we journey together in creative tension. We will continue to be in ministry with all God's children and celebrate the gifts diversity brings. We will continue to feast at table with all God's children.

Drafting group: Sharon Rhodes-Wickett (Cal-Pac), Karen Oliveto (Cal-Nev), Tom Boller (Yellowstone), Daniel Foster (PNW), Milo Thornberry (AMC), Jeff Procter-Murphy (DSW), Erin Dunning (Cal-Nev), Ann Bateman (ORD), Gilbert Caldwell (RM), Bishop Melving G. Talbert, and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson.

Casper, Wyoming, July 12-15, 2000

Effective: July 1, 2001

Termination: July 1, 2002