

BRIEF FOR JUDICIAL COUNCIL
DOCKET NUMBER 1012-8

IN RE: Review of a Bishop's Decision of Law in the North Carolina Annual Conference Regarding the Meaning, Effect, and Application of ¶¶ 613.20 and 806.9

During the 2011 North Carolina Annual Conference Session, I made a motion requesting withdrawal of membership and financial resources from the North Carolina Council of Churches as I believe their practices and policies “promote the acceptance of homosexuality.” That motion is attached to this brief. The motion was defeated at that time. During the past year, members of Center United Methodist Church and I have been in conversation concerning the two paragraphs cited above in our 2008 “Book of Discipline.” It was determined that perhaps the reason the motion failed is partly due to a misunderstanding of what the phrase, “promote the acceptance of homosexuality” means. While I am sure what constitutes “promotion of homosexuality,” since it has not been clearly defined it seems it is up to a personal interpretation. These two paragraphs impact the entire United Methodist Church and I believe the phrase, “promote the acceptance of homosexuality” must be defined so all Conferences, Districts, and Local Churches have a clear understanding of what, “promote the acceptance of homosexuality” means.

While I understand Bishop Gwinn’s rationale for his decision, I disagree with his interpretation that this is a request for a declaratory decision and that it is hypothetical. It is not declaratory as I did not ask for Bishop Gwinn to make a ruling in a vacuum but clearly stated the my request with particular questions that I believe fit the definition of the phrase, “promote the acceptance of homosexuality.” Neither is it hypothetical as my request was made before the General Council on Finance and Administration’s report where they have a line item for an entity that I believe “promotes the acceptance of homosexuality.” Until such time as this phrase is defined either by General Conference or the Judicial Council, heated debate will continue in our Annual Conferences concerning various entities who “promote the acceptance of homosexuality” and receive United Methodist Funds.

I understand the need to retain membership in various ecumenical groups and to maintain ties with other denominations. However, ¶¶613.20 and 806.9 clearly state that United Methodist funds are not to be given to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality.

Thus with this in mind I once again ask the following questions:

- 1) Does the performance of same sex unions and same sex marriage ceremonies “promote the acceptance of homosexuality?”
- 2) Does the election or appointment of a self avowed practicing homosexual to a position of authority within an ecumenical group “promotes the acceptance of homosexuality?”
- 3) Does an ecumenical group that advocates for the legalization of same sex marriage or has a policy statement opposed to “The Defense of Marriage Act” promotes the acceptance of homosexuality?
- 4) Does an ecumenical group that admits into its membership an organization that performs same sex unions and marriages “promotes the acceptance of homosexuality.”

I believe each question above “promotes the acceptance of homosexuality.” My reasons are listed below:

- 1) Any organization that performs same sex unions and same sex marriage ceremonies are stating that homosexuality is not incompatible with Christian teachings and should be embraced as an appropriate Christian lifestyle.
- 2) When an ecumenical group elects a self avowed practicing homosexual to a position of authority and leadership such as president of said group then they are advocating that homosexuality is not incompatible with Christian teachings and should be embraced as an appropriate Christian lifestyle.
- 3) Any ecumenical group that advocates for the legalization of same sex marriage is clearly stating that homosexuality is not incompatible with Christian teachings and should be embraced as an appropriate Christian lifestyle.
- 4) The admittance of a organization that performs same sex unions into an ecumenical group gives validity to the idea the homosexuality is not incompatible with Christian teachings and should be embraced as an appropriate Christian lifestyle.

I am aware that various ecumenical organizations have done some wonderful things in the name of Christ, We cannot simply look at the past good they have done. It is tempting to look the other way or to believe that the funds we send are not being used in a manner to promote the acceptance of a homosexual lifestyle. I am a realist and I understand that any funds we give to such organizations, regardless of the other good they do, even if they guarantee Methodist funds will not be used directly, it allows them to free up funds from other areas in order to promote their agenda of advancing the homosexual agenda.

Finally, I believe that all the Councils on Finance need direction in this area as well as the local churches. This is a United Methodist issue and not simply one annual conference. I respectfully request affirmation on these definitions or clarification on what activities, policies, and practices constitute “promoting the acceptance of homosexuality.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chris D. Humphreys
Pastor, Center UMC
4141 S Plank Road
Sanford, NC 27330

Date mailed to the Secretary of the Judicial Council

Required copies to:
Secretary of the Judicial Council (13)
Bishop (1)
Assistant to the Bishop (1)
Secretary of the Annual Conference (1)