

BOR #2023: Support for Clergy Families

Over the past several years, clergy, whether single or married, and their families have continued to express serious concerns for the stresses they bear in their congregations. This phrase, “life in the fishbowl,” describes how pastor and staff therapist Frank J. Stalfa sees the lives of clergy and their spouses and family members in our local congregations. The image is painfully accurate about the situation filled with unrealistic expectations, virtually nonexistent boundaries for privacy and personal time, disrupted lives, crises in careers and educational programs, unending demands of congregational needs, and pressure for spouse and preacher’s kids (PKs) to be persons without personal or professional needs as well as perfect, “model” Christians.

PK syndrome is documented in research on children and youth in clergy families, and it names the pressure on clergy children to set a high standard for other children to follow (the perfect student, the model son/daughter, the high-achieving youth), potentially limiting their individuality and development. Support, encouragement, and opportunities for PKs to share their pressures and joys are being addressed through annual conference PK retreats, blogs (www.preacherkids.com <<http://www.preacherkids.com>>) and growing recognition among congregations that they are pivotal people in the health and well-being of preacher’s kids.

The 2009 Clergy Spouse and Family Survey, conducted by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, in collaboration with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the General Board of Discipleship, received over 3100 responses from United Methodist clergy spouses. This survey echoed many of the responses to the Leadership survey conducted in 1992 as to the contributors for marital stresses among clergy families: insuf-

ficient time together, use of money, income level, communication difficulties, differences over leisure activities, difficulties in raising children, pastor's anger toward spouse, and differences over ministry career and spouse's career. A significant and troubling finding from the Leadership survey was that 80% of clergy reported that they believed their pastoral ministry negatively affected their families. The 2009 Clergy Spouse and Family Survey revealed similar reflections from spouses and as well as several changes occurring among clergy spouses.

Although the majority of clergy spouses are female, a growing number of these spouses are male. This challenges how the "role" of clergy spouse may be related more to gender than the "position" as a spouse to a clergyperson. Noteworthy among the differences in how men married to women clergy are treated include: rather than being called the clergy spouse, they are the "men married to a minister," and the expectations placed on female clergy spouses are not placed on these male clergy spouses such as providing child care, being in a choir, teaching a children's church school, or attending worship services. Their development of a separate personal and professional identity may not be the struggle it is for many female spouses who fight to keep a career or family time or educational opportunities. This suggests that expectations of clergy spouses may not only be traditional but also gender-related. Further research could guide the Church in how to minister effectively to spouses of clergy and congregations as these roles continue to transition.

Also changing is the "traditional" supportive ministerial role identity among clergy spouses. In previous generations, the pastor's spouse was generally available to provide additional local church leadership. However, the 2009 survey revealed a very different set of life commitments as clergy spouses are now employed full-time (55%), part-time (17%), with only 12% able to be a stay-at-home parent/homemaker; 30% of clergy spouses have college

degrees and 43% have graduate degrees, representing being one of the most highly educated groups in the denomination; among those surveyed, 78% were female and 21.7% were male; 70% believed their children are satisfied being a “preacher’s kid” and 18% of parents indicated they didn’t know how their children would assess their experience; 80% of spouses are in their first marriage and rated their marital satisfaction as very high (note that this survey was not able to reach divorced spouses of UMC clergy); and 49% are in the 51-64 age range with a combined total of 38% being younger than age 50. The changing nature of the clergy spouse role has yet to alter many expectations from many of our congregations. (“The Clergy Spouses and Families in the United Methodist Church Survey,” 2009, <<http://www.gcsr.org/ClergyFamilyandSpouseSurvey.aspx>>.)

Although the 2009 survey showed that the clergy spouse roles and expectations are changing, it also revealed that the experiences of being invisible, lonely, recipients of parishioner gossip and hostilities, frequent disregard to clergy family needs of adequate, safe, and efficient housing and for honoring spouses’ professional careers and development, and chronic distrust from the consequences of seeking professional marital and/or family counseling for fear of how the Church (local and annual conference) may perceive them as “troubled” remain far too common among our clergy spouses.

It is unthinkable to believe that congregations intentionally wish the stress and pain that living life in a “fishbowl” can cause. Certainly, many parishioners would find it unacceptable that their expectations and demands (spoken and unspoken) would cause additional pain and hardship on their clergy family.

Christian Community for All Our Families

As United Methodists we envision churches and congregations

in which all of God's children are welcome at the Table, all are nurtured and respected for their own gifts and talents, and are transformed to be Christ to others in the world. We are a Church of disciples, each to be fully engaged in transforming the world regardless of family status.

Our Church places high value on our families, yet the needs and crises of our clergy families may go unnoticed, unidentified and unaddressed. Clergy families are like every other family with strengths and stresses similar to all families. They need privacy and boundaries that protect life just as other families have.

What Can Be Done?

The roles of clergy spouse and family are unique and frequently taken for granted. These roles are, nonetheless, critical to the well-being and success of the clergy's ministry. Sustaining the emotional, spiritual, physical, and economic health of our clergy families is a ministry to be recommended to every congregation and annual conference. Recognizing that clergy have families that come in different forms and have different needs, congregants can:

1. Examine their own attitudes, perceptions, and expectations and identifying where they are unrealistic;
2. Ask themselves the questions that will identify any sexism or racism in their expectations and assumptions: If this clergy spouse/family member were another gender or another race, would I have the same expectations? Would I make the same assumptions? Would I react differently if they were a congregational family member?
3. Remember clergy and their families are human and have their own personal and professional lives;
4. Provide safe and honest sharing for clergy families when stress mounts;

5. Encourage clergy families to seek help, even taking the initiative to provide resources and support;
6. Regularly clarify and keep their expectations realistic, recognizing that pedestals are for statues;
7. Reserve family time and protect family life boundaries;
8. Provide adequate, healthy, clean, safe and efficient parsonages (which clergy families are to also treat with respect and care), with the understanding that this is the home for the clergy and family, not an extension of church property.

Congregations can share the effective and renewing models working in the episcopal areas and conferences around the Church, including but not limited to these:

1. Iowa Conference's "What Do I Do If . . .?" Basic Information Handbook for Clergy Spouses, distributed to clergy spouses upon the commission or ordination of their spouse.
2. Florida Conference's program of nurture, healing, and preventative care to clergy and their families, Shade and Fresh Water. (The three-part approach includes a therapeutic presence for families in crisis or need, including professional counseling and safe space; a preventative program for clergy families in transition in appointments; and a sustaining program encouraging healthy modeling of well-balanced lives.)
3. Varied programs, guidance, and initiatives of organizations like The Center for Ministry, the Center for Pastoral Effectiveness and Spiritual Direction, and websites like "Desperate Preacher's Site," PreachersKids.com and spouseconnect.blogspot.com.
4. www.gcsr.org/Clergyspouse <<http://www.gcsr.org/Clergyspouse>> website for postings of articles, events, retreats and resources for clergy spouses and families.
5. The book, *How the Other Half Lives: The Challenges Facing Clergy Spouses and Partners*, by Johnna Fredrickson & William A. Smith. Published by The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Ohio,

2010.

6. Clergy Housing Handbook: Parsonages available at www.gcsrw.org/clergypouse <<http://www.gcsrw.org/clergypouse>>: a collection of best practices from annual conferences with housing recommendations and checklists, designed to facilitate open, healthy and caring communication among clergy, clergy spouses and families, and parishioners.
7. Ongoing collaboration between the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the General Board of Discipleship, and the General Commission on Religion and Race.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church calls on each of the following groups to address this growing crisis among our clergy families:

1. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will work collaboratively with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the General Board of Discipleship to convene a summit to research issues affecting clergy spouses and families, to identify and promote existing relevant and effective resources, plan the development of needed additional resources to address these concerns, and make any legislative recommendations to the 2016 General Conference.
2. Bishops, cabinets, and boards of ordained ministry will promote specific conference resources, training and orientation models, and counseling assistance programs to all clergy and families.
3. Staff-parish relations committees will use strategies and training resources for their members in these specific concerns of clergy and families.
4. District superintendents and their spouses may be called on to provide modeling and leadership for their clergy families

in successful strategies. Superintendents will prioritize this issue as they work with local congregations in transitions and ongoing appointments.

5. Annual conference commissions on the status and role of women will survey spouses and families of clergy to assist annual conferences, bishops and cabinets, and general agencies in gathering data and developing resources and strategies in response to the challenges of life in the clergy family.

6. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will host a page on the www.gcsr.org <<http://www.gcsr.org>> website dedicated to posting available resources, links and conference events related to clergy spouse and family support ministries.

7. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will post on www.gcsr.org <<http://www.gcsr.org>> the Clergy Housing Handbook: Parsonages for easy availability and free accessibility to local church and conference boards of trustees, staff-parish councils, bishops, cabinets, boards of ordained ministry, and commissions on the status and role of women.

8. The research and data from the summit findings from GCSRW and other collaborating general church boards and agencies will be published in a summary document and made available for use by United Methodist annual conferences and other denominations and religious bodies.

ADOPTED 2004

AMENDED AND READOPTED 2012

RESOLUTION #2023, 2008, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #22, 2004 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 161B.

BOR #2043: Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct

Introduction: Misconduct of a sexual nature committed by laity and clergy is an ongoing problem throughout the Church. Three percent of women attending church in any given month reported being sexually harassed or abused by a clergyperson at some point in their adult lives according to a nationwide study (Diana Garland, "The Prevalence of Clergy Sexual Misconduct with Adults: A Research Study Executive Summary, 2009"; <<http://www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct/index.php?id=67406>>, accessed 16 July 2010). Continued revelations about mishandlings of religious leaders across all faith communities offer a sobering reminder to United Methodists to face our own abuse crisis (M. Garlinda Burton, "United Methodists Need to Face Abuse Crisis: A UMNS Commentary," umc.org 2010; <<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=1wL4KnN1LtH&b=5259669&ct+8437677&tr=y&auid=6486686>>, accessed 14 June 2010). The United Methodist Church averages between 140 and 500 known cases of clergy sexual misconduct annually in the US alone (Sally Badgley Dolch, *Healing the Breach: Response Team Intervention in United Methodist Congregations*, Doctor of Ministry, Wesley Theological Seminary, 2010, pp. 131-32). The most recent Sexual Harassment survey in The United Methodist Church revealed significant increases in sexual harassment perpetrated by laypersons (Gail Murphy-Geiss, "Sexual Harassment in the United Methodist Church," Chicago: General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 2005). The responsibility for handling these complaints rests with our judicatory leaders.

Bishops and district superintendents are responsible for ensuring that the church responds to allegations of sexual misconduct by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship, attending to both procedural justice or pastoral concern. In the church's response to misconduct, there can be no true procedural justice in the absence of pastoral concern just as there can be no

true pastoral concern without procedural justice. The dual needs of procedural justice and pastoral concern are far better met by team effort than by one individual. A full account of justice-making requires the involvement of different persons in distinct roles throughout a process of disclosure, adjudication, and healing. A trained Response/Intervention/Care Team is a group of persons with expertise in specific areas of trauma ready to be deployed by the bishop or bishop's designee to facilitate the process of healing mandated by the Book of Discipline.

Definition: Response Teams are called into a situation of trauma in order to promote the possibility of healing for the congregation and the individuals involved. Response Team ministry provides a way for judicatory leaders to enable effective assessment, intervention, training and resourcing of congregations experiencing events affecting congregational health by enlisting a group of persons with training, expertise, and resources in specific areas of ministry. Members may be paid or unpaid. The Response Team is not called to any judicial or disciplinary processes for legal resolution of a situation. The Response Team is called into action by the bishop or bishop's designee, often a district superintendent, and is accountable to the bishop.

Disciplinary Mandate to Provide for Healing: The bishop and cabinet are mandated to "provide a process for healing within the congregation" or other ministry context as part of the supervisory response (§ 363.1f, Book of Discipline 2012) and judicial process (§ 2701.4.c). The Discipline also allows for the use of a Response Team to provide pastoral care when handling and following-up on a complaint: the bishop may select "persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing" to assist during the supervisory response (§ 363.1b, Book of Discipline 2012). These persons may perform distinct roles, such as individual support for the accused and individual support for the congregation and families affected. These roles are in addition to any interim appointment made in accordance with the

Book of Discipline 2012, ¶ 338.3. In all cases, the bishop initiates and guides the church's response to ministerial sexual abuse. Effective use of a Response Team can lessen legal liability and promote justice. When victims feel that the church is attending to their needs and seeking a thorough process for justice-making, they are more likely to continue engaging the church in problem-solving and resolution rather than reactively pursuing civil procedures (e.g., suing the conference). Spreading the work of pastoral care and justice-making among several persons, each with a distinct role, also reduces real and perceived conflicts of interest. A trained and ready Response Team, assembled in a timely manner, can assist the bishop with the holistic task of justice-making.

The United Methodist Church commends the use of Response Teams in cases of sexual misconduct by ministerial leaders and urges judicatory leaders to train and employ them. Only 18 annual conferences in the US maintain an active, trained Response Team ("Active" is defined as having responded to more than one congregation within a three-year period. Six additional conferences used a Response Team once between 2007 and 2009. Sally B. Dolch, *Healing the Breach*). Between 2007 and 2009, these teams responded to 156 incidents, averaging nearly three cases per conference per year. Extrapolating this data to all jurisdictions, we estimate that an additional 112 cases of ministerial sexual misconduct are handled by annual conferences in the US every year without the assistance of a Response Team. We urge bishops, district superintendents, chancellors, and other conference leaders in The UMC to seek out training in the use of a Response Team, to organize and provide for training Response Team personnel, and to employ these teams as partners in the healing ministry required when someone in leadership violates the sacred trust of ministry through sexual misconduct.

For more information on how judicatory leaders and Response Teams may collaborate in promoting congregational healing, see

When a Congregation Is Betrayed: Responding to Clergy Misconduct by Beth Ann Gaede and Candace Reed Benyei (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006, pp. 102-16) and the “Guide to Using a Response Team,” <http://umsexualethics.org/ConferenceLeaders/ResponseTeams.aspx>.

ADOPTED 2012

RESOLUTION #2043, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 161J.

BOR #2045: Eradication of Sexual Harassment In The United Methodist Church and Society

Since the mid 1970s when the term “sexual harassment” was first recognized, the world has seen an evolution in awareness, laws and litigation, policies, advocacy, and international collaboration to eradicate sexual harassment in the workplace. In our own communities we have moved from debating whether or not sexual harassment is even a problem to witnessing women and men join together across national boundaries to address it in global settings, churches and ministries, and multinational workplaces.

Since the 1990s, sexual harassment is a recognized form of sexual violence and misconduct in our societies and in The United Methodist Church. The Church declared sexual harassment a sin against individuals and communities, and a chargeable offense against our clergy or laity. Critical to our understanding of the impact of harassment is the recognition that it is certainly an abuse of power over another, not only inappropriate sexual or gender-directed conduct.

Definitions

Beginning with the continuum of behaviors that includes sexual harassment: Sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of

another. It includes criminal behaviors in some nations, states, or communities.

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual misconduct. The Social Principles define it as “any unwanted sexual comment, advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation and abuse of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender” (§ 161J).

To clarify further, it is unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior within a pastoral, employment, ministerial (including volunteers), mentor, or colleague relationship that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or volunteer’s performance. It can create a hostile, offensive environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit women, men, elders, children, or youth.

Generally, anyone can be a target and anyone can harass—women, men, youth, interns, volunteers, all racial/ethnic groups, any level of employee, clergy, or laity. In the learning place, it affects any student of either gender, any grade, any teacher or professional, or any volunteer.

Businesses, governments, congregations, and organizations lose significant human and financial resources when harassment is permitted to devastate workers, customers, or members. It damages self-esteem, productivity, and ability to minister or earn wages. It can result in illness, absenteeism, poor performance, loss of promotions and opportunities. For students it can result

in failure, absenteeism, isolation from peers, loss of self-esteem and learning potential, withdrawal from teams and groups, and illness. Families of the harassed and others in work, worship, and learning places are also victims of the hostile, intimidating environment harassment creates.

Harassment in the Church

In the church, harassment can occur between a staff person, pastor, committee or council chairperson, church school teacher or helper, student, camper, counselor, youth worker, volunteer, or chaperone, paid or unpaid. It can happen on the bus to camp, in a youth group or Bible study, on a church computer or in choir rehearsal. The devastating effects on persons when it happens in a faith community jeopardize spiritual life, theological meaning, and relationships. For some, the loss of a sense of safety and sanctuary can be permanent. In 1990, the General Council on Ministries released the study mandated by General Conference in 1988 examining sexual harassment in The UMC. Then, half of the clergy, 20 percent of laity, nearly half of students, and 37 percent of church staff had had an experience of harassment in a church setting. Nearly 20 years ago we had much work to do to eradicate this form of sexual misconduct and violence.

Four quadrennia later, good work has been done toward the elimination of sexual harassment in the Church. Thirty-five annual conferences now assign oversight of harassment issues to a “team,” and many conferences require sexual misconduct awareness training for all clergy. Since the General Conference mandated sexual harassment policies in 1996, more and more churches of every size continue to report policies in place (in 2007: 34 percent of smallest and 86 percent of largest membership congregations have policies—up from 9 percent and 36 percent, respectively, in 1995). The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has provided support and counsel to victims and

church officials in hundreds of cases.

But the most recent surveys of our progress in eradicating sexual harassment (2005 and 2007¹) are very troubling: sexual harassment remains a significant problem for women and men, lay and clergy in our church settings, programs, and with church property (including computers and the Internet):

1. Awareness of the denomination's policy on sexual harassment is relatively high (higher among clergy than laity), but awareness of the resources for victims and congregations is much lower.

2. While every local congregation is required to have a policy and procedure on sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, in 2007 only 34 percent of small and 86 percent of largest membership churches report that they do.

3. Ninety percent of pastors have attended at least one sexual ethics training, but only one of four pastors has attended supplementary training.

4. More than three-fourths of the clergywomen and half of the laywomen had experienced sexual harassment in the Church (only a third of laymen had); the most commonly reported settings were church meetings and offices, and workplaces and social gatherings at seminary.

5. Perpetrators are most often men and increasingly laypersons in the local church. Clergy commit over a third of reported offenses. A significant change since the 1990 study was significant increases in the number of laity harassing laity, and laity harassing clergy.

6. Local churches were most likely to trivialize reports/

complaints while seminaries and UM offices were more likely to move toward action against offenders.

7. Personal friends and relatives were most helpful to victims, while district superintendents, personnel officers, and seminary administrators were among the least helpful.

8. The most lasting negative effects were inability to work with the offender, emotional impacts, and worsened feelings about self and the church.

9. Smaller membership churches need resources and training specifically developed for their unique settings and dynamics.

1. "Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church 2005," and the "Quadrennial Local Church Survey 2007," by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women," Chicago, Illinois, Gail Murphy-Geiss, Principal Investigator.

In The United Methodist Church, constant vigilance is needed to keep effective, updated policies and procedures in all places in the church. Regular training of our lay and clergy leaders is a critical ongoing ministry of our church, with focus on the troubling use of "cyber-sex" (sexualized material in telecommunications) in church programs, with church property, or on church premises.

In 2006, a significant national symposium addressing sexual misconduct in The United Methodist Church, "Do No Harm," was held. At that critical event, participants asked episcopal leaders to focus on clergy training, lay leadership training, and early intervention with problem clergy. Advocacy and intervention teams have been working in many conferences but not all, and

every episcopal area needs to maintain working, effective channels and procedures. We need and are grateful for strong episcopal leadership across the Church who maintain our achievements and forcefully address existing barriers to a harassment-free denomination.

A Vision of God's Hospitable Community

Sexual harassment destroys community. This alienating, sinful behavior causes brokenness in relationships—the opposite of God's intention for us. From the first biblical stories of human community in the garden to the letters of Paul to the first Christian communities, we learn that all of us, both female and male, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. We are called to be stewards of God's community of hospitality where there is not only an absence of harassment, but also the presence of welcome, respect, and equality.

Therefore, the General Conference calls for intensified efforts worldwide to eradicate sexual harassment in the denomination and its institutions including these strategies:

1. Episcopal leaders implement plans to address and eradicate sexual harassment in each episcopal area including regular, updated training of clergy, early intervention with problem clergy, and regular training of lay men and women, especially in smaller membership churches;
2. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, in collaboration with appropriate agencies (including the General Board of Discipleship's Safe Sanctuaries ministry), continue to develop and distribute resources to reduce the risk of abuse in local churches and increase United Methodists' understanding and action on sexual harassment in church and society;

3. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, in collaboration with appropriate agencies, develop and distribute resources on sexual harassment specific to those in ordained ministry and to lay leaders, students, faculty, and administrators of United Methodist-related educational institutions;

4. Annual conferences throughout the connection will encourage their local and national governments to collect accurate data on the incidence and nature of sexual harassment in their workplaces, and encourage their national governments to adopt laws, policies, and procedures for eradicating sexual harassment;

5. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women continue to monitor and assess the Church's progress in eradicating sexual harassment and will seek ways to report its findings to the Church on the specific areas to be strengthened within the life of the Church including policy development, prevention, education, and training;

6. The General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries advocate for laws that prohibit sexual harassment in US workplaces, and continue to provide resources to the denomination on international initiatives to eradicate harassment and other forms of violence against women;

7. The Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships work cooperatively with the World Council of Churches "Decade to Overcome Violence" (2001-2010); and

8. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women continue to conduct assessments of The United Methodist Church's progress to eradicate this behavior from the Church worldwide.

For more information and resources, see The Book of Resolu-

tions, 2012, “Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships” (#2044) and the original text of this resolution in The Book of Resolutions, 2004, p. 155.

ADOPTED 1992

REVISED AND ADOPTED 2000, 2008, 2016

RESOLUTION #2045, 2008, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #37, 2004 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #31, 2000 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 161J.

BOR ¶2046: Sexual Ethics as Integral Part of Formation for Ministerial Leadership

Background: A 2005 survey conducted by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (henceforth, GCSRW), “Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church,” found a high number of incidents of sexual harassment in local churches and seminary settings (Gail Murphy-Geiss, “Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church,” Chicago: General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 2005). A 2009 study, “Sex and the Seminary: Preparing Ministers for Sexual Health and Justice” by the Religious Institute, found that few seminaries offer comprehensive courses in sexuality issues for religious professionals and most seminarians can graduate without taking a course in sexuality. Furthermore, tenure-track faculty are the least likely to teach sexuality-related courses. One of the report’s key recommendations is that seminaries require coursework on human sexuality and healthy professional boundaries (Kate M. Ott, “Sex and the Seminary: Preparing Ministers for Sexual Health and Justice,” New York: Religious Institute, 2009).

Since 1996, The United Methodist Church has called for “United Methodist-related schools of theology to provide training on the prevention and eradication of sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct within the ministerial relationship” (Book of Resolutions 2008, p. 139; see also Book of Resolutions 1996, p. 131). The United Methodist Church has also urged seminaries to address issues of pornography and pornography addiction (Book of Resolutions 2008, pp. 155-56). Some schools have done well in teaching professional ethics and sexual ethics for ministry, and some faculty members work very hard to attend to the ethical aspects of the ministerial profession. These efforts, however, often depend on the passionate commitment of individual faculty members and administrators and are not yet integrated into the institutional structures of expectation in seminary education. (This dynamic goes beyond United Methodist theologi-

cal education. In a 400-page, landmark study of clergy education by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, issues of sexual ethics and interpersonal boundaries are mentioned only three times, briefly. Charles Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006, pp. 173, 315 and 338.) The United Methodist Church desires that professional ethics go beyond a special emphasis of lone faculty members and become an integral and intentional part of the fabric of ministerial formation. The United Methodist Church calls for seminaries and Course of Study schools to strengthen existing curricular coverage and training in professional ethics for United Methodists preparing for roles of ministerial leadership.

A multidisciplinary, multiethnic, racially diverse, ecumenical group of scholars, clergy, and consultants has unanimously agreed on the fundamental need to improve the structures of professional education for clergy. Many persons and groups have been included and consulted in developing a strategy to improve training in professional ethics for United Methodists preparing for roles of ministerial leadership. In April 2010, GCSRW convened a full-day seminar of seminary faculty, administrators, and consultants, with the participation of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, to examine the issue of ministerial preparedness and sexual misconduct and to develop recommendations for addressing this need. (Details of this seminar, along with resources and updates on this project have been made available online throughout the development and testing of these guidelines: <http://umsexualethics.org/Education/SeminaryCurriculumDevelopment.aspx>.) Two seminar participants from different United Methodist seminaries committed to offering a pilot course in sexual ethics for ministry in the fall semester of 2010. The success of these elective courses was reported back to GCSRW in January 2011. Meanwhile, GCSRW

conducted listening sessions and pedagogical workshops with two additional United Methodist seminaries during the academic year 2010-2011. Plans are also being made for meeting with each United Methodist Seminary faculty by 2014. GCSRW collaborated in January 2011 with the FaithTrust Institute and the Religious Institute to present a panel and pedagogy workshop for the Society of Christian Ethics on "Teaching Sexuality from a Professional Ethics Perspective." (This session was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, which is funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. and located at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana.) GCSRW also presented its work in this area to participants of "Do No Harm 2011," a national sexual ethics summit of UM leaders from 56 annual conferences held in Houston, Texas in January 2011.

As a result of these consultations with faculty, administrators, general agency staff, and consultants, GCSRW proposes the following plan:

1. Develop pedagogical objectives relating to professional ethics for ministry to be covered during the course of the Masters of Divinity (henceforth, MDiv) curriculum;
2. Promote the development of a series of curricular modules with resources for each core MDiv course, tailored to each discipline of study: theology, ethics, evangelism, biblical studies, field education, etc. (including each of the basic graduate theological studies required for UM ordination, Book of Discipline 2008, ¶ 324.4a);
3. Encourage intentionally utilizing the implicit curriculum (e.g., plagiarism policies and student honor codes) to model professional ethics, policies, procedures, and adjudication of misconduct;
4. Develop strategies for greater ongoing collaboration among

UM seminaries, and between seminaries, GCSRW and other general agencies, and boards of ordained ministry.

Each stage represents ongoing collaboration with seminary faculty, administrators, and general agency staff. At its best, professional formation for ministerial leadership should not be confined to one subject, class, or academic discipline but should rather pervade the entire core curriculum, ethos and co-curricular experience of ministerial education. The overarching goal is that every person preparing for any role of ministerial leadership in The UMC be conversant with and practice professional ethics, sexual ethics, healthy boundaries and self-care.

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church calls for a rigorous program of ministerial readiness regarding professional ethics, sexual ethics, healthy boundaries, and self-care to become a standard aspect of United Methodist seminary and Course of Study education. The following pedagogical goals, core competencies, and content areas are to apply to students in the MDiv program of each UM seminary and additional seminaries approved by the University Senate and to the Course of Study for licensed local pastors.

Goals—Future ministerial leaders are to:

1. understand healthy interpersonal boundaries as integral to enabling the trust necessary for ministry;
2. recognize sexual ethics in ministry as an issue of appropriate use of power and avoidance of abuse rather than exclusively an issue of “sexual morality”;
3. understand the importance of professional ethics, including one’s own denominational policies and expectations;

4. learn the role of judicatories in prevention and response to clergy sexual misconduct;
5. become knowledgeable about human sexuality, one's own sexual self, and how to deal with sexual feelings that may arise for congregants and vice versa;
6. appreciate how sexual integrity contributes to spiritual wholeness and that this is vital to ministerial formation and personal health;
7. become conversant with scriptural and theological resources for all of the above.

Competencies—Ministerial candidates are to:

1. practice healthy life-choices and work/life balance;
2. be sexually self-aware;
3. become comfortable talking about issues of sexuality;
4. develop skills to provide pastoral care and worship leadership on sexuality issues;
5. be committed to sexual justice in the congregation and in society at large.

Content Areas—Students will study:

1. theology of power, privilege, and abuse (including topics such as: fiduciary duty of ministry; professional ethics paradigm; conflicts of interest; healthy boundaries; predators vs. wanderers);
2. human sexuality (including topics such as: dating, intimacy, and work/life balance; pregnancy, birth control, and abortion; pornography and objectification of persons; shame and abuse; consent and vulnerability; genetic, cultural, and physiological aspects of gender and sexuality);
3. sexual misconduct in ministry (including topics such as:

boundary violations; judicatory processes of justice-making;

secrecy; inappropriate uses of social networking and communication technologies);

4. pastoral care (including topics such as: working with victims of sexual violence and abuse; transference; dual relationships; confidentiality and stewardship of information; referrals);

5. best practices of ministry (including topics such as: cyber-safety, Safe Sanctuaries [Joy T. Melton, *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church*, Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1998]; healthy communications, clergy self-care; life-long sexuality education; ministering with sex offenders).

This common core of expectations will provide a baseline of preparation for ministerial leaders in The UMC. The regular, up-to-date sexual ethics training currently required of all clergy under appointment can build upon this shared foundation instead of having to start with the basics every time (Book of Resolutions 2008, p. 139). District committees on ordained ministry and conference boards of ordained ministry can expect clergy candidates to have a working knowledge and understanding of these facets of professional ethics and sexuality in ministry before they are appointed to serve a church. The continued training for clergy during residency can also build on this common core.

Be it further resolved, GCSRW will continue its work to improve training in professional ethics for United Methodists preparing for roles of ministerial leadership. Specifically, GCSRW will continue the four-stage plan described above.

Second Stage: GCSRW will continue to encourage and equip all faculty members to address these issues as they pertain specifically to their academic discipline. GCSRW will work with faculty groups to develop a series of curricular models and resources for each core MDiv course, tailored to each discipline of study:

theology, ethics, evangelism, biblical studies, field education, etc. (including each of the basic graduate theological studies required for UM ordination, Book of Discipline 2008, ¶ 324.4a).

Third Stage: concurrent with the second, GCSRW will work with seminaries to address co-curricular and extra-curricular formation of seminary students. Specifically, GCSRW will create guidelines for intentionally utilizing the implicit curriculum (e.g., plagiarism policies and student honor codes) to model professional ethics, policies, procedures, and adjudication of misconduct.

Fourth Stage: GCSRW will develop strategies for greater ongoing collaboration among UM seminaries, and between seminaries, GCSRW and other general agencies, and boards of ordained ministry. GCSRW has already begun this work by participating in a roundtable discussion, “Improving the Gatekeeping Function by Seminaries and Denominations,” convened by the FaithTrust Institute in March 2011.

Measuring Our Accountability: Seminaries have a great deal of flexibility to contextualize the ways in which these learning goals are reached. Each seminary has the freedom to shape its curricula and courses in ways that best suit the structures of the particular seminary. These guidelines do not specify an additional three-semester-hour course for ordination (although this is one possible way to meet the objectives listed above) but rather that the objectives be achieved throughout the entire professional degree (MDiv) or five-year Course of Study. It is intended that seminary administrators will coordinate how these topics will be covered across different academic courses and how each of these competencies and goals will be achieved throughout either track.

Be it further resolved, The United Methodist Church calls for:

1. District committees and conference Boards of Ordained Min-

istry to expect seminary and Course of Study graduates, beginning with the entering class of 2013, to have met the goals, achieved the competencies, and covered the content areas as outlined;

2. each seminary to report to GCSRW, by January 2014, its plan for meeting the above objectives;
3. Directors of Course of Study programs to report the same to GCSRW by September 2014;
4. GCSRW to assist the academic dean or other administrator at each seminary in interpreting these objectives, reporting the plan for compliance, and measuring the program's success; and
5. GCSRW to report the results of this effort to General Conference 2016.

ADOPTED 2012

RESOLUTION #2046, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 161J.

BOR #2081: Pornography and Sexual Violence

Throughout the Bible, themes exist that highlight the imperfect nature of humanity and the hope for redemption through our relationship as God's children held in God's loving arms.

The Old Testament laws of purity invite an understanding of the body created in God's image and accountable to God through right relationship. Christ shared with us a vision of the world that confirms our vulnerability and affirms sacred personhood. Jesus Christ provides a path to a loving and protective relationship with God and with others; treating our neighbors and families with love thereby fostering healthy physical and emotional relationships. John Wesley described the path to right relationship with God toward achieving invitation into God's kingdom as a journey toward Christian perfection. We struggle mightily throughout life to move toward that vision of Christian perfection in an imperfect world.

In the midst of our imperfect world we grieve at actions of sexual exploitation and pornography. Our Social Principles declare that, "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" (§ 161F The Book of Resolutions, 2012). The issue of pornography has undergone a dramatic change over the past two decades, one that shifts the definition, increases the complexity, and requires a new level of discussion. The use of violent, aggressive themes accompanying sexually explicit material has continued to increase. Television, the Internet, and emerg-

ing wireless technologies have made sexually aggressive media widely available, particularly to children and youth. Pornography is frequently relied upon as a source of information about sexuality. The Church is called to lead society in articulating an ethic that affirms God's good gift of human sexuality and that protects the vulnerable from sexual violence and coercion. Common understandings of pornography no longer serve us well. Some believe pornography is a social evil because it is sexual, while others may defend pornography as a universal right to freedom of expression because it is sexual. Yet the truth is that pornography is not only about sex; it is often about violence, degradation, exploitation, and coercion.

While there is not widespread agreement on definitions, the following are suggested as the basis for dialogue:

Pornography is sexually explicit material intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal that often portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation. In addition, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornographic.

The impact of pornography on behavior is difficult to measure. While there is little evidence that consuming pornography causes an individual to commit a specific act of sexual aggression, several studies suggest that such consumption is addictive and may predispose an individual to sexual offenses, and that it supports and encourages sexual offenders to continue and escalate their violent and abusive behavior. Few dispute the fact that a society that supports multibillion dollar industries promoting sexual violence as entertainment and portraying the abuse and torture of women and children in a sexual context is a society in trouble. "Pornography, by its very nature, is an equal opportunity toxin. It damages the viewer, the performer, and the spouses and the children of the viewers and the performers. It is a distortion of

power and fosters an unhealthy understanding about sex and relationships. It is more toxic the more you consume, the “harder” the variety you consume and the younger and more vulnerable the consumer. The damage is both in the area of beliefs and behaviors. The belief damage may include Pornography Distortion, Permission-Giving Beliefs and the attitudes about what constitutes a healthy sexual and emotional relationship. The behavioral damage includes psychologically unhealthy behaviors, socially inappropriate behaviors and illegal behaviors.”¹

The vast majority of pornography is inextricably linked to oppression of women. Its appeal will continue as long as sexual arousal is stimulated by images of power and domination of one person over another, most often male over female. Pornography is also linked to racism; women of color are invariably portrayed in the most violent and degrading ways. The destructive power of pornography lies in its ability to ensure that attitudes toward sexuality will continue to be influenced by images that negate human dignity, equality, and mutuality. Pornography contributes

1. Layden, Dr. Mary Anne, Co-Director, Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology Program, Center for Cognitive Therapy University of Pennsylvania, Testimony, The Science Behind Pornography Addiction, US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation Web site, (expert witness testimony),

<http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/witnesslist.cfm?id=1343> (18 May 2005). to alienation in human relationships and distorts the sexual integrity of both women and men.

The expansion of pornography onto the Internet in recent years has made access easier for providers and consumers of pornography, and especially for adults who sexually abuse children. There is mounting evidence that pedophiles routinely use the Internet to lure children into their hands. A staggering number of chat rooms promote rape, incest, sex with children, child prostitution, and other criminal and violent behaviors.

Pornographic materials are being transmitted in cyberspace on a global scale, permitting access by both adults and children.

Disclaimers warning of graphic materials on these sites have not prevented children from viewing them. Most sites offer free “previews” of graphic, obscene, and violent images and are linked to other sites. According to the United States Commission on Pornography, 12- to 17-year-old adolescents are among the largest consumers of pornography.

Those portrayed in Internet pornographic images are typically women, especially women of color. Female bodies are treated as objects and commodities, and female body parts are dismembered and magnified for pornographic effect and cyber-sexual consumption. The global nature of the Internet and its lack of regulation enables such materials that may be legal in one country to be accessed in a country where they may be illegal. National boundaries are easily crossed, and there is no international code of conduct to monitor pornographic material.

Care should be taken that children and youth are protected from pornographic materials. The supervision and love of Christian parents and other caring adults, supported by the extended church family, are the primary source of sex education. A comprehensive approach to sex education offers an additional basis for countering pornography. Children, youth, and adults need opportunities to discuss sexuality and learn from quality sex education materials in families, churches and schools. An alternative message to pornography, contained in carefully prepared age-appropriate sex education materials that are both factual and explicit and portray caring, mutually consenting relationships between married adults, is needed. Materials should be measured by the intentions expressed and the goals served, not by the degree of explicitness of sexual imagery. If we fail to provide such materials, accompanied by parental and adult supervision, we risk reliance

of children and youth on pornography as the primary source of information about sexuality.

Our position on pornography is clear: We oppose all forms of pornography. We support laws that protect women and children and incarcerate those who are purveyors in the “industry” that instigates and expands child and adult pornography activities. Addiction to adult pornography affects marital relationships, familial relationships, and may lead to criminal behavior. The addict must be treated with the best practices toward complete and total recovery and rehabilitation to ensure the best chance at future healthy relationships. Where rehabilitation and recovery fail we stand ready to support the spouses and families of addicts with love and care.

Addiction to child pornography is a deviant and criminal behavior that must be addressed through rehabilitation and legal means. We deplore the use of the criminal justice system as the sole means to address addiction; however, when the pornography addict resorts to criminal behavior that harms or hurts another person, especially children, or should rehabilitation not succeed, we support legal means by which the person with the addiction is held accountable and monitored by the legal system so as to protect the addict and the victims from future harm.

The United Methodist Church is already on record naming sexual violence and abuse as sins and pledging to work for their eradication (“Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse,” 2000 Book of Resolutions; “Violence Against Women and Children,” 2008 Book of Resolutions) and stating that “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse” (Social Principles, ¶ 162C).

Understanding pornography to portray violence, abuse, and humiliation in a sexual setting, and understanding any sexually

explicit depiction of children to be pornographic, we affirm that The United Methodist Church is opposed to pornography. We further affirm our commitment to quality sex education. To address pornography at its root causes we encourage United Methodists to join in:

1. action toward developing effective societal and governmental policies that eradicate child pornography, adult exploitation and enslavement;
2. education to encourage healthy relationships and behaviors;
3. compassion and encouragement for rehabilitation and recovery of addicts, their families, and victims;
4. sensible laws that focus on a restorative justice model; and encourage incarcerated persons to pursue rehabilitation and recovery.

We call upon The United Methodist Church, its general agencies, annual conferences and local churches, to:

1. educate congregations about the issue of pornography, especially Internet pornography, and enact strict policies that provide oversight of church-owned computers and sexual ethics education and training;
2. seek strategies to reduce the proliferation of pornography;
3. work to break the link between sex and violence by encouraging healthy human relationships;
4. monitor and prevent access by children and youth to pornography and sexually explicit material;
5. participate in efforts to ban child pornography and protect child victims;
6. promote the use of United Methodist and other quality sex education materials that help children and youth gain an understanding of and respect for mutually affirming sexuality;
7. provide educational sessions for parents on minimizing the risk to children from Internet usage. Encourage parents to estab-

lish rules for teenagers and children; encourage parents to utilize screening technology;

8. call for social responsibility in all media, including the Internet and in all public libraries, and work with local, national, and international groups that advocate for global media monitoring of images of women, men and children; and

9. participate in ecumenical and/or community efforts that study and address the issue of pornography.

ADOPTED 1988

REVISED AND ADOPTED 2000

REVISED AND READOPTED 2008, 2012

RESOLUTION #2081, 2008, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #42, 2004 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #36, 2000 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 161Q.

BOR #3427: Eradicating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

All of creation is sacred in God's sight. Because many women and children, along with others, are ignored, abused, and violated, we urge renewed commitment to prohibiting violence against women and children in all its forms.

Violence takes different forms and in many cases, it is about power and control. Violence is a tool used by the strong to dominate the weak and the powerful to dominate the vulnerable. Often the mere threat of violence is enough to achieve the goal of dominance and control. Human beings are especially vulnerable with respect to gender and sexuality, and therefore sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is particularly devastating.

Exploitation, abuse, and violence take many forms: child marriage, female genital mutilation, child soldiers, displacement of persons, family violence, polygamy, human trafficking, and rape as an act of war.

Child Marriage

In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed that marriage must be based on consent. Yet, in practice, one third of girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18 and 1 in 9 are married before the age of 15: usually without their consent and often to men they do not know (Child Marriage Facts and Figures, International Center for Research on Women, <<http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>>). As recently as 2010, 67 million women aged 20-24 around the world had been married before the age of 18 (Child Marriage Facts and Figures, International Center for Research on Women, <http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>). Child marriage itself is an expression of power and control, and can lead to further experiences of violence.

Female Genital Mutilation

According to the World Health Organization, “female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons. FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women” (Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet, World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>). FGM is nearly always carried out on minors to keep girls and women from experiencing pleasure during sexual intercourse, rationalized that this will keep girls from straying outside of marriage. FGM “has no medical benefits” and can cause harmful medical complications including “severe pain, shock, bleeding, recurrent bladder and urinary tract infections, infertility and an increased risk of childbirth complications and newborn deaths” (Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet, World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>).

Child Soldiers

UNICEF estimates that “300,000 children—boys and girls under the age of 18—are involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide. Children are used as combatants, messengers, porters, cooks, and for forced sexual services. Some are abducted or forcibly recruited, others are driven to join by poverty, abuse, and discrimination, or to seek revenge for violence enacted against them or their families” (Fact Sheet: Child Soldiers, UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/childsoldiers.pdf>). Sexual violence is increasingly common in conflict situations and is perpetrated against both girls and boys.

Displaced Persons

Displaced children, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, and persons with disabilities are particularly at risk of sexual and gender-based violence (UN High Commissioner on Refugees). During conflict and disaster, children are easily separated from their families. Limited in their ability to protect themselves, they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abuse, trafficking, forced or early marriage, female genital mutilation, or other harmful traditional practices. With less access to employment than men, women and girls are often compelled to engage in sex for survival. In the developing world, they are in danger of rape, assault, and even death as they search for water, firewood, and food for the household. Added to these social and physical atrocities are the possibilities of unwanted pregnancy, HIV infection, and the transmission of the virus from the mother to her unborn child.

Family Violence

Violence and abuse exist around the world and in families in virtually every congregation; tragically, no church or community is exempt. Abuse among family members—child abuse, spouse/partner abuse, elder abuse—takes many forms: emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, and economic. It is manifested through violence, abusive language, controlling behavior, intimidation, and exploitation.

Polygamy

Some traditions observe polygamy: multiple wives of one husband. Polygamy typically places women in a subordinate role subject to the power and control of the husband, and with no legal rights to family property.

Labor and Sex Trafficking

Modern-day slavery has become the fastest-growing transnational criminal enterprise earning an estimated \$150 billion (US) in illegal profits annually while enslaving 21 million people around the world (Human Trafficking, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html>). The United Nations underscores the role of violence in trafficking, defining it as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

“Exploitation includes . . . sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude” (Human Trafficking, U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html>).

Rape as a Weapon of War

For centuries, women have been raped as an act of violence and a demonstration of power—especially in times of conflict and war. Rape has been and is sanctioned by some military organizations for the gratification of soldiers during war. For example, during World War II “comfort women” were forced to have intercourse with soldiers. The motivation for abuse of women is also a deliberate strategy to terrorize opposing forces and the civilians in their territory. For example, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, rape of women by warring parties has been confirmed as “a war in the war.” Many women are raped by armed groups including the regular forces of the country. Impregnating women and forcing them to bear children who will continue to remind them of their violation is used as a way to destabilize opposi-

tion ethnic groups. Unfortunately, government responses tend to focus on violence against individual women rather than violence used as a strategic weapon. Thus, women and girls are discouraged from reporting the crime because of the stigma associated with being a victim.

According to United Nations Women, one in three women and girls are impacted by physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Violence has immediate and residual consequences:

Psychological Trauma

Sexual and gender-based violence inflicts deep emotional and physical wounds that can carry lifelong scars. Child brides often show signs symptomatic of sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress, and are therefore extremely vulnerable to domestic violence, abuse, and abandonment (Facts and Figures, International Center for Research on Women, <http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>). One woman who was raped as a tactic of war stated: “[A]fter the rape, I was in pain all the time and lost all sexual desire. Because of my chronic fatigue I could no longer work. My husband eventually abandoned me and the children” (Child Marriage Sexual and Gender-based Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/hac/crises/cod/sgbv/sgbv_brochure.pdf). The World Health Organization reports: “Many survivors of sexual and gender-based violence suffer from psychological trauma expressed through symptoms such as chronic fatigue, anxiety, insomnia, depression, etc. Some have even resorted to suicide. And trauma that boys and men face as witnesses or perpetrators of sexual violence is underestimated” (Sexual and Gender-based Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/hac/crises/cod/sgbv/sgbv_brochure.pdf).

Physical Injury

Underage girls experience higher mortality during pregnancy and childbirth. Girls younger than 15 years old are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s, making pregnancy among the leading causes of death for girls ages 15 to 19 globally (Facts and Figures, International Center for Research on Women, <http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>). One million girls worldwide suffer from an obstetric fistula, a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolonged obstructed labor, leaving a woman incontinent of urine or feces or both. This commonly occurs among girls who are anatomically immature. As a result of the incontinence and resulting foul smell, the girl or woman is often rejected by her husband and community (What is Fistula? Fistula Foundation, <https://www.fistulafoundation.org/what-is-fistula/fast-facts-faq/>). Child brides, often unable to effectively negotiate safer sex, are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, along with early pregnancy. Nearly 2,500 adolescents are infected with HIV daily (Opportunity in Crisis, UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/lac/Opportunity_in_Crisis-Report_EN_052711.pdf). Other practices such as FGM can result in pain and the spread of infection (Child Marriage Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet, World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/e>).

Economic Hardship

The United Nations Development Program reports that in many places women lack access to paid work or the ability to get a loan. Thus women, who make up 50 percent of the world's population, own only 1 percent of the world's wealth (Gender and Poverty Reduction, U.N. Development Program, http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/focus_areas/focus_gender_and_poverty.html). People

living in poverty, and particularly women and children, are disproportionately affected by violence. Abusive interpersonal relationships and unfair treatment, cultural practices and norms, institutional policies, and business practices at every level of society, including between some nations, continue to deny women's and girls' sacred worth and perpetuate gender inequality. Sexual and gender-based violence is not only a gross human-rights violation, but fractures families and communities, and hampers development, also costing billions of dollars annually on health-care costs and lost productivity (Estimating the Costs of Violence Against Women in Viet Nam, United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/2/costing-study-viet-nam%20pdf.pdf>). Child marriage limits young girls' skills, resources, knowledge, social support, mobility, and autonomy. Young married girls have little power in relation to their husbands and in-laws. Perceived as a way to provide for a daughter's future, married young she will be subjected to physical and sexual violence without education or skills to create economic opportunity for her or her children (Child Marriage Facts and Figures, International Center for Research on Women, <http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>).

Stigmatizing the Victim

Many victims of sexual violence are stigmatized in society or rejected by their families. Misguided religious morality often reinforces stigma and blame regarding rape, domestic violence, gender identity, disability, and sexually transmitted infections like HIV. A significant consequence of sexual and gender-based violence is the breaking of sacred trust within society, including the Christian community, where vulnerable members are violated. When brokenness is reinforced, it can lead to new social manifestations of violence. For example, a woman's inability to bear a child, a teenager's odor from a fistula formed in prolonged

labor, or her positive HIV status are grounds for divorce. At the same time, traditional beliefs such as child marriage and FGM are reinforced by traditional leadership and mandatory cultural practice.

The combined effect of these many consequences of sexual and gender-based violence is decreased ability to create solutions and respond to local concerns. All of the manifestations of violence identified above limit the educational and employment opportunities for women. Girls who marry young are less likely to discuss family planning—healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies—with their husbands, increasing the chances of infant mortality and maternal death. Rather than spending time developing ideas that would generate income, enhancing the emotional and physical health of families and communities, women and children plagued by sexual and gender-based violence often focus precious resources on survival.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Is Not New

One thousand years before Christ, Tamar was raped by her brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13). An earlier account tells of the gang-rape of a concubine (Judges 19), and an even earlier account the rape of Dinah (Genesis 34). These are stories not only of the violence done to women, but the failure of those in power to support the victims. In Tamar's case, her father, King David, was silent, doing nothing for Tamar, the victim, but rather protecting Amnon, the perpetrator, and thus his own dynasty.

The history of our faith is the history of attempts to recover the insight of Genesis 1 that all creation is sacred in God's sight, and all human beings are creatures of sacred worth. Jesus was an advocate for the sacred worth of all. In the account of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11), we see Jesus actively oppose violence against women. Jesus saw beyond the stigma and blame

that her accusers imposed on her. Unlike King David, Jesus did not employ his power to cover the injustice, but instead recognized her dignity, interrupted the proposed violence, and sought to restore her to community. Jesus' response expresses his commitment to abundant life (John 10:10), and his call to help create the circumstances in which abundant life can thrive. Jesus' gracious response reaches for the redemption of both victim and perpetrator and stops the cycle of violence.

United Methodists have worked to eradicate the many forms of violence that destroy the integrity of individuals, families, communities, and nations. People of faith must work to change attitudes, beliefs, policies, and practices at all levels of society that dehumanize and promote the exploitation and abuse of women and girls. Women with equal rights are better educated, healthier, and have greater access to land, jobs, and financial resources.

Because women and children, along with others, are ignored, abused, and violated, we urge renewed commitment to eradicating violence against women and children in all its forms.

We call on all United Methodists, local churches, campus ministries, colleges, universities, seminaries, annual conferences, general agencies and commissions, and the Council of Bishops to:

1. Teach, preach, and model healthy masculinity and respectful relationships that reflect the sacred worth of women and girls (Principles of Healthy Masculinity, <http://www.maleallies.org/principles-of-healthy-masculinity>);
2. Engage men and boys as allies in the promotion of gender equality;
3. Assess resources used in local ministry settings to ensure the promotion of sacred worth of women and girls and healthy masculinity;
4. Develop theological, educational, and advocacy tools to raise public awareness of sexual and gender-based violence, and to

promote a culture of nonviolence;

5. Develop and implement culturally relevant and culturally competent training focused on violence against women;
6. Advocate for an end to harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage, polygamy, and female genital mutilation;
7. Advocate for training in local contexts for people on the front lines of disaster and conflict to recognize women's and girls' increased vulnerability to opportunistic rape, sexual exploitation, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence;
8. Advocate for full and legal access to medically safe reproductive health-care services. Violence against women undermines sexual and reproductive health, contributing to unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, fistulas, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV, and their recurrence;
9. Ensure that adolescent sexual and reproductive health services address gender-based violence, including access to prompt quality care in cases of rape, emergency contraception and Post Exposure Prophylaxis to prevent HIV infection, and additional referrals (e.g., legal, specialized counseling, and support groups);
10. Provide comprehensive sexuality education so that girls and women in abusive relationships have increased understanding of their bodies and tools to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and/or unwanted pregnancies;
11. Advocate for girls to have access to higher levels of education to decrease the rates of child marriage and poverty;
12. Ensure that all children have access to registration and documentation, including birth registration, to increase access to basic services. and,
13. Advocate for the reduction of war and conflict in the world to reduce conditions that increase the risk of aggression toward women and girls.

The Church must reexamine the theological messages it communicates in light of the experiences of victims of sexual and gender-based violence. We must treat with extreme care the

important, but often-misused, concepts of suffering, forgiveness, and the nature of marriage and the family. Part of our call, as individuals and as a Church, is seeking to address the root causes of violence, working to eradicate it in its multiple forms, and being God's instruments for the wholeness of affected women and children. As people of faith we must become aware of how violence affects our communities, how we can end our participation in it, and what interventions will end its ongoing cycles.

ADOPTED 2016

See Social Principles, ¶ 162C, F.

BOR #3422 & 3443R

3442: Every Barrier Down: Toward Full Embrace of All Women in Church and Society

All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
(Galatians 3:27-28)

As the Church of Jesus Christ enters its third millennium, women continue to heed the call to transform the Church and the world in the name of the One who names us and claims us all for witness, mission and earth-shaking transformation.

As much as he was a product of his era—one admittedly marked by gender, class, religious, and community exclusion—Jesus Christ brought to us a ministry of transformational invitation. The Living Christ invited—and still invites—to a common table of grace, justice, and power, people who had never before been invited to the religious power tables, including women, cultural and religious minorities, social outcasts, and disreputable community sinners.¹ And women, in claiming their voice in the new faith movement ignited by the Messiah, became leaders in expanding that movement and in pushing further for inclusion of Gentiles in what was then viewed as Jesus' renewal of Judaism.

Women, in fact, advocated for and sought to protect the inclusive equality of discipleship called forth by Jesus. In this way, they challenged the Jesus movement to remain true to the new vision of human relationship that Jesus initiated by extending its table fellowship, sharing the message of the coming reign of God and inviting Gentiles (non-Jews) to share in that reign.¹ Jesus treated women with dignity and respect, challenged the conventional sexism of his day, and forever redefined the role of women in the

church and society.

As with many expressions of the Christian faith, it took The United Methodist Church and its forebears a while to capture Christ's vision. In 1770, the first Methodist woman was appointed a class leader in the United States; in 1817, women were allowed to hold prayer meetings but denied a license to preach; in 1884 Anna Howard Shaw's ordination by the Methodist Protestant Church was ruled out of order; and full voting rights for women in the Methodist tradition were not universally recognized until 1956.

Since that time, however, God's call to women as preachers, teachers, administrators, mission workers, treasurers, lay leaders, trustees, peace-with-justice advocates, voting rights' workers, Christian educators, and evangelists has blown a fresh breath across the globe and throughout the Church on the wings of the Holy Spirit, despite the rise and fall of our denominational enthusiasm for addressing sexism, gender bias, prejudice, and bad theology. God has done great things with us and, sometimes, in spite of us. Among the victories celebrated throughout our denomination's history:

- twenty-seven percent of United Methodist pastors in local churches today are women, compared with less than one in 100 in 1972;
- of the 66 active United Methodist bishops around the world, 13 are women; 11 in the US and 2 in central conferences. Of the US women bishops, nine are white and two are Latina. No other US racial-ethnic group is represented among women bishops. In 2012 the first woman bishop was elected to serve in Africa. Since 2012 there has been no black US woman among the active United Methodist US bishops;
- The United Methodist Church gave to the world the

first African American (Leontine T. C. Kelly, 1984) and first Latina (Minerva Carcaño, 2004) bishops in mainline Christendom;

- women comprise half of all students enrolled in United Methodist seminaries and seeking ordination;
- United Methodist Women is the largest and most prolific mission working entity on behalf of women, children, and youth in our denomination, with ministries of education, discipleship, economic and social development, health care, advocacy, and empowerment in over 120 nations around the world.

In many ways The United Methodist Church has been a standard-bearer among Judeo-Christian faith communions in terms of full inclusion of women in the life, ministry, and witness of the institutional church and its regional and local expressions. However, if we ask, “Is The United Methodist Church a credible and reliable witness to Christ’s exemplary embrace of all women as valued, respected partners in the total institutional life and global witness and impact of the Church?”—the honest answer is not yet. We still fall short when it comes to living out the challenge of Galatians 3:27-28, which declares men and women are truly one in Christ. There are still areas of leadership, of professional ministry, of decision-making, and of areas of discipleship for which the Church will not trust, value, revere, or allot resources to women to the same degree as their brothers in the faith. Some recent examples include:

- a number of United Methodist congregations in 2007 still flatly refuse to accept a woman as senior pastor and are especially opposed to receiving a woman in a cross-racial clergy appointment. In 2006, a racial-ethnic clergywoman assigned to an Anglo church was allegedly menaced by members to dissuade her acceptance of the appointment. In another instance, laity threatened to leave the congre-

gation unless the woman pastor wore a dress instead of slacks to prove she was “a real lady”;

- in a 2007 survey of local United Methodist congregations, 18 percent said they do not have women serving as ushers (an increase over 2004), and local church chairpersons of the church council, finance, and trustees are still overwhelmingly men and not women;
- United Methodist membership in the US is declining among young women (and men) and people of color, particularly among those in low-income communities;
- according to the most recent “Clergy Age Trends in The United Methodist Church 2014” report from the Lewis Center, the number of female elders under the age of 35 has increased from 38 percent in 2013 to 39 percent in 2014;
- a number of lay and clergy respondents to a survey on sexual harassment in the church mandated by the 2004 General Conference dismissed any ministries related to empowering women and addressing sexism as “political crap,” which “has nothing to do with spreading the good news of Jesus Christ”;
- a woman district superintendent reportedly was called a “bitch” when she disagreed with a male colleague during a meeting of the conference cabinet;
- several prominent Church leaders—including bishops—have joined with secular society in decrying “the tyranny of diversity” and retreating from the work of undoing racism and sexism;
- such things as: “We need to stop worrying about politics and focus on the gospel . . .” (that is, as long as the gospel is interpreted in a way that continues to privilege North Americans, white people, and males); and “We’ll accept a woman or person of color as long as she’s qualified” (Could this infer that white men are automatically assumed to be qualified and that women and people of color get their jobs because of some other criteria, not

because of their gifts and talents?);

- the United Methodist Women’s national organization is under attack for having too much money and too much power in the hands of a women-controlled board of directors. Proposals by opponents include reducing the number of United Methodist Women directors who can also serve on the General Board of Global Ministries in the interest of “gender balance”;
 - complaints of alleged sexual abuse of women by lay and clergy leaders in church settings are on the rise, according to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women;
 - women comprise 54 percent of total members of our denomination, yet account for less than 30 percent of ordained ministers, and only 27 percent of the top-paying offices in US annual conferences (treasurers, chancellors, and directors of connectional ministry);
 - of 20 active bishops who oversee the work of the church in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines, only two are women.
- According to United Methodist theologian and ethicist Rosetta Ross, the defining characteristic of an authentic Christian community is that we love one another as God loves us. Such love is not a passive, merely personal emotion, but requires that we constantly strive to be in right relationship with one another, that we pursue justice and well-being for all, and that we be courageous in undoing that in the community that stymies the building of God’s beloved—and loving—community.²

“Whatever we love with the social love of agapé—our understanding of a particular movement; persons living in war zones or without clean drinking water; communities of which we are a part; the cause of justice; or the natural beauty of creation—is evident in our expressions of faithful attentiveness to it,” concludes Dr. Ross, who is also a South Carolina United Methodist clergywomen.

The United Methodist Church, as a community conceived as a corporate expression of Christ's love for us all, has declared its belief in the full equality of women and its desire to embrace women, and has historically decried institutional sexism in all forms in every corner of the world. Yet, we are still on the journey to faithful living; to "walking our talk"; to emulating Jesus' model of turning convention on its ear in favor of doing God's new thing when it comes to engaging women as universally respected, full participants in every aspect of our corporate and congregational lives. We are still living into what it means to extend agapé love to all the daughters and sons of God, beyond the historic patriarchy and misogyny that has marred full participation of women in church and society.

Our reliability as an agency of God's love assumes that we are paying attention to one another and we are seeking to empower, to unshackle, to raise up those who are still oppressed, repressed, derided, treated as "less than." This agapé love seeks to make the world better through persistently affirming all life, and we are willing to call all people and systems—including our own denomination—to account for how we either empower or repress the children of God. Agapé love fears no risk of ridicule or of interrupting business as usual. In fact, God's love requires that we act, even if it means taking positions that are uncomfortable, unpopular, inconvenient, or even frightening. Further, it requires courage.

To quote Dr. Ross, "We are behaving courageously when we have the resolve to take the actions and create the context needed for overcoming challenges we face in seeking to be faithful to what we love and are committed to."

Until we fully affirm the dignity and value, the contributions, the theological perspectives, the concerns, the hopes, the recommendations, and even the discourse of and among women, The

United Methodist Church will not be adequately equipped to make of all disciples, to carry a word of hope and peace and love to a broken world, and to demonstrate our authenticity as the incarnation of the life-transforming and barrier-breaking body of Christ.

We therefore ask the General Conference to recommit The United Methodist Church to fulfilling the following recommendation as we continue our journey toward dismantling sexism in the church and inviting all women from every station to share in God's welcome table, by challenging the denomination to:

1. Listen anew to women, with new emphasis on women of color. The experiences of racial-ethnic women in the United States and women from The United Methodist Church in Africa and the Philippines mirror the parables and other Gospel stories of triumph over obstacles, being strangers in a strange land, reinterpreting familiar stories for new disciples, and bringing our talk about love and justice in line with our walk, especially as the Church also exists in a society that is still racist and sexist. We ask the general agencies to create evangelistic tools, programs, educational materials, networks, and opportunities to empower women in the church and society, including specific resources for and leadership opportunities offered to women under 35, racial-ethnic women in the United States, women from nations beyond the United States, women in recovery from addiction, divorced women, professional women, farm women, and skeptical-about-the-church women. We further urge church growth teams to include women from these groups in order to help the Church focus more on being a vibrant movement in people's lives instead of just a religious institution. In our leadership development at all levels, the Church must put energy, resources, skill and prayerful action into engaging new women in lay and clergy leadership.

2. Champion economic parity and justice, beginning in our own

communities. Our largely Western-focused denomination must witness in our giving and our living to the power of agapé by working actively for the well-being of all people. This is particularly critical in our work with women around the world who, with their children, are more likely than any other demographic group to live in poverty; to lack access to adequate health care, housing, and education; and to lack political power sufficient to transform systems. The United Methodist Church must lead the way by valuing the comparable work and worth of women in our churches, agencies, and related entities, and by championing such things as affordable child care and health care, pay equity, financial aid, and educational support for single women in Africa and the Philippines. Each agency and annual conference should report to the 2012 General Conference on how they have engaged women, including women of color, women from Africa and the Philippines, and women under 35.

3. Evangelize and identify, recruit, and develop leaders among women. In recent years, some church pundits have claimed that Christian churches have become “too feminized,” and therefore irrelevant and unappealing to men. However, these same observers fail to consider that even with decades of male-only leadership among churches, and even in the face of narrow and misogynist misreading of the Bible to exclude and blame them for human sin, many women have continued to stay actively and joyfully involved in the life of the institutional Church. We challenge general agencies and annual conferences to include in church growth and new discipleship strategies efforts to reach women of color, young women, poor women, career women, teen girls, older women, immigrant women, women survivors of violence, women in prison, women leaving prison, women seeking, women rearing children on limited incomes, etc.

4. Adopt a posture of “no tolerance” to sexual violence, harassment, and abuse in church and society. According to some estimates by

denominational advocates and legal experts, The United Methodist Church has paid more than \$50 million from 2000 to 2004 in legal fees, counseling, mediation, and reparations related to sexual misconduct and abuse in church settings committed by lay and clergy. While sexual misconduct can impact anyone and be perpetrated by anyone, most cases involve men as offenders and women and children as victims. If women cannot trust the Church to believe them, protect them from abuse, and offer them clear justice when abuse happens, it again calls into question the authenticity of the Church's witness. It could suggest to them that the Church—and, by extension, God—does not care about, want, or value the participation of women. We call on the Council of Bishops to collaborate with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to continue to develop and enforce effective policies, laws, and practices and consistent application of those policies and practices to reduce risk of misconduct and offer swift and just recompense and remediation for victims when abuse happens.

5. Engage women in theological exploration and shaping and teaching church doctrine. There is no one women's perspective or women's theology or women's view of Christianity. What is common among many women in The United Methodist Church, however, is that their participation in theological discourse is typically treated as "in addition to" the "classical" biblical and theological teachings. Feminist/womanist/mujerista perspectives are often considered subversive and treated as suspect. Discussions of gender-inclusive language, reading the Hebrew and Greek text through women's eyes, and liberation theology—especially as discussed by women—are regarded by many as a threat to the Christian faith, instead of new and perhaps even more authentic perspectives on it. Further, laywomen and clergywomen in local parishes often do not see themselves as theologians, with as much right to explore Scripture, to embrace the gospel anew, and to offer their learnings to the wider Church. We urge the denomination to affirm the

importance of women's perspectives in theological discussions in the denomination, and we applaud the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for its Women of Color Scholarship Program that empowers and engages women of color in theological education and discourse. Further, we ask that the board monitor United Methodist seminaries for inclusion of women's theological perspectives as expressed in the number of tenured faculty, etc. Also, we invite the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to create curricula for local churches with teaching tools on inclusive language, sexism, creating a girl-friendly church, and myths about women and church leadership. And we ask active members of the Council of Bishops to study with pastors and lay leaders in their respective annual conferences on the history of women as preachers and teachers in the church, using "Women Called to Ministry," a six-part curriculum developed by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and available at www.gcsrw.org.

6. Create a "report card" on overcoming sexism for each agency and annual conference. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women shall create sufficient monitoring tools, focus-group interviews, desk audits and surveys, along with baseline standards in order to evaluate the progress of each annual conference and each general agency in terms of full participation of women, dismantling institutional sexism, and addressing sexual misconduct.

Recommended resources: www.gcsrw.org, www.umsexualethics.org; The Journey Is Our Home: A History of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, by Carolyn Henninger Oehler, 2005; 2008 Resolutions #2044, "Sexual Misconduct

Within Ministerial Relationships,” and #2045, “Eradication of Sexual Harassment in Church and Society.”

1. An End to This Strife: The Politics of Gender in African American Church by Demetrius K. Williams, Augsburg Fortress Press, 2004.

2. “Blazing Trails and Transcending Boundaries Through Love: Women of Color and ‘Religious Work’” by Rosetta E. Ross, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Spelman College, Atlanta Georgia, 2006.

In fact, Dr. Ross asserts that agapé love in the Christian understanding is love that “affirms the dignity and value of life,” and depends on the “interrelatedness of all relationships—intimate or corporate, public or private,” as expressed through the actions, practices, and behaviors of individuals and the corporate Christian community.

ADOPTED 2008

AMENDED AND READOPTED 2016

RESOLUTION #3442, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #3443, 2008 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #190, 2004 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #180, 2000 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 163.

3443. Eradication of Sexism in the Church

Whereas, sexism continues to be a pervasive and systematic force within our church and our society; and

Whereas, sexism deprives the church and society of the opportunity to use the skills and talents that women have; and

Whereas, a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2007 survey of local churches in the United States found

that only 55% of small churches and 62% of large membership churches have policies against sexual harassment; inclusive language studies are rare in local congregations with only 4% of laity and 31% of clergy indicating they use inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language studies, harassment policies, and diverse use of female lay persons (as Board of Trustees members and ushers, for example); and

Whereas, the Church remains committed to the eradication of sexual harassment against children, employees, volunteers, clergy and their families, and congregants. Yet sexual misconduct remains a serious problem in our conferences, with 1 in 33 women experiencing sexual harassment in local church meetings and worship, and an alarming number of local congregations do not have policies, procedures, or training in place for laity and clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and

Whereas, women comprise 58% of the denomination's membership but hold only one-fifth of the top leadership positions in the US annual conferences and as leaders are largely relegated to committees without much financial power like women's ministry and advocacy, racial-ethnic concerns and youth ministry rather than committees that exert considerable influence and control over funding as well as the allocation of money in annual conference ministries, and women employed by general church agencies hold 77% of administrative and clerical support positions (Data from the General Council on Finance and Administration 2009; Women by the Number: issues November 2010, December 2010, January 2011, and March 2011; THE FLYER); and

Whereas, the Church continues to lose clergywomen from local church ministry into more welcoming forms of ministry, indicating a persistent, subtle, and often unchallenged sexism that

denies women in The United Methodist Church the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all areas of the Church;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference continue to commit itself to eradicating sexism in the church and that it affirm the work and tasks of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and of the annual conference-related commissions and counterparts; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference commission or counterpart be given the financial backing to pursue projects that are aimed at educating the members of the local churches about the issues of sexism and at sponsoring the leadership events that enable the annual conference commission members to be better advocates for all who seek equity and inclusiveness; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference, United Methodist seminary, and all United Methodist-related institutions are called to have policies on sexual harassment and equal opportunity; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference and local congregation is called have policy, procedures, and training opportunities in place for lay and clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and that progress to full compliance will be reported through the Episcopal Office to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women at the Commission's request. The Commission will be responsible to report to General Conference 2016; and

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference support the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as the advocacy and monitoring agency of women's issues for increasing opportunities for females in leadership, promoting equality in filling decision-making posts, and fostering inclusiveness in all facets of The United Methodist Church.

ADOPTED 1996

AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004, 2012

RESOLUTION #3443, 2012 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #3444, 2008 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #48, 2004 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #40, 2000 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS

See Social Principles, ¶ 162F.

BOR #8021: Functions of an Annual Conference COSROW or Related Committee

Focusing on a general call to make disciples of all people, annual conferences fulfill the responsibilities of the Book of Discipline ¶ 644 through various creative structures and forms of institutional support. When it comes to advocating for the full participation of women in the total life of the Church, some annual conferences maintain an independent Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women, while others include this work within other structures established to address interrelated concerns. Such an adaptive and flexible model provides an opportunity for identifying how each annual conference will participate in the work of ensuring that disciple making at all levels of the Church is gender sensitive and inclusive, encouraging cooperation between all people with respect for the unique gifts of each person.

Conferences with active and effective existing ministries should continue these programs and regularly relate to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women around their work and the status of women in the annual conference. The below recommended actions are not intended to replace already existing programs or effective ministries but to guide in planning regardless of the particular conference structure.

1. Host annual gatherings for the support of women and education about pertinent issues including but not limited to work-life balance, domestic violence, pay equity, leadership development, cooperative leadership, maternity and paternity leave, education, and other relevant topics.
2. Discuss and encourage attention to issues of sexual ethics. Find out if the annual conference has policies and procedures in place to address instances of sexual miscon-

duct, including practices to care for victims and affected communities (e.g., through the use of response teams). Using the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and umsexualethics.org <<http://umsexualethics.org>> as resources, sponsor education and training events and work to establish and strengthen policies aimed at fair process, healing, and reconciliation.

3. Arrange meetings with conference leadership, e.g., conference lay leader, Board of Laity, Committee on Nominations, Board of Ordained Ministry, cabinet, and bishop. The purpose of these meetings may include recommending any strategies, programs, or resources for the continued effort to improve the full participation of women in the life of the church with awareness of the unique gifts and struggles brought on by race, ethnicity, age, ability, and status.

4. Send at least two participants to leadership development events sponsored by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women including Do No Harm sexual ethics summit. Annual conferences are advised to provide as much support as possible to assist with travel costs and registration.

5. Recruit and identify women for recommendation to the annual conference Board of Laity, Committee on Nominations, and other leadership. This may take place by requesting recommendations from all local church lay leaders, district lay leaders, United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men district offices, and other persons in local leadership.

6. Provide at least one monitoring, research, or other report on the status of women to the annual conference. Highlight areas

of progress and concern to guide strategic planning and future ministry development. The methods and goal of such reports should be established in consultation with conference leadership, General Commission on the Status and Role of Women staff, and women lay and clergy leaders of the conference.

7. Use the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as a regular resource.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will provide resources and recommendations for trainings for conference-wide events. Toolkits for meetings with conference leadership, fact sheets about women's issues, the most recent research, and information about the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women leadership convocation will be made available at gcsr.org.

ADOPTED 2016

BOD ¶ 161: F-R | II. The Nurturing Community

F) Women and Men—We affirm with Scripture the common humanity of male and female, both having equal worth in the eyes of God. We reject the erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another, that one gender must strive against another, and that members of one gender may receive love, power, and esteem only at the expense of another. We especially reject the idea that God made individuals as incomplete fragments, made whole only in union with another. We call upon women and men alike to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete and to respect the wholeness of others. We seek for every individual opportunities and freedom to love and be loved, to seek and receive justice, and to practice ethical self-determination. We understand our gender diversity to be a gift from God, intended to add to the rich variety of human experience and perspective; and we guard against attitudes and traditions that would use this good gift to leave members of one sex more vulnerable in relationships than members of another.

G) 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 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.

H) Family Violence and Abuse—We recognize that family violence and abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical,

sexual—is detrimental to the covenant of the human community. We encourage the Church to provide a safe environment, counsel,

and support for the victim and to work with the abuser to understand the root causes and forms of abuse and to overcome such

behaviors. Regardless of the cause or the abuse, both the victim and the abuser need the love of the Church. While we deplore the actions of the abuser, we affirm that person to be in need of God's redeeming love.

I) Sexual Abuse—Violent, disrespectful, or abusive sexual expressions do not confirm sexuality as God's good gift. We

reject all sexual expressions that damage the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual

relations where one or both partners are exploitative, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the social order. We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. To lose freedom and be sold by someone else for sexual purposes is a form of slavery, and we denounce such business and support the abused and their right to freedom.

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 the establishment of adequate protective services, guidance, and counseling opportunities for children thus abused.

J) Sexual Harassment—We believe human sexuality is God's good gift. One abuse of this good gift is sexual harassment. We define sexual harassment as any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender. Contrary to the nurturing community, sexual harassment creates improper, coercive, and abusive conditions wherever it occurs in society. Sexual harassment undermines the social goal of equal opportunity and the climate of mutual respect between men and women. Unwanted

sexual attention is wrong and discriminatory. Sexual harassment interferes with the moral mission of the Church.

P) Sexual Assault—Sexual assault is wrong. We affirm the right of all people to live free from such assaults, encourage efforts of law enforcement to prosecute such crimes, and condemn rape in any form. It does not matter where the person is, what the person is wearing, whether or not he or she is intoxicated, if he or she is flirtatious, what is the victim's gender, or any other circumstance.

Q) Pornography—Scripture teaches that humans are created in God's image and that we are accountable to God through right relationship. Sexual images can celebrate the goodness of human sexuality through positive depiction in art, literature, and education. We deplore, however, images that distort this goodness and injure healthy sexual relationships.

We oppose all forms of pornography and consider its use a form of sexual misconduct. Pornography is sexually explicit material that portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation for the purpose of sexual arousal. Pornography sexually exploits and objectifies both women and men. Any sexually explicit material that depicts children is abhorrent and victimizes children. Pornography can ruin lives, careers, and relationships.

We grieve the pervasiveness of Internet pornography, including among Christians, and especially its impact on young people and marriages.

The Church is called to transformation and healing for all persons adversely affected by pornography. Congregations should send a clear message of opposition to pornography and commitment to safe environments for everyone. We encourage strategies to eradicate pornography, to support victims, and to provide open

and transparent conversation and education around sexuality and sexual ethics. We also believe that people can be rehabilitated and should have the opportunity to receive treatment; therefore, churches should seek ways to offer support and care for addressing issues of addiction. Further, all churches are encouraged to review and update appropriate child, youth, and adult protection policies to reflect The United Methodist Church's position that the use of pornography is a form of sexual misconduct. By encouraging education, prevention, and pathways to recovery for all affected by pornography, we live out our Wesleyan understanding of grace and healing.

R) Bullying—Bullying is a growing problem in parts of the connection. It is a contributing factor in suicide and in the violence we see in some cultures today. We affirm the right of all people, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, race, religion, disability, age, physical appearance, sexual orientation and gender identity, to be free of unwanted aggressive behavior and harmful control tactics.

As the Church, we can play a pivotal role in ending this problem. We urge churches to seek opportunities to be trained in responding to the needs of those who have been bullied, to those who perpetrate bullying, and to support those in authority who may witness or be called to intervene on behalf of those who have been bullied. Churches are urged to connect with community associations and schools in this outreach.

We encourage churches to adopt a policy of zero tolerance for bullying, including cyberbullying, within their spheres of influence; stand with persons being bullied; and take a leadership role in working with the schools and community to prevent bullying.

BOD ¶162: F&G | The Social Community

F) Rights of Women—We affirm women and men to be equal in every aspect of their common life. We therefore urge that every effort be made to eliminate sex-role stereotypes in activity and portrayal of family life and in all aspects of voluntary and compensatory participation in the Church and society. We affirm the right of women to equal treatment in employment, responsibility, promotion, and compensation. We affirm the importance of women in decision-making positions at all levels of Church and society and urge such bodies to guarantee their presence through policies of employment and recruitment. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within our Church and society. We urge employers of persons in dual career families, both in the Church and society, to apply proper consideration of both parties when relocation is considered. We affirm the right of women to live free from violence and abuse and urge governments to enact policies that protect women against all forms of violence and discrimination in any sector of society.

G) Rights of Men—Because we affirm women and men to be equal in every aspect of their common life, we also affirm the rights of men. We affirm equal opportunities in employment, responsibility, and promotion. Men should not be ignored or lose opportunities or influence because they are men. We recognize that men are also victims of domestic violence and abuse. We encourage communities to offer the same policies and protection as provided for women in similar situations. We affirm the right of men to live free from violence and abuse and urge governments to enact policies that protect men against all forms of violence and discrimination in any sector of society. We recognize that men's role in raising children is in equal importance to women's and call for equal rights as women in

opportunities for parental leave. When parents divorce, men often have less contact with their children. We call for equal access to child-custody, but emphasize that the best interest of the child always is the most important.

BOD ¶163: E | The Economic Community

E) Poverty—In spite of general affluence in the industrialized nations, the majority of persons in the world live in poverty. In order to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and other necessities, ways must be found to share more equitably the resources of the world. Increasing technology, when accompanied by exploitative economic practices, impoverishes many persons and makes poverty self-perpetuating. Poverty due to natural catastrophes and environmental changes is growing and needs attention and support. Conflicts and war impoverish the population on all sides, and an important way to support the poor will be to work for peaceful solutions. As a church, we are called to support the poor and challenge the rich. To begin to alleviate poverty, we support such policies as: adequate income maintenance, quality education, decent housing, job training, meaningful employment opportunities, adequate medical and hospital care, humanization and radical revisions of welfare programs, work for peace in conflict areas and efforts to protect creation's integrity. Since low wages are often a cause of poverty, employers should pay their employees a wage that does not require them to depend upon government subsidies such as food stamps or welfare for their livelihood.

Because we recognize that the long-term reduction of poverty must move beyond services to and employment for the poor, which can be taken away, we emphasize measures that build and maintain the wealth of poor people, including asset-building strategies such as individual development savings accounts, micro-enterprise development programs, programs enabling home ownership, and financial management training and counseling. We call upon churches to develop these and other ministries that promote asset-building among the poor. We are especially mindful of the Global South, where investment and micro-enterprise are especially needed. We urge support for policies that will

encourage equitable economic growth in the Global South and around the world, providing a just opportunity for all. Poverty most often has systemic causes, and therefore we do not hold poor people morally responsible for their economic state.

BOD ¶166: VII | Our Social Creed

We believe in God, Creator of the world; and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God's gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.

We joyfully receive for ourselves and others the blessings of community, sexuality, marriage, and the family.

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging, and people with disabilities; to improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights and dignity of all persons.

We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the glory of God and the good of themselves and others and in the protection of their welfare in so doing; in the rights to property as a trust from God, collective bargaining, and responsible consumption; and in the elimination of economic and social distress.

We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world, to the rule of justice and law among nations, and to individual freedom for all people of the world.

We believe in the present and final triumph of God's Word in human affairs and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world. Amen.

(It is recommended that this statement of Social Principles be con-

tinually available to United Methodist Christians and that it be emphasized regularly in every congregation. It is further recommended that “Our Social Creed” be frequently used in Sunday worship.)

BOD ¶ 362: Complaint Procedures

BOD ¶ 362: Complaint Procedures

1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, pro-visional members, and full members are set forth in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of

the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

a) Supervision—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or district superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergyperson. A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties. The person filing the complaint and the clergyperson shall be informed by the district superintendent or bishop of the process for filing the complaint and its purpose.

b) Supervisory Response—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. The person against whom the complaint was made may choose another person to accompany him or her with the right to voice; the person making the complaint shall have the right to choose a person to accompany him or her with the right to voice.

The supervisory response shall be carried out by the bishop or the bishop's designee in a timely manner, with attention to communication to all parties regarding the complaint and the process. At the determination of the bishop, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory response. The bishop also may consult with the committee on pastor-parish relations for pastors, the district committee on superintendency for the district superintendents, appropriate personnel committee, or other

persons who may be helpful.

When the supervisory response is initiated, the bishop shall notify the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry that a complaint has been filed, of the clergyperson named, of the general nature of the complaint, and, when concluded, of the disposition of the complaint.

c) Just Resolution—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties.

If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

d) Suspension—When deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, may suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities, but not from an appointment, for a

period not to exceed ninety days. With the agreement of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may extend the suspension for only one additional period not to exceed thirty days. During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits provided by a pastoral charge will continue at a level no less than on the date of suspension.⁸⁰ The person so suspended shall retain all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334. The cost of supply of a pastor during the suspension will be borne by the annual conference.⁸¹

e) Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the Bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint with the consent of the cabinet giving the reasons therefore in writing, a copy of which shall be placed in the clergy person's file; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

f) Supervisory Follow-up and Healing—The bishop and cabinet shall provide a process for healing within the congregation, annual conference, or other context of ministry if there has been significant disruption by the complaint. This process may include sharing of information by the bishop or the bishop's designee about the nature of the complaint without disclosing alleged facts, which may compromise any possible forthcoming administrative or judicial process. When facts are disclosed, due regard should be given to the interests and needs of all concerned, including the respondent and complainant who may be involved in an administrative or judicial process. This process for healing may include a process of a just resolution, which addresses unre-

solved conflicts, support for victims, and reconciliation for parties involved. This can take place at any time during the supervisory, complaint, or trial process.

g) A complaint may be held in abeyance with the approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry if civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent on matters covered by the complaint. The status of complaints held in abeyance shall be reviewed at a minimum of every 90 days by the bishop and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to ensure that the involvement of civil authorities is still a valid impediment for proceeding with the resolution of a complaint. Abeyance of a complaint may be terminated by either the bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry. The time in which a complaint is held in abeyance shall not count toward the statute of limitations. A clergy-person shall continue to hold his or her current status while a complaint is held in abeyance.

BOD ¶413: Complaints Against Bishops

1. Episcopal leadership in The United Methodist Church shares with all other ordained persons in the sacred trust of their ordination. The ministry of bishops as set forth in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church also flows from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles (¶ 402). Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized.

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall be submitted to the president of the College of Bishops in that jurisdictional or

central conference. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the secretary of the College of Bishops. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702.

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2, the president and the secretary of the College of Bishops, or the secretary and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the president (or the president and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the secretary), shall, within ten days, consult the chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy who shall appoint from the committee one professing member and one clergy member who are not from the same episcopal area; who are not from the episcopal area that the bishop under complaint was elected from or has been assigned to; and who are not of the same gender.

a) When deemed appropriate to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church and/or bishop, the College of Bishops, in consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed sixty days. During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits will continue.

b) The supervisory response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution. It is not a part of any judicial process. The supervisory response should be carried out in a confidential manner and should be completed within 120 days. There may be an extension of 120 days if the supervising bishop and the two jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process shall determine that an extension will be productive. There may be a second extension of 120 days by the mutual written consent

of the supervisory bishop, members of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee appointed to the supervisory process, the complainant, and the bishop under complaint.

The supervising bishop shall regularly advise all parties of the status of the process and shall notify all parties within seven days after a determination is made that the supervisory response will not lead to a resolution of the matter.

No verbatim record shall be made and legal counsel shall not be present, although the bishop against whom the complaint was made and the complainant both may choose another person to accompany him or her, with the right to voice. At the determination of the president (secretary), persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory responses. Others may be consulted as well.

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement.

d) (i) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the

supervisory process (§ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may either dismiss the complaint with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy, giving the reasons therefore in writing, a copy of which shall be placed in the bishop's file, refer the matter to the committee on episcopacy as an administrative complaint pursuant to § 413.3e, or refer the matter to counsel for the Church pursuant to § 2704.1 to prepare a complaint to forward to the committee on investigation.

(ii) If within 180 days of the receipt of the complaint by the president or secretary of the College of Bishops (as specified in § 413.2), the supervisory response does not result in the resolution of the matter, and the president or secretary of the College of Bishops has not referred the matter as either an administrative or judicial complaint, then the matter will move to:

(1) In the case of a bishop from one of the central conferences, a panel of three bishops, one from each continent, as selected by the Council of Bishops, or

(2) In the case of a bishop from one of the jurisdictional conferences, a panel of five bishops, one from each jurisdictional conference, as selected by the Council of Bishops, who shall then continue the supervisory response process and, within 180 days, either dismiss or refer the complaint, as required above.

(iii) All costs associated with actions taken pursuant to paragraph (ii), above, will be paid by the Episcopal Fund.

(iv) The Council of Bishops may, at any time in the process, after a complaint is filed, including after a just resolution, remove the complaint from the College of Bishops to the Council of Bishops with a two-thirds vote by the Council.

e) Administrative Complaint—If the complaint is based on allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform episcopal duties, the president and secretary of the College of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint) shall refer the complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.¹⁰ The committee may recommend involuntary retirement (§ 408.3), disability leave (§ 410.4), remedial measures, other appropriate action, or it may dismiss the complaint. When the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy deems the matter serious enough and when one or more offenses listed in § 2702 are involved, the committee may refer the complaint back to the president and secretary of the College of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint) for referral as a judicial complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on investigation. The provisions of § 361.2 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.

4. Any actions of the jurisdictional or central conference committee taken on a complaint shall be reported to the next session of the jurisdictional or central conference.

5. Each jurisdiction shall develop a protocol for the caring of lay, clergy, and staff determined to be affected by the processing of the complaint.

6. Immunity From Prosecution—In order to preserve the integrity of the Church's complaint process and ensure full participation in it at all times, the College of Bishops, the supervisory response team, the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy, witnesses, advocates, and all others who participate in the complaint process regarding a bishop shall have immunity from prosecution of complaints brought against them related to their role in a particular complaint process, unless they have committed a chargeable

offense in conscious and knowing bad faith. The complainant/ plaintiff in any proceeding against any such person relating to their role in a particular complaint process shall have the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that such person's actions constituted a chargeable offense committed knowingly in bad faith. The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by the civil laws.

BOD ¶2702: Chargeable Offenses and the Statute of Limitations

1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor,⁹ clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4)¹⁰ 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;¹¹
- (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings,¹² including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;¹³
- (c) crime;
- (d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church;
- (e) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church;
- (f) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor;¹⁴
- (g) child abuse;¹⁵
- (h) sexual abuse;¹⁶
- (i) sexual misconduct¹⁵ including the use or possession of pornography,
- (j) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment;
- (k) racial or gender discrimination; or
- (l) fiscal malfeasance.

2. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference, or diaconal minister may be brought to trial when the appropriate body recommends involuntary termination.¹⁷

3. A professing member of a local church may be charged with

the following offenses, and, if so, may choose a trial:

- (a) immorality;
- (b) crime;
- (c) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church;
- (d) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church;
- (e) sexual abuse;
- (f) sexual misconduct;¹⁸
- (g) child abuse;
- (h) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment;
- (i) racial or gender discrimination;
- (j) relationships and/or behaviors that undermine the ministry of persons serving within an appointment; or
- (k) fiscal malfeasance.

4. Statute of Limitations—No judicial complaint or charge shall be considered for any alleged occurrence that shall not have been committed within six years immediately preceding the filing of the original complaint, except in the case of sexual or child abuse and in the case of immorality or crime, when the alleged occurrence(s) include allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse, there shall be no limitation (§ 2704.1a).¹⁵

Time spent on leave of absence shall not be considered as part of the six years.

5. Time of Offense—A person shall not be charged with an offense that was not a chargeable offense at the time it is alleged to have been committed. Any charge filed shall be in the language of the Book of Discipline in effect at the time the offense is alleged to have occurred except in the case of immorality or crime, when the alleged occurrence(s) include allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse. Then it shall be in the language of the Book of Discipline in

effect at the time the charge was filed. Any charge must relate to an action listed as a chargeable offense in the Discipline.

9. See Judicial Council Decision 982.

10. The statute of limitations went into effect as law on a prospective basis starting on January 1, 1993. All alleged offenses that occurred prior to this date are

time barred. See Judicial Council Decisions 691, 704, and 723.

11. The language beginning “including but not limited to . . .” first appeared in the 2004 Book of Discipline, effective January 1, 2005.

12. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 984, 985, 1185.

13. The language beginning “including but not limited to . . .” first appeared in the 2004 Book of Discipline, effective January 1, 2005.

14. See Judicial Council Decision 702.

15. This offense was first listed as a separate chargeable offense in the 1996 Book of Discipline effective April 27, 1996. See Judicial Council Decision 691.

16. See Judicial Council Decisions 736, 768

17. See Judicial Council Decision 767.

18. This offense was first listed as a separate chargeable offense in the 2000 Book of Discipline, effective January 1, 2001. See Judicial Council Decision 691.