

Petition #1-10

“AFFIRMING OUR UNITY AMONGST DIVERSITY OF OPINION”

Resolved: That the Pacific Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church confess and proclaim that diversity of opinion on important matters of faith and practice have always characterized the Christian community. Because it is a living body of believers, gathered together by God from many diverse segments of the human community, unanimity of belief, opinion, and practice has never been characteristic of the Church. Therefore, the present differences of opinion among faithful Christians regarding sexual orientation and practice, which continue to divide the church deeply, should neither surprise nor dismay; nor should they be covered over with false claims of consensus or unanimity. To the contrary, such conflict must be embraced with courage and perseverance as all together continue to seek to discern God’s will. We uphold the present controversy as evidence that God is not finished in sculpting us to be God’s people, and we stand united in declaring our faith that God’s grace is available to all, that neither belief nor practice can separate us from the love of God. In that confidence, we pledge to continue to be in respectful dialogue with those with whom we disagree, to explore the sources of our differences, to honor the sacred worth of all persons, and to tell the truth about our divisions.

Explanation: The persistent controversy regarding homosexual persons and practice has appeared at times to be so great as to split our denomination. The actions of the 2004 General Conference both seemed to move toward and to resist such division. Historically, from the very beginning, the Christian community has struggled with great tensions involved in being “one body” with “many members”—the core problem of unity-in-diversity. From the conflicts over diverse spiritual gifts and the admission of Gentiles to the church, differences have often threatened, and too frequently succeeded, to divide the church: the illusion of a pure and unanimous community continues to entice, because diversity is experienced as threatening. There is a fundamental theological issue here, however: Christians as not saved by being either “pure” or “right”; they are saved by grace alone, in all their flawed imperfection. It may well be that God keeps tossing controversy and tension into the life of the church to remind those who seek unity without diversity that such is not God’s way. A public affirmation of our lack of unanimity, and with it a radical commitment to persistent dialogue, is thus an important witness to both grace and faith, one that we can hope the General Conference will itself proclaim in the future.

--Vince Hart, Larry Fox, Gen Farmer, Dodie & Chuck Haight

--Amory Peck, Carol & Jeff Waymack;

Pacific Northwest Reconciling Ministries Network

Petition #1-11

“IMPLEMENTING THE CALL OF THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES: MINISTERING WITH AND FOR HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS”

Resolved: That each congregation of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference actively engage in a study of the document, Implementing the Call, prepared by the Council of the PNW Reconciling Ministries Network (text below) during the present quadrennium, and develop a specific plan of action for their own implementation of the General Conference call for intentional ministry with and for homosexual persons consistent with the Social Principles;

Further Resolved: That the resources prepared by the United Methodist Church and by the Reconciling Ministries Network be made available for this local church study and planning;

For Concurrence  
2/10  
For Concurrence  
2/10  
Call the Reconciliation  
2/10  
3

Decision of Law  
PNW empowered!  
Vote due 2/10/2

WJH/TW