

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MEMORANDUM 1295

IN RE: A Request for a Declaratory Decision Regarding Alleged Violations, Errors, Omissions, and Actions during the East Ohio Annual Conference Clergy Session

STATEMENT OF FACTS

During the Clergy Session of the East Ohio Annual Conference, a retired elder in full connection moved to recommit the portion of the motion to adopt the recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry to discontinue a clergy member's provisional membership in the Annual Conference.

Bishop Hopkins ruled the motion out of order. The Bishop's parliamentary ruling was not appealed.

Subsequent to the 2014 Annual Conference Session of the East Ohio Annual Conference, the retired elder submitted a petition on behalf of the discontinued provisional member to the Judicial Council. The petition stated:

The contents of this petition identify, set forth and/or allege violations, errors, omissions and actions of the East Ohio Annual Conference which are matters that affect the Petitioners and this petition involves the constitutionality, meaning, application or effect of some portions of *The Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2012*.

The petitioner's motion for a declaratory decision was made as a challenge to the Bishop's Ruling against his motion. Paragraph 2610 stipulates the various bodies with The United Methodist Church that are authorized to make petitions to the Judicial Council for declaratory decisions. Individuals are not named among those who have been authorized to make such petitions. The Bishop's Ruling on the petitioner's request is strictly parliamentary in nature. The Judicial Council's long standing jurisprudence has been not to review parliamentary ruling made by episcopal leaders. See Decisions 98, 1130, and 1131.

In the record supplied there is no indication that any actions from the Annual Conference were taken on this matter as required by the *2012 Discipline*. See ¶2610. The Judicial Council has no jurisdiction in this matter.

DIGEST

The Judicial Council has no jurisdiction because the petition did not come from an authorized body under ¶2610 of *2012 Discipline*. Moreover, the Bishop's ruling was parliamentary in nature and no annual conference action was taken on this matter.

Sandra Lutz recused and took no part in this decision.

Beth Capen was absent.

Warren Plowden, third lay alternate participated in this decision.

April 18, 2015