



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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CONSELHO JUDICIAL DA IGREJA METODISTA UNIDA
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Report by Bishop on Decision of Law

This form is to be used for (please check one):

☒ Reporting of decisions of law made by bishops in response to questions of law submitted to them in writing during the regular business of a conference session (§ 56.3 Const. and ¶ 2609.6 *The Book of Discipline* 2016).

☐ Reporting of episcopal decisions on questions of law when such decisions are appealed by one-fifth of the members of the conference (§ 56.2 Const. and ¶ 2609.7 *The Book of Discipline* 2016).

Name of Bishop: LaTrelle Miller Easterling

Address: 11711 East Market Place City: Fulton

State/Province: MD ZIP/Postal Code 20759 Country: USA

Phone: (410) 290-7300 Fax: _____ E-mail: bishopeasterling@bwcumc.org

Annual Conference: Baltimore-Washington Date of session: May 31, 2017 (month/day/year)

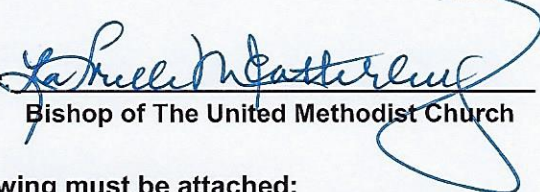
Question(s) of Law: "Paragraph 324.14 of the Book of Discipline reads, 'Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.'

I would like to request a rule of law as to whether the Board was within its rights to create a new category of candidates who are approved by the requisite 3/+ majority of the Board, but not brought forward for a vote of the clergy session."

Authorities Cited (indicate paragraph or decision number where applicable):

Constitution: _____ Book of Discipline: Par. 324.14

Judicial Council Decision(s): _____

Signature: 
Bishop of The United Methodist Church

Date: 7/13/17
(month/day/year)

The following must be attached:

- Decision of Law, including facts, rationale and ruling
- Text of the written request for decision
- Minutes of annual conference proceedings (relevant portions only)
- List of names and addresses of interested parties
- Other relevant materials (e.g. conference rules, resolutions, policies, reports)

Send electronic copy of this form and all materials in PDF and Microsoft Word format to:
secretaryjudicialcouncil@gmail.com

Mail four (4) sets of hard copies to: Secretary of the Judicial Council, 5556 N Sheridan Road,
610; Chicago, IL 60640 USA

SYLLABUS OF BISHOP LATRELLE MILLER EASTERLING'S DECISION OF LAW RENDERED DURING THE CLERGY EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE BALTIMORE- WASHINGTON CONFERENCE ON MAY 31, 2017

Statement of Facts

A Clergy Executive Session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church was held in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, May 31, 2017, commencing at 2:00 p.m. During that session, the Rev. Dr. Charles Parker asked for a ruling on a question of law he raised in connection with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry's announced decision to defer forwarding to the clergy session a recommendation that certified candidate Tara C. Morrow be elected to provisional membership. The Chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry had explained that the Board had decided not to forward the recommendation at this time in order to give the Board more time to review and explore the implications the Judicial Council's recent decisions might have in the case of candidate Morrow.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Parker then requested from the Bishop a ruling on a question of law, which he also submitted in writing to the Conference Secretary, as follows:

Paragraph 324.14 of the Book of Discipline reads, "Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry." I would like to request a rule of law as to whether the Board was within its rights to create a new category of candidates who are approved by the requisite $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the Board, but not brought forward for a vote of the clergy session.

Disposition

As reflected in the minutes of the session, Bishop Easterling ruled on Rev. Parker's question of law during the executive session, as follows:

As I look at the paragraph that you have quoted, Paragraph 324 of the Book of Discipline, the word "shall" is used that they are eligible for election on recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Tara Morrow is not included in the recommendation that the Board of Ordained Ministry brings to this 2017 Executive Session, therefore, there is no requirement for her to be voted on at this time.

Analysis

Paragraph 324.14 of the Book of Discipline identifies one of several qualifications that a candidate must meet in order to be elected to provisional membership. Specifically, it provides that a candidate cannot be elected to provisional membership unless (among other things) he or she "shall have been recommended in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry." Thus, as written, Paragraph 324.14 does not impose any requirement on the Board of Ordained Ministry to forward to the clergy session a written recommendation on any particular candidate or category of candidates. Rather, it provides that the clergy session may elect as provisional members only those candidates who have been so recommended in a writing to the clergy session, and then only if the recommendation is supported by the requisite three-fourths majority of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Clergy Executive Session

Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC

Wednesday, May 31, 2017 | 2 p.m.

Clergy gathered to the singing of “Thank You Lord” led by the Conference Choir and then joined in singing “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying.” Ephesians 4:1 was read by the Rev. Lemuel Dominguez and the Rev. Fay Lundin led the Call to Worship. This was followed by the Rev. Eunyoung Joo reading Ephesians 4:2a in Korean and the Rev. Alexis Brown leading the Opening Prayer. Rev. Dominguez read Ephesians 4:2b-3 and the assemblage then sang “Bind Us Together.” The Rev. Joo read Ephesians 4:4 in Korean and a Prayer for All People was lead by the Rev. Brown. The worship concluded with a spirited rendition of “O How I Love Jesus” and the Benediction by the Rev. Lunden. At the conclusion of the worship Bishop Easterling called upon the Rev. Kenneth Jones, the oldest living clergy member of the Conference, to pray.

Bishop Easterling requested the Board of Ordained ministry report from the Rev. C. Anthony Hunt, Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry. He informed the Bishop that he had an enabling motion to put before the body, if it was in order. The Bishop confirmed that it was and the Rev. Hunt offered the Clergy Executive Session Organizing Motion. The motion was seconded.

A question was raised by the Rev. Eliezer Valentin-Castanon regarding why the Assistant to the Bishop, who is clergy would not have a vote. The Rev. C. Anthony Hunt explained that the Assistant to the Bishop was a lay person. Bishop Easterling called for the vote. The motion passed.

The Rev. C. Anthony Hunt then presented the Board of Ordained Ministry narrative report that can be found in Section VI Reports.

Bishop Easterling invited the Rev. Maidstone Mulenga to the podium to be acknowledged as the Council of Bishops new Director of Communications and to instruct those gathered in the use of the voting devices as well as to explain those eligible to vote. He explained that a blue dot was on the devices given to Full Clergy Members and yellow to those who were not Full Clergy Members. Laity devices were identified with a white dot. Only Full Clergy Member and Laity on the Board of Ordained Ministry are eligible to vote on character and quality of candidates. He also explained that only Lay and Full Members are allowed to vote on constitutional amendments.

The Bishop reminded the session that devices are assigned by name and to remember to turn them in when requested. She called on the Rev. Hunt to lead the answering of the Disciplinary Questions.

The Dean of the Cabinet, the Rev. JW Park, gave the Cabinet’s response to Disciplinary Question 17. Questions 18.a, b and c were approved.

The Rev. Terri Rae Chattin raised a point of information regarding certified candidate Tara C. Morrow and the Rev. C. Anthony Hunt explained that Morrow had received a letter from the Board of Ordained Ministry that her recommendation was being delayed. Following a concurring explanation by Bishop Easterling and further exchanges, the Rev. Terri Rae Chattin raised a Point of Order that Morrow's name should be brought forward for a vote at the Executive Session and that what the Board of Ordained Ministry had done was to create a new category. She explained that under Conference Rules and Robert's Rules there needs to be a two-thirds vote for reconsideration. Hunt explained that recent Judicial Council decisions, which they need time to explore the implications of, led the Board of Ordained Ministry to decide to delay Morrow's recommendation although she remains a certified candidate.

The Rev. Charles Parker requested a Rule of Law: "Paragraph 324.14 of the Book of Discipline reads, 'Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.' I would like to request a rule of law as to whether the Board was within its rights to create a new category of candidates who are approved by the requisite $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the Board, but not brought forward for a vote of the clergy session."

Bishop Easterling ruled on the question of law: "As I look at the paragraph that you have quoted, Paragraph 324 of the Book of Discipline, the word 'shall' is used that they are eligible for election on recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Tara Morrow is not included in the recommendation that the Board of Ordained Ministry brings to this 2017 Executive Session, therefore, there is no requirement for her to be voted on at this time." She stated that copy will be forward to the Judicial Council as is appropriate.

The Bishop recognized the Reverend John Phillip Wogaman, who in a moment of Personal Privilege, stated he was approaching his 60th anniversary of his Elder's ordination, and announced that he was turning in his clergy credentials. He said that his "heart breaks" for T.C. Morrow (a lesbian) and others like her "with gifts and graces for ordain ministry who have been excluded because of bad church law, applied legalistically and hurtfully." Following his statement, Bishop Easterling repeatedly asked Wogaman to reconsider his decision. After "grievously" receiving his credentials, the Bishop called for a laying on of hands as she tearfully offered a prayer for the Rev. Wogaman. She called a ten-minute recess to allow times for those so moved to speak with Wogaman and to prepare to move forward. "I Surrender All" was sung during this time.

"Trust and Obey" was sung as the gathering music as the group reconvened. Bishop Easterling stated that the Parliamentarian advised her that it requires a one-third vote of the body for the Ruling of Law she made to be forwarded to the Judicial Council. Subsequently, it was confirmed that the Reverend Charles Parker was

asking for an appeal of the Rule of Law to the Judicial Council and the one-fifth vote required by ¶2709.7 of the Book of Discipline was received to do so.

The Rev. C. Anthony Hunt continued the process of responding to the Disciplinary Questions. Questions 21.a, b, and c were approved. Questions 25 and 26.b were approved.

The Rev. Scott Shumaker presented the provisional candidates. Candidate for membership as Provisional Deacon (Question 28.a), Jennifer Kokoski, was approved. The following were approved as Provisional Elders (Question 28.b): Daniel Breidenbaugh, Alison DeLeo, Walter D. Jackson, III, Heerak Kim, Tommy M. Murray, Kathleen M. O'Hern, Heather Olson, Monica E. Raines, and Evelyn Rivera.

Point of Order: The Rev. Debbie Scott, stating that she did not want to interrupt or take away from the moment for the Provisional candidates, asked "Can we put Tara C. Morrow's name forward under 28.a for this session?" Bishop Easterling responded that she believed she had ruled on that issue and that Morrow's name would not be presented for this session.

The following were approved as Provisional Members from other Christian denominations (Question 31.a): Kecia Ford, Reginald Tarpley, and Ronald Triplett.

Full Deacon Al Hammer presented the candidates elected as members in full connection (Question 32.a). The following were approved as a group for full membership and Ordination (Question 34.a): Myungha Baek, Mark Christopher Gorman, Yujung Hwang, Selena Marie Johnson, Robert Edward Kells, Jr., Ginger Ray Medley, and Kara June Scroggins. Hammer offered prayers for the group.

William G. Thomas was approved as a readmitted Full Member (Question 36). The Rev. Amanda McMurtrey, who was received by transfer from the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference (Question 38), was also approved. She and the Rev. Rodney Rydell Hudson, who transferred from other Methodist denominations (Question 39) and who had been hospitalized the previous day, were recognized.

The voluntary discontinuance (Question 42.b) of Kathy Ann Barna was approved. The name of the Rev. Adam Briddell was added to informational Question 49.

Five people listed in Question 50.a.were approved for voluntary leave of absence - four for personal leave and one for family leave. Eleven people were approved for grant of medical leave and their names appear in Question 52.

Board of Ordained Ministry, Vice Chair, Amy McCullough, asked those retiring Members in Full Connection listed in Question 53 to stand as their names were read. They were recognized and approved for retirement by the body. (See ___ page of this journal.) McCullough offered a prayer for those retiring. Question 54 listing one associate member retiring passed.

Associate Members and Elders listed under Question 72.a were approved for less than full-time service. [After the vote, the Rev. Ianther Mills indicated that one of those on the list had served 8 years and required three-fourths vote; the name was approved.]

Question 76 lists Provisional and Full Elders who are appointed to Extension Ministries. Part c of the question requires a vote; the body approved those listed. [Should the corrections requested by Bryant Oskvig to his Charge Conference, Chevy Chase and Mark Schaefer to Foundry be included?]

The report as corrected was approved at the ____ plenary session. The full report can be found on pages XXX to XXX of this journal, except for Question 75, which is found on pages XX to XXX.

Bishop Easterling asked for thanks for the board of Ordained Ministry and thanked the body for “bearing with one another in love” and disagreeing respectfully and in love. She expressed her pride in being bishop of the annual conference. The Rev. Rebecca Iannicelli offered a closing prayer.

Starnes, Thomas E.

From: Cynthia Taylor <CTaylor@bwcumc.org>
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 11:52 PM
To: Starnes, Thomas E.
Subject: Fw: Request for rule of law

Cynthia Taylor

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From: Charlie Parker <charlie@nationalchurch.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 3:32 PM
To: Cynthia Taylor
Subject: Request for rule of law

“Bishop, Paragraph 324.14 of the Book of Discipline reads, ‘Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.’ I would like to request a rule of law as to whether the Board was within its rights to create a new category of candidates who are approved by the requisite ¾ majority of the Board, but not brought forward for a vote of the clergy session.

Rev. Dr. Charles A. Parker
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List of Interested Parties in Docket No. 1017-10

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