

COMMITTEE ON APPEALS SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

In the Matter of the Rev. Errol Leslie, Appellant

(Original Jurisdiction: Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church)

OPINION ON APPEAL

This matter was heard on May 31, 2016. Upon consideration of the record on appeal, the briefs of the parties, oral argument, and deliberations of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals (“Committee”), the Committee concludes that the weight of the evidence sustains the charges of sexual misconduct, immorality, and disobedience to the order and discipline of the United Methodist Church (“UMC”) and no errors of Church law vitiate the trial court’s verdict or penalty of termination of Rev. Errol Leslie’s membership in the New England Annual Conference (“New England Conference”). Accordingly, the Committee affirms the verdict of the trial court and the penalty imposed.

[Approximately 13 pages of the opinion redacted.]

V. Decision

The facts substantiating the charges in this case have never been disputed. The appellant contests only the severity of the penalty imposed. However, the penalty is within the range authorized by ¶2711.3 for such offenses. There has been no mixing or matching of penalties as prohibited by Judicial Council decisions 240 and 1270. The trial court, though not unanimous, imposed the penalty after careful consideration of all facts and evidence. While errors were made, the members of this Committee cannot say that the admitted or alleged errors are of such a nature as to vitiate the verdict or penalty imposed.

For all the foregoing reasons, the Committee concludes that the weight of the evidence sustains the charges of sexual misconduct, immorality, and disobedience to the order and discipline of the UMC, and that no errors of Church law vitiate the trial court’s verdict or penalty of termination of the appellant’s conference membership and revocation of the recognition of appellant’s credentials for conference membership. Accordingly, the Committee affirms the verdict of the trial court and the penalty imposed.

DATED: 6/3/2016

[Signatures redacted.]

From: **William Campbell** <campbellwscott@aol.com>

Date: Saturday, July 9, 2016

Subject: Notice of Appeal

To: secretaryjudicialcouncil@gmail.com, [4 email addresses redacted]

Dear Rev. Tran,

Please accept this letter as formal notice of the intent of the Rev. Errol Leslie to appeal the June 3, 2016 decision of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals related to his trial by the Florida Annual Conference on January 11 and 12, 2016. It is my understanding that the Chairperson of the Committee on Appeals has forwarded all relevant background material to you. The Appellant has also requested that I request an oral hearing before the Judicial Council at its fall meeting in relation to this matter. Please let me know if you need anything further from me at this time.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Scott Campbell
Counsel for Rev. Errol Leslie