

## Scripture Passages, and the UMC Book of Discipline Paragraphs:

Seven passages in the Bible have traditionally been considered. There are four groupings:

- the sin of Sodom (Genesis 19:4-11, Jude 7);
- the Holiness Code (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13);
- Paul's lists of sins (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10);
- and Paul's description of unnatural relations (Romans 1:26-27).

Not all these passages carry equal importance in the United Methodist debate over homosexuality. For example, both traditionalists and progressives agree that the first chapter of Romans is pivotal. However, most scholars on both sides of the debate, at least within United Methodism, believe that the story of Sodom and the guests being hosted by Lot (Genesis 19) is a lesson on the terrible and criminal withholding of biblical hospitality to strangers, and not on the practice of same-sex relations.

**The United Methodist Church's *Book of Discipline* 2016, includes:**

### **¶ 4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church**

The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status,<sup>4</sup> or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.<sup>5</sup> In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.<sup>6</sup>

4. Amended 1992.

5. Amended 2000.

6. See Judicial Council Decisions 242, 246, 340, 351, 362, 377, 398, 594, 601, and Decisions 4 and 5, Interim Judicial Council.

### **¶ 214. Eligibility**

The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶ 4). In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

### **¶ 304.3 Qualifications for Ordination**

While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals<sup>1</sup> are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.<sup>2</sup>

1. "Self-avowed practicing homosexual" is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020

2. See Judicial Council Decisions 984, 985, 1027, 1028

**¶ 613 Responsibilities** [of the conference council on finance]

The [conference council on finance and administration] shall have authority and responsibility to perform the following functions:

19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The UMC "not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends" (¶ 161F). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church's ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events where the Church's official position is fairly and equally represented.

**¶ 806.9 Fiscal Responsibilities** [of the General Council on Finance and Administration]

[The General Council on Finance and Administration] shall be responsible for ensuring that no board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The United Methodist Church "not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends" (¶ 161F). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures.<sup>18</sup> It shall not limit the Church's ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.

18. See Judicial Council Decisions 491, 597.

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