



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Book of Discipline ¶2101-2109

¶2102 – The primary purpose...challenge The United Methodist Church , including its general agencies, institution, and connectional structures, to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making at all levels of the Church's life.

Sexual Ethics

- ▶ Advocate on behalf of victims – walk them through the process and provide support and assistance
- ▶ Assist Annual Conferences' leaders – walk them through the process and provide support and assistance
- ▶ Training for Leadership – Bishops, District Superintendents, Chancellors, BOOM committee members, Assistants to Bishops
- ▶ Training for Clergy on Sexual Ethics and Boundaries (including in Philippines, Mozambique, South Congo/Zambia)
- ▶ Develop Resources – Power Brochure, The Way of Integrity, and #MeToo Toolkit, Whispers with Stones video (10 languages)

Leadership Development & Accountability

- ▶ Assist Annual COSROW with their ministries – salary study, monitoring annual conference meetings including nominating committee, informational videos
- ▶ Resources: God of the Bible, Women Called to Ministry (7 languages) Next – Welcoming a Woman Pastor for local churches and annual conferences
- ▶ Monitoring: US salary study of clergy, number of women deacons, women elders, looks at various positions of power – where are women.... For General Conference, the make up of delegates, and who participates in the discussions
- ▶ Education – coordinating with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary for Women Leadership Summit in August 2020; coordinated with Eurasia Area the first Women's Retreat

Overview

- ▶ Budget of less than \$1 million per year (World Service Fund - \$77 million per year)
- ▶ Staff of 6 ½ persons (only with the assistance of a grant from United Methodist Communications)
- ▶ Websites: gcsrw.org and umsexualethics.org
- ▶ Sign up for our newsletter – go to gcsrw.org, select the tab that says “News,” click on “Newsletter”
- ▶ **With the United Methodist Women, we are hosting “Women’s Orientation” on Monday, May 4th from 4-6pm.**

GCSRW Legislation

- ▶ 6 pieces of legislation submitted to General Conference 2020
- ▶ Legislation will be in the ADCA, available February 2020
- ▶ Also available on the gcsr.org website – legislation and talking points

Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct

- ▶ Updated resolution to encourage Annual Conferences to have Response Teams who are equipped to understand trauma and grief. The team will have different persons in distinct roles throughout the process of disclosure, adjudication, and healing.
- ▶ Response Teams are called into a situation of trauma in order to promote the possibility of **healing** for the congregation, staff, and individuals involved.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, siblings, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct

1. Resolution #2043 is being updated because there is still a need for a Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct in The United Methodist Church.
2. There is a Disciplinary mandate to “provide a process for healing within the congregation” as part of the supervisory response and judicial process (§363.1f, *Book of Discipline* 2016).
3. The Response Team is appointed by the Bishop and is part of the assistance provided by an Annual Conference. When sexual misconduct occurs, congregations need trained support from their Annual Conference. Any misconduct can have lasting emotional and spiritual effects; therefore, trained Response Team members work to promote congregational healing that is long-term.
4. The *Discipline* also allows the Bishop to select “persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing” to assist during the supervisory response (§363.1b, *Book of Discipline* 2016).

Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships

- ▶ Update of an existing resolution.
- ▶ Sexual Abuse, Misconduct, and Harassment in ministerial roles cause great harm to all parties involved and the witness of the Church. It is critical that The United Methodist Church has proper accountability when sexual abuse, misconduct, or harassment occur and has committees and structures to prevent and address such behaviors.

1 Peter 1:22

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships

1. Resolution #2044 is being updated to assist in providing means for the Church to live into the vision of persons being treated equally as created in the image of God.
2. Identifying and setting appropriate boundaries can help ministerial leaders, both lay and clergy; this resolution provides assistance with that process.
3. Within the resolution, definitions are codified for sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment.
4. The resolution provides direction for the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force as mandated by the *Discipline* ¶2103.11.
5. This resolution delineates our dynamics of relationships between ministerial and non-ministerial persons including dating (sexual misconduct is not an affair).

Prevention of the Use of and Effects of Pornography Within the Church

- ▶ New resolution (previous was dropped in 2016 accidentally)
- ▶ Provides resources to the various levels of the church in eradicating the use and effects of pornography within The United Methodist Church.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Prevention of the Use of and Effects of Pornography Within the Church

1. We must acknowledge that we have a problem of pornography within our United Methodist Church and we must have achievable ways to acknowledge the issue and address the problem in order to eradicate the problem.
2. Pornography objectifies the body and does not provide the capability to see another person as the housing of the Holy Spirit which dwells within each person, and sees a person as an empty dwelling instead of a holy dwelling.
3. Within The United Methodist Church, we affirm that all lay and clergy persons should uphold the highest of sexual ethics, as provided by *The Book of Discipline*, and this resolution gives the church the abilities to provide parameters of accountability for lay and clergy persons.
4. Each pastor should have the light of God to share with their community, and when engaging in pornography, we cannot hold the light and life of God at its brightest, because we are objectifying the body instead of affirming and upholding a person's spirit.
5. Pornography also typically accompanies other sexual misconduct and is often a gateway to further sexual misconduct.

Eradication of Sexism in the Church

- ▶ Update of an existing resolution
- ▶ Sexism, a pervasive and systematic force within our church, deprives the church of the opportunity to use the skills and talents of women.

Genesis 1:27

So God created humankind in God's own image, in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them.

Eradication of Sexism in the Church

1. Resolution #3443 is being updated to acknowledge that this problem continues to be a prevalent issue in the church, with statistics showing that sexism has increased.
2. The resolution challenges the church to ensure that all Annual Conferences are providing resources for local churches to educate their members on this issue and to become more open to equity and inclusiveness.
3. The Global Young People's Convocation passed legislation that acknowledges this issue and is forwarding it to the General Conference for consideration. This legislation complements that of the Global Young People's Convocation and we affirm their language acknowledging this problem and that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the church.

Apology from General Conference to the Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC

- ▶ New resolution
- ▶ To the extent of our ability and in the spirit of offering healing for all affected, The United Methodist Church publicly acknowledges the harm victims/survivors have experienced as a result of sexual misconduct perpetrated by any leaders of The United Methodist Church.

James 5:16 For this reason, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

In the 2016 Book of Resolutions, Invitation to the Lord's Table: Practice - When Holy Communion is celebrated, it is important to always begin with the words of Invitation, including Confession and Pardon. If these are omitted, all those present may not understand either the openness of the Table of the Lord or the expectation of repentance, forgiveness, healing, and entrance into new life in Christ (p. 742).

Apology from General Conference to the Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC

1. Apologies are the first step towards justice – the making right of a wrong. A public apology would be the first step in a journey of reconciliation and restitution.
2. Many people who are survivors of sexual misconduct have not heard an apology from any person of authority in The UMC or an institutional apology from the denomination.
3. The acknowledgement of the harm experienced by survivors of sexual harassment is a crucial first step to healing, especially for those who are unable to file a complaint due to time limits.
4. This apology piece acknowledges the harm experienced by survivors who believed there was a sacred trust that was broken.
5. One of the goals of this petition is to show an act of convicted humility from the institution.
6. The petition names the sin of sexual misconduct and indicates that The UMC accepts the responsibility for any wrong the survivors have experienced by clergy and lay leadership.
7. This apology does not seek to admit liability by The UMC; in the US, approximately 35 states and the District of Columbia have apology laws with a scope of wide-ranging applicability

Paragraph 4, Article IV

- ▶ Add the word “gender” to Paragraph 4, Article IV of the Constitution.
- ▶ All persons without regard to race, **gender**, color, national origin, status, 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, becoming professing members in any local church in the connection.

Genesis 1:27

*God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image
God created them, male and female God created them.*

Paragraph 4, Article IV

1. Paragraph 4 is in accord with ¶16.1 – To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.
2. Paragraph 4 is also in harmony with ¶16.14 – General Conference shall have full legislative power over matters distinctively connectional, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows...To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender or status.
3. Even though the beginning of the sentence is “All persons,” we know that not “all persons” have been eligible for membership. We know this because we are told who is not eligible: women who are not the first wife in a polygamy culture, women who have been divorced, etc.
4. There is no comma after all persons so the words following after describe who the “all” are.
5. The list helps remind us of the history of who was not included and who has been discriminated against. This seeks to correct historical inequities.
6. In the 2016 *Book of Discipline*, the word gender is used 64 times. The word is usually used in reference to inclusivity: race, gender, age, economic status, etc.
7. Under ¶ 161.F, The Nurturing Community, Women and Men: “We affirm with Scripture the common humanity of male and female, both having equal worth in the eyes of God. We reject the erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another...”

New Amendment to Constitution

New ¶6: As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women's and girl's equality and well-being.