



## First United Methodist Church

### Points to Ponder

# The BoD and LGBTQ

Source (with citations): [http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_umc6.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_umc6.htm)

Every four years, a *General Conference of Methodist churches* is held at which modifications to the *Book of Discipline* are considered.

**1972:** The following statement was added to the "Social Principles" document: *"Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are person of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Further we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured, **although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.**"*

**1984:** The UMC passed a statement that: *"Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve..."*

**1988:** The Conference created a "Committee to Study Homosexuality." Categories for committee membership (intended to have it be truly inclusive) did not include gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.

**1992:** The (100% heterosexual) committee reached consensus on four items:

1. The [7 references to homosexuality](#) in the Bible **represent ancient culture and not the will of God.**
2. Homosexuality is a **normal human sexual variant**, which can be healthy and whole.
3. Covenantal, committed, and **monogamous homosexual relationships should be affirmed.**
4. These conclusions are **supported by God's grace**, visible in the life of lesbian and gay Christians.

**A majority report recommended:** *"The present state of knowledge and insight in the biblical, theological, ethical, biological, psychological, and sociological fields does not provide a satisfactory basis upon which the church can responsibly maintain the condemnation of all homosexual practice."*

**The report was "received" by the General Conference, but not approved.** However, the *Book of Discipline* was modified to state that: *"... all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured."* This didn't include human right to marry the person to whom one is committed for life, or the right to be considered for ordination.

Also in 1992, the UMC *Commission on Christian Unity and Inter-religious Concerns* opened its membership to all members, including gays and lesbians.

**1996:** The Conference added that: *"Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches."* 11 active and 4 retired Bishops circulated a letter calling for the right of homosexuals to be eligible for ordination. As of 1998, it had been endorsed by 1,300 UMC clergy. The letter reads, in part: *"We the undersigned bishops wish to affirm the commitment made at our consecration to the vows to uphold the Discipline of the church. However, we must confess the pain we feel over our personal convictions that are contradicted by the proscriptions against gay and lesbian persons..."*

- Steven Di Pilla