

Total Number of Pages: 3

Suggested Title: Eradication of Sexism in the Church

Discipline Paragraph or Resolution Number, if applicable: *Resolution #3443*

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: Yes

Amend Resolution #3443 Eradication of Sexism in the Church

Eradication of Sexism in the Church

We affirm that “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, no is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 NIV

Whereas, sexism continues to be a pervasive and systematic force within our church and our society; and

Whereas, sexism deprives the church and society of the opportunity to use the skills and talents that women have; and

Whereas, a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women ~~2007 survey of local churches in the United States found that only 55% of small churches and 62% of large membership churches have policies against sexual harassment; inclusive language studies are rare in local congregations with only 4% of laity and 31% of clergy indicating they use inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language studies, harassment policies, and diverse use of female lay persons (as Board of Trustees members and ushers, for example);~~ 2017 survey found that only 53% of lay persons versus 86% clergy are familiar with local church policies against sexual harassment. Previous research by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women continues to show that inclusive language studies are rare in local congregations with only 4% of laity and 31% of clergy indicating they use inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language studies, harassment policies, and diverse use of female lay persons (as Board of Trustees members and ushers, for example); and

Whereas, the Church remains committed to the eradication of sexual harassment against children, employees, volunteers, clergy and their families, and congregants. Yet sexual misconduct remains a serious problem in our conferences. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2017 survey indicates that more than 50% of clergy, lay persons and seminary students have reported experiencing some form of sexual misconduct, with 1 in 33 women experiencing sexual harassment in local church meetings and worship, and an alarming number

of local congregations do not have policies, procedures, or training in place for laity clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and how to report such conduct; and

Whereas, women comprise ~~58%~~ 57% of the denomination's membership but hold only one-fifth of the top leadership positions in the US annual conferences and as leaders are largely relegated to committees without much financial power like women's ministry and advocacy, racial-ethnic concerns and youth ministry rather than committees that exert considerable influence and control over funding as well as the allocation of money in annual conference ministries, and women employed by general church agencies hold 77% of administrative and clerical support positions (Data from the General Council on Finance and Administration 2009; Women by the Number: issues November 2010, December 2010, January 2011, and March 2011; *THE FLYER*); and

Whereas, the Church continues to lose clergywomen from local church ministry into more welcoming forms of ministry, indicating a persistent, subtle, and often unchallenged sexism that denies women in The United Methodist Church the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all areas of the Church; and despite progress, research continues to show that clergywomen experience a limited positional power when leading a congregation in comparison with their male counterparts; and

Whereas, a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2017 Pay Equity survey found that though membership is comprised of 58% women, they made up 28.4% of clergy positions, with women clergy receiving on average a salary that is almost \$4,000 less per year than their similarly situated male counterparts across regions and jurisdictions; and

*Therefore, be it resolved*, that the General Conference continue to commit itself to eradicating sexism in the church and that it affirm the work and tasks of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and of the annual conference-related commissions and counterparts; and

*Be it further resolved*, that each annual conference commission or counterpart be given the financial backing to pursue projects that are aimed at educating the members of the local churches about the issues of sexism and at sponsoring the leadership events that enable the annual conference commission members to be better advocates for all who seek equity and inclusiveness; and

*Be it further resolved*, that each annual conference, United Methodist seminary, and all United Methodist-related institutions are called to have policies on sexual harassment and equal opportunity; and

*Be it further resolved*, that each annual conference and local congregation is called have policy, procedures, and training opportunities in place for lay and clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and that progress to full compliance will be reported through the Episcopal Office to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women at the Commission's request. The Commission will be responsible to report to General Conference 2016; and

*Be it further resolved*, that bishops and cabinet members be mindful of pay equity disparities and work collectively within their respective conferences to eliminate pay inequities; and

*Be it further resolved*, that the General Conference support the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as the advocacy and monitoring agency of women's issues for increasing opportunities for females in leadership, promoting equality in filling decision-making posts, and fostering inclusiveness in all facets of The United Methodist Church.

Date: 7/31/2019

Signature of the Petitioner:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dawn Wiggins Hare".

Identification of the Petitioner: General Secretary of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

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