



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church Statement in Support of Women's Equality and Full Inclusion May 7, 2018

The Council of Bishops notes with dismay that two amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church regarding gender equality did not pass. While we are not completely clear concerning the motivation that caused them to miss the two-thirds required majority by slim margins, we want to be clear that we are unequivocal in our commitment to the equality of women and their full inclusion in our Church. Our Social Principles are clear: “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, that one gender must strive against another, and that members of one gender may receive love, power, and esteem only at the expense of another.” (¶161(F)) We also state, “We affirm women and men to be equal in every aspect of their common life.” (162(F)). With regard to clergy, our principle has been clear for more than 60 years: “Both men and women are included in all provisions of the Discipline that refer to the ordained ministry.” (¶369.2). Throughout our Book of Discipline, the General Conference has enacted provisions to protect women’s role and to enhance their full participation in the life of the church. This includes the establishment of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and their related structures in annual conferences.

We confess we have a long way to go to fully live into our deep commitment to the equality of women in our many countries and in the life of The United Methodist Church. Sexism still exists at all levels of our church, and we confess our sinful actions and structures. We acknowledge that we have not yet reached a place where we fully embody the gospel promise that “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28).

We recommit ourselves as individual bishops, and the Council of Bishops, to leading the church toward the goal which Christ has given us to fully include both men and women in the life and ministry of Christ’s church.

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