

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2012
Errata 06/04/2015
(New additions appear in red letter.)

United Methodist Bishops, page 8, column 2, fourth line from bottom. Remove second hyphen. Correct: Hee-Soo Jung.

United Methodist Bishops, page 9, middle of column 2. Remove hyphen. Correct: Sandra Lynn Steiner Ball.

¶ 6, page 10, line 4. Add the word “pray” before the word “seek” so that the sentence will now read:

¶ 6, Article VI. Ecumenical Relations—As part of the church universal, The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life....

This constitutional amendment was duly approved by the General Conference and the requisite two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting and those votes were canvassed by the Council of Bishops meeting in October 2014 and announced according to *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 59."

¶ 14, page 26. Delete the words “in the month of April or May” and add the sentence “The change in the preceding sentence shall become effective at the close of General Conference in 2016.”

The sentence will now read:

The General Conference shall meet once in four years at such time and in such place as shall be determined by the General Conference or by its duly authorized committees. The change in the preceding sentence shall become effective at the close of General Conference in 2016.

This constitutional amendment was duly approved by the General Conference and the requisite two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting and those votes were canvassed by the Council of Bishops meeting in October 2014 and announced according to *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 59."

¶ 32, page 33, line 2. Replace “director of Lay Speaking Ministries” with “director of Lay Servant Ministries.”

The sentence will now read:

The lay membership shall consist of professing⁵⁶ lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses, and home missionaries under episcopal

appointment within the bounds of the annual conference,⁵⁷ the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries....

This constitutional amendment was duly approved by the General Conference and the requisite two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting and those votes were canvassed by the Council of Bishops meeting in October 2014 and announced according to *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 59."

¶ 40, page 38, lines 1, 3, and 7. Delete "Changes in." Replace "may be effected," with "shall be determined." Add to the paragraph end, "The authority of jurisdictional and central conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision."

The paragraph will now read:

The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas shall be determined by the jurisdictional conferences in the United States of America and by the central conferences outside the United States of America according to the provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective structures of the jurisdictional and the central conferences. The authority of jurisdictional and central conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.

This constitutional amendment was duly approved by the General Conference and the requisite two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting and those votes were canvassed by the Council of Bishops meeting in October 2014 and announced according to *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 59."

¶ 104, page 65, line 4. Delete the word "Lamentations."

¶ 139, page 98, second line from the bottom. Following the words "Service (¶ 328)" add the words "compassion and justice."

¶ 139 now correctly reads: ...deacons are called to ministries of Word, Service (¶ 328), Compassion, and Justice....

Social Principles Preamble, page 104. Add to the end of the third paragraph, "We stand united in declaring our faith that God's grace is available to all, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus."

Delete final paragraph, beginning "We acknowledge that...."

¶ 256.3.a, page 185, line 1. The opening fragment should read “The coordinator of youth ministries and the youth council, when organized, shall be responsible for recommending to the church council activities,

¶ 310.2e, page 226,. Insert the word “written” between the words “individual” and “ballot.”

¶ 310.2e. now correctly reads: “be voted on by individual written ballot by committee members present.”

¶ 316.6, page 231. Add to the end of subparagraph 6 this following sentence: “Local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences (see Judicial Council Decision 1181 and ¶ 35, Article IV).”

Decision No. 1181

In Re: IN RE: Request for a Declaratory Decision as to the Meaning, Effect, and Application of the Amended Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 35, Article IV of the 2008 Discipline

DIGEST OF CASE

The persons who are eligible to be elected as clergy delegates to the General Conference, the jurisdictional conference, or the central conference by the annual conference or the provisional annual conference are the full clergy members of the annual or provisional conference. Eligibility to be elected is conferred by full conference membership without regard to ordination or to years of service.

The persons who are eligible to cast ballots as electors in choosing the clergy delegates to the General Conference, the jurisdictional conference, or the central conference, are (a) the persons who are eligible for election, (b) the associate members, (c) the provisional members who have been judged by the annual conference to have completed the educational requirements and have been elected to provisional membership, and (d) the local pastors who have met two criteria: they have, by either of two options as determined by the annual conference, completed the constitutionally specified level of education; and they have been appointed by the bishop and served for two consecutive years, immediately preceding the election, during which time no withdrawal of the appointed status has occurred.

¶ 321, page 235, last line of first paragraph. Change “appointments as provisional members in full connection” to “appointments as provisional members and members in full connection.”

¶ 327.2b, c, page 244. (See **Judicial Council Decision #1181** above.) In subparagraph b capitalize “General” Conference.

Add this following sentence to the end of subparagraph c:

“Provisional clergy members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences (see Judicial Council Decision 1181 and ¶ 35, Article IV).”

¶ 334.5, page 259. Change “incapacity leave” to “medical leave.”

¶ 337.2, p. 263, line 1. Remove the word “and” and add a comma so that the sentence reads, “In addition to ordained elders, persons....”

¶ 339, page 267, line 2. Add the phrase “(according to 1992 *Book of Discipline*)” after the words “provisional deacon.”

¶ 353, page 287, last line. Change “incapacity leave” to “medical leave.”

¶ 354.3, page 288, line 1. Following the word “absence,” add “, with the exception of transitional leave,”.

¶ 354.11, page 290. Insert the phrase “except for transitional leave” after the word “requested” and before “it.”

¶ 354.11 now correctly reads: When an end to voluntary leave of absence is requested, except for transitional leave, it shall be by written request....

¶ 358.2a, last sentence. Replace “then the provisions of ¶1506.4i shall apply” with “then the actuarial reduction provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program shall apply.”

¶ 407, page 320, 8th line from bottom. Change “incapacity” to “medical leave.”

¶ 410.4. Page 326. Change “*Incapacity Leave*” to “*Medical Leave*.”

¶ 431.1.b.1, page 343. Lower case “catholic.”

¶ 435, page 347, line 5. Change “Untied” to “United.”

¶ 511.4.c, page 358, line 7. Change “60-day period” to “90-day period.”

¶ 511.1.a, page 356, line 7. Delete the word “jurisdictional.”

¶ 514, p. 361. Following the last word of the final sentence, add, “except when the application of that formula results in a total number of delegates to a jurisdictional conference less than 100. In that event, the Secretary of the General Conference shall adjust the number of delegates to the jurisdictional conference in the same proportion among the annual and missionary conferences of the jurisdiction to achieve a total of 100, ensuring that no annual or missionary conference shall be represented by fewer than four delegates.”

¶ 602.1 b, c, d, page 395. (See **Judicial Council Decision #1181** above.) In subparagraph b capitalize “General” Conference.

Add the following sentence to the end of subparagraph b:

“Provisional clergy members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences (see Judicial Council Decision 1181 and ¶ 35, Article IV).”

In subparagraph c line 1 delete the words “and affiliate.”

In subparagraph c lines 3 and 4 delete the words “election of clergy delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences.”

In subparagraph c add the following sentence at the end:

“Affiliate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General, jurisdictional or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (see Judicial Council Decision 1181 and ¶ 35, Article IV).”

In subparagraph d capitalize “General” Conference.

In subparagraph d add to the end the following sentence:

“Local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences (see Judicial Council Decision 1181 and ¶ 35, Article IV).”

¶ 602.4, page 396, line 5. Add “the conference scouting coordinator,” following “district lay leaders.”

¶ 635.2.1.6, page 461. Change “incapacity leave” to “medical leave.”

¶ 702.6, p. 509, line 3. Change 2004 *Book of Resolutions* to 2008.

¶ 703.9, page 511, line 6. Change ¶ 906.1 to ¶ 806.1.b.2

¶ 705.4.e, page 517, first line. Remove “(1).”

¶ 807.7, page 542, line 1. Remove the word “act.”

¶ 906.1, page 573. Change “49 persons” to “47 persons.”

¶ 1124.1, page 603, line 5. Remove “a)”

¶ 1124.3, page 603, line 2. Remove “a)”

¶ 1212, page 611, line 1. Remove “1.”

¶ 1311.1, page 618, next to last line. Remove the closed parenthesis following the word “board.”

¶ 2521.1, p. 736, line 1. Change “The board” to “The District Board of Church Location and Building....”

¶ 2544. Page 752. Add a new 1. at the beginning of the text and change all the numbers following as shown below. Add the word “or” following “new parsonage “ in a) as shown below.

Planning and Financing Requirements for local Church

Buildings—1. If any local church desires to:

- a) build a new church, a new educational building, or a new parsonage; or
2. After the study committee finishes its work, the local....
3. In the case of a building project or purchase proposal....
4. The charge conference of the local church shall authorize....
5. The building committee shall....
6. The building committee shall submit to the district....
7. After preliminary approval by the district board of....
8. After approval by the church conference, the building....
9. After approval by the charge conference and district....
10. In metropolitan areas, the building committee shall....
11. The local church shall acquire a fee simple title to the....
12. If a loan is needed, the local church shall comply with....
13. The local church shall not enter into a building contract or....
14. Neither the trustees nor any other members of a local....
15. It is recommended that a local church not enter into a....

¶ 2609.6, p. 769. Delete “when such appeal has been made by one-fifth of that conference present and voting.” The subparagraph then reverts to the language of the 2008 *Book of Discipline* as follows:

6. The Judicial Council shall pass upon and affirm, modify, or reverse the decisions of law made by bishops in central, district, annual, or jurisdictional conferences upon questions of law submitted to them in writing in the regular business of a session; and in order to facilitate such review, each bishop shall report annually in writing to the Judicial Council on forms provided by the council all the bishop’s decisions of law....

DECISION 1244

IN RE: Review of a Bishop’s Decision of Law in the Southwest Texas Annual Conference Regarding the Meaning, Effect, and Application of ¶ ¶ 313 and 635.2 in Regards to the Discontinuance of a Certified Candidate

DIGEST

The amendment adopted by the 2012 General Conference to ¶ 2609.6 stating “when such appeal has been made by one-fifth of that conference present and voting” is

unconstitutional because it modified ¶¶ 51 and 56.3 of the Constitution. Therefore, the amendment is null, void and of no effect. This decision is effective immediately.

Finding the amendment of ¶ 2609.6 unconstitutional does not prevent the Judicial Council from ruling on the Bishop's decision of law.

The Bishop's decision of law is reversed. The matter was properly before the Annual Conference as business of the Annual Conference pursuant to ¶ 33. The matter is remanded to the bishop for a decision on the questions presented. His submission is to be submitted to the Secretary of the Judicial Council within 60 days of this notification. The Judicial Council retains jurisdiction.

¶ 2701. *Preamble and Purpose*, page 772-3. Replace first sentence with this from the 2008 Book of Discipline (see Judicial Council decision #1296 below): The judicial proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from the counsel for the Church to the committee on investigation.

¶ 2702.4, page 777, last line on page. Change “**See Note ** on p. 778” to “**See Note ** on p. 776.”

¶ 2703.2, page 778. Add the following text from *The Book of Discipline 2008*:

*When respondent is a clergy member of an annual conference, a clergy member on honorable or administrative location or a local pastor—*There shall be a committee on investigation consisting of four clergy in full connection, three professing members, and six alternate members, three of whom shall be clergy in full connection and three of whom shall be professing members. The committee shall be nominated by the presiding bishop in consultation with the board of ordained ministry (for clergy members) and the conference board of laity (for professing members) and elected quadrennially by the annual conference. If additional members or alternates are needed, the annual conference may elect members to serve for the remainder of the quadrennium. Committee members shall be in good standing and should be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. The committee on investigation shall elect a chair and organize at the annual conference. None of the members or alternates shall be members of the board of ordained ministry, the cabinet, or immediate family members of the above. Should a member of the committee on investigation have been a party to any of the prior proceedings in a case that finally comes before the committee, he or she shall be disqualified from sitting on the committee during its consideration of that case, and his or her place shall be taken by an alternate member. Seven members or alternates seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

¶ 2703.2, page 779. ¶ 2703.2 becomes ¶ 2703.3 and ¶ 2703.3 ¶ becomes 2703.4.

¶ 2704.2, page 780. Replace ¶ 2704.2.a, .b, .c, and .d with the following text from *The Book of Discipline 2008*:

2. *When respondent is a clergy member of an annual conference, clergy on honorable or administrative location or a local pastor*

a) *Judicial Complaint*—If the bishop determines that the complaint is based on allegations of one or more offenses listed in ¶ 2702.1, the bishop shall refer the complaint to the counsel for the Church, who shall be appointed by the bishop. The counsel for the Church shall be a clergyperson in full connection and shall have the right to choose one assistant counsel without voice who may be an attorney. The counsel for the Church shall draft and sign a judicial complaint, attaching as exhibits all relevant written materials, including but not limited to information from the supervisory process and a suggested list of witnesses as deemed appropriate, forward the judicial complaint to the committee on investigation and represent the Church in the judicial process. The statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4 should be considered prior to the referral of a judicial complaint.

b) If a written complaint is made against a clergyperson for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.1, the bishop shall appoint a clergyperson in full connection as counsel for the Church (see ¶ 361.1d[1]). Counsel for the Church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of the conference committee on investigation and represent the interests of the Church in pressing the claims of the person making the original complaint in any proceedings before the committee. A copy of the complaint and documentary evidence under consideration shall be sent to the respondent, the person making the original complaint, and the bishop. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to submit to the committee on investigation a written response to the judicial complaint within thirty days of receipt of the judicial complaint. The chairperson of the conference committee on investigation shall have sixty days to convene the committee on investigation after receiving the judicial complaint.

c) If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the bishop may suspend the person charged from all clergy responsibilities pending the outcome of the judicial process. The respondent retains all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334.

¶2706.2.c, page 783. Replace ¶ 2706.2c with the following text from *The Book of Discipline 2008*:

When respondent is a bishop, a clergy member of an annual conference, clergy on honorable or administrative location, a local pastor, a clergyperson, or a diaconal minister—A respondent who is a bishop, a clergyperson, or a diaconal minister shall be entitled to select a clergyperson in full connection to serve as respondent's counsel. A respondent shall be entitled to choose one assistant counsel without voice who may be an attorney.

¶ 2706.5.b.2, page 785. Restore this paragraph from *The Book of Discipline 2008*:

(2) *When respondent is a clergyperson other than a bishop*--A vote to adopt any charge or specification shall require five votes. Any bill of charges and specifications adopted by the committee on investigations shall be sent by the chairperson within five days to the respondent, the person making the complaint, the secretary of the annual conference, the counsel for the Church, and the resident bishop.

¶ 2706.5.b.2, page 785. ¶ 2706.5.b.2 will become ¶ 2706.5.b.3 and ¶ 2706.5.b.3 will become ¶ 2706.5.b.4

¶ 2706.5.b.4, page 786. Delete.

2706.5.c, line 6, page 786. Following “to the resident bishop in the case of a” add “clergyperson or”

JUDICIAL COUNCIL DECISION 1296

The action of the 2012 General Conference to delete the role of the Committee on Investigation for clergy members of an annual conference is unconstitutional. The portions of the *Discipline* that relate to the role of the Committee on Investigation for clergy members of the annual conference that existed in the 2008 *Discipline* are restored. This decision is prospective and takes effect on April 18, 2015.

Beth Capen was absent.

Warren Plowden, third lay alternate, participated in this decision.

Dennis Blackwell was absent.

Timothy K. Bruster, first clergy alternate, participated in this decision.

April 18, 2015

CONCURRING OPINION

It appears uncontroverted that at the 2012 General Conference, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) submitted a package of petitions (Nos. 20168-20199) intended to make sweeping changes in the investigations and trial processes of the Church. Of the 32 petitions, 15 were rejected by the legislative committee. Of those that were carried to adoption, Petitions 20180, 20182 and 20188 were significantly amended and assigned to the legislative committee on judicial administration (the last three under Calendar Items 304, 305, 306). All said four petitions deleted references in the 2008 *Book of Discipline* to the annual conference committee on investigation (COI), as it related to the investigatory part of the judicial process when a cleric, who is not a bishop, is the respondent. They were eventually adopted by the 2012 General Conference.

Petition 20180, as adopted, changed the commencement of judicial proceedings from when the matter at issue in a case is referred to the Committee on Investigation (COI) to when it is referred to the counsel for the Church.

Petition 20182, as adopted, deleted ¶2703.2 of the 2008 *Discipline*, which defined the annual conference COI tasked with the investigation of charges brought about against a clergy member of the annual conference.

Petition 20184, as adopted, deleted the requirement in ¶2704.2 of the 2008 *Discipline* that where the respondent is a clergy member of the conference, the counsel for the Church must present the complaint to the annual conference COI. It defined the role of counsel for the church, making said counsel, in consultation with the conference chancellor, solely responsible for directly forwarding the complaint to the person assigned to preside over a subsequent trial.

Petition 20188, as adopted, deleted the role of the annual conference COI, from ¶ 2706 of the *2008 Discipline* when the respondent is its clergy member.

Resultantly, the COI has replaced the trial court, retaining its name but shedding off its investigation function prior to trial. It is now a misnomer.

However, the other proposals to eliminate the pool of candidates, the trial court, the committee on appeals of the jurisdictional and central conferences, were not adopted by the General Conferences, hence, there is still no direct appeal from a trial to the Judicial Council.

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction under 2610.1 and 2.j of the *2012 Book of Discipline*.

Prior to the questioned elimination, the Committee on Investigation (COI) of an annual conference functioned as an investigating body where the respondent is a clergy member. It could hear and question a complainant. The respondent had a body of peers to help determine if sufficient evidence existed to bring a charge preparatory to trial. Members of the Committee had voting rights in matters of ordination, character and conference relations of a clergy. There was plain assurance of a fair process. Now, because of the legislative deletion of COI, the fate of the clergy respondent whether or not a charge is forthcoming, is left to the sole discretion of the Bishop-appointed Counsel for the Church, albeit in consultation with the Chancellor. Said Counsel has no accountability to the conference. There is no more thorough, let alone fair, process of investigation and hearing. Nor is there a screening of the evidence prior to its presentation at the trial. There is no record or transcript of what transpired before a trial commences. Consequently, those who preside at the trial would be hard-pressed resolving pre-trial issues given the limited information on hand.

Fair process is an integral part of our clergy right not only in trial (JCD 1226) but also in investigation or pre-trial. The requirement of an annual conference Committee on Investigation composed of peers before a cleric is brought to trial has been enshrined in the *Discipline* since 1940 (¶631). In fact, in 2008 the General Conference, with the support of 2/3 vote of the membership of all annual conferences, amended ¶33 of the Constitution to provide laity voting members on the clergy COI. (¶¶602.6 and 2703.2)

More importantly, the Committee on Investigation is specified in ¶33 of the Constitution stating, *inter alia*, “that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry and the Committee on Investigation may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.” Although the word used is the usually permissive may, how can the lay members vote if the clergy COI is taken out of the provision? Hence, the General Conference cannot eliminate it or change its function in the judicial process by mere legislation. Unless and until said constitutional provision is properly amended, the COI must remain as a structural part of the annual conference. Obviously, the retention of the name of the COI despite the change of its function from investigation to trial work was done to circumvent the rigorous process of amending ¶33 of the Constitution as prescribed by ¶59 which requires a two-thirds majority of the General

Conference present and voting and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting.

Further, the deletion has created an imbalance in the treatment of respondents, clergy, bishop and laity. While the COI for clergy has been eliminated, those for bishop and laity have been retained. The rights of a clergy respondent are sacrificed at the altar of speedy investigation mistaken as a streamlined procedure.

Accordingly, I respectfully hold that the 2012 amendments to ¶¶2703.2, 2704.2 and 2706 eliminating and/or changing the function of the Annual Conference Clergy Committee on Investigation are void and unconstitutional. The provisions of said paragraphs in the *2008 Book of Discipline* must be restored and maintained.

Ruben T. Reyes
April 18, 2015

¶ 2710.3, page 793. Change paragraph references to “¶¶ 304.2 and 330.5.c.3.”

Index, page 807, second column, alcoholic beverages. Change ¶ 613.19 to ¶ 613.18.

Index, page 816, column 1, line 9. Delete reference to ¶ 272.

Index, page 826, second column, line 7. Delete “ordinations as deacons, ¶ 371.3.”

Index, page 847, column 2, Lay Minister Certified. Delete reference to ¶ 272.

Index, p. 848, Lay Servant Ministries, seventh line from the top. Column one. “support for, ¶1106.6” Remove the .6.

Index, page 852, second column, “Pension and Health Benefits.” Delete subparagraph 1602.2.

Index, page 870, column 2, Human Relations Day. Replace reference ¶ 828.1 with ¶ 824.1.

Index, page 870, column 2, Laity Sunday. Delete reference to ¶ 272.