

1 **1Petition to the 2008 Western Jurisdiction**

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3 **TITLE: Resolution on Human Sexuality in Western Jurisdiction**

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5 Submitted by: Randy Miller, California-Nevada; Josh Davies, Rocky Mountain;

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7 **FINANCIAL IMPACT: None**

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10 The Western Jurisdiction, in searching its collective heart, and in responsibility to our calling to  
11 make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, affirms the statement known  
12 as The Majority Report, adopted by the Human Sexuality Sub-Committee and the larger Church  
13 & Society II Legislative Committee of the General Conference on April 27, 2008, in keeping  
14 with Wesley's general rules to do no harm, and to do good for the glory of God. This statement  
15 was and is a product of honest and genuine holy conferencing and represents a reflection of both  
16 grace and truth of which United Methodists throughout our connection can be proud. The spirit  
17 of this statement is clearly the heart of our future and a reflection, we believe, of the grace and  
18 truth of Jesus Christ.

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20 We will follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit and affirm language that communicates a more  
21 authentic and truthful representation of the United Methodist Church, acknowledging that we  
22 disagree yet all seek a faithful witness and remain in love with God and in ministry together.

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24 *A Statement on Human Sexuality as adopted by Church & Society II Legislative Committee,*  
25 *General Conference, April 27, 2008)*

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27 *We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully*  
28 *human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church, and society.*  
29 *We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society*  
30 *in the stewardship of this gift. We also recognize our limited understanding of this complex gift*  
31 *and encourage the medical, theological, and social science disciplines to combine in a*  
32 *determined effort to understand human sexuality more completely. United Methodists, along*  
33 *with other Christians, have struggled to find principles for applying traditional teachings to*  
34 *contemporary understandings of human sexuality.*

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36 *We recognize that sexuality is part of the larger human mystery, to be received and*  
37 *acknowledged in grateful responsibility. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy*  
38 *the humanity God has given us. We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation*  
39 *of sexual relations, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. We*  
40 *call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children*  
41 *by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. We call*  
42 *for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for children thus abused. We believe that the*  
43 *Church family should support all families in providing age-appropriate education regarding*  
44 *sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We challenge all members of our community of faith to*  
45 *commitment, integrity and fidelity in their sexual relationships.*

46

47 *We know that all are God's children and of sacred worth; yet we have been, and remain, divided*  
48 *regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Faithful, thoughtful people who have*  
49 *grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another; yet all seek a faithful witness. We*  
50 *continue to reason and pray together with faith and hope that the Holy Spirit will soon bring*  
51 *reconciliation to our community of faith. The fire in our disagreements points to a deeper human*  
52 *mystery than we knew. We believe that the Spirit has brought our collective conscience to*  
53 *acknowledge this mystery more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before*  
54 *God and our neighbors. We therefore ask the Church, United Methodist and others, and the*  
55 *world, to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices as the Spirit leads*  
56 *us to new insight. Let us seek to welcome, know, forgive, and love one another as Christ has*  
57 *accepted us, that God may be glorified through everything in our lives.*

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59 RATIONALE:

60 The 2008 General Conference of the United Methodist Church convened under the theme “A  
61 Future With Hope” and, beginning with the opening worship service, expressed a new and  
62 genuine spirit to move beyond some of the language of the past and affirm new language that is  
63 more faithful to witnesses from both past and current holy conferencing, as well as our Scriptural  
64 call to live the gospel in the Spirit of Christ.

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66 The members of the General Conference Legislative Committee known as Church & Society II  
67 were prayerfully selected to represent a broad scope of faithful United Methodists, both clergy  
68 and laity and from all parts of the theological spectrum, in their task of considering petitions  
69 submitted by United Methodists spanning our global connection.

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71 The General Conference's Church & Society II Sub-committee entitled Human Sexuality  
72 engaged in lengthy, thorough, and genuine holy conferencing around the subject of Human  
73 Sexuality found in ¶ 161 G of the *Book of Discipline*.

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75 It is our prayer that The 2008 Western Jurisdictional Conference will affirm this statement and  
76 allow us to move forward, fully embracing “A Future of Hope”. We feel it expresses a  
77 respectful middle ground in an attitude of seeking understanding and the leadership of the Holy  
78 Spirit. We commit ourselves to let this statement guide our own relationships with one another  
79 in this jurisdiction with our surrounding culture.