

Request for Ruling on Question of Law

California-Nevada Annual Conference

June 21, 2008

The request is in accordance with ¶ 2609.6 in the plenary session of the 2008 Session of the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

During the Business of the Annual Conference at the plenary session on the afternoon of June 21, 2008, a clergy member, Rev. Ronald Greilich, requested a ruling on the action of the Annual Conference regarding its passage of a resolution and its possible violation of ¶2702.1.

The resolution (Item 21) stated in part: “Therefore be it resolved that the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church commends its retired clergy for offering continued ministry and will communicate to its congregations the availability of the following retired pastors to perform same gender marriages or holy unions. (Names of 66 retired clergy were listed.)”

The resolution was passed by a majority vote of the Annual Conference. Immediately following its passage, a clergy member (retired), Rev. Ronald Greilich, requested the presiding bishop to make a ruling of law under ¶2609.6. The member further submitted the question in writing. The following is the text of the question:

“I move that there be a ruling of law in regard to the passage of Item 21. Specifically, does this violate the provisions of the Book of Discipline

regarding clergy not performing same sex marriages? Such action is a chargeable offense listed in paragraph 2702.1.”

Ruling of Law

While the Resolution (Item 21) is a commendable gesture to the congregations of the Conference in offering the pastoral counsel of a number of retired clergy to persons contemplating same-gender marriage under the laws of California, it steps over a Disciplinary line when it commends these clergy to the congregations for the purpose of “performing same gender marriages or holy unions”.

¶ 2702.1 declares that performing such services is a chargeable offense. It is not within the power or prerogative of an annual conference to offer the services of its clergy to perform acts which the General Conference has declared to be chargeable offenses against the law of the United Methodist Church.

Therefore, the Resolution (Item 21) is void and of no effect.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beverly J. Shamana". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana