



Love Prevails

revolution 3-D: disclose(t), divest, disrupt

February 12, 2016

Dear Council of Bishops,

From the first paragraph to the last, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church miss the mark in your [Report of the Task Force on Human Sexuality, Gender and Race in a Worldwide Perspective](#).

In recent collective statements on matters of social concern, bishops always remind us of the tasks of the episcopal office: “to guard the faith, to seek the unity and to exercise the discipline of the whole church.” However, a passion for the unity of the Church without a care for the individual parts has the functional consequence of rewarding those with voting power while sacrificing the needs and concerns of LGBTQI people, women and non-white people.

This report falls back into institutional jargon and a refusal to become unstuck from the intentional harm legislated into the *Book of Discipline*. Rather than a prophetic, Gospel-oriented insistence on eliminating discrimination, you have once again settled for serial harm to Women (gender), Blacks/Natives (race), and LGBTQI persons (sexuality). Thus making your call to repentance hollow sanctimony. Repentance is meaningless unless it is accompanied with changed behavior.

This Task Force of bishops has written a section on repentance, confession, and honesty in a document on sexuality, gender, and race and done so without ever addressing the underlying sins of heterosexism and homophobia, sexism, and racism. This report offers no analysis of oppression or of power and privilege.

This is quite evident in references to your tepid *Pastoral Letter on Racism* that has no condemnation of white supremacy, police violence, or unjust criminal justice systems in the economic stronghold of United Methodism in The United States of America. There are no references to the formal Acts of Repentance towards Indigenous People, people who are victims of some of the greatest historical and contemporary racist acts. And the report never once mentions heterosexism or explores the harm done to LGBTQI people by the United Methodist Church’s polity and practice.

With no mention of pain, suffering, and violence against women, people of color, queer people, how can you speak of other pains of the earth, children, poverty, or spirit? To have a document that never names the real conditions and situations of injustice toward those it claims to be concerned about is egregious and demonstrates a stunning lack of both comprehension and leadership. We are sick to death of bishops and other church “leaders” using the real lives of LGBTQI people, women and people of color as cannon fodder for dead-end, high-minded theological discussions.

We criticize you for your abstractions, but we rebuke you for one bold lie. In *Point 1: God’s Grace for All* you write, “Therefore we actively oppose all forms of discrimination.” Categorical discrimination against lesbian and gay people in ordination and marriage is codified in the *Book of Discipline*. The overwhelming majority of you do not *actively* oppose this form of discrimination. You are, in fact, *active enforcers* of this discrimination. To claim anything else as a Council is a falsehood that Love Prevails condemns in the harshest of terms.

This Task Force Report has no basic integrity and is sadly reflective of the Council of Bishop’s unwillingness to substantively address some of the most critical matters of oppression and injustice in our collective life together. Trying to cover up the harm being done under a rubric of Episcopal vows and a self-imposed uniformity leads to a lack of any credibility in your authority and weakens a common witness to the Nature and Name of God—Love.

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