

2. Query for Clarification of Confusion

(re: 2002 AC Action on Licensing and Ordination)

Whereas: We are concerned with what is helpful and will build up the Body of Christ;

Whereas: congregations have always had the responsibility, through a process of discernment, for calling from their midst skilled and gifted disciples of Jesus Christ to leadership and ministry;

Whereas: districts have been granted authority for licensing and ordaining qualified persons on behalf of the denomination;

Whereas: the Michigan District Ministry Commission and Board did follow Church of the Brethren polity and procedures in calling to ministry from our midst a skilled and gifted person who happens to be openly homosexual;

Whereas: the 2002 Annual Conference response to the query “Licensing/Ordination of Homosexual Persons to the Ministry in the Church of the Brethren” is unclear, appears to contradict current polity, and causes confusion in the following areas:

1. The action was passed on as a suggestion to the districts rather than as a polity statement.
2. The action seems to say that sinners cannot be called for licensing or ordination.
3. The action affirms the 1983 Annual Conference paper “Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective,” yet draws conclusions that the 1983 paper does not support when it says “We understand that paper to conclude that homosexual practice is unacceptable behavior in the church and therefore implied to be sin” (2002 AC Query answer) as compared with “Covenantal relationships between homosexual persons is an additional lifestyle option but, in the church’s search for a Christian understanding of human sexuality, this alternative is not acceptable” (1983 AC paper “Human Sexuality from a Christian Perspective”).
4. The action to “not recognize the licensing and ordination of such persons in the Church of the Brethren” is ambiguous in that there is not currently a category for “unrecognized” licenses and ordinations in the Church of the Brethren.

1 5. The action raises questions for membership in the Church of the
2 Brethren because the Church's belief states "baptism is an ordination
3 into ministry" (*For All Who Minister*, p. 131) and all members of the
4 church are equal in the eyes of God.
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6 6. The action raises questions for district Boards and Ministry
7 Commissions such as: whether to revoke licenses and ordinations of
8 homosexuals previously given; whether to change polity by making the
9 final approval vote be a vote of District or Annual Conference delegates;
10 or whether to ban all future ordinations of homosexuals.
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12 Therefore, we the members of the Michigan District Board, meeting Friday, August
13 16, 2002, request from Annual Conference through the Michigan District
14 Conference, clarification on how these issues from the 2002 action fit into previous
15 polity and procedures and how we shall proceed with future licensing and ordina-
16 tions.
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18 Michelle Grimm Chris Campbell
19 Michigan District Board Chair Michigan District Board Secretary
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22 *The Michigan District Conference, meeting at Hastings, Michigan on August 17, 2002,*
23 *approved this query without amendments.*
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25 Dan McRoberts Bill Sumner
26 Moderator, Michigan District Clerk, Michigan District Conference
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