

The Annual Conference Council answer to the “Clarification of Confusion” Query¹

The query, “Clarification of Confusion” was submitted to the 2003 Annual Conference by the Michigan District. Standing Committee asked the Annual Conference Council to address the concerns of the query and the Annual Conference delegates agreed with Standing Committee’s decision.

The Council’s first response to the query was to write and deliver a letter to the Michigan District dividing the answer into two parts:

- 1) Annual Conference does not allow the ordaining of a non-celibate homosexual and
- 2) specific structural and theological issues would be addressed later.

This was reported in *Newsline* and is listed on the Annual Conference website as “the answer to the query.” www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/2003ClarificationConfusion.html

The query requests a response to five or maybe six concerns:

- 1) Is the new decision a policy or polity?

Answer: It was a policy decision which our polity requires we follow. (Polity requires ordination be reserved for those who will support the actions – policies – of Annual Conference.)

- 2) Does the action say that sinners cannot be called for licensing or ordination.

Answer: No.

- 3) Does the 2002 statement change the Human Sexuality Paper by including the word “sin” in its description of homosexual behavior?

Answer: No. All Annual Conference answers have two parts—a prelude and an answer. That which provides the “why” we answered in the way we answered is not the answer. It is the “prelude” and is not voted on.

- 4) Is the action to “not recognize the licensing and ordination of such persons in the Church of the Brethren” ambiguous since there is not a category for unrecognized licenses and ordinations?

Answer: Non-recognition is the same as non-ordination.

- 5) Are not all Brethren “ordained” by their baptism and thus equal under the eyes of God?

Answer: We are equal under the eyes of God but as a church we set apart certain of our members for ordained ministry.

- 6) Should districts (a) revoke licenses and ordinations of homosexuals previously given, (b) change polity by making the final approval vote be a vote of District of Annual Conference delegates and (c) should all future ordinations of homosexuals be banned?

Answer: No, no and no. The paper only speaks to non-celibate homosexuals.

Action of the 2006 Annual Conference: The report of the Standing Committee was received as information for the delegates.

¹ 2006 Annual Conference Minutes (2005-2008), attachment to the “Report of the Standing Committee,” 393-394.