

**“I BELIEVE I AM BEING LED  
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT”**

**Laity and clergy coming to differing  
conclusions regarding homosexuality**

**Adolf Hansen**

## **EXPLANATORY COMMENTS**

The pages that follow represent an abbreviated version of a 24-page booklet. The address for an entire copy (in either booklet or one-sided format) is: [www.inumc.org/wayforwardresources](http://www.inumc.org/wayforwardresources).

Permission to print the entire booklet is granted by the author (if all pages are included without editorial modification).

If a booklet format is chosen for all the pages, a double-sided printing is necessary for page numerals to appear in sequential order. If a document format is chosen for all the pages, a single-sided printing will enable the page numerals to appear in sequential order.

The title of the book is placed within quotation marks since it represents what persons in The United Methodist Church often say, even when they have differing points of view.

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### **Introduction**

### **I AM A LAY PERSON**

I serve on a Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

I am a member of a governing entity of a local congregation.

I am a member of a Board of Ordained Ministry.

I am a member of an Annual Conference.

I am a delegate to General Conference.

I am being led by the Holy Spirit.

### **I AM A CLERGY PERSON**

I serve a local congregation.

I am a member of a Board of Ordained Ministry.

I am a member of an Annual Conference.

I am a District Superintendent.

I am a delegate to General Conference.

I am a Bishop.

I am being led by the Holy Spirit.

## INTRODUCTION

Earlier in my life I became acquainted with a college student who believed another man was following him everywhere he went. In several conversations he told me about his experiences in great detail.

One day he asked, “Do you believe me? Do you believe what I’m saying?”

I paused, and then replied, “I believe that you believe a man is following you everywhere you go.”

I don’t think my response satisfied him, but I do think he understood.

\* \* \* \* \*

When you say, “I believe I am being led by the Holy Spirit,” do you assume others believe you?

When you hear someone who has a view different from yours say, “I believe I am being led by the Holy Spirit,” does that person assume you believe him or her?

If you do not agree with the view this person is expressing, are you willing to say, “I believe that you believe you are being led by the Holy Spirit?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Do you believe that some people in The United Methodist Church who believe the practice of homosexuality is compatible with Christian teaching believe they are being led by the Holy Spirit?

Do you believe that some people in The UMC who believe the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching believe they are being led by the Holy Spirit?

\* \* \* \* \*

Do you believe that being convinced of one of these two possibilities is the only interpretation that is possible?

Or, do you believe there might be other options between the two, perhaps a person who leans toward one of them, or the other, but is not convinced of that view? Or, a person who might be ambivalent?

\* \* \* \* \*

Does the following spectrum clarify the possibilities?

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The practice of  
homosexuality is  
compatible with  
Christian teaching

The practice of  
homosexuality is  
incompatible with  
Christian teaching

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
convinced          leaning              ambivalent          leaning              convinced

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\* \* \* \* \*

**Since some persons in The UMC follow each of these interpretations, and since they believe they are being led by the Holy Spirit, does there need to be room for all of them in The UMC of 2019 and 2020?**

\* \* \* \* \*

Are there ways we can try to understand such perspectives? Will looking at them first through the eyes of a lay person, and then through the eyes of a clergy person, be helpful?

\* \* \* \* \*

Will reflecting on the options through the positions persons hold in the life of the local congregation and the annual conference help us to think through what this would look like?

- Pastor of a local congregation
- Member of a Staff-Parish Relations Committee
- Member of a governing entity of a local congregation
- Member of a Board of Ordained Ministry
- Member of an Annual Conference
- Delegate to General Conference
- District Superintendent
- Bishop

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