

NICVOICE

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Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2005 12:08 PM
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Subject: NIC VOICE News Update 06-01-2005 UMNS Judicial Council to hear Stroud Case, Commentary & News

NIC VOICE News Update 06-01-2005 UMNS Judicial Council to hear Stroud Case, Commentary & News

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NIC VOICE is a network of laity in the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church.

NIC VOICE posts news related to the Northern Illinois Conference, as well as GC/JC/AC Conference updates at the **NIC VOICE** web site (www.nicvoice.org).

Other news of interest across the UMC included in **NIC VOICE** news updates are now being posted in the [NIC VOICE forum](#) at [Faithful Christian Laity Discussion Forum](#).

View previously released **NIC VOICE** news updates on the Beth Stroud Case here:
<http://www.faithfulchristianlaity.org/discussion/viewtopic.php?t=191>.

NIC VOICE news updates published during the trial week and after have been posted on the **NIC VOICE** web site: http://www.nicvoice.org/beth_stroud_trial_updates.htm

UMNS News Release

Judicial Council to hear Stroud case on Oct. 27

May. 31, 2005 News media contact: Linda Bloom * (646) 3693759* New York {326}

NOTE: A photograph of Beth Stroud is available at <http://umns.umc.org>.

By United Methodist News Service

The Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church will hear oral arguments in the case of Irene Elizabeth (Beth) Stroud Oct. 27 in Houston.

In a church trial last December, Stroud was found guilty of violating the denomination's prohibition of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" in the ordained ministry. Then serving as associate pastor of First United Methodist Church of Germantown in Philadelphia, she lost her clergy credentials but remained on staff as a layperson.

On April 29, however, the denomination's Northeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals overturned the trial court's verdict and penalty, citing legal errors, and restored Stroud's clergy standing.

The next week, Bishop Marcus Matthews of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual (regional) Conference, which conducted the trial, filed an appeal of the jurisdictional committee's decision with Judicial Council, the denomination's top court.

The Oct. 27 hearing, open to the public, will begin at 9 a.m. at the Stansbury Building on the Westchase Campus of First United Methodist Church, at 10570 Westpark Dr. in Houston. Representatives of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and Stroud will be allowed 30 minutes each to present their arguments.

Deliberations will follow the hearing but the Judicial Council normally does not release information about its decisions until the conclusion of the full meeting, which would be Oct. 29.

Keith Boyette, the Judicial Council's secretary, noted that anyone wishing to comment on a matter coming before the council may submit a brief but added that doing so does not make one a party to the proceeding.

Briefs must be submitted to Boyette, secretary, Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church, 10501 Plank Road, Spotsylvania, Va. 22553. Ten copies of each brief must be sent and signed by the person submitting the brief.

Boyette also requests that an electronic copy of the brief in either Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect format be filed at judicialcouncil@umc.org if possible.

News media contact: Linda Bloom, New York, (646) 369-3759 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

United Methodist News Service
Photos and stories also available at:
<http://umns.umc.org>

Affirmation:

Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Concerns is an independent voice of LGBT people and their allies who affirm full participation of all persons in the church and society and who relentlessly pursue policies and processes to that end. Together we proclaim a Gospel of respect, love, justice and mercy for all. Affirmation is an activist, not-for-profit organization with no official ties to The United Methodist Church.

Coming Out of the Shadows: Beth Stroud's Appeal

by Vivian Waltz

For Immediate Release, May 21, 2005

"Christianity does not ask us to live in the shadow of the cross, but in the fire of its creative action." (Teilhard de Chardin)

Something ignited during the morning of Beth Stroud's appeal on April 28. Teilhard de Chardin's words on the front of the bulletin for the noontime communion service seemed to fan a spark of hope I felt flickering within me. Maybe I also detected it in the eyes of the members of Beth's congregation who gathered round the table: a kindling of optimism, a glimmer of expectation...

Then, on April 29th, the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals overturned the December 2, 2004 decision of an Eastern Pennsylvania Conference trial court to withdraw the Reverend Irene Elizabeth "Beth" Stroud's clergy credentials. In an 8 to 1 ruling, the panel reinstated Beth as a fully-credentialed pastor. It did not question the lower court's findings of fact but said the earlier decision had violated Stroud's right to due process because the denomination has never clearly defined the terms "practicing homosexual" or "status."

The word "status" appears in The Constitution of The United Methodist Church under "Inclusiveness of the Church." This section includes a broad pledge not to discriminate on the basis of "race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition." Stroud's defense team had tried to argue in the original trial that "status" includes sexual orientation, but the argument was disallowed by the presiding bishop, Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel.

The appeals panel also said the lower court erred by convicting Stroud on the basis of Paragraph 304.3, which contains the prohibition of "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals" as United Methodist ministers, because that provision constitutes a new standard or rule of doctrine. For a new rule to be elevated to the status of doctrine, the General Conference must vote that it is not contrary to any existing standards.

Although the successful appeal is reason to celebrate, many people working for inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in The United Methodist Church are reluctant to call it a victory. At the request of Bishop Marcus Matthews of Eastern Pennsylvania, the Judicial Council will review the decision of the Committee on Appeals.

The shadow of exclusion may be cast over us yet again, and perhaps it will feel even more oppressive after this temporary respite from the injustice of Beth's case. But we must step out of the shadow of the cross into the "fire of creative action." The work of justice is not about succumbing to the shadows but instead being energized with all-consuming passion, a burning fire within us that cannot be extinguished.

Perhaps we can survive in the shadows, but we will never thrive there. We need to come out! The prophet Malachi proclaimed that God is like a "refiner's fire" that burns away all impurities within us. We cannot be afraid to live in the blaze of God's creative action and be a flaming force of transformation in our United Methodist Church and in our world!

The Rev. Vivian R. Waltz is chair of the Communications Committee of the National Council of Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns, Inc. This commentary appears in [Affirmation's June 2005 newsletter \(PDF format, 300K\)](#). **Note:** [The free Adobe Acrobat® Reader](#) must be installed on your computer to read PDF files.

Related News at Affirmation:

[Another of Our Gifted Clergy Surrenders Credentials](#)

by Herb Snyder and Jim Palmquist

<snip>

Why then is the Rev. Jones leaving the denomination that has meant so much to him over his eighty years? He is "offended by the hypocrisy of a Church that says if you lie, you can be a pastor; but if you tell the truth, you cannot." In his letter to Bishop Park, Randy explained that he has "noted with concern the movement of our Church to the right. The recent decision of the General Conference not to ordain those who openly profess a gay/lesbian relationship went against my beliefs. The decision of the recent court in Philadelphia to defrock Rev. Beth Stroud was shocking and very upsetting to me. It demonstrated that our Church has ceased to be an inclusive one and has begun a process of eliminating those who do not fit its chosen group. I can no longer continue in good conscience in such a Church."

We have lost another gifted clergy person of high Christian caliber and integrity! How long will the people of God let the persecution and exodus continue? [Read More](#)

[Methodist Federation for Social Action \(MFSA\)](#)

Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA)...an independent voice for justice within Methodism since 1907. MFSA unites activists within the United Methodist Church to take action on issues of justice, peace and liberation in the church, nation and world.

The following is a summary written by Kathryn Johnson for her commentary "A Matter of Fairness and Prudence": See <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/2941/> (full article

follows summary)

IN SUMMARY:

Sorting out what happened in the decision of the Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals in the case of Beth Stroud is complicated. This is partly due to the number of things presented by Beth's counsel for the Committee to consider, as well as the many references to Judicial Council decisions and various parts of the Book of Discipline. The final decision, however, can be stated rather simply.

The Appeals Committee overturned the verdict rendered at the original trial based on two things:

- 1. The Appeals Committee pointed out that the Annual Conferences and General Conference have not complied with a decision of the Judicial Council - something they are required to do.*
- 2. The Appeals Committee states that the way in which homosexuality is referred to in the Discipline, as "incompatible with Christian teaching," enters the realm of doctrine.*

The first raises the issue of fairness and the second a question of prudence.

In response to this MFSA would say:

Fairness: It is not fair for Beth Stroud to have her clergy orders removed when the Annual Conference of which she is a part has not followed a clear instruction given by the Judicial Council that applies to cases such as hers.

Prudence: It is imprudent for the church to give the weight of doctrine to something over which the church is so deeply divided. The prudent course would be to make any of our rules in this area just that, rules. Doctrine should only be established when there is a broad consensus.

We need to be fair and we need to be prudent.

CORNET: 2941 [A Matter of Fairness and Prudence by Kathryn Johnson](#) A Matter of Fairness and Prudence Decision Reversed in the Stroud Appeal ...

[A Matter of Fairness and Prudence Decision Reversed in the Stroud Appeal](#)

**Kathryn Johnson, Executive Director
Methodist Federation for Social Action
May 2005**

There was an audible gasp in the room on the morning of April 29, 2005 when the Northeast Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals announced its decision overturning both the verdict and the penalty in the case of the Rev. Beth Stroud.

Across the church many people were elated with the decision, others furious. However they felt about the decision, most people were confused.

Just six months prior, on December 2, 2004, a jury in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference had rendered a guilty verdict in response to the charge that Beth, a “self-avowed practicing homosexual,” was engaging in practices “incompatible with Christian teaching.” By a vote of 7 to 6, the jury had removed her clergy credentials. It was this verdict and penalty that were overturned by a vote of 8 to 1 by the Appeals Committee.

Even for someone who had followed the case closely, having attended both the original trial and the appeal, it took some time to sort out what the committee had done.

The decision by the Jurisdictional Appeals Committee was not made quickly or lightly. While their deliberations took place behind closed doors, the portions of the proceedings that were public, along with a carefully worded, comprehensive fourteen-page written decision, indicate that the committee took their task seriously and worked diligently.

The clearly written decision begins with a digest of the case stating that both “the verdict and the penalty (from the original trial) are reversed and set aside.” This decision was based on two grounds which, in the judgment of the Committee on Appeals, constituted legal error sufficient to “vitiate the verdict.”

The first ground for reversing the verdict is based on Judicial Council Decision No. 702. In Decision No. 702, the Judicial Council ruled that a clergy person cannot be denied an appointment unless all of their rights as a person in full conference membership are honored. The Judicial Council ruled in Decision No. 702, also dealing with a person who had been open about her sexual orientation, that she could not be denied an appointment because neither the General Conference nor the Annual Conference had clearly defined the terms “status” and “self-avowed practicing homosexual.” The Judicial Council made clear in that decision that these terms must be defined before a person is denied an appointment. Since neither the General Conference nor the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference has defined those terms, the Appeals Committee ruled that the verdict/penalty which denies Beth an appointment is an error in law.

The second ground for reversing the verdict is the contention that the provision in the UM Book of Discipline stating that “homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching,” in essence constitutes a “new standard or doctrine.” According to the First Restrictive Rule in the Discipline, in order for new doctrine to be adopted in the United Methodist Church, one of two things must happen. Either General Conference must declare that the new doctrine is “not contrary to the present standards” of doctrine or the new doctrine must be adopted by General Conference by a 2/3 vote and then ratified by a 3/4 vote of the members in each annual conference.

Since neither of these things has happened, the first Restrictive Rule of the Discipline has been violated in the case of Beth Stroud according to the Committee on Appeals, thus constituting an error in church law sufficient to overturn the original verdict and penalty.

The Committee on Appeals did not initiate these arguments. Indeed, their task was very limited. They were only to look at the record of the original trial, including testimony that had been given orally and testimony that had been entered into the record. Based on the original trial, Beth’s counsel had submitted a number of arguments as to why the trial had not been fair. It was these documents and these arguments that the Committee on Appeals used in reaching their decision.

The document summarizing the decision by the Committee on Appeals includes the charge given to the Committee in paragraph 2715.7 of the 2000 Discipline. The Appeals Committee is charged to “determine two questions only: (a) Does the weight of the evidence sustain the charge or charges? (b) Were there such errors of Church law as to vitiate the verdict and/or the penalty?”

On the first of these questions, the Committee ruled that “there is no question that the weight of the evidence sustained the charge.”

On the second question regarding errors in Church law, Beth's counsel advanced a number of legal arguments, nine by my count. The Committee on Appeals reviewed and responded to each of these.

They disagreed with Beth's counsel on seven points, in some cases granting validity to the argument but determining that it did not result in errors of law sufficient to vitiate the verdict or penalty. In the two instances mentioned above, the Committee agreed with Beth's counsel: Judicial Council Decision No. 702 instructing General Conference or Annual Conferences to define terms, and the contention that new doctrine has been added to the Discipline without proper process being followed.

What does this all mean for Beth? Practically it means that her clergy credentials have been restored. She is a clergy member in good standing of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and is eligible for appointment. The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference has already indicated, however, that they will appeal this case to the Judicial Council. It is anyone's guess as to what will happen at that point. The Judicial Council could uphold the decision of the Committee on Appeals or they could overturn the decision meaning that Beth would once again lose her clergy credentials.

At the press conference during the first day of the hearing before the Committee on Appeals, Beth said that even if the Committee ruled in her favor she will not return to exercising the functions of an ordained clergy person until the matter is fully resolved. She understands her ordination as a "sacred trust," she said, "not something that can be put on and taken off like a suit of clothes." True to her word, when Bishop Marcus Matthews returned Beth's clergy credentials after the trial and offered to appoint her, she declined.

In the meantime, Beth continues as a lay pastor at the First UMC of Germantown where she has worked for several years.

Why not join another denomination? Beth's answer to this question is often spoken through tears. She loves the United Methodist Church she will tell you. It's the church in which she grew up, was nurtured and was called to ministry. When Beth went through the ordination process she was not in a relationship. As a celibate person at the time, Beth was not in violation of any disciplinary restrictions. It was not until after her ordination that Beth fell in love. Beth responded to that love, and entered into a covenant relationship with a woman.

Some reports of Beth's actions would have the reader believe she made a calculated decision to challenge the policy of the church in relation to sexual orientation, that it wasn't her response to a call to ordained ministry but a political agenda that drove her actions. Listening to Beth tell her story, and listening to colleagues and parishioners, it is clear how very far off the mark such allegations are. Beth grew up in the church, responded to a call to ordained ministry and proceeded with integrity through the ordination process. At some point in her life journey she discovered a same-gender sexual orientation. And after ordination she fell in love with a woman with whom she wishes to spend the rest of her life. The reason this has become an issue for Beth and for the church is that she wasn't willing to keep her identity and her love a secret. Revealing the fullness of who she is was an act of integrity. Not an act of defiance.

Indeed, the integrity, patience and love with which Beth has proceeded along this journey is a gift to the church of immense value. Beth holds before us one of the most important human rights issues of our time. She embodies this issue. Faced with a woman of great integrity and clear manifestations of the gifts and graces for ordained ministry, the church is faced with the dilemma of asking her to choose between responding to God's call to ministry and God's gift in her life of a woman she loves and with whom she wants to live in covenant relationship.

Throughout the hearing before the Committee on Appeals, the counsel for the church said over and over again that the church should be able to determine the standards for a person who will enter the clergy. That's exactly what the church did. As Beth traveled the path through seminary, ordination and the pastorate, her ministry was affirmed again and again. No one at the original trial or the appeals hearing intimated anything other than the fact that Beth is a remarkable person and an exemplary pastor. The church, through the Board of Ordained Ministry in her home Annual Conference, did decide that Beth Stroud has the gifts and graces for ordained ministry. How odd that the church would remove an effective pastor simply because of the gender of the person with whom she has fallen in love.

I began this article by talking about the confusion experienced by many as they hear the results of various trials and hearings. Indeed, I have found the misinformation printed about the appeals hearing in Beth's

case simply amazing. My hunch is that most of the misinformation is simply a result of the complexity of the workings of the United Methodist Church's decision-making and judicial processes. A few articles would fall into the category of an intentional twisting of the facts. Notable in this category are the things that have been written by the Institute on Religion and Democracy. I would encourage everyone interested in this case to read the decision of the Appeals Committee (www.umns.org) and then the article written about that decision by John Lomperis (www.ird-renew.org).

It will be clear to the reader that the IRD article contains several factual errors and statements of future church action that no one can know with any certainty.

Many articles assert that the statement that "homosexuality is not compatible with Christian teaching" is not a new standard. Some would argue that all of Christian tradition supports this stance. While serious scholars and theologians could counter this point, it is true that our own Discipline has contained this standard for thirty years. This misses the point, however, when seeking to understand the ruling of the Committee on Appeals.

In addition to the fact that the General Conference has never declared the statement contrary to our doctrine, it was only recently (last May) defined by the Judicial Council as the law of the church—a "declaration" that meets the standard identified in 2702.1b for "practices declared by the UMC to be incompatible with Christian teaching." The first restrictive rule was inserted in the Constitution in 1808 to make the addition of new doctrine cumbersome enough that great intentionality was required by the church. When the Confession of Faith of the EUB Church was added to the doctrinal standards in 1968, a vote of the General Conference that these new standards were congruent with the present and existing standards was required of the General Conference even though there were several completely new items added.

The ruling of the Committee on Appeals will be reviewed by the Judicial Council and there is little doubt that the entire matter will be before the church at General Conference 2008. The process of discerning God's will and manifesting that will in our actions and laws as a church has been long and difficult in the arena of human sexuality. This should come as no surprise, however. The passion with which these matters are discussed and the care with which decisions are made, reflects the seriousness with which the church takes this precious gift from God.

The gift of sexuality is something to be celebrated. Those who would use that gift to harm or degrade another must be held accountable and called to repent. It is my firm conviction, and the stance of the Methodist Federation for Social Action which I direct, that one's sexual orientation is God-given and to be celebrated. We believe that it is the role of the church to call all persons, whether homosexual or heterosexual, to use this gift in loving ways which honor the beloved.

To declare this gift as manifest in homosexual persons "incompatible with Christian teaching" does great harm and the church must be called to repent. The actions of the Committee on Appeals in the case of Beth Stroud were narrowly focused on matters of law. It was not their task to rule on larger questions related to sexual orientation and they did not do so.

It is my belief, however, that the witness of Beth Stroud, and the fact that the actions of the Appeals Committee keep her case before us as a church, provide the church with the opportunity to repent and embrace God's grace moving through history

[Reconciling Kansas](#)

[APPELLATE COURT REVERSES RULING](#)

Beth Stroud, who was found guilty of violating United Methodist church law for being a practicing lesbian and lost her clergy credentials last December, won her appeal in a decision announced 29 April.

Stroud had appealed the December verdict to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals, which met 28-29 April at the Sheraton International Hotel near Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

The Pennsylvania clergy court found her guilty of violating church law, which forbids the ordination and appointment of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals." Stroud had disclosed that she was living in a committed relationship with another woman.

The appeals committee upheld part of the trial court's finding, but overturned the verdict in an 8-1 vote based on two legal errors.

At the time of the trial in December, Stroud was serving as associate pastor of Philadelphia's First United Methodist Church of Germantown. She had served in that capacity since 1 July 1999. Since the verdict, which removed her clergy credentials, she has been employed as a lay staff member at the church.

The latest ruling reinstates her clergy standing, but Stroud said she would not exercise the ministry of an ordained person until the "whole process is concluded."

The appeal committee's written ruling was that "the verdict and the penalty are reversed and set aside." However, it said that "the evidence in support of the charge was overwhelming and would be sustained in the absence of legal error."

The committee noted two legal errors.

In the first, it cited an earlier ruling by the United Methodist Church's supreme court, the Judicial Council, regarding the rights of ordained elders -- members in full connection" -- to an appointment or ministry in the church.

"It is the judgment of the committee that Judicial Council Decision No. 702, which binds this committee, makes it legal error to try, convict and deprive a member in full connection of her right to an appointment pursuant to Paragraphs 304.3 and 2702.1(b) of the Book of Discipline, when, as in this case, neither the General Conference nor the pertinent annual conference has defined the words, 'practicing homosexual' and 'status.'"

The General Conference is the church's top legislative assembly.

Second, the committee wrote that "legal error was committed by trying and convicting [Stroud] on the basis of Paragraph 304.3 because that provision constitutes a 'new standard or rule of doctrine' which has not been declared by the General Conference to be 'not contrary' to the present standards, in violation of the First Restrictive Rule and paragraph 102 of the Discipline."

The First Restrictive Rule, found in the church's constitution, states that the General Conference shall not establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to the church's existing standards of doctrine.

The committee did not comment on its ruling further, because it might be appealed to the Judicial Council.

Stroud briefly spoke to the media after the decision, saying she felt a sense of "relief."

"This is just one step in the whole process," she said, "but it gives me hope that the United Methodist Church has resources to do justice."

Stroud reiterated that she would not resume the functions of the ministerial office, even though she has been reinstated as a clergy person.

"I will not exercise the functions of the ordained ministry," she said, "until this whole process is concluded. Ordination is a sacred trust. You can't just take it off or put it on like a suit of clothes. To do so would be to trivialize it. I'm going to wait."

The full text of the committee's decision is available by clicking the hyperlink below.

- [Decision](#)
- [DON'T READ THIS](#)

Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Reconciling Ministries Network Spring 2005 The Word is Out Newsletter

Rev. Stroud Appeal To Be Heard

The Rev. Beth Stroud will appeal her conviction and defrocking to the Northeastern Jurisdiction's Committee on Appeals on April 28. The case will be heard in open session requested by Stroud between 9 am and noon at the Sheraton Hotel near the Baltimore-Washington Airport. After the arguments are presented, the committee will deliberate in private, most likely reaching a decision later that same day. A negative result could lead to a further appeal to the UMC's Judicial Council, the "supreme court" of United Methodism. Rev. Stroud has asked that her supporters be in prayer for not only herself and close supporters but also for members of the committee and the entire UMC. In a recent email, she expressed it this way – "as you pray, here are some of the specific things I am praying for these days: For clarity and humility to stay focused on my day to day ministry in my own church and my local community. For times of Sabbath quiet and rest, to hear what God might be trying to say to me. For healthy balance and perspective, and to remember that, whatever may be happening in my life, it continues to be a life of comfort and privilege and ease and joy. Beth Stroud is convinced that the witness provided by her trial, conviction, and appeal will offer the UMC opportunities for learning and healing. Consider not only your individual prayers but joining together with others in small groups in a home or at your church for prayer and reflection. To learn more, visit Rev. Stroud's website: www.bethstroud.info.

New Press since 05-06-2005 News Update

UMC Conservative Condemns Lesbian Pastor's Reinstatement

Agape Press - Tupelo, MS, USA

By Jim Brown

May 13, 2005

(AgapePress) - An evangelical renewal ministry within the United Methodist Church is voicing its dismay over the decision by the denomination's appeals committee to reinstate the clergy credentials of a lesbian minister from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Recently, the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeal voted overwhelmingly to reverse the defrocking of Beth Stroud, who announced in a 2003 sermon that she was living in a so-called "covenant relationship" with another woman. Although the evidence of Stroud's homosexual relationship was "uncontradicted and overwhelming," the regional panel voted 8-1 to nullify Stroud's defrocking. The reason for the regional panel's ruling, ostensibly, was because many of the terms under which the lesbian minister had been disciplined have

never been adequately defined by the proper church authorities.

Pastor Tom Lambrecht, a Wisconsin minister and chairman of the board of the Methodist renewal ministry "Good News," suspects certain parts of the church of subtly trying to circumvent the denomination's decision on the issue of homosexuality. "I think the hierarchy is wanting to push forward an agenda that is not in agreement with where the grassroots of the church is at," he says.

Lambrecht is decrying the appeals committee's decision to restore Stroud's clerical credentials, which were stripped when a UMC trial court found her guilty of "practices that are incompatible with Christian teachings." The renewal advocate feels the trial court's decision was the correct one, and he notes, "Every person in the church wants to see the church open to all people who want to come to know Jesus Christ. But that doesn't mean that we want to include or endorse what the Bible calls sinful behavior of any kind."

The Good News ministry chairman feels this latest verdict, which reverses the trial court's sentence, has only served to create confusion and tarnish the image of the UMC. "The unfortunate thing is that it makes headlines every time something like this happens," he says, "and we lose hundreds, if not thousands of members across the country who are fed up with a church that can't maintain its biblical standards." Lambrecht says he is pleased that the ruling of the Appeals Committee will be referred to the United Methodist Church's Judicial Council, the highest court in the denomination. The conservative pastor believes the Judicial Council will most likely overturn Stroud's reinstatement, thereby affirming the original trial court judgment against her.

Lesbian Methodist Reinstated ... For Now

Windy city Media Group - Chicago,IL,USA

2005-05-11

BY Jason Victor Serinus

<snip>

"The ruling today gives me hope that the United Methodist Church does have within itself the resources to do justice," Stroud told a group of supporters who had assembled to hear the decision.

In our third interview since she was defrocked, Beth explained what is happening in her case.

"I feel hopeful and encouraged, but it's a cautious optimism. I entered the appeal hearing knowing that whatever the committee ruled, it wouldn't fully resolve my case. We really don't know what will happen next."

Stroud's decision as to how to conduct church duties in the interim provides an example of the heartfelt sincerity with which she approaches religious life.

"Although the ruling gives me the right to redon my robe and stole and celebrate the sacraments," she says, "I've decided to wait until my case is resolved. Ordination is sacred to me, and I don't feel that I can just put it on and take it off again without trivializing it."

It is precisely such dedication, displayed on national TV in a two-hour PBS documentary broadcast last December, that brought tears to the eyes of many who observed the original trial. Stroud's deepening love for the teachings of the church, even as she faces legal condemnation, continues to open minds and hearts.

<snip>

Since her December defrocking, Stroud has received far more invitations to speak than she has been able to accept. Her priorities remain to connect with high school and college people whenever possible, and to speak in environments where people have not made up their minds.

"It's incredible to me that I get invited to talk about being a lesbian Christian minister," she reported. [Read More](#)

Methodists appeal lesbian minister case

Gay.com UK - UK

... Rev Elizabeth Stroud as an assistant pastor of First United **Methodist** Church of ... On Tuesday **Bishop** Marcus Matthews said in a press release that he authorised ...

[Bishops: Lesbian's win doesn't alter clergy ban](#)

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (subscription) - Little Rock,AR,USA

... legal technicality, not because church rules against "selffavowed practicing" **gay** clergy are ... Stroud was the associate pastor of First United **Methodist** Church of ...

[Methodists appeal lesbian minister case](#)

PlanetOut - San Francisco,CA,USA

... Elizabeth Stroud as an assistant pastor of First United **Methodist** Church of Germantown, Pa. ... On Tuesday **Bishop** Marcus Matthews said in a press release that he ...

[Methodist panel ruling backs lesbian minister](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer - Philadelphia,PA,USA

BALTIMORE - A United **Methodist** Church appeals panel has restored **Beth Stroud's** ministry credentials, but she isn't putting her clerical robes back on just yet. ...

[For reference: UMNS Coverage](#)

Stroud Appeal Coverage

The latest coverage of the April 2005 Beth Stroud appeal as reported by the United Methodist News Service.

[Beth Stroud Trial Updates at *NIC VOICE*](#)

News Updates Previously Released by *NIC VOICE* Regarding Beth Stroud Trial:

[Pre-Trial Updates](#) posted at the *NIC VOICE* Forum at Faithful Christian Laity

- [05-06-05 Good News Commentary Beth Stroud; New Press Articles](#)
- [05-05-05 Reconciling Ministries Coverage & Commentary](#)
- [05-05-05 Updates from UMNS and Beth Stroud web site, Press & Commentary](#)
- [05-03-05 Statement from Marcus Matthews pursuant to the Committee on Appeals decision](#)
- [0503-05 Methodist Church Appealing in Case of Gay Minister](#)
- [05-02-05 Stroud Appeal Verdict - Bishops' Statement, Dissent Statement, Press](#)
- [05-02-05 Commentary on the Beth Stroud Appeal Decision](#)
- [05-01-05 Stroud Appeal Verdict - Lone Dissenting Vote/Pastoral Letter from Bishop Matthews](#)
- [04-30-05 Stroud Appeal Verdict – Press & Commentary](#)
- [04-29-05 Message from Mark Tooley, Director UM Action #3](#)
- [04-29-05 Appeals committee reverses Stroud verdict #2](#)
- [04-29-05 Appeals committee reverses Stroud verdict](#)
- [04-28-05 Stroud Appeal Hearing Press & Commentary 6:30 PM Update](#)
- [04-26-05 Stroud Appeal Hearing Set for April 28](#)
- [03-06-2005 Beth Stroud Case – Press and Commentary](#)
- [02-14-2005 Beth Stroud Case – Press and Commentary](#)
- [01-14-2005 Beth Stroud Case – Press, Letters and Commentary](#)
- [01-06-2005 Beth Stroud Case – Press & IRD Releases](#)
- [01-03-2005 Beth Stroud Case – Press & Commentary](#)
- [12-29-2004 Beth Stroud Case – Press, Appeal, Documentary](#)
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