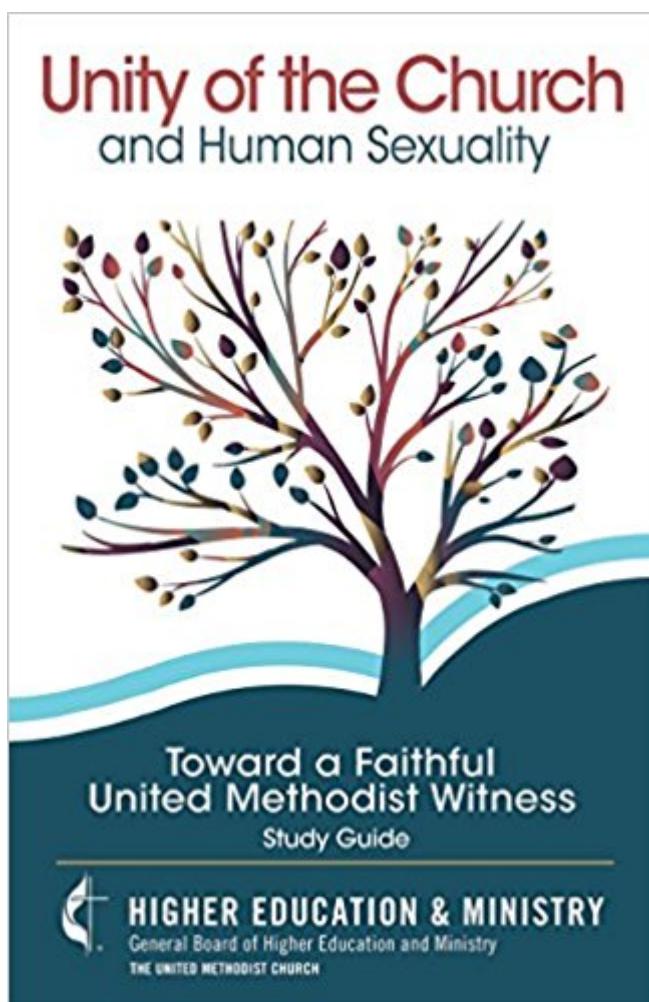


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# Unity Of The Church And Human Sexuality: Toward A Faithful United Methodist Witness



## **Synopsis**

Join the conversation. Suitable for a four-week study, this resource addresses how the church can be a witness and provide for a diversified human community. Based on the research of Dr. Charles M. Wood, this study guide offers United Methodists an opportunity to think about what has become a cultural and ecclesial flash point--human sexuality--and comes out of the conviction that the church is thirsty for theological conversation. Methodism is no stranger to controversy. John Wesley addressed the contentious issues of his day and strove to hold the Methodist societies together across many lines of difference. This guide plumbs the depths of the Wesleyan heritage to enhance our faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ at a time when devout followers are deeply divided. Contents: Foreword by Dr. Kim Cape; Session One: The Conversation Matters; Session Two: Loving God with Our Mind Matters; Session Three: The United Methodist Church Matters; Session Four: Finding a Way Forward Matters; Afterword by Bishop Kenneth H. Carter; Appendix A: "An Ecclesial Vision for The United Methodist Church" by Dr. Charles M. Wood; Appendix B: Helps for Group Leaders

## **Book Information**

Paperback

Publisher: United Methodist General Board of Higher Education; Study Guide ed. edition (April 18, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0938162306

ISBN-13: 978-0938162308

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.2 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #138,623 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Methodist #28712 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

## **Customer Reviews**

With the work of the Way Forward happening, I began to search for books and materials written to be used in the local church. I do not believe that the local church is doing enough to discern and prepare for the special General Conference in 2019. In searching for resources for small group discussions, I came across this book. While I appreciate that it comes from the GBHEM, I found it

very discouraging-perhaps unintentionally (safe?, biased?)-that it says "we shall refer to these people in the same manner as does our Book of Discipline." Regardless of what it says in the sentence before or after about Grace or God's image, this negative implication is used throughout the whole book. Ex: homosexual practice, self-avowed practicing homosexual. In one of the session questions, it says "these days there seems to be many different genders and SOME transgendered people." Sentences like this seem to discredit their desire for unbiased conversation. In addition, it tends to reference cultural acceptance as a driving force for the current conversation and not re-looking at the inclusiveness of the church as it relates to the body of Christ. Furthermore, the book mentions some of the "gotcha" passages without any explanation or depth. It even chooses to mention a book of Jude reference to Sodom and Gamorrah which is devoid of the original reference to hospitality. While I can let a lot of this pass, as a gay United Methodist I must say that what what this book is missing more than anything is a connection to the people it is talking about. The book seems to be written without any consideration of inclusion of the LGBT community in this books conversstion. I must emphasize, the LGBT community can and is a part of the faith community. Because of this, it felt very impersonal and lacking in an attempt to learn or listen to gay people. And unless I missed it, the discussion questions are always asking ABOUT gay people while assuming they are not a part of the small groups. The closest question I found which doesn't not include them personally asks: "do you know someone who is homosexual or part of the LGBT community? And "do you know someone who is a practicing homosexual and also a faithful Christian? There wasn't any question about whether or not an LGBT person was in the group. Overall, the best part of this book is the Afterword by Kenneth Carter. Most of the discussion questions are good conversation starters though I would encourage you to consider reframing them or rewording them if the goal is an inclusive conversation. If you are looking for a book to start discussions about the Way Forward, I would take parts of this one. But be aware it can get bogged down in politics and not people. You cannot learn anything if you don't listen to and hear your "others".

Seeking unity while overlooking a theological/creedal baseline is a waste of time.

Easy to read. The goal of the book was clearly stated.

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