

Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation



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and will be preserved to the end of time,
for the conduct of worship, and
the due administration of God's Word and Sacraments,
the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline,
the edification of believers,
and the conversion of the world.
All, of every age and station
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UM Hymnal



Previously on our show

- Contention over views of Scripture, theological interpretation and expression, particularly centered around LGBTQ issues



The living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified by personal experience, and confirmed by reason. Scripture [however] is primary, revealing the Word of God ‘so far as it is necessary for our salvation.’

United Methodist Book of Discipline
<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?mid=1664>



Jesus replied, “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because your hearts are unyielding. But it wasn’t that way from the beginning.”

Matthew 19:9 (CEB)



Previously on our show

- Contention over views of Scripture, theological interpretation and expression, particularly centered around LGBTQ issues
- Impasse at GC2016 led to special called GC2019
- Bishops charged to develop a Way Forward presented 3 plans, not 1
- Traditional Plan succeeded. But much was unconstitutional.
- Instead of leaving the church, progressives continued to struggle to, in their view, perfect the church.
- GC2020 coming up fast. Expectation of a big showdown between plans under development. Lots of heat, lots of smoke, little light.



In This Week's Episode

- Many groups feel like the time for separation is at hand
- “If we continue to fight, when we separate, will we have any love left?”
- Cross-church group convened at the request of Bishop John Yambasu
 - Representation from leaders of competing plans and perspectives
 - Impartial mediator of global standing – Ken Feinberg
- Goal was to multiply the mission of the UMC by restructuring the Church through respectful & dignified separation
- Need to have unanimous agreement for the Protocol to have power
- Must be undergirded in prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit



Protocol for Reconciliation Through Separation

- Unanimous agreement among the participants
- No signatory will challenge constitutionality of the Protocol
- All signatories will support this Protocol rather than other plans, even the plans that they lead.
 - Will also lead their constituencies to support the Protocol over others
- Protocol is all or nothing. If part is struck down, the rest is void.
- No claims will be made for further financial assets post-separation



But, What Does It Do?

- Creates a new traditionalist Methodist denomination
 - Perhaps other new Methodist denominations as well
 - At least 100 congregations required to form a new denomination
- Allows both sides to move forward with what is most important
- Allows for sharing some programs and services, where appropriate
- Ends the wrangling so we can pursue our mission to make disciples for Christ



But, What Does It Do?

- UMC retains structure of General Church boards and agencies
- UMC retains General Church assets and liabilities
- Pastors' pensions remain intact.
- Wespath can provide services for new denominations
- Council of Bishops can engage with new denominations on ecumenical matters, e.g. board and agency support



Trust Clause & Finances

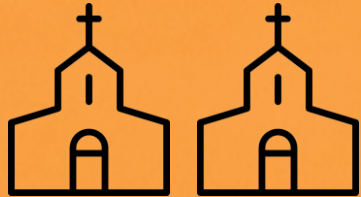
- Central, Jurisdictional, and Annual conferences and local churches can join the new denomination with **assets and liabilities intact**
- UMC sets aside \$25M to seed creation of traditionalist Methodist denomination(s). **No further claims** from traditionalist denomination(s).
- UMC sets aside \$2M in escrow for any other new Methodist denominations that arise
- UMC and traditionalist denomination set aside \$39M (\$26M / \$13M)
 - Offset the effects of systemic racism
 - Strengthen ministry with and to different racial and ethnic groups



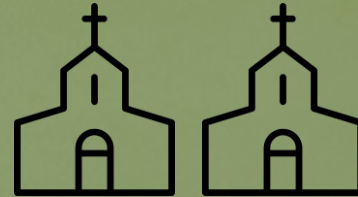
Before GC2020

United Methodist Church

Annual Conference



Annual Conference



After GC2020 – TMD Is Created

United Methodist Church

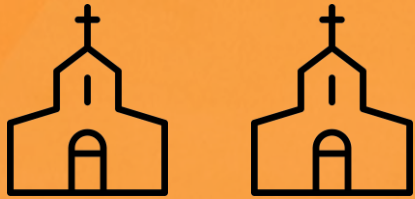


Traditional Methodist
Denomination

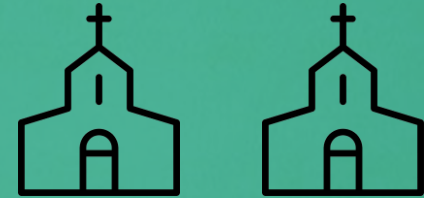


After GC2020 – Annual Conference Joins TMD

United Methodist Church

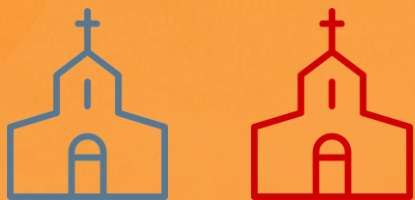


Traditional Methodist
Denomination



After GC2020 – Congregations Decide to Vote

United Methodist Church

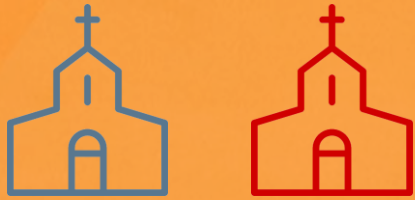


Traditional Methodist
Denomination

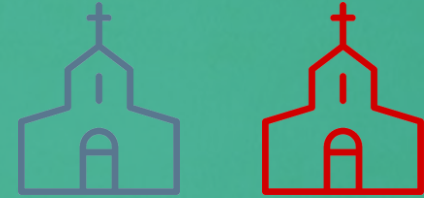


After GC2020 – Congregations Decide to Vote

United Methodist Church



Traditional Methodist
Denomination



Short Term Timeline

- Put administrative and judicial claims around LGBTQ issues into abeyance – 1 Jan 2020 until after first post-separation conference
- Before GC2020 (5 May 2020 – 15 May 2020)
 - Create legislation to implement Protocol
 - Request Declaratory Ruling from Judicial Council
 - Request report from General Commission on Budget and Administration
 - Request Legislative Committee place Protocol legislation before other plans since it subsumes them
 - Gather support from competing plans



At GC2020 – May 2020

- Vote on implementing legislation for the separation
- Set aside time and space for reorganizing meetings
- Convene first post-separation conference of the UMC
- Move on to post-separation business
- Expectation for traditionalist convening conference in 2020



After GC2020

- Continue to honor apportionments and obligations until a conference or church disaffiliates with the UMC
- Register intent to form new traditionalist denomination with Secretary of Council of Bishops by 15 May 2021



After GC2020

- Optional voting comes next
 - Doing nothing continues status quo in the UMC
 - Central conferences may vote to affiliate. Requires 2/3 majority
 - Annual conferences may vote to affiliate. Requires 57% majority.
 - Motion at Annual Conference, then voting by 1 Jul 2021
 - Local church may vote to affiliate.
 - Church council decides whether simple majority or 2/3 majority required
 - Vote by 31 Dec 2024



After GC2020

- Pastors are members of an annual conference
 - Membership moves with the conference
 - Pastors have the option to remain as they are or affiliate with new denominations
- Wesleyan Covenant Association and traditionalists are ready
 - Have had contingency plans to leave the UMC for a while.
 - Likely will be up and running quickly.
 - This makes the rest of the votes possible.
 - Without a new denomination to go to, the votes are pointless



What happens if this all passes?

- Will I have to find a new church home?
- What happens if I find out my church and I seriously disagree?
- What happens if I find out my friends and I seriously disagree?
- What happens to Roswell UMC?
- What happens to our pastors (current and retired)?
- What happens to North Georgia Conference?
- How many churches and conferences are likely to go to the traditionalist Methodist denomination?



2020 United States Annual Conference Delegate Map

Against the Traditional Plan

70%-100%

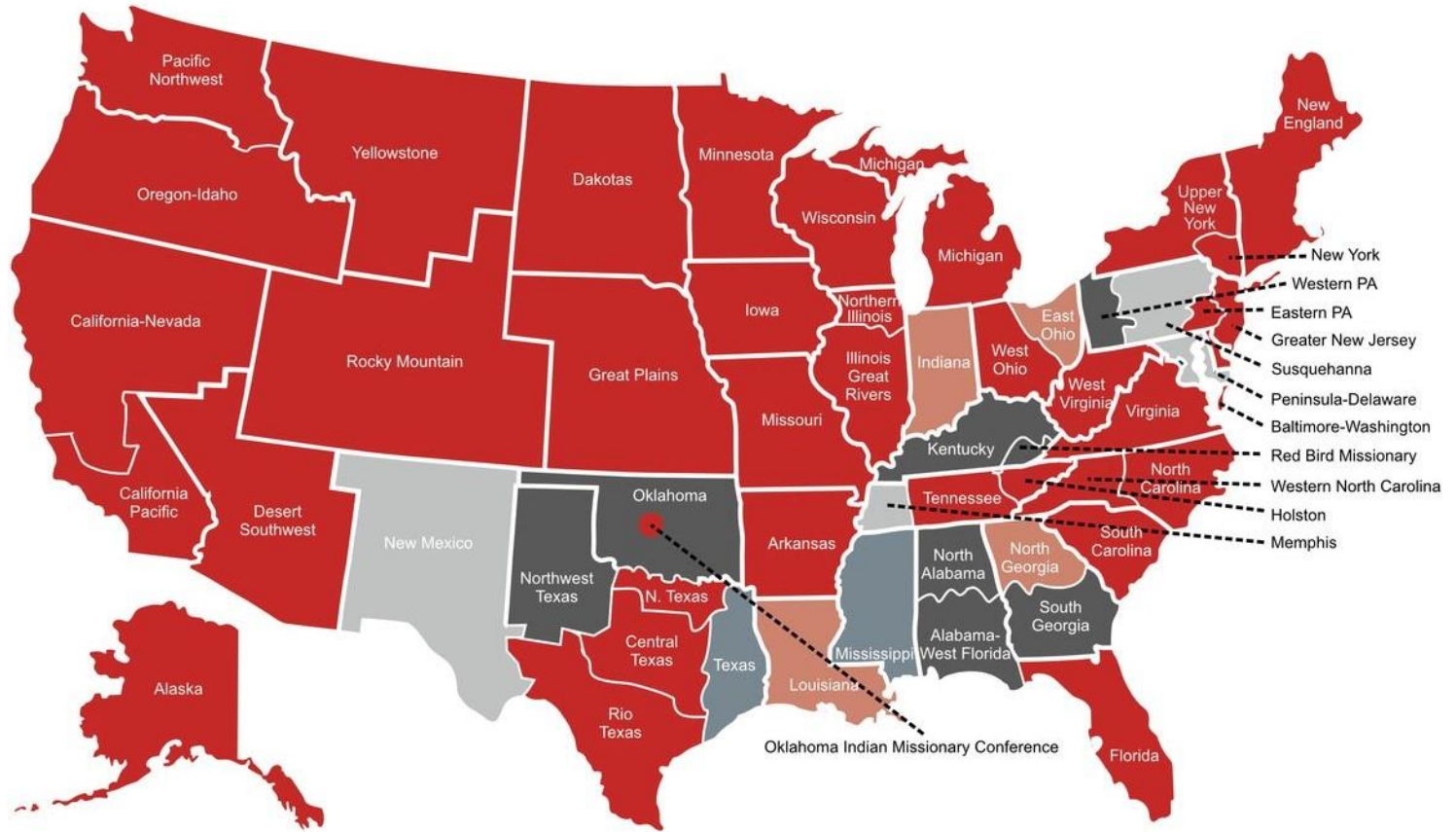
51-69%

N/A or 50%

30-49%

0%-29%

mainstream
UMC
MainstreamUMC.com



What Next?

- Plan focuses on separation to allow the church to move forward
- Plan is not perfect. Perfect is the enemy of the good.
- What alternative is there?
- This won't all be settled on May 15.
 - Timelines are long for this phase.
 - Subsequent phases post-separation are long as well.
 - The Church's schedule does not move as quickly as we want things to move.



What Next?

- Remember – the goal is a graceful, respectful, and dignified separation so that we can all pursue Christ's call on our lives
- Pray for the church, the people creating the legislation, the delegates, and all involved.
- Pray to be a reflection of Scripture rather than making Scripture a reflection of what you already believe
- Educate yourself & others. Don't be afraid to talk about this.
- Contact your delegates to GC2020
- Attend one of Bishop Sue's Town Hall Meetings



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Resources

- Press Release & Articles (lots at <http://umnews.org>)
 - <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/newsdetail/united-methodist-traditionalists-centrists-progressives-bishops-sign-agreement-aimed-at-separation-13133654>
 - <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/feinberg-kept-church-negotiators-at-table>
- Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation
 - <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/files/websites/www/pdfs/signed+umc+mediation+protocoal+statement+-2020.pdf>
- Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation FAQ
 - <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/protocol-of-reconciliation-and-grace-through-separation-faq>
- Comparison of Proposed Plans for GC2020 - <https://www.umnews.org/gc2020-plan-comparison>
- North Georgia Annual Conference – <https://www.ngumc.org/eventdetail/general-conference-2020-12839100>
 - NGUMC Delegation: <https://www.ngumc.org/newsdetail/election-of-general-and-jurisdictional-delegation-12834453>
- FAQ Video Session - <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/um-news-to-interview-protocol-developers>
- Bishop Sue's Podcast - <https://www.ngumc.org/podcast>

