Homosexuality and The United Methodist Church

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Godself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation -- 2 Cor. 5:18

Covenant

We will carefully listen to one another.

We will be careful not to judge one another.

We are not here to change one another's positions. (Speak to be understood, not to convince)

We will ask questions.

Covenant

We will speak our truth in love.

We will assume trust not suspicion.

We will protect the confidentiality of the conversation.

Let everyone participate, no one dominate, allow every voice to be heard.

~ adapted from the Covenant used by The Commission on A Way Forward

Incompatibility

- •We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons.
- All individuals are of sacred worth.
- We consider the practice of homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching.
- We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends.
- •We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Incompatibility

We consider the practice of homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching.

No same-sex weddings by pastors or interpretation of Scripture Interpretation of Scripture.

Restrictions on the use of church funds.

When has a sermon or studying a passage of scripture changed your mind about what that scripture meant?

Givens

- We disagree on the interpretation of the biblical passages which refer to homosexuality.
 - •God's will for all time.
 - •God's will in a particular time and place.
 - Difference in meaning of words & culture.

Genesis 19:1-11 ~ Judges 19:16-30 ~ Leviticus 18:22 ~ Leviticus 20:13 Romans 1:18-32 ~ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ~ 1 Timothy 1:8-11

Givens

•While it was hoped that the Special Session in February 2019 would provide a way forward for The United Methodist Church, the conference was characterized by anger and vitriol.

 Harm has been done to persons and to the witness of The United Methodist Church. The Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation is a PROPOSAL for a solution to our 50-year disagreement and debate regarding the level of inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons in the life of our denomination.

We will remember that it's just a proposal!

In response to the 2019 Special Session, the Protocol is one of several plans that have been sent to the General Conference for consideration.

- "New Denominations of United Methodism" (Indianapolis Plan) – Traditionalist UMC and Centrist UMC
- "New Expressions Worldwide" (UMForward) Traditionalist, Moderate, Progressive, and Liberation Methodist denominations
- "Next Generation UMC" (UMC Next) removes LGBTQIA+ restrictions, allows for missional context adaptation, gives local churches options for separation
- Protocol

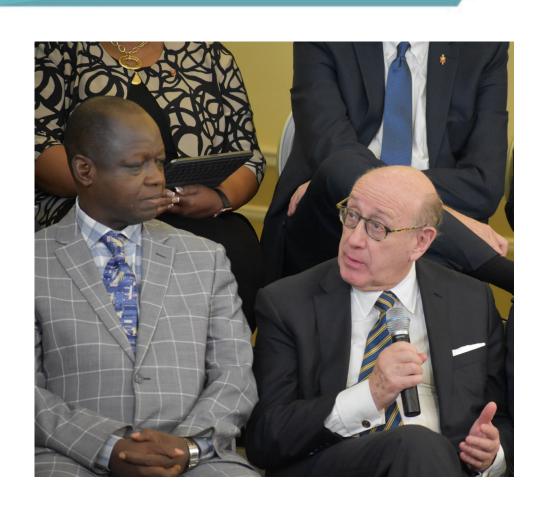
The Mediation Team

- Bishop Yambasu and Central Conference bishops called the group together in July 2019 in Chicago
- US Bishops
- Members of Central Conferences
- Progressives, Traditionalists, Centrists representing a variety of groups in the UMC
- No budget. All volunteer. No authority.





Kenneth Feinberg



- Deepwater Horizon, 9-11 Fund, TARP, Boeing, GM, Volkswagen
- Pro bono services Six days of mediation along with meetings between sessions
- "What happens when a person outside of your village believes in you a little more than you do?"

Commitment to the Protocol

- Groups will no longer support the plans they created.
- Some separation is assumed.
- Mediation Team has developed legislation to offer the 2020 General Conference (now postponed until 2022).
- Group will use best efforts to encourage all parties/groups to vote for Protocol legislation.

Remaining United Methodist

- No Annual Conference must vote.
- No local church must vote.
- You are a UMC, and unless your Annual Conference votes to separate, you remain a UMC by simply doing nothing.
- If your Annual Conference votes to separate, your local church can vote to remain in UMC and move to another Annual Conference.

Process

- Registration of intent of forming new denomination.
- All AC's may vote to join new denomination
 - 20% support threshold to call for a vote
 - Must be supported by 57%
- Central Conferences may also join new denomination

Process

- Local churches who want to remain in the UMC if Annual Conference separates
 - Church Council: choose simple majority or supermajority vote.
 - Vote taken at Church Conference.

Local Churches

- Local Church joining a new Methodist denomination (pursuant to the Protocol)
 - Retains its assets and liabilities.
 - Annual Conference will not exercise its trust clause.
 - Expected to maintain connectional responsibilities prior to departure.

If the Protocol Passes ...

3 Avenues for Local Church Leaving the UMC

Unite with a New Expression of United Methodism

- Retains its assets and liabilities
- Annual Conference will not exercise its trust clause
- Expected to maintain connectional responsibilities prior to departure

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- Church Conference2/3 majority
- 24 months of apportionments
- Pension liability
- Legal costs

Close and Buy Back

- Charge Conference to close church
- Appraisal
- Negotiate with Conference Trustees regarding buy-back amount

Clergy

- Can choose
- Default is to continue as a member of your annual conference.
- Provisions for if a clergy wants to do something other than the choice/or default of the Annual Conference.
- No reduction in pension benefits.

Financial Agreements

Traditional Methodist denomination \$25M

Other Methodist denominations
\$2M

•If more than one Traditional Methodist denomination should be registered, \$25M would be split amongst those entities. Same with \$2M.

Financial Agreements

 Earmark for Ministries to Asian, Black, Hispanic-Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander Communities and Africa University

\$39M over two quadrennia

Moratorium

- Bishops asked to place all administrative and judicial processes addressing restrictions in Book of Discipline related to self-avowed practicing homosexuals or samesex weddings in abeyance.
 - January 1, 2020 through adjournment of first conference of the post-separation UMC.
- Nothing in the legislation changes our current language about gay marriage or gay ordination.

Reconciliation

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Godself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

--2 Cor 5:18

- The restoration of friendly relations.
- The end of estrangement.
- Reconciliation, as an outcome, is an improvement in the relations among parties formerly at odds with one another.

What is your reaction to the Protocol? What are its strengths and challenges? What questions do you have?

Where We Are Now

- In-person, 2020 General Conference postponed until August 29 September 6, 2022.
 - Called Session May 8 (limited agenda)
- 2 New Denominations
 - Liberation Methodist Connexion (LMX)
 - Global Methodist Church

Given our various positions on the level of inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons in the life of the church, how can we continue healthy conversations in the months to come?