



Dear Friends,

Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32

We are who we are:

Our best approach to regionalization is total honesty. Many US and Western European churches and annual conferences are already meeting the ministry needs of their mission field by openly, unapologetically ordaining and marrying LGBTQ persons. We do not buy into black-and-white, dualistic theology, and we do not buy into black-and-white dualistic, understandings of human sexuality. We believe in the primacy of Scriptures and prayerfully explore them through the lenses of Tradition, Reason, and Experience. We believe the Biblical views on slavery, women, polygamy, divorce, and homosexuality are descriptive Biblical truths, that describe what was true for others in another time and place. We believe in the prescriptive Biblical truths of justice, inclusion, and grace. There is NO scenario where the US church changes this identity.

We, very likely, have the votes to remove the anti-gay language at General Conference 2024:

The 2019 One Church Plan offered grace for traditional pastors, churches, bishops, and annual conferences to maintain a traditional view and practice on homosexuality. It also offered grace to progressive pastors, churches, bishops, and annual conferences to have a progressive view and practice on homosexuality. That grace was rejected by a margin of 50 votes out of 822 cast

and substituted for the overly harsh and punitive “Traditional Plan”. Just three months later, annual conferences across the US revolted and elected new delegates shifting the margin of “compatibilist” US delegates from 2/3 to 3/4. Then, with the handwriting on the wall, the traditionalists announced the formation of their new denomination and 20% of US churches have left. True to form, 80% of the US church is “compatibilist.”

The disaffiliations gave us even more “compatibilist” delegates. The number of delegates per conference was already set, so when traditionalists left, centrists and progressives were elected to replace them. Now, what was 80% of the US church, likely has more than 90% of the US votes. We do not yet have 2/3 for regionalization, but we are very likely to have a majority. If we do have a “compatibilist” majority, there is NO scenario where, after suffering significant membership losses in the US, we do not vote to change the language at this upcoming General Conference.

We are not going back to exclusion even if we lose again:

The Traditional Plan disproportionately impacted the US Church. The Book of Discipline already allows central conferences (those outside the United States) to adapt the Book of Discipline to their cultural context. However, the vast majority of votes for the Traditional Plan came from Africa (60%). There is NO scenario where Africa would ordain LGBTQ pastors, even if the General Conference told them to. There is NO scenario where the United States will go back to trials and exclusion, even if the General Conference told them to.

We may lose Africa and the Philippines:

This is the hardest truth with which we must wrestle. It hurts to be rejected. We offered to live together side by side with traditionalists in the US and they said “No.” The disaffiliations have been heart-wrenching across the country. We are committed to remaining in relationship with Africa and the Philippines but recognize that they are much more traditional than even the US traditionalists. They may not be willing to stay in relationship with a church that is openly, unapologetically ordaining LGBTQ pastors—even though that church is doing so as a faithful response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They might say

“No.” We need to be prepared to live with that.

Conclusion:

Regionalization is a graceful way to give every region of the church the autonomy to reach its mission field. The US is “compatibilist” and willing to live with regions that are much more conservative. The most traditional regions, Africa and the Philippines, then get to decide if they are willing to live with the US church. We cannot, however, live together under false pretenses or “don’t ask, don’t tell.”

Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

We need your help to take the next steps! Please donate today to Mainstream UMC: www.MainstreamUMC.com/Donate

Next Steps:

1. Honesty: The truth will set you free.
2. Clarity: Articulating and celebrating the United Methodist Church.
3. Manage Expectations: What can we reasonably get done at GC 2024?

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Mark Holland

Executive Director, Mainstream UMC

www.MainstreamUMC.com

If the web links above do not work, please copy and paste them directly into your browser. If you cannot see the header and footer, please download the pictures.

Mainstream UMC is a 501c3 tax-exempt organization.



Mainstream UMC

PO Box 8374, Prairie Village, Kansas 66208

Mainstream UMC is a 501c3 tax-exempt organization.

This email was sent to c.ritter@peopleneediesus.org

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Mainstream UMC · PO Box 8374 · Prairie Village, KS 66208-0374 · USA