

DRAFT BASIC PROVISIONS OF AN INDIANAPOLIS PLAN

Drafted: August 8, 2019

The 2019 special General Conference of The United Methodist Church highlighted the depth of the irreconcilable differences present in the UM Church. We seek to envision a new future for the people of the UM Church, offer a different narrative, and avoid further harm to one another, to the UM Church and its members, to the church universal, and to those with whom we strive to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire to move away from the vitriol and caustic atmosphere that has too often marked conversation in the UM Church and move into a new season where for the sake of Christ we strive to bless one another, even as we send one another into our respective mission fields to multiply our witness to Christ.

We envision the UM Church birthing new expressions that will share a common heritage from the roots of Methodism, unbound from the conflict that has decimated the UM Church. These new expressions, though separate, will continue the rich heritage of the Methodist movement as currently expressed in the UM Church while being freed to present the best of who they are and their respective witnesses for Christ unhindered by those with whom they have been in conflict. We will send one another to our respectively defined missions and multiply as each expression reaches its mission field. In doing so, we will love one another even in the midst of our sharp disagreements. We will release one another to joyful obedience to Christ's call on our lives.

1. The 2020 General Conference of the United Methodist Church would birth a Traditionalist United Methodist Church and a Centrist/Progressive United Methodist Church. (Names are placeholders; each new denomination would choose their own name. Both can use "The United Methodist Church" with a modifier to distinguish the two if they so desire)
2. The United Methodist Church **would not be dissolved** but would have its legal continuation through the Centrist/Progressive United Methodist Church.
3. **The Traditionalist UMC** would be a global denomination that would maintain the current stance of the *Discipline* regarding the practice of homosexuality.
4. **The Centrist/Progressive UMC** would be a global denomination that would remove the "incompatibility" language, prohibitions against same-sex weddings and the ordination and appointment of self-avowed practicing homosexuals, and the funding restrictions on the promotion of the acceptance of homosexuality for its US-based annual conferences.
5. **A Progressive Expression** that practices immediate, full inclusion of and ministry with LGBTQ persons could initially be a part of the Centrist/Progressive denomination or could emerge as a separate denomination.
6. **Central Conferences** could align with any of the new expressions or become autonomous affiliated denominations.
7. **Other Expressions** may be formed by a group of 50 or more local churches or by an annual conference.

8. All expressions would develop a new General Conference, with its own *Book of Discipline*, structures, polity, and finances.
9. Annual conferences in the U.S. would decide by majority vote with which expression to align. Annual conferences choosing not to make a decision would become part of the Centrist/Progressive UMC by default.
10. Central conferences would decide by majority vote with which expression to align or to become an autonomous Methodist church. Central conferences choosing not to make a decision would become part of the Traditionalist UMC by default. Annual conferences outside the U.S. could decide by majority vote to align with a different expression than their central conference.
11. Local churches disagreeing with their annual conference's decision could decide by majority vote of a church conference to align with a different expression. All local church property, assets, and liabilities would continue to belong to that local church.
12. Clergy would decide with which expression to align. By default, they would remain part of their annual conference in whichever expression their annual conference affiliates, unless they request to affiliate with a different expression.
13. Bishops would decide with which expression to align. By default, they would remain part of the Centrist/Progressive UMC, unless choosing to align with a different expression. Service as active bishops in each of the new expressions would depend upon the provisions adopted by that expression.
14. Continuation of clergy and episcopal pensions would be provided for by assigning liability for the unfunded pension liabilities to the new expressions and by receiving payments from withdrawing congregations that choose not to align with created expressions.
15. Annual conferences and local congregations could begin functioning in the new alignment beginning August 1, 2020, on an interim basis. Inaugural General Conference sessions would be held in Fall 2021, with the new expressions becoming fully functional as of January 1, 2022.
16. Wespath, UMCOR, UMW, and the United Methodist Publishing House would be established as independent 501(c)3 organizations with their own self-perpetuating boards of directors and would be positioned to serve any expression that desired to receive services from them.
17. All other agencies would become part of the Centrist/Progressive UMC with mutually agreed upon initial funding, subject to further possible reforms and restructuring by that new expression. Such agencies could also contract to serve other expressions formed in this process.
18. The 2020 General Conference would provide continuing funding for Central Conference ministries during the 2021-24 quadrennium, supported by all expressions.
19. A process and principles for dividing general church assets would be adopted by General Conference, to be implemented by an arbitration board.
20. Mandatory retirement provisions for bishops in the U.S. would be waived until 2022. Jurisdictional conferences would not elect bishops in 2020, reconvening for election of bishops in 2021 or 2022 as part of the Centrist/Progressive UMC. This would allow a proper match of the number of bishops with the need under the new conditions. Retired bishops may be used where needed to lead conferences until new bishops are elected. Bishops in the other expressions would be elected and assigned according to the provisions of those expressions.