



UM Forward



Confessing Movement



UMC Next  
 Church of the Resurrection  
 Western Jurisdiction  
 European Central Conferences  
 Reconciling Ministries  
 Annual Conference Plan



Renewal & Reform Coalition  
 Good News / Confessing Movement  
 Southeastern Jurisdiction  
 African Central Conferences  
 Institute on Religion & Democracy



GC 2020



# THE FUTURES OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Conversations around the UMC

*Note:* This list is not comprehensive or without error. If you have additions or clarifications, please send specific and concise input to [umcnext@gmail.com](mailto:umcnext@gmail.com) by midnight tonight and we will add.

- **Renewal and Reform Coalition (WCA/Good News/Confessing/IRD)** - Focused on either bringing legislation to strengthen traditional plan or negotiate a dissolution of the UMC at GC 2020 with two new entities being created. Various conversations being had within jurisdictional and central conferences around the terms of dissolution.
- **Uniting Methodists** - They seek to work collaboratively with all who share the values of Ephesians 4:1-7 in vivid contrast to the harmful polarization that plagues the wider culture and has infected the Church. Their convictions, aims, and commitments for spiritual and structural unity in the Church have not changed. They will stay within and work for radical reform of The United Methodist Church. They will not comply with and will seek to eradicate unjust and unloving rules of exclusion of LGBTQ persons or punishment for any who work for the full inclusion of all.
- **Mainstream UMC** - Created for the purpose of building a coalition of support for the One Church Plan, Mainstream is continuing its work by collaborating with conversations around reform of our church or creation of a new form of Methodism. They desire to continue acts of resistance, evaluate apportionment dollars, engage in dialogue groups and build a coalition of support for a UMC governance structure that allows for appropriate regional autonomy. They recently invited input on Facebook and through their website about the essentials of a new Methodism and definitions of inclusion.
- **Reconciling Ministries Network** - RMN grew out of Affirmation about 35 years ago to pursue equality and justice for LGBTQ people in the UMC. They are committed to remaining an advocate for justice across the expressions of Methodism that may grow from this and other movements over the next months and years. Their immediate focus is two-fold: leading and participating in conversations across the connection and putting pressure on the system to force change. They are also preparing for a potential onslaught of complaints early next year when the Traditional Plan goes into effect. The process for creating the new will not be immediate and RMN is committed to finding creative solutions for those who are the most vulnerable under the Traditional Plan while the new expressions of Methodism are being born, inside or outside of the UMC.
- **UMForward** - UM Forward hosted Our Movement (OMF) Forward in Minneapolis this past weekend. OMF was a Summit to discuss the future of The United Methodist Church, centered on POC+Q+T (Person of Color, Queer, and Transgender) voices. Some of the most articulate, faithful, visionary leaders of the church are People of Color (POC)+Queer(Q)+Transgender People yet their voices have not been centered in conversations since the General Conference. A vision statement was released after the event and can be found on the UM Forward Facebook page.
- **Western Jurisdiction** - Convened after General Conference 2019 and are committed to continue to fully welcome LGBTQIA+ persons. The Western Jurisdiction places a high priority on collaborative efforts and seeks to include leadership from persons of color, young people, and LGBTQIA+ persons. They identified strategic priorities and have formed task forces for each around theological statement, coalition building, safe harbor for clergy, new movement process, structural change, complaints, future scenarios, central conference relationships, branding, funding and disruption.
- **African Central Conferences** - The Bishops from Africa have met with the renewal and reform coalition and are actively planning conversations with various groups to see how Africa can be part of a solution toward the future.

- **European Central Conferences** - The European areas are each unique in their context and are appropriately convening conversations about the future of the church within their area. In the German area, the Executive Committee released a statement following General Conference stating they would not "follow the chosen way of controlling people in their disposition and imposing stricter penalties." The Bishop in Germany is convening groups in Germany to discuss a "shared future," the details of which are unknown at this time.
- **Two Bishops Plan (or Jones/Bard Plan)** - Organizes a method for all annual conferences to leave the UMC and join one of three (or two) successor global denominations, each with their own Constitutions and Books of Discipline, but sharing Wespeth, GCFA, UMCOR, Publishing House, and Archives/History. Churches could choose separately from the annual conference. Progressive Methodist Church will take current Discipline with Simple Plan added. Open Methodist Church will take current Discipline with the One Church Plan added. Traditional Methodist church will take Traditional Plan. The UMC would have no members. All other general agency assets liquidated and distributed to the successor denominations. Does not require constitutional amendments. Would try to suspend all complaints and trials during implementation.
- **Annual Conference Plan** - Lovett Weems has noted that although General Conference is broken, the annual conference is not. Bishop John Schol has said annual conferences will be the places that find the way forward because it is in the annual conference where relationships are established and nurtured and where pace and tone can be set recognizing contextual differences. Greater New Jersey at a special annual conference session in March created a Way Forward Team to identify how GNJ will be in ministry with all people, including the LGBTQ+ community. The Way Forward Team has established a purpose statement to help congregations thrive by turning the church outward through new expressions of Methodism. The Team has asked for a special annual conference session in the Fall to roll out a pilot of three expressions to model new forms of ministry in the midst of theological diversity. Bishop Bob Farr is having similar conversations in Missouri around how annual conferences could work this out themselves. 16 additional bishops from the U.S. and one from outside the U.S. have expressed interest in an annual conference plan.
- **NE Jurisdiction gathering - The** Northeastern Jurisdiction Seminary President/Deans representing the three Seminaries in the NEJ, five bishops representing the College of Bishops and 12 clergy and laity representing seven conferences met to talk about a jurisdictional way forward that connects and supports conferences as we assess and identify the best path forward in light of the General Conference action. The NEJ is one of the most diverse jurisdictions theologically and ethnically and that different paths and expressions may be needed. It also affirmed that Wesleyan theological education will be critical to a strong Methodist Movement in the future.
- **Standing Committee on U.S. Matters** - The Connectional Table and others are working on a two-step proposal that would allow US delegates to deal with US matters through a Committee on U.S. matters and eventually become a regional body similar to a central conference (with the power to adapt the adaptable portions of the Discipline). It is not intended to address legislation concerning human sexuality.
- **COB Servant Listening Team - The** COB desires to walk alongside the various groups and stay connected about future models of structural unity and differentiation. They have named a servant listening team convened Bishop Carter and Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey. The other members of the team are Bishop Rudy Juan, Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, Bishop Bill McAlilly, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, Bishop Bruce Ough, Bishop Harald Rückert, Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, Bishop James Swanson and Bishop John Yambasu.

THE DISUNTING OF THE UMC

