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# What Happened at General Conference 2019?

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# Before GC

In 2016 - We asked the bishops at the General Conference to lead us through the impasse.

- Commission on Way Forward Formed
- Report given to Bishops on 2 recommended plans
- Judicial Council ruled on constitutionality



# Commission on the Way Forward

**32 Members**

- Diversity represented -  
geographic diversity, openly  
lgbtqi persons represented, a  
few bishops,
- Met over two years and  
presented findings to the  
Council of Bishops



# The Judicial Council Ruling

- One Church Plan ruled largely constitutional, with very minor changes.
- They could not rule on Connectional Conference Plan - too many constitutional changes would be needed.
- Traditional Plan ruled largely unconstitutional

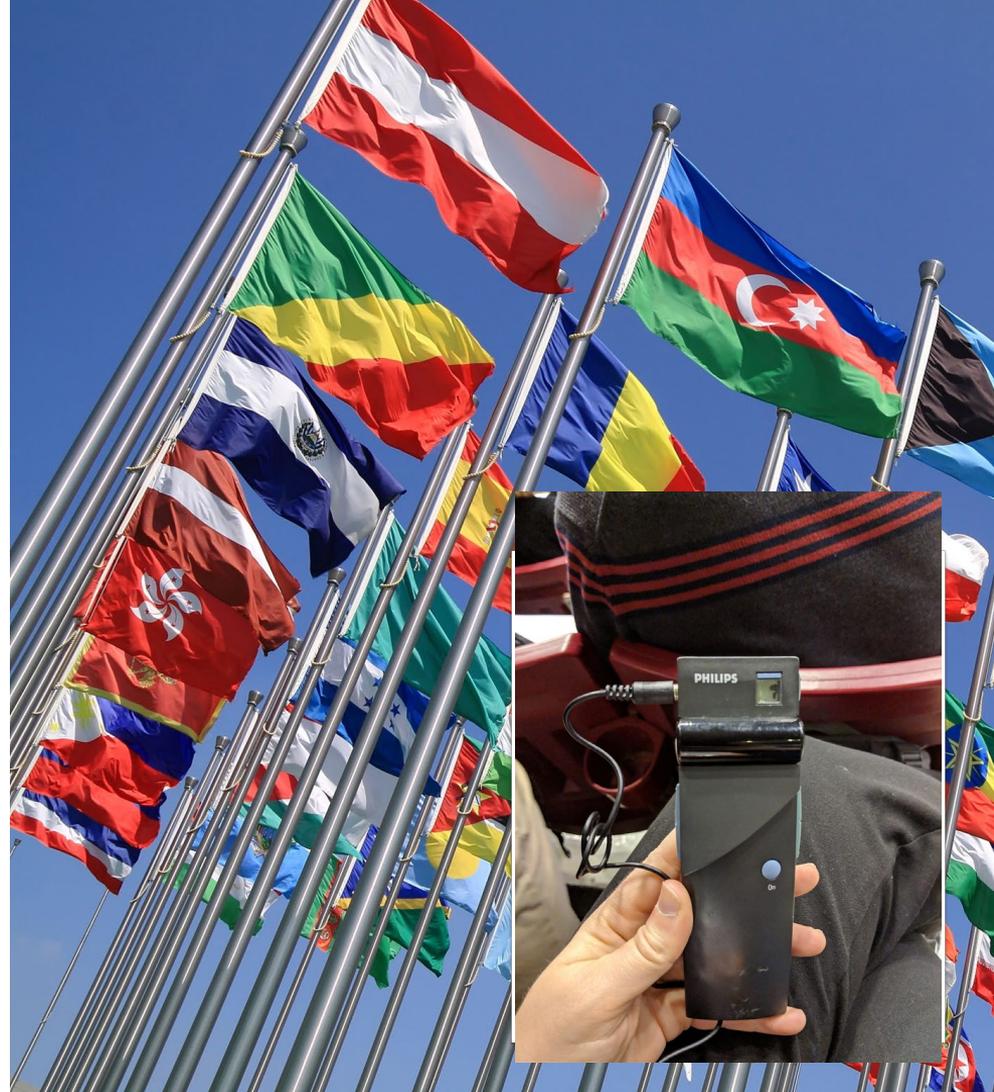
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Bishops largely expressed  
support of the  
**One Church Plan.**

It had the best chance of  
holding us together without  
forcing any one opinion.

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Fast forward to February 23 -26....

We have a global church.  
864 Delegates from all  
over the world. **We had  
simultaneous  
translation in many  
LANGUAGES.**





# Four Days

The Conference Met for four days.

- **Day 1** - Preparation and Prayer. We focused on praying for the world and included missional needs.
- **Day 2** - The body as a whole heard from the Commission on the Way Forward. We then convened as a legislative committee. We elected a chair, vice chair, and secretary to guide us through the legislative committee work.
- **Day 3** - Committee Day 2
- **Day 4** - Plenary - Actual Binding Voting Happens

So what petitions  
passed?

(That were ruled constitutional already)

Petition 90032 - *Tightens up language around homosexuality  
makes it harder for out LGBTQ clergy to serve or be ordained.*

**CoWF - Traditional Plan #1 - Footnote 1 Qualifications for Ministry - Par. 304.3 (90032-TC-¶304.3-G)**

Amend by addition footnote 1 attached to ¶ 304.3:

“*Self-avowed practicing homosexual*” is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual; or is living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020, 1341.

The current wording has sometimes allowed practicing homosexuals to serve, even while being public about their practice, defeating the purpose of the requirement in ¶ 304.3. The added language identifies other means by which an individual openly acknowledges that they are engaged in the practice of homosexuality and can be determined . . .

*Petition 90036- Episcopal (Bishop) Responsibilities Tightens up language around who a bishop can consecrate, ordain or commission.*

**CoWF - Traditional Plan #5 - Episcopal Responsibilities - Par. 415.6 (90036-TC-¶415.6-G)**

Amend by addition ¶ 415.6:

To consecrate bishops; to ordain elders and deacons; to commission deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries; and to see that the names of the persons commissioned and consecrated are entered on the journals of the conference and that proper credentials are furnished to these persons. Bishops are prohibited from consecrating bishops who are self-avowed homosexuals, even if they have been duly elected by the jurisdictional or central conference. Bishops are prohibited from commissioning those on the deacon or elder track if the Board of Ministry has determined the individual is a self-avowed homosexual or has failed to certify it carried out the disciplinarily mandated examination, even if the individual has been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference. Bishops are prohibited from ordaining deacons or elders if the Board of Ministry has determined the individual is a self-avowed homosexual or has failed to certify it carried out the disciplinarily mandated examination, even if the individual has been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference.

Clarifies that bishops are not allowed to consecrate, ordain, or commission persons who are not qualified under ¶ 304.3, even if they are elected or approved by the relevant jurisdictional conference or clergy session. This enhances the bishop's role in upholding the *Discipline* and makes him/her individually responsible to do so . . .

*Petition 90042- Minimum Penalty- Creates a mandatory minimum penalty for clergy who conduct ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions.*

**CoWF - Traditional Plan #11 - Minimum Penalty - Par. 2711.3 (90042-TC-¶2711.3-G)**

Amend ¶ 2711.3, *Penalties* as follows.

¶ 2711. Power of the Trial Court

3. *Penalties - If the Trial Results in Conviction.* Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership and/or revoke the credentials of conference membership and/or ordination or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office, or to fix a lesser penalty. Except, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions, or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:

- a) First (1st) offense – One (1) year’s suspension without pay.
- b) Second (2nd) offense - Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court.

*Petition 90043- Qualifications for Ministry Prevents boards of ordained ministries from approving or recommending people that are homosexual for ordained ministry*

**CoWF - Traditional Plan #12 - Qualifications for Ministry - Par. 304.5 (90043-TC-¶304.5-G)**

Amend ¶ 304.5 as follows:

5. In all votes regarding license, ordination, or conference membership, the requirements set forth herein are minimum requirements. Each person voting is expected to vote prayerfully based on personal judgment of the applicant's gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness for the mission of the Church. The District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry shall not approve or recommend any person for candidacy, licensing, commissioning, or ordination who does not meet the qualifications of ¶ 304.1-3, based on the full examination and thorough inquiry into the person's fitness by the committee and board (see Judicial Council Decisions 1343 and 1344). The bishop presiding in the clergy session shall rule any such unqualified candidate out of order and not eligible to be acted upon.

Incorporates Judicial Council Decisions 1343, 1344, and 1352 in the *Discipline*, requiring district committees and boards of ordained ministry to fully examine candidates' qualifications under ¶ 304.3. Guarding against non-conforming committees and boards of ordained ministry, this forbids them from approving or recommending persons found to be unqualified under that paragraph.

## *Petition 90044- Complaint Process Prevents bishops from arbitrarily dismissing complaint*

### **CoWF - Traditional Plan #13 - Complaint Process - Par. 362.1e (90044-TC-¶362.1e-G)**

Amend the complaint process ¶ 362.1e and ¶ 413.3d as follows:

¶ 362.1 e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:(1) Dismiss the complaint as having no basis in law or fact, with the consent of the cabinet giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the clergyperson’s file and shared with the complainant; or (2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

¶ 413.3 d) (i) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (¶ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may either dismiss the complaint as having no basis in law or fact, with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the bishop’s file and shared with the complainant, refer the matter to the committee on episcopacy as an administrative complaint pursuant to ¶ 413.3e, or refer the matter to counsel for the Church pursuant to ¶ 2704.1 to prepare a complaint to forward to the committee on investigation.

## *Petition 90045 and 90046- Just Resolutions*

- Party that brings complaint has to have every effort made to agree to the resolution,
- Just Resolutions must include a commitment on behalf of those who violated church law to not repeat violation (this portion was ruled unconstitutional)

*Petition 90047- Church Appeal Process Allows churches to appeal trial decisions considered double jeopardy*

**CoWF - Traditional Plan #16 - Church Appeal - Par. 2715.10 (90047-TC-¶2715.10-G)**

*Amend ¶ 2715.10 Appeal Procedures as follows:*

**¶ 2715. Appeal Procedures—General**

...

10. The Church shall have no right of appeal from findings of fact of the trial court. The Church shall have a right of appeal to the committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council from findings of the trial court based on egregious errors of Church law or administration that could reasonably have affected the findings of the trial court. When the committee on appeals or the Judicial Council shall find egregious errors of Church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new trial, along with a statement of the grounds of its action. This is not to be double jeopardy. In regard to cases where there is an investigation under ¶ 2702, but no trial is held, egregious errors of Church law or administration may be appealed to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council by counsel for the Church. The committee on investigation’s decision not to certify a bill of charges does not alone constitute an egregious error of Church law or administration. When the committee on appeals or the Judicial Council shall find egregious errors of Church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new hearing, in which event it shall return to the chair of the committee on investigation a statement of the grounds of its action. This is not to be double jeopardy.

Petition 90066 - Disaffiliation - Passed through  
Minority report which did some editing of the  
Disaffiliation to perhaps bring it into  
Constitutionality.

- Allows churches to leave for reasons of conscience
- Applies somewhat equally to progressives and conservative churches.
- Penalizes those who leave with some financial obligations (pension liability, apportionments, etc)

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**But all of the Traditional  
Plan was referred to  
Judicial Council  
Meeting on  
April 23 -26, 2019**

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# What people are saying

**I will not treat my gay and lesbian people as second class. I will not quietly accept the way backwards as an acceptable way for us to live together as United Methodists.**

Adam Hamilton, , Church of the Resurrection

“People see the hypocrites of the church and it’s a turn-off. The discrimination against gay and lesbian people needs to end, and the church needs to be leading in doing that,” There are a lot of grieving people right now who feel this is wrong, and I’m one of them

Mark Holland, Great Plains Conference,

As a supporter of the One Church Plan, I am deeply grieved. As I shared in a recent sermon, I had hoped that a door would open for gay couples to be married and for LGBTQ friends to be ordained. My heart is heavy that that door remains closed.....]Our Welcome Statement at West End is clear: we welcome and embrace ALL. Now, more than ever, we are called to live into that statement.

Carol Cavin-Dillon, West End Senior Pastor

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**We will have  
another General  
Conference in  
2020...**

# What might happen at/by GC 2020

Two possibilities and a certainty

- Wesleyan Covenant Association may leave. They are poised and ready to go. They would like a better exit plan first, which did not pass this year.
- More Progressive and Centrist Churches may leave. (A. Hamilton)
- The number of delegates in the Southern Hemisphere will grow

# What is next for WEUMC?

- Offered initial public response: banners, social media reaffirming our Welcome Statement
  - Nominate Delegate(s) to General Conference 2020
  - Network with other congregations
  - Consider joining the Reconciling Network
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# What can I do?

- Pray and engage
- Watch for further opportunities for conversation
- Share your thoughts:
  - With pastors/staff
  - With leaders

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# Contact your leaders:

- Amy Lynch, Chair of Ministry Table
    - [lynchamy@comcast.net](mailto:lynchamy@comcast.net) or 615-973-9281
  - Davis Turner, rising Chair of MT
    - [davisturner@comcast.net](mailto:davisturner@comcast.net) or 615-400-5621
  - Allan Horner, former Chair of MT
    - [ahorner@criterionadv.com](mailto:ahorner@criterionadv.com) or 615-400-8211
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# Final Words

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