



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 1, 2019

## Methodists Vote to Retain Biblical Stand on Sexuality, Marriage

The United Methodist Church (UMC), which has been under a decades-long attack from homosexual and liberal activists within its ranks, has chosen to stay true to the biblical record on sexuality and marriage. On February 26, delegates to the UMC's annual conference voted to keep in place the denomination's ban on same-sex "marriage" and ordination of openly homosexual clergy.

As reported by [UM News](#), three plans had been forwarded at the conference: the "Traditional Plan" retaining the denominational prohibitions on same-sex marriage and homosexual clergy; a "One Church Plan," which would have allowed UMC congregations to determine how to handle same-sex marriage while leaving it up to UMC regional conferences to decide on whether or not to allow homosexual clergy; and the "Simple Plan," a proposal forwarded by a UMC group called the Queer Clergy Caucus, which would have removed all prohibitions on homosexual marriage and clergy from the UMC *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's guide book.

In the end, delegates to the four-day General Conference Special Session convened in St. Louis rejected the One Church Plan on a 436-386 vote, and the Simple Plan by a vote of 494-323. While a last-ditch effort was made to bring the One Church Plan back, it was ultimately tabled, and when the Traditional Plan was brought to a vote it passed 438-384, with conservative, biblically minded delegates breaking out in a chorus of "Blessed Assurance" at the successful vote.

Fox News noted that 43 percent of the 800 delegates to the conference were from overseas, with the majority from Africa, "and the overseas delegates overwhelmingly supported the LGBT bans."

One of those delegates, the Reverend Jerry Kulah of Liberia, said before the vote that if the ban against homosexuality in the denomination were lifted, "the church in Africa would cease to exist. We can't do anything but to support the Traditional Plan — it is the biblical plan." He added that "today the church in Africa is growing in leaps and bounds because we are committed to biblical Christianity. You cannot be performing Christianity differently in America and Africa and suggest that we are one church."

Kulah exhorted his fellow delegates that the Traditional Plan "ensures God's word remains foundational to the life and growth of the UMC. I submit we love our LGBTQ friends" by voting to retain the biblical





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stand on sexuality.

Response ranged from disappointment to anger from UMC pastors and members who had hoped for a different outcome. The Reverend Tim Bagwell, a Methodist pastor from Macon, Georgia, called the vote “deeply painful,” noting that the UMC “has always been mainstream, reaching out to people. This sends a different tone ... one of exclusion, not inclusion.”

The Reverend Susan Henry-Crowe, head of the General Board of Church and Society, the UMC’s social-justice arm, said after the vote that the denomination had failed “to love LGBTQIA people, recognize their gifts in the church, maintain our unity in the midst of diversity, and to live out our Gospel mandate to seek justice and pursue peace. We worship a fully-inclusive, justice-seeking God.”

The [New York Times](#) predicted that “a divide of the United Methodist Church, which has 12 million members worldwide, appears imminent. Some pastors and bishops in the United States are already talking about leaving the denomination and possibly creating a new alliance for gay-friendly churches.”

Among those quoted by the *Times* was the Reverend Mike Slaughter, a UMC pastor from Ohio, who declared after the vote that “it is time for another movement. We don’t even know what that is yet, but it is something new.”

The Reverend Tom Berlin, a pastor in Herndon, Virginia, a Washington, D.C. suburb, predicted that with the latest vote some UMC churches “will test this new legislation by performing marriages and some conferences will ordain gay clergy,” thereby risking punishment and even removal from the denomination.

By contrast, the Reverend Talbot Davis, pastor of Good Shepherd UMC in Charlotte, North Carolina, said that he was “delighted that the Special General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted the Traditional Plan, as we believe in the beautiful picture of celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in heterosexual marriage that is woven throughout the pages of Scripture as well as church teaching since its inception.” He added that “we gladly join with our global brothers and sisters in teaching this truth with as much love and winsomeness as we can.”

Similarly, the Reverend Keith Mcilwain, a UMC pastor in Pennsylvania, said that with the vote, the denomination “once again reaffirmed her commitment to the ecumenical consensus of the last two thousand years, and firmly took her place in the global orthodox resurgence which is doing great things all over the world for the gospel.”

Image: [Screenshot from UMC.org](#)



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