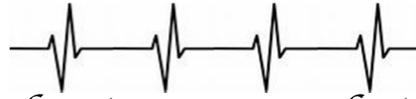


Pulse



*Confessing Jesus Christ as
Son, Savior and Lord!*

Inaugural Wesleyan Covenant Association Conference

On October 7, 2016, over 1,700 clergy and laity met in Chicago, Illinois for the first public meeting of the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA). This new organization is “an association of congregations, clergy persons, and laity who desire to cooperate in the mission of the WCA to promote the ministry of the gospel from a Wesleyan theological perspective within The United Methodist Church and kindred bodies.” The group adopted the Nicene Creed and UMC doctrinal standards, voted on the WCA Council Nominees and confirmed a statement to the Bishops’ Commission on A Way Forward.

The WCA is a membership organization and will, therefore, be directed by its members through several forms of representation including congregational delegates and clergy members. Funding will primarily come from membership fees in addition to any contributions received.

Please visit the WCA website at www.wesleyancovenant.org for more information.

Bishops Rule Against Non-conformity Resolutions

The New England Conference adopted its “Action of Non-Conformity with the General Conference of The United Methodist Church” at its June 17 session by a vote of 445 to 179 with a few abstentions.

Presiding Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar ruled the resolution illegal because it is in violation of the Book of Discipline. In his ruling Devadhar called the decision “a painful one to make.” “As a United Methodist Bishop, I cannot challenge what I believe to be an unjust law by approving an illegal law” he said.

Similarly, Bishop Mark J. Webb of the Upper New York Conference ruled against a resolution adopted at the Jurisdiction’s meeting in July “ask[ing] the conference finance committees to say no funds were available for church investigations and trials related to homosexuality.”

October 2016



COMMISSION ON A WAY FORWARD

Purpose Statement

MISSION

The Commission will bring together persons deeply committed to the future(s) of The United Methodist Church, with an openness to developing new relationships with each other and exploring the potential future(s) of our denomination in light of General Conference and subsequent annual, jurisdictional and central conference actions. We have a profound hope and confidence in the Triune God, and yet we acknowledge that we do this work in a climate of skepticism and distrust, from a human point of view. We are a connection, and we admit that our communion is strained; yet much transformative mission across our world is the fruit of our collaboration. The matters of human sexuality and unity are the presenting issues for a deeper conversation that surfaces different ways of interpreting scripture and theological tradition. The work is meant to inform deliberation across the whole church and to help the Council of Bishops in their service to the next General Conference in finding a way forward.

VISION

The Commission will design a way for being church that maximizes the presence of a United Methodist witness in as many places in the world as possible, that allows for as much contextual differentiation as possible, and that balances an approach to different theological understandings of human sexuality with a desire for as much unity as possible. This unity will not be grounded in our conceptions of human sexuality, but in our affirmation of the Triune God who calls us to be a grace-filled and holy people in the Wesleyan tradition.

SCOPE

We should be open to new ways of embodying unity that move us beyond where we are in the present impasse and cycle of action and reaction around ministry and human sexuality. Therefore, we should consider new ways of being in relationship across cultures and jurisdictions, in understandings of episcopacy, in contextual definitions of autonomy for annual conferences, and in the design and purpose of the apportionment. In reflection on the two matters of unity and human sexuality, we will fulfill our directive by considering “new forms and structures” of relationship and through the “complete examination and possible revision” of relevant paragraphs in the Book of Discipline. We will give consideration to greater freedom and flexibility to a future United Methodist Church that will redefine our present connectionality, which is showing signs of brokenness. If we ignore this work, fracturing will occur in more haphazard and even self-interested ways across the church. If we do this work only to address our preferences and self-interest we will fail to place our complete trust in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness. If we do this work with complete surrender to God’s unlimited imagination and kingdom purposes we will be blessed beyond our limited human imagination. God remains God; God is with us; God will never let us go. To God be the glory!
COB 9/28/16

UPDATE ON COMISSION MEMBERS

The Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops has narrowed the list of potential nominees for membership on the Commission on the Way Forward from over 300 persons to 29. The group includes 8 bishops, 13 clergy, and 8 laity who are representative of our global connection and theological diversity.

“We are working to move this process forward with as much dispatch and care as possible,” said Bishop Ough. “The additional time has honored the values we have of being a global church, seeking representative voices and experiences, and creating space for the discernment of the nominees and the bishops who are guiding the selection process.”

Excerpts from COB press release October 5, 2016.