

Pulse



Pulse is a publication from The Confessing Movement designed to keep you informed of the current state of our beloved church. Please continue to pray for renewal - particularly a renewed obedience to Scripture.

Elections this year at General Conference will have very significant impact on the future of the church. The nine member Judicial Council is the Supreme Court of the UMC. Five of the nine members, 2 clergy and 3 laity, will be elected in May at GC. The JC has the authority to:

- Determine the constitutionality of acts of GC
- Hear and determine an appeal from a bishop's decision
- Pass on decisions of law made by bishops at Annual Conferences
- Hear and determine legality of actions taken by any GC, jurisdictional, or central conference board upon appeal
- Have duties and powers conferred upon It by GC
- Determine any questionable action of a local church, pastor, District DS or any other complaint within the UMC

All decisions of the Judicial Council are final.

UNIVERSITY SENATE ELECTIONS

This General Conference will elect 4 members to the University Senate. Two will be in executive positions of UM related educational institutions and the other two will be from other positions "relevant to academic or financial affairs or church relations." The council is composed of 27 voting members who determine whether or not a school meets the criteria to be a UM affiliated institution. It is also tasked with reporting annually approved institutions and providing consultative services to approved schools.

The Commission on General Conference is tasked with selecting the site and dates for the General Conference every four years. It is the commission's responsibility to arrange for the publication of the Advance Edition of the *Daily Christian Advocate* and reports of the general agencies in multiple languages. In conjunction with the Secretary of the GC and the Business Manager of the GC, the commission sets the number of legislative committees and assigns them materials. It is also involved in scheduling the agenda, including the opening day of the conference and providing the delegates an overview of the program.

Group Supporting Intelligent Design Denied Booth at GC 2016

For the first time at a United Methodist General Conference gathering, outside groups have been invited to sponsor exhibits. Judi M. Kenaston, chair of the Commission on General Conference told United Methodist News Service that "The commission reserves the right to refuse any potential sponsor if it, in its unfettered discretion, believes such sponsorship is inconsistent with the Social Principles." The commission decided claims of intelligent design by the Discovery Institute in Seattle conflict with church teaching and denied them booth space. It is true that in 2008 a resolution was passed that opposed "the introduction of any faith-based theories such as Creationism or Intelligent Design into the science curriculum of our public schools." However, the expressed purpose of this resolution according to the *Book of Resolutions* is to reflect the church's long standing position that there should be separation of church and state. In contrast, the Social Principles state that "All creation is the Lord's" which supports the belief a creator, THE Creator, God. It is hard to understand how this group was not allowed to participate but a group who openly condemns the church's *Discipline* on matters of sexuality is given booth space. Reconciling Ministries not only disagrees with church law but encourages others to openly defy the decisions of previous General Conferences.



Rev. Larry Baird

The recent events in two of our Northeast Jurisdiction conferences reveals that those who continue to take actions contrary to our denomination's long held position on the ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals really would prefer to form a different denomination. While they will deny this, their actions clearly indicate they do not wish to live in covenant with the majority. On the other hand, they will accuse the orthodox, conservative, and evangelical among us of being the ones trying to divide the denomination. It is at this point a haggard old story, and

in many of our minds reveals a profound disingenuousness.

At this point, we can only pray that General Conference will eschew more utopian hopes that the issue will resolve itself over time. This issue will never be resolved when on one hand there are people who are committed to classic Wesleyan Biblical integrity, and others hold to a "progressive" view that God's love somehow requires us to confirm, celebrate, and accept wherever our culture travels in regard to sexual morality.

Larry R. Baird

The New York Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM) announced in a statement on their conference website that "Sexual orientation and gender identity are not and will not be considered in the evaluation of candidates by the Board of Ordained Ministry." The Northeastern Jurisdiction has proposed legislation for the 2016 General Conference entitled "Enabling Ministry with LGBTQ Persons" that is consistent with this position. The blatant defiance displayed for the *Book of Discipline* will likely not be the last as preparations are being made for General Conference in May. The real question is what will happen next if the GC upholds the church's current position? If history is any indication, the battle will likely not fade into the sunset at the conclusion of GC. Disobedience may escalate.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference

Board of Ordained Ministry (BoOM) voted to recommend Tara Morrow for provisional membership in the conference as a deacon even though she is "married to a woman." The policy claims that the BWC and The United Methodist Church "are not of one mind on the issue of ordination of LGBTQ individuals," and that previous rulings by the Judicial Council have only created "further ambiguity" around the understanding of "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals." The board members were instructed to vote their conscience even if it contradicted the church's *Book of Discipline*.

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