

Bishop Swanson's Talking Points for Listening Sessions

GOALS: For the attendees to leave with a sense of:

1. Clarity
2. Peace about the process
3. Hope for the future of The United Methodist Church

PART I

Begin review of our uniquely United Methodist governance and using that to lead us into the introduction of the Mississippi Conference Delegation

- The lay member for each charge represents their local church or charge at the annual conference session along with the pastor appointed to that charge (each pastoral appointment requires another lay member).
- United Methodist governance resembles the governance of the United States—a republic or representative form backed by a democratic election process.
- Tri-partite

PART II

So I propose to address our current furor around human sexuality by providing you the following:

- A. Clarity
- B. Peace
- C. Hope for the future of our United Methodist Church

A. Clarity around the process that brought us to this point.

1. The 1972 General Conference - “We consider the practice of homosexuality to be incompatible with Christian teaching”
2. Acts of disobedience by individual clergy, bishops and conference boards of ordained ministry
 - a. Performance of marriage ceremonies of same sex couples
 - b. Ordination of LGBTQ persons
3. The 2016 General Conference asked the bishops to help solve this impasse. This led to the formation of the 32-member Commission on a Way Forward and authorizing the Special Called Session of General Conference 2019 for the sole purpose of addressing this issue.

B. Clarity about the proposal coming from the Commission on a Way Forward

1. The Commission on a Way Forward presented the three proposals with no preference.
2. The Council of Bishops recommended that all three plans be presented indicating that the majority of the bishops supported the One Church Plan.
3. So in essence what are the three proposals?

C. Judicial Council rulings

1. All petitions that are submitted will be presented to the delegates.
2. The commission will present the proposals to the 2019 General Conference and not the bishops.
3. The Judicial Council will rule on the constitutionality of all three plans.