

One Church Plan Script

As we begin, please don't assume one of these plans will pass—the fact is that the legislative process involves amendment, debate, and compromise. A plan may pass as written. A plan may pass and be so changed as to not resemble anything forwarded by the commission. Another option is that no plan may pass, and we will be exactly where we are today.

Summary of the one church plan as written by Dan Hurlbert, clergy delegate.

While I don't know for sure I believe this is called the one church plan because it does not require anyone to leave the United Methodist Church unless they choose to do so. In fact, it does not require any person, church, or annual conference to vote or change what is being done right now. It is the only plan of the three that does not recommend a separate body for those whose opinions are not in line with the majority. We can choose to remain one church.

The one church plan proposes to remove all restrictive language around LGBTQ people while adding language about religious freedom. For example, the prohibition of officiating same sex weddings will be removed but in its place is language that states a pastor cannot be forced to officiate such a wedding and a local church cannot be forced to host one. Similar actions are recommended for ordination. Boards of ordained ministry will decide on the fitness, readiness, and effectiveness of candidates for ordination and will make their own decisions. They will not be forced to decide, nor will bishops be forced to ordain a candidate if they object to the candidate's sexual ethics.

Having said that, there are those who state adoption of this plan, which may, in some areas, constitute full inclusion of LGBTQ folks, is not something they can live with--making it necessary for them to choose to leave the denomination. The plan, as presented, offers a way out for both churches and pastors who would choose thusly.

This would have the result of moving choices around LGBTQ people to annual conferences and local churches. For example, each local church MAY decide (but is not required to decide) its own policy regarding same sex marriage ceremonies. Each Board of Ordained Ministry MAY decide (but is not required to decide) on the ordination of LGBTQ individuals. Each pastor decides whether or not to do weddings—this decision may be different from the one the local church reaches. In a nutshell—no one is forced to do anything.

Under this plan each jurisdiction will be responsible for all costs of its episcopal offices (Bishops). While continuing to support episcopal leadership in mission fields around the globe.

This plan allows for space to contextualize ministry. This acknowledges that in some places the current LGBTQ prohibitions are a hinderance to our mission. In other places, for example in other countries, full inclusion could be viewed as a crime.

This plan requires 17 changes to the Book of Discipline none of which are constitutional amendments.

Rhetorical Jujitsu:

This is a method for answering hostile feedback to information you have presented. It was taught to me by John Crawford Phd. Who I had for advanced public speaking and conflict and negotiation at ASU. The basic assumption is that some questions are really not questions at all. When you receive one of these you use this technique to turn the energy back on the attacker and restate you message.

Here are a couple of examples:

Question:

Don't you think that the Bible is clear about homosexuality and aren't these plans just a way of approving of sin?

Answer:

If I understood you correctly, you said that you believe the Bible identifies homosexuality as sin and these plans are a way of approving of sin. During my presentation of the plan I clearly stated the plans intention to not force anyone to engage in activity that they did not agree with.

Question:

Isn't it true that the Traditional plan people are either going to push those who don't agree with them out of the United Methodist church, or, if another plan passes, they are going to leave?

Answer:

If I understood you, you just said that the folks behind the traditionalist plan are trying to rid the church of people who do not share the same sexual ethic. You further stated that those backing this plan will likely leave the denomination if they don't get their way. I would refer you back to my statements regarding the traditionalist plan as representing a particular view of Biblical orthodoxy as well as the consequences of not following prescribed practice around marriage and ordination.

Here is what these examples accomplished. They identified what the person has said to be a statement and not a question. Then the salient points of the plans were reiterated.

Pay special attention to "questions" that contain the following statements: Don't you think. . . Isn't it true. . . wouldn't you agree. These are only questions grammatically—in actuality they are the beginning of a statement of opinion.