

VIII. Resolution: Seeking to Protect Our Connection and Clergy

Financial Implications: No

Section 1: Keeping Connection while Breaking Apart

Whereas the Desert Southwest Conference has been a Reconciling Conference for 10 years;

Whereas we recognize a profound division in The United Methodist Church which appears to be moving to a redefinition of its organization;

Whereas within our conference we find deep divides along theological lines that prevent us from fully engaging one another in ministry that embraces the full diversity of our community;

Whereas division of our denomination over the proper regard, role, and status of persons who are LGBTQIA+ may have now become irreconcilable;

Whereas the delegates and bishops of the Western Jurisdiction have made unified statements as one body working together; and

Whereas if a time comes when we can no longer be a part of The United Methodist Church, we see the best way forward from a broken connection is to form new connections; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that exploration of a pathway of separation for the Desert Southwest Conference be sought as much in cooperation with our brothers and sisters of the Western Jurisdiction as is possible; and, be it further

Resolved, that such work include seeking a way in the work of General Conference 2020 which would permit jurisdictions, conferences, and churches to separate from The United Methodist Church and form a new denomination with new structure as deemed appropriate by the forming bodies.

Section 2: Values for Moving Forward

Whereas trying to anticipate or predict what will happen at General Conference 2020 is nearly impossible;

Whereas while we cannot control much of what happens, we can most certainly control our attitude and actions in response;

Whereas doing nothing, waiting to see what will happen and then hoping for the best is a failure at planning; and

Whereas when there are many variables at play and an exact future is indiscernible, the effective leader works at setting in place operating values to shape how best decisions will be made when the time arrives; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference sets in place these values;
If the division of our denominational body becomes necessary any split will be handled in ways that are **equitable, amicable, and honorable**. We simply decline to operate in a vindictive or punitive manner on a personal or corporate level and we hold to processes of honoring each other as we are working out details of division over our differences.

Section 3: Protecting Our Colleagues While Seeking A New Future

Whereas the February 2019 General Conference of The United Methodist Church singled out LGBTQIA+ persons, supporters, and allies for specific punitive action;

Whereas we recognize in the Traditional Plan the systematization of institutional oppression through the establishment and strict enforcement of rules over one group of people;

Whereas this conference condemned the Traditional Plan at Annual Conference June 2019;

Whereas the punishments of the Traditional Plan are set to take effect at 12:01 am, January 1, 2020, threatening immediate and destructive action against lives and careers of LGBTQIA+ persons, allies, and supporters; and

Whereas what is at stake with the implementation of new rules and punitive punishments of the Traditional Plan, are the careers of professional clergy, including candidates, consecrated and ordained persons who are giving their lives in service to God's call through the United Methodist denomination; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference yearns to be and will unceasingly strive to bring to completion a conference of full acceptance and a suspension or reversal of rules which enable complaints against candidates and members of the clergy having to do with acceptance, marriage, or ordination of LGBTQIA+ persons; and, be it further

Resolved, that until that time we strongly encourage our episcopal authority to not take up for consideration any complaints of such a nature. We simply decline to operate in a vindictive or punitive manner on a personal or corporate level and hold to processes nurturing and honoring and embracing of all God's children.

Name(s) of Petitioner(s).
Rev. Jonathan Arnpriester
Rev. Khalif Smith

Anita MacFadden
Nancy French
Rev. Ann Lyter
Rev. Michael Patzloff
Rev. Stephen Govett
Fay Sias
Rev. Kimberly Scott
Rev. Tom Jelenik
Rev. Doug Handlong
Rev. Dee Dee Azhikakath
Rev. Dan Hurlbert
Rev. Antoenette Fernandes
Rev. David Rennick
Rev. Melissa Rynders