



HOW'D WE GET HERE?

- ▶ February 2019: Traditional Plan passed
 - ▶ Retains harmful language, restrictions on weddings, disqualifies “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” as clergy candidates/deacons/elders
 - ▶ Increases punishment requirements for complaints against clergy and bishops
- ▶ March - December 2019
 - ▶ Active resistance to Traditional Plan across US
 - ▶ Bishops created mechanisms for complaint processes

- “Traditional” Plan was a phrase coined by “Traditionalists” to retain the “traditional” understanding of marriage and ordained only heterosexual persons in the UMC. This term does not refer to “Traditional” worship; this concerns polity not worship style.
- Conferences and local churches hosted meetings, worship services and protests throughout the country rejecting the theological and philosophical implications of the Traditional Plan. Our own North Texas Conference voted on a Once Church Resolution as an act of resistance (Conference Report: <http://northtexansonechurch.org/category/update/>; and, Episcopal Response: <https://ntcumc.org/news/bishop-mckee-provides-clarity-on-one-church-resolution>) And, Bishops were receiving so many more complaints that mechanisms were put in place to handle the administrative load. This was seen as a sign of resistance as well.

▶ **General / Jurisdictional Delegation shifts**

- ▶ Across US, delegations shifted to younger, more diverse, less experienced, more progressive
- ▶ “Writing on wall” was much of the talk across the UMC

▶ **General Conference 2020 Legislation**

- ▶ Many “plans” attempting to amend/reform/replace Traditional Plan
- ▶ Projections on broad legislative “fixes”, e.g., polity concerns, general Church monetary distributions, and extending Bishop retirement age.

- When General and Jurisdictional delegate elections were taking place in Annual Conferences last summer, it became evident that the electorate was shifting to a more centrist and progressive stance. Conversations around the country have been couched as “The Traditional Plan ‘poked the bear’” and “The writing is on the wall for a denominational shift.”
- Legislation was due middle of October; many “plans” were part of the legislative tasks for GC 2020. The protocol is an attempt to supersede the “plans” and reform/re-orient toward a new UMC expression.
- RELEASED, January 23, 2020; The Advance Daily Christian Advocate, which is the full legislative agenda for GC 2020: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/general-conference-2020-advance-daily-christian-advocate>

**“The undersigned propose restructuring
The United Methodist Church by
separation as the best means to resolve
our differences, allowing each part of the
Church to remain true to its theological
understanding, while recognizing the
dignity, equality, integrity, and respect of
every person.”**

This is the preamble to the “Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation”

UMC PROTOCOL

- ▶ **Released on January 3, 2020**
- ▶ **Mediation team** led by Kenneth Feinberg
(*pro bono*)
 - ▶ Diverse group: included people from various caucuses in the drafting; short timeline
 - ▶ Bottom Line: Offers agreement for keeping a version of The UMC and spinning off one or more "traditionalist" or other denominations
- ▶ **Broad support** across UMC

- <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/protocol-of-reconciliation-and-grace-through-separation-faq>

▶ **General Conference legislation (not yet written)**

create:

- ▶ an exit for one or more traditional denominations
- ▶ regional conferences within the remaining UMC
- ▶ possibility for other spin-off but affiliated denominations:
 - ▶ UMC pays \$25-27M to departing denomination(s),
 - ▶ Retains \$38M to use as reparations on racist legacy of the denomination(s) [eight-year pay-out],
 - ▶ and, annual conferences affiliate with resulting denominations.

- General Conference legislation for the “Protocol” is not yet written. BUT... There is a sentiment, if not direction, from the mediation team that will cover at least these critical points:
 - The temporal and financial timeline for the exiting churches in forming new denomination(s)
 - Regional Conferences: (1) That new lines will have to be drawn for the inclusion of annual conferences remaining, and (2) *AS opinion*: The US becomes its own regional conference.
 - Legislation must also include elements of the Protocol such as (1) denominational payouts, (2) ethnic church funding, and (3) annual conferences exiting plans.