

Why the Wesleyan Covenant Association Supports the “Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation”



Is there a way to end this protracted denominational battle and separate without rancor?

The mission of The United Methodist Church has been severely hindered over the last several decades because of our profound irreconcilable differences over theology, practice, and our understanding and interpretation of Scripture. Is there a way to end this protracted denominational battle and separate without rancor? We believe the protocol agreement makes that possible.

For traditionalists, a long-held, non-negotiable in any plan of separation of The United Methodist Church has been to lift the trust clause and allow traditionalist local churches to separate without having to litigate over their property and assets. The protocol agreement’s implementing legislation would allow traditionalist local churches to do just that.



There was great excitement among WCA members and friends at our recent 2019 Global Gathering at the prospect of partnering with others to launch a new traditionalist Methodist church. The protocol agreement’s implementing legislation would allow all traditionalists to begin creating such a new Methodist church without any UM Church restrictions.

Traditionalist United Methodists have long argued that our denomination’s institutional structure is overly bureaucratic, too costly, remote, and most importantly, not reflective of their core theological and ethical values. The protocol agreement allows traditionalists to begin building together a church that is far more flexible, less costly, and most importantly, one that promotes their core beliefs and ethical values.



The protocol agreement frees traditionalists from a dead end debate, and allows them to concentrate on revitalizing local churches



While not intending to diminish the importance of promoting and defending Christianity's long and widely held sexual ethics and its teachings on marriage, traditionalists have concluded the debate over these issues has become futile and a distraction from the church's greater mission. The protocol agreement frees traditionalists from a dead end debate, and so allows them to concentrate on revitalizing local churches, planting new ones, investing in young people called to ministry, addressing racial and ethnic injustices, and working with partners in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines for a healthy and vibrant Methodist movement. The protocol agreement's implementing legislation liberates traditionalists to concentrate on their highest priorities: praising and worshipping God, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and making disciples of all people and nations.



As we prepare for separation, the name United Methodist seems ill-fitting, particularly in the U.S. context. As the chasm has widened over our core theological convictions and how we live the Christian life, it has become increasingly difficult to articulate what actually unites United Methodists. And within our polarized media culture, many now recognize negative press attention has significantly damaged the UM Church's reputation. Headlines over our strife have also undermined the good work our local churches do in their communities.

Many of our grandparents were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and some of us were members of the Methodist Church or the Evangelical United Brethren before a merger of the latter two in 1968 made us members of The United Methodist Church. A new church, with a new name, would not be a novel development in Methodism's 225-year history in the U.S. Under the protocol agreement, traditionalists would have the opportunity to embark on a new path, with a new name, and a timeless message.



As a new path emerges, The WCA believes it is time for all traditionalists to focus on Christianity's great three-fold mission to:

Worship and praise the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior

"Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The WCA believes the protocol agreement's implementing legislation would allow us to move forward into a more hopeful and faithful future, eager to share the love and grace of God with all people.



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