

Friends,

At the start of the week I expected to make this email about the need for every pastor and every church to update their profile. Every pastor. Every church. If you haven't gotten to that, they were due December 13.

But that changed yesterday with the release of a new proposal from the "Mediation Group" called together by Bishop Yambasu of Sierra Leone. It is significant, and worth being aware of, but please remember several things.

First, this is a proposal offered by a relatively small group of individuals. They are influential, but they are still individuals who do not have the authority to speak for the denomination. So headlines like this one from CBS News, "**United Methodist Church proposes split over LGBTQ impasse**", are wrong. "The church" has not proposed anything. And nothing has been or can be decided until General Conference meets in May.

Second, the actual legislation has not been written yet. We will not know many details about this proposal until actual legislation is written, published, and proposed by an annual conference.

Third, if this proposal gets to General Conference (which it probably will), it then belongs to the General Conference which can amend what is proposed before deciding whether to adopt it or not.

So I encourage you to read the document for yourselves. It is only 7 ½ pages long. Don't rely on rumors and word of mouth. You can find it here: <https://cdnsc.umc.org/-/media/umc-media/2020/01/03/15/48/Protocol-of-Reconciliation-and-Grace-through-Separation>

And I encourage you to read the Frequently Asked Questions document which was released along with the proposal. It can be read here: <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/newsdetail/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-united-methodist-mediation-team-13133711>

Most importantly, I encourage you to remember the words of the Psalmist, "I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (Psalm 121) It is easy in these days to be anxious. And the more we focus on the issues of the world, the more anxious we tend to become. But as we place our trust in God, and spend ourselves in the work of the Kingdom, the more we experience the peace that is God's gift.

May you – and the people you lead – experience that peace as we live lives that are themselves our gifts of worship to the One who made us and watches over us.

Blessings,

Tim

Rev. Timothy J. Rogers
Marion District Superintendent
South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church
PO Box 543
Marion, SC 29571

Phone: (843) 423-1202

Fax: (843) 423-6775

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