



Lonnie D Brooks

16 hrs ·

I am fearful that the current United Methodist Church's media frenzy surrounding the ecclesial charges that are being brought against United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions comes at a really bad time for the Church. Because of its proximity to the critical special session of the UM General Conference that will be held in St. Louis next year it has the potential to act like gasoline on the fire that currently separates the Church left and right.

It shows in pretty stark fashion a facet of that divide that is normally in the background of the conflict which usually manifests itself as a difference of opinion about how the Church ought to be in ministry with members of the LGBTQ community. This despite the fact that pretty much everybody knows that the sexual matter is only the part of the conflict that's on the surface.

The Sessions issue brings to the surface the fact that the folks on the far left of that divide have a casual relationship to law and covenant, preferring commitment to prophetic witness, while the folks on the right seem more rigorously committed both to law and covenant. The left regularly flouts Church law in steadfastly refusing either to prosecute or convict in the Church's judicial processes those who are in violation of the laws related to sexual practice, while the right insists on rigorous enforcement. In the Sessions affair that plays out with the left's insistence on using the law and judicial process of the Church to pursue what is obviously primarily, if not exclusively, a dispute that is political in nature. And the left is doing this in what it fairly candidly acknowledges is primarily for publicity purposes, since it acknowledges there is little likelihood of Sessions's conviction and expulsion from the Church--in fact, they openly say they don't want him to be expelled, which is the only possible negative outcome of a Church trial of a lay person.

What all this means is that the Sessions affair has the potential to guarantee the failure of General Conference 2019, if there was any doubt remaining of that outcome.