

The following resolution was defeated in the Texas Conference by a vote of 569-558.

GRACIOUS ACCOMMODATION TEXAS ANNUAL

Whereas, The United Methodist Church has experienced increasing polarization over theological and ethical issues, leading to parts of the church no longer finding themselves able to comply with United Methodist polity and discipline; and,

Whereas, persons of sincere faith and Christian commitment within the church are led by the convictions of conscience to significantly divergent beliefs and actions regarding the church's ministry to and with LGBTQ persons and their families; and,

Whereas, these divergent beliefs and actions appear to be irreconcilable with each other, to the point that the 2016 General Conference requested the Council of Bishops to appoint a Commission on a Way Forward to develop proposals to end the conflict within our church and provide a way forward that would refocus the church on discipleship and mission; and,

Whereas, any plan that is proposed by the Commission and the Council is likely to have provisions that offend the deeply held beliefs of some of our members, meaning that such plans need to provide for a fair and gracious accommodation for conscience; and,

Whereas, the Commission and the Council have both urged the church to act out of a "heart of peace" rather than a "heart of war," giving grace and exercising Christ-like humility in the way that we engage with one another; and,

Whereas, a significant part of giving grace is to offer fair treatment to our church's congregations and members, treating others as we would like to be treated (Matthew 7:12), not coercing their consciences or penalizing them for sincerely and deeply held Christian understandings on either side of the divide over LGBTQ ministry; and,

Whereas, it is patently unfair to require congregations who cannot in good conscience abide by the decision of the 2019 General Conference to compromise their consciences in order to remain in The United Methodist Church or surrender their buildings and real estate in order to be faithful to their Christian understanding, nor is it fair to expect members who have invested decades of loving gifts of time, service, and finances to build their local congregation to walk away from that church's assets or to be financially penalized in order to remain true to their consciences;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Texas Annual Conference strongly urges that any plan passed by the 2019 General Conference have within it the provision of a fair and gracious exit path for congregations who cannot in good conscience abide by the stance of the church regarding LGBTQ ministry, as determined by the 2019 General Conference. Such an exit path should allow congregations to leave the denomination with their property and assets, assuming their own liabilities, but without payments to the conference that could negatively impact the congregations' ministry. "Though we may not think alike, can we not love alike" (Wesley)? Can we not bless one another in pursuing the various paths of ministry we believe God is laying

before us? The secretary of the annual conference shall send this resolution to all of the active bishops of the church and each of the heads of General Conference delegations, to be shared with the members of their delegations.

Submitted by:

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