

SIX QUESTIONS FOR THE ONE CHURCH-LOCAL OPTION PLAN

1. The Presbyterian Church USA adopted a similar plan and project losses of 60% in membership between 2000 and 2020 (2.5M to 1M). Why won't this happen to us?
2. The Episcopal Church rejected 'gracious exit' for parishes that could not in conscience remain Episcopal (though all remained Anglican), resulting in 50M legal costs. Without a gracious exit plan, are we prepared for the cost if churches feel they cannot remain?
3. The One Church plan will cause slight ripples in the Western Jurisdiction due to the tiny presence of evangelicals. It will inflict major upheaval throughout the larger US church. What spiritual "cost-benefit analysis" led the COB to accept this trade-off?
4. Stripping the prohibition against 'self-avowed practicing homosexuals' from ordination leaves no specific sexual behaviors as 'incompatible with Christian teaching.' Does this now permit willing conferences and churches to ordain or bless self-avowed practicing LGBTQIA persons (bisexual-transgendered-queer-questioning-intersex-asexual), and other evolving categories, since the thinking is that this is their God-created nature?
5. If the One Church plan is adopted, how does one limit a 'states rights' approach to Christian doctrine and morals? Could Methodism rethink polygamy where legal?
6. Was the denomination wrong in 1844 to split over slavery rather than adopt a One Church model, since the church was not of one mind on the issue?

SIX QUESTIONS FOR THE ENFORCEMENT-TRADITIONAL PLAN

1. Official seminaries contain many faculty who disagree with church teaching on sexuality, or the factuality of the virgin birth or bodily resurrection of Jesus. Is there an assumption that a "purge" of church seminaries will need to happen and, if so, by whom and how?
2. The vast majority of churches and clergy that affirm traditional sexual morality are in plateau or decline. How is adopting the traditional plan going to help reverse that slide among those whose theology already is 'correct'?
3. Most US annual conferences have numerous clergy who disagree with church teaching on sexuality but are faithful to their vows and do not disobey. Is there an assumption that these clergy and laity will stop advocating for change?
4. What happens if tightened enforcement doesn't work? Is not a legal nightmare of trials and penalties (not always enforced) a real possibility?
5. What happens if progressives refuse to leave for an affiliate-autonomous version of the church? Is the assumption that conservatives then would leave in droves? If so, where does that leave the growing church in Africa and elsewhere outside the USA?
6. Strong biblical Methodist-Wesleyan denominations exist; why so little talk about uniting with some of them if a local option is adopted?

Dr. Bob Phillips

Retired Elder, IGRC

Captain, Chaplain Corps, US Navy (ret)

(Both sides of this sheet are for reflection – NOT official WCA document)