

## A Response by Beth Ann Cook to a conference-wide letter by Bishop Trimble

See:

<https://mailchi.mp/inumc.org/bishop-4886370?e=8ef551dc40>

I'm very uncomfortable with the use of the word refugee in Bishop Trimble's recent email. I've been pastor to real refugees—people who fled repressive regimes or unthinkable natural disasters. They fled with their lives and bear deep scars. I think we need to use the word refugee carefully. Hyperbolic use diminishes their life experiences.

Is finding out your church is not going in the direction you would like painful? Yes. This is happening to both progressives and traditionalists. (My parents church recently took a poll showing that they would not reach the 2/3rds to disaffiliate. Traditionalist members there face a painful choice.)

I have no problem with the Bishop's pledge to plant new progressive churches in places that don't have them. Honestly that seems like a good idea.

The Global Methodist Church fully intends to plant new churches in places where there are no Traditionalist expressions. I've worked together with progressive colleagues to help people find theologically aligned congregations regardless of their perspective.

But I pray we will be careful with our language. Let's also strive to live out what Bishop Trimble said at Annual Conference—we are not enemies. Hyperbole doesn't help us stay that way.

Blessings and peace,  
Beth Ann