



Dear Friends,

Rev. Rob Renfroe, the longtime President of Good News Magazine, chose Holy Week to issue his latest threats to the Delegates of the upcoming 2024 General Conference. We either give him the political power he wants (top-down disaffiliations), or he will burn down the house (sabotage regionalization and continue the fighting in the UMC). Renfroe's ecclesial bullying is everything that is wrong with our church.

To be clear, Mainstream UMC believes that churches should be able to leave, but this should be left up to the annual conferences and central (or regional) conferences to handle from this point forward. The General Conference should not impose another universal, top-down process that will further harm the annual conferences that have already done this work. Renfroe does not have the votes he once had to force the majority needed for disaffiliations. So, he is threatening to harm the UMC however he can. I am reminded of King Solomon adjudicating who really loves the baby...(1 Kings 3:16-28)

Read Renfroe's words:

- "If a just opportunity for disaffiliation is not provided for churches outside the U.S. and if international delegates ask for our help, we will assist them in trying to defeat the regionalization plan."
- "...regionalization, we feel certain, can be defeated."

- “[If disaffiliation petitions are approved] Honestly, I think Good News and the WCA would say “thank you,” pack our bags and go home early. Or, I guess, we can go at it one more time.”

Renfroe believes he is still a power broker, and he desperately wants “to go at it” one more time. His arrogance is justified; their coalition is undefeated at General Conference, most recently sabotaging the Bishops’ One Church Plan in 2019. With that action, “traditionalists” simultaneously won the vote and lost the church. The new reality is that Renfroe is offering a trade that he does not have the power to deliver. And most importantly, he cannot be trusted even if he pretends to support it.

Christine Schneider of Switzerland completely refutes Renfroe’s arguments about disaffiliations in the central conferences. She is a reserve delegate and a member of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. She has been at the worldwide table throughout the discussions around both disaffiliations and regionalization. She addresses Renfroe directly:

- “I appreciate your concern, but we already have the right to separate from The United Methodist Church, and some are using that right.”
- “In the central conferences, we do have functioning procedures for handling the disaffiliation of annual conferences and local churches. Extending disaffiliation options under something like Paragraph 2553 is therefore simply not needed here.”
- “Thank you, Rob, for worrying about us and our rights, but you may stop. And please also stop speaking on our behalf. In the central conferences, we are quite capable of thinking and speaking for ourselves.”

In short, Rev. Renfroe’s entire premise for top-down disaffiliations is built on misdirection. The Book of Discipline already has paths for churches to leave—both inside and outside the US. He knows that. Churches have left from all four continents where the UMC is present. Yet Renfroe demands another universal, top-down disaffiliation process like ¶2553 which his team crafted in 2019.

Now, without votes or credibility, Renfroe and “Good News” have been reduced to

issuing threats. Rather than turning their attention to building their new Global Methodist Church, they continue to demand division in the UMC.

Mainstream UMC is having none of their threats and bullying. Please join us as we work to defeat this political division and usher in a new day for the United Methodist Church!

- Please support Mainstream UMC: www.MainstreamUMC.com/Donate
- Please forward this email to 5 friends and encourage them to sign up: www.MainstreamUMC.com/Sign-Up

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Mark Holland
Executive Director, Mainstream UMC
www.MainstreamUMC.com

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Notes:

Read Renfroe's threats: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/traditionalist-caucus-president-speaks-to-criticism>

Read Schneider's rebuttal to Renfroe: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/central-conferences-already-have-exit-paths>

Read Mainstream's rejection of top-down disaffiliations: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/say-no-to-disaffiliation-petitions>

Links for Mainstream UMC's 3 legislative priorities for General Conference 2024

1. Remove the harmful language
 - a. Adopt Revised Social Principles
<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124>
 - b. Repeal the entire Traditional Plan and all LGBTQ prohibitions.
<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/lets-not-forget-why/>
2. Adopt Regionalization
<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/5-reasons-for-regionalization/>
<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/5-challenges-to-regionalization/>
3. Stop top-down disaffiliations from restarting and expanding
<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/why-a-ds-wants-to-end-disaffiliations/>
<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/6-fallacies-about-africa-disaffiliations/>
<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/4-reasons-to-end-disaffiliations/>



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