



Dear Friends,

I start in the unlikely place of praising John Lomperis, the former employee of the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD). He recently resigned his lay position on the Indiana Delegation to the UMC's 2024 General Conference. Lomperis has left the IRD and has taken a new position as the General Conference Business Manager for the Global Methodist Church (GMC). He has decided to shift his attention to building a church instead of tearing one down. That's a good decision.

It is time for EVERY delegate who does not want to build the United Methodist Church to resign from their respective delegations. Most of the delegates who have left the UMC have already faithfully resigned. For non-UMC delegates, remaining on a delegation for the General Conference lacks integrity and selfishly sucks as much as \$5,000 each for a space that belongs with someone who wants to build the Church. There are qualified reserves on every delegation to take that spot. There is no mechanism in the Book of Discipline for Annual Conferences to remove harmful delegates between election cycles. It is left up to the integrity of the individuals, which in many cases, is lacking.

Here is Rev. Stan Copeland, Mainstream UMC Board Member, addressing this issue on YouTube as "Foxes in the Henhouse." [https://youtu.be/vGthsqTrVAw?si=MyTLm\\_7Uik1h6\\_BI](https://youtu.be/vGthsqTrVAw?si=MyTLm_7Uik1h6_BI)

The strategy of the remaining delegates representing Good News and the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) is to ask African delegates to further divide the US church. The WCA has proudly announced a fundraising campaign to pass legislation that will extend disaffiliations. The fundraising is specifically designated to pay for travel for "observers" from Africa to lobby delegates. They know African votes are their only hope at General Conference.

This was exactly the strategy they used to pass the Traditional Plan in 2019. This is the plan that contained their "gracious exit" (§2553) intended to force out "liberal" churches. Ironically, this became the pathway for "traditional" churches to disaffiliate, numbering about 25% of US churches. It also shows the need for regionalization: a full

60% of the votes to pass the Traditional Plan and allow disaffiliations came from Africa. Only 1/3 of US delegates in 2019 supported this plan, even though it ultimately applied only to the U.S. churches. There was enormous backlash to the Traditional Plan in the US and delegate elections later that spring saw scores of “traditional” US delegates lose their seats to moderates and progressives. The far-right won the vote and lost the Church.

The ruse of the current disaffiliation legislation is the claim that it is to help churches outside the US leave, when in fact, the goal is to help more US churches leave. As we have reported before, churches outside the US already have been leaving over the past year AND they already have authority under ¶101 to adapt this portion of the Book of Discipline to facilitate more disaffiliations. The key is the vast majority of United Methodists in Africa do not want disaffiliations. With an emphasis on regionalization, the US and Africa should not be telling one another how to handle disaffiliations at all.

The Board of Mainstream UMC reiterates that we do NOT support any legislation that reopens disaffiliations for three reasons. 1) There are existent paths in the Book of Discipline for churches to leave and Annual Conferences can handle that on a case-by-case basis. This is already happening in South Carolina, for example. 2) Many of the churches that left via ¶2553 were not driven by disagreements, but were simply opportunistic in taking their property. 3) It is time to move forward to build our church. The divorce is final.

This is not a call for delegates who are traditional or conservative, who intend to remain in the UMC, to leave. This is a call for those delegates who are serving in leadership with groups working to divide the UMC, namely, Good News, IRD, WCA, or the GMC to step down. You won! You have your new church. Go celebrate. And remember, there will not be a single UMC delegate disrupting your GMC General Conference in Costa Rica in September—the conference John Lomperis left the UMC to organize. We are moving on and we want you to move on also. Go in the peace and joy of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

If you have a delegate from your Annual Conference working to divide the UMC, please forward them this email and encourage them to resign immediately. We all need to get to work to build the church we want to live in!

Please support Mainstream UMC’s advocacy to build a great church at General Conference 2024.

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

In Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Mark Holland  
Executive Director, Mainstream UMC  
[www.MainstreamUMC.com](http://www.MainstreamUMC.com)

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Notes:

Read the GMC announcement of hiring Lomperis: <https://globalmethodist.org/gm-church-hires-john-lomperis-to-serve-as-general-conference-business-manager/>

You can read Scott Field's WCA article here to find further division with help from Africa: <https://wesleyancovenant.org/2023/12/05/for-every-people-and-nation-what-is-fair-for-some-should-be-fair-for-all/>

You can read about disaffiliations in Africa: <https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/6-fallacies-about-africa-disaffiliations/>

Read the Africa College of Bishops' complete statement denouncing the WCA and their Africa

Initiative: <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/files/statement+from+africa+colleges+of+bishops+-+sept+8.pdf>

Read how the GMC has abandoned Africa: <https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/math-gmc-has-abandoned-africa/>

Read how Tom Lambrecht of Good News defends abandoning

Africa: <https://tomlambrecht.goodnewsmag.org/another-mainstream-misunderstanding/>

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