

What we heard from Rev. Dr. Bryan Fink

Plus Reasons #6- #9

“9 Reasons Why I and others have Disaffiliated from the UMC”

Reason #1. The UMC Defies its Stated Teaching on Human Sexuality

The UMC has had conservative and consistent language in the Book of Discipline since 1982. Today, there are entire Jurisdictions, Annual Conferences, prominent Bishops, Clergy, and congregations clearly violating the Book of Discipline and promoting its defiance...and it goes unaddressed. Rules without consequences are merely words.

Reason #2 – Different understandings regarding key Scriptures takes us down different paths.

When we can't agree on what simple scriptures mean, when the same words mean different things to different people, there is really no way to agree on how best to accomplish our mission. Is our real task, to make Disciples for Christ who love God and follow his Word, or simply to herd everyone into the big tent and let them wander in the dark. The Holy Bible is the one true light for those that seek to understand. The Holy Spirit is the true guide! Our role is to put that all together so that sinners might believe, repent, and find God. We love the sinner but cannot affirm the sin.

Reason #3 The Big Tent experiment has collapsed.

How can any church be connected by common values if those values cannot be agreed upon and honored by all. The Big Tent assumes that many variations in opinion can be shared and then they imply that variations in practice are “probably” acceptable as long as we all stay under the Big UMC tent. Being under the Big Tent means that you should also support the Big Tent no matter what goes on under its cover. It makes it almost impossible for Conservatives to find even a small spot in the Big Tent if they don't openly support what they consider unbiblical practices. Being under the Big Tent and financially supporting the Big Tent is more important to the UMC than holding to a common biblical understanding, maintaining common values, and working for the same mission.

Reason #4 – The BOD is Non-Juridical. They say beliefs stated in the Book of Discipline are not absolute standards to be assented to or legal tests for membership.

Previous General Conferences determined that beliefs like the Articles of Religion and other denominational doctrines are considered non-juridical. That means they are not invested with final authority or to be set apart as absolute standards for doctrinal truth and error. If these standards and doctrines are being ignored by many Annual Conferences, then why do we describe them as doctrines and why do we call it a book of Discipline? How can we call ourselves a connectional church if the very thing that is supposed to connect us is not consistent and often connects us to some things we do NOT want to be connected to? How can we claim to be connected Methodists when the leadership refuses to enforce agreed on church doctrine across the connection?

Reason #5 - Seminaries are increasingly more progressive.

Methodist Seminary's are very liberal and turning out even more Progressive pastors. Seminaries like Iliff are promoting non-Christian theology while we support them with our apportionment funds. What this means is, that there will continue to be less traditional pastors produced to return to the local church. And as seminaries

produce more and more progressive pastors the likelihood of a church receiving a progressive pastor becomes more likely because pastors are guaranteed an appointment. Are you ready for that?

Reasons #6- #9 were not specifically addressed due to time limitations, but answers were implied in conversation and covered in member questions.

Reason #6 – Trust Deficits with General Church Leadership

There is a great disconnect and loss of trust in UMC Church leadership which in fact does not represent most of the membership. The Council of Bishops is very liberal as evidenced by 28 of 54 Bishops/Conferences publicly opposing the Traditional Church plan that was voted into effect at the 2019 Called Conference. How can Traditionalists have any confidence that things will not change in 2024 when the full Council of Bishops is pushing the liberal agenda and all five US Jurisdictions have overwhelmingly voted on resolutions to remove the sexuality language at the 2024 General Conference? It seems obvious that the Council of Bishops is simply choosing not to enforce things they know will change in 2024?

Reason #7 - You Keep your property.

The trust clause was put in place to ensure consistent teaching of church doctrine and continuation of the common mission. Today the UMC is abandoning agreed on church doctrine and leaving the membership behind which is the opposite of why the trust clause was set up. Without a trust clause, the local church retains ownership of the property that they bought and paid for. The UMC can no longer hold the property as a lever to enforce its ever more liberal agendas.

Reason #8 The Protocol is Passe`.

The Protocol was a good plan agreed to by both Progressive and Traditional factions which would have allowed churches on either side to exit with grace as well as their property. When the Progressives realized how many churches would leave and what it would cost the UMC in lost apportionments, they withdrew support for the plan leaving 2553 as the only option.

Reason #9 Timing. 2553 is sunseting. The clock is ticking and the deadline approaching.

2553 was set up for the Progressives to use as an exit plan but they refused to leave. More importantly, they refused to honor the 2019 Conference vote and the provisions regarding sexuality, ordination, and marriage.

There was no enforcement or penalty for them. When liberal/Progressives withdrew support for the Protocol, there was no other way out for conservatives who were now forced to use 2553 as an exit plan. According to the GCF&A 20% of the churches will disaffiliate by 2025 and 25% of our SouthCentral Jurisdiction will be gone as well. The UMC world is forever shifted Progressive.

2553 is expensive but workable. Because the Traditionalists are leaving and the animosity of the conferences is becoming clear, it is almost certain that 2553 is the last ever opportunity to leave and retain the church property that your church bought and paid for.

- The statements above have been reviewed and approved by Rev. Dr. Bryan Fink. Please feel free to contact him directly if you feel they were misstated or would like further clarification. Please see Pastor Aubrietta Jones for contact information.

The following statements were presented by the members during the Question & Answer period following the presentations by Rev. Dr. Fink and Rev. Smith. They are heartfelt and genuine. We thank them for their courage and support of our church.