

What's Likely to Happen to the UMC in 2019-2020 and Beyond: Some Scenarios

Ted A. Campbell
Perkins School of Theology, SMU
Aldersgate Day, 2017

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church has called a special general conference of The United Methodist Church (UMC) to meet February 23-26, 2019, in St Louis, Missouri, to deal with long-disputed issues about ordination of gay and lesbian people and clergy authorization to bless marriages or unions of gay and lesbian people. The Council of Bishops has also appointed a Task Force on a Way Forward to consider options for the UMC in dealing with these issues. They are working hard, but their task is a grave and difficult one. They need our prayers.

The Wesleyan and Methodist way of being Christian will survive beyond this conference, but many believe that this conference will be a decisive turning point in the life of the UMC that will lead to some forms of separation within the denomination or division into separate denominations resulting from the 2019 conference and then the regularly scheduled general conference to meet in the next year, 2020.

Although it's always dangerous for a historian to comment on the future, I'll try to assess some of the more likely scenarios for unity as well as separation based on our histories and on the current developments I'm aware of. In particular, I want to show that separation could take a number of forms, some more and some less dramatic.

What follows presupposes some knowledge of United Methodist life and history and polity (how the denomination works), but I invite lay as well as clergy United Methodists and others to join in creative thinking about the issues and the possibilities that face us now.

And I pray: *Christ, have mercy on us.*

What Divides Us?

A. "The practice of homosexuality."

The overarching issue that most consistently divides us today has to do with one statement and two related prohibitions in the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* referring to homosexual practice:

1. The statement added to the Social Principles in 1972 that, “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching” (in the 2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 161G, p. 113).
2. The statement added to the chapter on “The Ministry of the Ordained” between 1980 and 1984 that, “self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church” (in the 2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 304.3, p. 226)¹ and the related chargeable offense for clergy, “being a self-avowed, practicing homosexual” (2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 2702.1, p. 788).
3. The statement added to the same chapter in 1996 that “Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches” (in the 2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 341.6, p. 278) and the related chargeable offense for clergy, “conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies” (2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 2702.1, p. 788).

Roughly stated, this overarching issue comes down to whether churches want to affirm these existing prohibitions, or whether they want to remove these prohibitions and allow fuller affirmation and inclusion of “self-avowed and practicing homosexuals” in the life and leadership of the denomination. This issue is tied to a wide range of other theological and cultural issues, including liberality and conservatism in the churches, the meaning of our doctrinal standards on the authority of the scriptures, the calling and experience of gay and lesbian Christians, scientific issues about whether homosexuality is a choice or a genetically- or socially-influenced orientation, and the changes in broader cultures with respect to acceptance and affirmation of homosexual people. It’s beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate the Biblical and moral and scientific issues that are involved here concerning homosexual practice.

United Methodist general conferences from 1976 through 2004 voted fairly consistently against changing this statement and these prohibitions with majorities typically in the range of 600 delegates voting to retain the 1972 statement and to add the prohibitions, and about 300 delegates opposing the statement in the Social Principles and the added prohibitions related to it. Despite numerous attempts, I have not been able to find the votes on these issues in the general conferences of 2008 and 2012. The 2016 General conference voted to delay voting on these issues, setting up the called general conference that will occur in 2019.

¹ Cf. also 2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 310.2d, footnote 3, pp. 232-233. The statement was originally added in 1980 but in the Social Principles section of the *Discipline*. The Judicial Council subsequently ruled that material in the Social Principles section could not be legally enforced, and the material was placed in the section on ordained ministry in the 1984 *Discipline*.

B. The Missional Issue of Continuing to Expend Our Energy and Resources Arguing about Issues related to Homosexual Practice

The United Methodist Church has debated these issues for 45 years now, since 1972, when the denomination was only four years old. The debates have become increasingly the center of attention in general conferences, and have called for increasing expenditures of time and resources on the part of both liberal and conservative United Methodists. There's a very widespread sense that none of us really wants to continue to expend these levels of energy and resources that distract all of us from our primary mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (in the 2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 120, p. 93). The possibility that one side or the other will win a decisive victory, forcing a small contingent of others out of the denominations seems farther and farther from possible.

One conservative leader in The United Methodist Church stated in a conference I attended that conservatives need "enough ecclesiastical separation" to be able to carry on their Christian mission without wasting more energy on these issues. I heard very similar sentiments from liberal United Methodist leaders at another meeting, that is, they wanted to be free from these issues to pursue their own vision of Christian mission.

But how could we accomplish having such a level of separation on these issues for the sake of mission without a formal, visible division in the denomination? That's the issue that faces us in 2019-2020.

C. The Issues of Whether Clergy Should Violate their Vows to Accept the Order and Discipline of the UMC in order to affirm Gay and Lesbian People or to Dissolve the Present UMC.

Clergy in The United Methodist Church (deacons, elders, and bishops) make a vow at ordination in the presence of witnesses that they affirm the following:

Will you be loyal to The United Methodist Church, accepting its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline, defending it against all doctrines contrary to God's Holy Word, and committing yourself to be accountable with those serving with you, and to the bishop and those who are appointed to supervise your ministry?²

In response to the prohibitions enacted since 1980, some clergy (deacons, elders, and bishops) have violated the *Discipline's* prohibitions given above, arguing that for conscience's sake they must disobey what they take to be immoral prohibitions that

² This form is from *Services for the Ordering of Ministry in The United Methodist Church* adopted by the 2004 General conference, p. 22.

were not part of historic and explicit Methodist or EUB practices. Others, even those who question the prohibitions, have elected to keep the denomination's *Discipline* according to the promises made at their ordinations.

Because the two prohibitions are tied to chargeable offenses for clergy, those who violate the *Discipline* in regard to these prohibitions are liable to the processes of trial and appeal, at the end of which they can be removed from ministry.

This might be a two-edged sword, because more issues than the issues about homosexual practice are involved in pledging our loyalty to the UMC and accepting "its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline". Could a clergyperson who has taken these vows vote in good conscience to essentially end the UMC and its present *Discipline*? The *Discipline* itself provides mechanisms for its own revision, so advocating revisions to the *Discipline* would not constitute a violation of the pledge of loyalty.

My larger fear, though, is that separating groups would have, within a short period of years, *Disciplines* so altered from what we have now that the resulting churches could hardly be recognized as the UMC to which clergy have pledged their loyalty. Would separating groups retain the Articles and Confession of Faith and the chargeable offense against clergy and laity for "dissemination of doctrine contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church"?³ Would separating groups retain socially progressive material in the Social Principles such as advocacy against the death penalty? Would they maintain the pledge in the ordination service that clergy accept the liturgy (as well as the order, discipline, and doctrine) of the UMC? Would separating groups retain episcopacy and episcopal appointment of itinerant clergy in forms that the UMC uses? At what point would a vote to allow radical forms of division constitute *de facto* disloyalty to the UMC?

D. The Issue of Whether These Prohibitions should be Globally Binding or Whether There Can Be Any Degree of Local Decision-Making on Them

At this point the two prohibitions in the *Discipline* (the second and third items above and the chargeable offenses related to them) are understood to be globally binding statements for the UMC. That is, they allow for no local decision making on these issues.

Some in the UMC have questioned whether regional or local church bodies could be empowered to make their own decisions on these issues as they do on other issues. For example, annual conferences could be empowered to make their own decisions about whether they could ordain self-avowed practicing homosexual persons, and local congregations could make their own decisions about performing marriages or unions of homosexual persons.

³ 2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 2702.1.e, and 2710.3.d (pp. 288-2789).

This issue of local decision-making is separate from the larger moral question of the appropriateness of same-sex relationships, though it is closely related to this issue. If folks take the prohibitions against homosexual activity to be absolutely necessary for Christian unity, on the level of the teachings in our Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, and the General Rules, then it makes sense that they should be taken as globally binding as an expression of the unity of the whole denomination throughout the world.

But because homosexual practice is not explicitly mentioned in our constitutionally-protected doctrinal standards—the Articles, the Confession, and the General Rules—and these prohibitions were not made explicit until 1980 and beyond, others maintain that they should not be globally imposed and that there should be some provision for regional and local autonomy on these issues.

How Radical a Separation, and How Many Groups Would Separate?

How, then, shall we continue the mission of The United Methodist Church “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” in the light of the issues that divide us? Only general conferences speak for the whole of the UMC, and the general conference of 2019 has been called to deal explicitly with the issues of homosexual practice listed above. The 2019 called general conference and the following regularly-called general conference in 2020 are more likely than any previous conferences to deal directly with these divisive issues.

I could be very, very wrong about this, but I’ll rule out two unlikely scenarios from the first. (1) I don’t think it’s likely that we will continue as we are as one church with no formal or visible separation into different groups, though it raises the big issue of what kinds of separate groups would emerge. (2) I hope (at least) that we don’t end up with two or three warring denominations, each claiming each other’s property and other assets as has happened in the Methodist past and has happened in the very recent past in other US-based denominations.

I see some signs in the UMC that indicate different possibilities. When conservative groups in the UMC have spoken of division in recent years, they tend to favor the phrase “amicable separation.” And what is behind that phrase is an implied promise that their object is not to claim church property from those who differ with them on these issues. That’s important because in historic American Methodist governance, local congregations hold their property “in trust” from their annual conferences, and they have not been able to separate and keep their property. That legal principle has generally held, but in practice in recent decades, congregations have purchased their properties back from the annual conferences, and that scenario also minimizes the possibility of a nastier church split in which local-church property is contested. But there are other church assets and properties that might yet be contested in some of the scenarios envisioned here. Moreover, the fact that the

General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the UMC has recently reorganized itself as Wespath Benefits and Investments suggests that it might be able to serve the needs of more than one denominational group, though it might require a new way for different groups to connect to Wespath.

So I think it's more likely that a separation in the UMC will take a somewhat gentler form than all-out denominational warfare, though it seems to me that **one way or another, every UMC congregation is going to have to decide where it goes with dividing groups** of whatever form. That's not an appealing prospect. In many areas, congregations will go with their own regions and their stronger links to existing groups within the UMC. In many cases, though, these are going to be wrenching decisions and will likely lead to some dividing congregations and some individuals who opt out of the denomination.

A Two-Way Separation

It might seem obvious on the overarching issue about homosexual practice described above (issue #1) that "you're either for it or you're against it," as one Sunday School member put it to me. If that were the case, then, there would be two resulting groups: one favoring ordinations and marriages of gay people, one opposing them.

It has been imagined by some that a **two-way split could take a geographical form**, but I think it's not likely. Within the United States, the general perception is that the South Central and Southeastern jurisdictions would fall on the conservative side and the Western, North Central, and Northeastern jurisdictions would tend to take more progressive or liberal stances, though within each of these large jurisdictions, there would be congregations and individual delegates to general conferences that take stances contrary to the general trends in their jurisdictions. Another general sense is that the central conferences (which are outside of the United States) would fall on the conservative side of the spectrum. Again, however, many congregations and individual delegates from those international conferences might differ from the general perceptions of their groups. This is why I think it's unlikely that a two-way split would take a strict geographical form, because so many congregations and individuals in particular regions would want to identify with the views taken in other regions. Sooner or later, I think (probably sooner), geographically-defined groups would become overlapping groups.

With respect to organized groups or caucuses within the UMC, the Good News Movement, the Confessing Church Movement, and supporters of the Wesleyan Covenant Association take the conservative side on the issues about homosexual practice. The Methodist Federation for Social Action and the Reconciling Ministries Network stand for broad inclusion of gay and lesbian people, favoring ordinations and marriages or unions of same-sex couples.

We could envision a two-way split, then, involving these jurisdictions, central conferences, and organized caucus groups:

Conservative Group	Liberal group
Majorities of congregations in Southeastern, South Central jurisdictions and in central conferences.	Majorities of congregations in Northeastern, North Central, and Western jurisdictions.
Congregations and individuals affiliated with Good News Movement, Confessing Church Movement, and Wesleyan Covenant Association.	Congregations and individuals affiliated with Reconciling Ministries Network and the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

A Three-Way Separation

Despite the presupposition of a two-way split on the part of many United Methodists, the issue of local decision-making described above (issue #4) means that there are some who would prefer for the denomination as a whole not to make globally-binding decisions on the issues about homosexual practice, either in a liberal or a conservative direction, but to allow some degree of regional and/or local decision-making. Some have called this a **“Third Way” option**. Those who support a “third way” option tend strongly to the view that clergy should not violate the promises they have made to keep the order and discipline of the UMC, however much they might advocate change in the UMC.

One organized group, the United Methodist Centrist Movement, most clearly represents this option, and it has attracted the support of pastors of some of the largest churches in the denomination. It’s not clear at this point whether majorities of any jurisdictional conferences or central conferences would opt for this, but the question might be whether the two groups envisioned above would be willing to rule out the possibility of a “third way” or centrist group in addition to the better-defined conservative and liberal groups within the denomination.

A prominent United Methodist leader indicated to me his intuition that the centrist group would eventual join forces with the more conservative groups and they would “continue the conversation” about sexuality issues within a larger group that would retain the name and structures of the UMC, leaving more liberal groups as a separated denomination. But if I understand conservative leaders at this point, what they want to void is continuing the conversation at least in the way in which the conversation has been held in recent decades, i.e., with large expenditures of time and resources dedicated wholly to these issues. That would make it seem unlikely to me that there would be an alliance of the conservative and centrist groups.

Four Scenarios for Separation

Whether the separation might be into two or three groups, let's consider four forms of separation that could occur, given my willingness to block out (at least here) the possibilities of remaining the UMC as we are or a very ugly separation in which property issues and perhaps pension funds are virulently contested. These four scenarios are ranked from least radical to most radical. The first two presuppose the continuation in some new forms of a denomination identified as The United Methodist Church; the second two presuppose a division into separated denominations. Here's how separation might look on these scenarios.

1. *Separation within a Single Denominational Structure Utilizing Existing Jurisdictional and Central Conferences.*

Could we accomplish “enough ecclesiastical separation” on these issues within a single denominational structure, utilizing our present jurisdictional and central conferences? The basic scenario here would amount to division within the denomination into separated groups, each of which has a basic agreement on the sexuality issues and thus would not continue the expenditures of resources and energies debating these issues in the denomination as a whole.

Any scenario for accomplishing ecclesiastical separation on these issues within a single denominational structure presupposes that conservatives could live with the fact that some within the same denomination differ strongly with them on the sexuality issues, and *vice versa*. That means that this scenario would really not solve the presenting issue of homosexual practice (issue #1 above), but it might be able to help with the missional issue of expending resources arguing about these issues (which I've identified as issue #2 above).

On this scenario, **each jurisdictional or central conference would come to its own conclusions about the sexuality issues.** This would imply a much larger role to be played by jurisdictions (in the USA) in defining these kinds of issues. Central conferences (outside of the USA) already have the authority to alter specific aspects of the denomination's polity to suit their regional and cultural situations. It's my view, though, that this could not function geographically as the current jurisdictions in the UMC function, because so many congregations in each jurisdiction would want to follow the conclusions of other jurisdictions on sexuality issues (see above).

A proposal like this **could be tied to proposals for a global *Discipline* for the UMC.** Central conferences (outside the USA) already have a degree of authority to alter some elements of church polity (not basic doctrine). The development of a global *Discipline* could collapse the distinction between jurisdictional and general conferences and specify less polity globally. Issues related to ordination of gay and lesbian individuals and marriages of same-sex persons would be determined at the jurisdictional/central conference level (whatever common terminology is utilized).

On this scenario, the global *Discipline* would represent only the core of doctrines and polity common to United Methodists across the world.

One of the appealing aspects of such a proposal is that it would leave denominational property intact, i.e., without having to be divided between dividing groups, though this would only go so far. For example, if an annual conference were to be divided seriously between separating groups, then the questions about its property (church camps, administration buildings, missional outreach facilities, etc.) might have to be divided.

2. *Separation within a Single Denominational Structure Utilizing Newly Devised Separated Structures (Synods).*

I have proposed an alternative way of **separation within a single denominational structure, allowing for a greater degree of separation** than existing structures of jurisdictional and central conferences allow. I've utilized the term "**synods**" to describe these separated structures. On my proposal, central and jurisdictional conferences would be replaced with synods representing separated church groups based on their positions with regard to the most pressing issues of the day, in our present case, with regard to the issues of homosexual practice and related issues described above.

In my proposal, synods would hold their own separate general conferences with need for some structure to agree on materials common to the overall denominations, perhaps on the analogy of how the US Senate and House of Representatives concur on legislation not by a combined body but by negotiation in conference committees.

In my vision, 1) **division into separated synods would be considered temporal** and thus temporary, acknowledging that all humanly-devised structures are in fact temporal and temporary; and 2) there would be **provisions for reunion** of the separated synods, **and provision for new divisions into synods** as future issues might occasion. In this way, I think we could acknowledge that there will in fact be divisive issues in the future, and we as a church are prepared to face and deal with such issues even to the point of authorizing temporal separation. As a historian, I can assure you that this has been the case through the long history of Christian communities since (and including) the period of the New Testament. Protestants up to this point have done a rather bad job of dealing with such divisive issues.

3. *Separation into Separate Denominations United by a Full-Communion Agreement.*

A further possibility envisioned by some participants in a March 2017 conference on "Sexuality and the Future of the UMC" sponsored by the UMC General Board of Higher Education and Ministry would be an amicable division of the UMC into two or three separate denominations united by a full-communion agreement that could

continue the nomenclature of “United Methodist Church” though with a rather new meaning to the term “United.”

But this scenario does allow a continuing entity identified as The United Methodist Church. In this case, the newly revised “UMC” would serve not as a denomination as it has in the past, but as an entity that allows degrees of participation in ministries and mission across the two or three separating groups. Full-communion agreements have typically a) formally recognized each other’s sacraments and ministries, b) provided for transfer of clergy from one group to another provided that clergy meet all the requirements of the receiving denomination, c) provide for collaboration in local and regional missions, and possibly d) allow for common means of decision making. These typically don’t amount to a very strong form of unity.

It is at least conceivable that the UMC could offer a stronger form of full communion. For example, it’s possible that Wespath could continue to serve the pension and benefits needs of all the separated groups, and that would alleviate some of the possible difficulties. It’s also possible that the United Methodist Publishing House and perhaps other agencies could continue to function under the United Methodist aegis. Perhaps denominational schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and other groups could also continue to be related to the UMC rather than to any of the two or three dividing groups.

In fact, the critical question in this scenario would be how large a role the re-constituted UMC would play and what roles would be devolved upon the denominational groups. As I see it, a stronger UMC entity under this scenario might be rather similar to the “synod” structure I outlined above. The difference might come down to words, that is, whether the two or three groups are identified as “synods” or “denominations.”

4. *“Amicable Separation” into Denominations without a Full-Communion Agreement.*

A fourth scenario would involve “amicable separation,” that is, separation into separate denominations without any remaining formal connections between them. That is to say, the new denominations would not have any formally specified full-communion agreement between them and would treat each other in the same way in which the UMC currently treats all other denominations outside of full-communion agreements. This would be the most radical form of separation that I think could be called “amicable,” an even here, there would be considerable possibilities for deepening division. For example, even if property to local churches was not contested, other properties (annual conference properties such as camps, ministry centers, and administrative facilities, jurisdictional properties such as Mt Sequoyah and Lake Junaluska) and pension funds might become severely contested grounds for deepening division. It’s also at this point that I worry that a vote to allow separation or division might constitute disloyalty to the UMC and its present *Discipline* (see issue #3 above).

That's about as far as I can go envisioning some scenarios for UMC separation beyond either remaining as we are or an all-out denominational holy war. There are obviously no easy solutions here, but I offer my historical perspective that if United Methodists can pull off some kind of relatively amicable separation in which we remain somehow formally connected to each other, we might end up a good deal better than other Protestant groups have done with separations in recent years.

Some Further Challenges and Possibilities

A few other possibilities and issues loom here. Some of them even unhappier, but we ought to be thinking about these issues.

Separation of Large UMC Congregations? Some UMC congregations already function as if the denomination hardly exists, with multiple separate 501(c)(3) corporations related to their congregations but off the denominational radar. What motivation would they have for remaining a part of any of these groups? I would be surprised if some of them did not request formal separation into their own entities.

Existing UMC Boards and Agencies. There's a perception that UMC general (global-level) boards and agencies have shrunk commensurate with the shrinking of church memberships and budgets. I think that's not true. What I intuit is that in fact local-church and regional budgets have actually increased at the same time as boards and agencies have been consistently starved of resources over the last two or three decades. If there were three dividing groups, would each have its own board of missions, in addition to independent missions run through 501(c)(3) corporations based in congregations? I do worry about a spiral of increasing mission and other agencies that are currently run under the aegis of boards and agencies. This makes another case, I think, for a relatively stronger "UMC" group in addition to separating groups.

Existing UMC Full-Communion Agreements. If there were separated UMC groups, would existing full-communion agreements (e.g., our concordat with the British Methodist Church, our full-communion agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and our full-communion agreement through the Committee on Pan-Methodist Unity and Cooperation) apply to all of the separating groups? What would be the status of currently proposed full-communion agreements a) between the present UMC and the Moravian Church Northern and Southern Provinces in the USA and b) between the present UMC and the Episcopal Church? Would separated groups honor the terms of these agreements, or would they need to re-negotiate them?

UMC-Related Colleges and Universities. To which entities would UMC colleges and universities relate rather than the present UMC University Senate? In some cases, I

recognize that colleges and universities are only “legacy” descendants of Methodist institutions, and they might well take this opportunity to separate fully. Fine by me. But other institutions have had core components of their schools that have functioned to cultivate church cultures and candidates for church ministries – In my own region, I think of my current institution, Southern Methodist University, my beloved Lon Morris College (that closed in 2012).

UMC-Related Theological Schools. All of the theological schools related to the UMC would want to serve students from all of the separating groups. But two specific issues face theological schools: a) how would separated groups accredit theological education beyond the standards provided by the Association of Theological School in the US and Canada? One could anticipate a chaotic period of shifting standards. And, b) how would separated groups or perhaps just regional groups support theological education for students, especially for candidates for various forms of ministry? Would it amount to a voucher system elected entirely by students, or would separating groups want more direct input into the shape of their candidates’ theological education?

Annual Conference Properties. Each annual conference in the UMC has its own properties, including church camps, administration buildings, and other facilities. I have commented above on some of the possibilities that division would bring for ascertaining the ownership and status of these institutions, but it would take some very careful stewardship and perhaps creative thinking to envision how they’d relate to some of the scenarios for division given above.

Local and Regional Outreach Ministries including UMC-Related Hospitals. In addition, our denomination and its predecessors have spawned or otherwise relate to a variety of local and regional ministries, and very similar questions about the relationship of these ministries to annual conferences and districts would arise, parallel to the questions raised above.

What Has United Us?

It would be wise for all of us to pause, to pray, and to consider what has united us. The Restrictive Rules in the Constitution of the UMC specify some of the grounds of unity that we protect by making them relatively difficult to change. These are:

- The core of Christian doctrines specified in our Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith;
- The core of Christian life specified in the General Rules.⁴

⁴ Restrictive Rules, Articles I, II, and V; 2016 *Discipline*, ¶¶ 17-18 and 21 (p. 31).

Beyond these, the Restrictive Rules also protect:

- Our episcopal polity and practice of itinerant ministry;
- Our provisions that neither clergy nor lay members can be removed without a process of trial and appeal.⁵

At the core of our doctrine, encoded in the historic creeds, and reinforced by our liturgical practice, is the ancient Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed in the breaking of bread:

Christ has died;
Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.⁶

Please do not forget what unites us. And again, I pray: *Christ, have mercy on us.*

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Date of this revision: Aldersgate Day, 24 May 2017.



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⁵ Restrictive Rules, Articles III and IV; 2016 *Discipline*, ¶¶ 19-20 (p. 31). I have not included the provision in the Restrictive Rules (Article VI, ¶ 22) that restricts the use of funds from the Publishing House as a central element of unity in our church.

⁶ Memorial acclamations in the Lord's Supper as they appear in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), 10, 14, and 16.