

Statement from Dr. Gardner concerning the Recent Council of Bishops Meeting

– 5/10/2018

Our Council of Bishops concluded its spring meeting this week, with the main topic for deliberation and prayer being the *Commission on the Way Forward* report on the different beliefs within the United Methodist Church about human sexuality. The Council has a [press release](#) regarding its actions. In summary, three steps were taken concerning the report of the *Commission*.

First, the Council of Bishops is forwarding all three plans from the *Commission* for consideration at the 2019 called *General Conference - a Traditionalist Plan*, a *One Church Plan*, and a *Connectional Conference Plan*. The General Conference has the right to adopt, amend or reject any of them.

Second, a majority of the Bishops recommended the *One Church Plan* which maintains a single denomination with allowance for theological differences internationally, and for individual clergy, congregations, and conferences. There was significant support also for the other two plans presented.

Third, the Council of Bishops is going to share the entirety of their report and the *Commission's* report with the General Conference delegates as resources in their decision-making about the best way forward for our United Methodist Church and all our clergy and congregations.

The General Conference, not the Council of Bishops will make any official decisions next February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis. The final written report of the Council of Bishops will be published when it is complete and ready for distribution. The projected date for release is after June 15, 2018.

Please continue to pray for our Church, our Bishops, all the conferences of the United Methodist Church worldwide, and the General Conference delegates and especially those from our Great Plains Conference.

I remain convinced that when people of good will listen to one another, we can discern a way forward through our differences on the divisive issue of human sexuality. What direction will ultimately emerge, even our Bishops cannot predict. It is up to General Conference and the leading of the Holy Spirit.



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