

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT TRADITIONALIST WANTING TO DISAFFILIATE?**

There are 4 main misconceptions, they are as follows:

### **1) MISCONCEPTION #1: Traditionalist wanting to disaffiliate from the UMC are trying to change the church.**

In most every writing, regardless of side, those wanting to disaffiliate are called “Traditionalist” meaning they want the church and discipline to stay the same. They do not want the church or discipline to change. Through disaffiliation what the “Traditionalist” are saying is they want everything to stay the same. To keep the Discipline the same but enforce the laws on the books. By disaffiliation what traditionalist are saying is THEY WANT to stay methodist, THEY WANT the book of discipline to stay the same, THEY WANT the same interpretation of scripture, THEY WANT to have the same worship services, etc... It is a large portion of the UMC that wants change. This large portion of the UMC is wanting to remove human sexuality from the book of discipline stating that the Bible is not clear on human sexuality. Thus, paving the way for ordination of openly gay clergy and utilizing the church to perform homosexual weddings. You see, “Traditionalist” believe that a vote to disaffiliate is a vote to keep our church the same.

### **2) MISCONCEPTION #2: Traditionalist do not like individuals in the homosexual community.**

This couldn't be further from the truth. Traditionalist wanting to disaffiliate love all people, after all we are all made in the image of God (Imago Dei). We do not want God's word hidden because of those that may be homosexual in the church. God never intended for us to stop sharing His word. If God is love and the Word is God, (John 1:1-2) why would we ever withhold this from those that we love? Some see the sharing of God's word as hateful or hurting someone, instead of seeing it as it is...LOVE.

So, traditionalist wanting to disaffiliate only want to continue sharing God's word unapologetically. The main reason for not sharing God's word is to operate under a “DO NO HARM” philosophy. However, traditionalist do not see the sharing of God's word falling under the category of Doing Harm, they see it as falling under the category of LOVE. This may be hard for some to understand because they don't believe that homosexuality is wrong and in fact think it should be celebrated. So, sharing the word of God with them means that you disagree with their lifestyle (Sin), it does not mean that you dislike the person. Each member can do their own search of the scriptures to determine God's view on this issue.

**3) MISCONCEPTION #3: Traditionalist wanting to disaffiliate do not want homosexual members in their church.**

This is God's church, no matter what side you are on, and in God's church "ALL ARE WELCOME". Not once has a perfect man/woman without sin entered the doors of Central UMC. The church is for unperfect people (sinners) to come and hear God's word, to grow in their relationship with Christ, and to strive towards perfection (come as you are, don't stay as you are). It doesn't matter what clothes you wear, what your sexual orientation is, what gender you are, or what your race you belong to, "ALL ARE WELCOME" to come and experience God. This would not change in a church that has a traditional understanding.

**4) MISCONCEPTION #4: Changes may be happening in other churches or conferences in other states but, those changes will not happen in Mississippi or at Central.**

Although we cannot say exactly what will happen, what we can do is look at the events leading up to this point. So, the answer is in three parts:

a) The most recent vote on Human Sexuality (book of discipline) at the general conference in 2019 was 53% Yes (leave it as is) and 47% No (remove it from the discipline). It is the more traditional churches leaving the UMC which would decrease the amount of "YES" votes. If this vote flips, then the discipline for the whole United Methodist Church could change and the Mississippi conference would be bound by this new change in the discipline.

b) The most recent vote, according to the 2022 annual conference report for Mississippi, on human sexuality was 402 Yes (leave it as is) and 348 No (remove it from the discipline) \*Source UMNEWS.ORG. This vote usually promotes the election of delegates from the Mississippi conference to the general conference. If the UMC churches leaving are the more traditional churches, then this vote could swing/flip as well. This would mean more "NO" voting delegates will be sent from Mississippi.

c) The UMC judicial Council has already ruled, "There is no basis in Church law for any annual conference to adopt stopgap policies, pass resolutions, take a vote, or act unilaterally for the purpose of removing itself from The United Methodist Church." So, what does this mean? It means that the conference cannot remove itself from the UMC. It also means that if human sexuality is removed from the UMC book of discipline, the Bishop nor the Mississippi annual conference, would not have any authority to stop UMC clergy from performing the marriage of homosexual couples in the church or the ordination of openly homosexual clergy.