

March 3, 2019

When I first read about the three plans being considered for United Methodists, I was very excited about the Connectional Plan - a wide umbrella that continued to connect us as United Methodists while allowing for some differences in theology and discerned understanding. But it was too challenging to incorporate globally.

Then I fell into step with those who thought the One Church Plan was the best option, eliminating the “incompatibility” language but justifying continued discrimination of our queer siblings. But listening to trusted friends who have been in this battle for a long time, I knew that little would change in my own ministry setting. LGBTQ people would continue to be second-classed and oppressed.

After I saw the very first vote at General Conference, it became crystal clear that the 55%/45% ish split would define the rest of the Conference. It was not a big surprise, but difficult to swallow, impossible to comprehend, and heart breaking for my beloved community.

Since we have returned home, the resistance to the vote of the majority at GC, who voted in the Traditionalist Plan, has shocked and surprised me. I have heard and seen people rising up to resist. I have heard and seen people apologizing to our queer siblings and lamenting the damage done.

I had decided if this Traditionalist Plan passed, it would be my jumping-off place. But now I will wait and see what my own Church will decide to do. Now I will come out as one set apart in ministry who offers myself as officiant for weddings for our members and friends. I will continue to tell the truth about God’s grace that is big enough for every single part of creation - the creation God called good! I will continue to preach the good news that we are God’s beloved and beautiful children, in whom God’s endless grace swims and swirls in and through.

I was born with Methodist blood. I have grieved the shift toward narrow understandings in the church of my childhood, youth, and call. Now I stand beside those who are energized to change that narrow understanding into a broad and wide and high and deep ocean of grace. God, help us.

— Jeni Markham Clewell