



The Methodist Messenger

FEBRUARY 2020

Whiteville United Methodist Church

Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday Communion Service - 6:00 p.m.



"PROTOCOL OF RECONCILIATION & GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION"

On January 3, the "Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace through Separation" (hereafter, the Protocol) was released to The United Methodist Church and to the world. The following commentary has two parts: Part I contains some basic information about the Protocol, and Part II offers some of this pastor's opinions about the Protocol.

PART I: Information about the Protocol

The Protocol is a nine-page document that outlines a plan that aims to resolve the conflict in The United Methodist Church by separating the groups now in conflict. The document includes these sections: "Statement of Principles," "Article I: Agreement and Commitment to This Protocol," "Article II: Definitions of Terms," "Article III: Process and Timeline for Implementation of the Protocol," "Article IV: Financial Agreement Terms of This Protocol," "Article V: Moratorium," "Article VI: General Conference 2020," and "Article VII: The Signatories to the Protocol." (You may read the Protocol at ntcumc.org/signed_umc_mediation_protocol_statement_-2020.pdf.)

The Protocol is the material product of a formal process of mediation that spread out over several meetings. The series of meetings was initiated by Bishop John K. Yambasu of the Sierra Leone Episcopal Area. The meetings had Bp. Yambasu and 15 other United Methodists at the table. This group of 16 had 2 representatives from each of the three main parties -- the Progressives, the Centrists, and the Traditionalists -- in The United Methodist Church. In addition, 8 were bishops. Not counted among the 16, the mediator was Mr. Kenneth Feinberg, a nationally known attorney who served in the mediation of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund and the BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster Victim Compensation Fund. During the mediation process, each of the 16 around the table could "veto" what was under consideration. That gave each person at the table substantial, equal power.

The Protocol will be presented, via several petitions (or legislative bills) that are now being written, to the 2020 General Conference in May. These petitions, if approved by General Conference, would implement the Protocol in The United Methodist Church. The Council of Bishops and the Commission on the General Conference will agree to the time when, on the the General Conference agenda (probably early), the Protocol and its petitions will be considered by the General Conference delegates.

If approved by General Conference, the Protocol petitions would establish a post-separation version of "The United Methodist Church" -- which will include its present name, agencies, boards, and other institutions. The Council of Bishops would then call the first General Conference of the post-separation United Methodist Church to organize and possibly repeal the Traditional Plan legislation and its LGBTQ-related portions, which now appear in The Book of Discipline. Generally, these actions would mean that the post-separation United Methodist Church would allow for choice on matters related to human sexuality.

According to the Protocol, starting January 1, 2020 until the conclusion of the first General Conference of the post-separation United Methodist Church, all administrative and judicial complaints involving the practice of homosexuality would be stayed or "held in abeyance."

Responding to the Protocol, Central Conferences (collections of Annual Conferences outside the United States), Annual Conferences, and Local Churches could vote to leave The United Methodist Church with their property and assets, and join a new Methodist denomination. Presumably, the new Methodist denomination would arise from the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA), which has not hidden its recent denominational planning. Before December 31, 2021, Central Conferences must reach a 2/3 majority to join a new Methodist church. Before July 1, 2021, Annual Conferences must vote at least 57% to affiliate with a new Methodist denomination. And before December 31, 2024, Local Churches' members must vote by a simple majority (1/2) or by a supermajority (2/3), to become part of a new Methodist "expression." (The Local Church's Church Council determines whether the majority or the supermajority will apply.)

The United Methodist Church now has around \$120,000,000 in unrestricted, liquid assets. The Protocol would give \$25,000,000 to the denomination that many Traditionalists might form, \$2,000,000 to a third denomination (probably for Progressives), and \$39,000,000 to those parts of the church that have experienced the most racial discrimination (namely, ethnic ministries and Africa University). The remaining \$54,000,000 stays with the post-separation United Methodist Church.

All in all, the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace through Separation allows The United Methodist Church to be liberal-progressive in its teaching and discipline, and invites the Traditionalists (and perhaps the most determined Progressives) to leave (with property and purse) and form their own denomination(s).

Again, please remember that the Protocol is but one plan for The United Methodist Church that will, one way or another, be considered by the 2020 General Conference this May. There are other plans that will be before the General Conference -- the Indianapolis Plan, New Expressions Worldwide, Next Generation UMC, and U.S. Regional Conference. The Protocol is especially notable because the 16 who participated in its formulation are very prominent United Methodists; fully half are bishops, leading bishops, in the church.

PART II: This Pastor's Opinions on the Protocol

1. **Think about the full title:** Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace through Separation. How is "reconciliation" achieved through "separation?" Reconciliation has to do with people coming together, not separating. Seems Orwellian.
2. **What a rollout** of the Protocol on January 3! The "mainstream media" -- New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and so on -- put it out there. The denomination also -- including the United Methodist News Service and the Council of Bishops -- pushed it out. The renewal ministries -- Good News, The Confessing Movement, UM Action/Institute on Religion and Democracy, and Wesleyan Covenant Association -- joined in the action. The stories were all quite positive. The journalists involved quoted few, if any, critics of the Protocol. Masterful.
3. **For decades, the largest renewal ministries have provided a thoughtful critique** of official denominational programs and statements. In the case of the Protocol, these ministries supported what the so-called establishment was offering. Seemed strange.
4. **The 16 United Methodists who signed the Protocol have vowed** to support it, not to amend it, and not to oppose it. Free-speech limitations always make this pastor a bit uneasy.
5. It can be reasonably argued (but not believed by all) that **bishops created the current denominational predicament.** Now bishops are playing an outsized role in leading the church out of the wilderness. Does that make sense?
6. **Both the bishops of the church and the Wesleyan Covenant Association have a self-interest** in seeing the Protocol adopted. The bishops because their involvement in the Protocol might help United Methodists to forget that the bishops' unwillingness to uphold doctrine and discipline is what created chaos in the denomination. The WCA because it wants to see the plans it has hammered out actually start a new denomination.
7. **The picture of 16 United Methodists** at a conference table, with a very skilled and powerful mediator, negotiating how to divide The United Methodist Church just does not seem right. When, in the history of the Church, have church leaders negotiated a fair-and-just schism?
8. Seems that, when all is said and done, this is the bottom line comment on the Protocol: **United Methodists would rather separate (or split) the church than thoughtfully discipline** disordered elements within the church. So very unfortunate.

In Christ, Pastor Paul

MEMORIAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP
Mr. Billy Hackney Deans
Whiteville United Methodist Church
February 1/Saturday/11:00 a.m.

PARISH NURSING

Mark your calendar for the next Blood Drive scheduled for Thursday, February 13, 1:30 until 6:00 p.m. in the Whiteville United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. Please note that the time frame for the Blood Drive has changed at the request of the American Red Cross Wilmington Unit. We are extremely fortunate that Peggy Huffman will head up the event again in 2020!

Two separate Lunch and Learn programs are planned for February. The first one, *Stop the Bleeding*, is planned for Monday, February 3, 11:00 until 12:00 p.m. Participants will learn and practice a new approach that laypersons can utilize as a first-aid measure until medical assistance can be obtained. Mary Ann Turner, Registered Nurse and Educator, is the lead presenter. The second program, *Advance Directives*, takes place after Sunshine Circle meets on Monday, February 17, at 11:30 a.m. The presenter will be Rev. Jeremy Simmons, Columbus Regional Health Care Chaplain. Both events are open to the public and include lunch at no cost to participants.

The church recently received a Shidu Voice Amplifier as a gift. It will be kept in the Church Office for anyone to use to enhance programs and/or presentations at church. The device can be checked out from Kathy. The kit includes easy to read directions. Feel free to use it often!

Fifty-Plus Exercise Class continues on Monday and Thursday, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., in the Parlor.

Patricia Ray, Parish Nurse

You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
– I Corinthians 12:27 (NIV)

GENEROUS GIFT TO UNITED METHODIST DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

My friend and fellow attorney, Sam Carlisle from Pinehurst, is a certified Mediator. During the Christmas season, he used to send small gifts (peanuts, cookies, etc.) to the attorneys throughout the state that he works with in his role as a Mediator. Several years ago, instead of small gifts to attorneys, he began making a monetary gift to a charitable cause in a county in which he had worked. This year he chose Columbus County, and he contacted me for input as to a worthy cause. In consultation with Kevin Bullard, I suggested the UMC Disaster Response and Recovery Program. When I explained the program and our church's assistance with it, Sam was enthusiastically in favor. The letter he sent to all of the attorneys throughout the state says it all:

December 18, 2019

Dear Friend,

I hope you are well. This year I'm continuing my practice of making a charitable donation in lieu of a token seasonal gift or card to you and others who help me and my assistant Pam Anderson.

For the thirteenth consecutive year, I'm contributing to a charitable cause in a different county. In the past I've contributed to Edgecombe, Nash, Wilson, Cumberland, Wake, Moore, Pitt, Lenoir, Beaufort, Bertie, Pasquotank and Wayne Counties. This year's \$3,500 contribution will go to Columbus County, another eastern county that has suffered major flooding twice in recent years.

Regrettably many of the areas' residents are still in recovery mode. FEMA money is now finally being released for Hurricane Matthew, which struck coastal and inland southeastern North Carolina in October of 2016. And Florence was still to come in the fall of 2018.

Inland Southeastern North Carolina contains some of the state's poorest counties, making the destruction all the more devastating and long-lasting. Cathy and I have friends who lived in the small, picturesque town of Fair Bluff. Their family business, a general store that was a major retail center of the community, was completely destroyed. It will not reopen because so many people have left the area and are not returning.

This year's gift is going to the Whiteville United Methodist Church Disaster Response and Recovery Program. The county's Disaster Response "headquarters" is in an office in the church. The church uses its youth house, with bedrooms and kitchen facilities, to house volunteers that have come from all over the country to help victims. I'm sincere when I say these folks are still in recovery mode. They housed a volunteer group from UNC-CH over the recent Thanksgiving holiday.

And there is also direct aid for victims in need and assistance with paperwork for insurance and other aid.

As usual, my gift is made to thank the lawyers, their staffs, court personnel and others who've helped me in the selected county. I hope I'm around long enough to eventually make contributions in all of the counties where I work, including yours.

My gift is also made to send you, your staff and family BEST WISHES FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON! Sam Carlisle, Attorney at Law

Sam certainly did not make this gift for the purpose of publicity. Nevertheless, with my encouragement, I received his blessing to share the news of it with our church. We are grateful to Sam for his generosity and to all the staff and volunteers who work with the Disaster Response and Recovery Program to help those in our county still in need from the damages suffered in the hurricanes.

– Carlton Williamson

METHODIST WOMEN

We would like to thank Vickie Sasser for coming to our meeting in January to speak about her work with UMCOR and Disaster Relief. It was a very interesting and informative program! For our February meeting, Marsha Stallworth has the program on Call to Prayer and Self Denial. Marsha and Debbie Conway have the refreshments, and Debbie has the devotion. We will continue to plan for our Soup and Sandwich Fundraiser in February. Look for more information about soups offered and signing up for orders in this newsletter. District Mission Studies are scheduled for February 22nd at Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington. The three studies being offered this year are: Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship, What About our Money? A Faith Response, and Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission.

As always, we welcome any Methodist women to come and have fellowship with us! Our theme for 2020 is: LOVE – Jesus summons us to love the poor, the immigrant, the prisoner, the homeless, the lonely and the lost with willing and grace-filled hearts.

– Debbie Conway- Vice President

NURTURE COMMITTEE

Our committee put up the Chrismon tree in the sanctuary (with the help of some wonderful angels!) and took it down in January. We have some activities coming up in February (decorating for the Valentine's dinner) and March (planning for the Lenten lunches following the Lenten services). It will be a busy time for our church. We hope that everyone can participate in those activities – our church has so many opportunities for spiritual enrichment!

– Debbie Conway, Chair

FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry was given canned goods and food items from Whiteville High School National Honor Society and Central Middle School Fellowship of Christian Students in December 2019. We also were given many food items from Mishop Springs United Methodist Church.

We purchased turkey breasts and hams in December to give on both Wednesdays before Christmas.

Thank you to the WUMC Wednesday Morning Bible Study class for making beautiful cross ornaments to include in our bags of food.

-- Beth Bullard



Whiteville United
Methodist Church
902 Pinckney Street
Whiteville, NC 28472

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 38
WHITEVILLE, NC

Mrs. Kathy Graham, Administrative Assistant
Monday-Thursday/8:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Layton Dowless, Custodian
Monday-Friday/7:30-11:30 a.m.

Ms. Tammie Anderson, Treasurer
Friday/4:00-6:00 p.m. (or later)

Rev. Paul T. Stallworth, Pastor

Whiteville United Methodist Church
email: wumc@whitevilleumc.org
mail: 902 Pinckney Street/Whiteville, NC 28472
telephone: (910) 642-3376
website: www.whitevilleumc.org

Our Service of Worship is broadcast on WTXY 1540 AM and 103.9 FM from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. Also it is available online at www.Kool1039radio.com. Click on the “Web Audio Player” applet. To listen to the entire service, go to: <https://lynx.prostreaming.net:2199/start/unitedmethodist/> and click on the Web Audio Player applet. For either choice, you may need to enable Adobe Flash. There is now a link to the radio station on our church webpage www.whitevilleumc.org. Click on “Stream Live Service Sundays at 10:00 a.m.”

Mission Statement of Whiteville United Methodist Church

As people of the body of Christ, we will gather for and be strengthened by Word and Sacraments, participate in loving fellowship, grow in discipleship, and serve our community and the world in Christ’s name.