

Town Hall #1 – September 18, 2022

Questions and Answers

The Jeremiah Task Force along with Rev. Dr. Temple is providing answers to the questions submitted during the September 18, 2022 Town Hall. We have also attempted to answer those that were specifically addressed to our guests. We will attempt to answer any unanswered questions in the coming days.

Please note that comments which were submitted provide context for questions. Comments are in italics and generally precede the questions.

General

- 1) What are defensible reasons to leave UMC? Defensible here means fact based. Those deciding to disaffiliate from the UMC have generally made that choice on the basis of several factors dealing with matters of accountability, the actions of some bishops and conference boards of ministry, biblical and church authority, church structure, and the inability of the UMC at present to be responsive to their concerns due to the continued postponement of the General Conference.
- 2) How can we feel it is fair for a “majority” of 35% determine the fate & direction of the church? According to the UMC Book of Discipline paragraph 2553, the decision of disaffiliation from the UMC is made by a 2/3 majority vote of a called Church Conference, chaired by the district superintendent, where all professing (full) members of the church who are present may vote. If called, the Church Conference at Christ Church will occur October 12, 2022. Why requiring a 2/3 majority is difficult to answer unless one was involved in writing paragraph 2553. It is important to note that the proposal for allowing disaffiliation originally called for a simple majority, but that was changed at the 2019 General Conference to require a 2/3rds vote, presumably to avoid a close 50/50 split within a church, and to avoid a situation where a smaller group of church members could gain passage of some provision that is not the will of the larger body. Others disagreed which is what eventually led to an agreement to require 57% under the Protocol for separation. That protocol, however, has never been considered due to the postponement of the 2020 conference. Also of note is that all votes in the UMC are simple majority unless a different percentage is specifically stated in the Book of Discipline, as it is in paragraph 2553. The Task Force however cannot really address what is “fair”.
- 3) If the vote goes through to Oct. 13, what about those representing CC at the prison & Walk to Emmaus etc. When can they vote? (Answered by Jim Rose, Lay Leader, during the Town Hall.) “We’ve gone through this with previous meetings, and that is once they’re set, they’re set, and in this case the District Superintendent picks the date. His calendar is pretty jammed. So, whatever time he has for the meeting that we need to have, he sets. No matter when it is, it's

going to conflict with someone. So, that's unfortunate; that's just the way it is, and the other part of it is that the only time you can vote in the Methodist Church is when you're present. There is no provision for voting by proxy. So, all present members can vote at a Church Conference, and as we learned, they cannot vote at Church Councils. Only Council members can vote at Church Councils; only committee members can vote at any committee that they might be attending."

- 4) Why in the world would we have such an important vote on a busy Thursday afternoon/evening when so many will not make it? (Prison Ministry, etc not to mention people who work and may travel. It's crazy.) *Tonight, the pews are filled with more people than have graced the church in years! The vote should be on a Sunday afternoon. Regardless of this choice! See the answer to #3. (Answered by Jim Rose, Lay Leader, during the Town Hall.)* "We'll forward that to the District Superintendent."

PLEASE NOTE: UPDATED 09/22/2022: As announced on September 22, due to a cancellation in the district charge conference schedules that just occurred, we have been able to make an adjustment in dates with the district superintendent and if a vote of the whole membership on the affiliation question is authorized, it will be held on Wednesday, October 12, at 7 p.m. A Sunday might indeed be preferable but we are only one of 264 congregations who may hold such a vote and not everyone can be at the same time.

- 5) Are these issues worth splitting over? (Answered by Jim Rose, Lay Leader, during the Town Hall.) "We hope not, but at the general church level it's somewhat discouraging to me that all of the solutions to our problems all envision some kind of split. The Bishop used that word tonight, that it's splitting. So, we can't just stick our heads in the sand and say it's not going to split. Something's going to happen because nobody's thinking in any other way that I've found in looking. It's the, that's the easy way out. We have a disagreement; let's split. You know, we argue at dinner every night; let's get a divorce, whatever. But this...is it worth splitting over...let's pray about that." In addition, it is regrettable whenever Christians divide, but so too is the prospect of continuing to divert enormous energies and monies into a long-standing disagreement that has paralyzed our denomination for decades. Divisions are found not just in the Bible (Abraham and Lot, Paul and Barnabas) but throughout church history, including Methodism which has divided numerous times since the 1740s. God has, however, often used such divisions to actually multiply the impact of the church and we are hopeful such will be the case at present. Again, "let's pray about that".
- 6) *Many hateful & hurtful comments have been posted on Facebook. For example, "you can't negotiate with evil" where the UMC is clearly being characterized as evil. We have survived many painful episodes in the past, but none have been so hateful. How can we heal from yet another episode of disunity?* **Answered by Bill Stoltz at Monday's Coffee and Dessert: "The question of how we can heal appears to be a challenge that each member of Christ Church must**

answer for themselves.” Additionally, the current situation would probably be helped if all of our members were to exercise a fast from Facebook and other social media platforms, or at the very least, hold themselves accountable to how they conduct themselves while on such platforms.

- 7) What is the plan to make our membership feel like they belong, even if they do not agree with a church-wide vote decision? How do we heal this church, yet again? Please see the answer to item #6 above . Additionally, the pastors fervently hope that we will be able to move Christ Church forward together irrespective of any decision which might be made regarding affiliation. There is nothing in any proposal that will change our programs, ministries, missions, or love for one another, and we will do our best to continue to emphasize that Christ Church is a place for all.
- 8) *Within the UMC, and the last 39 yrs of Christ Church, there are and will continue to be people who disagree on church doctrine or scripture interpretations. Now, all of a sudden, we have these labels – Traditionalist, Centrist or Progressives. We have never had any outcry from our congregation of dissatisfaction with UMC until recently. Why all of a sudden do we have these efforts to divide us into camps? There has been no effort to divide the congregation into any camps. Events within the larger denomination, however, have raised the question of how to live together under a shared discipline when others have chosen to willfully violate it. The Commission On a Way Forward, which came out of the 2016 General Conference, used the terms Traditionalists, Contextualists/Centrist, and Progressives to describe the beliefs represented in the denomination.*
- 9) According to the chart provided is it true that the UMC will not allow practicing homosexuals to be appointed?
Yes. That is the current position of the UMC according to the Book of Discipline, although some annual conferences have ordained them and their Jurisdictional College of Bishops have refused to act. It will remain this way unless it is changed by a UMC General Conference in the future.
- 10) Does GMC & WCA support Christian nationalism & only Christian governmental policies? **No, neither does the UMC support socialism and communism. The current debate has nothing to do with cultural politics.**
- 11) Once the GMC & WCA get rid of the LGBTQs what is the next group you have targeted? **This is not a question, but an assertion, and it is a false one. Those in the LGBTQ community will continue to be welcomed into the GMC congregations as they presently are within the UMC.**
- 12) How can I invite my gay friends who want to learn about Christ to a church where they will not feel accepted or comfortable because of their sexual orientation? *This feels counter to Christ’s desire to bring others to Him.* (Answered by Rev. Dr. Gregory during the Town Hall.) **“So for me, you love them thoroughly, and you invite and you welcome and you know that you are inviting them to Christ Church where they will be loved and they will be welcomed, just like we invite people all the time. I don’t believe the church is full of perfect**

people, right? We all have things that we need to work on in different places, that we need to have shaped and changed in our lives, and so I believe that we all come together and it's in that coming together that God does a mighty work. And, that's really between God and the individual. I believe Christ Church is probably a very loving environment that you could bring anybody to." Additionally, nothing will change at Christ Church in this respect from what is the current stated position within the UMC. If you are comfortable inviting gay friends to our congregation now, you should likewise feel the same in the future, whether Christ Church stays in the UMC or changes to the GMC.

- 13) Why can't we delay all voting until the nature of GMC is clear? It is difficult to know what is meant here by waiting until the nature of the GMC is clear. The issue of current procedures and dates that place limits on voting on disaffiliation can be addressed. Key issues are (1) A church's desire and appropriate vote to disaffiliate from the UMC must be approved by its Annual Conference (the Texas Annual Conference (TAC) in the case of Christ Church) for it to be effective. (2) The provisions of Paragraph 2553 of the Book of Discipline allowing a church to disaffiliate from the UMC while retaining its physical property and assets expires December 31, 2023. With respect to item #1, there are currently only 2 opportunities for Christ Church to gain approval from the TAC to disaffiliate (should that be the members desire) prior to this 12/31/2023 expiration date. One is at a December 3, 2022 called session of the TAC to receive and act on such requests. The second will be at the 2023 regular session of the TAC, which will be held late May, 2023. There are additional events occurring in 2023 (appointment of a new bishop for the TAC, retirement of Christ Church's lead pastor, to name two) that won't necessarily have a direct impact on this process, but add an element of the unknown. With these considerations, the task force laid out a schedule for discernment, education and voting that allows satisfying all requirements by the end of 2022. As stated here, this schedule can be delayed.
- 14) What is the expectation of the vote United vs Global for Methodist worldwide? The task force has not seen any speculation as to the worldwide outcome.
- 15) If disaffiliation window is through 2023. If Christ Church stays with UMC now can it change it's mind later before May 2023? Theoretically - Yes. But as a practical matter it becomes very difficult. Not only would there have to be another discernment process, the annual conference under the leadership of a new bishop may choose to set new guidelines and requirements. Please see response to item #13 above.

Polity/Discipline/Organization

- 1) What will replace UM Army & UMCOR in the GMC? (Answered by Jim Rose, Lay Leader, during the Town Hall.) "Well, I can't speak to that, but it's nothing will

change. I guess I can speak to that. We have been told as a group (J29 Task Force), that these are entities/programs that are open to all denominations. So, it is our intention to continue to do all of those.”

- 2) If so many pastors want to stay in the UMC, where will we get pastors to replace retirees in the coming year, if we move to GMC? It is believed that there will be a more than adequate supply of clergy within the GMC.
- 3) Why is the General Conference to be held in 2024 being referred to as the postponed 2020 General Conference? This is a matter of some controversy within the wider church. By referring to the 2024 meeting as a “postponed 2020 General Conference”, the existing clergy and lay delegates elected in 2019 will be allowed to serve rather than require new elections as would be normative. It has also prevented any consideration of what the usual reallocation of delegates as per conference size, which would favor Africa over America in 2024 otherwise. Please note, the rate of membership growth in “conservative” Africa in recent years combined with the 5% declines in the “Bible Belt” South Central and South East Jurisdictions will continue to widen the gap between them versus the double-digit rates of decline in the more liberal North East, North Central, and Western Jurisdictions. Presumably, by using the 2020 mix that existed for determining delegates to the 2020 GC the 2024 GC will be more liberal than if the membership is based on the projected 2024 mix.
- 4) If a “YES” for disaffiliation, what will be the anticipated timing for transition to GMC structure, assets & personnel (following a formal approval by the annual conference)? If Christ Church votes in October 2022 to disaffiliate from the UMC and that is approved by the TAC, disaffiliation would be effective on December 31, 2022. If Christ Church subsequently votes to affiliate with the GMC, it is anticipated that all requirements to do so will be able to be met with the transition to affiliate with the GMC becoming effective January 1, 2023.
- 5) If a “NO” vote decision on 9/25, or a “NO Disaffiliation” vote on October 12, what basic fundamental & structural changes will or may occur & what is the timing/window? In this case, Christ Church will remain in the UMC and no fundamental changes will occur. There could be changes in personnel, but such changes would be based on the desires of the individual pastor or staff member.
- 6) How can you be sure the Book of Discipline won’t be changed? The Book of Discipline is always subject to change but changes can only be made by the General Conference when they meet every four years. The task force does not know what changes may or may not be made in future years.
- 7) Methodists outside the U.S. Which aligns the closest UMC/GMC? In general, Methodists in Western Europe are more closely aligned with progressive delegates in the U.S. Those from Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Philippines lean more conservative, though some will not be coming immediately into the GMC until after the 2024 General Conference.
- 8) *Currently Bishop stated Doctrine is moving Progressive. Rev. Whitaker stated Doctrine will not change in the UMC. Who is telling the truth? If by doctrine one*

means the theological tenets of the church, those are extremely unlikely to be changed within the UMC, though at present they are being ignored by leaders and clergy across the denomination. Questions regarding our social practices, church organization, role of bishops, etc., are open for change every four years at a General Conference. The current makeup of delegates to the General Conference would seem to favor a more progressive stance in the future. (It is assumed they are both expressing their opinion based on their respective viewpoints and experience.) The task force cannot be the judge of truthfulness.

- 9) How can you rationalize continuing support for a church leadership that doesn't respect or enforce our book of discipline? **There is no rational reason for not abiding by the Book of Discipline that one has sworn to uphold.**
- 10) How is the UMC going to make those bishops who have already violated their oaths to now make them accountable? Where is their accountability be? (Answered by Rev. Dr. Whitaker during the Town Hall.) "I think that is part of what our Bishop, Scott Jones, was saying. Bishops are Bishops, and I think one of the points of the GMC that I think is probably a good thing is the term limits on Bishops, and I think that is something that has already been talked about in the United Methodist Church. I think that is something that may be presented to a General Conference in the future. Right now I would say the answer to it is that no one but other Bishops can enforce the rules."
- 11) If the number of bishops, conferences and clergy violating their vows is so small (as Keith W. indicated) then why aren't they being held to account according to the Book of Discipline? **The number of clergy who have actually committed chargeable offenses against the Discipline is indeed fairly small. But at least a quarter of the annual conferences, as well as the entire Western Jurisdiction, have gone on record to suggest that they do not feel bound by the Discipline right now. In such instances, it is difficult to hold anyone accountable, as the ones who would be called upon to do so (the bishops responsible for enforcing adherence to the Book of Discipline) have not faithfully executed their duties and actually agree with those who have broken church law. *If the incarnation is not affirmed completely in 100% of clergy & Bishops, what is off-limits? Perhaps nothing.***
- 12) Why can't we as UMC continue on? ***Do not amend book of discipline – those that have broke discipline be held accountable & move on to Progressive church as they are such a "small percentage" (less than 1%). The task force does not feel we can offer a definitive response but can only say that we have reviewed the longstanding disagreement on issues for which no compromise has been reached. However, the percentage cited is far from correct (see Question 12). But the bottom line is that those advocating for a more progressive understanding have repeatedly indicated that they are not going to simply "move on," but intend to stay and fight for what they believe is just.***
- 13) Even though it may have been "a small fraction of 1%" that violated the Disciplines, what was done about it? ***I have heard that "nothing was/is done". We believe you are correct.***

- 14) *I realize that every church that is added to the GMC brings revenue, property & resources to the denomination, but what about smaller churches who depend on financial help from the Texas Annual Conference? How can we say that our apportionments will be much lower in the GMC when we don't know the conference budget will be? It is anticipated at present that the Texas Annual Conference budget will be reduced by perhaps 20-30%. The GMC is being designed, however, to operate with a greatly reduced overhead and bureaucracy, allowing for a cap on the amount of apportionments that is roughly one half of the current amount in the UMC.*
- 15) *How many African UMC bishops are there? Rev. Whitaker made reference that only 3 African bishops are leading towards leaving UMC. With over 40 percent of the church's whole membership, Africa now has 13 United Methodist bishops (as opposed to 46 active bishops in the U.S.) The 2016 General Conference approved a plan to increase the number of African bishops by five but it has not been implemented. The bishops in Africa tend to favor supporting the institutional church more than the clergy and laity do, so it is difficult to know what the real lay of the land is. But, in general, across the denomination, it is believed that the church in Africa is generally far more traditional than in the U.S.*
- 16) *When did we change the name of our church to "Christ Church" w/ no UMC? We have never formally changed the official name of our congregation. The church has been known to many within our community, however, as simply "Christ Church" for much of its life. The decision to incorporate that practice into our logo and marketing was thus made with the approval of the congregation seven or eight years ago. But we have remained "A United Methodist Community" as all of our logos clearly state.*
- 17) *Several years ago, the name of this Church was changed from Christ United Methodist Church Sugar Land to Christ Church Sugar Land, a United Methodist Community. In recent months the presentation of the United Methodist Church Cross & Flame was discontinued on some Church materials. Vows and Rituals of new members today were made to Christ Church, not The United Methodist church as we all did when we joined this congregation.*
- A) *Has the United Methodist Discipline changed?*
 - B) *Should new members continue to be welcomed by, and make a covenant to be faithful to The United Methodist Church?*
 - C) *Should these changes and others be considered "rebranding" or "grooming"?*
 - D) *Isn't the result of these actions to (gently) wash away the memory of the United Methodist Church?*

See the answer to question 16 above. There has been no effort to discontinue the use of the Cross and the Flame and the membership vows have not changed. While we did rebrand with our new church logo adopted by the Church Council several years ago, the inference of "grooming" is inaccurate and unduly inflammatory.

Theology – (Many of the Theology questions are directed to our guest presenters.)

Statement:

- 1) *I would like examples of how the UMC questions Jesus as both human and God, the truth of the resurrection and the virgin birth. I don't see brood evidence of this. Bishop Karen Oliveto has publicly stated that Jesus was mistaken and prejudiced and needed to repent. While pastor at Glide Memorial in San Francisco (since left the UMC) the cross was removed from the sanctuary because it "offended" some. Professors at many of the official UM seminaries do not affirm the physical resurrection of Jesus but consider it to be a metaphorical one. Universalism, or the idea that everyone is saved in the end, is widely promoted as well.*

Financial/Physical Matters:

- 1) What happens to this physical church if we go Global? *Our physical property remains with our congregation, and will continue to be used as it is presently. There will however, be a name and denominational logo change.*
- 2) When we voted to go into discernment, we were to find out the cost. What is the cost to change to GMC? *The cost of disaffiliation is the payment of both last year's apportionments and this year's apportionments in full, plus our portion of the conference's unfunded pension liability. While the bulk of our apportionments has already been paid for those two years, a certain amount for the general church was escrowed (roughly \$70,000 per year) and it has been held while the issues were being reviewed. It is available at any time and should the congregation elect to change its affiliation, it will be released to the conference to complete the apportionment payment. Should the church decide to stay in the UMC, it can likewise be released to the conference. Because of favorable actions taken by the conference in May and the change in interest rates, our pension liability is currently \$0.*
- 3) No matter which way the disaffiliation vote goes, it is likely that those of us on the "losing" side of the vote will transfer our letters to a church that more closely reflects our opinions. I fear this will cause further financial hardship to the remaining church. I understand about 300 families account for 2/3 of our budget. True? How can the remaining church survive? *Members of the task force can't answer the question regarding distribution of giving amongst Christ Church members. The concern expressed about a potential decrease in giving as members react to the outcome of a vote is understood and shared.*

- 4) How is it considered ethical by the GMC to withhold apportionments as our church has done for the last 3 yrs but it is required by the GMC to meet all financial contributions or face involuntary disaffiliation? See the answer to item #2 & #3 above. There is a distinction between withholding and escrowing funds; the intention all along has been to distribute the funds following the resolution of the pertinent questions. This decision was thoroughly discussed by the finance committee three years ago, has been approved by the congregation every year where it is plainly listed in the budget, and was done with the full knowledge of the bishop and superintendent. Nothing unethical has been done in the least. It is also incorrect to suggest that if a congregation cannot pay its apportionments (a different situation than escrowing them out of conscience sake) that the GMC will involuntarily disaffiliate that church. The GMC has already offered the waiver of all apportionments for the first two years of its membership for any congregation facing financial difficulties.
- 5) How is it honest and ethical if churches like ours who have not paid their full apportionments for 3 years, leave the UMC with our property and not pay a dime to the denomination that helped us build our church and supported it for the last 39 years? How can we be ok with that? See the answer to item #2, #3, & #4 above. Again, should Christ Church determine to change its affiliation, escrowed funds will be released and we will have paid our apportionments in full as per the requirement. Additionally, Christ Church will pay any pension liability due the conference should there be any due following the October 1, 2022 recalculation by the conference. That amount is currently \$0. Christ Church has actually contributed more to the conference and denomination through its apportionments and extremely generous second-mile giving than it has received from the UMC over the years.
- 6) Why is it so important that church property be in each church's name? (Answered by Jim Rose, Lay Leader, during the Town Hall.) "Actually, it's in the church's name now. The only difference is the United Methodist Church has basically a lien on it. We're holding it in trust for them. So, if we wanted to sell it, we'd have to have their permission. We own it. We paid for it. As someone said, " We paid for it; we own it. We manage it. The trustees do a fantastic job of keeping it cool in the summer and warm in the winter and dry when it doesn't rain. The reason they have the Trust Clause in there is if a church does run into problems and has to close, then that's where the money goes." Pastor Michelle added, "The Trust Clause has been around since about 1767, and the intent of it has been to ensure that the properties are used for the United Methodist Church. That it's used for the Church." Indeed, trust clauses go back to John Wesley, our founder, who wanted to make sure that the properties he had acquired as meeting places for Methodist societies would remain places where established Methodist doctrines were taught, and where Methodist leaders would never be shut out. Accordingly, Wesley asked several lawyers to craft deeds for Methodist preaching houses. "The Model Deed" was thus

begun in 1796 when it was approved by the General Conference for American Methodists. Our Book of Discipline continues to require that the following appear in all UMC property deeds:

"In trust, that said premises shall be used, kept, and maintained as a place of divine worship of the United Methodist ministry and members of The United Methodist Church; subject to the Discipline, usage, and ministerial appointments of said Church as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Conference and by the annual conference within whose bounds the said premises are situated. This provision is solely for the benefit of the grantee, and the grantor reserves no right or interest in said premises." (§ 2503.1)

- 7) *Christ Church already owns our property. We manage & maintain the property w/ our own resources.* Yes, moving to the GMC would remove the Trust Clause, but isn't it true that 3 Texas cases have ruled Trust Clauses in this context are not enforceable & its sole purpose is to protect the property in the event a local church goes under? *The Trust Clause in Texas is indeed in question following at least three cases where it has been found unenforceable, including a small UM congregation in North Texas, control of SMU by the jurisdiction, and the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.* While the protection of property in the event of a church's demise is included, such is not the principle reason why the Trust Clause was invented.

The following questions were directed to our guests. While a few were answered during the Town Hall, others were not. We will attempt to answer the remainder in the coming days.

- 1) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker:** What are some of the ministries in the UMC that you are most proud of?
- 2) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker:** *Much of what we have heard about UMC has been spoken in a spirit of fear about its future.*
 - A) Keith what can you say to reassure us about the theology of the UMC?
 - B) Do you see it changing in our Book of Discipline? **See the answer to #6 under Polity/Discipline/Organization/**
- 3) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker:** *You mentioned a few times the UMC's speed to become more Progressive should not worry us. Reading between the lines, isn't that the equivalent of saying the destination of Progressiveness is not healthy, but it'll be slow and thus ok?*
- 4) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker:** Is there likelihood that the pro-LGBTQ ordination/marriage proposals will pass in the upcoming UMC General Conference? Has the proposal gained more support in the last decade/last few conferences? **(Answered by Bryan Tullos, General Conference delegate and Christ Church member, and Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker during the Town Hall.)** **Rev. Whitaker, "It has not changed much over the past few General Conferences."** **Bryan Tullos, " Over the last 15 years, there's the difference between those voting in favor of that and those voting against it has narrowed, the gap has narrowed. And, it's right, the last vote that was taken, 3 or 4%, or well I guess 7%, something like that difference. So, the trend is in the direction for that to gain approval. Whether it will happen or not is anybody's guess. So, it's an open question. You just can't predict. It's kind of like trying to predict who's going to win the presidential election."**
- 5) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker:** *"A small percentage of clergy have broken the rules of our Discipline".* Can we assume the Discipline will be amended in the UMC to embrace same sex marriage in all of its affiliated churches? **Please see the response to item #4 above, as well as the answer to #6 under Polity/Discipline/Organization/**
- 6) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker:** Will Jesus' miracles still be recognized? **Rev. Whitaker stated that the basic doctrine of the UMC is not changing.**

- 7) **Rev. Dr. Leah Hidde-Gregory:** Why leave before a proposal has passed? Why not as a reaction against a disagreed topic and not pre-emptively? **See the answer to #12 under General.**
- 8) **Rev. Dr. Leah Hidde-Gregory:** If the GMC will not ordain LGBTQ or allow same sex marriages, will they allow LBGTQ couples to teach children Sunday school or volunteer in youth groups? **(Answered by Rev. Dr. Gregory during the Town Hall.) "Just like in the United Methodist Church, that will be up to the decision of the local pastor as well as the nominations or leadership committee in the local church, at the local church level".**
- 9) **Rev. Dr. Leah Hidde-Gregory:**
A. If an ordained minister is found to be LGBTQ, will they be removed? **As in the current UMC, a distinction is drawn between orientation and behavior with respect to homosexuality. There is no prohibition in either church against individuals who may struggle with same-sex attraction. Those who act upon it, however, are not eligible to serve as a clergy, either the UMC or GMC at present. That provision has not been enforced in some parts of the American UM church, but it will be in the GMC, though with compassion and pastoral care as well.**
B. How will new churches be funded?
- 10) **Rev. Dr. Leah Hidde-Gregory:** *I thought the GMC reflected the more conservative views consistent with Africans & other nationalities. The proclamation by a group of African bishops that they want nothing to do with the GMC because of the way they maligned the UMC was surprising. Does the GMC believe they still have enough support to survive as a new denomination?*
- 11) **Rev. Dr. L. Hidde-Gregory and GMC:** Is the GMC also going to exclude women pastors or divorcees, formerly incarcerated, or those who may cheat a bit on taxes or who speed on freeways? **Women and others already have an important role to play in the life of the GMC and that will not change. Eventually if you get too Traditional and go back far enough Dr. Leah will need to give back her doctorate and her ordination. This is a statement and requires no response.**
- 12) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker and Rev. Dr. Leah Hidde-Gregory:** It is possible in your opinion to separate amicably? Answer please, UMC & GMC
- 13) **Rev. Dr. Keith Whitaker and Rev. Dr. Leah Hidde-Gregory:** What mechanism will be put in place to prevent the possibility of repeating the present issue of no power to discipline? Answer please, UMC & GMC