



# S.C. DELEGATION

## 2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

# Table Conversations Feedback

Jan. 5 Listening Session (Indian Field UMC)

*(Charleston/Orangeburg/Walterboro districts)*

### **Question 1: What are your hopes for the UMC?**

- The global church of today is guided by scripture and the adopted 2019 (sic) Book of Discipline!
- Reclaim mission by living from foundation of Three Simple Rules.
- The church will continue to follow traditional beliefs and scripture.
- Discover true unity with open hearts and minds by keeping the spirit of Jesus and God's word for now and future generations!
- UMC individuals to treat all with respect and dignity while adhering to scripture.
- That the UMC will honor scripture, continue to make disciples for the transformation of the world, and continue our work of compassion and grace while we continue to become more united in Christ.
- Remain faithful to scripture and our Book of Discipline while we continue to stay united in our global missions.
- Don't spend all of our energy on differences – find common agreement.
- Accountability, balance, connection and being flexible to embrace 21st century methods and always keeping God at the center.
- Remain united, but remain friends, no matter what.
- Live as people of the whole Bible, focused on the mission to the lost by loving like Jesus.
- We are to get the "problem" addressed.
- We want more decisive leadership.

- We must be guided by the word (i.e. scripture).
- That we would become a truly united church with clear communication that starts at the top.
- Keep Discipline the same.
- Follow through on UMC motto of Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.
- Maintain a larger connected church living in differences in the same church.
- Desire for harmony/unity in a vast contrast of opinion in future UMC.
- Future UMC and all fresh expressions of Methodism are known for faithful ministry and making disciples.
- We agree to disagree and finalize the decision.
- Move to a resolution to move away from public stigma and division.
- We want to derive hope by leaning into God's word and his work in the world.
- We desire to be a growing, loving church that is vibrant with vim and vigor.
- Even though we may not think alike, we can all love alike – unconditional love.
- Followers of the word of God with grace, compassion and understanding.
- Focus on being disciples and making disciples.
- Remain united by focusing on God's purpose, plan and will for our lives as intentional disciples recognizing our heritage of hospitality by refocusing on the definition of Christianity and spirituality, while acknowledging diversity, liberation and acceptance, allowing spiritual issues to guide us with social issues.
- We want the United Methodist Church to stay united under our missional focus.

### **Question 2: What are your main concerns?**

- Vote on the identity of the UMC as first order of business at GC.
- Singular vote of each member of UMC counts and is recorded.
- Process is driven by man, not Christ, compromising truth.
- Division and unhealthy change hurting the mission of the church.
- Passion over-riding empathy, distorting the image/example of the church.
- Failure to welcome is becoming a norm in church culture.

- Resolution is necessary.
- Interpretation and adhering to the UMC Discipline.
- Will mission work suffer?
- Equity in division of assets if there is a split, with local churches retaining property – don't mess with my church!
- Accountability of bishops, clergy and laity.
- What does it mean to be a faithful disciple, a faithful member of the UMC?
- With an acknowledgment that change is upon us, how do we move forward? How do we lessen the schism of last summer? What will that look like?
- Finances/loss of membership/reaching new generations.
- Funding for what has depended on UMC.
- Survival/thrival (sic) of the local church in new expressions of the UMC.
- What will the UMC look like in the future?
- Are we going to allow the world to change our church?
- Reduce the disconnect between large church congregation focus of general agencies and the reality of small congregations at the local level.
- Resolve conflict to find unity.
- Make disciples.
- Missional work of the church.
- Loss of focus on missions – funding and effort.
- Faithfulness to scripture and tradition.
- Concern about the details of the schism.
- Decrease/failure to attract younger church members, decreased attendance.
- Upper-level management positions result in fiscal inefficiency.
- Maintenance of overall global missions if there is division.
- Apportionment/financial concerns.
- Homosexuality issues.

- Membership/attendance decline and leadership indecisiveness.
- Inequitable split of assets
- Adhere to traditional doctrine.
- Clarity of long-term mission of UMC.
- So polarized we can't talk (trust issues).
- Restructuring impact on small-membership churches.
- Trust clause and release? Properties should remain with church.
- Political correctness (culture war in the church, marriage definition, etc.) should not interfere with witness/mission.
- Balance between episcopal leadership and discipline/accountability, covenant and trust.
- Expanding Safe Sanctuaries to include all safety concerns (active shooters, etc.)
- Plan to move forward once a decision is made at the General Conference to help us to move forward.
- With the decision, let the church not forget the vulnerable population (i.e. return to the central jurisdiction concept that happened in the 1960s, women still have a voice within the denomination).
- Our churches are too mono-cultural and insular.
- Aging congregations and how to engage younger adults.
- How do we get beyond our differences to communicate?
- Splitting church property (if we will be able to retain church properties)?
- What will be the plans for appointing clergy?
- What happens to the existing programs that are now in place?
- Please pray before you vote on this decision!
- To have a secret ballot for every member of the congregation to vote on the direction of the church.
- Lack of transparency leads to lack of respect and trust.
- If we split, we will lose members.
- Focus on inclusivity. We need to practice what we believe. Focus on the revitalization, sustainability and growth of the church.

### **Question 3: What do you want S.C. delegates attending the 2020 General Conference to know?**

- Vote a conscience of biblical truth not self. Matthew 5:13, John 15:18-21: Know these in your heart before voting for those you represent.
- Maintain UMC because of its power to transform and make disciples.
- Transparency in how y'all vote.
- Vote on biblical teaching and not on political correctness.
- If we quit teaching the Bible, people will go elsewhere.
- Do no harm.
- Not making a decision is not an option.
- Consider the effects on both elders and local pastors.
- Each and every delegate treat the other delegates with respect.
- If a split must be, we will work to preserve the dignity of all parties and each church be allowed to retain its property.
- We can live with and show respect for others we disagree with.
- Our Christian faith is not determined by the UMC. Praying God's will shall be done! We are praying for you.
- We want the delegates to be aware of what the congregations they represent think, to make informed decisions.
- We want closure to the issues dividing the UMC.
- Delegates are in our prayers and we pray that God's will be done – "Do not lead my little ones astray." Thank you!
- We appreciate your commitment and sacrificial service.
- We are praying for you to know God's spirit to set your will aside and let God's will prevail.
- Understand the deep gravity of your decisions and rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- We have full faith and trust in our delegates to come to some resolution and clarity at GC2020 that we can articulate the future of the Methodist movement.

- We love God and our church, and we would like for the delegates to prayerfully discern the issues as to what is best in maintaining our unity. We support our delegates.
- Do not be afraid to make a decision.
- Come back with a plan to move forward.
- The people (clergy and laity) are ready for a decision and a plan to move. We are tired of the indecisiveness.
- Sensitivity to the impact of decisions at the local church level, and consider conversations from different regions of the state.
- Most of all, God is with us.
- Let God lead.
- Treat everything with care, prayer and consideration because it affects real people.
- Our behavior matters more than our vote, and your conference loves you.
- Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit in making decisions.
- Understanding and empathy for the beliefs and opinions of the members of all congregations.
- Will delegates report and explain their decisions?
- Seek prayerfully God's discernment in their decision-making.
- Final resolution on human sexuality.
- Non-resolution could lead to decline in membership.
- Hear and be aware of the responses from this listening session.
- We appreciate the work the delegates are doing on our behalf and trust their wisdom is for the good of the church.
- We want the delegates to vote what God has shown them. What would Jesus do?
- Be fair, be in God's service, be God-centered when you vote.
- Please don't prolong your decisions.
- Remember that this is God's church! And God's children.