



TWO FUTURE METHODIST DENOMINATIONS COMPARED

By Rev. Chris Ritter*

| | Post-Separation United Methodist Church | Global Methodist Church |
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| General Conference, AC, District Structures? | Yes. Annual conference and district boundaries likely will be adjusted in many locations following the separation. | Yes. Annual conference and district boundaries will be new in many places. General Conference will meet every two years while the church is organizing and every six years afterward. |
| Boards and Agencies? | Yes. Annual conference and district boundaries likely will be adjusted in many locations following the separation. | New, leaner structure with a single connectional operations officer overseeing. |
| Name? | The United Methodist Church | The Global Methodist Church |
| Trust Clause on Local Church Properties | Local church property held in trust for the annual conference. | Local church property owned by the local church. |
| Global in Nature? | Likely yes (U.S., Western Europe, parts of Philippines, and maybe Africa) | Likely yes (U.S., Eastern Europe, parts of Philippines, and Africa). Some former UMC conferences in Latin America and Asia have indicated an interest in joining, too. |
| Openly Non-celibate homosexual or Transgender Bishops and Clergy? | Yes | No |
| Clergy Performing Same-Sex Weddings? | Yes, if they so choose. | No |
| Female Clergy at All Levels of Leadership? | Yes | Yes |
| Clergy Deployment | Ordained clergy guaranteed an appointment by the bishop, and the local church guaranteed a pastor of the bishop's choosing – with consultation. | Collaborative appointment system where church lay leaders have a bigger voice in the appointment. No guaranteed appointments for clergy. Bishop must sign off on the selection made. Minority candidates must be considered. |

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| <p>Ordination</p> | <p>Elders and Deacons are separate orders. Commissioning is a step toward ordination in both orders. Many/most clergy are non-ordained, licensed local pastors with limited sacramental authority. Deacons do not have full sacramental authority.</p> | <p>Note: This is a work in progress. In an effort to restore the connection between ordination and the sacraments, there may be a return to the pre-1992 understanding that elders are first ordained as deacons. Local pastors will first be ordained as deacons. When they have completed course of study, they may pursue elder's orders. There will be permanent deacons and deacons on their way to becoming elders. Deacons have sacramental authority.</p> |
| <p>Bishops</p> | <p>Yes. Bishops for life (in the U.S). Selected by Jurisdictional/Central Conferences and paid by General Church.</p> | <p>Yes. Term-limited. Called by the annual conference from a list of candidates approved at General Conference.</p> |
| <p>District Superintendents?</p> | <p>Yes. Appointed by the bishop.</p> | <p>Presiding Elders (the historic term for DS's) may also serve a local church. They will be selected by the bishop from a nominated slate elected at a district conference. District size will be smaller.</p> |
| <p>Clergy Appointment Length?</p> | <p>One year at a time.</p> | <p>Open-ended. The bishop's consent is required to declare a pulpit open.</p> |
| <p>Clergy Pensions?</p> | <p>Administered by Wespath</p> | <p>Administered by Wespath</p> |
| <p>Apportionments</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Yes, General Church apportionments will be about half of what is paid by a UMC congregation currently. Conference apportionments are up to each annual conference but encouraged to be lean.</p> |
| <p>Position on Abortion</p> | <p>Likely Nuanced Pro-Choice</p> | <p>"We believe that life is a holy gift of God whose beginnings and endings are set by God, and that it is the particular duty of believers to protect those who are powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn. We believe human life begins at conception and abortion ends a human life."</p> |
| <p>Theology</p> | <p>Pluralistic, flexible per "Our Theological Task," with articles and confession retained as historic markers.</p> | <p>Classic, per the Methodist Articles of Faith and EUB Confession of Faith, but updated into a single document in today's vernacular (this work is to be done by a blue-ribbon commission created at the first Convening Conference).</p> |