

# *Reimagining the Passion of a Global Wesleyan Movement*

*“I look upon all the world as my parish.”*

God calls us to embrace a new day as the people called Methodists. Established in the faith entrusted to us by our forbearers, we discern the Holy Spirit reviving the Methodist movement in a new work. We are committed to God’s vision given to our predecessors “to reform the continent(s) and spread scriptural holiness over the lands.” A group of bishops, clergy, and laity, men and women, African-American, Asian, Caribbean, Caucasian, and Hispanic persons from every U.S. jurisdiction, and three central conferences met to expand and clarify the vision for a future traditional expression of Methodism. In addition to bishops, laity and clergy from the Wesleyan Covenant Association, Good News, the Confessing Movement, the Institute of Religion and Democracy/UM Action, as well as other traditional voices not associated with the renewal groups were present.

In a spirit of cooperation with the *Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation*, we join the many conversations occurring as we move toward General Conference 2020. If the 2020 General Conference adopts the Protocol legislation, with one voice and a spirit of humility we intend to form a global Wesleyan movement committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, and the work of the Holy Spirit in conveying God’s truth, grace, renewal, and sanctification to all people who repent and believe.

We are committed to being a people who covenant together around time honored core doctrines, ethics, and mission. God has always been faithful to us, but we have not always been faithful to him. We desire to repent and return to him. We aspire to be a covenant community, watching over each other in love. We long to reclaim the Wesleyan genius of mutual accountability throughout our connection. We are committed to holding one another accountable to the high calling of our identity in Jesus Christ.

We will be a church that is truly global in nature, fully welcomes people of various ethnicities and women into every level of ordination and leadership, and is characterized by joy. We will be committed to the Christian faith as expressed for 2,000 years, the four-fold movement of grace, compassion, and a passionate desire for people to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We will inspire growth in discipleship, holiness, and a commitment to service, mercy, and seeking God’s justice.

Our unfolding vision includes:

## The Church’s Culture and Mission

- Being so in love with Jesus that we boldly share his love with all people because we can do nothing else
- Welcoming and embracing all who respond to God’s love into the Body of Christ
- Engaging people in lifelong, intentional formation as disciples
- Renewed by Spirit-filled worship that brings people into the presence of God

- Deeply committed to prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit
- Instilling holiness of heart and life that leads to a balanced Wesleyan character of *personal holiness* through the spiritual disciplines and *social holiness* through experiencing communion and accountability with one another in the Body of Christ
- Reaching out to the world at its points of deepest need through ministries of mercy and justice, especially involving the sins of racism, tribalism, economic injustice, the oppression of women, and addiction
- Developing Christ-following leaders, called by God for fostering vital local churches
- Connecting together vital and vibrant local congregations of every size for mutual support and shared ministry
- Equipping the local church in partnering with God to make disciples of Jesus Christ with a high value on evangelism, reaching youth and young adults, and developing global missional partnerships
- Passionate about planting new churches, revitalizing existing churches, and apostolic ministry
- Becoming a nimble and less bureaucratic institution, continuously led by the Holy Spirit
- More movement than institution
- Embodying our global nature in every aspect of doctrine, relationships, structure, and church culture
- Forging deeper unity with other Methodist and Christian expressions around the world
- Exuding joy, offering hope, and moving confidently into the future

#### Essential Doctrinal Beliefs

- The primacy of Scripture, leading to a biblical worldview
- Christology that boldly proclaims the deity of Christ and his salvific work as Lord and Savior
- All persons are of sacred worth, created in the image of God, unconditionally loved by God, and in need of redemption from sin through Christ
- The historic creeds (especially the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed) are reliable summaries of the Christian faith
- Molded by, proclaiming, and exhibiting the Wesleyan four-fold movement of grace: prevenient, convincing, justifying, and sanctifying
- The powerful work of the good and life-giving Holy Spirit in the lives of people and the ministry of the Church today
- The traditional understanding of Christian marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman as God's intended setting for human sexual expression
- The accountability of clergy and bishops to the doctrine, mission, and discipline of the Church
- Adherence to the Wesleyan doctrinal standards: Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, Standards Sermons, and Notes on the New Testament

#### Organization

- Global connectional polity
- A General Conference that cares for:

- Accountability to Doctrinal Standards, Social Witness, and shared life and order of the Church
- Coordinating global mission
- Standards for clergy qualifications, education, and credentialing
- Sharing resources and best practices
- The few general agencies that will be minimally staffed, focusing on facilitating ministry partnerships, coordinating mission, channeling resources globally, and resourcing local churches for vital ministry
- Relying upon local church, district, and annual conference partnerships across the globe, enabling two-way sharing of people, gifts, and resources, with a goal of sustaining existing commitments and expanding ministry
- Where appropriate, engaging services from agencies of the post-separation United Methodist Church to sustain ongoing mission
- An interim structure needs to be put in place to care for sustaining ongoing programs globally during the transition
- Providing ultimate accountability for bishops
- Determining the number and shape of regional structures
- Regional bodies that care for:
  - Applying, not adapting, the *Discipline* of the Church
  - Electing and deploying bishops
  - Providing the first step in episcopal accountability
  - Coordinating regional mission
  - Sharing resources and best practices
- Annual Conferences that care for:
  - Teaching, worship, and inspiration
  - Recruiting, developing, credentialing, and deploying lay and clergy leaders to equip the Church
  - Ensuring that those who are currently Licensed Local Pastors are equal partners in ministry, with a pathway to ordination as elders and with voice and vote on all clergy matters within their order
  - Resourcing local churches for effective mission
  - Sharing resources and best practices
  - Coordinating area mission
  - Providing for pensions and other benefits globally
- Local Congregations that care for:
  - Acting as the primary vehicle by which the mission of the Church is accomplished
  - Contextualizing organizational structure with minimal requirements
  - Fulfilling the expectation that every local church will have an intentional way of helping people grow as joyful and obedient disciples
- Superintendency characterized by:
  - Bishops elected for one 12-year term, rather than lifetime service
  - A global Council of Bishops consisting only of active bishops
  - Bishops elected, assigned, and accountable regionally, with clearly established means of global accountability

- Episcopal appointment of clergy that practices true open itinerancy with enhanced models of consultation with congregations and clergy, ensuring equity in pastoral appointments for women and persons of varying ethnicities

Our covenant with God and each other will be renewed as we claim, teach, and live into a life-affirming confession of faith rooted in Scripture and our doctrinal standards. We worship God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are sent to be disciples and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. And we are called to be the Body of Christ in the world, bearing witness to the transforming power of the Good News as we humbly, but boldly, strive to serve others in Christ's name.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, this new traditional Methodist denomination is dedicated to fulfilling this mission. May we be a people of integrity, living out what we believe as the Church. May God grant us the grace and wisdom to grow into this Church so conceived!

Signed,

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