

Planned traditionalist Methodist denomination gets name

by [Sam Hodges](#) in the [April 7, 2021](#) issue

Traditionalists committed to leaving the United Methodist Church have chosen “Global Methodist Church” as the name for the denomination they plan to launch.

“The primary mission of the Global Methodist Church will be to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly,” said Keith Boyette, chair of the transitional leadership council that is helping to guide the new denomination.

But the official start and legal organization of the Global Methodist Church may be more than a year and a half away.

Boyette and other leaders are counting on passage of the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation, a plan negotiated by centrist, progressive, and traditionalist United Methodist leaders to end the denomination’s long-standing conflict over how accepting to be of homosexuality.

The protocol would let traditionalist churches and even annual conferences vote to leave and form another denomination, with \$25 million to start.

However, the protocol requires approval by the General Conference, the UMC’s global lawmaking assembly. The 2020 General Conference was delayed for a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic and has been postponed again—until August 2022—because the public health emergency continues.

Boyette said that if, in the meantime, there’s erosion of support for the protocol among those who negotiated it, the Global Methodist Church will consider going ahead with an official launch.

For decades, the UMC has faced conflict over same-sex weddings and the ordination of what the UMC Book of Discipline refers to as “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy. Church law bans both practices, but there has been widespread defiance in churches and conferences in the United States and Western Europe.

Traditionalists have long maintained that the denomination's sexuality divide can't be overcome. The Wesleyan Covenant Association, led by Boyette, formed in 2016 and has been planning for a new denomination.

Boyette said the WCA will continue to exist even though the Global Methodist Church has a name, logo, and transitional leadership council.

"I've often described [the WCA] as a midwife to bring to birth a new denomination. We will continue to pursue that objective," Boyette said. "Our expectation is that once the Global Methodist Church is functioning and has its convening conference, the Wesleyan Covenant Association will have fulfilled its mission."

The name "Global Methodist Church" is in the spirit of Methodism founder John Wesley's statement, "The world is my parish," a press release said.

Other WCA members include Philippe Adjobi, a district superintendent in the Côte d'Ivoire Conference, and Andrei Kim, a district superintendent in the North West Russia and Belarus Conference.

"I believe the Global Methodist Church will fulfill the expectations and aspirations of local churches throughout Africa," Adjobi said in materials provided by the traditionalist group.

But some United Methodists in Africa are strongly opposed to a breakup of the UMC, and a variety of voices continue to weigh in about the denomination's future.

Boyette would not estimate how many churches will be a part of the Global Methodist Church at its launch.

The group has a Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline, available in English, French, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish, but various organizational and operational details remain to be worked out.

"True to our roots, we're a patient and methodical people," Boyette said.

Late last year a group of progressive United Methodists launched a new denomination called Liberation Methodist Connexion, or LMX. —United Methodist News Service