



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE NORTH CAROLINA STATE CONFERENCE

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The NC NAACP Stands in Full Support of LGBTQ Methodists and Launch a State-Wide Listening Tour to Increase Support for LGBTQ North Carolinians

The NC NAACP is standing in full support of LGBTQ members of the Methodist Church International and those hurt by the decision made this week to support the “Traditional Plan”. Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman, President of the Board stated, “We understand all too well how colonialism, racism, sexism, transphobia and homophobia all share the same insidious roots of oppression, exclusionism and white supremacy. That is why we stand now with the LGBTQ community.”

Bishop Tonyia Rawls, Inaugural Chair of the LGBTQ Committee of the Executive Board of the NAACP’s State Conference notes, “We are committed to equal protection under the law for all residents of our state and look to the margins to find ways to help ensure no one is left behind. The LGBTQ community has been marginalized and effectively used as political and social wedges by those who seek to steal elections and inflict further harm on the already oppressed. We say enough. Not on our watch.”

The Traditional Plan adopted this week by the United Methodist Church is summarized as follows:

The Traditional Plan would retain the current stance of the Discipline regarding same-sex marriage and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. It will impact LGBTQ people and supportive clergy in the following ways:

- Encouraging annual conferences, bishops, clergy, and congregations unwilling to live within the requirements of the Discipline to withdraw from The United Methodist Church and form their own self-governing Methodist church.
- Providing that annual conferences not enforcing the Discipline could no longer use the United Methodist name or logo and could not give or receive funds through the general church.
- Providing a new accountability process for bishops, whereby the Council of Bishops could place a bishop on involuntary leave or involuntary retirement.
- Expanding the definition of “self-avowed practicing homosexual” to include persons living in a same-sex marriage, union, or partnership.

- Requiring that bishops nominate as members of the conference board of ordained ministry only persons willing to uphold and enforce the Discipline.
- Providing a mandatory minimum penalty for clergy found guilty of performing a same-sex wedding.
- Prohibiting bishops from dismissing a complaint unless it has no basis in law or fact.
- Reforming the “just resolution” process to include the required participation of the complainant.
- Allowing the church to appeal any egregious errors of church law from a trial process.

The way for annual conferences, bishops, clergy, and Traditional Plan also instituted instructions for how to remove non-compliant segments of the church. The United Methodist Church, by a simple majority (or in some cases a 55 percent majority) vote will keep all property, buildings, assets, and liabilities, in exchange only for covering unfunded pension liabilities of non-compliant persons or entities.

We stand strong with our LGBTQ community and their families. The harm caused by the decision stretched far beyond the Methodist Church. It is impacting children and parents, educators and others who are called to care for those often on the margins.

In response to this action, we will be engaging in a statewide listening tour to explore ways of offering more support to the LGBTQ community and those who love and affirm their rights and protections. The tour will be followed by a report of the findings and strategies will be established for ways to protect the rights of all trans, gay, lesbian and bisexual people. “Our faith and moral traditions demand that we love our neighbors as we do ourselves”, says Reverend Spearman. He went on to state, “That is what we have always done as an organization, and we will continue to do so in this matter.”

The NC NAACP stands in solidarity and prayer with the LGBTQ community and specifically those impacted by the United Methodist Church decision. We are committed to working to ensure equal protections for LGBTQ people in the State of North Carolina.

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Founded in 1939, the NC NAACP is part of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its branches throughout North Carolina are premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and discrimination. www.naacpnc.org