

## **Traditional Plan** (7/19/2018 Summary)

The Traditional Plan would affirm current language in the Book of Discipline, which bans “self-avowed and practicing” gay clergy and the blessing of same-sex unions. It would also enforce those bans swiftly and strictly.

The plan’s legislative petitions also provide a way for churches and annual conferences that disagree with strict enforcement to set up self-governing or “autonomous, affiliated or concordant” churches or conferences.

According to the Way Forward report, a “Traditional Model” was prepared by a few members of the Council of Bishops and was not the work of commission.

Support for this plan on both the commission and council was “modest enough” that earlier work on the model was discontinued, then resumed in May at the request of the Council of Bishops that a traditional plan be developed, the report said.

Other provisions include:

- Broadening the definition of “self-avowed practicing homosexual” to include anyone living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or who publicly states that he or she is a homosexual.
- Setting minimum penalties and quicker expulsion after conviction of violations.
- Requiring bishops and annual conferences to certify that they would uphold, enforce and maintain Disciplinary standards on LGBTQ marriage and ordination. Bishops who could not do so would not be eligible for compensation for expenses after 2021 and would be urged to join the self-governing churches.
- Preventing bishops from consecrating, ordaining or commissioning a “self-avowed homosexual” even if that person had been elected or approved by the relevant jurisdictional conference or clergy session. That petition does not include the term “practicing” as part of the ban.
- Reviewing the status of bishops who could not certify they would uphold the Discipline through a newly created Council of Bishops’ Council Relations Committee for possible action.
- Handling complaints against bishops under new provisions set out [in a constitutional amendment that was ratified in May](#) and aimed at requiring the Council of Bishops to hold its members accountable.

- Setting a strict timeline for new provisions for handling complaints and making dismissal of complaints more difficult.
- Allowing local churches that disagree with a conference decision not to enforce the Discipline to remain with The United Methodist Church.
- Allowing local churches in a conference that plans to enforce the bans to join the “autonomous, affiliated, or concordant” church if they disagree with their conference. Groups of 50 or more churches could form new denominations.
- Encouraging clergy who could not maintain the ban on LGBTQ marriage and ordination to leave the denomination and join the affiliated churches.
- Requiring any just resolution of a complaint to contain a commitment not to repeat the offense.
- Requiring every annual conference to certify that they would maintain the bans and conferences that did not “would be encouraged” to form self-governing bodies.
- Continuing the current general agencies that could negotiate their services with churches and conferences that leave the denomination.
- Requiring the conference Board of Ordained Ministry to conduct an examination to ascertain whether a candidate was a practicing homosexual, including looking at information on social media.

The Traditional Plan recognizes that “because of the current deep conflict over The United Methodist Church’s position on marriage and sexuality,” a church or conference may want to form a self-governing church,” the Way Forward report said. The plan sets out a timeline for conferences to vote on that issue and detailed procedures for how funds will be handled, including pensions.

The implementation timeline would have the Traditional Plan in place by Jan. 1, 2021.