

Hillary Clinton Has a Church Problem

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The 2016 presidential race, like all presidential races, has raised questions and controversies regarding the religious faiths of the candidates. Donald Trump's beliefs have been questioned, as were Ted Cruz's. And trying to pin down Bernie Sanders' views on God is very difficult. But that said, recent developments just occurred with the United Methodist Church that should focus the spotlight on Hillary Clinton's religious thinking. They constitute two crucial moves that stand in direct opposition to Clinton's longtime militancy for "abortion rights" and her growing radicalism for the "LGBTQ" political agenda, including her recent full-fledged support of same-sex marriage after years of insisting that marriage is between one man and woman in accordance with tradition and Scripture.

Every four years the United Methodist Church general assembly meets, where ongoing doctrine is determined by democratic vote among those assembled. A battleground at these conferences erupts between the American liberals who for decades have tugged the church leftward and the more orthodox/conservative African delegation looking to keep the church committed to its historic beliefs. Two conferences ago, the liberals deliberately held critical votes on the hot-button moral-social matters before the Africans got there. Traditional Methodists since have worked with the Africans to ensure they are never again circumvented.

Thus, the 2016 conference has been much anticipated, with everyone waiting to see if the United Methodist Church would change the church's long-held beliefs on natural, biblical marriage and what it would do on abortion. As to the latter,

the United Methodist Church lurched left some time ago, joining the scandalous Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), a group of left-wing religious believers convinced that Jesus Christ would honor their affirmation of a sacred “right to choose.” This group is a great embarrassment to Christianity by Christians—though not to a Christian named Hillary Clinton. As someone who wrote an entire book on the faith of Hillary Clinton, I can attest that one of the reasons she is “so comfortable” (her words) in the United Methodist Church has been the church’s abortion liberalism.

But alas, that has suddenly changed.

There was major news at the United Methodist Church’s gathering at the conference this year in Portland. The liberals did not succeed in shutting out the huge contingent of Africans from their rightful representation. The denomination’s growth has occurred in Africa, where it is exploding, contrary to America. One source told me that “overseas delegates” made up 41 percent of the delegates this year, and that the crucial victories would have been “impossible without them.” One such victory came when the assembly voted overwhelmingly (and surprisingly) to withdraw from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. The conference also rejected a resolution titled “Responsible Parenthood,” which would have once again further advanced “abortion rights” in the name of John Wesley.

This was a big deal. The headline in the pro-life flagship publication, , reported it this way, “United Methodist Church Quits Pro-Abortion Coalition After Years of Promoting Abortion.”

But that wasn’t all the United Methodist Church did. By a much narrower margin, but a majority nonetheless, the church did not repudiate its historic position on marriage, despite angry protests by “LGBTQ” Methodist activists. The slim majority thereby affirmed the United Methodist Church’s official *Book*

of Discipline, which states explicitly: "We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment and shared fidelity between a man and a woman." The *Book of Discipline* also states: "The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church."

To be sure, what the assembly actually did was far from a perfect solution or a triumph of orthodoxy, as it agreed to defer the sexual-marriage matters until after a committee studies the subject. Nonetheless, as noted by Mark Tooley, a veteran observer of these Methodist battles, "what had initially seemed potentially bad" instead turned out to be "mostly on the whole, good." For traditionalists, the action taken in Portland might allow the church to hang on until the next blow-up in four years in Minneapolis. By then, the American church will likely have shed still more members and the international element will be even stronger, increasing the chances of natural, biblical marriage being affirmed rather than undermined by nature-Bible redefiners.

And so, here is this big issue as related to the 2016 presidential race: All of this relates intimately to Hillary Clinton, the presumptive Democratic nominee who proudly calls herself a committed "old-fashioned Methodist." Will Hillary now follow the lead of her church and soften her fanatical position on abortion? Will she back off her push to redefine marriage? How does a self-described "old-fashioned Methodist" (as she calls herself) merrily take the liberty of redefining marriage and advocating unlimited "abortion rights?"

She will not change one bit. Not a chance.

Nonetheless, what happened at the United Methodist Church conference is very important and cannot be ignored. It now

places Hillary Clinton's cultural radicalism in direct and rising defiance of her own church and its teachings. Just like that, there is suddenly controversy between Mrs. Clinton and her church. {eoa}

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