

What the United Methodist Split Over Homosexuality Says About Our Culture

According to The Washington Post, “United Methodist Church is expected to split over gay marriage, fracturing the nation’s third-largest denomination.”

Religion reporter Julie Zauzmer writes: “Leaders of the church said they had agreed to spin off a ‘traditionalist Methodist’ [read Biblically conservative] denomination, which would continue to oppose same-sex marriage and to refuse ordination to LGBT clergy, while allowing the remaining portion of the United Methodist Church to [keep the money, and] permit same-sex marriage and LGBT clergy for the first time in its history.” (I have added my own commentary in brackets.)

Later, Zauzmer writes, “The writers of the plan called the division ‘the best means to resolve our differences, allowing each part of the Church to remain true to its theological understanding, while recognizing the dignity, equality, integrity, and respect of every person.’”

In Leviticus 18:22 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Scripture condemns homosexual intercourse and marriage as immoral and abominable. And according to 1 John 3, all men are created in the image of God, but only those who know Christ are children of God.

Still, according to the *Washington Post*, “the split is ‘a resolution that’s going to free the Methodist church to share love unconditionally with all people,’ said Andrew Ponder Williams, a married gay candidate for the clergy.

“... ‘There are efforts in the protocol to stop condemnation of LGBTQ people, which of course is good. There are no signs

pointing toward a church [or Scripture] that affirms us and repents of the significant harm that has been done to LGBTQIA people for decades because of its complicity in spiritual violence against us,' said the Rev. M Barclay, who was ordained in 2017 as the United Methodist Church's first transgender deacon." (Brackets denote my commentary.)

Deeming herself neither male nor female, Reverend Barclay self-identifies as being the plural third-person "they." (In the ludicrously odd world of preferred pronouns, "they" is considered singular and "gender neutral.")

The validity of Barclay's charge that traditionalists need to "affirm us" and must repent for "the significant harm that has been done to LGBTQIA people for decades" will have to be weighed against Scripture and will also allow a preliminary assessment of Barclay's working knowledge of the Bible.

The Apostle John declares that "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

In his book *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, A.W. Pink clarifies: "To worship spiritually is the opposite of mere external rites, which pertained to the flesh; instead, it is to give to God the homage of an enlightened mind and an affectionate heart. To worship Him truly is to worship Him according to the Truth, in a manner suited to the revelation He has made of Himself."

"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice," says Proverbs 21:3. As Jewish Hebrew scholar Michael V. Fox puts it: "The Lord ranks righteousness even above sacrifice." This clearly shows that ethics supersede and take precedence over ritual.

Proverbs 9:7-8 provides wise counsel: "He who reproves a scorner gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man gets hurt. Do not reprove a scorner, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you."

In this verse, “wicked” comes from a Hebrew phrase emphasizing a religious aspect, like a failed relationship with God.

Rendering psychological insight into “mockers” and those living in open rebellion against God, Dr. Bruce K. Waltke writes: “Wisdom admonishes the gullible, for they are still impressionable and even credulous, but a mocker is so full of himself and contemptuous of others that he will not humble himself under authority, not even under that of the Lord.”

There is no true wisdom without “fear of the Lord.”

Dr. Peter J. Leithart, in his book *A Son to Me*, has this to say about the Methodist breakup: “The fall of leaders in the church is not always a tragedy; it may well be a sign of God’s work to renew His people. The hardening that we see toward the word of God in some mainline churches [e.g., acceptance of sodomy and abortion] may be a cause for rejoicing; God may have closed their ears and hardened them as a prelude to overthrowing them.”

What is happening in America is spiritual, not political. Anti-God forces are attempting to impose their rules for public discourse, excluding Christendom from taking a public stand against sin, in complete disregard of the fact that a loving God in 4,000 years of Judeo-Christian religion, for the good of those created in His image, has condemned homosexuality, immorality, and licentiousness.

The Methodist implosion appears to be a carbon copy of the radical homosexual enforcement and proselytism dished out daily in public schools to America’s youth, all in order to graft virulent secular views, values, and politics onto the next generation.

Both should be strongly opposed by cultural conservatives.

We are close to arriving at a tipping point for returning to the Founders’ Biblically based model. It remains an open

question, however, whether American Christendom will return to Jesus' Kingdom assignment to reestablish the *ekklesia* in the marketplace as called for in Matthew 16:18b: "On this rock, I will build My church [*ekklesia*], and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

As Christians begin to return to America's public square in America, challenging and countering the powers of darkness at the gates of Hades, it will become obvious that Jesus' chosen means for conquering the gates is the *ekklesia*, rather than any housing for public worship, says Greg Simas in *Ekklesia Emerging*.

Sheltered or hidden out of view behind the walls of a building in the last 100 years, American Christendom has created a subculture. The result on the culture has been disastrous.

Had Jesus' *Ekklesia* been operating on all cylinders in the 20th century, it would have been hard to imagine that any of the following would have taken place: removal of prayer from public schools, removal of the Bible from public education, constitutional "right" to kill babies, removal of the Ten Commandments from public school buildings, and most recently, detecting a constitutional "right" for homosexual intercourse and marriage.

Even so, this is our *kairos*.

In his book *The Life of David*, Pink says:

"The high favorites of Heaven are sometimes to be located in queer and unexpected places. Joseph in prison, the descendants of Abraham laboring in the brick-kilns of Egypt, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonah in the great fish's belly, Paul clinging to a spar in the sea, forcibly illustrate this principle."

Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand. Just in time!