

Asbury Theological Seminary Removed by the UMC Just Years After the Historic Revival Captured the World's Attention

A century-old evangelical seminary says it is standing firm on biblical convictions after being removed from the United Methodist Church's list of approved schools for ordination candidates.

Asbury Theological Seminary announced Thursday that the University Senate of the United Methodist Church voted to delist the Kentucky institution from its approved schools of theology following disagreements over the denomination's revised 2024 Social Principles on human sexuality and marriage.

In a press release from the seminary, President Dr. David F. Watson said that Asbury respected the Senate's authority but maintained that the outcome "reflects a determination made by the UMC rather than a shared resolution."

Watson said the seminary fully participated in the review process, submitting all requested documents and remaining transparent about its doctrinal convictions even when those beliefs differed from the denomination's updated standards.



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"We engaged fully and faithfully in the process and honored every request from the Senate in a timely manner," Watson said. "We were forthcoming with the requested documents and

information. Throughout the process, we were honest and clear about our doctrinal and ethical standards, even when those differed from the recently amended Social Principles of the UMC.”

While expressing disappointment with the outcome, Watson noted that “their final decision to delist us was unilateral” and said the seminary’s mission remains unchanged.

At the heart of the disagreement, Watson pointed directly to the theological divide between the two institutions. He stated:

“The Senate’s requirements, particularly those related to the UMC’s 2024 Social Principles concerning ‘Human Sexuality’ and ‘Marriage,’ are not aligned with Asbury Theological Seminary’s institutional ethos and the historic witness of the Christian faith. We affirm marriage as sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union for life, as delineated in Scripture, and provides the sole context for sexual intimacy, helping to ensure the blessings of that relationship as God intended.”

Watson added that Asbury remains fully committed to the principles of Scripture.

According to the release, more than 4,000 living Asbury alumni affiliated with the United Methodist Church have served churches worldwide. Watson said the seminary remains grateful for its United Methodist students, alumni and faculty, and prays that God would continue to bless them.

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