

Despite UMC Vote, Methodist College 'Welcomes People of All Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities'

Despite the United Methodist Church voting to confirm its ban on gay clergy and same-sex marriage, a Methodist college in Birmingham issued a statement affirming the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

"The traditions of the church have had a profound impact on our school and have guided us to the institution we are today. As our mission statement says, BSC honors its Methodist heritage of informed inquiry and meaningful service," Birmingham-Southern College President Daniel Coleman says in a release.

The statement continues:

At the same time, we believe that an educational community thrives when its membership is diverse and when everyone in our community feels not just safe, but welcome. Birmingham-Southern College welcomes into its community of faculty, staff and students people of all beliefs, races, and ethnic backgrounds. In light of the recent events, I believe it is important to state as clearly and emphatically as possible that Birmingham-Southern welcomes people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. We welcome all people in all capacities.

Birmingham-Southern is here today to develop young people for lives of significance through teaching, scholarship and service. We create a community here to prepare young people to have a positive impact on the world around them when they leave. Our focus is to create graduates who follow these

words of John Wesley:

*“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”*

Nothing will change this focus.

BSC's announcement to go against the UMC vote and support same-sex marriage was met with approval on social media.

After years of schism rumors over same-sex marriage and gay clergy, the UMC voted on Tuesday to continue to stand on biblical marriage and scriptural values.

Called the Traditional Plan, the guidelines affirm the church's current bans on ordaining LGBTQ clergy and officiating at or hosting same-sex marriage. It also boosts penalties and accountability for transgressions of those bans.

According to UMC news site, when the Traditional Plan vote was announced and flashed on the screen, the room erupted with observers singing “Blessed Assurance.” Some delegates gathered in a circle and joined in with the singing.

In approving the Traditional Plan, the UMC rejected the Simple and One Church plans.

According to the UMC, the One Church Plan would have left questions of such weddings up to individual clergy and congregations—and questions of gay ordination up to individual conferences. Central conferences—church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines—would be able to determine their own policies. The Simple Plan would have eliminated any restrictions related to homosexuality.

"It is better to be divided by truth than united in error," said Rudolph Merab, the lead lay delegate from the Liberia Conference.