

Why disaffiliation? What have we lost? Where is God calling us?

1. A Different Gospel. Using Galatians 1 as a starting point, we have come to a point where the United Methodist Church promotes and defends a different Gospel. This has been true for several decades. The Gospel of Jesus has been adjusted and revised so that Jesus is no longer God's only begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, nor is He the risen Savior. The United Methodist Church still says that they love Jesus as a human being, as a model lover of people and as a great teacher but not the crucified Son of God raised to new life on Easter morning. We no longer can be a church trying to proclaim the true gospel in a church culture of a Jesus stripped of His Divinity and demoted by our new "gospels".

2. Authority of Scripture. Where once we were a church that lived and operated under Biblical authority, we now are a church much like the community found in the Old Testament book of Judges where what is right was determined by what is right in our own eyes. Much of the Bible must be discounted or at least rewritten to fit our opinions and interpretations. The confusion started by Satan twisting the truth of God in the minds of Adam and Eve over what God said continues. As authority of Scripture has eroded, so has every biblical doctrine given us by God like ...
 - a. Being "saved" isn't "One Way" but rather one of many ways!
 - b. Being the church of Jesus Christ is optional, not essential!
 - c. Being a man or a woman now has 100's of sexual expressions and definitions!
 - d. Being a Christian offers us many degrees of commitment!
 - e. Being??? We can no longer be a church that neglects Biblical truths and surrenders to philosophical or pagan ideologies!

3. A crisis of polity. The credentialing committee for clergy, known as the Board of ordained ministry, has become so progressive theologically, that our reality is "there are hardly any evangelical, conservative" pastors that are available to churches that want a pastor faithful to the scriptures and committed to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. There is an abundance of pastors who will preach Jesus as "love" but not as "Savior", who will question the Bible as final authority, who will teach confusion rather than moral clarity, who will down play eternal truths and lift up institutional agendas. The "Big Tent" approach to Christianity which includes a variety of approaches to spirituality such as Process theology, pantheism, paganism, New Age, historical political ideologies are how seminaries are training pastors, how Boards of Ordained Ministry are recruiting and processing new pastors and how Bishops and their cabinets operate. Even at the continuing education level pastors are not being trained in skills so essential for leading churches to be growing, missional, evangelistic and healthy.

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4. We have lost our unity. As one leader put it, “We have become so divided that we need to divide.” The divide is so significant that the only gift we have to give is “division”. Division about Biblical authority; Division about Jesus; Division about the work of the church; Division about what is sin; Division about what it means to equip the saints; Division about polity. People genuinely seeking for Jesus are not going to come to a church so that they can fight and be confused. We have been trying to work together since the early 70’s, but without success to find agreement and consensus. What we once had that held us close, we no longer have. Our Church Discipline with the Bible as final authority once guided us, drew lines between acceptable and unacceptable behavior and had in place a judicial process now being openly defied by Bishops, Cabinets and pastors. Currently, there are bishops appointing sexually active lesbian pastors which our Discipline prohibits. Disaffiliation is an attempt to bring unity back into play letting God decide where the fruit and blessing will happen.

5. We are praying and seeking recovery of what once was our strength, our Wesleyan heritage. We once were a people who followed Jesus Christ with Holy Spirit power. Just as John Wesley’s heart was strangely warmed by his surrender to Jesus, so were the Methodist followers. Just as the early church was blessed by believers being in small groups with accountability and fellowship, we desire to become. We once were a church which understood what it meant to be the priesthood of believers from which God called small group leaders and equipped laity to be teachers able to build disciples. Now, we function not as a priesthood of believers, but as pastor centered churches. Methodism once reached pioneer families, once shared the Gospel with unbelieving people, once were the people who knew Jesus so well that their lives were changed. This cannot happen so long as we are a church that spawns Biblical confusion, celebrates sexual diversity, questions Jesus’ resurrection and accepts cheap grace (forgiveness without confession, faith without commitment, discipleship without growing, repentance without transformation, worship without vulnerability, etc.) We are today what we have become gradually. It will take solid praying, extensive Bible study and Holy Spirit activity for us to position our church for recovery.

6. We now work in a church that makes us struggle with compliance. We are expected to pay apportionments, promote sexual transgenderism from the pulpit, and subscribe to modern and post-modern interpretations of Scripture. We want to return to a struggle to obey the commands of Jesus and to abide in His Word.

for your consideration and conversation, Pastor Bob Kenas, Retired