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My Reflection on the Council of Bishop's Work on A Way Forward

I want to share my thoughts and feelings about the recent Council of Bishops meeting that ended May 4 in Chicago. It was a rich time, a challenging time, a prayerful time, a frustrating time, a joyful time, and a time of deep reflection and discernment. In essence, it was our Church as it is today, in this time and place. I don't see it as a good place or a bad place, a right place or a wrong place. No, we are where we are; and together we work out our own salvation – and future – with deep respect and some trembling. Our Church is not of one mind or one heart; but we are guided by the same Spirit; and through the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, I believe we can have a strong, lasting future of transformation and grace.

I encourage you to read [the summary reports](#) on the Bishop's recommendations, and to continue to pray about them and the Church. Prayer is the one thing we all can do; and in prayer, we trust that God will enable us to make the very best decisions.

The Council of Bishops reflects the many perspectives on the authority of scripture, the theological foundations of faith, engagement with LGBTQ individuals and communities; but in the midst of the diverse worldviews, some strong commonalities emerged. As a Council, we decided to place our trust in God and God's Church – represented in our General Conference – to do the work that is needed, and to decide our best path forward.

By consensus, we recommend the One Church Plan because we feel this best honors our global and theological diversity, but keeps us closely aligned with our mission, purpose, and the four areas of focus of our denomination. We affirm and embrace the concept of a "convicted humility," whereby we honor the strength and depth of various convictions, but acknowledge with humble grace that our positions may be flawed or incomplete. We want to respect beliefs, opinions, and perspectives without reducing every disagreement to a simplistic level of right or wrong.

As Bishops, we believe our primary role is to shepherd the whole Church, and this means we cannot simply choose one segment or focus to the exclusion of others. We will lead from our core strengths, gifts, convictions, and beliefs, but with grace, allow for differences in interpretation and understanding.

To allow the whole worldwide United Methodist Church to fully comprehend and engage with the three plans (Traditional, One Church, Connectional Conference) in native languages, the full details and legislative proposals will be translated and released no later than July 8. This will allow Conference delegations adequate time to prepare for the special session of General Conference in February 2019 to be held in St. Louis.

We agree there is no perfect solution that will satisfy everyone, but that should not prevent us from a faithful witness to the power of God's Holy Spirit to bring us to a place of unity around mission and vision. There is great need in the world and great giftedness in our United Methodist Church. We step forward in faith, knowing that God is not finished with us. We have important, vital, transformative work to do, today and for years to come.

Continue to pray, sisters and brothers, that we might truly be made one in Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world!

Grace and Peace,

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

