

Legislation and Revelation

Learning by the Lake How Far We've Drifted

Ever floated in a boat without an anchor? Whether fishing or enjoying the rays, you can drift imperceptibly until you find yourself in the weeds. Yikes!

I'm no legislative wonk. Sometimes it is difficult for me to see how the petitions and resolutions of Annual Conference tie in with the Kingdom work of making disciples. But I would say at least this—the legislation debated sometimes reveals how far we've drifted. This year's Annual Conference especially bore this out.

One petition put forward was to move Annual Conference back to Grove City. I grew up on Lake Erie, so I knew we were in for some wonderful sunsets and cool breezes. My apologies to those driving from the Connellsville District, but I think the extra 90 minutes north is worth not staying in a musty dorm and using the communal bathrooms. Just sayin' . . .

Regardless, that legislation was ruled out of order partly on the grounds that Grove City College will not allow Critical Race Theory to be taught. Wow. I certainly knew some within our conference believed CRT to be the best way to understand racial tension, but I didn't know that it was considered so deeply foundational to who we are as a conference. Very revealing.

A petition was raised to send word to the GCFA that we don't like having "Nonbinary" as one of the categories for membership on the yearend reports. Presenters said they felt "forced" to declare a number for those who had so come out to the congregation, thus violating their conscience and the *Book of Discipline*.

When I first read this legislation, I wasn't fully on board. Given that we've been hoping for an amicable separation, I felt this was overstated and unnecessarily combative.

Nonetheless, the discussion was revealing. One ordained elder (biologically male) declared that they themselves are nonbinary, and they find it liberating to wear a dress on Sundays. *Uh, OK.* And our Conference Secretary, who has faithfully overseen reporting in our conference for at least 20 years, clarified why "nonbinary" is now an appropriate category, given our culture.

Second, both gender and race are fluid and artificial categories that people created to understand the world around them. When those categories are misused or become vehicles for discrimination then this topic becomes a justice issue and must be addressed by the church. (Italics mine.)

Does that raise any flags for you? Are both gender and race artificial categories? Were they created by people simply to help us make sense of the world around us? That's not a biblically informed perspective of reality. Even secular voices, like evolutionary

biologist Colin Wright, are calling this all into question. Blogging at Reality's Last Stand, he [has now devoted his career to addressing](#) this current craze of gender ideology.

Then the legislation that I certainly agreed with and actually [stood to the mic to address](#) was regarding the transgendered in sports. We voted on sending a message to Harrisburg, urging them to pass legislation to prohibit biological males from competing with females. This is certainly a matter of fairness. But in some sports, the actual safety of women is at risk.

Some of the comments in the debate were revealing, but I found the actual vote to be the most troubling. It passed, *but only with a 56% majority*. That, of course, doesn't automatically translate into 56% of all WPA United Methodists agreeing with transwomen competing with biological females. But it certainly was a signal that a large percentage of conference clergy and laity have drifted into transgender ideology.

Our culture has abandoned a biblical worldview. They've lost sight of the beauty and dignity of both male and female created in the image of God. Here in the States, our denomination is drifting into the weeds with them.

This fall many of us are weighing disaffiliation. Be certain of this—change is coming. Churches will leave. But what will be left behind in the continuing UMC? While evangelicals with a biblical view of race and gender are being welcomed to practice what they believe, the conference as a whole will be lurching further to the left.

Without question, the world's view of sexuality is seeping into your local church. Young people are inundated with this message. Perhaps as many as half of your own flock is sympathetic toward the trans ideology. But remaining in a denomination that has bought into this mindset makes it more difficult to teach our people biblically and minister to our communities wisely.

Our denomination has theologically drifted into an unbiblical anthropology. Out of misguided compassion, it has normalized distortion and brokenness. How much better to be part of a movement which speaks clearly to matters of sexuality, gender and race.

Drifting vessels need to motor out of the weeds and find their anchor. Our anchor is Jesus Christ. Who he is and how he has created us are revealed clearly in scripture.