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revolution 3-D: disclose(t), divest, disrupt

MIND
Methodists In New Directions
a Reconciling ministry in the New York Annual Conference

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LGBTQI Groups Condemn Composition of Commission that Excludes Queer Voices

Call on Bishops to Start Over, Call on Straight People to Resign, Make Room for LGBTQI People

Last week the United Methodist Church Council of Bishops announced the members of its Commission on the Way Forward, following a mandate from the church's General Conference in May to create a body to discuss the UMC's policies of discrimination against LGBTQI people. Of 32 members, only two are identified LGBTQI people – 6% – and both are white cisgender men. The commission is majority white.

As the Council of Bishops prepares to discuss the Commission as part of its biannual meeting currently being held in St. Simon's Island, Georgia, [Love Prevails](#) and [Methodists in New Directions](#) issued the following statement:

The Commission as appointed by the Council of Bishops represents a continuation of the systemic exclusion of LGBTQI United Methodists and perpetuates the fallacies that cisgender heterosexual persons are both unbiased and able to fully articulate the concerns of LGBTQI United Methodists. The only thing this Commission is representative of is the current dysfunction in the United Methodist Church. It embodies the discriminatory status quo and the continuing failure of our episcopal leaders to name the harm being done to LGBTQI United Methodists by our current policies and practices.

For 44 years LGBTQI people have been demonized and condemned by the church, discriminated against and categorically excluded, prosecuted and persecuted, legislated about and lectured to – but never once negotiated with. The formation of the Commission was an opportunity to finally rectify this fundamental injustice.

When the proposal for this Commission was presented to the General Conference in May, LGBTQI people did not stand in the way of its adoption, despite the failure of three previous similar church bodies to remedy our exclusion. In [numerous forums since then](#), we let our bishops know that the Commission needed to include a broad spectrum of LGBTQI United Methodists who constituted at least half the body. Then we let the Council-led process unfold.

It is now clear, however, that our leaders have failed us yet again and that our deep concerns remain ignored. This Commission continues the UMC's shameful history of treating LGBTQI people as a problem to be solved, rather than faithful partners in ministry.

The Commission has no legitimacy if it omits from the conversation those whose rights, whose safety, whose very lives are at stake.

Therefore, we call on the Council of Bishops to repent of its grievous error and change the composition of the Commission to include the full spectrum of LGBTQI people as well as the full spectrum of people of color in the United Methodist Church. To have validity, half of the members of the Commission must be LGBTQI-identified.

Additionally, we call on heterosexual cisgender members to resign their positions in order to make room for LGBTQI voices on the Commission, and especially LGBTQI people of color and women.