

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 1.2

Q: Since the General Conference is happening in 2024, is it possible we would get a better deal at disaffiliation after Paragraph 2553 expires at the end of this year? Why should we consider disaffiliation now?

A: The 2024 General Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC):

1. *Could* leave the Book of Discipline (BoD) unchanged with regard to the issues of same-sex marriage and ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals (“human sexuality issues”).
2. *Could* enact a new disaffiliation process to replace Paragraph 2553 — which will have expired on December 31, 2023 — *if* it changes the BoD provisions on human sexuality.
3. *Could* provide more favorable terms for disaffiliating churches *if* it enacted a new disaffiliation process in 2024.

Burnt Factory members should assess the risks associated with each of the three above statements in light of the following:

(1) It is more likely than not that the 2024 General Conference will adopt the human sexuality changes to the BoD;

(2) There are currently no legislative initiatives to enact a replacement for Paragraph 2553. Instead, at a recent meeting of the Council of Bishops, the Council President said that December 31, 2023 marked the end of disaffiliation and the beginning of a “period of jubilee”. Their express intent is to move past disaffiliation.

(3) One Annual Conference (North Georgia) stopped processing disaffiliations under Paragraph 2553, but was ultimately overruled by court order; and

(4) Four Annual Conferences amended the terms of Paragraph 2553 to require an additional disaffiliation payment equal to 50% of the property value of a disaffiliating church (note: this is *not* applicable to Virginia churches).

In answer to the question “why should Burnt Factory consider disaffiliation now”, the *only certainty* is that if Burnt Factory wants to disaffiliate, it may do so in 2023 under Paragraph 2553. If it does, it will acquire ownership of its property under affordable financial terms. Waiting introduces risk. Leaving the UMC after 2023 *could* mean leaving all BFUMC property behind and starting anew because the UMC owns all church property under the Trust Clause.