

 **Brainstorming Responses to Repentance and Transformation Resolution**

Discussion at the October Constituency Leadership Council (CLC) largely focused around the consideration of the Repentance and Transformation (R/T) resolution for the May Special Delegate Assembly. Since that meeting, MCUSA has asked area conferences what they are doing to resource their congregations in considering the R/T resolution.

 In response to MCUSA’s promptings, these “brainstorming” responses are offered as a resource for any IMC congregation that may send delegates to the May Special Assembly. The **Challenges to the** **Repentance and Transformation Resolution** come from some of the sentiments at the March and October CLC meetings. (A pdf of the October CLC table groups was emailed to IMC pastors on Dec.2.)

The **Affirmations In-Line with the Repentance and Transformation Resolution** are sentiments from the R/T resolution and other sources adapted to MCUSA. A link to the details of the May Special Delegate meeting is on the IMC website [www.illinoismennoite.com](http://www.illinoismennoite.com) .

**Challenges to the Repentance and Transformation Resolution**

Much effort across the denomination - in many area conferences - involves experimenting with mutual forbearance around the issue of same sex relationships/marriage. The R/T resolution has no hint of mutual forbearance around this issue. The resolution works at cross-purposes to these efforts towards forbearance across the denomination.

The R/T resolution ignores the spirit of the MCUSA F*orbearance* resolution and *Agreeing and Disagreeing* *in Love* statement. It also, arguably, is not in the spirit of the *Healing and Hope* vision statement.

The R/T resolution declares that those who do not affirm same sex marriage ”have caused great harm”. Many people certainly have caused great harm. But to identify this “great harm” as something caused by people’s sincere convictions (regardless of how they relate to their gay brothers and sisters) means there is no place in MCUSA for anyone who does not affirm gay marriage.

The R/T resolution commits MCUSA to eventually change Article 19 in the Confession of Faith. This commitment comes before any actual theological review of the statement on Christian marriage.

The R/T resolution begins with condemning the Membership Guidelines (MG). If the MG are no longer MCUSA polity, then MCUSA has moved on from there.

**Affirmations In-Line with the Repentance and Transformation Resolution**

MCUSA affirms that all people, regardless of how we experience our sexuality, are created in the image of God, are steadfastly loved by God, and are invited to join in the redeemed community of God and the Lamb.

Our disagreements in MCUSA are whether same sex relationships/marriage are faithful discipleship.

The view by many, that same sex marriage is not faithful discipleship, is no excuse for how some of us have treated our gay brothers and sisters.

We confess some of us have focused more on theology with little attention to how to relate to our gay brothers and sisters. We are deceived if we think that what we consider sound biblical exegesis is a substitute for demonstrating the love of Jesus.

We confess some of us have made a priority of preserving our “rightness”. We have not risked giving grace. Some of us have offered gay individuals and their families mostly rejection, shame, and conditional love.

We confess many in MCUSA have not treated gay individuals with kindness, compassion, and relational delight. Rather, we have cultivated a culture of isolation and fear. We have turned a blind eye to dehumanizing rhetoric.

We confess and repent from creating a heteronormative church culture that inevitably ostracizes Christians wrestling with their sexuality or gender identity.

We commit to respect and forbearance toward those with whom we disagree regarding the faithfulness of same sex marriage.

We acknowledge that the conversation about faith, sexuality, and gender is just that - a conversation, and a complex one that cannot be summed up in bullet point conclusions.

We commit to look for….to trust ….to explore how God is at work in the church, even amidst these difficult circumstances ,…redeeming and transforming the church through this difficult debate.