



Episcopal Discernment through a Social Justice Lens

Western Methodist Justice Movement hosted an online event to talk about what key questions might help consider the social justice perspective, gifts, and values of future episcopal leaders for the denomination. From that session, a set of questions were developed to aid those working on episcopal candidacy and discernment. These questions and concepts are available for anyone to use in the discernment process as they may find them useful.

1. Where do you see connections between colonization and racism in the life of the church? How will you pursue an anti-racist and decolonizing agenda at the different levels of our connection: local ministry, conference, jurisdiction, and denomination?
2. What is your experience doing social justice in and beyond the church? If you have been a District Superintendent or served in another conference leadership role, how did you incorporate social justice into this role?
3. How do you define anti-racism? What will you do as bishop that is intentionally and explicitly anti-racist, and that would move beyond quotas and tokenism?
4. Give examples of how in the past you've worked in multi-cultural spaces. Tell how working cross-culturally has impacted and changed you.
5. What is the church's role in affecting public policy? What are some ways the church does this effectively? If you see a national, state, or local policy that violates a key social justice value, how will you respond in your role as bishop?
6. What does it mean to be compassionate in the role of the bishop? What does it mean to be prophetic? How are these two roles connected?
7. What was a Bonhoeffer/Martin Luther King Jr./Tutu/Romero moment for you?
8. What is your experience with demonstrations for social justice and public acts of civil disobedience? (e.g., marches, protests, at the border, D.C., etc.)
9. Where do you go to find courage? How has this helped you to "keep on keeping on" when things got tough in working on a social justice concern?
10. Using a lens of the experience of indigenous people, how has that changed your understanding of social justice? What are some specific ways the church is called to respond to these experiences?
11. What do you see as the appropriate role for science in the setting of global, national, state, and local policies and how should testimony from the scientific community be evaluated vis-a-vis the testimony and demands being made by religious communities?
12. What value do you see in interreligious conversations between different religious communities in the U.S. and beyond? In the movement for social justice, what is the role of interreligious cooperation?
13. How would you as an episcopal leader work with the deeper longings which come from marginalized people wanting to be free to pursue their dreams? How would you, as an episcopal leader, do more than just advocate and fight for the survival of marginalized communities and work with others to create a beloved community?
14. What spiritual practices do you use to stay open to collaboration? When, if ever, does collaboration become impossible and how do you compassionately address that reality?