



Q & A with Bishop Nominee Edward Kenneth Martin

These questions were asked by four networks within the FMC and the Bishop Nominees were asked to respond to each question.

1) How much sexism are you aware of in the FMCUSA and where do you see it hampering the work of God the most? What have you done in the past and what are your plans in the future for addressing this issue?

I believe that when it comes to sexism in the FMCUSA, we have made some significant, positive, and intentional strides as it relates to women in leadership. Number one is the election of our first woman bishop; and number two is having women superintendents and assistant superintendents; and also, others who serve in major roles in our Annual Conferences. However, there is still much more that can be and should be done. We are still being led predominately by our Anglo-European males. There needs to be more diversity of women leaders in our general church as superintendents, in our Annual Conferences' BOA and MEG Board chairs. We must represent what we believe and stand for concerning diversity of ethnic women in our denomination.

Personally, I have had the privilege of working alongside some phenomenal women pastors and leaders on boards and committees. I have also submitted to women in leadership and have had the honor to serve them. First, I must begin with the privilege and honor to serve with my wife, Estelle, who is an ordained elder and we have co-led together since the day we met 37 years ago. I have also prepared many women to serve on church and committee boards, and those who have sensed a call to pastor. I have taken them through a leadership development training manual that centers on the spiritual formation plan of the Heart, Head, and Head formation, with the required reading of Bishop Emeritus David Kendall's book, Follow Her Lead and B. T. Roberts' Ordaining Women. Their assignment was to submit a written report on those two books, along with a report from The Book of Discipline on women in ministry.

As a reference, the following is a list of the women I have had the distinct pleasure of serving and working together with and I have also sat under their leadership: Rev. Kristen Marble, Rev. Jen Finley, Pastor Irene Ramirez, Pastor Sandy Lopez, Pastor Stacy Cobb-Muniz, Rev.

Colleen Hurley-Bates, Rev. Donna Saylor, Pastor Barb Heintzman, and Rev. Deloris Grays Smith.

2) How do you define economic justice? In what ways can the FMC more effectively confront growing economic inequality in the U.S.?

Concerning economic justice, I would define it as equal economic opportunities for ALL people that is fair and just. I am reminded of the words on the inscription of the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

I would like to address a few issues that we face regarding this issue, i.e., the unhoused (those who are experiencing homelessness); the need for those who are without to have the basic necessities in life, like clean water and food to eat; racial equality/discrimination; racial gaps in education and health; and wage inequality.

We must also deal with children living in poverty and the recent concerns of the immigrants coming to our country. We are still finding many families, like the Old Testament days in Egypt, trying to make bricks without straw.

For us to be more effective in confronting economic inequalities in the USA, we must first backup what we believe as a denomination and be vocal and visible with those on the frontlines who want to see an end to the disparities. We must stand up and help support, economically, those in need. We must serve on boards and committees in our community and sit at the table where significant decisions are being made concerning the LOST, the LEAST, and the LONELY, who have been forgotten. The challenge is not to politicize these injustices by making it a Democratic or Republican issue or agenda. We should begin by not choosing sides, but by leading a cross-cultural initiative where we cry out together, serve together, and with prayer for God to guide us in our work together as the body of Christ in the community.

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3) How do you see the future of the Latino church in the U.S.? Do you have a vision for more cultural diversity and inclusion in print, communication, and leadership? How do you think the denomination can help mentor, raise up and empower Latino leaders into different leadership circles?

Concerning the future of the Latino church in the US, God has blessed the FMCUSA with great Latino leaders and churches. And in my opinion, there are not enough of our Latino brothers and sisters at the table where significant decisions are being made. We need Latinos to lead as a Bishop, as superintendents, and in the general church, not as tokens or for a photo op, but because God has called them with the gifts and graces to lead. For us to see what God sees regarding Latino leadership and raising up the next generation of Latino leaders and pastors in the FMCUSA, it must come from the ground up, not top down. It's all of us together as pastors and church members being intentional in building relationships, doing life together in our homes, going to Latino-led events and conferences to sit at their feet with a teachable spirit, and to serve under their leaders and support their initiatives. Then I believe we will see God's hand like never before where there will be Latino bishops, superintendents, and leaders in the general church.

In closing, of course we will see more cultural diversity and inclusion in print and communication within the FMCUSA if we are intentional in our efforts as I have previously addressed above.

4) The FMC proclaims that we started due to our opposition of slavery, yet we have had minimal success in attracting significant numbers of African Americans to our denomination. Do you see this as a problem and what steps would you take to rectify this going forward?

If the FMCUSA doesn't see this as a problem and if those who lead the church don't see this as a concern, we have a serious problem and we are missing the mark. We have had capable and anointed qualified African-American pastors and leaders who left the FMCUSA because they just couldn't take it anymore. I believe God sent me to the FMCUSA to address this problem and I simply submitted to the will of God and served the FMC wherever and whenever called upon. If we are serious about attracting African Americans to the FMC, they must see us as equal in every area of leadership in the church. And from my understanding, the global FMC is watching and waiting to see if the FMCUSA will have an African-American and other culturally diverse leaders who have a global call on their lives and are sent by God to serve His church.