



Q & A with Bishop Nominee Kaye Kolde

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 have been aware of sexism, my own included, since I first considered the idea of women pastors and preachers as an immature Christian in my 20s in a complementarian church. I went on my own journey of prayer and learning to understand how church leadership can reflect the image of God in every human being, as well as the implications of Galatians 3:28. From the time that I was called to ministry I was personally and painfully aware of implicit biases about women in ministry, as well as overt hostility. In the FMC the Billy Graham rule hampered my ability to be a part of important leadership conversations and several pastors turned down my request for mentoring, or I watched young male leaders offered opportunities for which women were overlooked. In some of those instances I could see that leaders were unaware of their own biases, so after praying and asking the Lord to deal with any of my own personal hurt, I spoke up. We need many voices to offer perspective because we all have blind spots. I have also spoken up when I hear women condemn men as a whole in the church, or suggest “all woman” leadership would be superior. The kingdom and the local church is meant to be male and female and we are better together. As we identify people for leadership, especially leaders who demonstrate they can lead other leaders, we have to be intentionally looking for women and people of color. If we do not, the familiarity, comfort, or biases of old circles of influence are perpetuated. This also means the people with the longest experience or name recognition may not be the best choices for the future.

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

I define economic justice as demonstrating the righteousness and love of God to the poor in tangible ways that move toward shalom both materially and spiritually. When I consider the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is clear the follower of Jesus needs to respond to and confront injustice when we encounter it. There is no shortage of any kind of injustice in the world - if our eyes are open, we will be encountering it in our communities. I know that we can't all address everything, but we must be intentional to equip and support churches as they take on something in their unique context based on the conviction and leading of the Spirit. We can call churches to utilize the strategy process that was part of the Vision Frame the current BOB developed to identify a “next breakthrough” for each local church in the area of love-driven justice.

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?

Because I was able to attend the Pacesetter Pastors' gathering in January I heard from and met more Latino leaders who are following the Spirit's lead to multiply disciples, leaders and churches. I was so encouraged that this is where we have exciting growth occurring. Other than some Light + Life articles, I wouldn't have known of these examples of movement. I see Latino culture as possessing values that are advantageous to community church planting compared to other cultures, and the denomination needs to have intentional processes to identify, equip and resource potential leaders. I know Deb Walkemayer is looking to identify young female leaders to mentor. Making similar intentional queries around the country and in our Free Methodist Universities to identify people of color who want to pursue ministry callings would be valuable. I went outside our denomination to pursue pastoral coaching 6 years ago; it was formational and

practical equipping for me as a leader. It also created relational connection with my cohort that is still a source of support and resourcing for ministry. Our SLT strategic catalysts for multiplication and justice partnering with the SLT on these types of cohorts for leadership development would be valuable. Additionally, we might seek out people of color from other movements who are effectively doing this to learn from them. Northern Seminary, where I am currently working on my Doctor of Ministry, has exposed me to a number of trainings and resources for leadership development for BIPOC communities that I was completely unaware of. I believe that in addition to the leaders we already have being tapped to lead cohorts there are outside sources for us to learn from as we seek to add more and more to our numbers of leaders representing a diversity of races and ethnicities.

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?

I don't often think in terms of attracting groups to our denomination, but instead want to focus on a holistic gospel presented by and to every kind of community and people group so that our denomination would be diverse and reflect the kingdom of God. It is a problem when we are not sharing the gospel through preaching, serving, and blessing our neighbors because our preferences and comfort matter to us more. But even deeper than those things are the deep roots of racism or segregation in our churches that I was made aware

of through books like "The Color of Compromise." Of course, diversity on our platforms encourages diversity in the local church, and diversity at higher levels of leadership in the denomination encourages more leaders of color seeing themselves as a welcome and valued part of our movement. Many lifelong Free Methodists couldn't accept their first woman lead pastor when I was appointed here, but having the first woman Bishop helps people understand this is in fact who we are. Similarly, having a person of color on the Board of Bishops would send that kind of message. I think it is imperative that we are praying and speaking against a spirit of fear or division that is being capitalized on by political interests. That kind of fear and divisiveness works against an earnest desire to pursue love-driven justice and instead protect the status quo. Some other thoughts regarding how to rectify this would also be included in answers above.