

**RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
REQUIRING ACTION
BY THE
2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

Action Item 1: Local Church Camping Coordinator

Submitted by: Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries

Each local church in the Wisconsin Annual Conference is urged to name one layperson to be responsible for promotion of the Conference Camps and Retreats in that local church. The Camping Coordinator's task will be to help the congregation understand the importance and value of the Conference camping program. The Coordinator will not only highlight the summer camp program but will also help the congregation be aware of retreat possibilities. Each local church shall send the name and address of its Camping Coordinator to the Camping Office in Sun Prairie as part of its yearly charge conference report.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 2: Camp and Retreat Emphasis Sunday

Submitted by: Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries

We recommend that every local church in the Wisconsin Annual Conference observe a Camp and Retreat Emphasis Sunday in the winter or spring of 2008 for the purpose of interpreting the Conference camping and retreat program and for promoting the 2008 camps.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 3: New Camp Participants

Submitted by: Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries

We recommend that every local church/charge/circuit in the Wisconsin Annual Conference send a minimum of two new participants to experience a United Methodist camp/retreat event during the coming year.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 4: United Methodist Women's Sunday

Submitted by: Conference United Methodist Women

Be it resolved that the fourth Sunday of September, September 23, 2007, be designated United Methodist Women's Sunday in the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 5: Resolution on “A Day of Witness and Deed”

Submitted by: Program and Arrangements Committee

WHEREAS the 2006 Wisconsin Annual Conference directed the Program and Arrangements Committee to develop a plan to implement the idea of a “day of witness and deed,” and to report that plan back to the 2007 Annual Conference, and

WHEREAS the Program and Arrangements Committee, in conjunction with the Mission Motivation Committee, has placed a significant importance on this day and the planning of it, and

WHEREAS the Program and Arrangements Committee has for the 2007 Annual Conference session suggested that each member of Annual Conference spend at least four hours between May 1 - June 10, 2007 in some form of mission service, to be reported on at the 2007 Annual Conference, and

WHEREAS the implementation of this type of activity will take a great deal of planning, preparation and coordination,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that between the 2007 Annual Conference Session and the 2008 Annual Conference Session the members of Annual Conference will be asked to participate in one full day of mission work in their communities, to be reported on at the 2008 Annual Conference session, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a taskforce composed of two members of the Program and Arrangements Committee and two members of the Mission Motivation Committee will gather together to plan “a day of witness and deed” at the 2009 Annual Conference session, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the taskforce from the Program and Arrangements Committee and the Mission Motivation Committee will prepare a report to the 2008 Annual Conference session with a recommendation for how “a day of witness and deed” will be implemented at the 2009 Annual Conference session.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 6: United Methodist Youth Sunday

Submitted by: Conference Council on Youth Ministries

WHEREAS the youth of our churches represent not only the future of the church, but a very present strength and reality in our congregations around the Annual Conference, and

WHEREAS youth are an important part of the church today, it is important to recognize these persons and encourage them as leaders in the church, and not many people realize the amount of work that is done by youth, and we feel that they also need to be lifted up, and

WHEREAS youth in our local congregations around this Annual Conference are engaged in mission, evangelism, spiritual growth and leadership development, and

WHEREAS the local church can gain a wealth of leadership potential and energy by tapping into the resources that youth have to offer to local congregations,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that there shall be a United Methodist Youth Sunday in every local church to recognize the role and commitment of United Methodist Youth. We recommend that churches look at Sunday, November 25th for this day in 2007, but may use any day that best suits their church.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference Council on Youth Ministries is willing to help provide resources to support leadership in this task. Resources such as bulletin inserts, videos, and pamphlets about conference youth leadership will be made available in the latter part of August.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 7: Youth in Mission & Ministry

Submitted by: Conference Council on Youth Ministries

WHEREAS hunger and hunger related issues are important issues in Wisconsin and a concern of youth in Wisconsin;

WHEREAS in many parts of Wisconsin, the largest group of people affected by hunger is children, who experience adverse effects on their behavior, learning, and health;

WHEREAS one in eleven Wisconsin households are food insecure and one in thirty-six Wisconsin households experience hunger, and these households range from poor to non-poor, unemployed and employed, and rural and urban people;

WHEREAS 1st Timothy 4:12 shows the church that youth have a strong ability to make a difference in their world, and there is a need for churches and youth groups to be intentional about empowering youth in their church and community to be Jesus' hands and feet in the world;

THEREFORE, the Conference Council on Youth Ministries calls all youth in the churches of the Wisconsin Annual Conference to dedicate a portion of their energy to issues of hunger in Wisconsin, especially as it affects youth.

BE IT RESOLVED that at least 350 churches in the Wisconsin Conference will commit to participating in youth mission & ministry that revolves around hunger issues, and will register their participation with the Conference Council on Youth Ministries by Annual Conference 2008;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that collectively the youth in the churches of the Wisconsin Conference will commit to participating in 1400 events that center on hunger by Annual Conference 2008. These events can range from bible studies that center around issues of hunger, volunteering at a local food pantry or soup kitchen, organizing a food drive or raising money for a local food pantry or soup kitchen, having informational gatherings to help inform youth about the issues of hunger, participating in programs such as 30 Hour Famine and the Souper Bowl of Caring, etc. Churches will then report to the Conference Council on Youth Ministries the number of events they have participated in to be reported back to the Annual Conference in 2008;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that collectively the youth in the churches of the Wisconsin Conference will commit to raising \$175,000 to help in the alleviation of hunger in Wisconsin and worldwide by Annual Conference 2008. This money can be raised in a number of ways, to be determined by the individual youth groups, and is to be distributed by the individual youth groups to the organizations/programs of their choice. The amount of funds donated can be calculated both from actual dollars raised as well as from the calculation of the value of food or other donations. Churches will then report to the Conference Council on Youth Ministries the amount of funds that they have raised to be reported back to the Annual Conference in 2008;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference Council on Youth Ministries will provide the following resources for the youth groups and churches of the Wisconsin Conference: opportunities to donate funds and food at conference youth events; educational information on hunger issues, a hunger bible and book study; lists of program and fundraising ideas for churches to use; and encouragement and prayer. CCYM will also provide registration forms for all churches that choose to participate, as well as a reporting system for churches to report the work they are doing.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 8: Proposed rule change

Submitted by: Conference Council on Youth Ministries

~~3.3.20 Conference Council on Youth Ministries. The Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) shall consist of 42 voting members chosen as follows: two senior high and two junior high representative elected by each district during the Regional Youth Conferences. (32); 2 youth members at large that are selected as president elect and YSF coordinator by the current CCYM, eight youth members at large chosen for inclusiveness by the Conference Nominations Committee and elected by the Annual Conference. Ex officio members with voice by not vote include all Conference Youth Event Design Team Leaders. The CCYM President has voice but no vote in case of a tie. Adult advisory members shall include one adult from each district, the Sr. High Adult Advisor, the Jr. High Adult Advisor and the Conference Youth Coordinator.~~

The Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) shall consist of youth members and adult advisors chosen through an application process with attention being placed on gifts and graces for leadership on the conference level as well as effort be made to ensure diversity (geographically, age, gender & ethnicity) on the committee. Applications will be received year round, new members will be accepted after the January CCYM meeting through the August CCYM meeting, and applications will be accepted, processed and CCYM members will be selected by the CCYM exec team during that time period. Conference Youth Event Design Team leaders are also considered to be a part of the committee and are given both voice and vote. The exec team of CCYM will consist of four youth co-chairs, four youth co-chairs in training, the Sr. & Jr. High Adult Advisor and the Conference Youth Coordinator. The chairs will be chosen from the body of CCYM and all efforts will be made to ensure diversity in leadership. Adult advisory members should include at least one adult from each district, the Sr. High Adult Advisor,

the Jr. High Adult Advisor and the Conference Youth Coordinator, who have voice but no vote. All efforts will be made to keep the ratio between youth members and adult advisors between 4:1 and 6:1.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 9: Designation of Earnings from the “New Ministries Fund”

Submitted by: Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

We recommend that the Annual Conference designate the earnings from the undesignated “New Ministries Fund,” to provide stewardship programming and resources to local congregations through the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 10: Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the Wisconsin Conference

Submitted by: Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance & Equitable Compensation

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the “Church”), of which the Conference is a part, has and in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church (“Clergypersons”); and

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation; and

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the “Discipline”), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (“GBOPHB”), during the year 2008 by each active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans,

annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the *Discipline*, that result from any service a Clergy person rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, or a disabled Clergy person of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergy person to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled Clergy person's pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergy person's gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code Section 107(2) and regulations thereunder to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergy person's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the Clergy person to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 11: Resolution on Past Service Annuity Rate

Submitted By: Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance & Equitable Compensation

BE IT RESOLVED the Past Service Annuity Rate (PSR) for 2008 shall be \$614.00.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 12: Resolution on Minimum Compensation

Submitted By: Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance & Equitable Compensation

WHEREAS the formula for establishing the minimum compensation for ordained clergy, local pastors, and student local pastors appointed to charges in the Wisconsin Annual Conference is the minimum compensation for the previous year for each category, plus the cost of living factor established by the U.S. Government for Social Security purposes, plus 1%;

WHEREAS this formula was approved by the 1996 session of the Wisconsin Annual Conference for implementation starting in January 1998 and has not since been changed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Minimum Compensation for Conference members serving full time for 2008 shall be \$33,468. The Minimum Compensation for Local Pastors serving full time shall be \$29,456. The Minimum Compensation for Student Local Pastors serving at least 27 hours per week plus 3 months of full time service during the summer shall be \$25,167.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 13: Resolution on 2007 Formal Funding Plan for Pre-1982 Pension Liability

Submitted By: Joint Board of Pensions, Insurance & Equitable Compensation

Letter of Introduction To Members of the Wisconsin Annual Conference:

The following funding plan is in the format recommended by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) of The United Methodist Church. This plan begins by discussing the Wisconsin Conference Past Service Rate (PSR) philosophy. The PSR is the dollar amount that is multiplied by years of Pre-1982 service to determine the annual pension benefits paid to a pastor for Pre-1982 service. The PSR for the coming year is set by Annual Conference based on the recommendation made by the Joint Board.

In the past, the Wisconsin Conference set a goal for the PSR to reach 1% of the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). That goal was reached in 1998, and for the year 2007 the PSR is 1.16% of the CAC. For the future, the Joint Board recommends that the PSR keep pace with inflation by using the index that the U.S. Government uses for Social Security payments. We do not think it is appropriate any longer for it to be linked with the CAC. We will, of course, meet the minimum requirement in *The Discipline* that states that the PSR stay at .9% of the CAC or higher.

Also in the past, the PSR increased at a faster rate than the CAC, but those increases were necessary due to the initial lower levels of PSR (PSR was .8% of CAC in 1982). Consequently, we expect the PSR to increase at a slower rate in the future, though we will keep up with inflation.

The plan then goes on to list a number of factors:

- Present Value of Expected Future Benefits (PVB): This is an estimate of our Pre-1982 pension liability. The GBOPHB calculates this amount based on a series of assumptions:
- Mortality – how long retirees and their spouses are expected to live (based on standard industry tables)
- Cost of Living – rate at which the PSR is expected to increase in the future (influenced by the Conference PSR philosophy, discussed above)
- Investment earnings – rate of return expected from our assets, including interest, dividends, and capital growth (GBOPH uses 7% as a long term value).
- Current Plan Assets: This is the current value of the money that has been invested with the GBOPHB to provide for payment of Pre-1982 pension obligations.
- Funded Status: This is the amount that our current plan assets exceed the present value of expected future benefits.
- Non-Plan Assets available for Retiree Benefits:
 - Deposit Account – money held by the GBOPHB that came from prior earnings on the Permanent Pension Fund and the Ministerial Pension Memorial Fund.

- Permanent Pension Fund (PPF) and Ministerial Pension Memorial Fund (MPMF) are permanent endowment funds established on behalf of Wisconsin Conference retirees. Per trust documents approved by Annual Conference, five percent of the December 31 market value of these funds is available to provide pension and retiree medical benefits for retired ministers and surviving spouses of the Wisconsin Conference. Contributions to these funds are made by individuals and estates.

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS at General Conference 2000 legislation was approved that requires each conference to annually adopt and publish a formal funding plan addressing its obligation for the pension plan that applies to years of service prior to 1983, and

WHEREAS all conferences are required to fully fund their Pre-1982 pension obligation by the year 2021, and

WHEREAS the intent of this legislation is to help the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) determine that all conferences are satisfactorily addressing the funding of this liability,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following Formal Funding Plan, with the letter of introduction, be adopted as the 2007 Formal Funding Plan and be published in the 2007 Conference Yearbook and Journal.

WISCONSIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

2007

Formal Funding Plan – Pre-1982 Pensions

2007 Past Service Rate (PSR) - \$594.00

PSR Philosophy – Increase PSR for inflation as of December of each year. Target for same Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase that is used for Social Security purposes.

The current PSR is at 1.16% of the Conference Average Compensation (CAC). This percentage is above the original Wisconsin Annual Conference goal of 1.0% of the CAC, as set by the 1969 merging conference. The PSR will no longer be tied to the CAC (other than the various minimum requirements) since we are well above our 1.0% goal and apportionment money is no longer being used to pay for these costs.

Current Plan Assets-1/2005	\$66,039,903*
Present Value of Expected Future Benefits-1/2005	\$53,335,536*
Funded Status-1/2005	\$12,704,367*

Non-plan assets available for retiree benefits: The funds that may be available to supplement pension/retirement funds for the Wisconsin Annual Conference are (values at 12/31/06):

1. Deposit Account at General Board of Pensions - \$2,795,635
2. Other Funds:
 - The Wisconsin Annual Conference established the Permanent Pension Fund in 1969. The Permanent Pension Fund has a balance of \$2,510,896.

- The Wisconsin Annual Conference established the Ministerial Pension Memorial Fund in 1983. The Ministerial Pension Memorial Fund has a balance of \$1,103,350.
- Per trust documents approved by Annual Conference, five percent of the December 31 market value of these funds is available to provide pension and retiree medical benefits for retired ministers and surviving spouses of the Wisconsin Conference.

Amortization Period – Not applicable.

Additional Contributions – We do not anticipate that any special deposits will be needed, since the Conference is currently over funded.

The contributions to the Ministerial Pension Memorial Fund and the Permanent Pension Fund come from individuals. The contributions come from gifts, primarily from estates. The size and frequency of future contributions is uncertain. The Wisconsin Annual Conference intends to continue to solicit additional contributions to each Fund. The investment return on the Funds is uncertain.

Contingency plans for PSR increases – Any faster increases in the PSR due to higher inflation are expected to be counter-balanced by slower increases at later (or prior) times, due to lower inflation. We use 3.0% as our long-term inflation assumption.

*Figures provided by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits 2007 Actuarial Valuation.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 14: Resolution Regarding Local Church Property Insurance

Submitted by: The North Windsor United Methodist Church Council

WHEREAS: The Wisconsin Conference currently negotiates a contract with Church Mutual Insurance Company for the insurance needs of all the United Methodist churches in Wisconsin.

WHEREAS: Discipline ¶2532 (2) LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY, encourages local boards to take care of insurance needs. The section reads in part, “The board of trustees shall review annually the adequacy of the property, liability, and crime insurance coverage on church-owned property, buildings, and equipment... The board shall include in its report to the charge conference the results of its review and any recommendations it deems necessary.”

WHEREAS: Premiums for insurance coverage from Church Mutual Insurance Company have been increasing dramatically since the Wisconsin Conference began negotiating for all of our churches.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED: When current contracts with Church Mutual are fulfilled, that individual Churches will again have the ability to entertain quotes from the company of their choice.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Conference Board of Trustees issue guidelines for local churches to follow when seeking quotes from insurance companies.

Conference Action: Defeated

Action Item 15: Peace Resolution 1 – 2007

Submitted by: Board of Church and Society

WHEREAS peacemaking is an imperative for followers of Jesus Christ [“Blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt. 5:9), “Do not resist an evildoer” (Mt. 5:39), “Love your enemies” (Mt. 5:44)]. The command is amplified by Paul “Bless those who persecute you ... Do not repay anyone evil for evil” (Romans 12:14 – 17), God through Christ “has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:18). The Hebrew Scriptures include prelude, prophecy, and hope. “They shall beat their swords into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:4, Joel 3:10, Mic. 4:3). (All references are NRSV.)

WHEREAS peacemaking is foundational in all the major world religions (*The Great Transformation* by Karen Armstrong 2006),

WHEREAS there is evidence that war in contemporary culture is, however unconscious, both attractive and addictive, and there is a need to bring the attractiveness and addiction to awareness,⁽¹⁾

WHEREAS there is a need to also provide non violent alternatives to the violence of war,

WHEREAS “The United Methodist Church resolves that the cabinet of the President of the United States be enlarged to include a Secretary of Peace, and that a Peace Academy be established comparable to the Army, Navy, and Air Force academies” (*Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church 2004 ¶¶271-272, p. 692-693*),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church encourage its congregations and members, Lay and Clergy, to advocate “that the cabinet of the President of the United States be enlarged to include a Secretary of Peace, and that a Peace Academy be established comparable to the Army, Navy, and Air Force academies.”⁽²⁾ This advocacy shall be as creative as possible, including encouraging dialogue and the establishment of peace keeping forces, hosting educational events, and writing letters to elected United States congressional representatives and the U. S. president.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church support Congressional Bill H. R. ~~808 3760~~ and Senate Bill S ~~1756~~, both of which advocates establishing a Department of Peace and Nonviolence.

Notes:

1. While observation, seeing and hearing (as Jesus suggests), demonstrate the truth of this assertion, there are a multitude of reinforcing studies including William Shakespeare: *Troilus and Cressida* 1602?; William James: *The Moral Equivalent Of War* 1910; Chris Hedges: *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* 2002; James Hillman: *A Terrible Love of War* 2004.
2. Repeats *The Book of Resolutions* Par 271 above

Conference Action: Approved as Amended

Action Item 16: Peace Resolution 2 – 2007

Submitted by: Board of Church and Society

WHEREAS at least the last 3 major wars in which the United States has been involved (Vietnam War and 2 Gulf Wars) were primarily wars of choice rather than wars of defense, and

WHEREAS the change in name from The Department of War (army only) to Department of Defense (all branches of the armed services), in 1949, has an Orwellian tendency to mitigate and justify the horror of war. (The word “defense” more easily justifies violence than does the word “war.”),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church advocate that The United States Department of Defense be renamed The Department of War. This Department of War shall have the same responsibilities and powers, including current coordination of the various armed services as the present Department of Defense. Only the name would change.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Wisconsin United Methodist congregations, clergy and lay members, urge their elected United States representatives to make this change.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 17: 2007 Proposed Revised Budget & 2008 Proposed Budget

Submitted by: Council on Finance and Administration

The 2007 and 2008 Budgets are printed at the end of the Action Items section in order to facilitate the journal printing process. See pp. _____

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 18: PETITIONS TO GENERAL CONFERENCE

*Editor's Note: In the "Petitions to General Conference" section of this workbook, text which is printed in **bold** indicates additions to the 2004 **Book of Discipline** or **Book of Resolutions**. Text that is printed in ~~strike through~~ indicates deletions from the 2004 **Book of Discipline** or **Book of Resolutions**.*

Petitions to General Conference						
Results of Voting by the 2007 Wisconsin Annual Conference						
Petition #	Yes	No	Abstain	Invalid	Empty	Total
1	455	233	3		8	699
2	335	349	9		6	699
3	387	299	7		6	699
4	443	242	5		9	699
5	502	172	14	5	6	699
6	455	227	6	1	10	699
7	114	566	12	1	6	699
8	515	160	16	1	7	699
9	267	390	33	2	7	699
10	356	322	12	1	8	699
11	314	344	31	2	8	699
12	510	165	16	1	7	699
13	302	365	23	1	8	699
14	352	329	12		6	699
15	81	601	10	1	6	699
16	130	529	36		4	699
17	78	574	38	1	8	699
18	534	139	20		6	699
19	244	417	34		4	699
20	593	85	16	1	4	699
21	201	455	36		7	699
22	412	270	10		7	699
23	271	394	26	1	7	699
24	292	385	16		6	699
25	433	225	34	6	1	699
26	163	483	44	1	8	699
27	484	176	29	3	7	699
28	417	252	23		7	699
29	387	289	19		4	699
30	80	584	31		4	699
31	73	585	31	4	6	699
32	101	553	38		7	699
33	86	572	34		7	699
34	74	591	24		10	699

Petitions highlighted in **Bold/Italic** were approved by the Wisconsin Annual Conference Session and will be forwarded to the Petitions Secretary of the 2008 General Conference

Note: Invalid ballots were recorded when a person marked more than one option (Yes and No, Yes and Abstain, No and Abstain) on a particular petition. "Empty" ballots were recorded when a person chose not to vote on a particular petition, but did not choose "Abstain."

**Petition # 01: AMEND DIVISION ONE ARTICLE IV (¶4) OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author's Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, "God desires the wholeness of all," we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, "God welcomes graciously," we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, "God loves expansively," we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that Division One, Article IV, ¶4, of the United Methodist Constitution be amended as follows:

The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, ~~or~~ economic condition, **gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, or ability** shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, ~~or~~ economic condition, **gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, or ability**.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition expands the definition of those who have access to the ministries and membership The United Methodist Church. This seeks to open wide the doors of the Church in order to welcome, and not turn away, all who find themselves drawn by grace to the church.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 02: AMEND ¶161C EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author's Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, "God desires the wholeness of all," we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, "God welcomes graciously," we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, "God loves expansively," we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶161C of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between ~~a man and a woman~~ **two adult persons**. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. ~~We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.~~

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Recommendation by the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale by the Petitions Committee: While acknowledging scriptural prohibitions against homosexual acts exist, a larger scriptural context witnesses to inclusiveness and against exclusion of any kind. On one hand, the Church has taught that human beings should be chaste until marriage. On another hand, the Church and civil authorities have prohibited same gender marriages and civil unions. This exclusion does not witness to the larger biblical context of inclusive love and justice.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 03: AMEND ¶161G HUMAN SEXUALITY

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, “God desires the wholeness of all,” we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, “God welcomes graciously,” we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, “God loves expansively,” we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶161G of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

We recognize that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church, and society. We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this gift. We also recognize our limited understanding of this complex gift and encourage the medical, theological, and social science disciplines to combine in a determined effort to understand human sexuality more completely. We call the Church to take the leadership role in bringing together these disciplines to address this most complex issue. Further, within the context of our understanding of this gift of God, we recognize that God challenges us to find responsible, committed, and loving forms of expression.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, **we believe** sexual relations are only clearly affirmed in the marriage bond. Sex may become

exploitative within as well as outside marriage. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual relations where one or both partners are exploitative, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families and the social order.

We deplore all forms of commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. We call for the establishment of adequate protective services, guidance, and counseling opportunities for children thus abused. We insist that all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured. **We encourage civil authorities to enact laws that will ensure full civil and economic rights for persons in civil unions and marriages without regard to the gender of the partners.**

We recognize the continuing need for full, positive, age-appropriate and factual sex education opportunities for children, young people, and adults. The Church offers a unique opportunity to give quality guidance and education in this area.

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ **While Christians of good faith differ on what Christian teaching reveals regarding homosexuality,** We affirm that God's grace is available to all, and we will seek to live together in Christian community. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition removes the prohibition against “the practice of homosexuality” and calls for civil authorities to end the prohibition against marriages and civil unions of same gender persons. The Church here has an opportunity to lead a healthy dialogue as a demonstration to society of the open, inclusive love of Christ.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 04: AMEND ¶162H EXPAND CIVIL RIGHTS

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, “God desires the wholeness of all,” we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, “God welcomes graciously,” we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, “God loves expansively,” we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶162H of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for ~~homosexual~~ **all persons, regardless of sexual orientation**. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting ~~their~~ **their** rightful claims where ~~they two people~~ **two people** have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against ~~gays and lesbians~~ **all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation**. ~~We also commit ourselves to social witness against the coercion and marginalization of former homosexuals.~~

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The word changes in this petition update and clarify that this justice issue is more about extending civil rights to all persons and is not just about homosexuals.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 05: AMEND ¶164I MILITARY SERVICE

Submitted By: Wisconsin Conference Board of Church and Society

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶164I of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

1) Military Service – We deplore war and urge the peaceful settlement of all disputes among nations. From the beginning, the Christian conscience has struggled with the harsh realities of violence and war, for these evils clearly frustrate God's loving purposes for humankind. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice. Some of us believe that war, and other acts of violence, are never acceptable to Christians. We also acknowledge that many Christians believe that, when peaceful alternatives have failed, the force of arms may regretfully be preferable to unchecked aggression, tyranny and genocide. We honor the witness of pacifists who will

not allow us to become complacent about war and violence. We also respect those who support the use of force, but only in extreme situations and only when the need is clear beyond reasonable doubt, and through appropriate international organizations, **and conducted under the rules set forth by the Geneva Convention and other pertinent international treaties.** We urge the establishment of the rule of law in international affairs as a means of elimination of war, violence, and coercion in these affairs.

[The remainder of the paragraph remains unchanged.]

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The addition of this wording clarifies that The United Methodist Church recognizes the “Geneva Convention and other pertinent international treaties” to be the rules by which nations and other military and political groups will conduct themselves during times of conflict.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 06: AMEND ¶214 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, “God desires the wholeness of all,” we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, “God welcomes graciously,” we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, “God loves expansively,” we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶214 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

Eligibility – The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles’ Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶4). **No person shall be excluded from The United Methodist Church for reasons related to his or her sexual orientation or gender identity.** In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition puts into words what had been the practice of The United Methodist Church. It also makes our practice consistent with the teaching in the pastoral letter from the Council of Bishops.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 07: AMEND ¶216.3 MINIMUM GRADE FOR CONFIRMATION

Submitted By: Rev. Bob Blackburn

Author's Rationale: The confirming of one's baptism involves God's grace and a commitment to be a faithful disciple of Jesus the Christ. Those persons who are confirming their baptisms are usually youth and a strong argument can be made that most youth are not spiritually, mentally and emotionally mature enough to confirm their baptism until they are in tenth grade or later.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶216.3 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

Preparation for the experience of profession of faith and confirmation shall be provided for all people, including adults. Youth who are completing the ~~sixth~~ **ninth** grade shall normally be the youngest people recruited for such preparation. When younger persons, of their own volition, seek enrollment in preparation for profession of faith and confirmation, such preparation shall be at the discretion of the pastor.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: While confirmation should be sought by those who are spiritually mature (and maturing), this petition does not address the issue of an individual person's decision and the preparation needed for confirmation. Any grade level designation will contain people who are and are not ready for confirmation. Changing a suggested grade level from sixth to ninth does not appreciably address the readiness issue.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 08: AMEND ¶252.4 THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Submitted By: Rev. Sam Royappa

Author's Rationale: The proposed ten responsibilities focus on local church growth and development. The Church Council must be a place 1) where energy, enthusiasm, and excitement are created and/or generated for doing ministry; 2) that would reflect the passion of people for church and community; 3) where clergy and lay leadership are encouraged, inspired, empowered, and motivated; and 4) where appreciation is shown for clergy and lay leadership, celebrating all they do in the name of Jesus and for His mission.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶252.4 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

- f) consider developing vision and mission statements in alignment with conference and general church vision and mission statements;
- g) establish objectives and goals and evaluate them every year;
- h) review church membership of the local church at each meeting and recommend realistic plans for membership care and growth that includes worship attendance;
- i) review members' giving and recommend ways to Finance and Stewardship teams to motivate members for consistent financial contribution;
- j) communicate to the congregation periodically of the church growth and development in consultation with the pastor;
- k) review and evaluate the effectiveness of all teams annually;
- l) provide guidelines and a system of accountability to all teams for their effective functioning;
- m) empower all teams and leaders for their productive teamwork that shall benefit the interest of the local church and its mission;
- n) receive reports of the Lay Leadership Development Team between the sessions of the Charge Conference;
- o) celebrate growth and development of the local church at each meeting.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: A Church Council should “reflect the passion of the people for church and community” and therefore the Council should do more than the current administrative functions listed in ¶252.4a-e.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 09: AMEND ¶304.2 CHASTITY INSTEAD OF CELIBACY

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author's Rationale: Celibacy means simply to be “unmarried,” to not have a spouse. It has no traditional meaning related to whether or not the celibate person has conjugal relations. Our ecumenical depth of understanding and therefore our relationships with those churches which know what these words mean is harmed by leaving the incorrect term in place.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶304.2 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

2. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of an ordained minister on the lives of other persons both within and outside the Church, the Church expects those

who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and ~~celibacy~~ **chastity** in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

[In addition, this correction needs to be made everywhere the word “celibacy” is misused in The Book of Discipline, including ¶311.3f, 322.1(8), 324.9o, 330.4a(6), 335.a(6), and 2702.1.]

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The petition is correct in replacing the word “celibacy” with “chastity.” This change would make the wording of the paragraph (and related paragraphs) more accurate in stating its intention.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 10: AMEND ¶304.3 HOMOSEXUALITY AND ORDINATION

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, “God desires the wholeness of all,” we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, “God welcomes graciously,” we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, “God loves expansively,” we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶304.3 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. ~~The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.~~

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition proposes deleting the lines which single out the homosexual as the one person who we will not ordain or appoint. This exclusionary act runs contrary to the law of love of the gospel.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 11: AMEND ¶313.1 DISCONTINUANCE OF CERTIFIED CANDIDATE

Submitted By: Rev. Jeanne Jones

Author's Rationale: Often certified candidates have been discontinued or had their licenses withdrawn for reasons other than those mentioned in *The Book of Discipline* and which were unclear to them. Under the current Disciplinary rules any decision by a Bishop or Committee is final. Many candidates have regarded their dismissal as unfair. With this change, "the district board shall [truly] be amenable **and accountable** to the annual conference through the board of ordained ministry" (¶659.1).

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶313.1 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

1. Discontinuance of a Certified Candidate – Certified candidates may be discontinued on their own request, upon severing their relationship with The United Methodist Church, or upon action to discontinue by the district committee on ordained ministry.
 - a. **Should a certified candidate be dismissed, the dismissing authority shall provide to the candidate in writing the grounds for the discontinuance, citing prior signed agreements or specifics of time, place, and events alleged to have taken place, that are the grounds for their consideration of discontinuance. The certified candidate shall have the right to request a hearing, with his/her mentor in attendance. The mentor shall have voice but not vote unless a member of the hearing group. Fair process rights (¶362.3) shall apply. The hearing shall be held within thirty days unless the parties agree to an extension. Should the decision to discontinue be upheld by the hearing, the certified candidate shall be informed in writing of the reason(s) for the decision and shall be suspended for no more than ninety days pending possible appeal.**
 - b. **Appeal – Should the hearing fail to reinstate the certified candidate, the certified candidate shall have ten days after notification to appeal either decision to the executive committee of the conference board of ordained ministry, who shall meet within thirty days with the certified candidate and his/her mentor in attendance, unless the parties agree to an extension. Fair process rights (¶362.3) shall apply. Both substance of the specifics and procedural issues are subject to appeal. Should the executive committee overturn the discontinuance, the candidate shall be returned to certified status. When a final decision has been made to discontinue the license, the district committee on ordained ministry shall file with the conference board of ordained ministry a permanent record of the instances relating to the discontinuance of the certified candidate.**

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) and the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) work to keep certified candidates

informed of deficiencies. The long, drawn out process of appeal here proposed would not be helpful for the certified candidate or the annual conference. Additionally, one of the responsibilities of the DCOM Candidacy Registrar is to “communicate in writing the decisions of the board and the reasons behind the decisions” (p. 61, *Candidacy Mentoring Manual*, GBHEM, 2004 ed.).

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 12: AMEND ¶319.4 ANNUAL INTERVIEW OF LOCAL PASTORS

Submitted By: Rev. Donald Olm, Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors

Author’s Rationale: The course of study is accepted as a route to completion of pastoral education while the local pastor is serving a congregation(s). During the course of study there is a minimum of five years of probation annual evaluation. Once the requirements of the course of study are completed the Local Pastor should not have to come annually before the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶319.4 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

4. A local pastor may choose to remain in a local relationship with the annual conference upon having completed the five-year Course of Study. **While remaining in this relationship the local pastor shall serve under the supervision of the District Superintendent without an annual interview with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.**

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: Local pastors currently are appointed and licensed year to year. Until a local pastor completes the Course of Study, he or she interviews annually with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM). Ending this annual interview relationship would make local pastors who have completed the Course of Study accountable to their District Superintendent and annual appointment and would lighten the workload of the DCOM.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 13: AMEND ¶320.1 DISCONTINUANCE OF LOCAL PASTORS

Submitted By: Rev. Jeanne Jones

Author’s Rationale: Often Local Pastors have been discontinued or had their license withdrawn for reasons other than those mentioned in the Discipline. Under the present Discipline rules any decision by the Bishop or District Committee on Ordained Ministry is final. A number of candidates have regarded their dismissal as unfair. With this change

in the Discipline, “the district board shall [truly] be amenable **and accountable** to the annual conference through the board of ordained ministry”. As our Discipline says discipline assumes accountability to the community of faith by those who claim that community’s support.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶320.1 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

1. Discontinuance of Local Pastor--Whenever a local pastor retires or is no longer approved for appointment by the annual conference as required in ¶318, whenever any local pastor severs relationship with The United Methodist Church, whenever the appointment of a local pastor is discontinued by the bishop, or whenever the district committee on ordained ministry does not recommend continuation of license, ~~license and credentials shall be surrendered to the district superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference. After consultation with the pastor, the former local pastor shall designate the local church in which membership shall be held. The board of ordained ministry shall file with the resident bishop a permanent record of the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of local pastor status as required in 634.3d.~~ **the following procedure should be followed:**

a. Should a local pastor be dismissed, the dismissing authority shall provide to the local pastor in writing the grounds for the discontinuance, citing prior signed agreements or specifics of time, place, and events alleged to have taken place, that are the grounds for their consideration of discontinuance. The local pastor shall have the right to request a hearing, with his/her mentor in attendance. The mentor shall have voice but not vote unless a member of the hearing group. Fair process rights (¶362.3) shall apply. The hearing shall be held within thirty days unless the parties agree to an extension. Should the decision to discontinue be upheld by the hearing, the local pastor shall be informed in writing of the reason(s) for the decision and shall be suspended for no more than ninety days pending possible appeal.

b. Appeal--Should the hearing (¶320.1a) fail to reinstate the local pastor, the local pastor shall have ten days after notification to appeal either decision to the executive committee of the conference board of ordained ministry, who shall meet within thirty days with the local pastor and his/her mentor in attendance, unless the parties agree to an extension. Fair process rights (¶362.3) shall apply. Both substance of the specifics and procedural issues are subject to appeal. Should the executive committee overturn the discontinuance, the local pastor shall be returned to the appointment from which he/she was discontinued. Should the executive committee sustain the discontinuance, the local pastor shall have the right to appeal to the annual conference clergy session, the body that voted the conference relationship, whose decision shall be final. When a final decision has been made to discontinue the license, the pastoral license and credentials shall be surrendered to the district superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference. After consultation with the pastor, the former local pastor shall designate the local church in which membership shall be held and the board of ordained ministry shall file with the

resident bishop a permanent record of the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of local pastor status as required in 634.3d.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition would change the relationship that currently exists between the local pastor and the annual conference. The long, drawn out process of appeal would not be helpful for the local pastor, the annual conference, or the local church to which the local pastor is appointed. In addition, under current Discipline and practice the local pastor would have had direction from the District Superintendent, District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM), and/or the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) as to the issues that could possibly lead to discontinuation.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 14: AMEND ¶341.6 HOMOSEXUAL UNIONS

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: This petition seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, “God desires the wholeness of all,” we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, “God welcomes graciously,” we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, “God loves expansively,” we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶341.6 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

~~6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: In keeping with the spirit of related petitions, the words of the author’s rationale state, “If we proclaim, ‘God loves expansively,’ we must not minister selectively.”

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 15: AMEND ¶341 PROTECTION FROM LAW SUITS

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: The current legal environment puts pastors, teachers, and choir directors, into legal jeopardy where a person could accuse them of sexual harassment. The Church must insulate itself from legal liability should the accusation end up in civil or criminal court. Conference leaders and conference sexual harassment policies warn lay and clergy alike to avoid contact with parishioners when no one else is around. Passing this petition makes the concern into church law which preserves the inviolability of the Church to civil courts.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶341 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

8. To protect our denomination from law suits, pastors and lay church leaders may no longer conduct one-on-one visitation, counseling or other contact with any person without the presence of another person within earshot and within line-of-sight. Further, no pastor or lay church leader may touch, hug, or otherwise be in contact with any person except in the case of their already being married or in the presence of the congregation for services such as weddings, baptisms, confirmation, etc. Unfortunately, this means that single pastors may not date without the constant presence of a chaperone. Bishops may only bow to one another upon greeting except during worship services. Superintendents and Bishops may not meet alone with any pastor or lay person given the possibility that such contacts may generate accusations which put the church into legal liability. As other such implications are discovered, they are to be forwarded to the Council of Bishops for their enforcement and to the Commission on the Status and Role of Women for communication to all pastors and churches.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: Fearlessness in the face of danger and of injustice has been a hallmark of the Church over the centuries. While the United Methodist Church should not be careless and reckless concerning lawsuits and legal liabilities, fear of being sued (self-protection) should not be our primary concern.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 16: AMEND 406.1 EPISCOPAL CRITERIA

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: Jurisdictions need to define their expectations of what a bishop does and in so doing define the limits of the bishops’ authority. As our awareness of power imbalance has grown, we know we must be sure the limits are clear to minimize power abuse. Such a list helps bishops by providing a single place rather than have to search the whole Discipline.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶406.1 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

Election – 1. Criteria--Prior to any nominations for episcopacy in annual conferences, the episcopacy committees of the central and jurisdictional conferences shall list the specific powers of bishops provided in the Book of Discipline so that all nominees will have a chance to see the boundaries of the power of the episcopacy and those electing them will see the gifts and graces of the nominees in light of those limits. Further, the episcopacy committee shall identify any other gifts and graces it

seeks for bishops-elect to conduct ministry in their jurisdiction or central conference.

[Current ¶406.1 & .2 would be renumbered accordingly.]

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committees already provide expectations for Jurisdictional Conferences and for those seeking election to the episcopacy. These expectations are currently based on ¶414-416 of *The Book of Discipline*, which defines “Specific Responsibilities of Bishops.”

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 17: AMEND ¶407 EPISCOPAL ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: General Conference legislative committees may only deal with Disciplinary paragraphs for which there is a petition. Once there is a petition on that paragraph, no matter what it says, the legislative committee may then make any additions or corrections it may feel it needs to do.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶407 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

~~1. Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy—The jurisdictional committee on episcopacy, after consultation with the College of Bishops, shall recommend the assignment of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference; it shall not reach any conclusion concerning residential assignments until all elections of bishops for that session are completed and all bishops have been consulted. A bishop may be recommended for assignment to the same residence for a third quadrennium only if the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy on a two thirds vote and the jurisdictional conference by a two thirds vote determines such assignment to be in the best interest of the jurisdiction.~~

~~The date of assignment for all bishops is September 1 following the jurisdictional conference.~~²

~~A newly elected bishop shall be assigned to administer an area other than that within which his or her membership was most recently held, unless by a two thirds vote the jurisdictional committee shall recommend that this restriction be ignored and by majority vote the jurisdictional conference shall concur.~~³

~~2. Central Conference Committee on Episcopacy—The central conference committee on episcopacy, after consultation with the College of Bishops, shall recommend the assignment of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the central conference.~~⁴

~~3. Special Assignments— The Council of Bishops may, with consent of the bishop and the concurrence of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, assign one of its members for one year to some specific churchwide responsibility deemed of sufficient importance to the welfare of the total Church. In this event, a bishop shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area for that term. Another bishop or bishops, active or retired, and not necessarily from the same jurisdictional or central conference, shall be named by the Council of Bishops on recommendation of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction involved to assume presidential responsibilities during the interim. In the event that more than one retired bishop is assigned to fulfill presidential responsibilities in one episcopal area, the Episcopal Fund shall be responsible only for the difference between the pensions paid the retired bishops and the remuneration of one active bishop. This assignment may be renewed for a second year by a two thirds vote of the Council of Bishops and majority vote of the jurisdictional or central committee on episcopacy, and the consent of the bishop and the College of Bishops involved. The bishop so assigned shall continue to receive regular salary and support.~~

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: Deleting ¶407 without proposing any change leaves the writing/rewriting of this paragraph completely up to the delegates of a legislative section of General Conference. If a specific change for the assignment of bishops is desired, this petition leaves the intent of the author unclear, except to do away with the old process.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 18: AMEND ¶413.2 & ¶413.3 HOLDING BISHOPS ACCOUNTABLE

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: Despite the Judicial Council decision in JCD 475 that bishops must be accountable to their electors rather than simply to each other, the current complaint procedure places that responsibility first in the hands of the College of Bishops. That defies the Judicial Council’s ruling and needs to be corrected.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶413.2 & ¶413.3 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶2702 shall be submitted to the ~~president of the College of Bishops in that jurisdictional or central conference.~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional episcopacy committee in that jurisdiction or to the chairperson of the central conference episcopacy committee (not a bishop).** ~~If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be~~

~~submitted to the secretary of the College of Bishops.~~ A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702.

~~For the purposes of this paragraph, the United Methodist bishops of the central conferences shall constitute one college of bishops.~~

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in § ¶413.2, the ~~president of the College of Bishops and secretary of the College of Bishops, or the secretary and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the president (or the president and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the secretary),~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee**, in consultation with a lay and clergy member of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy appointed by the chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, shall make a supervisory response.

a) When deemed appropriate to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church, and/or the bishop, ~~the College of Bishops, the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee, in consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy~~ **College of Bishops**, may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed sixty days. During the suspension, salary, housing and benefits will continue.

b) The supervisory response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution. It is not a part of any judicial process. The supervisory response should be carried out in a confidential manner and should be completed within 120 days. There may be 2 additional extensions of 120 days if the ~~supervising Bishop~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee** determines that an extension will be productive. The ~~supervising Bishop~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central Conference Episcopacy** shall regularly advise all parties of the status of the process and shall notify all parties within 7 days after a determination is made that the supervisory response will not lead to a resolution of the matter.

No verbatim record shall be made and legal counsel shall not be present, although the bishop against whom the complaint was made and the Complainant both may choose another person to accompany him or her, with the right to voice. At the determination of the ~~president (secretary)~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee**, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory responses. Others may be consulted as well.

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1[b]). The ~~appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or secretary if the complaint concerns the president~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee** should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the

parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement.

d) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the ~~bishop~~ **chairperson** in charge of the supervisory response shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, ~~the president or secretary of the College of Bishops~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee** may refer the matter as an Administrative Complaint (§ 413.3[e]) or a Judicial Complaint (§ 2704.1).

e) *Administrative Complaint* – If the complaint is based on allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform episcopal duties, the ~~president and secretary (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint)~~ **chairperson of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee** may refer the complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy. The committee may recommend involuntary retirement (§ 409.3), disability leave (§ 411.4), remedial measures (§ 362.4a), other appropriate action, or it may dismiss the complaint. When the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy deems the matter serious enough and when one or more offenses listed in § 2702 are involved, the committee may refer the complaint back to the ~~president and secretary (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint)~~ **chairperson of the Jurisdictional or Central Conference Episcopacy** for referral as a judicial complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on investigation. The provisions of §362.3 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition changes the accountability for complaints against bishops from the College of Bishops to the Jurisdictional or Central Conference Episcopacy Committee. This is in keeping with the ruling of the Judicial Council (Decision 475).

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 19: AMEND §413.2 & 413.3 COMPLAINTS AGAINST BISHOPS

Submitted By: Rev. Ethan Larson

Authors’ Rationale: The Judicial Council ruled in 1980 that bishops were not subject to the evaluation of other bishops regarding the matter of accountability (JCD 475). Making bishops accountable for supervising another bishop in the complaint process creates conflicting roles and implicitly violates that ruling. It is unsound to expect bishops to be collegial while also supervising one another.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶413.2 & ¶413.3 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

2 Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶2702 shall be submitted to the president of the College of Bishops in that jurisdictional or central conference. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the ~~secretary of the College of Bishops~~ **chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy (hereafter “chair”)**. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶2702. For the purposes of this paragraph, the United Methodist bishops of the central conferences shall constitute one college of bishops.

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶413.2, the ~~president and the secretary of the College of Bishops~~ **chair**, or the ~~secretary and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the president (or the president and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the secretary)~~, in consultation with a lay and clergy member of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy appointed by the chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, **along with two other members of the committee appointed by the chair (including a member from that bishop’s annual conference)**, shall make a supervisory response.

a) When deemed appropriate to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church and/or bishop, the College of Bishops, ~~in consultation with~~ **upon the recommendation** of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed sixty days. During the suspension salary, housing and benefits will continue.

b) The supervisory response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution. It is not a part of any judicial process. The supervisory response should be carried out in a confidential manner and should be completed within 120 days. There may be 2 additional extensions of 120 days if the ~~supervising Bishop~~ **chair** determines that an extension will be productive. The ~~supervising Bishop~~ **chair** shall regularly advise all parties of the status of the process and shall notify all parties within 7 days after a determination is made that the supervisory response will not lead to a resolution of the matter.

No verbatim record shall be made and legal counsel shall not be present, although the bishop against whom the complaint was made and the Complainant both may choose another person to accompany him or her, with the right to voice. At the determination of the ~~president (secretary)~~ **chair**, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory responses. Others may be consulted as well.

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶362.1 [b]). The appropriate persons, including the ~~president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the~~

~~complaint concerns the president,~~ **chair** should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement.

d) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the ~~bishop~~ **chair** in charge of the supervisory response shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the ~~president or secretary of the College of Bishops~~ **chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy** may refer the matter as an Administrative Complaint (¶413.3 [e]) or a Judicial Complaint (¶2704.1).

e) Administrative Complaint- If the complaint is based on allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform episcopal duties, the ~~president and secretary of the College of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint)~~ **chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy** may refer the complaint to **the entire** jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy. The committee may recommend involuntary retirement (¶ 409.3), disability leave (¶ 411.4), remedial measures (¶ 362.4a), other appropriate action, or it may dismiss the complaint. When the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy deems the matter serious enough and when one or more offenses listed in ¶2702 are involved, the committee may refer the complaint back to the ~~president and secretary of the College of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint)~~ **chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy** for referral as a judicial complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on investigation. The provisions of ¶362.3 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: Though this petition is similar to Petition #18, and thought the committee agrees with the spirit of this petition, support for this idea is given to Petition #18 as having a better chance of being heard at General Conference.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 20: AMEND ¶420 SACRAMENTS FOR ALL

Submitted By: Rev. Jeanne Jones

Author's Rationale: Baptism and Communion are necessary parts of church membership. Some churches, served by supply pastors who are presumably unqualified to administer the Sacraments, do completely without the Sacraments, sometimes for extended periods. The original purpose of the quarterly conferences in the Wesleyan tradition was for the Superintendent to provide for those local needs which required a qualified pastor. There

is no requirement in this amendment for the Superintendent to do these things personally. This should only be an active task should there be an active need.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶420 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

4. To assure that the Sacraments are offered at least quarterly within each church of the district.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The Sacraments are important to the life of individual Christians and to the whole church. This would make The Lord's Supper available on a more regular basis than some United Methodist Churches are now receiving it.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 21: AMEND ¶663.1 DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

Submitted By: Rev. Jeanne Jones

Author's Rationale: Many conferences now rotate membership on the district committee on ordained ministry to allow for the selection of candidates with different gifts. Those conferences who do not rotate membership regularly seem to have self-perpetuating committees. Since limited terms have appeared to work well where they are used, it would seem that all conferences should do the same.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶663.1 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

1. The district committee on ordained ministry shall be amenable **and accountable** to the annual conference through the board of ordained ministry. It shall be composed of a representative from the board of ordained ministry, named by the board after consultation with the district superintendent, who may be named chairperson; the district superintendent, who may serve as the executive secretary; and at least six other clergy in the district, including women and ethnic clergy, wherever possible, nominated annually by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the board of ordained ministry and approved by the annual conference. The committee shall include elders in full connection and, whenever possible, deacons in full connection and at least one elder who has taken the Course of Study. Interim vacancies may be filled by the district superintendent. **No person, except for a district superintendent, shall serve as a member of the district committee on ordained ministry for more than a three-year term, with at least one year between periods of service. The board shall**

be divided into yearly classes, so that one third of the members shall be replaced each year. The conference board of ordained ministry shall provide orientation for new members, including education regarding the ministry and roles of all clergy and distribution of any available written guidelines.

At least three professing members of local churches shall be members of the committee with vote, except on matters prohibited by ¶ 33, Article II, in the Constitution, nominated annually by the district superintendent and approved by the annual conference.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: Boards of Ordained Ministry have worked to lengthen the term of service of members of District Committees on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) so that a candidate for ministry has someone on a DCOM who knows him or her throughout the process of candidacy. To limit the length of service of DCOM members to less than the Disciplinary 3 quadrennium terms (and 2 quadrennium Wisconsin Conference rule) would be to lose an advocate for candidates at the DCOM level.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 22: AMEND ¶806.9 ACCEPTANCE OF ALL PEOPLE

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: This petitions seeks to help the Church be consistent in word and deed. If we proclaim, “God desires the wholeness of all,” we must not exclude categorically. If we proclaim, “God welcomes graciously,” we must not discriminate unmercifully. If we proclaim, “God loves expansively,” we must not minister selectively.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶806.9 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

~~9. It shall be responsible for ensuring that no board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality. The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.~~

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: With the exception of ¶806.10, ¶806 deals with “Fiscal Responsibilities of the General Council on Finance and Administration.” This clause seems too targeted and restrictive for the larger context of this paragraph.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 23: AMEND ¶1416.4 DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY OF AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

Submitted By: Rick Kindshi

Author’s Rationale: Institutions affiliated with The United Methodist Church ought to develop and perpetuate our United Methodist identity. Affirming classical Christianity or United Methodist doctrine does not preclude teaching a wide variety of perspectives, nor does it inhibit academic freedom. It grounds all teaching on a shared foundation and better equips persons to serve in United Methodist ministry.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶1416.4 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

4. To qualify for affiliation with the United Methodist Church, institutions must maintain appropriate academic accreditation. **In addition, all persons hired by affiliated theological schools after January 1, 2009, for tenured and tenure-track faculty positions must affirm their agreement with classical Christian theology, as defined by the Apostles’ Creed. Furthermore, all persons hired by affiliated theological schools after January 1, 2009, for teaching positions within the theology department must affirm their agreement with United Methodist doctrine, as defined by the Doctrinal Standards (¶103).**

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: ¶104 states, “While the Church considers its doctrinal affirmations a central feature of its identity and restricts official changes to a constitutional process, the Church encourages serious reflection across the theological spectrum.” To legislate the conformity of theologians and institutions of higher learning would curtail the “serious reflection across the theological spectrum.”

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 24: AMEND ¶1421.3D COURSE OF STUDY TO MAINTAIN UM STANDARDS

Submitted By: Rick Kindschi

Author’s Rationale: The Course of Study is providing the basic theological education for an increasing percentage of United Methodist pastors, and it is essential that local pastors receive a solid grounding in United Methodist theology in their foundational studies.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶1421.3d of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

- 3d) Prescribe a Course of Study for local pastors that includes the studies for license for pastoral ministry and the five-year Course of Study curriculum. **All classes in the**

Course of Study shall be taught consistently with the doctrinal and ethical standards of The United Methodist Church, as reflected in the Doctrinal Standards (§103) and Social Principles (§160-166) of *The Book of Discipline*. All work in the Course of Study shall be taken in programs approved by the Division of Ordained Ministry.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: §1421.3d already states that the Course of Study offered by any institution must be “approved by the Division of Ordained Ministry.” This program includes UM History, UM Polity, and UM Doctrine. The addition in this petition is redundant and unnecessary.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 25: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT’S POLICIES CONCERNING THE WAR IN IRAQ AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Submitted By: Wisconsin Conference Board of Church and Society

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS §164 I) of **The 2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church** states “We also respect those who support the use of force, but only in extreme situations and only when the need is clear beyond reasonable doubt, and through appropriate international organizations,” and

WHEREAS the United States went to war in Iraq without any international authorization, and

WHEREAS §164 A) of **The 2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church** also states “We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to ... petition for redress of grievances ... to the right of privacy ... We also strongly reject domestic surveillance ... the mistreatment or torture of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned,” and

WHEREAS the United States Government is holding detainees for years without their being charged and has denied them legal counsel or access to the courts and is listening to phone calls and opening mail without court ordered warrants and has used interrogation techniques considered to be torture and has transported detainees to other countries to be tortured, and

WHEREAS §164 B) of **The 2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church** also states “The Church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust.”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The United Methodist Church opposes these actions of the United States Government in conducting the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism and calls on the United States to cease such actions and to begin an orderly and phased withdrawal from Iraq, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church be directed to immediately forward a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States and members of Congress and express strong opposition to these governmental policies.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This resolution presents an opportunity for the United Methodist Church to speak with a prophetic voice for justice, for peace, and in opposition to government actions which violate the civil liberties of people and put some people at risk of violent danger.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 26: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS AMEND THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE ¶243-260

Submitted By: Rev. Samuel Royappa

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS the “decline” trend of the United Methodist Church is directly and indirectly attributed to the local churches; and

WHEREAS the present Disciplinary provisions to organize and administer the local churches and their affairs are no longer serving as scaffolding for church growth and development in all aspects of local church’s life and ministry; and

WHEREAS the local churches need a “Functional Structure” that will enable the congregation to become a community of making disciples, pastors to become visionary leaders and coaches, and laity to become missionary leaders; and

WHEREAS the local churches are constantly challenged to do church differently, to transfer from “maintenance model” to “missionary model,” to move from “traditionalism” to “transformation,” and to turn from “membership mentality” to “discipleship approach;” and

WHEREAS the organizational structure of a local church needs to be in alignment with a missionary purpose, meaning, less hierarchical or top-down or centralized power, more teamwork, more people-oriented, more service or mission or outreach oriented, more empowerment and permission-giving to do ministries, more celebration of ministries and more technologically centered; and

WHEREAS the organizational structure of a local church needs to create and generate energy, excitement and enthusiasm for doing church, for being an effective witness in the community and for being an instrument making a difference in the lives of all people; and

WHEREAS Martin Luther recovered the biblical truth of the “Priesthood of all believers” and John Wesley demonstrated the evangelistic power of the laity by building Methodism on the shoulders of lay preachers and class leaders that caused this great movement to grow leaps and bounds;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church is strongly asked to consider amending or revising or re-structuring or re-writing the paragraphs of the Book of Discipline from 243 to 260 and the corresponding paragraphs that have direct implications to these paragraphs, related to the organization and administration of the local churches in the best interest of the future United Methodist Church envisioning the next fifty years, keeping the relevance of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the post modern world in mind and without violating the Restrictive Rules, Section III Paragraphs 17-22 in the Book of Discipline, by designing a team that would have, (1) clergy-deacon, elder, local pastors, student pastors, lay preachers, (2) laity-children, youth, young adults, seniors, and (3) church growth specialists regardless of their denominational background, involved in a process of conversation, dialogue and research that would bear a functional structure for local churches.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This resolution seems too vague in what it seeks to do. There is no board, agency, or body (other than General Conference) designated to work on the rewriting of these paragraphs. The team that is designated would simply be “involved in a process of conversation, dialogue and research.” It is unclear as to how this research would be translated into written paragraphs for *The Book of Discipline*.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 27: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: ENERGY POLICY

Submitted By: Al Olson and Lloyd Shepherd

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, ¶160.I. The Natural World, remind us that “all creation is the Lord’s and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it;” and

WHEREAS energy issues are addressed in the 2004 Book of Resolutions: 5. Energy Policy Statement (adopted 1980, amended and readopted 2000); 6. U.S. Energy Policy and United Methodist Responsibility (adopted 2004); and 7. Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future (adopted 1992, amended and readopted 2004); and

WHEREAS those resolutions recognize the threat to the planet of human activity, the linkage of climate change and energy policy, the imperative need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, and the concern for justice in creating a new energy policy; and

WHEREAS the use of coal, the least expensive means of generating electricity, will increase in the USA and around the world in years to come despite the fact that coal-fired power plants currently are the greatest source of carbon emissions into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS while the United States will not be the major contributor of carbon monoxide emissions from coal-fired power plants, it is appropriate, if not absolutely essential, that we lead a global effort to quickly and dramatically reduce those emissions; and

WHEREAS appropriate grants and subsidies have helped to create low carbon emission technologies and development of alternative means of generating power, but these approaches have not been employed widely due to the lack of meaningful economic incentives; and

WHEREAS there is a strong and growing conviction within the expert community that a tax on carbon dioxide emissions is the most efficient, if not the only way, to quickly bring about a reduction in these life-threatening emissions into the atmosphere,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The United Methodist Church, recognizing that humankind has but a small window of time to deal with climate change, calls for an urgent national priority to be the establishment of an energy policy that will reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the cornerstone of this new energy policy be the imposition of a carbon emissions tax on power generation enterprises that will:

- Provide incentives for utilization of carbon capture and storage technology in coal-fired power generation.
- Replace the system of grants and subsidies currently in use.
- Result in energy price levels that invite expansion of alternate energy sources.
- Reduce the uncertainty in energy costs.
- Provide appropriate relief from other forms of taxation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such a tax:

- Be implemented over time so that the economy and the public can adjust.
- Be a shift from other taxes so that the system, essentially, is revenue neutral.
- Will not unfairly increase the financial burden on the poor, the elderly, or any other group,

See Social Principles, ¶160.I. The Natural World

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

(vote – 5 concurrence; 2 non-concurrence)

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The committee generally agreed that our nation's energy policy seems unfocused. However, this resolution seeks to resolve in a few lines about taxes what governmental departments take volumes to attempt to explain and understand. Disagreement centered on whether the carbon emissions tax parts of this resolution is so far beyond both the scope of the problem with our nation's energy policy and beyond our understanding and knowledge of the problem and the tax code. However, the committee did decide that this uncertainty should not keep us from seeking to move forward as a church and a nation to be a part of the solution in these environmental issues.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 28: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE FOR OUR DAY

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author's Rationale: The decline of mainline denominations can be traced in part to the clash of modern world views with ancient and medieval world views. This petition, if adopted, would set in motion dialogues that could bridge the gap between those world views to the benefit of the Church.

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS theologians from Paul to Augustine to Aquinas to Luther and Calvin have appropriately emphasized a personal relationship with God, and

WHEREAS John Wesley, appropriate to his time of moving into the industrial revolution added, "The gospel of Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness", and

WHEREAS theologies were developed concerning God's role in Creation consistent with their understanding of Creation, and

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church, in its Doctrinal Standards and General Rules, expressed its understanding of both God's role in Creation and God's relationship to humans, and

WHEREAS in the interests of unity, the founders of The United Methodist Church endowed the articles of faith with permanence through the Restrictive Rules,

BUT

WHEREAS, while affirming the historic expressions of faith, The United Methodist Church sees in its "Our Theological Task," the need to update theology as knowledge and circumstances dictate, and

WHEREAS knowledge and circumstances regarding Creation has changed dramatically as we have moved into an age of cosmology, quantum physics, information technology, biological innovation, and global warming,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Board of Church and Society and General Board of Discipleship jointly conduct a dialogue with theologians, scientists, clergy and others both within and beyond The United Methodist Church to examine current Christian theologies and assess their relevance to current knowledge and circumstances, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding for such a dialogue be met through readjustment of budgets approved by the General Council on Finance and Administration and/or application of grants and gifts designated for this purpose, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is encouraged to engage in similar dialogues in its geographical area, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report with recommendations for appropriate theological additions and clarifications for our day be submitted to the 2012 General Conference for adoption.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The truth of God will continue to be manifested as human knowledge in and of the world grows. Christians do not need to fear knowledge as long as we do not use it to become “puffed up” (1 Corinthians 8:1). This open dialogue of leaders in their respective fields will foster cooperation and learning and give United Methodists the opportunity to dialogue with others who may not currently hold similar opinions.

Conference Action: Concurrence

Petition # 29: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: #79 SPIRITUAL UNITY IN HUMAN DIVERSITY

Submitted By: Rev. Amy DeLong, Kairos CoMotion

Author’s Rationale: We hear much about doctrinal unity being based on historic understanding of our Christian tradition but not so much about new understandings being brought by the Holy Spirit (John 16:12). It is helpful to structure ways to better hear that which is less heard and so a proposed emphasis upon a Theological Task Sunday. The vehicle for this is a modification of an already passed Resolution to both sharpen its perspective, to make it more positive, and to broaden its effect with a practical application.

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS the tension between Spiritual and Human, Unity and Diversity is in constant need of review for the purpose of seeing God at work in every part of life, and

WHEREAS the gift of edging into new understandings of Jesus' ministry among us is important to fulfill our past understandings and to aid us in better imitating his presence in our day, and

WHEREAS it is helpful to have specific vehicles through which to practice our theological methodology (such as a special Sunday to highlight a particular value),

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that #79 in *The Book of Resolutions* be amended as follows:

79. Spiritual Unity in Human Diversity

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church ~~is experiencing conflicting honors and critiques experiences of a variety of~~ expressions of faith and biblical theology; **and**

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church incorporates confessional traditions (i.e., the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith from *The Book of Discipline*, 1992) and inclusive tradition ("The Catholic Spirit" sermon by John Wesley); **and**

WHEREAS, *The Book of Discipline*, 1992 (Part II: "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task") "preserves the inherent tension between doctrinal standards and theological exploration ... [and] involves dialogue, debate, and some conflict" ("Biblical Wisdom and Current Theological Ferment," Council of Bishops, ~~October 31—November 4, 1994~~); **and**

WHEREAS, maintaining an inclusive spirit about doctrinal, theological, and language issues serves the greater purpose of helping people to affirm faith in Jesus Christ and to appropriate the historic confessions of the Church; **and**

WHEREAS, ~~the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel lesson for the Second Sunday of Easter (John 21:19-31) recounts a growth of faith even through doubt, absence, and differing experiences; confessing faith in scripture truth honors rich diversity in the biblical witness and informs a deeper understanding among people of faith;~~ **and**

WHEREAS, "indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.... [and] God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.... The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas, our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another" (I Corinthians 12:14-25);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United Methodist Church reject any spirit that seeks to divide the body of Christ (and especially The United Methodist Church) ~~and that cuts off the confessing and inclusive heritages by which United Methodists know themselves to be people of God;~~ **and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we affirm our biblical faith in Jesus Christ and the spiritual gift of unity in human diversity; **and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Second Sunday of Easter be designated “Our Theological Task Sunday” to highlight ¶104. SECTION 4 - OUR THEOLOGICAL TASK of our Book of Discipline.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This resolution is an amendment of our current Resolution #79 in *The Book of Resolutions*. It seeks to sharpen the focus of the resolution by providing for a Theological Task Sunday, encouraging dialogue and conversations about “our biblical faith in Jesus Christ,” seeking “unity in human diversity.”

Conference Action: Concurrence

**Petition # 30: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS:
HOMOSEXUALITY**

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: I present this resolution as a means of ending the partisan scuffling over whether all homosexuals are natural or an abomination to God. As Jesus said of eunuchs, (see Matthew 19:12), some are God-made and some are man-made. So it is with all of us! And only the harmful treatment of ourselves and each other needs to be addressed.

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS the debate in the church over homosexuality derives primarily from use of Scripture to support a personal preference or a prejudice on both “sides” of the debate; and

WHEREAS human knowledge and experience shows that all of us have elements of the heterosexual and homosexual, more or less, in our own natures; and

WHEREAS medicine has identified genetic and hormonal differences that are a part of the natural course of human birthing, and not therefore different from the nature of being red-haired or left handed,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church affirm that homosexuality is on a continuum of sexuality with heterosexuality and therefore be seen in the natural God-made way for human life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Conference also affirm that some people anywhere along that continuum of sexual behavior may stray into behaviors that are not true for them as individuals and therefore need help and patience to find their own true sexual nature, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, rather than be against one kind of natural sexuality as opposed to another kind, we focus on challenging those behaviors that are

untrue to that individual, or are exploitative, violent, or otherwise cause harm to any other individuals.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The statements on human sexuality made in *The Book of Discipline* are understood to be the “rule of law” for United Methodists. This resolution would add little to discussions on sexuality that has not already been said.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 31: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: UNIQUENESS OF CHRISTIANITY

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

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The Resolution:

WHEREAS there has been a call to the denomination to take a stand on its theology, and

WHEREAS that call has been to be faithful to Scripture, and that application of Scripture has been almost exclusively identified as the grounds to remove practicing homosexuals from membership and leadership in our church, and

WHEREAS we need to go back and identify our spiritual roots to withstand this attempt to divide our church with an issue that requires study rather than prejudice,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that General Conference of the United Methodist Church affirm its General Rules (Do no harm, do good, and participate in the church. See ¶103) and the Wesley Quadrilateral (taking the content of our faith from the Scriptures, from tradition, from reason, and from experience. See ¶104); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Conference affirm the Armenian nature of our theology (taken by John Wesley from the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius who emphasized Paul’s Philippians 2:12 teaching of “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” as a counter to “Sola Scriptura” and “Sola Fide” of other Protestant Reformers and led Wesley to his emphasis on sanctification where he did not use “Are you saved?” but rather “Are you going on to perfection?”); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that United Methodists be “known by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15-21), “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 7:12), “Love God and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:25-37), and “That you have done it to the least of these you have done it unto me” (Matthew 25: 31-46).

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This resolution seeks to restate United Methodist doctrines that are already clearly stated in *The Book of Discipline*, specifically in the sections entitled, “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task.” This resolution is redundant and unnecessary.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 32: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: CASE REVIEW PANEL

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: I have seen good pastors destroyed by cruel, thoughtless, and incompetent handling of complaints over the last quarter century. The procedures used have been unfair.

The Case Review Panel will find some cases were handled with appropriate intent but will also find many ignored *The Book of Discipline* and the facts of the case. It is time to have independent review so that the truth about our processes can be seen and shared appropriately.

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The Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference establish a Case Review Panel to examine any cases since 1980 where pastors felt they had been treated unfairly in order to identify breakdowns in how our administrative and judicial processes worked in their cases.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Review Panel be made up of three retired clergy and four laity (two lawyers, one personnel expert, and one at large member) who have not been related to any of the cases acted upon by committees, courts, boards or councils since 1980, and that their election be by the General Conference after nomination on the floor of General Conference so that the panel can be convened to organize and begin its work by the end of July, 2008.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that their review be primarily directed to the kinds of mistakes made so that any future legislation relating to the complaint processes will at least minimize those mistakes and that those mistakes be identified for the Council of Bishops, General Council on Finance and Administration, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry, and the 2012 General Conference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that secondarily, if any of the cases were egregious in their handling, that the panel recommend actions to the appropriate Annual Conference that could make those situations “whole.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the expenses for the panel be covered by General Council on Finance and Administration but that the expenses related to those bringing their cases be covered by those people, their advocates, and/or their family seeking relief.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that hearings of the panel be held in all five United States Jurisdictions in places as central in those areas as possible.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This resolution is not supported for two main reasons. First, creating a Case Review Panel will not lessen the opportunities for “breakdowns ... in administrative and judicial processes.” Second, the scope of trying to hear “any cases since 1980 where pastors felt they have been treated unfairly” seems too comprehensive. Though this does not dismiss the understanding that our system does, at times, foster injustice, this resolution does not provide a suitable response to this justice issue within The United Methodist Church.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 33: AMEND THE BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS: ANNUAL CONFERENCE JUDICIARY

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author’s Rationale: Because of the lack of training of bishops and other conference leaders about the limits set by *The Book of Discipline* and by the rules of the annual conference, conference members need to have a more direct means to challenge the actions of conference administrators and bishops to attain a balance of powers in the conference.

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The Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference establish a study commission funded out of the General Council on Finance and Administration to report petitions to the 2012 General Conference which sets up an annual conference judicial council to provide checks and balances to the power of the bishop and other administrative leaders in the Annual Conference.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: The purpose of this resolution, as stated in the author’s rationale, is “the lack of training of bishops and other conference leaders.” Creating an entirely new level of the judiciary as a result of this study will take a minimum of 4 years to implement and will not deal with the lack of training for bishops and conference leaders.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Petition # 34: PETITION TO AMEND ¶304.2 & 304.3 HIGHER STANDARDS FOR MINISTRY

Submitted By: Rev. Jerry Eckert

Author's Rationale: The Old Testament places several evil behaviors along with their prohibition of homosexuality, such as those listed in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The New Testament likewise adds other behaviors such as those listed in Romans and First Corinthians. Other passages offer positive behaviors that should be followed. For consistency, with the Biblical witness, I petition General Conference to add the above prohibitions.

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The Petition:

BE IT RESOLVED, that ¶304.2 & 304.3 of *The Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

2. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of an ordained minister on the lives of other persons both within and outside the Church, the Church expects those who seek ordination to make complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life **as contained in Scripture**. To this end they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, **represented by such Scriptural dictums as these:**

- a. **never slaughtering cattle for food without first presenting it at the door of the church so the pastor can sprinkle its blood all over the altar and burn its fat (Leviticus 23:1-2);**
- b. **never uncovering the nakedness of your aging parents, your infant children, nor your wife when she is having her period (Leviticus 18:6-19);**
- c. **never participating in the life of the church if you are castrated or are born of unwed parents (Deuteronomy 23:1-2);**
- d. **never lending at interest except to foreigners (Deuteronomy 23:19);**
- e. **never believing an accusation unless it is attested to by two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15);**
- f. **never refusing to stone your rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21);**
- g. **never wearing clothing made of two different stuffs, like wool and linen (Deuteronomy 22:11);**
- h. **never failing to repay a loan before nightfall (Deuteronomy 24:13);**
- i. **never perverting justice (Deuteronomy 24:17);**
- j. **never being filled with envy, malice, deceit, heartlessness, and haughtiness (Romans 1:29-30);**
- k. **never being greedy (I Corinthians 6:9);**
- l. **never do unto others what you would not have them do unto you (Matthew 7:12);**
- m. **never failing to love God and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39);**

n. **and never failing to uphold** fidelity in marriage and ~~celibacy~~ **chastity** in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world, **particularly those noted above. The practices of failure to obey all Old and New Testament laws and directives on behavior along with** ~~The practice of homosexuality is~~ **are** incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

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Recommendation of the Petitions Committee: Non-concurrence

Rationale of the Petitions Committee: This petition seems to be making the point about enforcing behavior prohibited by certain Scriptures. The addition of these items will not change the original implication of this paragraph, which leaves the prohibition of ¶304.3 intact.

Conference Action: Non-Concurrence

Action Item 19: Proposed Balloting Procedures for the Election of Delegates to the 2008 General and Jurisdictional Conferences

Submitted by: Kevin Rice Myers, Conference Secretary

WHEREAS Conference Rule **140.0.0 General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegations** reads in part:

140.1.0 Nominations and Elections:

Lay and clergy United Methodists of Wisconsin who are interested in election as General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates may submit brief biographical sketches of themselves which will be distributed by the Conference Secretary in the pre-Conference materials. The Conference Secretary shall present the balloting procedures during the opening plenary of an election year session for adoption by the Annual Conference.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following procedures shall be used by the 2007 Wisconsin Annual Conference Session for the election of delegates to the 2008 General and Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church:

Balloting:

- A. Ballots may be taken any time the Conference is in session. Before each ballot after the first ballot, the Bishop shall read the name and vote count of each person who received 10 or more votes on the prior ballot, the names of persons previously elected, and the number of persons to be elected on the present ballot.
- B. When sufficient time has elapsed to mark the ballot forms, the Bishop shall call upon all those voting to stand and remain standing until their ballot forms have been collected.

Valid Ballots:

- A. To be valid, a ballot form must include votes for the exact number of eligible individuals that are to be elected on that ballot. If it contains votes for more or fewer persons than are to be elected on that ballot, it shall be an invalid ballot form.
- B. Ballot forms will be scanned electronically, and must be marked with a Number 2 pencil. Ballot forms marked in ink, which cannot be scanned, will be invalid.
- C. Ballot forms that contain votes for someone who is not eligible for election will be invalid.
- D. Ballot forms that the scanner does not read will be checked for accuracy. If those who are counting the ballot forms can readily discern the proper number, the ballot form will be corrected, and providing that all other conditions are correct, it will be counted as valid.

Election:

For each of the first six ballots cast, a majority of all the valid ballot forms shall be necessary for election. On the seventh ballot the persons receiving the highest number of votes will be elected, up to the number needed to complete the General Conference delegation. The same procedure using not more than seven additional ballots will be employed for the election of Jurisdictional Conference delegates.

Reserve Delegates:

The Reserve Delegates to General Conference shall consist of the delegates elected to Jurisdictional Conference, in the order of their election. Following the ballot on which the final Jurisdictional Conference Delegate(s) are elected, then one additional ballot shall be cast to elect two Reserve Delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference. Only those candidates who received 10 or more votes on a prior ballot shall be eligible for election as reserve delegates. The two persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 20: Resolution Towards Peace With Justice For Israel/Palestine

Submitted by: Rev. Grace Cajuat, Appleton: First UMC & Conference Board of Global Ministries

WHEREAS the lands of Israel/Palestine have been considered holy by Christians, Muslims and Jews alike for centuries, and

WHEREAS this is the 40th year of the occupation of the West Bank and next year is the 60th year of the Nakba (catastrophe) which left thousands of Palestinians inside and outside of Palestine in refugee status, and

WHEREAS we are called to support members of Christ's church around the world, including Palestinian Christians who are being forced to leave the Holy Land due to Israel's confiscation of their property and the severe hardships of living under occupation, and

WHEREAS the Fourth Geneva Convention forbids an occupying power from moving its own people into territory it occupies, and there are currently more than 400,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories, with thousands of new settler housing units being planned and constructed, and

WHEREAS the Israelis are unilaterally building a 400 mile long, 26 foot high concrete “security” wall with watch posts and razor wire inside the Green Line set by the United Nations in 1947, isolating thousands of Palestinians from their crops, jobs, family & sources of trade, and

WHEREAS the Israelis are confiscating and demolishing family homes, farms, vineyards and villages that have been in the family of Palestinians for hundreds of years in order to build this wall and more Israeli settlements, and

WHEREAS the Israeli government is increasing the oppression of the Palestinian population, both Christian and Muslim, with walls, checkpoints, armed guards and dwindling human rights, including access to water, and

WHEREAS the United States contributes more than 2 billion dollars each year in military aid to Israel and many U.S. companies are selling equipment and making investments in the state of Israel that is directly contributing to the plight of the Palestinians, and

WHEREAS the Council of Bishops called for all United Methodist Churches to study this issue in a statement issued in May 2001 and the General Conference in 2004 passed a resolution that we advocate for peace with justice for the Palestinian people, and

WHEREAS the United Methodist Church should not profit from the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land or the destruction of Palestinian homes, orchards, and lives, and

WHEREAS we are committed to ensuring that our denomination’s money is used in a manner consistent with our beliefs, with international law, and with Christ’s teaching,

WE THEREFORE call upon the Wisconsin Conference to form a study group ~~to investigate the possibility of applying pressure on the Israeli government to make a fair and just peace with the Palestinians by divesting all church funds from all industries doing business with Israel, especially those directly contributing to the oppression of the Palestinian people;~~ to investigate what, if any, action the Conference can take to contribute to the resolution of this issue.

AND WE FURTHER RESOLVE that this task force be appointed by the Bishop and charged to bring a report and recommendations to the 2008 Annual Conference;

AND WE FURTHER RESOLVE that the secretary of the Annual Conference should write to our legislators calling for a just peace and calling on them to consider decreasing military funding that is contributing to this oppression;

AND WE FURTHER RESOLVE that each local church and/or circuit should study the issue of Israel/Palestine and take action to work for a just peace in whatever ways they believe would be most effective.

Conference Action: Approved as Amended

Action Item 21: In Support of Dental Access for Low-Income People in Wisconsin
Submitted by: St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Manitowoc, WI

Whereas, most dentists in Wisconsin do not serve Medicaid and other low-income persons, citing low reimbursement rates (under 40% of cost) as their main reason; and

Whereas, on February 28, 2007, 12-year-old Deamonte Driver of Maryland died from a brain infection resulting from a tooth abscess since he was unable to get access to basic dental care; and

Whereas, thousands of Wisconsin low-income residents suffer from untreated dental abscesses each year which could easily result in their deaths; and

Whereas, dental health affects general health and a recent Harvard study has connected poor dental health with pancreatic cancer, and diabetes, heart and lung disease and possible low birth weight babies have already been connected; and

Whereas, Wisconsin is mandated to provide actual dental access to Medicaid recipients, not just a plan on paper; and

Whereas, according to a recent Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA) survey 80% of dentists surveyed stated that they would accept Medicaid clients if their reimbursement rates were increased to the 75th percentile which could be achieved ONLY through legislation;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Wisconsin Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church actively renew its position favoring dental access for low-income people; and

Be It Further Resolved, that members of the United Methodist Church write to all Wisconsin legislators urging them to co-sponsor Senate Bill 117 and companion bill Assembly Bill 237, the "Two Cents for Tooth Sense" bills, which would tax 2 cents on a 12 ounce can of soda and would fund the Medicaid dental system, allow for increased Medicaid dental reimbursement and dental access for low-income citizens; and

Be It Further Resolved, that members of the United Methodist Church attend hearings concerning Senate Bill 117 and Assembly Bill 237 (Two Cents for Tooth Sense bills) and actively lobby for their passage and increased dental access for low-income citizens.

Conference Action: Approved as Amended

Action Item 22: Resolution on Eliminating Seminary Debt

Submitted by: Rev. John Sumwalt

Whereas many of our seminary and course of study students incur significant debt while preparing for ministry, and

Whereas starting salaries in the church are generally low, and some graduates find it necessary to consolidate their loans over 25 years, and

Whereas this is a burden that some clergy families carry for over half of their time of service, making it difficult to save for retirement, and

Whereas we as the Wisconsin Conference, local churches and individual disciples of Christ have a responsibility to share the financial burdens of those God has called into ministry as ordained and licensed local pastors,

Be it resolved that the Wisconsin Annual Conference establish a task force of seven persons to be appointed by Bishop Lee to study the financial needs of current seminary and course of study students, and clergy under appointment who have graduated in the past ten years, for the purpose of discerning the impact of their educational debt load by using relevant data such as:

- 1) inviting persons in these groups to respond anonymously to a survey about their educational debt load,
- 2) surveying financial aid officers in our United Methodist seminaries and other seminaries with significant numbers of Wisconsin Conference graduates to determine the level of support they provide to students and their future plans for providing student grants and loans,
- 3) gathering information from ~~other~~ annual conferences and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Office of Loans and Scholarships about the level of support they provide to seminary students, the source of their loans and scholarships, i.e. from conference budgets, capital fund drives, advance specials etc.
- 4) seeking information from the General Board of Higher Education And Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry, about the results of other studies that have been conducted about the burden of seminary debt.

Be it further resolved that the task force report their findings and make recommendations for addressing this need to the 2008 Annual Conference.

Conference Action: Approved as Amended

Action Item 23: Support of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry

Submitted by: Nelson Bonilla, on behalf of the Hispanic Ministries Committee

Whereas, the Hispanic-American population increased by 60 percent to a total of 37 million during the decade of 1990 to 2000, is now 12.5 percent of the total population of the United States, and is projected to increase to 43.7 million by 2020: and

Whereas, 57 percent of the Hispanic persons over age 25 have completed high school compared to 88.4 percent of non-Hispanics; and

Whereas, the poverty level for Hispanic persons is 22.8 percent compared to 7.7 percent for non-Hispanics, and 40 percent of Hispanic children live under the poverty level; and

Whereas, God and our Wesleyan heritage call us as the church of Jesus Christ to be in ministry with people of all races, nationalities, ethnic groups and social classes, especially among the poor and marginalized persons in our communities; and

Whereas, many United Methodist annual conferences are working toward fulfillment of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry's goals, including the development of faith communities and community ministries, the training of lay missionaries and the establishment or revitalization of congregations, and continue to need support and mentoring; and

Whereas, 32 annual conferences have received grants for the implementation of the plan to date and many more are in the application process; and

Whereas, 30 annual conferences have established positions for directors and coordinators of Hispanic ministry and there are many others that would benefit; and

Whereas, some annual conferences are beginning to resource non-Hispanic congregations reaching out to Hispanic communities; and

Whereas, the National Plan provides strategic direction for local congregations in ministry with Hispanics:

Reaching out in justice ministry

Evangelization, church development, and congregational renewal

Leadership development, both lay and clergy

Whereas, the North Central Jurisdiction has a fast growing Hispanic population in the United States, and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Conference area has a growing Hispanic community and it is expected that before the year 2020 that number will increase; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Conference is been a recipient of a grant from the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry; and

Whereas, the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry continues to provide resources, facilitators, and training for the Wisconsin Conference Hispanic Ministries and local churches; and

Whereas; the Wisconsin Conference has several persons trained as lay missionaries, several active worship groups, and outreach projects throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Therefore, let it be resolved that at the Wisconsin Annual Conference, meeting June 10-13, 2007, affirms the continuation of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry for the ~~2005-2008~~ 2009-2012 Quadrennium; and

Be it further resolved that the Wisconsin Annual Conference request the 2008 General Conference to approve the continuation of the plan and provide sufficient funds to fulfill its goals.

Conference Action: Approved as Edited

Action Item 24: Resolution on Recognizing the Legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr

Submitted by: Commission on Religion and Race

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr., was born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He skipped grades nine and twelve and entered Morehouse College in Atlanta at age fifteen. He graduated and later received a PhD in religion, but at nineteen he was ordained in the Baptist Church and held pastorates throughout his life. He married Coretta Scott on June 18, 1953 and they had four children, two boys and two girls, and

Whereas shortly before he was killed by an assassin's bullet on April 4, 1968, he said these words* about his death:

“Say that I was a drum major for justice,

Say that I was a drum major for peace,

Say that I was a drum major for righteousness.”

**Sermon on February 4, 1968 at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia*

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr., the son and grandson of pastors was ordained in the Baptist Church at the age of nineteen. He remained a pastor at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta or Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama throughout his life. He was a powerful preacher; his was a message of love and justice for all God's children. He often talked about the Beloved Community and the immorality of inequality. Probably his best-known sermon is, “I Have a Dream,” delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963, and

Whereas, to Martin Luther King, Jr., racial discrimination was wrong and immoral and unchristian and unlike the teachings of Jesus. To try to bring about equality for all God's beloved children, by non-violent methods of resistance, he knowingly broke unjust laws and was subsequently jailed many times, while leading the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, and

Whereas, Martin Luther King, Jr., was a man of God who exemplified Christian discipleship by advocating peace with justice who was honored by the secular world and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 (the youngest recipient). His idea of peace was more than the absence of war, although he was opposed to the Vietnam War.

Whereas real peace will come when all are treated equally and poverty is no more. To bring about peace, Martin Luther King, Jr., advocated and practiced non-violent resistance or civil disobedience which he learned from Mahatma Gandhi and Henry David Thoreau, most famously in the Montgomery, Alabama bus strike, which resulted in Negroes being allowed to sit anywhere on a bus, and

Whereas in acknowledgment of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, monumental contributions toward racial equality and civil rights, President Ronald Reagan in 1986 signed into law a bill that makes the third Monday in January a national holiday for United States government workers. This law has been followed by laws affecting state and municipal workers, as well as schools and universities. And

Whereas the Christian community has engaged in practices of racial discrimination in its patterns of encouraging segregated worship services and segregated congregations on the basis of race, despite its promises of reform, and closes the doors of membership to persons on the basis of gender and differing mental or physical abilities:

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Christian community represented in the congregations of The United Methodist Church shall be encouraged to honor Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., commemorating his life work as a sterling example of martyrdom in the Christian tradition; and

Be It Further Resolved, that each congregation and/or circuit in the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church shall recognize and celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy of love in the way most appropriate to that congregation – be it in sermon, song fest, forum, community gatherings, and so on.

Conference Action: Approved

Action Item 25: Resolution on the Discontinuance of Richfield: Emmanuel UMC, Richfield, Wisconsin

Submitted by: Emmanuel Richfield SPRC, Emmanuel Richfield Board of Trustees, and Cabinet.

WHEREAS, Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield has served in faithful ministry for 155 years in the Richfield Township of Washington County, Wisconsin; and,

WHEREAS, people have come to know and experience God through the ministries of worship, mission, study, and fellowship in Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield; and

WHEREAS, at a church conference held on April 29, 2007 the members voted to discontinue; and,

WHEREAS, the Metro-North District Board of Church Location and Building, the Conference Board of Trustees, area presiding Bishop Linda Lee, and the District Superintendents have approved the discontinuance of Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield; and,

WHEREAS, proper care has been given to records and other legal and official documents; and,

WHEREAS, pastoral care has been given to the members of Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield and efforts have been made to transfer membership to area United Methodist churches; and,

WHEREAS, the property of Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield will be transferred to Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church, Menomonee Falls, WI on June 30, 2007 for the payment of \$1.00; and,

WHEREAS, any monies held in the designated Memorial Fund account will be given to United Methodist Children's Services; and,

WHEREAS, any monies remaining in Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield accounts will go toward the upkeep and insurance of the property of Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield and will be transferred to Emmanuel Community United Methodist Church, Menomonee Falls,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church meeting in the 38th session, June 10-13, 2007, at Middleton Wisconsin, declares Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Richfield, of Richfield, Wisconsin (Washington County), discontinued as of June 30, 2007, and direct the Metro-North Superintendent to be the officer of the Conference to implement this action.

Conference Action: Approved

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