

# Daily Christian Advocate

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Cleveland, Ohio

Thursday, May 11, 2000

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## Peaceful Protests Emphasize the Division

As delegates arrived at the convention center Wednesday morning, they were greeted by songs and words in protest of the United Methodist policies regarding homosexuality. Representatives gathered on the mall outside the convention center with songs of praise and words of unity. Present in the protest were United Methodist bishops William W. Dew Jr., Jesse R. DeWitt, Calvin D. McConnell, Susan M. Morrison, C. Joseph Sprague, Mary Ann Swenson, and Joseph H. Yeakel. In circles of prayer and unity, participants chanted the message "We love The United Methodist Church."

At the edge of the crowd were counter-protesters who held signs "GAYS, Got Aids Yet!, Romans 1:27, Romans 6:23" and "Leviticus 20:13, Man w/Man, Abomination, Put to Death." They shouted degrading and inflammatory words against gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons. The counter-protest was not associated with the Transforming Congregation movement or any United Methodist caucus or group. As rally participants approached the convention center, the voices of the counter-demonstration grew louder, and a woman offered back, "We love you."

The protest included brief speeches by several bishops and leaders of groups which supported the protest: Greg Dell, In All Things Charity; Gil Caldwell, United Methodists of Color for Full Inclusivity; Marilyn Alexander, Reconciling Congregations Program; Mel White,



ARRESTED – Bishop C. Joseph Sprague (in clerical collar) is among protest leaders arrested by Cleveland police for blocking the entrance to the convention center. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Soulforce; and the Rev. James Lawson, a United Methodist civil rights leader who worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Other participants were Yolanda King, eldest daughter of Dr. King; Rodney Powell, a co-worker of Dr. King; and Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mohandas Gandhi.

The protest marchers continued to the exit ramp of the convention center where they shouted, "No exit without justice." By 1:30 p.m. EDT, police had arrested 185 persons, including Bishop Sprague, charging them with "aggravated disorderly conduct." The arrests were orderly, as each protester was fingerprinted and fined \$180. Many persons received bail money from United Methodists who could not participate in the march.

Inside the convention center, a quiet protest began as Ohio West Area Bishop Judith Craig brought the conference to order. In the balcony, a group arose and chanted, "Wide is God's welcome; extend the table!" Several hundred persons stood and sang "We are marching in the light of God."

Lawson called for a moratorium on negative language regarding homosexuals in *The Book of Discipline* and on any witch hunts of clergy ministering to gay and lesbian persons. Lawson drew parallels to the civil rights movement. "Immorality is the charge aimed at the Black community for 400 years," Lawson said.

—John Thornburg and Brad Motta



Hecklers shout and hold anti-gay signs during the gay rights march outside the convention center. A UMNS photo by Paul Jeffrey

## 'Being Jailed on Behalf of the Gospel' Is Appropriate, Bishop Says

The arrest of Chicago Area Bishop C. Joseph Sprague by Cleveland police Wednesday during a Soulforce-organized demonstration is a proper expression of the episcopal office, according to three United Methodist bishops.

Bishops Mary Ann Swenson, Denver Area; Woodie W. White, Indianapolis Area; and Kenneth Carder, Nashville Area, answered queries from the news media on homosexuality and other issues at a Wednesday news conference.

"I do think that it is appropriate that Bishop Sprague was arrested," Bishop Swenson said. "I believe it is appropriate for us to witness in a variety of ways, and at times that means not only visiting people in jail, but being jailed ourselves on behalf of the gospel. Even among the Council of Bishops, we have different points of view and different ways of expressing our witness. I wanted to be supportive and in relationship with those who were outside and want to push for change."

Bishop White said he wanted the demonstrators to know the church heard them and was listening. "There were those of us who wanted to be sure we exemplified a spirit of hospitality and openness to hear whatever those who have words to say to us as the church," he said. The bishop also recalled his involvement in a General Conference floor protest three decades ago.



**CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE** – Leaders commit an act of civil disobedience as they block the entrance to the convention center in protest of The United Methodist Church's policies regarding homosexuality.  
A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Calling for United Methodists to take a pastoral approach rather than a disciplinary approach to homosexuality, Bishop Carder reminded the media that United Methodist bishops have a long history of expressing their individual conscience. "We teach . . . individually, but we also have a corporate teaching role. There may seem to be . . . some conflict between that. We as bishops, however, in the Council of Bishops, do not feel that is in conflict.

"We are united in the Council of Bishops in our covenant that we will abide by the *Discipline* [and] enforce the *Discipline* as the *Discipline* requires. We are free to express our individual conscience, however."

The bishops stressed the church's commitment to the *Discipline's* support of full civil rights for homosexuals, including the recognition of the church as a safe place for people to struggle with sexual identity.

Bishop Carder also said our differences over gay rights in United Methodism may be the place where the church can come to understand God in a different way. "On the issue of homosexuality, we are raising other issues such as the authority of Scripture, the nature of God, and the meaning of baptism," he said. "When we say the church is for all children, do we really mean all children?" Bishop Swenson hopes the church will be open to the gifts of all God's children, regardless of their orientation.

Bishop White expressed optimism about the church's future on the issue of homosexuality because of current positive language on gay rights. He noted the church does not condemn homosexual orientation, supports ministry with homosexuals and openness to homosexuals, and affirms civil rights for homosexual persons. "As a bishop, I

### Agenda for Thursday May 11

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 8:00 a.m.  | Choral Music   |
| 8:15 a.m.  | Worship Service  |
| 9:00 a.m.  | Committee on Calendar and Agenda Report                      |
| 9:10 a.m.  | Calendar Items   |
| 12:10 p.m. | Conference Announcements and Committee on Presiding Officers |
| 12:15 p.m. | Lunch Recess   |
| 2:20 p.m.  | Gathering Music  |
| 2:30 p.m.  | Calendar Items   |
| 5:30 p.m.  | Dinner Recess  |
| 7:20 p.m.  | Gathering Music  |
| 7:30 p.m.  | Report of the Committee on Agenda                            |
| 7:30 p.m.  | Calendar Items   |
| 10:25 p.m. | Announcements  |
| 10:30 p.m. | Adjournment  |



ANGUISHED — A woman cries while Cleveland police arrest people protesting The United Methodist Church's anti-homosexual policies.

A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

expect no pastor ever to close the door or membership to a person of homosexual orientation," he said.

When asked about the hate groups counter-demonstrating outside the convention center, all three bishops indicated those groups do not represent the church's views on homosexuality.

Wednesday's demonstration was Bishop Swenson's first time to experience the heckling of anti-gay hate groups. "It was very painful to hear [the hecklers]," she said. "I thought of myself being in Jerusalem and

getting to walk the Via Dolorosa and the streets in which Jesus walked. And remembering how when Jesus carried a cross, people heckled him and said ugly and harmful things to him."

"Across the spectrum, in this church, we agree all persons are persons of sacred worth, children of God. You don't heckle children of God and treat people with disrespect. We honor their sacredness as a child of God. When we abuse any of God's children, we abuse Jesus again," Bishop Carder said. He believes the church will become unified through its struggles on painful issues, including homosexuality. He also said the church is united in its common commitment to Jesus Christ and in its participation of Christ's mission of reconciliation and transformation in the world.

—Kurt Gwartney

### Where in the Convention Center is ...Brad Motta????

I am seated in an assigned seat. If you want to sit in these seats; you have to be "assigned" your seat by another body of the church. You have a unique viewpoint of the actions of the General Conference. It is a place where people support and help one another in their ministry. It is a place that has seen and continues to see some of the great leaders of the church provide spiritual and moral support.

See photo on page 2206 for the location.

## Ecumenical Leaders Praise United Methodist Efforts; Bishops Honor Love, Bannister

Dr. Janice Love and the Rev. Kathryn Bannister were presented with certificates of appreciation from the United Methodist Council of Bishops during an ecumenical celebration Wednesday at the 2000 General Conference.

Love, who said she had a passion to reach across "these great chasms that divide us," was honored for more than 20 years of promoting Christian unity through representing The United Methodist Church on the World Council of Churches. She served from 1975 through 1998.

Bannister, who opened the worship service celebrating Christian unity, is a local pastor in the Kansas West Conference and a president of the World Council of Churches. She was honored for her seven years' service on the World Council.

Bishop Melvin Talbert presented the awards. "As you meet here today, you are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses . . . who are praying for the Holy Spirit to strengthen our bonds," said Bishop William S. Skylstad of the National Council of Catholic Bishops, one of more than 15 ecumenical guests

He prayed that "in spreading biblical holiness throughout the land," we would find common paths we can walk together. Skylstad commended United Methodists for bringing zeal to the search for unity of faith and common purpose.

Acknowledging "we are facing many of the issues you are facing," Skylstad commended delegates for celebrating the witness of repentance and reconciliation for sins of racism. "Certainly your witness with the African-American churches is a witness for all our churches," he said.

Praising United Methodists for their leadership in ecumenical efforts, he said, "Christ . . . has called all of our churches together in unity."

Speaking for the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the Rev. Robert W. Edgar said, "God is challenging us as members of the body of Christ to recognize it's not too late." But he emphasized "the ecumenical community is committed to understanding the urgency for unity now."

The need for unity is great, he said, to work together to seek justice, care for the poor, and seek to change the world. Bishop William Boyd Grove welcomed the ecumenical guests.

The Most Rev. and Right Honorable George L. Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, preached at the morning worship service.

—Jackie Campbell

## Archbishop's Address, Peaceful Protest, Election Formula Pique Delegates' Interest

A wide variety of activities claimed delegates' attention Wednesday.

History was made as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. and Right Honorable George L. Carey, addressed the General Conference, the first head of the worldwide Anglican communion to do so. Clad in a purple cassock, the archbishop expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak to the spiritual descendants of John Wesley, an Anglican rector until his death.

Christians, Carey said, "must transcend the concern for the survival of the church and start to focus [their] concern upon the kingdom of God and its centrality to church and society." The archbishop said he "abandoned a long time ago a theology of unity that assumes it means uniformity and sameness."

Ecumenical visitors representing the African Methodist Episcopal, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, Nazarene, Orthodox, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Wesleyan churches were introduced. Also welcomed were representatives of the Consultation on Church Union, the International Council of Community Churches, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

San Francisco Area Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, the incoming ecumenical officer of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, recognized two United Methodist ecumenical leaders—Jan Love and Kathryn Bannister.

While the archbishop preached inside the convention center, 185 people, including a United Methodist bishop, were arrested for engaging in civil disobedience as a way of protesting United Methodist policies regarding homosexuality.

About 300 people participated in the rally organized by Soulforce, a coalition of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people and heterosexuals from a variety of faith backgrounds. The group is urging The United Methodist church and other mainline denominations to accept sexual minorities in the life of the church.

According to police officials, the protestors were charged with aggravated disorderly conduct. Chicago Area Bishop C. Joseph Sprague was among the first protestors arrested. At least nine other active or retired bishops participated in the rally but did not appear to have been arrested.



The Judicial Council handed down several decisions during the morning session. Affirming *The Book of Discipline*, the church's "supreme court" ruled that annual conferences may not "legally negate, ignore, or violate" Disciplinary provisions even when such disagreements are based upon conscientious objections. The court ruled the *Discipline* regulates every phase of the church's life and work.

In a second case, the council said the General Conference had voided a May 8 election by its own legislative action a day later. The delegates, the court held, voided the election of a person to serve the four remaining years of a council member's unexpired term by approving legislation deleting the age limit on members of the Judicial Council, thus assuming a vacancy that does not exist.

In a late morning news conference, bishops Kenneth L. Carder, Nashville Area; Mary Ann Swenson, Denver Area; and Woodie W. White, Indiana Area, expressed hope and optimism for the denomination.

"I think we are focused on a point where our church is in disagreement," said Bishop White. "But there are many more issues where we are in agreement." All three bishops voiced their belief that the current struggle with homosexuality issues can create a stronger United Methodist Church.

In legislation Wednesday, delegates encouraged congregations and parents to monitor their children's TV, video and movie viewing, as well as their Internet activity.

After almost an hour's debate, the conference approved a new formula for determining the number of delegates an annual conference can elect for General Conference. The new formula provides for one-half of the General Conference delegates to be elected on the basis of clergy membership. The allocation to each annual conference shall be proportional to its share of the total clergy in the church. The remaining delegates shall be allocated on the basis of local church membership in the conference. The allocation of each annual conference shall be proportional to its share of the total laity.

In every case, the delegation for a particular conference will include at least one clergy and one laity. If a conference has more delegates, the total must be half clergy and half laity. Supporters of the new formula say it will be fairer than the current system that is largely clergy based, and is long overdue.

—Robert Lear

## Women Bring Special Perspective to General Conference

"Women bring a uniqueness to General Conference," said Darlene T. Webb, a first-time lay delegate from the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. "Women help us look at the issues that relate to families, children, [and] pain and suffering in the world.

"They bring a needed balance," said the African-American woman who is a retired administrator of Delaware's Human Relations Commission.

The Rev. Stephanie Anna Hixon, a member of the General Secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, said women offer significant leadership.

"They're convening committees; they're well prepared," said Hixon. "And they're quick to express their convictions."

Historically, Hixon reflected, women have been acculturated not to speak up in meetings.

"Studies show us that parliamentary procedure is not a preferred method of decision-making for women," she said. And though she did not feel comfortable speaking in generalities because "women are diverse and have diverse experiences," she thought it could safely be said women tend to be inter-relational.

"The nature of General Conference can feel unwelcoming."

Anna Gail Workman, a diaconal minister in the North Carolina delegation, said, "I believe women are more connected to women's issues. For instance, four years ago, when the Korean Plan was proposed, the Korean female clergy were not happy. They felt left out. Being a female in ministry myself, I heard that loud and clear.

"I don't feel disenfranchised at this conference," she continued. "I never hesitate to speak up. In fact, I'm not sure anyone at this level hesitates. Any prejudice I've felt has been more geographical in nature than anything. When they hear that southern accent, there's that tendency to wonder, 'what are *you* going to know?'"

Even "geographical prejudice" is not so much prejudice as a lack of understanding, Workman said.

Sandra Burnett, lay delegate from the Memphis Conference, has noticed some differences in how women and men approach General Conference.

"I believe women are more attentive to issues that relate to children and nurturing-type ministries," said the president of Memphis Conference United Methodist Women. "Men seem more inclined to be in administrative and financial committees. And I did notice eight out of the 10 committee secretaries are female—as if that's a woman's job.

"But truthfully, I'm more disturbed about the lack of interpreters for Central Conference delegates and the way they are sometimes treated in committee. When a delegate from an African country spoke about an issue being seen only from an American perspective, the next speaker took us back to the issue as though [the previous speaker] had said nothing."

Webb concluded: "We have a way to go in how we respect each other for our gifts and graces."

—Cathy Farmer

## Spirit of Shalom Is Spreading, Says Bishop Sprague

Shalom is on the loose. So proclaimed General Conference delegates following the Communities of Shalom report, presented Monday by Chicago Area Bishop C. Joseph Sprague and the Rev. Myron F. McCoy, Northern Illinois Conference delegate and National Shalom Committee member.

The spirit of Shalom is spreading, Bishop Sprague said. In Philadelphia, a housing renovation project provides homes for area residents and creates 25 new jobs. Eight rural ministries dot the South Carolina countryside, and a mobile health ministry in Texas is thriving.

The ministry began in 1992 when The United Methodist Church responded to the Los Angeles riots by seeking to bring healing, wholeness, and hope to the neighborhoods wracked by the violence. *Shalom*, Hebrew for "peace," is an effort to equip individuals and churches to develop partnerships within communities to bring about positive change and to empower spiritual renewal.

Bishop Sprague noted Shalom training has been provided in 43 annual conferences, including Zimbabwe. Planning is under way for training in three additional Central Conference locations.

To date, more than 3,300 lay and clergy persons—representing more than 1,000 local churches and cooperative parishes—have received Shalom training. Teams have created successful partnerships and collaborative relationships that have yielded more than \$6 million in grants, matching funds and creative resources to sustain the various ministries.

Today more than 350 Shalom sites bring about systemic change anchored in the basic tenets of the Christian faith, McCoy said. "We did not imagine this ministry would become what it has," he said. "It has achieved solutions that could only be accomplished through the guidance of God."

—Andy Ellis

## Top 10 Reasons for Having Sign Language

10. You can communicate through windows.
9. Sign language is a 3-D language.
8. You can sign with your mouth full.
7. Hearing parents can communicate with their deaf child.
6. You can sign underwater.
5. Sign language is a cool way to express yourself.
4. You can communicate across a room without shouting.
3. Sign language is beautiful.
2. You can make friends with deaf people.
1. Sign language brings hearing and deaf people together!

—Kenneth Schroeder, first-reserve delegate, Baltimore-Washington Conference



LaVerle Carrington, Lincoln, Ill., translates General Conference plenary business into sign language for deaf attendees. —UMNS Photo by John Goodwin

## Sign Interpreters Should Be Required, Deaf Delegate Says

A reserve delegate who is deaf wants General Conference to provide American Sign Language interpreters when it meets in 2004.

General Conference is very interesting, and he is learning a lot from the discussions, said Kenneth Schroeder from the Baltimore-Washington Conference, but he wishes other deaf United Methodists from around the world could participate.

"I want to meet other deaf Methodists from other places," he signed. Even if there were no deaf delegates, interpreters are needed to allow deaf visitors to understand the deliberations and actions of General Conference, he added.

"It should be a mandate, I think," he signed.

Because he is a reserve delegate, the General Conference Commission provided no funding for deaf interpreters for him, according to Schroeder.

General Conference business manager Gary Bowen said all delegates and first reserves received a questionnaire asking if they had special needs. No one reported a need for sign interpretation, he said.

When the questionnaire was distributed, Schroeder did not receive one because he was a second reserve. He later moved to first-reserve position.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference and General Board of Global Ministries and General Board of Church and Society grants are sharing expenses of volunteer interpreters for Schroeder, according to the Rev. Peggy A. Johnson, Christ United Methodist Church of the Deaf,

Baltimore. The Baltimore-Washington delegate regrets, however, that limited GBGM deaf-ministry program dollars must be spent in this way.

Members of the National Committee on Deaf Ministry were pleased their proposal for "strengthening the connection with the greater deaf community" was passed Tuesday. They were disappointed, however, that their funding request was not included in agency budgets but had to be referred to the General Council on Finance and Administration.

The committee submitted its budget two years ago and expected it to be included in the usual pre-General Conference budgeting process as part of GBGM's budget, according to Johnson. Only when Johnson arrived at General Conference did she and committee members learn their request would be added to the "laundry list" of off-budget items to compete for limited resources, she said.

"I think they don't understand the process," said Dennis Belton, GCFA internal audit director. "If they asked GBGM for funding, why did they not get an answer? If you don't get an answer, don't you think you should follow up?"

The National Committee on Deaf Ministry has completed a study of deaf ministries throughout The United Methodist Church (see *DCA*, pp. 821-824). Only 19 percent of United Methodist churches have some means of accessibility for deaf people, according to the Rev. LaVerle Carrington of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference.

—Dean Snyder

## 'So Great a Cloud of Witnesses' Video Inspires Delegates to Reach Out through the Advance for Christ and His Church

A "great cloud of witnesses" filled the General Conference auditorium Tuesday evening as a new video celebrating the Advance for Christ and His Church had its debut.

"So Great a Cloud of Witnesses" features the denomination's highly successful avenue for second-mile giving. Since its inception in 1948, more than \$832 million has been given to a myriad of worldwide mission efforts. The record-setting \$38 million given in 1998, the Advance's 50th-anniversary year, was topped by donations totaling \$44 million in 1999.

In introducing the 20-minute video, Portland Area Bishop Edward W. Paup, General Council on Ministries Advance Support Group leader, said the Advance is a way the church "holds high God's candles of light" for the world.

The video features the innovative outreach efforts of several United Methodist congregations that participate in second-mile, designated giving. Each answers God's call to mission by supporting World Service and other apportioned funds, conference benevolences and ministry in its own community.

Community United Methodist Church, Nome, Alaska, reaches out to the Yupik people of eastern Russia, just across the Bering Strait. La Trinidad United Methodist Church, San Antonio, hosts a sidewalk Sunday school that nurtures children from impoverished families living in a housing project.

Pulaski Heights and St. Paul United Methodist churches, both in Little Rock, Ark.—partners with a Russian congregation—made and shipped two stained-glass windows to the church. Members of Kingsley [Iowa] United Methodist Church make and sell peanut brittle to support mission efforts.

Other United Methodist congregations spotlighted are Chinese Community, Oakland, Calif.; Wesley, San Jose, Calif.; Ben Hill, Atlanta; Community, Naperville, Ill.; and John Street, New York City.

These are among the more than 17,000 United Methodist churches that give to missions through the Advance.

The Advance allows congregations to have "a personal connection to mission," Bishop Paup said. "God is calling us to reach out and be in ministry at home and beyond. The Advance helps us not only be in touch with needs miles away from us, but with those in our neighborhoods."

Copies of the video will be mailed in September to every United Methodist local church, according to promotion coordinator Russell H. Scott. The emphasis is also

supported by "Minutes for Mission" cards, newspaper inserts and information on the Internet at [www.gb-gm-umc.org/advance](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/advance).

Bishop Paup said he takes inspiration from Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

"All are called to *our* Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria for the cause of Jesus Christ, and I think that's what this video tries to say," the bishop observed.

—Jane Dennis

### All in the Family

The Rev. James J. "Jim" Bryan, Missouri West Conference delegate, is the son of Bishop Monk Bryan. Jim's grandmother, Eva Monk Bryan, was a Central Texas lay delegate to the General Conferences of 1934, 1938 (the last of the Methodist Episcopal Church South), 1939 (Uniting Conference), 1940 (the first of the Methodist Church), and 1944. Her brother, Marion S. Monk, was host pastor to the 1922 General Conference at Central Church, Hot Springs, Ark. The Little Rock and North Arkansas conferences invited her father, Alonzo Monk, to give the welcoming address on behalf of Arkansas to the General Conference.

Sisters Dr. Dora S. Washington, Mississippi Conference delegate, and Dr. Rosa Washington-Olson are attending their second General Conference together. Rosa, district lay leader from the California-Nevada Conference, is attending her sixth General Conference, four as a delegate and two as a page. Dora is a second-time delegate.

From the very beginning, persons of African descent were a part of Wesley's Methodist movement in the Caribbean and the United States. Many have remained a part of this United Methodist Church, even through years of discrimination and disenfranchisement. In 1948, James Brown, an immigrant from Jamaica, established what is now known as Zion United Methodist Church, Sharptown, Md. Two of Brown's descendants are delegates to the 2000 General Conference: the Rev. Myron F. McCoy, Northern Illinois Conference delegate and senior pastor at St. Mark United Methodist Church, Chicago, and Lenora Thompson, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference delegate and lay leader.

## Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty Will Continue

*"We do not inherit the earth from our parents; we borrow it from our children."*

—Hazel Henderson

During the 10 days of General Conference, some 320,000 children worldwide will die from malnutrition and poverty-related conditions.

Mississippi Area Bishop Marshall L. Meadors Jr., chair of the Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty (Advance No. 982200-8), emphasized, however, that five years ago, according to the United Nations, that number would have been 350,000. "We believe the initiative has made an impact and a significant contribution over the past quadrennium," he said.

The initiative, launched in 1996, will be continued for the next four years. A partnership has developed between the bishops and United Methodist boards and agencies attempting to implement the initiatives' goals across the connection.

In the United States, 20 percent of all children live at or below the poverty level. Among children of color in the United States, according to Bishop Meadors, that figure is 40 percent.

During the 1992-96 quadrennium, the Council of Bishops struggled to discern what effort might engage the council in a special mission outreach. "We settled on the dual issues of poverty and the crises faced by children worldwide. The bishops have preached and lifted up before the churches and conferences these needs grounded in the biblical and theological mandate as well as our traditional Wesleyan witness," Bishop Meadors recalled.

What difference has the initiative made? The bishop said every United Methodist seminary has responded, with some initiating a special class in ministry to children. Some annual conferences have renewed a focus on the church's outreach to families, especially to children in poverty.

The Mississippi Conference added a staff person to work specifically in this ministry for children. Angie Williams, trained in social work, is the primary liaison between the conference and the Mississippi legislature.

The goals of providing resources, reshaping, and evangelizing have moved The United Methodist Church to assist local churches to initiate ministries with children and the impoverished. The denomination continues to place the needs of the poor in the center of the church's life, ministry and mission while proclaiming God's redeeming, reconciling love and grace for all of God's children.

The Bishops' Appeal: Hope for the Children of Africa (Advance No. 101000-4), partnered with the initiative,

has focused on establishing one-on-one linkages between churches and conferences in the United States and Africa. Several conferences have built homes for children and widows. U.S. children have written letters to children in Africa.

Missouri Area Bishop Ann B. Sherer will chair the Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty during the 2001-04 quadrennium and, when he retires in September, Michigan Area Bishop Donald A. Ott will give special episcopal oversight to the initiative.

—William K. Quick

### Prayer Concerns

You are invited to bring prayer requests to any Cokesbury checkout counter or to Brad Motta in the DCA office. The requests will be printed in the DCA. Please pray for the following:

- The family and extended church family of Philippines Bishop Nelinda "Ellen" Primavera-Briones, who died May 10
- Charlotte Fitzsimons, whose mother died
- Mary Ellen Foley, knee surgery
- Rosa Hodgson, New England Conference, executive director of NITKA, which serves children and youth in Managua, Nicaragua. She had surgery in Boston, May 9.
- Michael Leach, Wilmington, Del.
- The family of Jim Pitka, who died May 10. His spouse Marjdein is a pastor in the Iowa Conference
- Sherry & Jack's upcoming wedding
- Becky Wood, young adult member, First United Methodist Church, Upland, Calif., who is en route to Equador with 14 other Azusa Pacific University students. They will do mission work for three weeks.
- That the Holy Spirit will anoint the remainder of this conference.
- Marshals Opal and Dennis Gillis, whose home is in the path of an approaching brush fire in New Mexico.

You're a tough act to follow! Victoria Rebeck

Bill Quick  
Mary Quick  
John Thornburg

George M. Lamm

I'll miss you!  
Angela

Phelma Beeler

### Four-time Editor to Retire from DCA at End of General Conference



He has burned the midnight oil in St. Louis in 1988, Louisville in 1992, Denver in 1996, and here in Cleveland. During those four quadrenniums, he has scrutinized 3,300 pages of copy for the *Daily Christian Advocate*, and that doesn't include the advance editions (another 1,500 pages just this year). He has done it all in his characteristic style, eye-glasses off, leaning over the proof pages. He is J. Richard Peck, editor of the conference's official news organ, the DCA.

Peck oversees a staff of 85 writers, transcribers, copy editors, audio technicians, production assistants, floor spotters, and proofreaders, and a budget of \$600,000. The staff is greeted each morning with a poster-sized "pep talk," congratulating and encouraging everyone. Yesterday's epistle read, "Two more deadlines. Three more issues. HANG ON!"

Peck has also been the editor of the United Methodist weekly newsletter, *Newscope*, for 23 years. The next edition, his 1150<sup>th</sup>, will be his last. He has two tasks prior to his retirement from The United Methodist Publishing House. He will be the general editor of the *Book of Resolutions*, and a consultant to Victoria Rebeck, the incoming editor of *Newscope*. He is a ministerial member of the New York Conference.

Thanks, Rich We love you!

—John Thornburg and Staff

Cindy Caldwell

Angie Williams

Sayle Hinson  
Thanks!! Don

Glenn Hints

Keith Peasley  
FOR IRE

Joseph A. Howe

Marge Peters

Marvin W. Cresney

Thanks for everything!  
Brad Pitts

Juanita Frederickson

Tom Wright

Elena De la Pena

It has been my pleasure to work with you  
God Bless  
Audrey Turk

All the best!  
Barbara Duniap-Berg

Thanks Rich!  
Richard Street

You're the best!  
Sheila

Barbara Aault

Blessings  
Patty Meyers

Mike Cunningham  
Jim Baker

Carla Beasley  
Logan

Kurt Groatney

## Reports of Legislative Committees

### Faith and Order—(5/10/00 2:25 p.m.)

The committee recommended concurrence:

- Amending 65G related to sex education materials that are “age appropriate” as well as “full, positive and factual” and change “youth” to “young people”;
- Creating a new Commission on Faith and Order, appointed by the Council of Bishops, to foster study and dialogue in the UMC on faith and doctrinal standards. The commission would foster doctrinal reflection and theological dialogue at all levels of the UMC, “helping the church recover and update our distinctive doctrinal reinvigoration for the sake of authentic renewal, fruitful evangelism, ecumenical dialogue and social witness”;
- Amending Para. 304, asking ordinands to accept the UMC’s “doctrinal standards” and *Discipline*, emphasizing commitment to doctrinal standards;
- Calling on local churches, conferences and UMC general agencies to support public education in such ways as partnering with public schools in enrichment, monitoring reform efforts—including creation of charter and magnet schools—and opposing draining away funds for public education.

The committee recommended nonconcurrence:

- Amending the preface to the Social Principles defining them as “a call to faithfulness and intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. They are not church law.” The vote was 53-42 for nonconcurrence, with four abstentions. There will be a minority report.

The committee recommended referral:

- Stating that experience, tradition and reason are subordinate to scripture in the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (suggested referral to a proposed Commission on Faith and Order during the next quadrennium);
- Examining the global relevance of the Social Principles, to the General Council on Ministries;
- Amending the existing resolution, “Religious Liberty,” to GBGM.

—Erik Alsgaard and Ann Whiting

### Higher Education and Ministry—(5/9/00 11:30 p.m.) All business is completed.)

The committee recommended concurrence:

- Referring to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) the policy regarding grant-

ing of sabbatical leave to ordained clergy for less than full time;

- Approving qualifications for election (not consecration as previously reported) to probationary membership and commissioning;
- Replacing term “Conference Council Director” with “Director of Connectional Ministries.”

—Terri Hiers and Duane Ewers

## Position Opening: General Secretary

### General Board of Church and Society

The General Secretary serves as the chief executive officer of the board whose primary responsibility is “to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns” (Par. 1004, *The Book of Discipline*).

*Candidates must be highly articulate in expressing the mandates of the church and justice issues. They must be willing to engage in effective dialogue with church members who may disagree with United Methodist positions and the board’s views. Extensive travel and public speaking are involved.*

*The search committee is committed to a racially and gender-inclusive process, providing equal opportunity for all qualified applicants.*

Send inquiries, nominations and letters of application to:

*Bishop Marshall L. Meadors Jr., Chairperson*

*General Board of Church and Society Search Committee  
100 Maryland Ave. N.E.  
Washington, DC 20002*

**Application deadline: June 15, 2000.**

*Visit the Web site at [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org)  
for more information about the ministries  
of the General Board of Church and Society.*

## Bishops' Assistants Reflect on First General Conference Experiences

Several persons who work in episcopal offices throughout the church are attending General Conference for the first time. It has been a positive experience for three with whom I spoke: Joanna Proferes, Florida Conference; Joy Clark, Western North Carolina Conference; and Patricia "Pat" Breen, Oregon-Idaho and Alaska Missionary conferences.

Their titles vary. Though they share some work in common, their jobs are as unique as the bishops and the episcopal areas with whom they work. During General Conference, their responsibilities vary, too. They are on call as needed. Some serve as recorders for legislative committees. Usually in the balcony during plenary sessions, they observe and learn.

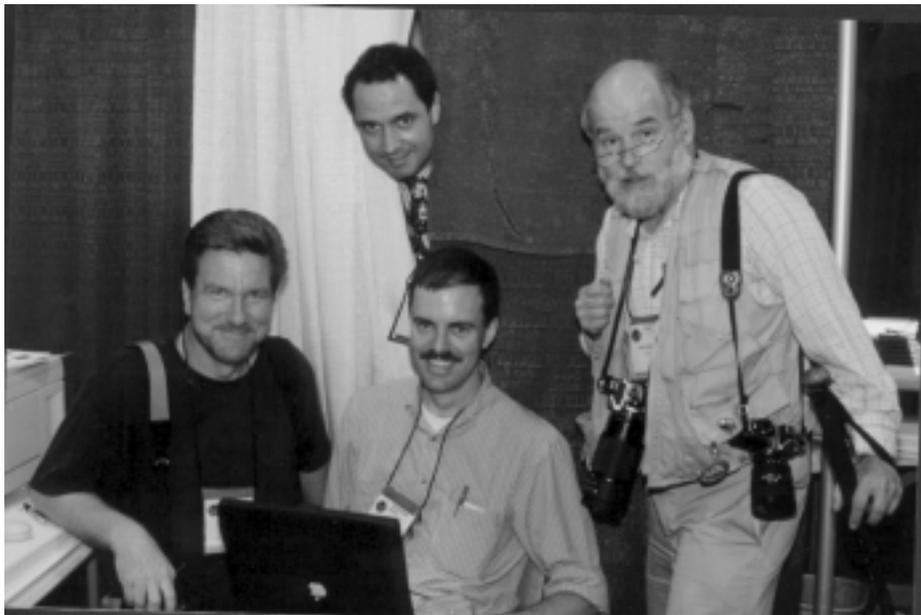
Joy said being here helps her to understand and interpret the relationship between annual, general, and jurisdictional conferences. Pat is amazed at the delegates' responsibilities and dedication. Joy noted the long hours they work, and how much work they do after the sessions. Joanna is surprised at how much voice delegates have and is impressed with the patience of bishops and other dele-

gates. Joy said being here has made her appreciate parliamentary procedure, and Pat is amazed how well delegates know it. They all said they will have much to do when they return to their offices. Some General Conference decisions may add to their workloads.

Donna Madefer, East Ohio Conference, hosted a luncheon for them Tuesday. Liz Okayama, General Council on Finance and Administration director of human resources—who works with them on episcopal services—greeted them. Networking is an important aspect of their time at General Conference. These new colleagues voiced appreciation for their more experienced colleagues.

Though it is their first General Conference, all three bring a wealth of work experience to their current positions. Joanna has 23 years of local church office experience. Joy worked in various capacities in her conference center before going to the episcopal office. Patricia was conference director at the University of Southern Colorado before she moved to the Portland Area episcopal office.

—*Patty Meyers*



### Where in the Convention Center Is...Brad Motta?

This photo was taken during the Wednesday plenary session. The bishops who realized what I was doing smiled and chuckled. It is amazing to be at General Conference and experience being with these men and women who lead the church and represent us around the world. May each of us give thanks to God for their ministries and pray that God's strength and wisdom may be upon them.



Pictured with me (and trying to figure out how I got by the pages) are: Bishop Leontine Kelly, Bishop Felton May, and Bishop Alfred Johnson.

*Photo by Ginnie and Dewayne Lowther*

## Announcements

- The Cokesbury Bookstore will close at 1:00 pm on Friday, May 12. If you have reserved a commemorative chalice, please pick it up at the customer service desk in the store by 7:00 pm Thursday, May 11.
- Dallas Area Bishop William B. Oden, president of the Council of Bishops, is featured in an interview discussing the future of The United Methodist Church. The interview will be shown on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly" program May 13 and 14 on more than 200 TV stations nationwide. A part of the overall coverage of General Conference on the award-winning PBS program hosted by Bob Abernathy, the show is expected to include interviews with delegates and church leaders, as well as events of the two-week assembly.
- Members of the Native American International Caucus and the National United Methodist Native American Center will join other protestors outside Jacobs Field Thursday at 5 p.m. The baseball game begins at 7:05 p.m. The General Conference passed a resolution May 9 denouncing any team or organization using "offensive racist logos" and calling for dialogue with Native Americans in the Cleveland area and with the Cleveland baseball team regarding its "Chief Wahoo" mascot. For further information, contact Juan Reyna, (216) 631-4767 or Alvin Deer, (216) 696-9200.

# Judicial Council Decision

This copy subject to final editing and correction.

## DECISION NO. 886

**IN RE: Declaratory Decision Regarding Authority of an Annual Conference to Take Actions That Are Unconstitutional or Violate Provisions of the *Discipline*.**

### DIGEST

The *Discipline* is the law of the Church which regulates every phase of the life and work of the Church. As such, annual conferences may not legally negate, ignore, or violate provisions of the *Discipline* with which they disagree, even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections to those provisions.

### STATEMENT OF FACTS

On motion of a delegate from the North Georgia Annual Conference, the General Conference adopted the following resolution and referred the same to the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision.

Be it Resolved, as provided in Paragraph 2616.1 and 2616.2a of *The Book of Discipline*, that the General Conference hereby petitions the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision on the effect of how the covenant relationship between the Annual Conference and its Clergy relates to *The Book of Discipline*, and

Further petitions for a declaratory decision on the application of *The Book of Discipline* as to whether there are circumstances where the Annual Conference has the right to negate or ignore *The Book of Discipline*, and

Further petitions for a declaratory decision as to the constitutionality of actions taken which violate *The Book of Discipline* based upon the Annual Conference conscientiously disagreeing with a particular disciplinary paragraph, and

Further petitions for a declaratory decision on the application of *The Book of Discipline* as to whether there are more basic and fundamental covenants which have precedence over *The Book of Discipline*, and, if so, provide clarification as to which of these other covenants the Annual Conference may rely upon to supersede or disobey disciplinary provisions.

Sally Curtis AsKew recused herself from participation in this decision.

### Jurisdiction

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction under ¶ 2616 of the 1996 *Discipline*.

### Analysis and Rationale

The first question in the resolution refers to how the covenant relationship between the annual conference and its clergy relates to the *Discipline*.

Par. 15 states:

The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows:

2. To define and fix the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, and deaconesses.

Pursuant to that power the General Conference has adopted Par. 303.3:

Ordained persons exercise their ministry in covenant with all Christians, especially with those whom they lead and serve in ministry. They also live in covenant of mutual care and accountability with all those who share their ordination, especially in The United Methodist Church, with the ordained who are members of the same annual conference and part of the same Order. The covenant of ordained ministry is a lifetime commitment, and those who enter into it dedicate their whole lives to the personal and spiritual disciplines it requires.

In addition, the General Conference adopted Par. 304.1(i) which states, "Be accountable to The United Methodist Church, accept its discipline and authority, accept the supervision of those appointed to this ministry, and be prepared to live in the covenant of its ordained ministers."

When a clergy person engages in mission and ministry in The United Methodist Church, that clergy person covenants to perform his/her duties in accord with the provisions of the *Discipline*. The *Discipline*, in describing the administrative responsibilities of the clergy states:

To administer the provisions of the *Discipline* and supervise the working program of the local church. [¶ 331.3(c)]

This paragraph is specific in stating that a clergy person has the responsibility of adhering to the provisions of

the *Discipline* and to assure that those for whom he/she has administrative responsibility do the same.

Question two of the resolution asks whether there are circumstances when the annual conference has the right to negate or ignore the *Discipline*.

In Decision 96 the Judicial Council declared:

The *Discipline* of The Methodist Church (United Methodist Church) is a Book of Law, and the only official and authoritative Book of Law of The Methodist Church (United Methodist Church)—“a body of laws pertaining to Church government,” regulating every phase of the life and work of The Methodist Church (United Methodist Church), including regulations relating to its temporal economy and to the ownership, use and disposition of church property.

This decision makes it clear that all entities of the Church are bound by the provisions of the *Discipline*, and that no entity or individual member of the Church has the right to negate or ignore the *Discipline*.

Question three of the resolution asks whether actions of the annual conference, which violate provisions of the *Discipline* but are based on conscientious disagreements with a particular paragraph of the *Discipline*, are constitutional.

As indicated above, the *Discipline* is the book of law of The United Methodist Church, the provisions of which are binding on an annual conference and individual members of the Church. If annual conferences were free to violate provisions of the *Discipline* because they disagree with them, this would have the effect of negating or ignoring the *Discipline*. Such acts would leave the Church without any enforceable law, which would lead to chaos in the Church.

Question four raises the question as to whether there are more basic and fundamental covenants which have precedence over the *Discipline* upon which an annual conference may rely to supersede or disobey disciplinary provisions.

Since the *Discipline* regulates “every phase of the life and work of the Church,” there are no covenants which supersede the authority of the *Discipline*.

### Decision

The *Discipline* is the law of the Church which regulates every phase of the life and work of the Church. As such, annual conferences may not legally negate, ignore, or violate provisions of the *Discipline* with which they disagree, even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections to those provisions.

May 10, 2000

### Concurring Opinion

I completely and fully agree with my colleagues' rulings in response to the specific wording of the questions asked. However, I believe that there is a need to also directly respond to the very evident underlying question involving the tension between following one's conscience when doing so may ultimately be found to be in violation of the *Discipline*.

While the *Discipline* itself gives no right to anyone to violate its provisions, our Christian heritage beginning with our Lord, and our Methodist heritage beginning with John Wesley both resound with people following their conscience and their God with challenges to the religious and secular status quo. Throughout time, Methodist (United Methodist) lay and clergy church leaders, while proclaiming dedication to Methodist (United Methodist) doctrine and polity, have taken totally opposite views on such issues as the American Revolution, slavery, women delegates to General Conference, ordination of women, homosexuality. (See the Historical Statement, *1996 Discipline*, pp. 9-20.) Some of these stands have arguably been in direct violation of the Methodist (United Methodist) doctrine or *Discipline* existing at the time.

John Wesley has been quoted as saying, “As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think.” (*1996 Discipline*, p. 48) Wesley also said, “To be ignorant of many things and to be mistaken in some, is the necessary condition of humanity.” (*1996 Discipline*, p. 49) Interpreted together, these two comments readily leads to the question as to what things do indeed “strike at the root of Christianity”, and then the fact that humanity may well be mistaken from time to time as to what these things are.

In another example, tension also arises out of Par. 62, Section 3 - OUR DOCTRINAL STANDARDS AND GENERAL RULES, THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, the 3rd subsection of Article XXV entitled “Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority” which reads “It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which they are citizens or subjects or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be.” (*1996 Discipline*, p. 64.) In point of fact, the Methodist (United Methodist) Church has regularly affirmed both laity and clergy who have, by conscience and with obedience to a “higher law,” done exactly the opposite of this exhortation.

Therefore, a more comprehensive response to the question of the “right” to violate the *Discipline* is that laity and clergy do have the personal “right” to violate the *Discipline*, albeit not “legally”, nor without subjecting themselves to the Disciplinary processes.

This concept then leads to the second part of the tension which resolves around being “subject” to the *Discipline*. To be clear, those who are alleged to have violated secular or disciplinary law come under the punitive laws which govern the specific violation. However, being “subject to” the punitive provision of the law does not mean that one must be charged nor, if so charged, must be found guilty.

Specifically, as to disciplinary law, if someone, or some entity of the church, is alleged to have violated the *Discipline*—and the disciplinary process has led to no charge, or an acquittal of the charge after full process has been followed—then the matter has been fully resolved in accordance with the existing law and is closed. Clearly, the sufficiency of the relevant punitive disciplinary process can be reviewed and modified legislatively if deemed necessary. However, in my opinion, there should never be questioning of the sufficiency and/or modifying of the punitive disciplinary process, which is in any way based on disagreement with the view or position which is alleged to be in violation of the *Discipline*.

Evelynn S. Caterson

### Concurring Opinion

The questions asked and the Judicial Council response center on possible actions taken by annual conferences. Although these questions border on being moot and hypothetical, we have responded. The *Discipline* is clear that annual conference actions must be faithful to and consistent with the *Discipline*. Annual conferences may not violate the provisions set forth therein.

Additionally, the covenantal relationship between clergy and the annual conference include the provisions set forth in the *Discipline* against the backdrop of Pars. 301-303 which include following in “the way of love and service.” In ordination, “the early church through the laying on of hands, set apart persons with responsibilities to preach, to teach, to administer the sacraments, to nurture, to heal, to gather the community in worship, and to send them forth in witness.” (Par. 302) This covenantal relationship is both grace filled and binding. It is marked by love and respect for all those in the covenantal relationship. As in any covenantal relationship, there will be honest differences of opinion and commitments. Expressions of differences of opinion with the *Discipline* by a member of the annual conference are always an option. When actions taken by a clergy person are determined to be contrary to the *Discipline*, he or she is responsible for the consequences of such actions.

Susan T. Henry-Crowe

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### MEMORANDUM NO. 887

**IN RE: Request From the General and Judicial Administration Legislative Committee of the 2000 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on Whether Lay Persons on the Committee on Investigation Have Voting Rights and Parity With Clergy Members Under Pars. 31, 18, and 56 or Any Other Provision of the Constitution.**

Petition #30464 proposes to change the wording regarding the composition of the Committee on Investigation to read, “consisting of seven (7) elders in full connection, two lay observers laypersons...” has raised the question of whether the two lay persons would have voting rights and parity with the clergy members under Pars. 31, 18, and 56 or any other provision of the Constitution.

Par. 31 of the Constitution reads as follows with the 1996 amendment italicized:

¶ 31. Article II.—The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General and the jurisdictional or central conferences, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, *except that the lay members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry be full participating members of the District Committee on the Ordained Ministry with vote.* It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine.

Amended Par. 31 does not mention the Committee on Investigation and, therefore, does not give vote to lay observers or lay persons on the Committee on Investigation.

The second question raised in this request for a declaratory decision is whether Petition #30464 is constitutional. It is the council’s decision that it is not constitutional.

## DIGEST

Lay persons serving on an Annual Conference Committee on Investigation of a clergy member of an Annual Conference do not have voting rights and parity with clergy members and any petition seeking to give them voting rights and parity with clergy members of the committee is unconstitutional.

May 10, 2000

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## MEMORANDUM NO. 888

**IN RE: Request From General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Meaning, Application and Effect of the Adoption of Petition #31789 as It Relates to the Election of a Person to the Judicial Council to Fill the Remaining Four Years of an Existing Eight Year Term.**

In 1996, a person was duly elected to an eight-year term on the Judicial Council. This person would have been required to step down at the close of the 2000 General Conference pursuant to Par. 2602 of the *1996 Discipline* which states in pertinent part:

“. . . a member of the council whose seventieth (70) birthday precedes the first day of the regular session of a General Conference shall be released at the close of that General Conference from membership or responsibility in the council, regardless of the date of expiration of office.”

On May 5, 2000, the General and Judicial Administration Legislative Committee adopted Petition #31789-GJ-2602-D without amendment. On Tuesday, May 9, 2000, the General Conference adopted Petition #31789-GJ-2602-D without amendment. The petition reads in full:

“Amend Paragraph 2602 by deleting the phrase in the first paragraph of this Paragraph with (sic) reads: *‘provided, however, that a member of the council whose seventieth (70) birthday precedes the first day of the regular session of the General Conference shall be released at the close of that General Conference from membership or responsibility in the council, regardless of the date of expiration of office.’*”

This legislation becomes effective upon adoption.”

On Monday, May 8, 2000, General Conference held an election for a person to fill the remaining four years of this eight year term. That person’s term was to begin at the close of the 2000 General Conference. (See Par. 2605.)

The General Conference referred this matter to the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision on the meaning, application and effect of the adoption of Petition #31789 as it relates to the election of a person to the Judicial Council to fill the remaining four years of an existing eight year term. The Judicial Council has jurisdiction under Par. 2616.

Since the term of the newly elected Judicial Council member does not begin until the close of the 2000 General Conference; and since the impediment of the Judicial Council member in office was removed by the legislative action of the General Conference, there is now no vacancy for the newly elected Judicial Council member to fill.

Therefore, the General Conference, by its own action, has negated the election of the person to fill the remaining four years of the eight year term.

John G. Corry recused himself and did not participate in any of the proceedings related to this decision.

## DIGEST

The General Conference, by its own action in the adoption of Petition # 31789-GJ-2602-D, has negated the election of the person to fill the remaining four years of the eight-year term.

This copy subject to final editing and correction.

### Petition Corrections

Petition numbers 31828 and 31046 were voided by the Committee on Reference:

Petition number 30260 was voided by the Petitions Secretary because it was not submitted by a United Methodist and it referred to the African Central Conference’s Book of Discipline.

MOTIONS FROM THE PLENARY SESSION  
PUBLISHED IN THE DCA AS REQUESTED IN THE  
PLENARY SESSION

**CONCERNE: SITUATION DE GUERRE EN  
REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE  
DU CONGO.**

Nous membres de la délégation de l'Eglise Méthodiste  
Unie de la République Démocratique du Congo depuis  
dix ans;

- Considérant les espoirs nés avec l'avènement d'un autre régime en; 1997
- Considérant que les motifs de sécurité aux frontières évoqués par les pays voisins agresseurs, ne sont plus soutenables car ils sont à plus de 1.500 km à l'intérieur du Congo (Exemple Kitona à l'Ouest);
- Considérant qu'il s'agit d'une guerre d'agression et non pas une rébellion;
- Attendu que Ugandais, Rwandais et Burndais sont soutenus et poussés dans cette agression par certaines puissances occidentales;
- Attendu que la Communauté Chrétienne et Islamique à travers leurs Evêques, Pasteurs, Prêtres, hommes, femmes et enfants déportés et/ou assassinés si pas violées, contaminées du sida pour les femmes et filles, les femmes enceintes évantrées et ou enterrées vivantes, en souffre énormément;
- Attendu que cette guerre lourde de conséquences dans le Pays et dans l'Eglise ne prendra pas fin avec les déclarations de son artisan principal le Président Paul Kagame du Rwanda sans l'intervention réelle des Nations Unies, bien que celui-ci ait promis à maintes reprises de retirer
- ses troupes mais sans le réaliser;

Devant le risque d'un nouveau génocide en cours en République Démocratique du Congo et l'urgence, demandons:

Que nos freres et soeurs chrétiens Méthodistes des Etats-Unis d'Amérique demandent au Président Bill Clinton et au Congrès Américain de:

- peser de tout leur poids au Conseil de Sécurité pour obliger les armées Ugandaises, Rwandaises et Burundaises de se retirer du sol Congolais;
- de décréter un embargo sur la vente d'armes aux Pays agresseurs et sur l'achat de diamants, or et d'autres matières précieuses pillés de la République Démocratique du Congo.

Que la Conférence Générale 2000"

- adopte la résolution de soutenir spirituellement, financièrement et politiquement les pourparlers de paix initiés par la Conférence des Eglises Pour Toute l'Afrique (CETA) sous la direction de Monseigneur ONEMA FAMA et acceptés par le Président et le Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo;
- continue à soutenir financièrement le budget de l'UMCOR qui fait beaucoup d'efforts d'assistance aux déplacés de cette guerre.
- Demande aux chrétiens des Pays agresseurs de faire tout auprès de leurs gouvernements pour que cette guerre cesse.

Fait à Cleveland, le 10 mai 2000.

Les délégués:

Rev. Mbukula-Koy—Central Congo

Rde Akenda Okenge Ake—West Congo

Rev Okoko R. Luboto—East Congo

Rev. Mutale Ntambo—Tanganyika-Tanzania

Rev. Ngoy Kahunda Veakazasi—Nord Katanga

Prof. Dr. Wenbodinga Ushudicnicar—Equator of Oriental Congo

MOTIONS FROM THE PLENARY SESSION  
PUBLISHED IN THE DCA AS REQUESTED IN THE  
PLENARY SESSION

### RESOLUTION FROM THE DELEGATES OF THE SIERRA LEONE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Whereas, the frequent outbreaks of violence in Sierra Leone in violation of the Lome' Peace Agreement signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1999 between the government of Sierra Leone represented by President Ahmah Tejan Kabba, and the Revolutionary United Front (The Rebels), represented by the leader, Foday Sabana Sankoh, continues to inflict wanton sufferings, mutilations of arms and limbs, loss of innocent lives and destruction of properties; and

Whereas, under the provisions of the said Peace Agreement, the West African Peace Keeping Force (ECOMOG), which was responsible to keep and enforce the peace and to further provide security for the people of Sierra Leone, was replaced by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with the mandate to maintain the peace and if need be, to enforce the peace and,

Whereas, recent events in Sierra Leone have demonstrated that the peace process is fragile and in jeopardy by the several violations of the provisions of the Peace Agreement by the RUF rebels in the indiscriminate shooting and inflicting all forms of injury substantially on the innocent inhabitants of Sierra Leone,

Therefore:

1. We call on the General Conference 2000 of The United Methodist Church convening in Cleveland, Ohio, to offer special prayers for the victims of these acts of violence on the people of Sierra Leone.

2. We further call on this General Conference to use its best endeavors to appeal to the President and the people of the United States of America, the British Prime Minister and the people of Great Britain and other world leaders and governments to ensure that hostilities in Sierra Leone and particularly in the capital, Freetown, be halted.

3. We also call on this General Conference to do all in its power to urge the bodies aforesaid and the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, for both financial and logistic support to keep, maintain, and enforce the peace in Sierra Leone.

4. And further, call for the return of the West African Peace Keeping Force (ECOMOG) to be deployed immediately in Sierra Leone to work alongside the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), with the exclusive mandate to keep, maintain and enforce the peace in Sierra Leone.

EKE A. HALLOWAY

For and on behalf of the Sierra Leone delegation

Submitted 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2000

### MOTION FROM CONGOLESE DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE 2000

We, the Congolese United Methodist delegates to the General Conference,

Whereas the given situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been grave for the past ten years,

Whereas the hopes of the Congolese people were rejuvenated with the new regime in 1997,

Whereas the reason for the invasion was originally given as related to security at the borders. It is now evident that this is not true because the forces from the invading countries are 1,500 kms deep inside Congolese territory,

Whereas the war in Congo is a war of aggression and not a rebellion,

Whereas Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi's aggression is funded by some western powers,

Whereas the Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian troops have been assassinating innocent civilians, deporting Christian and Muslim leaders, raping and deliberately contaminating women with HIV/AIDS, cutting pregnant women's wombs open and burying people alive,

Whereas despite statements from the presidents of Rwanda and Uganda to end the war, hostilities from both countries against our people have not ceased. Instead, they are perpetrating a genocide in our country,

Be it hereby resolved that our Methodist brothers and sisters in the United States plead with President Clinton and the United States Congress to work with the Security Council of the United Nations and demand the withdrawal of Rwandan, Burundian and Ugandan troops from Congolese territory. If these countries refuse to heed the call to withdraw, both the U.S. and the U.N. should impose an arms embargo on those countries. The embargo should also cover the purchase of diamonds and natural resources looted from the Congo.

Be it hereby resolved that the General Conference will adopt a resolution to support financially, politically and spiritually the peace initiatives by the All Africa Conference of Churches and Bishop Onema Fama. The General Conference needs to provide continuing financial support to UMCOR, which has been instrumental in assisting people displaced from the war. In addition, the General Conference should ask Christians from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi to pressure their governments to withdraw their troops to their respective countries.

## Seven Fast for Truth

While many verbally protest inside and outside the convention center, seven silently protest by fasting. Two Oregon-Idaho clergywomen are on the fourth day of their fast, three are on the second day, and two persons started Wednesday. Those fasting include a young adult from a Central Conference, a man who completed chemotherapy three months ago, and a diabetic.

The Rev. Jeanne Knepper reports her legs are weak, but her spirit is strong. The Rev. Marcia Hauer says she is tired physically, but energized, saying, "The Spirit speaks." The two attended their annual conference dinner Monday night and got past temptation to eat.

They report their fasting is changing some people's hearts. They stand in the foyer of the conference center each day so people can see them. They have experienced "lots of shunning or wincing." One person spoke not to them, but so they could hear, "They should have arrested more of them." Others have said, "Thank you," or silently handed them juice. In casual conversation on an elevator, one Central Conference delegate said, "You'll never change them; they're too intolerant."

Discussing the impact of the fast, they said, "It's the most profound way we know of to use the whole body in prayer. And we are praying that General Conference will realize the painful impact of its language and make a change. It is so thoroughly within the Wesleyan tradition

to fast." The goal of the fast is to have General Conference make one positive language change in the incompatibility phrase in *Discipline* paragraph 65G.

—Patty Meyers

### Neither Sleet Nor Hail . . .

. . . nor demonstrators, nor police stop the *DCA* from getting to delegates, but it was a challenge. According to Pat Wintucky of PM Graphics, driver Margie Paige circled the convention center six times and had to park in three different garages before she could deliver the *DCA*. Meanwhile, Juanita Freudenthal couldn't distribute *DCAs* because Margie couldn't get them to her. Eventually John Clark, circulation manager, helped Margie make her delivery.

—Patty Meyers