# Table of Contents

## Volume 1

### Delegates Handbook
- Letter from the Commission on General Conference Chairperson .................. 3

### Church and Society Legislative Committee
- Summary Report for General Board of Church and Society .......................... 165
- Report of the General Board of Church and Society .................................. 167
- Report to General Conference 2012 on God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action from the Council of Bishops’ Task Force on In Defense of Creation .................. 183
- Proposed Legislation Committee A .......................................................... 186
- Proposed Legislation Committee B .......................................................... 261

### Conferences Legislative Committee
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 341

### Discipleship Legislative Committee
- Report of the General Board of Discipleship ........................................... 373
- Hymnal Revision Committee Report ..................................................... 378
- Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century ................................ 379
- Native American Comprehensive Plan .................................................... 382
- Africana Hymnal Study Committee Report ............................................. 384
- Services for the Ordering of Ministry in The United Methodist Church, 2013-2016 ................................................................. 391
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 489

### Financial Administration Legislative Committee
- Reports of the General Council on Finance and Administration .................. 511
- Reports of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits ...................... 567
- Summary of Report One: Overview ..................................................... 567
- Report One: Overview ................................................................. 569
- Summary of Report Two: Changes in Response to Local Law Changes ............ 577
- Report Two: Changes in Response to Local Law Changes .......................... 578
- Summary of Report Three: Referrals from General Conference 2008 ................ 579
- Report Three: Referrals from General Conference 2008 ............................. 581
- Summary of the Church Systems Task Force Report .................................. 598
- Church Systems Task Force Report ..................................................... 597
- Clergy Retirement Security Program Amendments .................................. 631

### Faith and Order Legislative Committee
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 885

### General Administration
- The Connectional Table Summary Report to General Conference ................. 901
- The Connectional Table Report to General Conference ............................. 903
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 912

### Global Ministries Legislative Committee
- Report of the General Board of Global Ministries .................................... 1087
- Report on the Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence ........ 1104
- Report on Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Ministries ......................... 1108
- Report on Pacific Islanders Comprehensive Plan for Ministry Study ............... 1109
- Summary Report on the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry: ¡Vengan al Banquete! ................................................................. 1117
- Report on the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry Study .................... 1119
- Summary Report on Korean Ministry Plan .............................................. 1137
- Report on Korean Ministry Plan: Advancing United Methodist Ministries Among Koreans ................................................................. 1139
- Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean Special Program ............ 1150
- Summary of Quadrennial Report of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund ... 1152
- United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Report 2009-2012 ............................ 1153
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1158

### Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters
- Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters Report to the 2012 General Conference ................................................................. 1195
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1200

### Independent Commissions Legislative Committee
- Summary Report of the General Commission on Archives and History ............. 1205
### Financial Administration

- Report of the General Commission on Archives and History and The African American Methodist Heritage Center .......................... 1207
- Summary Report of the African American Methodist Heritage Center .................................................. 1210
- Summary Report of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns ........ 1214
- Report of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns .................. 1216
- Summary Report of the Pan-Methodist Commission ................................................................. 1223
- Report of the Pan-Methodist Commission ................................................................................ 1225
- Report of the General Commission on Religion and Race ......................................................... 1229
- Report of United Methodist Communications ................................................................. 1237
- Report of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women ................................ 1239
- Report of the General Commission on United Methodist Men ................................................. 1246
- The Global Warming Task Force 2012 Report ................................................. 1249
- Opportunity Sunday: A Report from United Methodist Communications ................................ 1255
- The Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force Report ................................................................. 1256
- Summary Report of the Socially Responsible Investment Task Force ................................. 1261
- Socially Responsible Investment Task Force Report .......................................................... 1263
- Summary Report from the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church ........................................................................ 1272
- Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church Report .......... 1273
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1281

### Judicial Administration Legislative Committee

- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1299

### Local Church Legislative Committee

- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1341

### Ministry and Higher Education Legislative Committee

- Summary Report of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry .................................. 1369
- Report of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry ............................................ 1371
- The Association of United Methodist Theological Schools ................................................. 1378
- Report of the 2009-2012 Study of Ministry Commission ....................................................... 1383
- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1395

### Superintendency Legislative Committee

- Proposed Legislation ................................................................. 1470

### Volume 3

- Report of the General Council on Finance and Administration

The General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) is the public policy and social justice advocacy agency of The United Methodist Church. The agency’s prime responsibility is to seek implementation of the Social Principles and other General Conference policy statements on Christian social concerns.

GBCS carries out its tasks through a program of research, education, “forthright witness,” and action “on issues of human well-being, justice, peace and the integrity of creation.” GBCS’s primary areas of ministry are Advocacy, Education & Leadership Formation, United Nations & International Affairs, and resourcing these areas for the denomination. GBCS’s headquarters is the United Methodist Building, which it owns in Washington, DC. It also maintains an office in the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City.

Awareness and action on global human issues and a passion for peace and justice characterize GBCS’s overall ministry of advocacy. GBCS calls on the church to do justice by linking biblical faith to action. The agency gives the denomination a voice at national and international levels. It also provides education and training both in person and through resources that address specific social concerns and mobilize responses to rectify injustice.

Such mobilization happened this quadrennium in the United States on several historic pieces of legislation. It is underway internationally in regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approved by 190 United Nations-member states. In both cases, the mobilization involves rectifying injustices within social, political, and economic systems—long-standing goals of a denomination that wrote the first Social Creed more than 100 years ago.

In providing “forthright witness,” the agency strives to mobilize the United Methodist connection on behalf of priorities set by General Conference on social holiness. To accomplish the greatest impact socially, spiritually, and politically by coordinated movements among United Methodists from different conferences around the world requires the efforts of an agency that spans those regions.

GBCS successfully led United Methodist support for important US legislation that will improve people’s lives. Most notable among these are regulation of tobacco by the US Food & Drug Administration and reform of the nation’s health-care system. The former will save lives and protect young people from a predatory addictive enterprise. The latter will bring more than 30 million previously uninsured persons under insurance coverage.

The work of the agency on these and other pieces of legislation will make significant differences to United Methodists by reducing costs of local churches, eliminating sickness and death wrought by tobacco’s deadly effects, and addressing inequities that keep those on the margins at a disadvantage.

Accomplishment of these historic milestones is notable, but justice ministry cannot rest on its laurels as long as homelessness, poverty, and abuses of privilege continue to thwart God’s vision for the earth.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is the mission-mandate of the General Board of Church & Society. Eradicating systemic causes of injustices that afflict the least, the last, and the lost is transformation of the world.

In 2008, the General Conference adopted Four Areas of Focus: combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally; engaging in ministry with the poor; creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations; developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world. All of these are vineyards in which GBCS has been toiling for decades.
After the 2008 General Conference, GBCS adjusted its priorities to clearly emphasize its support for the focus areas. This was relatively straightforward because the focus areas are in line with existing Disciplinary mandates of the agency. Its Human Welfare work area, for example, which was already involved in HIV/AIDS ministry, added other global-health initiatives addressing women and families. Furthermore, the expansion was accomplished through grants from sources outside the World Service Fund, underscoring the agency’s commitment to sound financial stewardship.

GBCS participates in the interagency ministries related to Global Health, Ministry with the Poor, and Leadership Development. Many GBCS Disciplinary mandates, however, go beyond the Four Areas of Focus. These include abolishing torture and capital punishment, and ending war.

GBCS has been an exemplary steward of the resources allotted to its ministry. It expends its funds in accordance to United Methodist Church guidelines and appropriate accounting procedures, confirmed by an annual outside audit.

A very important affirmation in the area of financial stewardship occurred in October 2010. The Superior Court of Washington, DC, ruled that GBCS, its predecessor agencies, and their respective Boards of Directors have been very conscientious in their fiduciary responsibilities regarding the United Methodist Building. The ruling ended a years-long legal case that stretched across two General Conferences.

The court case began when GBCS asked for a declaratory ruling on whether United Methodist Building funds are being properly used. The court’s answer was an emphatic yes.

Superior Court Judge Rhonda Reid Winston ruled in favor of the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) concluding that funds given in the early 20th century to construct the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill were not intended for work only in the areas of temperance and alcohol. The United Methodist Building opened in 1923, a dozen years before the Supreme Court Building next door.

In her analysis, Judge Reid Winston found “clear and convincing evidence” that donations to GBCS’s predecessor agencies “were not restricted solely” for use in temperance and alcohol problems. “Even some of [the opponent’s] own exhibits show a lack of restrictions on gifts,” she stated.

“The exhibits clearly show that throughout the years, the Boards were also authorized to, and did, perform substantial work on other ‘public morals’ issues,” Judge Reid Winston wrote.

The United Methodist General Conference has declared its opposition to the death penalty, war, gambling, pornography, alcohol and tobacco use, racism, religious persecution, and many other evils. It has also declared its support for a clean environment, quality education, peace, separation of church and state, equitable distribution of wealth, and other desirable social ends. History has proven these to be long-term efforts, and recent history has proven that progress can be achieved through diligence and faithfulness to God’s vision.

The past half century has seen enormous strides forward through the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the environmental justice movement, the movements to end apartheid and nuclear weapons, and the movement for the rights and dignity of all people. These are moral and spiritual at their core. The United Methodist Church has been an important part of these efforts. The General Board of Church & Society plays an essential role in facilitating the involvement of United Methodists in social justice movements around the world.

Transformation of a world beleaguered for so many centuries by war, famine, pestilence, and plague will only be accomplished by working at all levels within the church, with a shared focus, such as that embodied in the Four Areas of Focus. They are, however, just that: only four areas. Our faith commands us to address them and so much more for any hope of true transformation to occur.

That is the role of the General Board of Church & Society. Our agency tills the soil and plants the seeds that will produce the plants that provide healing salves that rectify conditions that demand transformation. Mercy ministries are crucial in the interim, but justice ministries are necessary for true transformation.
Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Church & Society

The General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) is the public policy and social justice advocacy agency of The United Methodist Church. Prime responsibility of the agency is to seek implementation of the Social Principles and other General Conference policy statements on Christian social concerns (¶¶ 1001-1011, 2008 Book of Discipline). GBCS carries out its tasks through a program of research, education, “forthright witness,” and action “on issues of human well-being, justice, peace and the integrity of creation.”

GBCS’s primary areas of ministry are Advocacy, Education & Leadership Formation, United Nations & International Affairs, and resourcing these areas for the denomination. GBCS’s headquarters is the United Methodist Building, which it owns in Washington, DC. It also maintains an office in the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City.

In providing “forthright witness,” the agency strives to mobilize the United Methodist connection on behalf of priorities set by General Conference on social holiness. To accomplish the greatest impact socially, spiritually, and politically by coordinated movements among United Methodists from different conferences around the world requires the efforts of an agency that spans those regions.

Awareness and action on global human issues and a passion for peace and justice characterize GBCS’s ministry of advocacy. GBCS calls on the church to do justice by linking biblical faith to action. The agency gives the denomination a voice at national and international levels. It also provides education and training both in person and through resources that address specific social concerns and mobilize responses to rectify injustice.

Such mobilization occurred this quadrennium in the United States on historic pieces of legislation. It is underway internationally in regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approved by 190 United Nations-member states. In both cases, the mobilization involves rectifying injustices within social, political, and economic systems—long-standing goals of a denomination that wrote the first Social Creed more than 100 years ago.

GBCS successfully led United Methodist support for important US legislation that will improve people’s lives. Most notable among these are regulation of tobacco by the US Food & Drug Administration and reform of the nation’s health-care system. The former will save millions of lives around the world and protect young people from a predatory enterprise. The latter will bring more than 30 million previously uninsured persons under insurance coverage.

The work of the agency on these and other pieces of legislation will make significant differences to United Methodists by reducing expenses of local churches, reducing sickness and death wrought by tobacco’s deadly effects, and addressing inequities that keep those on the margins at a disadvantage.

Accomplishment of these historic milestones is notable, but justice ministry cannot rest on its laurels as long as homelessness, poverty, and abuses of privilege continue to thwart God’s vision for the earth.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is the mission-mandate of the General Board of Church & Society. Eradicating systemic causes of injustices that afflict the least, the last, and the lost is essential to the transformation of the world.

Four Areas of Focus

In 2008, the General Conference adopted Four Areas of Focus: combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally; engaging in ministry with the poor; creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations; developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world. All of these are vineyards in which GBCS has been toiling for decades.

After the 2008 General Conference, GBCS adjusted its priorities to clearly emphasize its support for the focus areas. This was relatively straightforward because the focus areas are in line with existing Disciplinary mandates of the agency. Its Human Welfare work area, for example, which was already involved in HIV/AIDS ministry, added other global-health initiatives addressing
women and families. Furthermore, the expansion was accomplished through grants from sources outside the World Service Fund, underscoring the agency’s commitment to sound financial stewardship.

GBCS participates in the interagency ministries related to Global Health, Ministry with the Poor and Leadership Development. Many GBCS Disciplinary mandates, however, go beyond the Four Areas of Focus. These include abolishing torture and capital punishment, and ending war, for example.

GBCS has been an exemplary steward of the resources allotted to its ministry. It expends its funds in accordance to United Methodist Church guidelines and appropriate accounting procedures, confirmed by an annual outside audit.

**The Trust Case**

A very important affirmation in the area of financial stewardship occurred in October 2010. The Superior Court of Washington, DC, ruled that GBCS, its predecessor agencies, and their respective Boards of Directors have been very conscientious in their fiduciary responsibilities regarding the United Methodist Building. The ruling ended a years-long legal case that stretched across two General Conferences.

The court case began when GBCS asked for a declaratory ruling on whether United Methodist Building funds are being properly used. The court’s answer was an emphatic yes.

Superior Court Judge Rhonda Reid Winston ruled in favor of the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society concluding that funds given in the early 20th century to construct the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill were not intended for work only in the areas of temperance and alcohol. The United Methodist Building opened in 1923, a dozen years before the Supreme Court Building next door.

“Judge Reid Winston’s ruling confirms the good intentions of our many board members through several decades to witness on Capitol Hill in Christ’s name for justice and peace,” said Bishop Deborah Kiesey, president of the GBCS Board of Directors. “The ruling underscores that we and our predecessors have been very conscientious in our fiduciary responsibilities. It also validates the excellent legal advice we have received.”

In her analysis, Judge Reid Winston found “clear and convincing evidence” that donations to GBCS’s predecessor agencies “were not restricted solely” for use in temperance and alcohol problems. “Even some of [the opponent’s] own exhibits show a lack of restrictions on gifts,” she stated.

Judge Reid Winston added that “evidence in the record” shows that language in the Declaration of Trust, which the legal proceeding was about, is mistaken in indicating donations were for temperance and alcohol purposes. “The exhibits clearly show that throughout the years, the Boards were also authorized to, and did, perform substantial work on other ‘public morals’ issues,” Judge Reid Winston wrote.

The legal proceeding never involved the issue of ownership of the United Methodist Building. “It has always been about allocation of funds, such as rental fees, related to the building,” explained attorney Fred Brewington, chair of the GBCS Board of Trustees. “Judge Reid Winston’s lengthy deliberations verified how complicated the issue was. We applaud her diligence and the astuteness of her decision.”

The trial in Superior Court of the District of Columbia ended in October 2008. The trial lasted six days. More than 300 exhibits comprising thousands of pages of documentation were entered into the court record.

Judge Reid Winston confirmed that through these many decades, the Board has been deeply engaged in fighting predatory enterprises, such as alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and pornography, that harm people.

It still is. The Board brought nationwide media attention to the denomination in 2011 when it called for an “Alcohol Free Lent.” The concept originated at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, NC. GBCS recognized it as an effective education tool to raise awareness of the dangers posed by the predatory alcohol industry.

The denomination has a storied legacy related to this important work that continues to this day at GBCS. The agency realized that issuing the challenge would bolster its ongoing efforts against alcohol addiction.

**Financial Stewardship**

The economic downturn that has been plaguing the world has everyone attuned to expenses. GBCS has been
Church and Society

no less concerned about the downturn’s ramifications than anyone else. The agency has, however, taken astute financial steps both before the downturn and since to ensure its ministries go forward.

GBCS has dramatically reduced costs of its Board of Directors meetings during the quadrennium. It has also doubled the net income derived from the United Methodist Building. In essence, the agency has increased its operating income separately from the World Service receipts by more than $3 million during this quadrennium.

The agency has successfully supplemented World Service funds with outside grant monies of more than $500,000 during the quadrennium as well. The grants are as follows:

- $76,000 from the United Nations Foundation for “Operation Healing Hope” campaign to raise awareness about a preventable birth problem affecting more than 2 million women annually.
- $365,000 from the United Nations Foundation for “Healthy Families, Healthy Planet” initiative that also involves the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund. This initiative has been extended through 2012.
- $22,000 from America’s Voice for immigration-reform grassroots organizing.
- $16,000 from the US Fund for UNICEF.
- $18,000 from the National Council of Churches to support advocacy for Economic and Environmental Justice.
- $35,000 from Open Society Institute for grassroots criminal justice advocacy.

In addition, GBCS’s Board of Directors, through the initiative of its Finance Committee and financial staff, closed and/or merged five designated accounts and combined their monies into a “leadership fund” totaling $38,000. Ten thousand dollars of that amount was allocated to hire a consultant to assist in immigration and criminal justice reform advocacy. This position has been created in response to requests from several United Methodist annual conferences and the Council of Bishops.

Collaborations

GBCS’s prime responsibility, as determined by General Conference, is to educate United Methodists about the Social Principles. One method to meet that mandate has been publishing a Social Principles booklet. The booklet provides history of the Social Principles, the principles themselves, and educational exercises to facilitate teaching and discussing them. In the past, GBCS has published and distributed this booklet, producing and selling tens of thousands of copies each quadrennium.

GBCS approached The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH) to propose it assume responsibility for printing, distributing, and selling the Social Principles booklet. GBCS Communications and Leadership Formation staffs worked with UMPH to develop this quadrennium’s booklet and transfer it to the denomination’s distribution channels.

Although transferring responsibility for the Social Principles booklet to UMPH entailed the sacrifice of significant income, the change freed GBCS from cost and time involved in physically producing the booklet and in filling orders and collecting payments.

The collaboration with UMPH enables both agencies to exploit what the other does best. This saved GBCS money in publishing costs and provided a new revenue stream for UMPH.

GBCS and the General Commission on Religion & Race have begun sharing management staff for accounting and human resources. This has produced combined savings of $100,000 annually.

In partnership with the United Methodist Foundation, GBCS has established a Social Justice Ministries Endowment Fund to help the agency continue its prophetic witness on justice ministries regardless of economic fluctuations in the future. Since its inception in 2006, the fund has accumulated more than $250,000 in assets.

While the fund does not yet generate sufficient income to support the agency’s annual budget, the partners continue to develop strategies to build its principal. For instance, GBCS makes at least two e-mail solicitations each year to encourage giving. The agency’s “Faith in Action” e-newsletter highlights the fund quarterly. GBCS also maintains a link on its Web site enabling donors to contribute at any time.
Creating New Spaces

The agency’s Ethnic Local Church, Human Relations Day, and Peace with Justice grants, Ethnic Young Adult Summer Internships, year-round internships for seminarians, and seminars conducted around the world on the United Methodist Social Principles strengthen and inform persons tasked with building local church communities, new and old.

GBCS also provides grants to strengthen racial/ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy, or leadership development as they engage in social justice. The agency has awarded more than $875,000 in Ethnic Local Church grants the past four years to ministries in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the United States.

Grants go to a wide variety of ministries. Some examples are leadership development among Asian-American United Methodists; judicial reform in Liberia; counseling and community building among Latino women in North Carolina; educational needs of recent immigrant and refugee youths in New York; a literacy-and-livelihood ministry in the Philippines; and an immigrant mothers’ and children’s retreat in Germany.

Leadership Development

GBCS has engaged in leadership development for decades. United Methodist Seminars on National & International Affairs and its Ethnic Young Adult Summer Internship program are just two examples. Both epitomize intra-denominational cooperation, the former working in collaboration with the Women’s Division of GBGM, the latter developed in cooperation with the five racial/ethnic caucuses of The United Methodist Church.

The Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship program has brought hundreds of young United Methodists, ages 19 to 22, to Washington, DC, over the past 30 summers to engage in ministry and work in non-profit and non-governmental social justice advocacy organizations. The interns are supervised by GBCS staff members. The past three summers, interns have come from 24 annual conferences, including Africa and the Philippines. Former Ethnic Young Adult Interns are now pastors in local churches, serving general agencies, and are young adult leaders in the United Methodist Student Movement. Three current GBCS staff members are former EYA interns.

Central conferences are a growing area of GBCS leadership development activities. This quadrennium, the agency formalized relationships with the United Methodist Seminary in Moscow and with Africa University. GBCS staff members have led seminars on social justice issues at both those institutions in the past two years.

GBCS conducted 21 Social Principles seminars during the previous quadrennium in central conferences. The agency is on target to increase that number this quadrennium. Social Principles seminars have been conducted in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines. In Africa, recent seminars have been in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda, Episcopal leader of the North Katanga Annual Conference in the DRC, wrote about a GBCS-led seminar in Kamina in 2010 attended by 130 persons:

“You came to open a new chapter in our area. Now people have a real understanding of The UMC through the involvement of the Church in society. . . . I end by congratulating you for such a ministry and encourage you to do more. But more especially, I end by extending another invitation to North Katanga, and why not to the rest of our episcopal areas?”

In 2011, the agency conducted its first educational event for more than 20 Africans studying in the United States. These students from eight countries came to the United Methodist Building to learn about Imagine No Malaria, the Social Principles, and how to advocate for justice. They also made visits to the US Capitol to thank legislators for supporting the effort to eradicate malaria.

Similar efforts began this quadrennium with other newly defined constituencies, such as clergy who identify themselves as evangelical. The intent is to familiarize them with how and why to do justice advocacy. These are new ventures in addition to ongoing programs for more traditionally defined audiences such as directors of connectional ministries, district superintendents, lay leaders, and young clergy.

In the past two years, more than 100 young clergy have come to the United Methodist Building to take part in the Young Clergy Leadership Forum. Now in its eighth year, more than 400 clergy have participated in the GBCS familiarization program that links faith to justice.
A relatively new wrinkle in the concept occurred in 2011 when GBCS staff participated in jurisdictional training for young clergy. The first was in Denver in the Western Jurisdiction. A similar event sponsored by GBCS will be held in 2012 in the Northeast Jurisdiction.

Overall GBCS provided leadership in events in nearly 60 annual conferences around the world. Its staff has designed and led workshops for local churches. The agency’s staff members have spoken at educational events in every US jurisdiction and in central conferences in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines.

**UM Seminars on National & International Affairs**

United Methodist Seminars on National & International Affairs is a GBCS core ministry. It provides an environment for United Methodists to explore the Social Principles and to act on their behalf. For more than five decades, this leadership-development program has educated youths and adults about social holiness and advocacy’s importance both locally and nationally.

A unique aspect of the seminars is that participants pick the topic. Seminar designers then create an interactive educational experience to address the topic.

UM Seminars is an interagency endeavor co-sponsored by GBCS and GBGM’s Women’s Division. Many groups participate in two-city seminars to learn about the same issue in Washington, DC, and New York City (United Nations). This requires close coordination between the Women’s Division and GBCS.

The seminar program collaborates with the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry (GBHEM) on training events for campus ministers, undergraduate students, and seminary students. The seminar program also works closely with GBHEM on the workshop and missions portions of the annual United Methodist Student Movement gathering.

The seminar program works with annual conferences, associations of campus ministers, caucus groups, and United Methodist Women units to identify ways to enhance their efforts through education. It has done so for decades.

Annually an average of 800 people attend UM Seminars in Washington, DC. All five US jurisdictions have sent a group to Washington, DC.

UM Seminars recently began a new effort that reaches out to groups unable to afford a trip to Washington, DC. The UM Seminars Web page offers educational resources under a new initiative “Engage at Home.”

**Ministry with the Poor**

Every advocacy program at GBCS addresses ministry with the poor. For example, “Faith in Action,” the agency’s e-newsletter carried nearly 300 articles related to poverty in 2010 alone, an average of more than 25 per month. That projects to well over 1,000 articles during the quadrennium on this focus area alone. Similar coverage applies to the other focus areas, although ministry with the poor is the most prevalent.

The agency has created educational resources, worship materials and announced advocacy opportunities via GBCS’s Web site (www.umc-gbcs.org). “Faith in Action” e-newsletter, and more than a dozen e-mail networks tied to advocacy work areas. In addition to the Web site and e-newsletter, social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter have been added to the agency’s communications arsenal this quadrennium.

“Faith in Action” and numerous action alerts are the agency’s primary vehicles to create and distribute stories, educational resources, worship material, and advocacy opportunities. In some instances, new Web sites have been introduced to support advocacy campaigns, as well.

A case in point is “Prophet-driven,” a campaign developed by GBCS’s Economic Justice work area, to support ministry with the poor. The Web site, whose tagline was “A prophet-driven people in a profit-driven world,” offers biblical resources, calls to action, and other activities. It is rooted in the United Methodist Social Principle “The Economic Community” (¶ 163).

The John 10:10 Web site took on a similar role during the debate about reforming health-care.

The goal of all this, of course, is to protect critical human needs funding from budget reductions and ensure an adequate revenue stream to meet basic human rights outlined in the Social Principles. GBCS was instrumental in faith-based efforts to ensure critical human needs funding as part of the Recovery Act adopted in 2009, for example.
GBCS does not attempt to accomplish this by itself. It works in collaboration with many other faith groups. Increased interagency collaboration within The United Methodist Church was an important tool to encourage and support efforts to guarantee a living wage for all employees at United Methodist institutions, by the way.

A unique facet of poverty is the vulnerability of the poor to human trafficking. This practice condemns disadvantaged persons to labor and sexual exploitation. GBCS recently reassigned staff responsibilities to create a position for a children’s advocate who includes human trafficking in his responsibilities.

**God’s Renewed Creation**

According to the project manager, GBCS was indispensable in bringing to fruition the Council of Bishops Pastoral Letter and Study Project, “God’s Renewed Creation—Call to Hope & Action.” The agency’s staff members were intimately involved from the beginning with “God’s Renewed Creation” and its challenge to United Methodists regarding poverty, the environment, and violence. GBCS contributed through acquisition of information, creation of the documents themselves, building its Web site (www.hopeandaction.org), and ongoing promotion of the project.

Another crucial effort in ministry with the poor is support of the Millennium Development Goals that set targets by 2015 for eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; universal primary education; gender equality and women’s empowerment; child mortality and maternal health; HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; environmental sustainability and the creation of a global partnership for development, including the proposal for an International Finance Facility to increase development assistance to poor countries.

The UN & International Affairs ministry along with the work areas on Economic & Environmental Justice and Peace with Justice are deeply involved in advocating for debt cancellation for poor countries, international development assistance, and financing for development targeted to alleviate global hunger and poverty. They also support policies that promote fair trade and trade justice, and other mechanisms that enable family farmers and small producers to compete in the global market. This includes work with the United Nations, other international organizations, ecumenical bodies, and civil society organizations.

UM Seminars and the agency’s Communications office have worked for years with United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to promote buying Fair Trade items, such as coffee and chocolate. The goal is to get producers a fair price for their products, thus lifting them out of bare subsistence existence.

**A Moral Budget**

The work area on Economic Justice is involved in education and advocacy that frames the federal budget as a moral document. The director of the work area testified before a US House of Representatives subcommittee to advocate for protection of low-income consumers to ensure they would not be pushed further into poverty.

GBCS staff members, including its General Secretary, made presentations on poverty at annual conferences or related events, such as conference-sponsored workshops. GBCS’s director of Civil & Human Rights has led numerous trainings on faith-based organizing.

As part of the ongoing debates over the budget and tax priorities of the US government, GBCS hosted a series of “webinars” to educate and equip grassroots leaders to engage conferences and congregations by highlighting the impact these decisions will have on our brothers and sisters struggling in poverty around the world. With the goal of lifting up the concerns of those living on the economic margins, GBCS hosted daily prayer vigils on its lawn, which faces the US Capitol.
These vigils held during the debate over raising the US federal government’s debt ceiling provided a public witness reported on by national and international media.

**Just, Humane Immigration Reform**

Ministry with the poor reaches from the inner cities in the United States through rural communities to the nation’s borders. Immigration reform has become a hot button across the nation. Not just poverty, but breaking up families and thwarting students’ dreams have become central to the debate.

The General Conference resolution, “Welcoming the Migrant to the US” (#3281, 2008 Book of Resolutions) is the basis upon which GBCS carries out advocacy for immigration reform. Network advocates are being organized in every jurisdiction to work for just, comprehensive immigration reform. All annual conferences that join the Rapid Response Team, developed by GBCS in cooperation with the denomination’s Interagency Immigration Task Force, agree to work on advocating for these policies.

GBCS has compiled an ever-growing “Immigration Reform Grassroots Journal” that documents more than 300 events, actions, and resolutions by United Methodists across the United States. The journal includes actions from 44 different states and the District of Columbia, almost entirely from the years 2009-2011. Many of these actions were planned and coordinated by United Methodist Rapid Response Teams active in 34 of the annual conferences.

GBCS is committed to educating and mobilizing United Methodists and legislators about the impact of immigration policy, theological concerns, and the necessity of legal reform. GBCS’s director of Civil & Human Rights chairs the grassroots organizing efforts on the Interfaith Immigration Coalition. He proposed the March 21, 2010, “March for America” that brought 250,000 people to the National Mall, including thousands of United Methodists. He also secured a primary speaking role for Bishop Minerva Carcaño, chair of the United Methodist Council of Bishops immigration committee.

GBCS helped organize more than 180 prayer vigils across the United States in February 2009. The vigils, which received nationwide media coverage, focused on protection of immigrants and their families. They prayed for moral courage for elected leaders to create just, humane immigration reform.

GBCS fostered the concept of the United Methodist Rapid Response Team (RRT). Under the leadership of Bishop Carcaño, RRT coordinates the work of United Methodists throughout the United States on immigration reform. The team comprises persons tasked with organizing their annual conferences in favor of just, humane immigration reform.

RRT started in July 2009 with two annual conferences. It has reached 34 and is growing. In June of 2011, GBCS gathered more than 50 leaders from the Rapid Response Teams from 25 conferences for leadership training in Chicago. As a result of that gathering, participants hope to have more than 100 congregations declare themselves to be welcoming congregations to immigrants by the end of 2012.

**Criminal Justice Reform**

Criminal justice reform affects many of the poorest in society. GBCS mobilizes United Methodists for action on behalf of initiatives and policies that strengthen and enforce restorative justice principles in the criminal justice system. GBCS has deepened its efforts to mobilize United Methodists to advocate for an end to mass incarceration, drawing on the historical commitment to restorative justice in the United Methodist tradition. This has been accomplished through GBCS-coordinated advocacy trainings and actions by a growing national network of United Methodist grassroots leaders engaged in prison and reentry ministry in annual conferences.

These have been reinforced by partnership with the Faith in Action Working Group, a coalition of over 25 national religious organizations chaired by the GBCS director of Civil & Human Rights. This coalition works on criminal justice, gun violence prevention, and death penalty issues.

A GBCS legislative priority to end unjust racial disparities in sentencing between crack and powder cocaine was accomplished through the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010. This followed more than two decades of advocacy efforts on its behalf. The sentencing disparity and the so-called war on drugs have been devastating to African-American, Latino/a, and First Nations communities. It has been a primary cause for the massive expansion of the prison industry in the United States in the past 40 years.

The National Criminal Justice Commission Act (NCJCA) passed the House in 2010, but failed to come to a vote in the Senate. Work continues on the adoption
of this legislation that will create a bipartisan commission charged with conducting a comprehensive review of the US criminal justice system. Such a study is well overdue. It was last undertaken during the Johnson administration. The goal of the commission is ultimately to ensure justice for all.

As part of GBCS’s advocacy in support of the NCJCA, the agency issued a call to clergy to endorse the act. In little over a week, more than 500 clergy responded, endorsing the need for the commission.

In June 2011, 23 clergy from across the United States participated in a joint visit to the US Capitol in support of the NCJCA. Meeting with over 20 Hill offices and the White House, GBCS coordinated this powerful witness. The clergy met with elected officials to address the devastating consequences of the US’s failed, unjust criminal justice system.

GBCS helped secure passage of the Second Chance Act, which addresses reentry for offenders, and several bills to protect refugees and immigrant widows and children. The agency has seen a greater engagement and connection with and among congregations around people directly affected by broken systems. This has brought about a greater and fuller understanding of the biblical call to social holiness engagement.

In a related action, GBCS was a prominent participant in a press conference arranged by Prison Fellowship to urge Attorney General Eric Holder to implement standards recommended by the Prison Rape Elimination Act Commission. Others involved in the endorsement included the American Civil Liberties Union, Focus on the Family, and the Southern Baptist Convention, a coalition that indicates this agency’s willingness to work across philosophical lines on issues related to criminal justice reform.

The agency has also administered distribution of nearly $180,000 to support restorative justice programs for youths. The funds are raised by the United Methodist Special Sunday offering for Human Relations Day. Nearly $90,000 was awarded in 2011 grants, two of which were to programs that will expand ministries into other annual conferences. The $130,000 granted in 2010 went to five ministries, including two in Africa.

**Stewardship of Creation**

Stewardship of creation is an important aspect of ministry with the poor. Creation care, as emphasized in “God’s Renewed Creation” and United Methodist Social Principles, is a critical effort to ensure those on the margins of society are not pushed farther away from God’s promised abundant life. GBCS works with United Methodists to analyze the connection between poverty, disease, and lack of health care and to take personal, congregational, and community-wide actions to share more equitably the abundant resources of God’s world.

GBCS has become an important partner in an ongoing outreach to young adults through jurisdictional “creation care” conferences. A GBCS-developed ecological footprint exercise reinforces the importance of simpler living. GBCS is sponsoring workshops to model simpler living through UM Seminars and through collaborations with seminary and college-age interns.

The agency’s Economic & Environmental Justice work area also engaged young adults at United Methodist Student Forum in cooperation with GBHEM on a range of justice issues including conscious consumerism.

GBCS works with conferences and congregations to develop initiatives in support of God’s creation. GBCS advocates on behalf of communities disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. This includes speaking engagements, development of curriculum and advocacy materials, and annual planning for the Festival of God’s Creation (Earth Day).

GBCS continues to connect with the disenfranchised people of color within The United Methodist Church—Appalachian Ministry Network, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, and the General Board of Global Ministries Community Developers—to stand in solidarity with and advocate on behalf of communities disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, which affects drinking water and food crops, for example.

**Global Health**

Global health is another United Methodist focus area that engages most of GBCS’s work areas. Environmental degradation such as pollution through unregulated mining activities, inadequate health care, war-related ravages and diseases, and the vulnerability of women and children surface repeatedly as global health problems. GBCS staff members work with interagency efforts, such as the United Methodist Global
AIDS Fund, the Global Health task force and Imagine No Malaria. In fact, GBCS’s director of Annual Conference Relations has added Imagine No Malaria to his portfolio. He works with the denomination task force to mobilize annual conferences.

Global health concerns are legion. GBCS has been actively involved in increasing awareness of the moral implications of government funding and policy decisions, especially in equipping United Methodists to evaluate choices that directly relate to lack of health care in the world.

GBCS collaborates with the Holistic Strategy on Africa based at GBGM. The agency works on issues of population and development such as HIV/AIDS and women, family planning and reproductive health, gender equality, domestic violence, trafficking, economic justice for women and international children’s issues, and mental illness. The list goes on and on.

GBCS advocates for an international economic system that places high priority on the alleviation and eradication of poverty and disease. The agency’s United Nations & International Affairs ministry is involved in shaping non-governmental organization response to the MDGs, especially regarding diseases of poverty and HIV/AIDS.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives acknowledged the United Methodist Church on national TV for its efforts in working toward reform of the US health-care system. The Social Principles (¶ 162V, 2008 Book of Discipline) declare that it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care. The legislation, the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act (PPAC), that passed in summer 2010 expanded coverage to some 31 million of the 47 million without insurance.

Passage of PPAC is an important step toward plugging the gaps in health-care access across the United States. GBCS will continue to advocate on behalf of The United Methodist Church’s long-standing position on health care as a right and will engage local churches in this effort.

United Methodists had a significant voice for achieving major reform of the health-care system. During the deliberations running up to passage of PPAC, thousands of United Methodists marched, prayed, worshiped, met with and wrote to their legislators. United Methodists were crucial to state organizing efforts as well. Prayer vigils were held to call attention to faith principles for health care. In Connecticut, for instance, United Methodists joined other faith groups in a prayer vigil outside Sen. Joe Lieberman’s home just before the Senate vote.

GBCS led discussions and events in more than a hundred settings to help United Methodists discuss health care from a Wesleyan Christian perspective. GBCS developed a study tool, “Health Care Advocacy: Ancient Vision, Modern Imperative,” used in hundreds of churches. This resource provided a scriptural and theological basis for the United Methodist position, thus enabling better-informed reflection on personal perspectives.

Implementation of the law has begun. GBCS expects United Methodist churches in 20 states to participate in enrolling Americans in health-care coverage once state exchanges are activated in 2014. The agency will lead training for congregations to be equipped to enroll children and families who do not otherwise have access to health insurance.

Affordable Health Care

The new health-care exchanges enacted under PPAC will offer the opportunity to buy affordable health-insurance coverage. This will have significant financial benefits on annual conference and local church dollars spent to cover clergy and other employees.

In addition, many churches would qualify for the small business tax credit provision in the law. GBPHB chief executive Barbara Boigegrain commented, “This IRS guidance is a welcome action that can help our small church employers continue to provide affordable and high-quality coverage, to offer coverage that they could not previously, or to expand their coverage to individuals who were not covered.”

The potential for annual conferences and local churches to reduce a major expense in their budget should not be discounted. It is an opportunity to cover every clergy member and church employee and shift a significant amount of money away from runaway health costs toward ministry programming.

John 10:10 Challenge

GBCS’s “John 10:10 Challenge” campaign in 2009 was a prototype of how digital and social media CAN be
effective advocacy tools. The campaign was a Web-based education and advocacy tool to generate grassroots support for health-care reform legislation. Seventy-two (72) teams with more than 400 participants from across the United States were formed through the Web site.

The 72 teams reported more than 850 different actions, ranging from sharing a personal story, taking part in a health-care reform conference call, sharing postcards, and contacting their members of Congress to making a personal commitment toward better health. Many teams represented local churches that engaged congregation members in 10:10 Challenge activities.

The Web site, 1010challenge.org, had over 15,000 visitors from its launch on July 24, 2009, to June 14, 2010. The site averaged over 70 percent new visitors, who came from at least 10 different countries. Most visitors (96 percent) were from the United States. Local churches and health-care-related organizations had links to our material on their sites.

The agency provides training events to equip United Methodists to understand the connection between poverty, racism, and addictions in the world. GBCS provides resources about and encourages personal, congregational, and community-wide actions to address the brokenness that leads to addiction.

**Predatory Addictive Enterprises**

GBCS has committed to confront predatory enterprises such as alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and pornography that profit from addicting behaviors. A major victory was achieved in 2009 with the enactment of legislation authorizing federal regulation of tobacco in the United States. This victory followed more than a decade of advocacy efforts by GBCS.

The agency’s chief executive chairs Faith United Against Tobacco, an interfaith coalition of more than 25 national faith denominations and organizations credited with helping secure passage of the “Family Smoking Prevention & Tobacco Control Act.” Continuing to bury so many people struck down early because of tobacco addiction is not acceptable, the coalition decided.

Faith United Against Tobacco sponsored prayer vigils and breakfasts, press conferences featuring faith leaders, and wrote newspaper articles, and wrote letters to members of Congress and the presidents of two administrations.

The US House of Representatives overwhelmingly endorsed the new legislation that gives regulatory power over tobacco to the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). By 307-97 the House voted to support a Senate version of the bill, which passed 79-17.

This historic action by Congress will help reduce the terrible toll of tobacco that local churches and United Methodist health agencies have witnessed for so long. It should significantly reduce the number of children who start to use tobacco, the number of adults who continue to use tobacco, and the number of people who suffer and die as a result.

Under the new law, the FDA will regulate tobacco product content and marketing. The FDA could alter chemical content, such as reducing the amount of addictive nicotine cigarettes contain. Warnings on tobacco products will be enlarged, and advertising will have new restrictions.

Products targeted to youths and children, such as candy-like tobacco lozenges and sweet-flavored products, will be taken off the market.

The Family Smoking Prevention & Tobacco Control Act is the result of more than a decade of deliberations and passionate debate. Forty-five years after the first US Surgeon General’s report linking cigarette smoking to lung cancer, the most deadly product sold in America will no longer be the least-regulated product sold in America.

The United Methodist Church’s General Conference voted in 2004 to support giving FDA authority to regulate tobacco products. As the legislation made its way through Congress, United Methodists in key states were vocal in providing support.

Faith United Against Tobacco also advocates for establishing smoke-free ordinances in states. The effort currently focuses on Texas, which nearly adopted a smoke-free law in 2011. The five Texas annual conferences signed a resolution supporting the smoke-free law and mobilized their members to contact state legislators. Groundwork has been done to bring the legislation forward in the next session of the Texas legislature. Supporters vow the effort will continue until a smoke-free law in Texas becomes reality.

GBCS has been instrumental in helping other states adopt smoke-free laws and raise taxes on cigarettes to prevent young people from turning to smoking.
Alcohol

The agency will continue to equip United Methodists to challenge the prevailing message that tobacco, alcohol, and drugs are acceptable ways to heal hurting souls. The Social Principles in ¶ 162 L and M point to the harmful effects of these on people and call for restraint or abstinence from them by using Scripture as a guide. GBCS resources provide reflection, conversation, and action opportunities toward the goal of living in an equitable world that lives into God’s vision of wholeness for all of God’s children.

Alcohol Free Lent in 2011 engaged United Methodists across the country by challenging them to go alcohol free during Lent. Fifty United Methodist congregations and many individuals made the public pledge to have an alcohol-free Lent. The campaign built awareness that drinking is influenced by many factors besides personal decisions. Articles in “Faith in Action” were accompanied by study questions to foster biblical and theological deliberations leading to advocacy. The articles encouraged congregations to dig deeper as they examined alcohol’s influence on society.

Participants learned about the influence of the alcohol industry through its marketing, frequency of drinking, and settings for doing so. In addition to education, churches were challenged to create a fund to give to a local or national addiction prevention or recovery project. Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, NC, raised well over $30,000. GBCS intends to continue this campaign, hoping to engage ever more congregations.

The alcohol industry’s reach is global. Alcohol producers continue to market their products in developed countries, but are strictly regulated there. Advertising in developing countries, however, faces little or no regulation. In some countries in Africa, billboards for alcohol are located on school campuses.

This troubling situation led to a historic summit on alcohol in Washington, DC, in November 2010. GBCS participated along with leading researchers, scientists, medical and addiction-prevention professionals. The summit worked toward a global strategy on alcohol.

GBCS was invited to participate in this summit because of the diligence of the denomination in alcohol advocacy throughout its history. The group intends to develop an alcohol-regulation campaign across several countries and at world health organizations. GBCS expects to be an integral part of organizing United Methodists for this effort.

Gambling

Gambling is a predatory enterprise that has deep roots that enabled it to spread rapidly across the country. Gambling variations are now legal in 48 states.

United Methodists are part of an advocacy effort to oppose expansion of gambling, build awareness of its damaging effects, and work toward elimination of state-sponsored gambling. GBCS helped gain passage of a law barring online gambling in the United States, but members of Congress have threatened to repeal the law. The agency has encouraged United Methodists in key districts to contact their members so the repeal effort does not gain strength, ensuring the important protections of the law remain in place.

In addition, GBCS will engage United Methodists in a campaign to repeal state-sponsored gambling in a target state as a step toward developing similar campaigns in other states.

HIV/AIDS

GBCS has been urging United Methodists to contact their members of Congress on the issue of HIV/AIDS. GBCS facilitated a workshop on AIDS and domestic violence in the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference in 2010. The workshop heightened awareness about both issues and mobilized support for AIDS funding bills in the US Congress and the Violence Against Women’s Act.

GBCS was a principal organizer and promoter of the “Lighten the Burden III” AIDS Conference, sponsored by the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund in October 2010. The conference provided education and advocacy opportunities to assist in the eradication of AIDS. Eight United Methodist general agencies cooperated in bringing this event to fruition. GBCS will be a key organizer for Lighten the Burden IV Conference in Tampa, FL, prior to the 2012 General Conference.

GBCS also helped facilitate the African American Women & AIDS Conference held in March 2011 in Columbia, SC. The UM Global AIDS Fund conferences have resulted in an informed, motivated constituency for legislative action, specifically US funding for AIDS prevention, care, and treatment.
Empowering Women

GBCS will continue an interagency emphasis on addressing international funding for women’s health, empowerment, and population issues. The agency sent information to its Women & Children’s Network about the following legislative initiatives: US ratification of the UN Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2009; Global Resources & Opportunities for Women to Thrive Act (GROWTH Act); and International Violence Against Women’s Act. GBCS collected 1,000 cards from United Methodist Women in support of the UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In 2011, advocacy efforts focused on the re-authorization of the Violence Against Women’s Act, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, as well as increased funding for international family planning.

GBCS co-sponsored a domestic violence seminar in the Virginia Annual Conference in 2009. About 150 participants learned about this issue and advocacy opportunities. Three additional domestic violence conferences will be October 2011 in partnership with the Louisiana Annual Conference; March 2012 in partnership with the West Ohio Annual Conference with a dual focus on domestic violence and human trafficking; and April 2012 with the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. The goal of these conferences is to train congregations on how to respond to domestic violence.

A downloadable resource on domestic violence, “Breaking the Silence,” was published on GBCS’s Web site for use in local churches.

GBCS has taken action on 2008 General Conference assignments related to population and women’s health. It has published monthly articles about “Sex and the Church.” An average of 2,701 persons each month read the 21 articles in this series.

A 2010 survey of “Faith in Action” readers indicated that 72 percent of respondents wanted the series to continue. As a result, “Sex and the Church” will continue through July 2012 and included 25 articles as of this writing.

Healthy Families, Healthy Planet

The General Board of Church & Society expanded its global health work regarding women’s health through grants from the United Nations Foundation.

With a woman dying every 90 seconds from complications during pregnancy or childbirth, The United Methodist Church is speaking out through “Healthy Families, Healthy Planet” about the moral tragedy of maternal mortality that claims the lives of more than 350,000 women each year. Since January 2010, the Healthy Families, Healthy Planet project has been working with annual conferences and Congress to increase funding for international family planning for the more than 215 million global women who lack access to it.

The project, funded by the UN Foundation, has reached more than 9,400 United Methodists in 15 annual conferences across the United States. Persons in those conferences have written more than 900 letters of support for international family planning to their members of Congress. In addition, Healthy Families, Healthy Planet has participated in 20 in-person meetings with key legislators to discuss United Methodist support for international family planning in the federal budget.

In October 2011, Healthy Families, Healthy Planet convened advocates from its 15 target annual conferences with maternal health professionals, policy experts, and grassroots organizers. The objective was to empower the advocates to lift up the importance of maternal health in their communities.

Healthy Families, Healthy Planet has been so successful that the UN Foundation extended its original grant for another year.

Another GBCS project funded by the United Nations Foundation was “Operation Healing Hope.” The project focused on education and advocacy about obstetric fistula, a birthing malady leading to incontinence for more than two million women each year. The malady can be avoided through adequate medical care. Hundreds of United Methodists participated in forums about this affliction, engaged in political advocacy on the child marriage bill, and designed and sewed quilts sent to Ganta Hospital in Liberia for women dealing with obstetric fistula.

Mental Illness

General Conference has mandated the General Board of Church & Society to work on behalf of those in our congregations who have mental illness and their families. A National Training Initiative (NTI) addressing mental illness began in late 2010. GBCS, in cooperation with eight other faith groups, is involved in planning this initiative through Pathways to Promise.
NTI will train congregations to welcome and support persons with mental illness and their families. A pilot has begun in St. Louis, MO, with three training modules. The three training modules, available on the Web at www.pathways2promise.org, are: Mental Health 101: An Introduction to Mental Health Ministry; Organizing a Mental Health Team in Your Congregation; and Companionship: A Ministry of Presence.

Key to the project’s success is participation of multiple congregations of different denominations in geographic proximity. The intent is to make this a nationwide effort. Already, additional sites have been identified in the state of Washington. Other outreach is focused on Los Angeles, Cincinnati, and Chicago.

**Gun Violence**

The General Board of Church & Society and United Methodist Women are among faith groups that announced formation of a diverse coalition to confront America’s gun violence epidemic. The coalition’s goal is to rally support for policies that reduce death and injury from gunfire.

Announcement of the coalition, “Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence,” came in the wake of the tragic shootings in Tucson on Jan. 8, 2011. The founding coalition consisted of 24 national faith organizations, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh. They endorsed a resolution calling for “effective public policy measures” to reduce death and injury from gunfire.

The Tucson shootings, where six persons were killed and 13 others wounded, including Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, spurred the new coalition to action. Member organizations chose Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, to announce the new coalition.

“Gun violence is a moral issue,” said Jim Winkler, GBCS chief executive who is chair of Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence. “It is simply unconscionable that we sacrifice 32 of our mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers every day to gunfire.”

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence member organizations will call their local congregations in every state to rally support for gun violence prevention policies and reach out to other faith organizations to join the effort.

**Peace with Justice**

GBCS advocates for Peace with Justice for All of God’s People. The Peace with Justice Program is an essential element of the agency’s ministry. GBCS’s Peace with Justice work area is supported by the United Methodist Special Sunday offering that provides resources both at the annual conference level and to the agency.

Thanks to the offering, GBCS has been able to award more than $200,000 in Peace with Justice grants this quadrennium. In 2011, a central conference project and 17 projects in four of the five US jurisdictions received grants. The central conference award went to a youth-oriented project in the Philippines, and a Northern Illinois award is for a ministry in South Sudan, for example.

Among its numerous Peace with Justice initiatives, GBCS’s work area spent many months of advocacy on behalf of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which was ratified by the US Senate just before Christmas in 2010. Reduction of nuclear weapons has been a decades-long goal of The United Methodist Church. It is a Social Principle and was the subject of the Council of Bishops’ pastoral letter, “In Defense of Creation,” written more than 20 years ago.

GBCS’s Peace with Justice efforts include advocacy for an international economic system that places high priority on the alleviation and eradication of poverty and disease. An important part of this advocacy is seeking reform of US foreign aid policies and practices.

Other Peace with Justice advocacy efforts include reduction of excessive military spending; ending conflicts such as that in Afghanistan; ending violent aggression and terrorism; supporting human rights; and building and restoring viable, secure, and sustainable communities. In the last instance, the agency has been seeking the right for citizens in Haiti to have a voice in redevelopment of their earthquake-ravaged country.

GBCS has offered forthright witness in condemning land mine use and supporting a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, both of which positions have been adopted by the General Conference.

An ongoing effort of GBCS is to train Peace with Justice coordinators across the connection. Almost daily communication is maintained with these coordinators through a Google group.
Ebb-and-Flow Nature

GBCS’s Capitol Hill activities often personify an ebb-and-flow nature as legislation moves through the US Congress. While advocacy efforts continue on the many social justice issues identified by the General Conference, advocacy intensity increases on specific issues as legislation nears consideration.

For example, the job description and area focus of Civil & Human Rights shifted in response to increasing attention to comprehensive immigration reform. The wisdom of that shift has been borne out by the immigration-related debates grabbing headlines across the country and the unjust laws being passed in various states. The shift was further strengthened by the request from the Council of Bishops and some annual conferences to expand our staff in this area of ministry. Expansion has been accomplished in immigration and in criminal justice reform through successfully soliciting grants from outside sources.

Outreach to Local Churches, Annual Conferences

GBCS’s primary means of outreach is its weekly electronic newsletter, “Faith in Action” (FIA). Circulation has grown from 9,542 in November 2005 to more than 25,000 now. FIA provides its subscribers articles describing United Methodist social justice ministries around the world. It also highlights resources that can assist in undertaking these ministries. FIA’s articles include news reports, sermons, advocacy resources, book reviews, and opinion pieces. Its articles emanate from a wide variety of sources stretching from local churches to general agencies. FIA articles are regularly picked up by United Methodist News Service, United Methodist Reporter, annual conference publications, and other media outlets, including radio and television.

While mandated to promote the Social Principles and other social concerns statements of the General Conference, GBCS staff members realize that United Methodists are not of one mind on any subject. To facilitate two-way communication and to meet another of our General Conference mandates to solicit input on social justice issues, the agency accepts comments through Letters to the Editor on its Web site and through social media vehicles, such as Facebook and Twitter. Phone calls and e-mails to the agency are monitored for relevance to the Social Principles.

These feedback mechanisms enable persons to express their opinions about social concerns positions of The United Methodist Church. These are vital links to persons in local churches, fostering two-way communication about the social issues of the day.

www.umc-gbcs.org

The GBCS Web site, umc-gbcs.org, has had 650,000 unique visitors from more than 200 countries and territories since it was launched in February 2008.

The most heavily trafficked areas of the Web site, excluding its home page, include “Faith in Action,” the Social Principles, pages related to the staff and board of directors, the action center (umpower.org), leadership development pages, the “Sex and the Church” series, “UMs Do Not Torture,” and issue pages (Economic & Environmental Justice ranked the highest). In total, over 113,720 pages on the Web site were viewed 1.4 million times.

Among the sources for its Web-site traffic, umc.org is ranked third in terms of referrals. Our Facebook page is ranked fourth. Our Facebook fan page has over 2,100 fans and grows daily. The remaining sources for Web-site traffic are primarily from e-mail domains and links to other United Methodist agencies, coalition partners, or blogs.

GBCS launched a Twitter account in February 2009 and has sent out over 1,086 tweets to 1,202 followers. Many of these tweets are re-tweeted by others.

Action networks have been developed that provide legislative updates, resources, and calls to action for persons on specific topics. GBCS has worked hard to grow these grassroots action networks of United Methodists, and we have seen results:

- Civil & Human Rights has increased from 3,532 in 2006 to 12,706.
- Peace with Justice has grown from 3,589 in 2007 to 9,637.
- United Methodists Against the Death Penalty has grown from 5,511 in 2009 to 5,816.
- Women’s & Children’s Issues has grown from 2,139 in 2005 to 6,580.
- HIV/AIDS network has grown from 3,766 in April 2009 to 4,090.
Church and Society

- Health & Wholeness has grown from 2,206 in December 2005 to 6,567.
- Alcohol & Other Addictions has grown from 2,570 in November 2006 to 5,402.

UN Action stands at 4,780 and Environmental Justice at 6,377. These subscriber bases have begun to broaden, respectively, with intensified interest prompted by international attention to the MDGs and, of course, the environmental disaster accompanying the Deep Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

A new action network is being launched to focus on children’s concerns. It will bring the number of action networks to more than a dozen.

**Faith & Facts Cards**

GBCS has produced an extremely popular resource called “Faith & Facts Cards.” These one-subject cards now cover 18 issues ranging from alcohol and domestic violence to poverty and immigration. These colorful cards, originally created for a youth event, meet a growing demand to make the social teachings of the denomination more accessible to a wider audience. Looking at issues through the lens of the Wesleyan quadrilateral, each card includes Scripture, United Methodist positions, facts, and opportunities for personal reflection and action. GBCS has distributed more than 180,000 cards, which can be used as bulletin inserts or for a study group.

Several of the cards have been adapted for use in Africa by including language from the African bishops’ communiqué on poverty. Country-specific data are plugged into the “facts” section to increase the relevancy for annual conferences outside the United States.

Social Principles bulletin inserts were introduced in 2011. Each insert features one Social Principle of The United Methodist Church. Most inserts are two-sided, offering Scriptures, prayer, readings, action suggestions, and a snippet about United Methodist activity related to the Social Principle.

These inserts are being updated with other Social Principles as issues arise. Several local churches have requested a Social Principle bulletin related to something occurring in their community. These have been produced quickly and added to the list of inserts that can be downloaded from the GBCS Web site.

To assist local churches and annual conferences in raising awareness of the Millennium Development Goals initiative to eradicate poverty, GBCS produced wallet-sized cards highlighting the MDGs. These proved so popular that the agency has done a second printing. More than 50,000 have been produced and distributed so far.

GBCS has initiated programs this quadrennium to increase frequency of contact with constituencies. These include monthly conference calls with annual conference Boards of Church & Society chairs and Peace with Justice coordinators. Google groups dedicated to specific work areas have been formed.

**Long-standing Events**

GBCS continues to be involved in several long-standing events. The agency helps plan and promote Ecumenical Advocacy Days, an annual program of worship, theological reflection, and opportunities for learning and witness in the US capital. Each year, United Methodists who attend gather with GBCS and Women’s Division staff members.

This annual event to strengthen our Christian voice and to mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of domestic and international policy issues has had an increasingly stronger United Methodist component built into it in the past few years. For instance, Bishop Carcano delivered a keynote address one year.

GBCS has strengthened its collaboration with “creation care” activities in both the Southeastern and South Central Jurisdictions. What began as a one-time speaking engagement for staff has deepened into full collaboration engaged in developing and resourcing annual jurisdiction-wide “creation care” conferences. Critical to the gatherings are times for dialogue among annual conference “creation care” leaders. These connections formed the initial list of leaders for monthly climate and energy strategy calls that are now ecumenical and include leaders from across the United States.

GBCS works closely with the Lake Junaluska Peace Conference planning committee and co-sponsors its annual peace event attended by hundreds of persons. Other jurisdictions have approached the agency about developing similar events.

**Ministry of Forthright Witness, Action**

GBCS has an active, relevant ministry of education, forthright witness, and action, as mandated by General
Conference. The agency is on the front lines of social justice efforts around the world, following in the footsteps of John Wesley made more than two centuries ago. This ministry is high profile, generating both support and criticism across The United Methodist Church.

One of the hottest issues that GBCS has had to address, for example, came from the 2008 General Conference. It mandated that GBCS form a task force to study and report on homophobia and heterosexism. Accordingly, the agency developed resources on how to eradicate homophobia and heterosexism. A Web page was designed for distribution of these resources and as a place to gather other information on the subject.

This report should give General Conference delegates a glimpse into the wide-ranging social justice issues that United Methodists address. While lengthy, it is not complete by any stretch of the imagination. GBCS provides guidance and resources to grassroots efforts among United Methodists to advocate for eradication of injustices anywhere.

John Wesley declared more than 200 years ago that the gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social, no holiness but social holiness. The Council of Bishops reiterated that strong stance in their 2009 Pastoral Letter and documents that call United Methodists to action against pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence.

General Conference has affirmed strong United Methodist social justice stances over the course of decades. General Conference grapples every meeting with the question of what the Church of Jesus Christ should and must say about the critical issues of the day, which are constantly changing, too.

The General Board of Church & Society continues the legacy of being a prophetic voice in a world awash with injustices that hinder it being on earth as it is in heaven. GBCS attempts to faithfully seek the implementation of the Social Principles, its prime responsibility by the Discipline, and other statements adopted by General Conference on Christian social concerns.

As with all other United Methodist agencies, GBCS’s ministry must constantly be evaluated in light of financial considerations. The recent recession not only affected investment income, as mentioned earlier, but has had an adverse impact on expected income from the World Service Fund. This changes the focus from what needs to be done to how to try to do it with fewer resources.

The United Methodist General Conference has declared its opposition to the death penalty, war, gambling, pornography, alcohol and tobacco use, racism, religious persecution, and many other evils. It has also declared its support for a clean environment, quality education, peace, separation of church and state, equitable distribution of wealth, and other desirable social ends. History has proven these to be long-term efforts, and recent history has proven that progress can be achieved through diligence and faithfulness to God’s vision.

The past half century has seen enormous strides forward through the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the environmental justice movement, the movements to end apartheid and nuclear weapons, and the movement for the rights and dignity of all people. These are moral and spiritual at their core. The United Methodist Church has been an important part of these efforts. The General Board of Church & Society plays an essential role in facilitating the involvement of United Methodists in social justice movements around the world.

Transformation of a world beleaguered for so many centuries by war, famine, pestilence, and plague will only be accomplished by working at all levels within the church, with a shared focus, such as that embodied in the Four Areas of Focus. They are, however, just that: only four areas. Our faith commands us to address them and so much more for any hope of true transformation to occur.

That is the role of the General Board of Church & Society. This agency tills the soil and plants the seeds that will produce the plants that provide healing salves that rectify conditions that demand transformation. Mercy ministries are crucial in the interim, but justice ministries are necessary for true transformation.
Report to General Conference 2012 on God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action from the Council of Bishops’ Task Force on In Defense of Creation

Excerpts from the Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action . . .

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social. No holiness but social holiness. John Wesley

We practice social and environmental holiness by caring for God’s people and God’s planet and by challenging those whose policies and practices neglect the poor, exploit the weak, hasten global warming, and produce more weapons. . . . We cannot change the world until we change our way of being in it.
Pastoral Letter

Your charge to the bishops

In 2004, the General Conference charged and funded the Council of Bishops to revisit its 1986 Cold War era Pastoral Letter, In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and A Just Peace. That historic document was an urgent message on the growing threat of nuclear war and the extinction of life through a “nuclear winter.” It was an urgent reminder that “This world belongs to God, ‘precious precisely because it is not our creation.’” It declared a clear and unconditional “No” to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. (Foundation Document, God’s Renewed Creation)

The General Conference called the Council to revisit these documents by “educating and encouraging church members, citizens and governments to seek things which lead to a just peace.” (Resolution 8004, Book of Resolutions 2008)

The results are the documents of God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action: the Pastoral Letter; the Pastoral Letter in Liturgical Setting; the Foundation Document that puts real stories and faces to the issues; study guides for adults, young people, and children, and Web-based resources. Adopted with a unanimous vote in the Council of Bishops in November 2009, the documents have been translated into seven languages spoken in the United Methodist world. They are available in print and online for free download.

You asked . . . , your bishops led . . . , the church developed . . . , and individuals, congregations, and groups embraced God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.

What the Council did with this important charge

Over a period of three years, a Task Force convened by Bishop Timothy Whitaker conducted interviews and panels with specialists, ecumenical and interreligious partners, and biblical and theological scholars at our seminaries and research centers. Staff members from the General Boards of Church and Society and Higher Education and Ministry provided assistance.

The theme chosen by the Task Force is described in the Pastoral Letter:

“God’s creation is in crisis. We, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church, cannot remain silent while God’s people and God’s planet suffer. . . . Our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered:

- pandemic poverty and disease,
- environmental degradation, and the
- proliferation of weapons and violence.”

The Task Force sponsored dozens of multi-generational and global listening and focus groups. A broad online survey targeted young people in and on the margins of our church. This process was possible only with the assistance of the General Boards of Church and Society, Discipleship, Higher Education and Ministry, and United Methodist Communications. Over two years, hundreds of Regional and Conference Schools of Christian Mission participants were surveyed with the assistance of United Methodist Women and the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

In all, over 5,000 people of faith and good will and interested individuals from age 11 to 88 told about their
fears and concerns for the future and for their families. They also told us what they hoped the bishops would say in their message on the interconnected triple threat to God’s people, planet, and peace.

The bishops heard these messages and witnesses clearly:

• Speak to our fear, anxiety, frustration, and concern for the future;
• Lead us in a confession of our greed and selfishness;
• Remind us of our biblical and theological grounding, and Wesleyan passion for social holiness;
• Call for transformation to sustainable, sufficient, and just lifestyles, systems, and structures;
• Give special attention to the sense of urgency and impatience of our young people facing these crises;
• Show us what we can do in prayer, study, and action, and exemplify by episcopal action how we can turn from fear and concern to hope and action.

Engaging the message and studying the issues

From 2010 to 2012, individuals, groups, classes, congregations, and units have been using the Study Guide. They have been conducting activities, educational discussions, and action planning, including the carbon footprint assessment for homes, churches, offices, and conference operation.

The feedback received during preparation of the documents indicated that general knowledge of the issues was uneven and sometimes outdated. Accordingly, the Study was designed to update information and build hope through action in our own communities and churches.

Hundreds of study groups, Schools of Mission and episcopal/conference office surveys later, thousands of United Methodists and faith partners have used the hopeandaction.org website, advocated for just, sustainable policies at state and national levels, and engaged young people who have voiced cynicism that the church could do anything to make a difference for their future. The Council of Bishops anticipates that the documents and studies will become ever more relevant, challenging, and inspiring for the next decade.

Bishops responded to their own pledges

The bishops heard that you hoped they would lead by their example, their own study and action. They understand the importance of showing their ability to transform their own operations to join God’s renewing action against the interconnected threats at the heart of their Pastoral Letter. They made nine pledges for renewal, transformation, and change that form a critical section of the Letter.

Highlights of the Council’s and the church’s progress since November 2009 include the following:

Annual conferences focusing on Peace with Justice themes and God’s Renewed Creation; annual conferences in the United States and in central conferences sending petitions to General Conference 2012 for further action; individual bishops making personal pledges to monitor their office’s carbon footprint and make changes that benefit the budget as well as the planet, including planting trees at church events and advocating for better policies at state and local levels; episcopal offices making commitments to embrace more telecommunication strategies for meetings to reduce travel expenses and environmental impact.

A notable commitment came from annual conferences and the leaders of the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference to contribute funds to key ministries to “offset” the carbon impact of their meetings. They supported efforts to pass national legislation to limit accessibility to weapons. Also, several UMC annual conferences assigned program staff members to creation care ministries. By summer 2011, over half of the bishops in the United States had conducted carbon footprint evaluations of their offices and operations to reduce expenses and environmental impacts.

Especially encouraging has been the response of young people in UM Seminars in New York and Washington, DC, and Church and Society familiarization trainings for young clergy from around the world. Social Principles workshops in the United States, Russia, the Philippines, and at Africa University have focused on God’s Renewed Creation.

In a few nations, bishops and annual conference leaders have participated in legislative advocacy on: weapons access, the US Clean Air Act and environmental policies, and the New START pact between the United States and Russia to limit nuclear weapons. The Council of Bishops and some key individual bishops
played significant roles in encouraging members of the US Senate to vote for the Christmas Eve 2010 ratification of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Bishops issued statements and posted blog messages to religious and major news media on key issues in the Pastoral Letter. The hopeandaction.org website successfully provided media, Special Sundays, workshop, and ecumenical and interreligious resources on current events. The website had a “following” of over 2,000 persons committed to peace, justice, creation care, and disarmament ministries. It was a key companion resource to the Study Guides for adults and young people.

**Recommendations going forward**

1. The General Conference and the Council of Bishops should determine how to keep *God’s Renewed Creation* before the denomination in the next quadrennium. For example, utilize the liturgy portions of the Pastoral Letter from General Conference for small group worship and prayer; encourage pastors to preach on the themes and challenges; energize Peace with Justice events, advocacy and action events; or have bishops share their action on the pledges through traveling exhibits and meetings.

2. Key elements of this project were valuable and should be considered for future projects: multiple translations of the documents to increase accessibility and feedback; the focused attention on young people and lay/clergy leaders of annual conferences; and the agility of the hopeandaction.org website to share plans and actions happening around the church.

3. We celebrate the outcome of this project. It provided an excellent return on a very modest initial investment by the General Church. The funding to get the project underway by providing for a project manager proved to be essential. Significant monetary and in-kind contributions were contributed by the general agencies. Without this funding and these contributions, the excellent return would not have been achieved. The collaboration of all the general agencies, their contribution of funds, staff expertise, and networking outreach were invaluable to success.

4. *God’s Renewed Creation* could only have been accomplished within the General Church level of our denomination. Bishops have insights and perspectives, but they relied on the collaboration and expertise of the general agencies’ directors and staff to accomplish the project. This was especially true in translation expertise, research, communications, editing and publishing, web operations, scholarly reviews, curriculum development, and youth and young adult networks.

Special thanks to the directors and staff of these general agencies: Church and Society, especially the Peace with Justice Program; Discipleship, especially Best Practices and Young Peoples Ministries; United Methodist Publishing House; Higher Education and Ministry; UMCommunications; The Connectional Table; Archives and History; Global Ministries; and Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

5. *God’s Renewed Creation* enhanced the pattern for Episcopal Pastoral Letters in a few important ways. These could be considered in future projects: the approach in research and study of the Task Force; surveying thousands of persons; the focus on the concerns of global young people; and the agility of user-friendly, supportive website and networking strategies.

6. We celebrate the thousands of individuals, congregations, and faith-based groups who contributed so generously to *God’s Renewed Creation*. We prayerfully encourage the ongoing study of the documents and implementation of their recommendations. We suggest the General Conference revisit this Pastoral message in each successive quadrennium because of the urgent ongoing need to strengthen our ministries of reconciliation, renewal, and peace for God’s good creation.

**Task Force Membership:**

- Bishop Timothy Whitaker (Florida) convener
- Bishop Warner Brown Jr. (California-Nevada)
- Bishop Charlene Kammerer (Virginia)
- Bishop Jane Middleton (Susquehanna)
- Bishop Don Ott (retired, North Central Jurisdiction)
- Bishop Patrick Streiff (Central and Southern Europe)
- Bishop Joe Wilson (retired, South Central Jurisdiction)

**Staff:**

- John Hodges (Young Peoples Ministries, General Board of Discipleship)
- Jim Winkler (General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society)
- Larry Hollon (General Secretary, United Methodist Communications)
- Deb Smith (Director Best Practices, General Board of Discipleship)
- Mary Catherine Dean (Chief Editor, UM Publishing House)
- Stephen Sidorak (General Secretary of Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns)
- Patricia Callbeck Harper, Project Manager.

**Submitted by:**

- Bishop Charlene Kammerer for the Task Force of the Council of Bishops
- Bishop Neil Irons, Executive Secretary of the Council of Bishops
Proposed Amendments to the Book of Discipline

¶159.
Petition Number: 20544-CA-¶159-G; Shaffer, John J. - Stanwood, WA, USA for Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. 10 similar petitions.

Preamble to UMC Social Principles

Amend The Book of Discipline by addition of the following paragraph to the Preamble to the Social Principles (Part IV, page 98, 2008 Book of Discipline):

We acknowledge that, because it is a living body of believers, gathered together by God from many diverse segments of the human community, unanimity of belief, opinion, practice has never been characteristic of the Church from the beginning to this day. From its earliest time, as evidenced in the letters of Paul, the witness of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and other New Testament texts, diversity of understanding and controversy with regard to many matters has been the reality. Therefore, whenever significant differences of opinion among faithful Christians occur, some of which continue to divide the church deeply today, neither surprise nor dismay should be allowed to separate the members of the Body from one another; nor should those differences be covered over with false claims of consensus or unanimity. To the contrary, such conflict must be embraced with courage and perseverance as all together continue to seek to discern God’s will. In that understanding and commitment, we pledge ourselves to acknowledge and to embrace with courage, trust, and hope those controversies which arise among us, accepting them as evidence that God is not yet finished in sculpting us to be God’s people. We commit ourselves to stand united in declaring our faith that God’s grace is available to all, that neither belief nor practice can separate us from the love of God. In that confidence, we pledge to continue to be in respectful dialogue with those with whom we disagree, to explore the sources of our differences, to honor the sacred worth of all persons, and to tell the truth about our divisions as we continue to seek the mind of Christ and to do the will of God in all things.

Rationale:
This paragraph deals with “our unity amongst a diversity of opinion”, which we often experience in discussion of social issues. Our Judicial Council (1021) has said “it is legal and legitimate to acknowledge officially our difference of opinion on vital matters”. Fundamentally, it is a matter of honesty and integrity.

¶160.
Petition Number: 20446-CA-¶160.B-G; Wenner, Rosemarie - Frankfurt, Germany for Executive Committee of the Germany Central Conference. 1 similar petition.

Energy Resources Utilization

Delete ¶ 160 B) and replace with new text:

Affirming the inherent value of nonhuman creation, we support and encourage social policies that are directed toward rational and restrained transformation of parts of the nonhuman world into energy for human usage and that deemphasize or eliminate energy producing technologies that endanger the health, safety, and even the existence of the present and future human and nonhuman creation. Further, we urge wholehearted support of the conservation of energy and responsible development of all energy resources, with special concern for the development of renewable energy sources, that the goodness of the earth may be affirmed.

The whole earth is God’s good creation and as such has inherent value. We are aware that the current utilization of energy resources threatens this creation at its very foundation. As members of the United Methodist Church we are committed to approaching creation, energy production and especially creation’s resources in a responsible, careful and economic way. We call upon all to take measures to save energy without regard to cost. Everybody should adapt his lifestyle to the average consumption of energy that respects the limits of the planet earth. Only one tonne of CO2 may be emitted per person annually. We strongly advocate for the priority of the development of renewable energies. The deposits of carbon, oil and gas resources are limited and their continuous utilization accelerates global warming. The use of nuclear power is no solution for avoiding CO2 emissions. Nuclear power plants are vulnerable, unsafe and potential health risks. A safe permanent storage of nuclear waste cannot be guaran-
Church and Society Committee A

§160.

Petition Number: 20816-CA-§160.C-G; Hanson, Jaydee - Arlington, VA, USA for Caretakers of God’s Creation Ministry Team.

Animal Life

We support regulations that protect and conserve the life and health of animals, including those ensuring the humane treatment of pets, and other domesticated animals, animals used in research, wildlife, and the painless slaughtering of meat animals, fish, and fowl. We encourage the preservation of all animal species including those threatened with extinction. We recognize unmanaged commercial exploitation of wildlife and the destruction of the ecosystems on which they depend threatens the balance of natural systems, compromises biodiversity, reduces resilience and threatens ecosystem services. We encourage commitment to effective implementation of national and international regulations and guidelines for the conservation of all animal species with particular support to safeguard those threatened with extinction.

Rationale:

The current statement on animal life in the Social Principles highlights primarily domesticated animals and animals used in research. We propose amending the paragraph to reflect the need for preserving the vast number of animal species threatened by humanity’s destruction of these creatures and the environments in which they live.

§160.

Petition Number: 20607-CA-§160.D-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Global Good Stewardship

Delete 160D D) Global Climate Stewardship — We acknowledge the global impact of humanity’s disregard for God’s creation. Rampant industrialization and the corresponding increase in the use of fossil fuels have led to a buildup of pollutants in the earth’s atmosphere. These “greenhouse gas” emissions threaten to alter dramatically the earth’s climate for generations to come with severe environmental, economic, and social implications. The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions. We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emissions.

And replace as 160D) Global Good Stewardship — We affirm policies that promote clean air, water and land. Clean water is especially an urgent need throughout much of the Global South. The control of pests that spread disease, such as malaria-laden mosquitoes, is an equally pressing need affecting millions of lives. Christian stewardship requires careful husbandry of all natural resources while safeguarding sacred human life. Thoughtful economic development is necessary to increase the standard of living for hundreds of millions who live in poverty. We encourage cooperation among governments, industries, philanthropies, relief groups, religious institutions, and individuals for the protection of land, water and air while also protecting human health and promoting global prosperity.

§160.

Petition Number: 20812-CA-§160.F-G; Preston, Cathy - Erie, PA, USA.

Science & Technology

Amend the Book of Discipline, Science and Technology 160F as follows:

160 F) Science and Technology — We recognize science ... We find that science’s descriptions of cosmological, cosmology, geological, geology, and biological, biology, evolution are not in conflict with theology. We recognize medical, technical, and scientific technologies as legitimate uses of God’s natural world when such use enhances human life and enables all of God’s children to develop their God-given creative potential without violating our ethical convictions about the relationship of
humanity to the natural world. We reexamine our ethical convictions ...

Rationale:
All Scripture, Christian teaching and tradition declares that God is Creator. The Theory of Evolution isn’t irrefutable fact, but only one model for interpreting scientific data, having shortcomings based on the fossil record and the design of life. The UMC repented for supporting eugenics, a social application of Darwinian evolution.

¶160.

Petition Number: 20850-CA-¶160.F-G; Moneyham, John - Panama City, FL, USA.

Science and Technology

Amend ¶160.F as follows:
We recognize science as a legitimate interpretation of God’s natural world. We affirm the validity of the claims of science in describing the natural world and in determining what is scientific. We preclude science from making authoritative claims about theological issues and theology from making authoritative claims about scientific issues. We find that science’s descriptions of cosmological, geological, and biological evolution are not in conflict with theology. We recognize medical, technical, and scientific ...

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church should not take a position in favor of evolution. Instead, our Church should encourage every member to exercise their own God given free will to make individual decisions about creation.

¶160.

Petition Number: 20142-CA-¶160.G-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Food Justice

Amend Social Principle ¶160.G Food Safety as follows:
Change title: Food Safety Justice
Insert new third paragraph: We support policies that increase access to quality food, particularly for those with the fewest resources. We affirm local, sustainable and small-scale agriculture opportunities that allow communities to feed themselves. We decry policies that make food inaccessible to the communities where it is grown and the farm workers involved in its growth.

Rationale:
We support policies that increase access to quality food, particularly for those with the fewest resources. We decry policies that make food inaccessible to the communities where it is grown and the farm workers involved in its growth.

¶163.

Petition Number: 20137-CA-¶163.G-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Graft and Corruption

New § in ¶163 entitled Graft and Corruption

God’s good creation, the fullness of its bounty and the loving, nurturing relationships that bind all together
are intended by God to be enjoyed in freedom and responsible stewardship. To revere God's creation is a sacred trust that enables us to fashion just, equitable, sustainable relationships and communities. The strength, stability, security and progress of such relationships and communities depend on the integrity of their social, economic, political and cultural processes, institutions and stakeholders. Graft, referring to unfair or illegal means of acquiring money, gain or advantage, especially by abusing one's position in politics, business and social institutions, transgresses human dignity and violates human rights. Corruption, referring to dishonest and undue exploitation of power for personal gain, subverts God's intention for the fullness of life and creation. Graft and corruption tangle the social thread of communities, erode the moral fiber of human relationships, and sully the reputation of social institutions. Legislative and judicial mechanisms, including a strong, just criminal justice system, must deal with graft and corruption at every level of society. Good, just political governance characterized by transparency, accountability and integrity is crucial to the eradication of graft and corruption. Societies that are graft-ridden and plagued with corruption are needful of God's pardoning love and redeeming grace.

Rationale:
Just political governance characterized by transparency, accountability and integrity is crucial to the eradication of graft and corruption.

¶163.
Petition Number: 20143-CA-¶163-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Finance
Place new § between current I and J in ¶163.
Finance
Financial institutions serve a vital role in society. They must guard, however, against abusive and deceptive lending practices that take advantage of the neediest among us for the gain of the richest. Banking regulations must prevent the collection of usurious interest that keeps people in cycles of debt. Personal credit issuing institutions must operate with responsibility and clarity that allow all parties to understand the full terms of agreements.

Rationale:
Financial institutions serve an important role, but they must guard against lending practices that take advantage of the neediest among us for the gain of the richest.

¶163.
Petition Number: 20474-CA-¶163-G; Woodie, Shirley H. - Ozark, AL, USA for Alabama - West Florida Annual Conference.

Public Indebtedness
Include the following in the Social Principles of The Book of Discipline ¶163 The Economic Community:
Public Indebtedness - The huge budget deficits produced by years of overspending by governments around the world is of great concern to us. We acknowledge that for a limited time in a nation's history governmental deficits are sometimes necessary. However, long periods of excessive overspending have produced significant economic challenges for many nations. Such wonton carelessness cannot continue. Therefore, we call upon all governments to take significant steps to reduce budget deficits and to live within their means. We ask that public officials, when making financial adjustments, remember first and foremost obligations that promote the well-being of society such as the funding of schools and other opportunities that foster the growth of the individual, as well as agencies that care for the poor, the elderly, the disabled and the disenfranchised.

We recognize that if deficits are not brought under control, future generations will be shackled with a burden of public indebtedness which will force societies to live under the specter of coerced repayments, rising inflation, mass unemployment, and despair. Thus, this is not just a financial issue, but an issue of justice for those who are yet to be born. Wise stewardship is needed today to provide for future generations. We call on church leadership throughout the connection to encourage public officials to reduce public indebtedness and to begin the process towards balanced and fair budgets.

Rationale:
We are at a crisis moment for our country with the national debt exceeding 13 trillion dollars. The interest on the national debt increases by over a million dollars every 18 seconds. In addition to the trillions of dollars of federal debt, other governmental agencies such as states, counties, and...
¶163.
Petition Number: 20669-CA-¶163-G; Light, W. Greg -
Greensboro, NC, USA.

Economic Community

¶ 163. IV. THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

We claim all economic systems ... and that they should
be held accountable for these costs. We support measures
that would reduce the concentration of wealth in the hands
of a few. We further support efforts to revise tax structures
and to eliminate governmental support programs that
now benefit the wealthy at the expense of other persons.

A) Property-We believe ...

B) Collective Bargaining-We support the right of all
public and private employees and employers to organize
for collective bargaining into unions and other groups of
their own choosing...

C) Work and Leisure-Every person has the right to
a job at a living wage. Where the private sector cannot or
does not provide jobs for all who seek and need them, it
is the responsibility of government to provide for the
creation of such jobs. We support social measures ...

D) Consumption-Consumers should exercise ...

E) Poverty-In spite of general affluence in the industrialized
nations, the majority of persons in the world live
in poverty. In order to provide basic needs such as food,
clothing, shelter, education, health care, and other neces-
sities, ways must be found to share more equitably the
resources of the world. Increasing technology...

Rationale:

In the third paragraph of the Preface to the Social
Principles it states, “The Social Principles, while not to
be considered church law, are a prayerful and thoughtful
effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to
the human issues in the contemporary world from a
sound biblical...

¶163.
Petition Number: 20520-CA-¶163.B; Haberstock, Ralph
Sr. - Charlotte, NC, USA.

Public Employee Bargaining

Amend ¶163 B) to remove “…all public and…” as
follows:

B) Collective Bargaining-We support the right of all
public and private employees and employers to organize ...

Rationale:

Collective bargaining as a statutory right and obli-
gation in the United States began more than 70 years ago
to address perceived inequities between private sector
management and private sector employees. For those
private sector employers and employees, collective bar-
gaining has provided mechanisms to address those per-
ceived inequities because such private...

¶163.
Petition Number: 20521-CA-¶163.C; Haberstock, Ralph
Sr. - Charlotte, NC, USA.

Work and Leisure

Amend ¶163.C as follows:

C) Work and Leisure-Every person has the right to
a job at a living wage paying a competitive wage. Where
the private sector cannot or does not provide jobs for all
those who seek and need them, it is the responsibility of
government to provide for the creation of such jobs
imperative that the government creates the political and
financial climate for entrepreneurs and others to create
such jobs. We support social measures ...

Rationale:

The government cannot create jobs, it can only cre-
ate work projects. Government work projects do not cre-
ate the wealth needed to support the on going needed
jobs. Therefore: The sentences; “…Every person has the
right to a job at a living wage”, and “Where the private
sector cannot or does...

¶163.
Petition Number: 20606-CA-¶163.E-G; Tooley, Mark
Fairfax, VA, USA.

Uplifting the Poor

Delete first paragraph of 163E E) Poverty—In spite
of general affluence in the industrialized nations, the
majority of persons in the food, clothing, shelter, educa-
tion, health care, and other necessities, ways must be
found to share more equitably the resources of the world. Increasing technology, when accompanied by
exploitative economic practices, impoverishes many
persons and makes poverty self perpetuating. Poverty
due to natural catastrophes and environmental changes
Church and Society Committee A

is growing and needs attention and support. Conflicts and war impoverish the population on all sides, and an important way to support the poor will be to work for peaceful solutions.

And replace with: We give thanks for the increasing prosperity of many previously impoverished societies and for the uplift of hundreds of millions from poverty into the middle class, especially in China, India, Indonesia, Brazil and elsewhere. Protections for private property, economic development, and transparent government upholding the rule of law are vital for increasing global standards of living. The assurance of clean water, electricity, reliable heating and refrigeration remain urgent needs for rescuing countless other hundreds of millions from chronic poverty. The Church must not view the poor only as victims but as inherent persons of dignity and talent who, in stable and lawful societies, create new wealth and greater justice.

¶163.

Petition Number: 20639-CA-¶163.G-G; Berlin, Dianne - Manheim, PA, USA.

Gambling

Delete current ¶ 163.G and replace with the following:

Gambling is a form of theft* (www.forward.com/articles/4183/ <http://www.forward.com/articles/4183/> Moses Maimonides, one of the most important (Jewish) medieval authorities, defines gambling as stealing, even if both parties agree to the rules of the game, as the winner “takes another’s money for free.” While both players know that the loser will lose his or her money, neither enters the game expecting to lose. In this way, gambling differs from sales transactions, in which one person expects to give up a certain amount of money and the other expects to surrender an object or service.) as each gambler wants to take money or something of value which belongs to another person or persons without buying, earning, trading or having it freely given as a gift or reward. To gamble would violate the Commandments against coveting and stealing. As an act of faith and concern, Christians should abstain from gambling and should work against legalizing gambling of all kinds no matter what governmental, private, individual or charitable entity is to profit no matter what the purpose.

Gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, economic, and spiritual life, destructive of good government everywhere and good stewardship.

Where gambling has already been legalized, Christians should work to repeal and end this exploitation of God’s people throughout the world. The Church’s prophetic call is to promote standards of justice and advocacy in all places.

When gamblers seek help, the Church will encourage such individuals to receive therapeutic assistance so that the individual’s energies may be redirected into positive and constructive ends.

¶164.

Petition Number: 20927-CA-¶164.G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Civil Litigation

Redesignate subparagraph 164I (Military Service) as ¶ 164J and add new subparagraph 164I:

I) Civil Litigation and Alternatives — Recourse to the civil courts to correct injustices and settle disputes has been a right exercised by Christians from the earliest days of the church. Jesus spoke of the legitimacy of civil judicial authority in Matthew 5:25-26. Paul, unable to get justice from the local authorities, appealed his case to Caesar (Acts 25:11). Therefore, the civil courts have a proper place within the political sphere under God’s sovereignty and we should regularly pray for judges and other court officers as well as for others involved in litigation.

However, we must oppose and protest excessive litigation. The multiplication of lawsuits, many of them frivolous or motivated by greed, drains public treasury, overloads court dockets, slows the legal process, forces defendants into bankruptcy, and too often harasses the innocent. To reduce the number of lawsuits, we support an increased referral of disputes to arbitration or mediation and call on all Christians to settle their disputes within the Church, not in the civil courts. Because both Scripture and our General Rules enjoin Christians from initiating litigation against other Christians, we urge our churches, conferences, and agencies to set up structures, as needed, for arbitrating or mediating disputes between members.

Rationale:

For too long, the Social Principles have ignored the evils of excessive litigation and suits between Christians. Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) and the General Rules (¶ 103, p. 73), and Methodist and
Evangelical United Brethren Disciplines before 1939 and 1968 all forbid lawsuits between Christians.

¶164.

Petition Number: 20603-CA-¶164.A-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Basic Freedoms

¶ 164.
A) Basic Freedoms and Human Rights—We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal, and to the right to privacy, and the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care.

Rationale:
As Christians we believe that all things come from the grace of God especially basic human rights. Nothing can be a basic human right if it depends on the labor or services of another. Unlike the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, and redress of grievances, as listed in this paragraph...

¶164.

Petition Number: 20643-CA-¶164.A-G; Derso, Joseph P. - Roswell, GA, USA.

Basic Freedoms

¶ 164.
A) Basic Freedoms and Human Rights—We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal, and to the right to privacy, and the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care. The form and the leaders of all...

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church, through the lobbying efforts of the General Board of Church and Society (GBOCS), has become increasingly involved in divisive secular political debates, as in its support of the 2010 U.S. health care legislation. These lobbying efforts have diverted financial resources, energy, and focus away from the...

¶164.

Petition Number: 20700-CA-¶164.A-G; Edwards, Bill - Boerne, TX, USA.

Basic Freedoms

¶ 164.
A) Basic Freedoms and Human Rights—We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal, and to the right to privacy, and the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care.

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church opposes the legislation of any faith-based accounts, such as creationism or intelligent design, into the science curriculum of our public schools. We oppose any ploy questioning scientific evolution on religious grounds, or misrepresenting science to further religious goals. We encourage science teachers to enthusiastically teach all, and only, legitimate scientific understandings of evolution. We further encourage highlighting significant contributions arising from evolutionary theory, such as new pharmaceuticals and vaccines, increased agricultural yields to feed earth’s growing population, etc., that are improving conditions for all God’s children. If asked, science teachers should point out that many thousands of religious leaders are fully comfortable with all aspects of science’s...
findings while some in religion have historically fought new scientific concepts such as our sun centered solar system, evolution, and now climate change. While not questioning scientific findings, we reserve the right to participate in how these findings may be used.

Rationale:
Some, by misrepresenting science, continue efforts to legislate their religious beliefs about creationism into public school biology classrooms – as they have for over a century. Science, several major court decisions, and many in religion have repudiated their actions, actions that jeopardize our freedom of religion. Hence this petition.

§ 164.
Petition Number: 20925-CA-§164.F-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Symbolic Violence

Amend § 164F.:
F) Civil Obedience and Civil Disobedience — Governments and laws ... to resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or are indiscriminately capriciously enforced, punishing some but not others for the same actions. ... We do not encourage or condone any form of violent protest or action as a legitimate exercise of free speech or civil disobedience. Neither are acts of “symbolic violence” legitimate or acceptable. These are actions that cause no direct physical harm to persons, but seek to intimidate, inflict emotional pain, or destroy property. Such actions include threatening gestures, verbal or written threats, vandalism (particularly, the vandalism of graves), the disruption of funerals, cross-burning and other acts of destruction of a faith’s sacred symbols or sacred scriptures, and the willful damaging or disrespecting of a nation’s flag or its destruction as a political statement. Such actions not only conflict with Paul’s instruction to live peaceably (Rom. 12:18), the Golden Rule, and the command to love one’s neighbor (Lev. 19:18, 24), but also have provoked violence against other Christians. Therefore, we support laws to protect the sacred symbols of all faiths and all nations’ flags. We offer our prayers ... to ensure civil rights, as defined by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to persons in legal jeopardy because of those nonviolent acts.

Rationale:
Discriminately is ambiguous, meaning either “with good judgment” or “with prejudice.” Without defining “symbolic violence,” we cannot condemn Koran-burning, which provokes anti-Christian violence. Attacks on a flag are the moral equivalent of grave-site desecration, an attack on those who died defending it. God, not international agreements, bestows civil rights.

§ 164.
Petition Number: 20604-CA-§164.G-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Solidarity with Crime Victims

Delete 164G: G) The Death Penalty — We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings.

The United Methodist Church is deeply concerned about crime throughout the world and the value of any life taken by a murder or homicide. We believe all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore, we must see all human life as significant and valuable.

When governments implement the death penalty (capital punishment), then the life of the convicted person is devalued and all possibility of change in that person’s life ends. We believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that the possibility of reconciliation with Christ comes through repentance. This gift of reconciliation is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness. For this reason, we oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes.

And replace with: 164G) Solidarity with Crime Victims: Every year crimes of murder, rape, robbery and assault affects millions globally. The Church must stand in compassionate solidarity with all crime victims offering ministries of healing and reconciliation. Policies that deter violent crimes must be vigorously and fairly enforced by just governments. Some nations in recent years, including the United States, have enjoyed falling crime rates thanks partly to more effective law enforcement, for which we give thanks. Many great cities are experiencing a rebirth thanks to falling crime rates. Millions of persons around the world are imprisoned for violent crimes. The Church also extends its compassion to them, knowing it is for such people that Christ died. Governments can achieve only so much in the fight against violent crime. Only the Gospel can fully transform human hearts. We urgently affirm jail and prison ministry while also encouraging ministries in the cities and among youth that provide hope and morals against the temptations of crime and despair.


Death Penalty

Amend ¶ 164G:

G) The Death Penalty—We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings. The United Methodist Church is deeply concerned about crime throughout the world and the value of any life taken by murder or homicide. We believe all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore, we must see all human life as significant and valuable. When governments implement the death penalty (capital punishment), then the life of the convicted person is devalued and all possibility of change in that person’s life ends. We believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that the possibility of reconciliation with Christ comes through repentance. This gift of reconciliation is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness. But we cannot, on those grounds, properly oppose all applications of the death penalty (capital punishment), when, in both the Old and New Testaments, Scripture recognizes it as a proper government function to punish evil and protect the innocent. Our established standards of doctrine (see Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament at Romans 13:4) and Christ Himself (Mark 12:9, Luke 19:27, 23:41-42) confirm this understanding. Because we believe “that nothing, including suicide, separates us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39)” (¶ 161N), we must reject the argument that the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings. On the contrary, we believe that no murderer, no accidental killer, and no executioner, by taking a life, has the power to separate eternally a soul from an all-powerful, all-loving God. While we must question or protest specific instances when the death penalty (capital punishment) is wrongly imposed, we cannot oppose its use in every instance. Nor can we urge its elimination from all criminal codes.

Rationale:

Absolute opposition to capital punishment violates both Scripture and Wesley’s Notes. Wesley identifies “the sword” entrusted to governments to punish wrongdoers with capital punishment (Romans 13:4). Therefore, such opposition contradicts Wesley’s Notes, violates the First Restrictive Rule (¶ 17), and constitutes a chargeable offense (¶¶ 2702.1(f) and 2702.3(d)).

Military Service

Delete the first and second paragraph, amend the fourth paragraph

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. 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.

We reject national policies of enforced military service as incompatible with the gospel. We acknowledge the agonizing tension created by the demand for military service by national governments. We urge all young adults to seek the counsel of the Church as they reach a conscientious decision concerning the nature of their responsibility as citizens. Pastors are called upon to be available for counseling with all young adults who face conscription or who are considering voluntary enlistment in the armed forces, including those who conscientiously refuse to cooperate with a system of conscription.

We support and extend the ministry of the Church to those persons who conscientiously oppose all war, or any particular war, and who therefore refuse to serve in the armed forces or to cooperate with systems of military conscription. We also support and extend the Church’s ministry to those persons who conscientiously oppose all war, or any particular war, and who therefore refuse to serve in the armed forces or to cooperate with systems of military conscription. This includes those who conscientiously oppose all war, or any particular war, and who therefore refuse to serve in the armed forces or to cooperate with systems of military conscription.
accept alternative service. As Christians we are aware that neither the way of military action, nor the way of inaction is always righteous before God. We are aware that we can become guilty both by military action and by conscientious objection, and that we all are dependent on God’s forgiveness.

Rationale:
Currently, the two articles 164 I) and 165 C) match badly. Our petition aims at confining the article 164 I) to the aspect of pastoral caring during the military service and to the possibility of conscientious objection. Issues of war and peace should be discussed in the article 165 C).

¶164.
Petition Number: 20716-CA-¶164.I-G; LaGree, Patty - Des Moines, IA, USA for Iowa Annual Conference.

Support for Persons in the Armed Forces

Amend ¶164, Section I) Military Service, as follows: In the last paragraph, following the next-to-the-last sentence, “We also support and extend the Church’s ministry to those persons who conscientiously choose to serve in the armed forces or to accept alternative service.” Add this sentence: When persons choose to serve in the armed forces, we support their right to adequate care for injuries suffered, and advocate for sufficient resources to meet their physical and mental health needs both during and after their service.

Rationale:
The extent of physical and mental injuries among veterans and their families is a travesty and a judgment on our democratic society. An all-volunteer force often consists of young people with limited options. The high incidence of suicides and divorce among veterans attests to unmet needs and curtailed future possibilities.

¶165.
Petition Number: 20007-CA-¶165.C-G; Brooks, Lonnie D. - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Promoting Restorative Justice

Amend ¶165.C) as indicated:
War and Peace—We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy, to be employed only as a last resort in the prevention of such evils as genocide, brutal suppression of human rights, and unprovoked international aggression. We oppose unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. ...

Rationale:
The inserted language was deleted at GC08, and that deleted was then inserted. The UMC is not and never has been a pacifist Church. The just war option should be restored, and preemptive strikes against a menacing opponent such as Israel faced in the Six Day War should be permitted.

¶165.
Petition Number: 20451-CA-¶165.C-G; Wenner, Rosemarie - Frankfurt, Germany for Executive Committee of the Germany Central Conference. 1 similar petition.

War and Peace

Add a new paragraph at the beginning of the text, add two new sub-paragraphs after the fourth sentence,
amend the last sentence and add a new paragraph at the end of the text:

According to the biblical understanding, peace (shalom) is a fruit of justice and refers to God’s covenant with his people in favor of their all-comprehensive well-being as individuals and as a social community. Just peace serves for preserving and developing human existence and is based on the respect of human dignity, which is founded on the human condition of being created in God’s image. It develops when people are protected from arbitrary unequal treatment, when their fundamental needs are safeguarded and when they are enabled to participate in social life. If peace is a process of decreasing violence and increasing justice rather than a static condition, peace politics is more than the prevention of war by disarmament.

We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy. We oppose unilateral first/pre-emptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them.

We must recognize that there are extreme situations where, as the last resort and the lesser evil, the lawful use of armed forces may become necessary in order to protect vulnerable groups of people exposed to imminent lethal threats. Yet even then we recognise the use of armed force in situations of conflict as both a sign of serious failure and a new obstacle on the way to just peace. For this reason civil conflict resolution must be granted political and financial priority.

We feel obliged to challenge any theological or other justifications for the use of military power. It is only possible to escape the vicious circle of violence by renouncing the use of violence. As Christians we therefore commit to a transformed ethical discourse that guides the community in the practice of non-violent conflict resolution and in fostering conditions for progress toward just peace in the world.

We advocate the extension and strengthening of international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide. We believe that human values must outweigh military claims as governments determine their priorities; that the militarization of society must be challenged and stopped; that the manufacture, sale, and deployment of armaments must be reduced and controlled; and that the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons of mass destruction be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

At the same time countries are called to convert the freed resources from disarmament into the training and service of specialists for conflict resolution and peace making. Such funds are equally to be provided for the reconstruction and the consolidation of civil structures in war areas. These measures should be coordinated by independent international institutions.

Rationale:

It is time that the common ecumenical concept of just peace is rooted in the Social Principles (cf. Peace with Justice Program). The discussion about war as a last resort reflects “An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace” (WWC2011). The priority of civil conflict resolution puts more emphasis on this concept.

¶165. Petition Number: 20608-CA-¶165.C-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

War and Peace

Delete Paragraph 165C C) War and Peace—We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy. We oppose unilateral first/pre-emptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them. We advocate the extension and strengthening of international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide. We believe that human values must outweigh military claims as governments determine their priorities; that the militarization of society must be challenged and stopped; that the manufacture, sale, and deployment of armaments must be reduced and controlled; and that the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

and replace as: 165C War and Peace - War is incompatible with God’s original plan. In a fallen world, most Christian teaching has recognized legitimate governments’ duty sometimes to use force in defense of jus-
tice and the innocent. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice and serve as reconcilers of conflict. All nations are called to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them. We advocate international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide. We oppose the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and urge limitations on armaments when possible.

¶165.
Petition Number: 20625-CA-¶165.C-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA.

Support Moral Framework for National Defense

AMEND Discipline ¶165C as follows:

¶165 C) War and Peace—We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as a usual instrument of national foreign policy. We oppose unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them. We acknowledge that the most basic function of any government is to protect the physical safety of its people, and that there are times when governments must necessarily use force in order to fulfill this duty. We do not condemn any national government for defending its land and its people from an attack by hostile forces. We advocate the extension and strengthening of international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide. Even when warfare is waged for the sake of the most just causes, however, we insist that such violence must not be disproportionate to the injury suffered and that careful steps must always be taken to avoid harming non-combatants. We believe that human values must outweigh military claims as governments determine their priorities; that the militarization of society must be challenged and stopped; that the manufacture, sale, and deployment of armaments must be reduced and controlled; and that the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Rationale:
Consistent with Scripture (Romans 13, etc), reason, experience, and the overwhelming bulk of historic Christian tradition, John Wesley once offered to recruit soldiers to defend his own nation from threatened invasion. We should encourage governments in their duty of defending lives while challenging them to follow high standards of restraint.

¶165.
Petition Number: 20630-CA-¶165.C-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA.

Defense from Invasion

AMEND Discipline ¶ 165C as follows:

¶165 C) War and Peace—We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy. We oppose nondefensive unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government. As disciples of Christ...

Rationale:
When it is confirmed fact, not merely suspicion, that foreign invasion or bombing is imminent, it is neither Scriptural nor reasonable to require the victim nation to ALWAYS wait and take no defensive action until it suffers a devastating attack, by which point it may be too crippled to respond.

¶1004.
Petition Number: 20837-CA-¶1004-G; Greene, Randy - Santa Rosa Beach, FL, USA.

Limitation of GBCS

Add after the last paragraph of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, ¶ 1004:

The General Board of Church and Society is expressly prohibited from the activity of political lobbying (on a national, state and local basis) including the hiring of staff or consultants for lobbying purposes and the General Board of Church and Society is directed to terminate all staff and consultant agreements that relate to lobbying efforts.

Rationale:
The General Board of Church and Society regularly engages in lobbying efforts which may or may not rep-
resent the Book of Discipline of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. The General Board of Church and Society, as such, acts in violation of the Book of Discipline as they...

¶1006.

Petition Number: 20943-CA-¶1006-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

GBCS Director Qualifications

Amend ¶ 1006: ¶ 1006. Organization—1. The General Board of Church and Society shall have sixty-three members, constituted in accordance with ¶ 705.5.3, and shall be organized as specified in its by-laws and in harmony with ¶¶ 702-710 of the General Provisions. In addition, members shall pledge themselves to support all parts of the Social Principles and to advocate no changes during the period of their service. The membership shall be constituted ... 1. a) Jurisdictional Members—Clergy, ... 2. b) Central Conference Members—Six ... 3. c) Episcopal Members—Six ... 4. d) Additional Members—a) (1) United Methodist ... b) (2) It is recommended ... Rationale: The renumbering completes a paragraph reconfiguration begun in 2000. Robert’s Rules (10th ed., 2000, p. 624) affirms an organization’s right “to require that its members refrain from conduct injurious to the organization or its purposes.” The GBCS too often seeks to change the Social Principles, rather than supporting them.

◊ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition Number: 20486-CA-NonDis-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

A Call for Peacemaking - Reports

The 2012 General Conference requests the following reports be prepared for submission to the 2016 General Conference:

• The Council of Bishops to summarize peacemaking activities of bishops and annual conferences during the 2013-2016 quadrennium and offer recommendations for further peacemaking activities during the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

• The Connectional Table, with staff assistance from the General Board of Church and Society, to describe the substance and results of peacemaking activities of general boards and agencies during the 2013-2016 quadrennium and to present recommendations for further peacemaking activities during the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

Rationale: A major portion of the petition calling for peacemaking originally submitted to the 2008 General Conference by the California-Pacific Annual Conference was adopted by the General Conference, but the portion of the California-Pacific Annual Conference petition that was not included in The 2008 Book of Resolutions was the section relating . . .

Petition Number: 20644-CA-NonDis-G; Derso, Joseph P. - Roswell, GA, USA. 130 similar petitions.

Eliminate the GBCS

The General Board of Church and Society shall be eliminated.

Rationale: The United Methodist Church has become an increasingly politically motivated organization, with the General Board of Church and Society (GBOCS) acting as a unilateral mouthpiece for the entire membership.

The UMC Book of Discipline, which is “the instrument for setting forth the laws, plan, polity and process by which United...

Petition Number: 20902-CA-NonDis-G; Irons, Neil - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action

Excerpts from the Pastoral Letter and Foundation Document God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action . . .

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social. No holiness but social holiness. John Wesley

We practice social and environmental holiness by caring for God’s people and God’s planet and by
challenging those whose policies and practices neglect the poor, exploit the weak, hasten global warming, and produce more weapons. . . . We cannot change the world until we change our way of being in it. Pastoral Letter

Your charge to the Bishops
In 2004, the General Conference charged and funded the Council of Bishops to revisit its 1986 Cold War era Pastoral Letter, In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and A Just Peace. That historic document was an urgent message on the growing threat of nuclear war and the extinction of life through a “nuclear winter.” It was an urgent reminder that “This world belongs to God, ‘precious precisely because it is not our creation.’” It declared a clear and unconditional ‘No’ to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. (Foundation Document God’s Renewed Creation)

The General Conference called the Council to revisit these documents by “educating and encouraging the church, citizens and governments to seek things which lead to peace.” (Resolution 8004, Book of Resolutions 2008)

The results are the documents of God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action: the Pastoral Letter; the Pastoral Letter in Liturgical Setting; the Foundation Document that puts real stories and faces to the issues; study guides for adults, youth people and children, and web-based resources. Adopted with an unanimous vote in the Council of Bishops in November 2009, the documents have been translated into seven languages spoken in the United Methodist world. They are available in print and online for free download.

You asked..., your bishops led..., the church developed..., and individuals, congregations and groups embraced God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.

What the Council did with this important charge
Over a period of three years, a Task Force convened by Bishop Timothy Whitaker conducted interviews and panels with specialists, ecumenical and interreligious partners, and biblical and theological scholars at our seminaries and research centers. Staff members from the General Boards of Church and Society and Higher Education and Ministry provided assistance.

The theme chosen by the Task Force is described in the Pastoral Letter:

“God’s creation is in crisis. We, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church, cannot remain silent while God’s people and God’s planet suffer. ... Our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered:  

• Pandemic poverty and disease,  
• Environmental degradation, and the  
• Proliferation of weapons and violence.”

The Task Force sponsored dozens of multi-generational and global listening and focus groups. A broad online survey targeted young people in and on the margins of our church. This process was possible only with the assistance of the General Boards of Church and Society, Discipleship, Higher Education and Ministry and United Methodist Communications. Over two years, hundreds of Regional and Conference School of Christian Mission participants were surveyed with the assistance of United Methodist Women and the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

In all, over 5,000 people of faith and good will and interested individuals from age 11 to 88 told about their fears and concerns for the future and for their families. They also told us what they hoped the bishops would say in their message on the interconnected triple threat to God’s people, planet and peace.

The bishops heard these messages and witnesses clearly:

• Speak to our fear, anxiety, frustration and concern for the future;  
• Lead us in a confession of our greed and selfishness;  
• Remind us of our biblical and theological grounding, and Wesleyan passion for social holiness;  
• Call for transformation to sustainable, sufficient and just lifestyles, systems and structures;  
• Give special attention to the sense of urgency and impatience of our young people facing these crises;  
• Show us what we can do in prayer, study and action, and exemplify by Episcopal action how we can turn from fear and concern to hope and action.

Engaging the message and studying the issues
From 2010-2012, individuals, groups, classes, congregations and units have been using the Study Guide. They have been conducting activities, educational discussions and action planning, including the carbon footprint assessment for homes, churches, offices, and conference operation.

The feedback received during preparation of the documents indicated that general knowledge of the issues was uneven and sometimes outdated. Accordingly, the Study was designed to update information and build hope through action in our own communities and churches.

Hundreds of study groups, Schools of Mission and episcopal/conference office surveys later, thousands of United Methodists and faith partners have used the hopeandaction.org website, advocated for just, sustain-
able policies at state and national levels, and engaged young people who have voiced skepticism that the church could do anything to make a difference for their future. The Council of Bishops anticipates that the documents and studies will become ever more relevant, challenging and inspiring for the next decade.

**Bishops responded to their own pledges**

The bishops heard that you hoped they would lead by their example, their own study and action. They understand the importance of showing their ability to transform their own operations to join God’s renewing action against the interconnected threats at the heart of their Pastoral Letter. They made nine pledges for renewal, transformation and change that form a critical section of the Letter.

Highlights of the Council’s and the church’s progress since November 2009 include the following:

- Annual Conferences focusing on Peace with Justice themes and *God’s Renewed Creation*; Annual Conferences in the United States and in Central Conferences sending petitions to General Conference 2012 for further action; individual bishops making personal pledges to monitor their office’s carbon footprint and make changes that benefit the budget as well as the planet, including planting trees at church events and advocating for better policies at state and local levels; 
- Episcopal offices making commitments to embrace more telecommunication strategies for meetings to reduce travel expenses and environmental impact.

A notable commitment came from Annual Conferences and the leaders of the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference to contribute funds to key ministries to “offset” the carbon impact of their meetings. They supported efforts to pass national legislation to limit accessibility to weapons. Also, several UMC Annual Conferences assigned program staff members to creation care ministries. By summer 2011, over half of the bishops in the United States had conducted carbon footprint evaluations of their offices and operations to reduce expenses and environmental impacts.

Especially encouraging has been the response of young people in UM Seminars in New York and Washington, D.C., and Church and Society familiarization trainings for young clergy from around the world. Social Principles workshops in the United States, Russia, the Philippines and at Africa University have focused on *God’s Renewed Creation.*

In a few nations, bishops and annual conference leaders have participated in legislative advocacy on: weapons access, the U.S. Clean Air Act and environmental policies, and the New START pact between the United States and Russia to limit nuclear weapons. The Council of Bishops and some key individual bishops played significant roles in encouraging members of the U.S. Senate to vote for the Christmas Eve 2010 ratification of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Bishops issued statements and posted blog messages to religious and major news media on key issues in the Pastoral Letter. The [hopeandaction.org](http://www.hopeandaction.org) website successfully provided media, Special Sundays, workshop, and ecumenical and interreligious resources on current events. The website had a “following” of over 2,000 persons committed to peace, justice, creation care, and disarmament ministries. It was a key companion resource to the Study Guides for adults and young people.

**Recommendations going forward**

1. The General Conference and the Council of Bishops should determine how to keep *God’s Renewed Creation* before the denomination in the next quadrennium. For example, utilize the liturgy portions of the Pastoral Letter from General Conference for small group worship and prayer; encourage pastors to preach on the themes and challenges; energize Peace with Justice events, advocacy and action events; or have bishops share their action on the pledges through traveling exhibits and meetings.

2. Key elements of this project were valuable and should be considered for future projects: multiple translations of the documents to increase accessibility and feedback; the focused attention on young people and lay/clergy leaders of Annual Conferences; and the agility of the [hopeandaction.org](http://www.hopeandaction.org) website to share plans and actions happening around the church.

3. We celebrate the outcome of this project. It provided an excellent return on a very modest initial investment by the General Church. The funding to get the project underway by providing for a project manager proved to be essential. Significant monetary and in-kind contributions were contributed by the general agencies. Without this funding and these contributions, the excellent return would not have been achieved. The collaboration of all the general agencies, their contribution of funds, staff expertise and networking outreach were invaluable to success.

4. *God’s Renewed Creation* could only have been accomplished within the general church level of our denomination. Bishops have insights and perspectives, but they relied on the collaboration and expertise of the general agencies’ directors and staff to accomplish the project. This was especially true in translation expertise, research, communications, editing and publishing, web operations, scholarly reviews, curriculum development, and youth and young adult networks.
Special thanks to the directors and staff of these general agencies: Church and Society, especially the Peace with Justice Program; Discipleship, especially Best Practices and Young Peoples Ministries; United Methodist Publishing House; Higher Education and Ministry; UMCommunications; The Connectional Table; Archives and History; Global Ministries, and Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

5. God’s Renewed Creation enhanced the pattern for Episcopal Pastoral Letters in a few important ways. These could be considered in future projects: the approach in research and study of the Task Force; surveying thousands of persons; the focus on the concerns of global young people; and the agility of user-friendly, supportive website and networking strategies.

6. We celebrate the thousands of individuals, congregations and faith-based groups who contributed so generously to God’s Renewed Creation. We prayerfully encourage the ongoing study of the documents and implementation of their recommendations. We suggest the General Conference revisit this Pastoral message in each successive quadrennium because of the urgent ongoing need to strengthen our ministries of reconciliation, renewal and peace for God’s good creation.

Rationale:
REPORT of the Council of Bishops Task Force responding to the General Conference charge in Resolution 8004 BOR; an overview of God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action, and recommendations for continued study and action on poverty and disease, environmental degradation and the proliferation of weapons and violence.

Petition Number: 20986-CA-NonDis-!-G; Streiff, Patrick - Zurich, Switzerland for European Central Conferences.

Revise Social Principles

The General Conference shall
• Direct the Secretary of the General Conference in cooperation with the General Board of Church and Society to lead and initiate a process to revise the Social Principles, to convene hearings and other appropriate measures in Jurisdictions and Central Conferences on the future of the Social Principles, and to appoint a committee of adequate size to provide assistance for further work on the revision of the Social Principles with the goal of making them more succinct, theologically founded and globally relevant. The composition of the committee should reflect in a representative manner the global nature of our church.
• Make available appropriate amounts of funding to the Secretary of the General Conference for this process.
• Provide logistical and staff support to the Secretary of the General Conference by the General Board of Church and Society and other General agencies as appropriate for this process.

Rationale:
The Central Conferences of Germany, Northern Europe and Eurasia, and Central and Southern Europe held consultations with the General Board of Church and Society. These consultations called for Social Principles with a clear theological foundation and a Wesleyan understanding of salvation, written in a succinct and globally relevant manner.
R1002.

Petition Number: 20146-CA-R1002-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

US Energy Policy and UM Responsibility

Amend Resolution #1002 U.S. Energy Policy and United Methodist Responsibility as follows:

Resolved:

God our Creator entrusts humankind with the responsibility to care for creation (Genesis 1:28, Psalms 8:6). Just as the Israelites moved in and out of obedience to God’s covenant, we too have neglected our covenantal ties to God, each other and the earth (Genesis 9:9-10). The prophetic voices condemn abuse of creation and mistreatment of our neighbors, calling us back into our covenantal responsibilities. Jesus embodied this prophetic spirit in his ministry to all people and creation. He is the reconciler of all creation. We are invited to participate in the preservation and renewal of God’s good creation (Colossians 15:19-20).

Grounded in a commitment to justice and sustainability, United Methodists the world over are called to pursue lifestyles that reflect our concern for God’s people and planet. Historically the world’s largest consumer of energy resources, the United States and its residents have a unique responsibility to take actions. Energy policy in the US must be based on sound scientific and ethical principles of respect for and justice within the World Community. The United States should focus its efforts on focusing not on expanding supply through large scale projects but on managing the demand through conservation and efficiency and developing renewable, cleaner alternative sources of energy.

Specifically, the United States must:

• move beyond its dependence on high carbon fossil fuels that produce emissions leading to climate change,

• ratify the Kyoto Protocol and adopt strong global commitments to emission reductions within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

• concentrate on reducing carbon dioxide emissions within the United States and not rely on mechanisms such as emission trading with other countries to meet our targets for emission reductions under international agreements,

• reduce our reliance on nuclear power, a technology for which there are still unresolved problems such as the safe disposal or safe storage of high level waste of nuclear reactors,

• manage demand through a high priority on conservation and energy efficiency,

• shift federal resources (both tax incentives and appropriated dollars) away from fossil fuels and toward increase significantly research and development into such renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass, etc.

• support development and utilization of appropriate technologies for small-scale, decentralized energy systems,

• support expansion of the infrastructure needed for cleaner energy vehicles, public transportation and ride-sharing etc.

• provide necessary support for individuals, families, and communities adversely affected by a transition away from fossil fuels, nuclear power, and large-scale hydro in order to allow for alternative economic development, retraining, relocation, etc.

2. Members of local United Methodist churches are urged to show leadership as stewards of God’s creation and take concrete actions to While national leadership is necessary, so too is the commitment of individuals, churches and church leaders. As a reflection of our call to be caretakers of God’s good earth, United Methodists should:

• educate our congregants on energy production and usage in relation to global warming,

• conduct an energy audit of our homes, churches and all United Methodist facilities, and camp structures to identify sources of energy waste and the potential financial savings of energy-related improvements,

• make energy improvements to our homes, church facilities, and camp structures,

• replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, the most efficient alternative available,

• expand our use of public transportation, ride-sharing, carpooling, and teleconferencing and other work and meeting technologies that reduce fossil fuel consumption,

• choose a cleaner vehicle and properly maintain its engine and tires for maximum fuel efficiency that is the least polluting and most efficient,

• keep our vehicle’s engine tuned and tires properly inflated.
Church and Society Committee A

- study the consequences of our consumer choices and take action to lessen our impact on the environment, and use our votes by telling our elected officials that we need laws that support the most important solutions to climate change: cleaner cars and cleaner power plants.
- advocate for policies that respond to the growing threat of climate change.

ADOPTED 2004
Resolution #6, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 160B.
Rationale:
Historically the world’s largest user of energy resources, the United States and its residents have a unique responsibility to take actions based on sound scientific and ethical principles to pursue lifestyles that reflect our concern for justice for God’s people and planet.

R1003.
Petition Number: 20145-CA-R1003-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Nuclear Safety in the USA

Amend Resolution #1003 Nuclear Safety in the United States as follows:

Theology
God has given humans a special charge to “guard and keep” the earth (Genesis 2:15). We are both a part of the natural order and caretakers with God of the interdependent creation (Genesis 1:28, Psalms 8:6, 1 Corinthians 3:9). Our Energy Policy Statement describes this hybrid human condition as producing the twin dangers of arrogance and irresponsibility — that we might overestimate our control of the environment and may fail to be responsible stewards of creation. As science and technology have expanded our understandings of God’s good creation, they have also brought new challenges to the conscience of Christians. The potential of nuclear technology and the corresponding dangers pose just such a challenge.

From extraction to production to use and disposal, nuclear technology must always be reviewed in light of our Christian call for stewardship, justice and intergenerational responsibility.

Nuclear technology presents a special challenge to our call to be stewards of God’s creation (Psalm 8:6-8) because of the risks involved in the production, handling, and disposal of long-lived nuclear byproducts (such as plutonium) in the energy and weapons production cycles. Until society discontinues the use of nuclear power to produce energy and weapons, we have a special responsibility to ensure that God’s creation be protected for present and future generations by insisting that the entire production cycle be as safe as possible.

The problem of nuclear safety is of worldwide concern. It is the responsibility of the church to use its influence internationally to prevent the devastation that could result from nuclear disasters as well as the on-going harm that comes to the environment and communities from mining and disposing of radioactive material (Joshua Gordon, as cited by Christopher Flavin, Worldwatch Paper 75: “Reassessing Nuclear Power: The Fallout from Chernobyl,” March 1987).

United Methodist Policy

Through its Energy Policy Statement, The United Methodist Church affirmed the need to explore all sustainable energy options while highlighting the environmental risks posed by certain options including nuclear power. “The hazards in storing radioactive wastes for thousands of years and the destructive potential of a catastrophic accident involve a great risk of irreversible damage to the environment or to the human genetic pool” (Joshua Gordon, as cited by Christopher Flavin, Worldwatch Paper 75: “Reassessing Nuclear Power: The Fallout from Chernobyl”; March 1987). Furthermore, the church has reiterated its opposition to “the production and testing of weapons designed to destroy or harm God’s creation, such as ... nuclear weapons. We urge the abolishment of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and urge the cleanup of sites contaminated by chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons waste.”

Background


Uranium miners, their families and communities are exposed to radioactive contamination even when companies claim to use “best practice” methods in the normal course of production. This contamination results in birth defects, chronic illness and death. For example, the American Lung Association found that lung cancer death rates more than doubled among Navajo people during the time when uranium mining was in high gear on their land. With the need to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, and renewed interest in building new nuclear power plants, indigenous peoples in the United States fear the renewed pressure on the ecological and spiritual integrity of their lands and on their health (Mark Dowie, “Nuclear Caribou,” Orion Magazine. January/February 2009).

Nuclear Power

Although there has been a pause in construction of new nuclear capacity in the United States—no nuclear plants have been ordered since 1978 and none has come online since the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Watts Bar reactor ordered in 1970 and licensed to operate in 1996—the waste generated by current nuclear operations continues to pile up and policy-makers are debating the merits of encouraging construction of new nuclear reactors.

In the United States, there are currently 103 licensed reactors operating at 65 plants in 31 states. Worldwide, nearly 433 reactors generate roughly 17 percent of global electricity.

The accident at Chernobyl on April 28, 1986—and its legacy of radiation, contamination, and cancer—demonstrated the dangers involved in the production of nuclear energy. This accident was much larger than the one at Three Mile Island in 1979. However, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s Reactor Safety Study points out that accidents even larger than Chernobyl are possible for US reactors. Despite the difference between the design of the Chernobyl plants and the designs of most US reactors, there are, according to the Reactor Safety Study, many accident scenarios possible in US plants that could lead to substantial releases of radiation.

In March 2002, at the Davis-Besse nuclear plant near Toledo, Ohio, authorities discovered that leaking boric acid had corroded a six-inch hole in the reactor vessel head leaving only a quarter-inch-thick stainless steel liner to prevent a potentially catastrophic release of reactor cooling water. This most recent example of safety-related shortcomings at nuclear plants further raises security concerns that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s oversight is insufficient and additional security and safety measures are needed.

Department of Energy Reactors

The Department of Energy (DOE) operates more than 200 nuclear facilities. Among its main responsibilities are the production and testing of this country’s nuclear weapons program. The DOE facilities are generally more antiquated than civilian plants and are not subject to review by outside agencies. Five of these facilities are the main nuclear weapons production reactors. Four are located on the Savannah River in South Carolina; the fifth is the “N-Reactor” at Hanford, Washington (a complex where poor disposal of wastes in the past has created a radioactive landfill known as “one of our largest contaminated areas”). The containment systems in these plants have been criticized as being inadequate and not capable of meeting minimum civilian standards.

Nuclear Wastes

One of the most controversial and costly components of the nuclear fission process is the creation of radioactive byproducts. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission divides wastes into two different categories according to the level and duration of radioactivity: high-level and low-level wastes. Each reactor produces an annual average of 20 tons of highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel and 50-200 cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste. Since the 1950s, the Department of

The cleanup of the Hanford site alone could cost over $100 billion. Yet most DOE plants continue to be exempt from the far more rigorous examination of commercial reactors by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Emergency Planning and State Rights

After the Three Mile Island accident, rules were instituted to improve public safety in case of a nuclear accident. The new rules required the participation, in emergency planning exercise, of local and state officials. In 1986, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in response to two state governors’ challenge to the viability of utility-produced emergency plans, requested that it be allowed to approve utility emergency evacuation plans in the event that state and local officials refuse to participate in the emergency-planning process. This rule change would ease the licensing of future nuclear reactors and seriously diminish public participation and review of safety measures, as well as increase the dangers of a serious accident.

Nuclear Wastes

One of the most controversial and costly components of the nuclear fission process is the creation of radioactive byproducts. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission divides wastes into two different categories according to the level and duration of radioactivity: high-level and low-level wastes. Each reactor produces an annual average of 20 tons of highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel and 50-200 cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste. Since the 1950s, the Department of
Energy has been searching for a viable way to dispose of the wastes created by commercial nuclear reactors (irradiated fuels) and high-level waste from weapons production. These wastes are highly radioactive and will remain radioactive. Presently, these wastes are stored within nuclear facility sites, creating what one member of Congress called hundreds of “de facto nuclear waste dumps.” Over the past six decades, these by-products have been accumulating at storage sites throughout the country, including an estimated 45,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel at civilian nuclear power plants with another 2,000 tons generated annually.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (NWPA) set a schedule for the location, construction, and operation of two high-level waste geologic repositories, one in the east, and one in the west. Amendments to NWPA in 1987 restricted the repository site studies to one location: Yucca Mountain. This site is located in Nevada, a state which itself has no nuclear reactors, and on land considered sacred to the Western Shoshone and Paiute. To a large extent, political considerations have taken precedence over safety and scientific considerations, and there has been improper and inadequate consultation and cooperation with state governments and Native American tribes. In 2002, Yucca Mountain was designated as the nuclear fuel repository over the objections of Nevada’s elected officials, tribal representatives, and environmental advocates. Proponents of the site highlighted the area’s geological stability despite the occurrence of an earthquake registering 4.3 on the Richter scale the month of the Congressional vote. Since its designation, the Yucca Mountain facility has faced court battles and regulatory delays. The future of a national central repository remains uncertain.

Construction of the Yucca Mountain repository will not be completed for years and shipments of the radioactive waste—raising deep safety concerns for the millions of residents living along shipment routes—will take decades. While billed as creating a “central repository” for waste, spent nuclear fuel must remain for years on site before it is “cool” enough to transport, so this process would merely create a new, larger storage site in addition to the 100-plus on-site storage facilities that would continue to store nuclear waste.

Recommendations
The United Methodist Church expresses its deep concern over the use of a technology with severe environmental and health impacts without appropriate and extensive safety measures in the production, handling, and disposal processes. We also reiterate our opposition to the use of nuclear technology for the production of weapons.

We recommend:
1. Reviewing the safety of operating plants. Each of the 107 operating commercial plants in the US should be reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Office of Technology Assessment of the US Congress to identify design deficiencies and weaknesses that could contribute to or cause an accident.
2. Instituting improvement programs. Improvement programs should be instituted in areas of demonstrated weak performance such as management, personnel performance, equipment reliability, and contractor accountability.
3. Researching new designs for plant safety. New designs for existing and future nuclear plants should be researched and developed so as to eliminate the potential of a core meltdown accident.
4. Phasing out nuclear weapons production. We urge the closing down of the five weapons-producing reactors and the Rocky Flats Plutonium Processing Plant, a thorough cleanup of any remaining nuclear wastes at these sites, and no more nuclear arms testing.
5. Establishing uniform safety standards for civilian and military nuclear operations. We support having all nuclear operations in the US subject to uniform basic safety provision. All Department of Energy nuclear operations should be licensed and reviewed by an independent agency such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Environmental Protection Agency. Department of Energy contractors should be held accountable to the same standards as civilian facility contractors and operators.
6. Protecting neighboring populations. We urge that due attention be given to the protection of populations living near nuclear power plants or along routes used to transport nuclear materials by ensuring the communities’ participation in emergency evacuation plans. We support maintaining evacuation planning zones for all areas within ten miles from a nuclear facility, and engaging the full participation of state and local officials in the planning process. We believe that the safety of all potentially exposed populations should be the guide in safety improvements to nuclear power plants, not narrow cost-benefit analysis.
7. Instituting full liability and compensation. We hold that those corporations and governments responsible for nuclear accidents should be liable for cleanup and restitution to all victims of an accident.
8. Reevaluating the US nuclear waste policy:
   a. We urge a moratorium on DOE’s proposed nuclear waste repository program;
   b. We urge Congress to establish an independent commission to review DOE’s nuclear waste repository
and Monitored Retrievable Storage Programs and to provide increased funding for the development of waste management technologies that will allow prolonged storage at the reactor site;

c. We urge that full public participation and consultation in any future nuclear waste repository siting and transportation routing be guaranteed through provision of grants to affected localities, states, and Native American tribes; and

d. We urge a moratorium of the building of nuclear power facilities until an adequate national plan is developed and implemented for the permanent disposal of nuclear waste products.

9. Decommissioning. We urge that the full cost of decommissioning (the dismantling and disposing of obsolete or closed power plants) be paid by the entities responsible for the construction and operation of nuclear facilities, not ratepayers or taxpayers.

10. Conserving energy and finding alternative energy sources. The greatest national effort should be made in the areas of conservation and renewable energy sources. We support increased government funding for research and development of technologies that would decrease dependence upon nuclear energy as an electricity source and urge the development of incentives, including tax and appliance standards, to speed the adoption of these technologies.

11. Cooperating with annual conferences. We urge the general church agencies of The United Methodist Church to assist central and annual conferences in their efforts to learn more about nuclear safety. Specifically, we urge general agencies of The United Methodist Church to assist annual conferences who have identified nuclear safety problems related to nuclear facilities, waste sites, and transportation routes within the bounds of those annual conferences.

We particularly urge the General Board of Church and Society to identify qualified nuclear safety experts who could assist annual conferences to understand and respond to nuclear waste and nuclear safety concerns in their areas.

ADOPTED 1988
AMENDED and READOPTED 1992
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004
Resolution #15, 2004 Book of Resolutions
Resolution #15, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 160F.

Rationale:

We are both a part of the natural order and caretakers with God of the interdependent creation. From extraction to production to use and disposal, nuclear technology must always be reviewed in light of our Christian call for stewardship, justice and intergenerational responsibility.

R1023.

Petition Number: 20141-CA-R1023-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Environmental Justice

Amend current resolution #1023, Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future, as follows:

Humankind is destroying the global ecological balance that provides the life-support systems for the planet. Signs of the crisis are evident all around us. The global ecological imbalance produces environmental destruction. Polluted air pervades the atmosphere. Garbage abounds, with little space for disposal. Polluting gases destroy the ozone layer and cause global warming. Deforestation leads to soil erosion, a lack of carbon storage, inadequate water quantity and poor quality, and the loss of species, resulting in a reduction in biological diversity. The misuse of pesticides and fertilizers contributes to the poisoning of our soils and creates products harmful to all life.

Present social, political, and economic development structures fail to provide the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter for all our brothers and sisters around the world with more than 1.2 billion people currently living in absolute poverty. And the world population is projected to grow by another 3 billion people in the next fifty years. This growth, combined with higher standards of living, will place severe strains on land, water, energy, and other natural resources.

Historical and Theological Concerns

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). We are entrusted to care for God’s beautiful creation (Genesis 2:15, Psalm 8) and to notice and praise God for its diversity of creatures (Psalm 148). Jesus fondly praised sparrows and flowers as indicative of God’s reign (Matthew 6). Cosmic redemption includes all the created order (Colossians 1:19-20), which after all bears witness to God (Romans 1:20). We have failed, however, to care for God’s creation. Too often we have interpreted God’s invitation to subdue and have dominion over creation (Genesis 1:28) as license to abuse it. Through the ages, a theological base for the domination of creation was found in Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over . . . every living thing that moves.
Church and Society Committee A

upon the earth.” Misinterpretation of “subdue” and “dominion” has been used to justify much of the nature-destroying aspects of modern civilization.

Our failure to serve as faithful caretakers of creation has led to local and global ecological crises, the signs of which are evident around us. From poisoned soil and waters to deforestation and the destruction of mountains, our unchecked consumption and unsustainable growth are threatening the fragile balance of life on Earth. As air pollution threatens human health so too do our actions threaten the existence of other animals and plants that are part of God’s great, sacred handiwork.

Even as our pursuit of “development” for the sake of human progress has exacted a toll on creation, we struggle to find ways to share fully the abundance God has entrusted to us. Present social, political, and economic development structures fail to provide the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter for all our brothers and sisters around the world with more than 1.4 billion people currently living in extreme poverty. Continued population growth, combined with higher standards of living, will pose severe strains on land, water, energy, and other natural resources.

The scale of human activity has grown so large that it now threatens the planet itself. Global environmental problems have become so vast that they are hard to comprehend. Between 1955 and 2000, the human population has more than doubled to 6.1 billion. During the same time, the consumption of fossil fuels has quadrupled with North Americans using fossil fuels at a per capita rate ten times greater than citizens of developing nations. The vast majority of scientific evidence suggests that the carbon dioxide from fossil fuels has already caused a measurable warming of the globe. Destruction of habitat, especially tropical rain forests, is causing the loss of species at an ever-increasing rate. Valuable topsoil is being depleted. There is a recurring hole in the ozone layer. More ultraviolet radiation now reaches the earth, which may cause more cancers, poorer crop growth, and damage to the immune systems of humans and other animals.

Confronted with the massive crisis of the deterioration of God’s creation and faced with the question of the ultimate survival of life, we ask God’s forgiveness for our participation in this destruction of God’s creation. We have misused God’s good creation. We have confused God’s call for us to be faithful stewards of creation with a license to use all of creation as we see it. The first humans had to leave the garden of Eden when they decided they had permission to use all of creation despite warnings to the contrary.

We have denied that God’s covenant is with all living creatures (Genesis 9:9). We have even denied that all of the human family should enjoy the covenant.

We forget that the good news that we are called to proclaim includes the promise that Jesus Christ came to redeem all creation (Colossians 1:15-20).

We believe that at the center of the vision of shalom is the integration of environmental, economic, and social justice.

We are called to eliminate overconsumption as a lifestyle, thus using lower levels of finite natural resources.

We are called to seek a new lifestyle rooted in justice and peace wherein all God’s children share in creation’s abundance.

We are called to establish new priorities in a world where 40,000 children die of hunger each day.

Therefore, we are called to a global sense of community and solidarity leading to a new world system of international relationships and economic/environmental order. In this way, the misery of 1.2 billion poor now living in absolute poverty can be alleviated and the living ecosystem be saved.

Principles for a Sustainable Future

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church remind us that “all creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it” (¶ 160). Development must be centered in the concept of sustainability as defined by the World Commission of Environment and Development: “to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Christian understanding of sustainability encompasses this concept. Fundamental to our call as faithful witnesses is the meeting of human needs within the capacity of ecosystems. This ensures the security of creation and a just relationship between all people. Sustainable development, therefore, looks toward a healthy future in three vital areas: the social community, the economy, and the environment.

Conclusion

The United Methodist Church will strive for a global sense of community to help achieve social, economic, and ecological justice for all of creation.

We will focus on the conversion to sustainable practices in the following areas:

Atmosphere

• Support measures calling for the reduction of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide, which contribute to acid rain and global climate change.
• Enforce agreements banning the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to stop the depletion of the ozone layer.
• Support ratification and enforcement of international frameworks, such as Kyoto Protocol, that seek to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.
• Support the cleanup of environmental problems through economic incentive, appropriate enforcement measures, and sanctions against those causing pollution.
• Support efforts that would reflect in their pricing the full life-cycle cost of products to incentivize efficiency by both manufacturers and consumers.

Earth
• Support integrated and sustainable natural resource management.
• Commit to the “Greening of the World” through the limiting of all emissions of pollutants that damage forests and reforestation.
• Work for ecologically sound agricultural practices that produce healthy food and a clean environment.
• Protect biodiversity among both animals and plants.

Water
• Maintain that water is a basic human right not a commodity to be traded for profit.
• Support integrated, sustainable management to reduce or eliminate factors contributing to limited water quantity and poorer quality.
• Encourage on-site water conservation and reuse through improved building and community design.

Energy
• Support improved energy conservation and greater reliance on new and renewable sources of energy.
• Support the development of eco-efficient mass transportation.
• Support a call for a just and sustainable national energy policy.
• Support economic diversification in regions overly dependent on fossil fuel production.
• Support policies that hold polluters responsible for the full cost of cleanup efforts.

Actions/Recommendations
We call upon the agencies and local congregations of The United Methodist Church to take the following actions:

Council of Bishops
• Communicate to the church the urgency of responding to the ecological crisis, reducing our individual and corporate impact on God’s Creation.
• Model for the church a “ministry of presence” by going to places where humans and ecosystems are endangered by environmental destruction.

Connectional Table
• Initiate basic research on the changing attitudes on environmental issues among United Methodist members.
• Request that each Quadrennial Report to General Conference include an evaluation of creation-care efforts and steps taken by the reporting body to integrate sustainable environmental practices into its ministry.
• Each United Methodist agency to include an evaluation of their corporate action toward sustainable environmental practices as a part of their 2004-2008 Quadrennial Report.

General Board of Church and Society (GBCS)
• Develop programs/resources highlighting opportunities for personal engagement and advocacy for individuals, local churches, annual conferences and the general church to understand and respond to our call to be caretakers of God’s Creation, that help annual conferences and local churches become more involved in sustainable practices in public policy and personal aspects of the ecological crisis. These programs would emphasize conversion to a sustainable society.

General Board of Discipleship (GBOD)
• Develop curriculum and programs (for all ages), in consultation with GBCS, that emphasize ecological responsibility as a key element of discipleship.

General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)
• Join with the GBCS in working with mission partners to prepare for and participate in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the ongoing global dialogue on sustainability through the United Nation’s Commission on Sustainable Development.
• Conduct a survey, with the assistance of all mission partners, to identify environmental concerns and develop projects geared to the solution of common concerns.
• Initiate an audit of all sponsored projects and meetings as to their environmental effect on the global ecological balance.
• Establish an eco-mission intern group to work on ecology issues.
• Include global environmental issues in the training of all GBGM missionaries.
• Facilitate dialogue between religious groups, other nongovernment organizations, and government agencies on the formation and methods of popular participation.

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM)
• Include a greater awareness in clergy education and training of the global ecological crises.

United Methodist Communications (UMCom)
• Produce programs that stress Christian responsibility for the future of creation and include models of The United Methodist Church’s involvement in environmental justice.

General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA)
• Assist the church in its effort to be ecologically responsible in its own use of resources by collecting statistics on local churches’ and general agencies’ use of energy, water, paper, and recycling to monitor the progress of the church in these aspects of stewardship.

General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBP/HB)
• Develop investment guidelines, in consultation with agencies, to evaluate its securities on adherence to high standards of environmental accountability as evidenced by the adoption of an environmental code of conduct and a practice of transparency in public environmental reporting.

Local Congregations
• Develop programs to incorporate the concerns of ecological justice into their work in evangelism, social concerns, mission activities, stewardship, trustees, and worship.

ADOPTED 1992
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004

Rationale:
We are entrusted to care for God’s beautiful creation and to notice and praise God for its diversity of creatures. We have failed, however, to care for God’s creation. Too often we have interpreted God’s invitation to subdue and have dominion over creation as license to abuse it.

R1027.
Petition Number: 20763-CA-R1027-G; Shunk, Dale - Somerset, PA, USA. 1 similar petition.

Clergy Letter Project

1027. God’s Creation and the Church
As disciples of Christ, we are called...
Specifically, The United Methodist Church:
• designates one Sunday each year, preferably the Sunday closest to Earth Day, as a Festival of God’s creation, celebrating God’s gracious work in creating the earth and all living things, incorporating it into the church’s liturgical calendar, and developing appropriate ways for congregations to celebrate it;
• endorses The Clergy Letter Project and its reconciliatory programs between religion and science, and urges United Methodist clergy participation;
• endorses the work ...

Rationale:
The claim that Israel is building illegal settlements and occupying Palestinian land is a recent public relations invention from 1949 with no Biblical precedence as a survey of modern Middle East history reveals. UMC Social Principles and Resolutions should not be employing such phraseology or promoting such unscriptural and anti-Semitic...

R4021.
Petition Number: 20157-CA-R4021-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Tobacco Marketing

Amend Resolution #4021, Tobacco Marketing by Altria/Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco, as follows:
4021. Tobacco Marketing by Altria/Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco

As people of faith in the living God, we are reminded that Jesus spoke out for justice for the poor, the disenfranchised and the powerless and called us to love one another. The Bible reminds us that our bodies are “temples of the living God” (1 Corinthians 6:13-20) and since we are created in God’s own image, we are then called by God to perfect our bodies in God’s image. Moreover, we are called by God to ensure that all of God’s creation has access to the knowledge of God’s love and God’s concern for our well-being and welfare. Through our historic Wesleyan heritage and by John Wesley’s words, we are reminded as United Methodists that “the world is our parish,” and we are called to minister in and throughout the whole world.

The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations have a long history of witness against the use and marketing of tobacco products. There is overwhelming evidence linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and related illnesses. Alarming statistics point to the impact of tobacco companies and their marketing practices to entice people to smoke. The World Health Organization in its 2009 Report on Tobacco says
tobacco use already kills 5.4 million people a year across the globe and the epidemic is worsening, especially in the developing world where more than 80 percent of tobacco-caused deaths will occur in the coming decades. “Unless urgent action is taken, one billion people will die worldwide from tobacco this century,” the report states. “Tobacco use is so devastating to the human body that it is a risk factor for six of the eight leading causes of death in the world.”

We are outraged by the use of marketing techniques aimed at young people (children, youths and young adults) children worldwide by leading cigarette manufacturers in the United States. This practice is in direct conflict with the global tobacco treaty, The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which outlines the most effective policy in controlling tobacco in the interest of public health. Specific The primary U.S. companies who have used deceptive marketing strategies aimed at children and young people are Altria/Philip Morris, which sells Marlboro cigarettes, and RJR Nabisco, which sells Camel cigarettes.

Therefore, as people of faith who believe our bodies are temples of the living God (1 Corinthians 6:13-20), we:

1. direct the General Board of Church and Society to collect and share maintain information about and publish a current list of consumer products produced by Altria/Philip Morris, and RJR Nabisco and other major tobacco companies so that United Methodists are made aware of their other products that provide indirect support of the tobacco industry’s financial strategies the tobacco industry implements that unduly influence governments, elected officials and community leaders.

2. commend the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits for its long-standing exclusion of tobacco manufacturers from its investment portfolio and ask it to challenge public media in its portfolio not to carry advertisements and promotion of tobacco products;

3. ask all United Methodist agencies and related institutions to take into account the church’s Social Principles and tobacco concerns and, specifically, to consider the role of Altria/Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco in tobacco marketing as a factor in any decision concerning purchasing food products manufactured by them;

4. request the United Methodist general agencies to communicate, interpret, and advocate for this concern with their affiliated institutions;

5. ask all local churches and annual conferences to educate their membership about the tobacco industry’s marketing tactics aimed at children and young people. It is equally important we understand the connection between our purchasing food products and our indirect support of the tobacco industry;

6. request the General Board of Church and Society to explore productive measures aimed at stopping tobacco companies from marketing cigarettes and other tobacco products to children and young people, if necessary, organize a boycott; and

7. direct the General Board of Church and Society to communicate this resolution to the tobacco companies, serve as a continuing advocate of the United Methodist position within The United Methodist Church and with the tobacco companies, and monitor the implementation of this resolution for report at the next General Conference.

ADOPTED 1996
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004
resolution #198, 2004 Book of Resolutions
resolution #189, 2000 Book of Resolutions

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church has a long history of witness against use and marketing of tobacco products. We are outraged by marketing techniques aimed at young people (children, youths and young adults) worldwide by leading cigarette manufacturers that leads to addiction and other health problems.

R4111.
Petition Number: 20741-CA-R4111; Smalling, Steve - Jasper, TN, USA.

Financial Support for Domestic Issues

Amend the last paragraph of current Resolution 4111 “Enabling Financial Support for Domestic Issues”...

...We petition the President and Congress of the United States to reapportion dollars, saved by reduced military spending and base closings, toward reduction of the national debt, for domestic programs that will enable the financial support for an increase in quality educational offerings in the public school systems of the country, adequate health care, affordable housing; to the creation of sufficient employment opportunities, and a new comprehensive employment training act, that will appropriate federal dollars into elements of the private sector that are currently in compliance with affirmative action guidelines for the purpose of encouraging their participation in the retraining of US workers and for redevelopment of plants within the continental United States.
Rationale:
The United States does not have sufficient financial resources to expand domestic spending. To survive as a nation long term, we must reduce our national debt. In particular, increased funding of our failing government schools would be a massive giveaway to the teachers union and a waste of capital.

R4112.
Petition Number: 20736-CA-R4112; Smalling, Steve - Jasper, TN, USA.

Delete and Disband
Delete Resolution 4112 of the Book of Resolutions “Establish Annual Conference State Taxation Task Force”
Disband the State Taxation Task Forces established in each annual conference pursuant to Resolution 4112 of the 2008 Book of Resolutions.
Make no statement whatsoever regarding what is a fair or unfair state tax structure.
Rationale:
The current budget crises affecting many states have shown that certain states which rely on highly progressive state income taxes are some of the most fiscally irresponsible states in the nation.
Productive, high income taxpayers are moving away by the tens of thousands from states with highly progressive income taxes...

R4135.
Petition Number: 20737-CA-R4135; Smalling, Steve - Jasper, TN, USA.

Remove Support for “Card Check” in Union Votes
Amend as follows, Resolution # 4135 (“Rights of Workers”), Section V, items 3 and 4:
3. encourages all employers to respect workers’ right to organize and recognize the inherent power that employers have over workers in most workplaces. This power over workers’ livelihoods means that employers must be especially careful not to bully or threaten employees, if workers are indeed to experience a “freedom of association.” In particular, employers are encouraged to clearly communicate to their employees that they are neutral on their employees’ choice and will deal fairly with any union they select; abide by their employees’ decision when a majority has signed union authorization cards or otherwise, indicated their desire to be represented by a union by secret ballot, and refrain from using hearings, elections, and appeals as a means for delaying or avoiding representation for their employees. The United Methodist Church is particularly concerned about the unethical practices of locking workers out of their workplaces and permanently replacing striking workers;
4. expresses additional concern about the erosion of rights guaranteed in the United States since 1935 by the National Labor Relations Act and urges adoption of legislation to reclaim these rights. This legislation should allow workers to choose union representation by secret ballot only by signing cards, require mediation and binding arbitration if a first contract agreement is not reached in a reasonable period of time, and expand penalties for employers violating workers’ right to organize;
Rationale:
The secret ballot is the only way to insure that employees are protected from harassment, intimidation, and bullying on the part of union organizers, or retaliation on the part of employers.

R4135.
Petition Number: 20800-CA-R4135; Golden, Tom - Wichita Falls, TX, USA.

Worker Rights

4135. Rights of Workers
I. Biblical/Theological Background
Scripture teaches ...
Scripture also teaches ... The basic principles are clear: all workers should be treated with respect and dignity, disparities of wealth and poverty should be avoided, workers should earn wages that sustain themselves and their families, and employers have a particular responsibility to treat workers fairly and empower them to organize to improve conditions. Workers have the right to organize if they so desire.
The concern ...
V. Supporting Workers’ Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively
The United Methodist Church ...
3. encourages all employers to respect workers’ right to organize and recognize the inherent power that employers have over workers in most workplaces. This
power over workers’ livelihoods means that employers must be especially careful not to bully or threaten employees, if workers are indeed to experience a “freedom of association.” In particular, employers are encouraged to clearly communicate to their employees that they are neutral on their employees’ decision and will deal fairly with any union they select; abide by their employees’ decision when a majority has signed union authorization cards or otherwise indicated their desire to be represented by a union, and refrain from using hearings, elections, and appeals as a means for delaying or avoiding representation for their employees. The United Methodist Church is particularly concerned about the unethical practices of locking workers out of their workplace and permanently replacing striking workers. If the employees desire to be represented by a union, the employer has a responsibility to the employees to make sure that the employees understand the union organizers cannot promise to secure improved wages, benefits, and working conditions. They can only promise to negotiate for them. The employer has a responsibility to the employees to make sure they understand all their current wages, benefits and working conditions become negotiable. The employer is also responsible to make sure the employees are aware that they do not have to be subject to bullying, threats and intimidation by co-workers or union organizers. The employer is responsible to explain that the organizational process will include card signing, and a secret ballot election. If the election shows the majority of employees want a union, a committee will be elected and bargaining will begin. The UMC is particularly concerned about unethical practices that have been used by both employers and union organizers such as production slow downs, damage of equipment and facilities, damage to inventory, worker lock outs and permanently replacing striking workers.

4. expresses additional concern about the erosion of rights guaranteed in the United States since 1935 by the National Labor Relations Act and urges adoption of legislation to reclaim these rights. This legislation should allow workers to choose union representation by signing cards, hold an election with secret ballots, require mediation and binding arbitration if a first contract agreement is not reached in a reasonable period of time, and expand penalties for employers violating workers’ right to organize;

5. calls on ...

Rationale:
The rationale for this petition is very relevant for this time in history. As written, Resolution 4135 supports the organization of a union by employees signing cards without a secret ballot. Meanwhile, union organizers have become more aggressive and adversarial making it critical that the secret ballot takes place. During...

R5001.

Petition Number: 20223-CA-R5001-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Taking Liberties

Amend resolution 5001 as follows:

5001. Taking Liberties: On the Stifling of Dissent

The Social Principles affirm, “We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people” (¶ 164A). Yet governments often use wartime and/or perceived threats to national security to justify restrictions on civil rights, immigrant rights, and the right to express political dissent.

In ancient Egypt, Pharaoh appealed to a mixture of patriotic loyalty and national security fears to justify the repression of immigrants: “Come let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will . . . in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land” (Exodus 1:10).

The prophet Jeremiah, like many of the other biblical prophets, voiced his dissent to the unjust practices of his government during war. The powers-that-be repeatedly condemned Jeremiah, charging him with “desertion” (Jer. 37:13-15). The prophets invariably faced beatings, imprisonment, and death threats for their political dissent in times of national crisis (See 1 Kings 22:13-27, Jeremiah 20:10; 26:11; 37:13-18; 38:4; Psalm 120).

The early church often faced beatings, imprisonment, and death for their religious and political dissent. The early church, as a religious minority, was frequently accused of being a political opposition group that must be suppressed: see Acts 6:11 on charges brought against Stephen. In Acts 17, early Christians are accused: “They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor” (17:7).

Yet in the midst of repression, Paul affirms the importance of due process respect for civil liberties. He insists that government officials acknowledge their own human rights violations: “‘They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens . . . and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves.’ So they came and apologized to them” (Acts 16:37, 39).
The recent U.S.-led “war on terrorism,” the 2001 U.S.A. PATRIOT Act (“Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism”) legislation, and the creation of military tribunals which lack due process or independent means of appeal in the name of national security, as well as draft legislation known as PATRIOT ACT II, or the Domestic Security Enhancement Act, have created a political climate in which an increasing number of governments have adopted executive orders and legislation restricting the rights of immigrants and opposition groups. Such measures include:

- use of “unlawful combatants” to designate political opposition,
- detention without charges or a trial,
- use of secret evidence and secret hearings,
- expanded wiretap and government surveillance,
- denial of access to legal counsel,
- deportation of asylum seekers, refugees and others who face persecution in their home country,
- use of racial and religious profiling,
- threatening to strip someone’s citizenship,
- denying rights of peaceable assembly and freedom of speech based on political beliefs,
- use of military tribunals that lack due process and independent judicial review, and
- the combination of restrictive government measures with appeals to unquestioning patriotic loyalty often foster a climate of mounting intolerance and repression against foreigners and any who voice peaceful political dissent.

The international human rights organization, Human Rights Watch, has compiled a report entitled, “Opportunism in the Face of Tragedy: Repression in the name of anti-terrorism.” (www.hrw.org) The report analyzes various repressive laws and measures adopted by 17 nations in the name of fighting terrorism. In reality, most of these measures seek to stifle internal political and religious dissent, as well as restrict the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and foreigners. These harsh measures have led to thousands of Muslims, Arabs and South Asians being detained without due process in the U.S., European countries, and many other nations. Almost none of those imprisoned have been convicted of any violent crime. The stifling of dissent through repressive government actions has also enabled authorities to resort to various forms of torture with greater impunity. Those who are targeted are often the most vulnerable and violated in a society.

Legitimate security concerns of any nation are best met by upholding and protecting the full human rights of all, including the rights of political opposition, immigrants, and minority groups. The church has a long history of advocating and protecting the rights of religious and political dissent.

Even in a context of heightened fears and violence, The Social Principles clearly declare, “We also strongly reject domestic surveillance and intimidation of political opponents by governments in power . . . The use of detention and imprisonment for the harassment and elimination of political opponents or other dissidents violates fundamental human rights” (¶ 164A).

We affirm the prophetic tradition of dissent and call on all United Methodists to publicly speak out for the protection of all human rights for all—including the right to dissent through peaceable assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of speech and other nonviolent means. We especially commend recent people’s movements in Egypt and across the Middle East in their peaceful protests against repressive regimes.

We call for the following actions:

- local congregations to undertake educational efforts (studying the Social Principles ¶ 164, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights covenants, and the U.S. Bill of Rights) to promote greater understanding and protection of international human rights and civil liberties, especially the rights of immigrants, political opposition groups, and as well as racial and religious minorities, and that these educational programs build toward the 60th 50th anniversary of the US Civil Rights Act (in 2014), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (in 2015), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in 2016) as occasions to rededicate ourselves to realize human rights for all.

- General Board of Global Ministries and General Board of Church and Society, working with national and international civil liberties and human rights organizations, such as the Center for Constitutional Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and American Civil Liberties Union, develop resources and advocacy materials for use in local congregations, to: 1) monitor potentially restrictive government measures that affect people’s civil liberties; 2) challenge repressive legislation and executive orders already in place (such as ones listed above); and 3) protect the rights of peaceful dissent;

- to call on the US government and all other national governments to submit timely reports on their compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention Against Torture, and that governments especially document steps taken to
insure full civil liberties to religious and political minority groups, immigrants, and the right to peaceful dissent; and

- local congregations, working with others in their communities, organize to defend civil liberties by encouraging local authorities to adopt Civil Liberties Safe Zone resolutions, and by forming local Bill of Rights (or Human Rights) defense committees to create a climate of tolerance and respect for different views.

ADOPTED 2004
READOPTED 2008

RESOLUTION #240, 2004 BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS
See Social Principles, ¶ 164A and F.

R5013.

Petition Number: 20130-CA-R5013-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Separation of Church and State

Amend resolution 5013 as follows:

Separation of Church and State

We believe in the Christian church, the community of God’s people founded on the confession of Christ. Jesus is the head of the body, the universal church, which is united by its common faith in Him. The church participates in the worship of God, the fellowship and training of believers, and the spread of God’s love in the world. This ministry of God’s love continues in the church as people are called to love and to bring together those who are separated from God and each other (Matthew 16:16-18; John 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:14-20). On the other hand, we believe that government is an institution established by God for the welfare of society. Government, as many other things in creation, is a part of God’s common grace to humanity. This is a grace where all members of society benefit, whether they are Christians or not. Wayne Grudem has said: “Human government is also a result of common grace. One of the primary means God uses to restrain evil in the world is human government.”

There are several places in Scripture that help us understand this gracious act of God. In the Flood story (Genesis 9:6ff) God reestablishes God’s covenant with Noah and sets forth the truth of the sanctity of life. The Bible does not speak much of the role of civil government; however, when it does it gives us a clear idea as to the reasons God has for the establishment of Israel’s governments and the responsibilities of its King and leaders (see 1 Samuel 10:17-25). For the biblical tradition the role of the government (as seen through the work of the kings and leaders) was very clear.

The psalmist says regarding kings and rulers: “Endow the king with your justice, O God, / the royal son with your righteousness. / He will judge your people in righteousness, / your afflicted ones with justice. ——— / He will defend the afflicted among the people / and save the children of the needy; / he will crush the oppressor” (Psalm 72:1-2, 4, NIV). Thus the prayer for the king continued by describing the task of the rulers (i.e., governments): “For [they] will deliver the needy who cry out, / the afflicted who have no one to help. / [They] will take pity on the weak and the needy / and save the needy from death. / [They] will rescue them from oppression and violence, / for precious is their blood in [their] sight” (Psalm 72:12-14, NIV). And, thus, adds Isaiah regarding the ruler whom God will bring: “But with righteousness [they] will judge the needy, / with justice [they] will give decisions for the poor of the earth. ——— / Righteousness will be [their] belt / and faithfulness the sash around [their] waist” (Isaiah 11:4-5, NIV; see also Isaiah 3:14; 1 Kings 3:8-9; Proverbs 8:14-16; Daniel 4:32).

The fact that God allows for the establishment of governments cannot be interpreted to mean that they are all good, as we can see in Scripture. As a matter of fact many governments act contradicting God’s will. The reality is that governments fail as human beings fail to live according to God’s will. Nevertheless, God can use governments for God’s purposes. In the New Testament we also see the important role that governments play according to Paul. When Paul speaks of those in authority he states: “For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing” (Romans 13:4-7, NIV). Too often misinterpreted, this passage does not call for an uncritical, servient posture towards the state. In chapter 12, Paul goes to great lengths to describe the behavior of Christians including to “hate what is evil,” “love what is good,” and to “live in harmony.” The role of the state in chapter 13 then is written in contrast with the role of Jesus’ followers. Chapter 13 is intended to be instructive and not entirely prescriptive. Jesus’ disciples are not
called to exact evil on those who do evil: That is the role of the state. Paul's writings and life show us that in no way does he intend for Christians to be uncritical or entirely subservient to the state. Neither was Jesus uncritical of the state, because he was put to death by it.

The Romans passage above equates God and government. On the contrary, there is no way to reconcile God's purpose for government with a government that acts contrary to God's will. There are many examples where governments pervert their authority. It is in situations such as this where the prophetic voice of the church best honors its responsibility to the state, and its faithfulness to the gospel, by calling the state to accountability. Christians must become the conscience of government, in the best sense of the prophetic tradition. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated: “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool.” Over the years The United Methodist Church has come to a clearer understanding of this relationship. Hence, our church has historically supported the separation of church and state and the free exercise of religion because of our direct experience of exclusion and persecution, due to religious intolerance and bigotry. During the early years of the republic The Methodist Church was seen as a group of outsiders and as an inconsequential religious body that was not part of the Protestant establishment, thus resulting in the exclusion of the Methodist preachers from many towns and pulpits in many places around the new nation.

This experience, which the Methodists shared with the Baptists, Moravians, and a few other non-establishment religious groups of the time, helped the Methodists to affirm the need to support the first constitutional amendment: “Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (also known as the establishment clause).

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church assert: “We believe that the state should not attempt to control the church, nor should the church seek to dominate the state. ‘Separation of church and state’ means no organic union of the two, but it does permit interaction. 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” (Social Principles, ¶164B). The notion of the separation of the state from the church deals with the relationship of institutions that are independent of each other, although interrelated. Religion and politics are two spheres of activities in the life of Christians that cannot be separated. Citizens who belong to religious groups are also members of the secular society, and this dual association generates tensions. Religious beliefs have moral and social implications, and it is appropriate and necessary for people of faith to express these through their activities as citizens in the political arena. The fact that ethical convictions are rooted in religious faith, does not disqualify them from the political realm.

On the other hand, these ethical convictions do not have secular validity merely because they are thought by their exponents to be religiously authoritative. They must be argued for in appropriate social and political terms in harmony with broad social values, including competing values.

The appropriate place of religion in our society has been in a constant flux, its nature and relations have been clarified in ongoing social debates. “It may not be easy,” James Madison wrote, “in every possible case, to trace the line of separation between the rights of religion and civil authority with such distinctness as to avoid collisions.” Clearly, collisions are what provide opportunities for careful deliberations of religious liberty issues, helping us to fine-tune this important pillar, in an increasingly pluralistic society.

Therefore, we should be prepared to deal with the complexities, ambiguities, and overlapping interests of church and state. We must discern workable principles that are compatible with fundamental constitutional imperatives, as well as our theological imperatives, in order to act morally and in accordance with God’s will. As the Book of Acts reminds us: “We must obey God rather than any human authority” (5:29, NRSV).

Thus, The United Methodist Church has supported that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his [or her] religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his [or her] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance” (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18).

In addition, The United Methodist Church also agrees with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18), which is not limited in its application to traditional religions or to religions and beliefs with institutional characteristics or practices analogous to those of traditional religions. Given our Church’s history, the Church views with concern any tendency to discriminate against any religion or belief for any reasons, including the fact that they might be newly established or represent a religious minority that may be the subject of hostility by a predominant religious community.
The United Methodist Church, in agreement with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, affirms that the freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others (Article 18, Paragraph 3).

Furthermore, The United Methodist Church has understood this to mean that government must be neutral in matters of religion and may not show preference of one religion over others, for religion in general, for religion over nonreligion, or for nonreligion over religion.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church continue to affirm its historical position that government may not engage in, sponsor, supervise, aid, or lend its authority to religious expressions or religious observances.

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference urge rejection of any attempt of legislative bodies at the federal and state levels to bridge this important separation between church and state by providing direct financial assistance to houses of worship and religiously affiliated organizations in order for them to evangelize or proselytize. The state should not support any religious group’s interest to evangelize or proselytize, the state is not the defender of the faith, whichever that faith might be.

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference reaffirms its historical position in opposition to any government legislation or constitutional amendment that would allow the use of public funds to support nonpublic elementary and secondary schools, or in regards to religious observances in public schools.

ADOPTED 2004

Resolution #243, 2004 Book of Resolutions
Resolution #229, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶164C.

Rationale:

We must discern workable principles that are compatible with fundamental constitutional imperatives, as well as our theological imperatives, in order to act morally and in accordance with God’s will.

R5031.

Petition Number: 20948-CA-R5031-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Equal Justice

Criminal Laws and the Courts
Restorative justice ...
When teaching in parables in Mark 12:9, Luke 19:27, Jesus further declares that death is a proper punishment for certain crimes. Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 13:4, where Paul declares that governments are God’s servants rightly empowered to use “the sword” against wrongdoers, John Wesley, in his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, identifies “the sword” with “capital punishment.” Therefore, no church teachings that ignore or contradict these plain biblical principles can be considered fully biblical or Christian.

Amend the next paragraph, beginning, “While acknowledging that” (pp. 673-674), as shown:

While acknowledging that ... important to understand that our Methodist Wesleyan heritage is rich ...”

Amend the bullet point recommendation, beginning, “intensify our redemptive ministries ...” (p. 678), as shown:

• intensify, in cooperation with Prison Fellowship, KAIROS, and similar prison ministries, our redemptive ministries with those ...

Amend the bullet point recommendation, beginning, “that the General Board of Church and Society intensify ...” (p. 681), as shown:

• that the General Board of Church and Society limit intensify its advocacy against for the abolition of the death penalty to cases where it is clearly wrongly applied throughout the world;

Rationale:

Absolute opposition to capital punishment violates both Scripture and Wesley’s *Notes*. Wesley’s *Notes* (at Romans 13:4) identify “the sword” entrusted to governments to punish wrongdoers with “capital punishment.” Therefore, opposing all capital punishment contradicts Wesley’s *Notes*, violates the First Restrictive Rule (¶ 17), and violates our Constitution.

**R5036.**

Petition Number: 20951-CA-R5036-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Delete Resolution

Delete Resolution No. 5036. Seek Moratorium on Capital Punishment.

Rationale:

Absolute opposition to capital punishment violates both Scripture and Wesley’s *Notes*. Wesley’s *Notes* (at Romans 13:4) identify “the sword” entrusted to governments to punish wrongdoers with “capital punishment.” Therefore, opposing all capital punishment contradicts Wesley’s *Notes*, violates the First Restrictive Rule (¶ 17), and violates our Constitution.

**R5037.**

Petition Number: 20952-CA-R5037; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Delete Resolution

Delete Resolution No. 5037. Texas Death Penalty.

Rationale:

Absolute opposition to capital punishment violates both Scripture and Wesley’s *Notes*. Wesley’s *Notes* (at Romans 13:4) identify “the sword” entrusted to governments to punish wrongdoers with “capital punishment.” Therefore, opposing all capital punishment contradicts Wesley’s *Notes*, violates the First Restrictive Rule (¶ 17), and violates our Constitution.

**R5038.**

Petition Number: 20209-CA-R5038; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion

Delete Resolution 5038.
Rationale:
Relevant provisions of this resolution are proposed to be merged into revisions to R5001, “Taking Liberties: On the Stifling of Dissent,” making R5038 redundant.

R5052.
Petition Number: 20764-CA-R5052-G; Shunk, Dale - Somerset, PA, USA. 1 similar petition.

Evolution and Intelligent Design
Delete current Resolution #5052 - Evolution and Intelligent Design.
Rationale:
Scriptural Foundation:
James 1:18 “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”
Resolution 80839 states that the General Conference “go on record as opposing the introduction of any faith based theories such as creationism or intelligent design into the science curriculum of our public schools.”
The Book of Discipline...

R5062.
Petition Number: 20953-CA-R5062; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Delete Resolution
Delete Resolution No. 5062. Military Service Regardless of Sexual Orientation.
Rationale:
It is hypocritical for The United Methodist Church to protest employment discrimination against homosexuals in the military, when the Church (correctly) bars homosexuals from ordination and ministerial appointment. The resolution falsely asserts that military service is a right. It is not.

R5071.
Petition Number: 20131-CA-R5071; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Campaign Finance Reform
Amend Resolution No. 5071 Campaign Finance Reform in the United States as follows:

Campaign finance reform is a moral matter for the religious community. The temptation to buy unjust favors is an ancient and unjust one that is addressed often in Scripture. The prophet Amos thundered against those merchants in Israel who “sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and push the afflicted out of the way” (Amos 2:6-7, NRSV). Psalm 15 defines upright persons as those who “stand by their oath even to their hurt and do not take a bribe against the innocent.”
The pouring of millions of dollars into political campaigns in order to buy special influence with legislators has become a scandal. Too often citizens forsake participation in the political process because they believe policies are shaped by money from special interests, not by the national interest or the needs of the people.
The issue of campaign financing is far more than a political matter. It goes to the heart of the ethical and moral life of a nation.

Many elected officials continually court monied special interests in order to finance their next election campaign. If politicians are to focus on the well-being of the people and the nation, they must be able to depend on public financing rather than pursuing special-interest money.

It is time to free electoral politics from this corrupting pressure, through a system of public campaign financing that would take government away from special interests and return it to the people.

If politicians are to focus on the well-being of the people and the nation, they must be able to depend on public financing rather than pursuing special-interest money.

We commend those politicians of all parties who are working to achieve real campaign financing reform.

We call upon all United Methodists to work within their own countries to build support for measures that would end the flood of special-interest monies to political campaigns and restore integrity to decision making.

In 2002, the bipartisan Campaign Reform Act was enacted in the United States. Unfortunately, in 2009, in the Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission decision, the Supreme Court overturned the 2002 Campaign Reform Act. The court decided that the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution does not prevent corporations and unions from giving unlimited amounts of money to defeat candidates in elections. This decision by the Supreme Court carries the potential to make the
result of elections reflect which corporations and/or unions spend the most money, rather than the will of the voting public.

The long-term goal of campaign finance reform is the public financing of campaigns at the national level. The next short-term steps for reform are strengthening the oversight of the Federal Election Commission, changing the presidential public financing system, and establishing a system that will enable federal candidates and parties to air on television and radio stations a limited amount of free advertising. The long-term goal of campaign finance reform is the public financing of campaigns at the national level. Similar legislation is ongoing in Germany and other countries.

Candidates for public office should focus their campaigns on the issues and on their own qualifications to serve in office. They should refrain from personal attacks and name-calling of opponents, not distort an opponent’s views by taking quotes out of context or misrepresenting the opponent’s positions or voting record, and set an example of truthfulness and integrity for the public. Similar legislation is ongoing in Germany and other countries.

ADOPTED 1996
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004
RESOLUTION #269, 2004 Book of Resolutions
RESOLUTION #253, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶164A and B

Rationale:
Campaign finance reform is a moral matter for the religious community. It is far more than a political matter. It goes to the heart of the ethical and moral life of a nation.

R5072.
Petition Number: 20126-CA-R5072-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Encouragement to Vote

Amend Resolution 5072 as follows:

Whereas, Members of The United Methodist Church have a history of being proactive in all levels of governmental activity, and Jesus’ proclamation of a coming Kingdom underscores the political implications in his message of good news to the world (Matthew 3:1, Mark 1:15). Among the many responsibilities of Christ’s followers in political engagement is the necessity to have a voice in choosing who will be elected to public office.

Whereas Furthermore, the first sentence of ¶164 of the Social Principles states, “... we acknowledge the vital function of government as the principal vehicle for the ordering of society.”; and

The Resolution entitled, “Church-Government Relations” Whereas, Resolution # 228 in The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2000 entitled “Church-Government Relations” presents a broad discussion of the relationship that is or should exist between the church and the government, ; and

Whereas, The decision-making power and administrative leadership of the government is vested primarily in elected officials, ; andWhereas, in Many jurisdictions within the United States there may be propositions, amendments and/or resolutions appearing on the election-day ballot, ; and At the same time, Whereas, in some jurisdictions within the United States there may be provisions for initiatives and referendums, the consideration of which may appear on the election-day ballot, ; and

Therefore, it is resolved, to urge churches in our global community to encourage their members to take advantage of the opportunities to vote, ; and Be it further resolved, those registered voters be encouraged to inform themselves concerning the qualifications of persons running for office and the merit(s) of items requiring decision(s) that are to appear on the election day ballot, and, after thoughtful and prayerful consideration, to vote their choices on the various election days.

Adopted 2004
Resolution #270, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 164A and B.

Rationale:
We acknowledge the vital function of government as the principal vehicle for ordering of society, therefore churches are urged to encourage their members to take advantage of opportunities to vote.

R5090.
Petition Number: 20224-CA-R5090-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Justice for Cuban Prisoners

Amend Resolution 5090 as follows:

5090. Justice for Cuban Prisoners

Whereas, in Matthew 25, Jesus tells us that those who care for those in need are his true disciples (verses
31-46). By the same token, the Lord reminds us that to do justice, and mercy are the most important aspects of the Law, that anyone who forgets these points has forgotten God’s purposes for them. Thus, the author of Hebrews urges us to “remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (13:3).

Whereas, taking the scriptural witness to heart we must respond to the injustice suffered today by five Cuban political prisoners in US federal prisons. Since their arrest in 1998 and incarceration following sentencing, they have received inhumane and cruel treatment.

Whereas, they are not allowed to visit with their families, and in many occasions their families have been denied visas to come to the US to see them, or have been allowed to come to the US and returned to their country without seen their loved one, and

The following are their names and their original sentences:
1. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo: Two lives in prison plus 15 years.
2. Ramón Labañino Salazar: Life in prison plus 18 years
3. Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez: Life in prison plus 10 years
4. Fernando González Llort: 19 years in prison
5. Rene Gonzalez: 15 years in prison [prison sentence may be completed in 2011]

Therefore, be it resolved that, the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, request the US government: the State Department, the federal prison system, to allow the families of these prisoners access to their loved ones; to allow them to see their children and their spouses in prison.

Therefore, be it further resolved, that The United Methodist Church support these prisoners’ families with their prayers and supplications before God, and that the Church through its leadership may accompany these families to visit their loved ones in prison.

Finally, be it further resolved, that, given that there have been concerns about the impartiality of their trials, The United Methodist Church gathered in Tampa, Florida, considers that it would be appropriate for the Justice Department to address these concerns and to truly do justice to these prisoners.

ADOPTED 2004
Resolution #275, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 164A

R6045.
Petition Number: 20225-CA-R6045-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

US-China Political Relations

Amend resolution 6045 as follows:

6045. United States-China Political Relations
Our Political Understandings

In late 1978, the governments of the United States and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) reached agreement establishing full diplomatic relations. The United States ended official relations-diplomatic and military-with the authorities on Taiwan. The United States recognized the People’s Republic of China as the “sole legal government of China” but reserved the right, over PRC objections, to sell “defensive” weapons to Taiwan. At the time of normalization, the PRC refused to rule out the possibility of reunifying with the island of Taiwan by force but offered to allow Taiwan to maintain the political, economic and military status quo if Taiwan were to recognize PRC sovereignty.

This normalization agreement ended a thirty-year period in which formal American commitments to the authorities on Taiwan blocked closer relations with the People’s Republic of China. It laid the foundations for a framework of cooperation and exchanges that continues to develop. Highlights include:

* government-to-government agreements covering consular relations and embassies, civil aviation, scientific and technical cooperation, educational exchange, trade and credit, fisheries, and a wide range of other fields;
* extensive private and government economic and technological investments;
* substantial expansion of tourism and specialized visits;
* educational programs facilitating tens of thousands of nearly 10,500 scholars and teachers (10,000 Chinese, 500 Americans) to be resident in the other country;
* numerous governmental and private institutional exchange agreements in education, the fine and performing arts, cinema, publishing, and so forth; and
* extensive cooperation on international platforms relating to economic, health, environmental concerns, and so forth.

US-China Political Relations

Amend resolution 6045 as follows:
The rapid growth and elaboration of these bilateral relations has been unusual and to many, unexpected. While the direction is generally positive and the initial results heartening, the relationship is still in its early stages, a positive indicator of a maturing relationship between the United States and the PRC that has become multi-dimensional and interdependent. Yet, because the PRC and U.S. systems are so different, translating worthwhile goals into concrete practice has often been difficult.

Fundamentally, the two countries have yet to determine what kind of long-term relationship they want. Misperceptions and misunderstandings are all too common on both sides, even on basic principles.

Recommendations on U.S.-China Political Relations

The United Methodist Church:
1. recognizes the necessity for China to continue its sustained economic and social development and urges U.S. cooperation to that end within the context of Chinese independence and self-hood, peace and stability;
2. feels the long-term basis of U.S.-China relations should emphasize people-to-people, educational, social, and responsible economic short-term or expedient military or strategic interests; and technological development, including the adoption of clean energy initiatives; opposes the sale of U.S. military equipment to the PRC;
3. endorses a peaceful approach to ending the longstanding conflict between the governments in the People’s Republic of China and in Taiwan while recognizing that the resolution of the status of Taiwan is a matter for the People’s Republic of China and for Taiwan and in that context supports the continued reduction and early cessation of U.S. arms sales and opposes the sale of U.S. military equipment to Taiwan;
4. declares our continuing concern regarding the human rights of all people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits; and
5. recognizes that U.S.-PRC relations have an important influence on the peace and stability of the Asian region, particularly in Southeast Asia; and urges the United States and the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan to seek peaceful means to contribute to the peace and stability of the region.

R6061.

Petition Number: 20333-CA-R6061-G; Sidorak, Stephen J. Jr. - New York, NY, USA for General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

Our Muslim Neighbors

Renew Resolution 6061, “Our Muslim Neighbors.”

Rationale:
The kind of dialogue and resources described with this resolution are needed now more than ever as tensions continue between Christians and Muslims around the world.

R6069.

Petition Number: 20226-CA-R6069-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

End US Embargo of Cuba

Amend Resolution 6069 as follows:

6069. End the US Embargo of Cuba

The United Methodist Church is linked in Christ with The Methodist Church of Cuba. We share a common heritage and mission. We are mutually responsible for the proclamation of God’s love and the nurturing of neighbor love. We celebrate the continued growth of The Methodist Church of Cuba. We acknowledge the difficulties that our two churches continue to face in their mission partnership due to the US embargo and the lack of diplomatic relationships between the two countries.

For over 44 ½ years, the government of the United States has not maintained diplomatic relations with the Cuban government and has, instead, pursued an economic embargo prohibiting trade with Cuba and controlling very tightly travel to that country. The Democracy Act of 1992 (22 U.S.C. 6001) and the 1996 Helms/Burton Act tightened the embargo and brought about additional suffering to the people of Cuba and to the people in the US as well. In addition to that, the embargo has failed its stated purpose of bringing political change to Cuba after all these years.

The United Methodist Church has long advocated for an improved relationship between Cuba and the US. The Methodist Church in 1964 made a historical statement entitled “The Reexamination of Policy Toward Mainline China, Cuba and Other Countries,” which said: “The Christian gospel involves reconciliation by encounter and by communication regardless of political considerations. Therefore, we cannot accept the expression of hostility by any country, its policies, or its ideologies as excuses for the failure of Christians to press persistently, realistically, and creatively toward a growing understanding among the peoples of all countries.”
There are many groups in the United States desiring the end of the United States embargo against Cuba. Among them, US farmers and other business concerns that went through the recently allowed, but very cumbersome, licensing process imposed by the US government to permit sales of food products to Cuba resulting in sales of over $125,000,000.00 by the end of 2002. This development was a step in the right direction, which we celebrate on the basis of the United Methodist-stated position that embargoes of food and medicines should not be part of any country’s policies. Also, Individuals and organizations - religious, academic, business - have been very eager to want to exercise their constitutional right to travel freely to Cuba. Thus, the greatly needed amendments to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of January 2011 are also an action we celebrate, as such amendments offer less restricted licenses for religious and other groups to travel into the Island. These amendments also allow remittances to be sent to Cuba under less restricted rules and regulations. In 2001 alone, over 176,000 US citizens traveled to Cuba, and some are facing steep fines for not adhering to the embargo travel restrictions.

The General Assembly of the United Nations has overwhelmingly approved, every year since 1992, a resolution called “The Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial, and Financial Embargo Imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.” The latest of these, in December 2002, October 2010, passed by a vote of 187 to 2 with 3 abstentions 173 to 3, demonstrating the international community’s concern for what it calls the “adverse effects of the embargo on the Cuban people and on Cuban nationals living in other countries” (UN resolution 65/6 §7/44 of October 26, 2010 December 16, 2002).

Whereas, the Council of Churches of Cuba, of which The Methodist Church of Cuba is a member; the Cuban Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops; and several other international religious groups and leaders such as CIEMAL [Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean], the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and Pope John Paul II, as well as US religious bodies such as the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the American Baptist Churches and ecumenical coalitions such as the Church World Service have stated or passed resolutions in favor of lifting the embargo; and

Whereas, we acknowledge that the embargo also curtails religious freedom by making very difficult the relationship between churches in the United States and churches in Cuba; and

Whereas, we believe that stopping the hostility generated by the US embargo policies would facilitate improvements in democratic reforms and human rights in Cuba; and

Whereas, we reaffirm the Bible teachings and mandate to “love one another, because love is from God” (1 John 4:7), and to practice mercy as the good Samaritan did (Luke 10:25-37);

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church, from its Christian and humanitarian perspective, inspired by the love of God and the historic Methodist commitment to peace and social justice, and in light of historic changes with the end of the Cold War, hereby petitions the President and Congress of the United States to lift its economic embargo against Cuba and any other regulations, practices or measures enforcing the embargo law and to seek negotiations with the Cuban government for the purpose of resuming normal diplomatic relations.


R6073.

Petition Number: 20138-CA-R6073-G; Winkler, James
- Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land

Amend Resolution No. 6073, Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land as follows:

We join with Palestinian Christians as well as our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters in feeling a deep sense of rootedness to the land that has special meaning for our three religious traditions. We celebrate the diversity of religious customs and traditions throughout the Middle East.

Jerusalem is sacred to all the children of Abraham: Jews, Muslims, and Christians. We have a vision of a shared Jerusalem as a city of peace and reconciliation, where indigenous Palestinians and Israelis can live as neighbors and, along with visitors and tourists, have access to holy sites and exercise freedom of religious expression. The peaceful resolution of Jerusalem’s status is crucial to the success of the whole process of mak-
Church and Society Committee A

ing a just and lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

We seek for all people in the Middle East region an end to military occupation, freedom from violence, and full respect for the human rights of all under international law.

WHEREAS, the prophet Isaiah cautioned against coveting the lands and homes of one’s neighbors: “Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land!” (Isaiah 5:8); and

WHEREAS, the continuing confiscation of Palestinian land for construction of settlements and the building of a separation wall violates fundamental understanding of human rights, subverts the peace process, destroys the hope of both Israelis and Palestinians who are working for and longing for peace, and fosters a sense of desperation that can only lead to further violence; and

WHEREAS, continued and often intensified closures, curfews, dehumanizing check points, home demolitions, uprooted trees, bulldozed fields, and confiscation of Palestinian land and water by the government of Israel have devastated economic infrastructure and development in the West Bank and Gaza, have caused a massive deterioration of the living standards of all Palestinians ... and an increasing sense of hopelessness and frustration; and

WHEREAS, targeted assassinations, suicide bombings, and attacks against civilians by both Israelis and Palestinians heighten the fear and suffering of all, and have led to many deaths of Palestinian and Israeli children; and

WHEREAS, people in the United States, through their taxes, provide several billion dollars in economic and military assistance to the State of Israel each year, which allows for the building of bypass roads and settlements that are illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention;

WHEREAS, a number of Israeli and international companies profit from the building and maintaining of Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands in a variety of ways, and many churches and Christians have funds invested in some of these companies; and

WHEREAS human rights organizations have documented that private foreign donors, including Jewish and Christian individuals and non-profit organizations, have provided financial support for settlements and that some of these donations are tax-deductible; and

WHEREAS, the church continues to work with ecumenical and interfaith bodies to advocate for Palestinian self-determination and an end to Israeli occupation; to affirm Israel’s right to exist within secure borders; to affirm the right of return for Palestinian refugees under international law; to call for region-wide disarmament; to urge Israelis and Palestinians to stop human rights violations and attacks on civilians, such as targeted assassinations and suicide bombings; and to urge the U.S. government to initiate an arms embargo on the entire Middle East region;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a “Greater Israel” that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings.

We also affirm the call by our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers, in their “Kairos Palestine” document (December 2009), for an end to military occupation and human rights violations through nonviolent actions.

Be it further resolved, that we urge the U.S. government to end all military aid to the region, and second to redistribute the large amount of aid now given to Israel and Egypt; to support economic development efforts of nongovernmental organizations throughout the region, including religious institutions, human rights groups, labor unions, and professional groups within Palestinian communities.

The United Methodist Church requests that the all governments, especially that of the United States, to working in cooperation with the United Nations and other nations, to urge the State of Israel to:

1. cease the confiscation of Palestinian lands and water for any reason;
2. cease the building of new, or expansion of existing, settlements and/or bypass roads in the occupied territories including East Jerusalem;
3. lift the closures and curfews on all Palestinian towns by completely withdrawing Israeli military forces to the Green Line (the 1948 ceasefire line between Israel and the West Bank);
4. dismantle that segment of the Wall of Separation constructed since May 2002 that is not being built on the Green Line but on Palestinian land that is separating Palestinians from their land and farmers from their fields.

We also urge the Palestinian Authority and all Palestinian religious leaders to continue to publicly condemn violence against Israeli civilians and to use nonviolent acts of disobedience to resist the occupation and the illegal settlements.
We further call on all nations to prohibit:
1. any financial support by individuals or organizations for the construction and maintenance of settlements; and
2. the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.

We ask all companies that profit from and/or support settlements through their business activities to examine these and stop any business that contributes to serious violations of international law, promotes systemic discrimination or otherwise supports ongoing military occupation.

The United Methodist Church does not support a boycott of products made in Israel. Our opposition is to products made by Israeli companies operating in occupied Palestinian territories.

We urge all United Methodists in the U.S. to:
1. advocate with the U.S. administration and Congress to implement the aforementioned above steps;
2. urge the U.S. government to examine the role played by donations from tax-exempt charities in support of discriminatory and other illegal aspects of Israeli settlements, and develop recommendations to ensure that tax-exempt funds do not support settlements and other violations of international law.

We urge all United Methodists to:
1. read and study the “Kairos Palestine” document,”A moment of truth: faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering,” written by Palestinian Christians, and take up its call for nonviolent actions seeking an end to military occupation.
2. encourage members of each congregation to study the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from all perspectives by inviting speakers to church events, reading books, using audio-visual resources in educational forums, and getting information from Web sites. We especially commend the 2010 British Methodist Church study, “Justice for Palestine and Israel” that includes a call “on the Methodist people to support and engage with [a] boycott of Israeli goods emanating from illegal settlements,” as well as a call for nonviolent actions issued by several Annual Conferences.
3. provide financial support to the Palestinian people through contributions to the General Board of Global Ministries;
4. support, and participate in, the work of international peace and human rights organizations, such as the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine & Israel and Christian Peacemaker Teams, to provide protection for Palestinians and Israelis seeking nonviolently to end the occupation; and
5. reach out to local synagogues, mosques, and Christian faith groups by engaging in interfaith and ecumenical dialogue on how nonviolent ways to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land; and
6. That the General Board of Global Ministries, working together with the General Board of Church & Society and interfaith organizations, develop advocacy packets for use in local congregations to promote a just and lasting peace and human rights for all in the region.

R6073.

Petition Number: 20640-CA-R6073-G; Holmes, Stephen D. - Warren, IN, USA.

**Israeli Settlements**

Amend Resolution #6073, “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land” as follows:

We join with Palestinian Christians as well as our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters in feeling a deep sense of rootedness to the land that has special meanings for our three religious traditions. We celebrate the diversity of religious customs and traditions throughout the Middle East. Jerusalem is sacred to all the children of Abraham: Jews, Muslims, and Christians. We have a vision of a shared Jerusalem as a city of peace and reconciliation, where indigenous Palestinians and Israelis can live as neighbors and, along with visitors and tourists, have access to holy sites and exercise freedom of religious expression. The peaceful resolution of Jerusalem’s status is crucial to the success of the whole process of making a just and lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

We seek for all people in the region an end to military occupation, freedom from violence, and full respect for the human rights of all under international law.

Whereas, the prophet Isaiah cautioned against coveting the lands and homes of one’s neighbors: “Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land!” (Isaiah 5:8) and
Church and Society Committee A

Whereas, the continuing confiscation of Palestinian land for construction of settlements and the building of a separation wall violate basic understanding of human rights, subverts the peace process, destroys the hope of both Israelis and Palestinians, who are working for and longing for peace, and fosters a sense of desperation that can only lead to further violence; and

Whereas, continued and often intensified closures, curfews, dehumanizing check points, home demolitions, uprooted trees, bulldozed fields, and confiscation of Palestinian land and water by the government of Israel have devastated economic infrastructure and development in the West Bank and Gaza, have caused massive deterioration of the living standards of all Palestinians--; and an increasing sense of hopelessness and frustration; and

Whereas, targeted assassinations, suicide bombings, and attacks against civilians by both Israelis and Palestinians heighten the fear and suffering of all; and

Whereas, people in the United States, through their taxes, provide several billion dollars in economic and military assistance to the State of Israel each year, which allows for the building of bypass roads and settlements that are illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention;

Whereas, the church continues to work with ecumenical and interfaith bodies to advocate for Palestinian self-determination and an end to Israeli occupation; to affirm Israel’s right to exist within secure borders; to affirm the right of return for Palestinian refugees under international law; to call for region wide disarmament; to urge Israelis and Palestinians to stop human rights violations and attacks on civilians, such as targeted assassinations and suicide bombings; and to urge the US government to initiate an arms embargo on the entire Middle East region;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a “Greater Israel” that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings.

Be it further resolved, that we urge the US government to end all military aid to the region, and second to redistribute the large of aid now given to Israel and Egypt, to support economic development efforts of non-governmental organizations throughout the region; including religious institutions, human rights groups, labor unions, and professional groups within Palestinian communities.

The United Methodist Church that the government of the United States, working in cooperation with the United Nations and other nations, urges the state of Israel to:

1. cease the confiscation of Palestinian lands and water for any reason
2. cease the building of new, or expansion of existing, settlements and/or bypass roads in the occupied territories including East Jerusalem;
3. lift the closures and curfews on all Palestinian towns by completely withdrawing Israeli military forces to the Green Line (the 1948 ceasefire line between Israel and the West Bank);
4. dismantle that segment of the Wall of Separation constructed since May 2002 that is not being built on the Green Line but on Palestinian land that is separating Palestinian farmers from their fields.

We also urge the Palestinian Authority and all Palestinian religious leaders to continue to publicly condemn violence against Israeli civilians and to use nonviolent acts of disobedience to resist the occupation and the illegal settlements.

We urge all United Methodists in the US to
1. advocate with the US administration and Congress to implement the above steps;
2. encourage members of each congregation to study the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from all perspectives by inviting speakers to church events, reading books, using audiovisual resources in educational forums, and getting information from web sites.
3. provide financial support to the Palestinian people through contributions to the General Board of Global Ministries;
4. support and participate in the work of international peace and human rights organizations to provide protection for Palestinians and Israelis seeking nonviolently to end the occupation; and
5. reach out to local synagogues, mosques, and Christian faith groups by engaging in faith and ecumenical dialogue on how to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land.

That the General Board of Global Ministries, working together with the General Board of Church and Society and interfaith organizations, develop advocacy packets for use in local congregations to promote a just and lasting peace and human rights for all in the region.

We seek for all people in the region an end to military occupation, freedom from violence, and full respect for the human rights of all under international law.

Rationale:

The petition as it stands now is inflammatory and by no means represents the convictions of most United
Methodists (plus being out-dated with references to Gaza). The revised petition would be more even-handed.

R6073.
Petition Number: 21068-CA-R6073-G; Drewry, Faye & Ronald - The Villages, FL, USA.

Delete Resolution
Delete current Resolution 6073.
Rationale:
Resolution 6073 appears to be rooted in compassion, but nevertheless, misinformation and ignorance of the history of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Church and Society members should prayerfully research the conflict, as they recommended in resolution 6073, before introducing resolutions that may result in growing hostilities and endangering both Israelis and Palestinians.

R6074.
Petition Number: 20641-CA-R6074-G; Holmes, Stephen D. - Warren, IN, USA.

Israel-Palestine Conflict
Amend Resolution 6074 as follows:
Whereas, negotiations between the State of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority still have not achieved a just and lasting peace for the Palestinian people; and
Whereas, the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly have passed numerous resolutions since UN Resolution 181, the Partition Plan, was first adopted in November 1947, including Resolutions 242 and 338, that outline a framework for just and lasting peace; and
Whereas, the UMC in the Social Principles recognizes and affirms the role of the United Nations in the just and lasting resolution of conflict, “Believing that international justice requires the participation of all peoples, we endorse the United Nations and its related bodies and the International Court of Justice as the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law” (Para. 165D); and
Whereas, Security Council Resolution 242, unanimously adopted in 1967, declares “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state can live in security”; and
Whereas, the security of every state depends on it having defined borders and not occupying territory of its neighbors; and
Whereas, the 10th commandment in the Bible states, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:17); and
Whereas, for more than 40 years the government of Israel has continued its military occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza and the seizing of more Palestinian land for illegal settlements in direct violation of UN resolutions as well as United Methodist General Conference resolutions; and
Whereas, the International Court of Justice, on July 9, 2004, issued an advisory opinion that declared that Israel’s security barrier or wall built on occupied Palestinian territories violates international law; that it must be dismantled; and that compensation must be provided to Palestinians for loss of land and livelihood; and
Whereas, Israel’s government has continued to build the wall on Palestinian land in ongoing violation of international law, which greatly increases Palestinian suffering as well as heightens the insecurity of both Palestinians and Israelis; and
Whereas, May 2008 marks 60 years since the establishment of the state of Israel as well as the dispossession of 750,000 to 900,000 Palestinians who are still seeking their full human rights; and
Whereas, ongoing military occupation and armed resistance heightens violence and insecurity for Palestinians and Israelis alike; and
Whereas, The United Methodist Church opposes all violence against civilians and considers “war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ” (Social Principles, Para. 165C); and
Whereas, the United States’ use of its veto more than 30 times in the UN Security Council to block actions by the international community to criticize and prevent the killing of Palestinian civilians has contributed to a climate of impunity and exacerbated the cycle of violence affecting both Palestinians and Israelis; and

Therefore, be it resolved that The United Methodist Church call upon Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and all States to abide by and uphold UN resolutions, International Court of Justice rulings, and international law as the basis for just and lasting peace in Palestine/Israel; and-
Be it further resolved that The United Methodist Church calls upon the United States, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to accept the authority of Security Council resolutions to refrain from vetoing resolutions, and abide by Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as all other relevant UN resolutions and International Court of Justice rulings, that provide a framework for bringing this conflict to a just and permanent end.

Rationale:
The present resolution as printed is considered by many United Methodists as anti-Israel and anti-Semitic and a cause for much unhappiness in our churches. The revisions recognize the United Nations without the inflammatory language.

R6074.
Petition Number: 20877-CA-R6074-G; Purnell, Sally - Parsons, WV, USA.

Israeli Borders

6074. United Nations Resolutions on the Israel-Palestine Conflict

WHEREAS, negotiations ...

Therefore, be it resolved that The United Methodist Church calls upon Israel, the Palestinian National Authority, and all States to abide by and uphold UN resolutions, International Court of Justice rulings, and international law as the basis for just and lasting peace in Palestine/Israel honor borders that Israel deems defensible and any holy sites they currently control to ensure religious liberty for all persons in Israel/Palestine; and

Be it further resolved ...

R6074.
Petition Number: 21066-CA-R6074-G; Preston, Cathy - Erie, PA, USA.

Israel-Palestine

6074. United Nations Resolutions on the Israel-Palestine Conflict

WHEREAS, negotiations ...

Whereas, the 10th commandment in the Bible states, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:17); and

 Whereas, for more than 40 years the government of Israel has continued its military occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza and the seizing of more and more Palestinian land for illegal settlements in direct violation of UN resolutions as well as United Methodist General Conference resolutions; and

 Whereas, the International Court of Justice, on July 9, 2004, issued an advisory opinion that declared that Israel’s security barrier or wall built on occupied Palestinian territories violates international law; that it must be dismantled; and that compensation must be provided to Palestinians for loss of land and livelihood; and

 Whereas, Israel’s government has continued to build the wall on Palestinian land in ongoing violation of international law, which greatly increases Palestinian suffering as well as heightens the insecurity of both Palestinians and Israelis; and

 Whereas, May 2008 marks 60 years since the establishment of the state of Israel as well as the dispossession of 750,000 to 900,000 Palestinians who are still seeking their full human rights; and

 Whereas, ongoing military occupation and armed resistance heightens violence and insecurity for Palestinians and Israelis alike; and

 Whereas, The United Methodist Church opposes all violence ... 

Rationale:
The claim that Israel is building illegal settlements and occupying Palestinian land is a recent public relations invention from 1949 with no biblical precedence as a survey of modern Middle Eastern history reveals. “It is our responsibility as Christians to oppose anti-Semitism whenever and wherever it occurs.” (3147. Building New Bridges in Hope)

R6075.
Petition Number: 21067-CA-R6075-G; Preston, Cathy - Erie, PA, USA.

Middle East

6075. Saying No to Violence in Middle East Conflict

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church ...

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has affirmed its support for the boundaries of the State of Israel internationally recognized prior to the 1967 war in the Middle East (“United Nations Resolutions on the
Israel-Palestine Conflict,” 2004 Book of Resolutions, page 811ff); and

Whereas, The United Methodist Church has strongly stated its opposition to Israeli settlements in occupied territories (“Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land,” 2004 Book of Resolutions, page 787ff);

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church continues ...

Rationale:
The claim that Israel is building illegal settlements and occupying Palestinian land is a recent public relations invention from 1949 with no biblical precedence as a survey of modern Middle Eastern history reveals. “It is our responsibility as Christians to oppose anti-Semitism whenever and wherever it occurs.” (3147. Building New Bridges in Hope)

R6091.

Petition Number: 20485-CA-R6091-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

A Call for Peacemaking

Amend Resolution ¶6091 on page 850 of The 2008 Book of Resolutions to read as follows:

God’s earth is aching for peace. Domestic strife, interpersonal violence and abuse, civil conflict, ethnic and racial clashes, religious schism and interfaith rivalry, terrorist attacks, wars between nations, and threatened use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons – all of these prevent us from achieving God’s shalom. In response, we who are disciples of Jesus Christ are called to be peacemakers for the transformation of the world.

The biblical foundation for peacemaking is the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus taught, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt. 5:9); “Don’t react violently against the one who is evil” (Mt. 5:39, Scholars Version); “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Mt. 5:44); and “pray to forgive those who trespass against us” (Mt. 6:14-15). Paul echoed Jesus’ teaching when he instructed Christians in Rome, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:14-21). He told the church in Corinth that through Christ we have a “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18).

For the United Methodist Church, peacemaking is an essential task for achieving success in other initiatives. Working with the poor to eliminate poverty, caring for children, and conducting global health initiatives can be most successful in stable and just societies, free from armed conflict. To have sufficient resources for these tasks requires global peace and disarmament in order to redirect vast amounts of public funds now spent on armed forces and weaponry. Moreover, a strong concern for peace and justice is a necessary feature of vital congregations.

THEREFORE, the 2008 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church calls upon:

• United Methodist children, youth, and adults—as devoted disciples of Jesus Christ—to become peacemakers wherever they are, at home, school, work, in the local and the wider world; and to show the love, compassion, and concern for justice that Jesus taught and lived.
• Local congregations—as an expression of Wesleyan social holiness—to teach and practice peacemaking, to study underlying causes of conflict among social groups and nations, to seek positive remedies and become instruments of peace.

• Annual conferences to under gird congregations through training, encouragement, and active support for peacemaking activities and to be voices for peace, justice, and reconciliation within the conference area and beyond.

• Bishops to encompass peacemaking in teaching what it means to live the United Methodist way, engage in conflict resolution where appropriate, and offer a prophetic voice for peace and justice:

• Boards and agencies to incorporate peacemaking into their regular programs and budgets.

The 2012 General Conference calls upon boards and agencies to incorporate peacemaking into their regular programs and budgets, including but not limited to the following:

• The General Board of Discipleship to develop, publish, and distribute Christian education material on the biblical basis of peace and justice and ways in which children, youth, and adults can be peacemakers and seekers of justice; and to publish devotional material for peacemakers.

• The General Board of Church and Society to serve as public policy advocate for actions that promote peace and oppose war, to provide resources on peacemaking to annual conferences and local congregations, and to facilitate training for nonviolence that applies Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

• The General Board of Global Ministries, its Women’s Division, and United Methodist Women to both continue and augment peacemaking activities in their ministries in the United States and around the globe.
• The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to work with United Methodist seminaries and Africa University for encouragement of research, teaching, and publications on the theology of peace and methods of peacemaking and peace building with justice.
• United Methodist seminaries to teach the theology of peace to students, clergy and laity and provide training for peacemaking.
• JUSTPEACE: Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation to promote a culture of just peace in the church and in the world and to provide training for peacemaking practitioners within annual conferences and local congregations.
• The General Commissions on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Religion and Race, the Status and Role of Women, and United Methodist Men to illuminate causes of injustice and inter-group tension, engage in advocacy for peace and justice, provide training for conflict resolution, and become instruments of peace.
• The Connectional Table to facilitate cooperation among United Methodist boards, agencies, conferences, and congregations on peacemaking endeavors.

Rationale:
United Methodism’s witness for peace in these troubled times is an imperative of the Gospel in much the same way as it was for John Wesley—founder of Methodist movement—in his day. A major portion of the petition calling for peacemaking originally submitted to the 2008 General...

R6094.

Petition Number: 20020-CA-R6094-G; Hallman, Howard W. - Washington, DC, USA for Methodists United for Peace with Justice.

Evil of Nuclear Weapons

Amend Resolution No. 6094 by inserting in ¶3 of the section on “Disarmament” after the sentence “We conclude that nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church’s blessing” the following sentences:

We affirm the finding that nuclear weapons, whether used or threatened, are grossly evil and morally wrong. As an instrument of mass destruction, nuclear weapons slaughter the innocent and ravage the environment. When used as instruments of deterrence, nuclear weapons hold innocent people hostage for political and military purposes. Therefore, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is morally corrupt and spiritually bankrupt.

Rationale:
These sentences derive from Resolution 6117 “Saying No to Nuclear Deterrence”, which is scheduled to expire. This significant language should be continued. It can fit comfortably into the revision of Resolution 6094 proposed by the General Board of Church and Society.

The UMC and Peace

Amend current Resolution No. 6094: The United Methodist Church and Peace as follows:

“My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest” (Isaiah 32:18 NIV).

“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14).

Christ is our peace. He is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). And yet we know that the peace of Christ, the peace that passes all understanding, has not always ruled our lives and swayed our actions as peoples, institutions or nations. We have not always followed God’s will for peace as we fought the many wars and waged the many conflicts that have littered our human history. We have not always sought counsel from the Christ whose words assure us justice and peace, compassion and forgiveness, and yes, salvation and liberation, even in our wayward and non peaceful ways.

The Bible makes justice the inseparable companion of peace (Isaiah 32:17; James 3:18). Both point to right and sustainable relationships in human society, the vitality of our connections with the earth, the well-being and integrity of creation. To conceive peace apart from justice is to compromise the hope that justice and peace shall embrace (Psalm 85:10). When justice and peace are lacking or set in opposition, we need to reform our ways.

Peace is God’s will and must be done. Christ’s true disciples must work for peace: build it and not just keep it; live it and not just aspire for it. If Christ is our peace, then peace must be imperative and primordial. Let those who would rather wage wars and foment conflict say otherwise. In the end, war and conflict cannot triumph over the Prince of Peace.
Even God’s people, however, do not always see and acknowledge the peace of Christ and God’s justice. As the prophets have done. God’s people must be reminded and warned of their collusion with destruction and decay and with injustice and non peace. The United Methodist Church, whose commitment to peace is rooted in its obedience to the Prince of Peace, must recognize the things that make for peace.

The Council of Bishops asserted in 2009 that God’s people “have neglected the poor, polluted our air and water, and filled our communities with instruments of war. We have turned our backs on God and one another. By obstructing God’s will, we have contributed to pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence” (“A Call of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church to Hope and Action for God’s Good Creation,” 2009).

The bishops’ call was prefaced by an assertion that God’s creation is in crisis and that our neglect, selfishness and pride have fostered a trio of “threats to life and hope.” The gravity of these threats prompted the bishops to call for a comprehensive response that united United Methodists and “people of goodwill” to offer themselves as instruments of God’s renewing Spirit in the world.

“God calls us and equips us to respond,” the bishops exhorted. They reminded us of God’s offer of redemption to all creation and reconciliation to all things, “whether on earth or in heaven” (Colossians 1:20). The bishops made us recognize again that God’s Spirit is always and everywhere at work in the world fighting poverty, restoring health, renewing creation and reconciling peoples.

The bishops’ collective prayer is that God will accept and use our lives and resources that we rededicate to a ministry of peace, justice and hope to overcome poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence. The bishops’ 2009 call for hope and action built on their 2004 document, “In Search of Security.” The 2004 document asserted that the “longing for safety is a feeling that all human beings share with one another. ... The way to real peace and security is reconciliation. We will not attain full reconciliation between all peoples before God’s final consummation because the forces of evil and destruction are still at work in the hearts of human beings and in their relationships. But we are called to be peacemakers and ministers of reconciliation until our Lord comes” (Council of Bishops Task Force on Safety and Security, “In Search of Security,” 2004).

The 2009 call for hope and action also recalled the bishops’ 1986 study document, “In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace.” The 2009 document described “In Defense of Creation” as “an urgent message to all United Methodists and the Church at large on the growing threat of nuclear war and of the extinction of life on the planet through a ‘nuclear winter.’” The bishops asserted that “the nuclear crisis threatens ‘planet earth itself, that the arms race ‘destroys millions of lives in conventional wars, repressive violence, and massive poverty,’ and that the ‘arms race is a social justice issue, not only a war and peace issue.’”

The bishops have asserted: “Peace is not simply the absence of war, a nuclear stalemate or combination of uneasy ceasefires. It is that emerging dynamic reality envisioned by prophets where spears and swords give way to implements of peace (Isaiah 2:1-4); where historic antagonists dwell together in trust (Isaiah 11:4-11); and where righteousness and justice prevail. There will be no peace with justice until unselfish and informed life is structured into political processes and international arrangements” (Bishops’ Call for Peace and the Self-Development of Peoples, 1972).

The mission of Jesus Christ and his church is to serve all peoples regardless of their government, ideology, place of residence or status. Surely, the welfare of humanity is more important in God’s sight than the power or even the continued existence of any state. Therefore, the church is called to look beyond human boundaries of nation, race, class, sex, political ideology or economic theory and to proclaim the demands of social righteousness being essential to peace.

The following are interrelated areas that must be dealt with concurrently in our quest for lasting peace with justice in a world community.

I. Disarmament

“In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety” (Hosea 2:18 NIV).

Today more than 26,000 nuclear weapons are spread around the world. Moreover, while there is yet to be a global reporting system for small arms, it is believed that at least 639 million firearms proliferate worldwide (Small Arms Survey). The arms race goes on. In fact, as the Council of Bishops pointed out, “After many decades and millions of dollars, we are no more secure or peaceful in our world with a larger number of nations in the ‘nuclear club.’”

If there is any concern in the international community where international law intersects with ethics and morality, it is the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. In an advisory opinion sought by the U.N.
General Assembly in 1996, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled: “The threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law. ... There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”

In spite of the ICJ ruling, billions of dollars in research, development, maintenance and deployment continue to be spent on nuclear weapons. International law bans chemical and biological weapons, including land mines and cluster munitions, for being excessively cruel and indiscriminate. Nuclear weapons, already proven in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, remain outside of this classification, however.

The danger of a holocaust remains as long as nations maintain nuclear weapons. Many more people will be maimed and killed as long as small arms are easy to acquire and readily available for use in domestic quarrels, street fights, or in wars and conflict zones.

Meanwhile, millions starve and development stagnates. Repeatedly, regional tensions grow, conflicts erupt, and outside forces intervene to advance or protect their interests without regard to international law or human rights.

Wars and rumors of wars are not unique in our time. What is new is the sophistication with which they are waged. High precision technologies exist side-by-side with conventional weapons. Together they make up the arsenal of death-dealing instruments that threaten the relations and very existence of peoples and nations. These instruments of destruction fracture the fragility of peace. They spawn hatred and violence contrary to God’s design of a world of peaceful, loving relationships. These instruments are not under the control of nations only: They are also in the hands of non-state actors, therefore making possible unregulated, indiscriminate and unpredictable use.

Current expenditures on weapons are distorting priorities in national budgeting. Because of fear of unemployment, desire for profits and contributions to the national balance of payments, the arms industry engenders great political power. Arms-producing nations seek to create markets, and then vie with one another to become champion among the arms merchants of the world. Food, health, social services, jobs and education are vital to the welfare of nations. Yet the overriding priority given by governments to “defense” constantly threatens their availability.

Our bishops’ historic position remains sound and clear: “We say a clear and unconditional ‘NO’ to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. We conclude that nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church’s blessing” (In Defense of Creation).

We support initiatives that move toward disarmament in every part of the world. This demands a radical reordering of priorities coupled with an effective system of international peacemaking and peacekeeping. The church must constantly keep that goal before peoples and governments. In particular, we support the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Our bishops’ historic position remains sound and clear: “We say a clear and unconditional ‘NO’ to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. We conclude that nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church’s blessing” (In Defense of Creation).

Accordingly, we reject the possession of nuclear weapons as a permanent basis for securing and maintaining peace. Possession can no longer be tolerated even as a temporary expedient. We call all nations that possess nuclear weapons to renounce these vile instruments of mass destruction and to move expeditiously to dismantle all nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles. We continue to support all movement to ban the “first-strike” policy from all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) doctrine.

We support the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We call all nations to become signatories of these important treaties and to abide by their provisions. These treaties form part of a non-nuclear proliferation regime under the purview of the United Nations. The ratification of the New Start Treaty by the United States and Russia is an act in the direction of disarmament. It is, though, only a beginning: Far more agreements need to be signed not just by these two powers but also by other nuclear and non-nuclear states alike. Beyond nuclear proliferation itself, the threat of nuclear terrorism must inform the move for global disarmament.

At the same time, nations must provide for more secure control of weapons-grade nuclear materials. It is clear that deterrence comes from international controls on materials used to make bombs. We support the concept of nuclear-free zones where governments or peoples in a specific region band together to bar nuclear weapons from their area either by treaty or declaration.

The United Methodist Church affirms its commitment to a nuclear-free Pacific. As Christian people committed to stewardship, justice and peacemaking, we oppose and condemn the use of the Pacific for tests, storage and transportation of nuclear weapons and
weapons-delivery systems and the disposal of radioactive wastes. We further affirm the right of all indigenous people to control their health and well-being.

World public opinion rightly condemns the use of chemical or biological weapons. Governments must renounce the use of these particularly inhumane weapons as part of their national policy. We support universal application of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

We support treaty efforts to ban the development, trade and use of weapons that are inhumane, are excessively injurious, and have indiscriminate effects. Such weapons include landmines, booby traps, weapons with non-detectable fragments, incendiary weapons, dirty bombs, cluster bombs, and blinding laser weapons. We call all nations to sign and abide by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

We are also concerned about the use of inhumane weapons by civilian or military police. Hollow-point (“dumdum”) or other bullets designed to maim are not acceptable weapons for use by civilian or military forces. We support measures that outlaw use of such weapons.

Progress in disarmament must be monitored so that declarations to disarm are truly matched by action. We support five criteria to use in assessing progress in disarmament:

1) Verification—A state’s unilateral declaration that it does not have nuclear weapons must be confirmed by highly reliable sources and by objective means;

2) Irreversibility—Confidence in compliance grows if controls are sufficient to make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a state to abandon a disarmament commitment and build or construct a nuclear arsenal;

3) Transparency—It is essential to have hard facts about the size of nuclear arsenals and concrete progress made in eliminating them;

4) Universality—Any agreement to achieve global nuclear disarmament must be fully “global” in geographic scope, with no exceptions; and

5) Legally binding—The world community expects commitments to disarmament to be legally binding.

Disarmament deals with not only non-conventional weapons, such as nuclear weapons, but also conventional weapons, particularly small firearms and light weapons. In this regard, we must support the continued review of implementation of the U.N. Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This convention comes out of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We must continue to exert pressure and support for nations and states, especially the United States and Russia, and other big arms-trading states, to negotiate a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty to regulate the global commerce of conventional arms. This Arms Trade Treaty would establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

While continuing our support of the goals of the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we must, in particular, support the breakthrough agreement arrived at the Review Conference’s 2010 meeting. The agreement moves forward the goal of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We must help diminish the perceived political and military value of nuclear weapons that is prevalent in security doctrines. A humanitarian approach is crucial to understanding nuclear weapons as cruel, inhumane instruments of mass murder and environmental destruction. True security puts human security over any other national security consideration.

We must affirm peoples’ movements directed to at the abolition of nuclear weapons, indeed of weapons of mass destruction and the tools of war. Governments must not impede public debate on this issue of universal concern.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civic groups are major stakeholders. They play important roles in the campaign for global disarmament. Their presence and advocacy at every Review Conference of the NPT as well as in the U.N. conferences dealing with small arms and light weapons are crucial. NGOs dealing with international humanitarian law, human rights protection and environmental justice must work together to form a strong foundation for a universal, comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. The convention would outlaw and ban development, possession, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Disarmament is related to military spending. Disarmament is possible and sustainable when its funding in national budgets does not overshadow and underfund the social and welfare needs of peoples. Meaningful disarmament will happen when a country like the United States, which leads the world in military spending (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), starts to redirect its military budget to peaceful and sustainable purposes.
Indeed, national budgets are moral documents. They are a testament to national priorities. May it be that such budgets are invested in life-giving and life-sustaining priorities; indeed, in the things that make for peace.

II. Democracy and Freedom

“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (Psalm 34:14).

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

Millions of people still live under oppressive rule and various forms of exploitation. Millions more live under deplorable conditions of racial, sexual, religious and class discrimination. In many countries, many persons, including Christians, are suffering repression, imprisonment and torture because of their efforts to speak truth to those in power.

Action by governments to encourage liberation and economic justice is essential. Such action must be supported by parallel action on the part of private citizens and institutions, including the churches, if peaceful measures are to succeed. Unless oppression and denial of basic human rights are ended, violence on an increasing scale will continue to erupt in many nations and may spread throughout the world. The human toll in such conflicts is enormous, for they result in new oppression and further dehumanization. We are concerned for areas where oppression and discrimination take place.

We, as United Methodist Christians, must build the conditions for peace through development of confidence and trust between peoples and governments. We are unalterably opposed to those who instill hate in one group for another. Governments or political factions must not use religious, class, gender, racial, or other differences as the means to achieve heinous political purposes. This concern extends to all situations where external commercial, industrial, and military interests are related to national oligarchies that resist justice and liberation for the masses of people. It is essential that governments that support or condone these activities alter their policies to permit and enable people to achieve genuine self-determination.

Democracy thrives under a rule of law founded on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations General Assembly World Summit of 2005 reaffirmed democracy as “a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their political, economic, social and cultural systems, and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.” The U.N. Democracy Fund was established at this summit. The large majority of the fund is intended for local organizations whose projects aim to strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. United Methodists must promote this fund and help grassroots groups to access it.

Graft and corruption erode the credibility of governments. Transparency and accountability are pillars of a democratic system and are checks upon graft and corruption. Much of today’s anger vented against governments arises from graft and corruption, and from economic fraud and exploitation. Peace and societal harmony are greatly enhanced when just, democratic processes prevail in society. The United Nations Convention against Corruption must be supported. This international law deals with promoting prevention, criminalization, law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange. It also includes mechanisms for implementation against corruption.

III. The United Nations

“So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (Romans 14:19 ESV).

International justice requires the participation and determination of all peoples. We are called to look beyond the “limited and competing boundaries of nation-states to the larger and more inclusive community of humanity” (Bishops’ Call for Peace and the Self-Development of Peoples).

There has been an unprecedented international cooperation has occurred through the United Nations and its specialized agencies as they have worked to solve global problems of health, education and the welfare of people, especially children. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has been successful in this area, especially in realizing two of the eight Millennium Development Goals that are needful of critical attention. These goals pertain to the achievement of universal primary education (Goal 2) and reduction of child mortality (Goal 4).

Commendable achievements have been reached through multilateral cooperation, especially in the areas of sustainable development, universal human rights, religious freedom and tolerance, peace building and security. Most laudable are the advancements in gender equality and women’s empowerment, especially the creation of the U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In other areas, however, political considerations have diminished the support needed for the United Nations to achieve its goals. Many nations, including the most powerful, participate in some programs only when such action does not interfere with their national advantage.
One U.N. agency whose work must not be politicized is the International Atomic Energy Agency. At a time when nuclear security concerns have increasingly become transnational, the work of this agency needs support by all governments so that it can efficiently and effectively perform functions dealing with nuclear security, especially in improving international coordination, monitoring, reporting, and sharing of information and best practices among states and the private sector.

We believe the United Nations and its agencies must be supported, strengthened and improved. We recommend that Christians work for the following in their respective nations:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a standard of achievement for all peoples and nations. International covenants and conventions, including protocols arising from these conventions, must be universally ratified. The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, approved in 2009 by the United Nations General Assembly, must now be universally recognized. The convention that deals with rights of peoples with disabilities must be supported.

- Peace and world order require the development of an effective, enforceable framework of international law that provides for peaceful settlement of conflicts between and among nation-states and the protection for human rights and guarantees of justice for all people. While wars continue and many conflicts remain intractable, the Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations deserve continued support. Professionalization of peacekeepers, including the adherence to discipline and human rights principles, forms part of this support.

- With the International Court of Justice fully in place to adjudicate conflicts between and among states, it is now time for governments universally to ratify the International Criminal Court to adjudicate on war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and aggression. Nations should remove any restrictions they have adopted that impair the effective functioning of both courts.

- We support the development and strengthening of international agencies to help nations or peoples escape from domination by other nations or transnational enterprises. In this instance, support is crucial for the sustainable development and governance of the least developed and land-locked countries of the world. Without such support, these countries risk making little progress in any of the key indicators of achieving eradication of hunger and poverty within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. A better and effective protection of the rights and welfare of migrants and their families can be had with the universal ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families.

- Economic and political considerations greatly affect issues of food, energy, raw materials and other commodities. We support efforts in the United Nations to achieve new levels of justice in the world economic order and work for the realization of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (See United Methodist Resolution #6025, “Globalization and Its Impact on Human Rights and Human Dignity”). Support is thereby crucial for the success of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

- We support the concept of collective action against threats to peace and the sustainability of the planet earth. This collective action is possible and meaningful when pursued within a multilateral framework. Reform of the United Nations, including and especially the Security Council, is crucial in this regard. Such reform must include organizational and programmatic coherence aimed at transforming the U.N. to be relevant, useful, responsible and accountable in dealing with today’s global challenges. Reform must include making the Security Council more democratically representative, transparent and accountable in its structure and decision-making.

- Wars fought in the search for justice or by acts of terrorism might well be averted or diminished if the nations of the world would work vigorously and in concert to seek changes in oppressive political and economic systems. This cooperation should use human rights as foundational principles of national and human relations as well as the promotion of rapprochement among cultures and religions. Just, equitable sharing of the world’s resources will greatly address the economic despair, political anguish and war-weariness of many peoples of the world.

IV. World Trade, and Economic and Sustainable Development

“Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken” (Micah 4:4).

The gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen. Human rights are denied when the surpluses of some arise in part because of continued deprivation of others. This growing inequity exists in our own communities and in all our nations. Communities and nations exist, however, that are far more disadvantaged because of such inequity. Our past efforts to alleviate these conditions have failed. Too often, these efforts have been limited by our own unwillingness to act or have been frustrated by private interests and governments striving to protect the wealthy and the powerful.
Debate is growing on why Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of economic success is failing to represent national well-being even as the two are increasingly interconnected. Economic development is heavily dependent on investment in human capacity development. To proponents, the shift must move from simply measuring economic production to measuring the well-being of people. Such a shift moves in the direction of a more equitable, sustainable future (Center for Partnership Studies, “The State of Society: Measuring Economic Success and Human Well-Being,” 2010).

In order to eliminate inequities in the control and distribution of the common goods of humanity, we are called to join the search for more just, equitable international economic structures and relationships. We seek a society that will assure all persons and nations the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

In working toward that purpose, we believe these steps are needed:

- Economic systems must be conceived, and developed, and that are structured to cope with the needs of the world’s peoples and the increased demand on limited natural resources. Such systems must consider the effects of climate change on our ecological system and its ability to respond to the increased demands of development.

- Measures must be implemented that will free peoples and nations from reliance on financial arrangements that place them in economic bondage. In this regard, we must support the creation of a Global Economic Council. This council was one of the recommendations of the Commission of Experts of the President of the U.N. General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System. Such a council, when created, would become the main forum within the United Nations for setting the agenda for worldwide economic and financial policy.

- Policies and practices must be developed that establish just prices and avoid damaging fluctuations in price for exchange of commodities and rare and raw materials. Policies must be developed and supported to stop manipulation and marketing of commodities and rare and raw materials for illegal uses, including funding of wars and conflicts, exemplified by what are called “conflict minerals.”

- The industrialized world, be it through the G8 or the G20 must not dominate development agencies and international financial institutions. Control of international monetary facilities must be more equitably shared by all the nations, including the needy and less powerful. We support efforts to make the Bretton Woods institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and other international financial institutions more representative, transparent and democratic, including being accountable within the United Nations framework.

- Agreements that affirm the common heritage principle that resources of the seabed, subsoil, outer space, and those outside national jurisdiction are the heritage of humanity should be accepted by all nations.

- Multilateral, rather than bilateral, assistance programs should be encouraged for secular as well as religious bodies. They must respond to the growing desire of the “developing world” to become self-reliant and sustainable.

- Nations that possess less military and economic power than others must be protected through international agreements from loss of control of their own resources and means of production to either transnational enterprises or other governments.

These international policies will not narrow the rich-poor gap within nations unless the powerless, disenfranchised poor are able to take control of their own political and economic destinies. We support people’s organizations that use the discovery of local areas of exploitation and development of methods to alleviate these problems.

Economic and political turmoil within many developing nations has been promoted and exploited by other powers as an excuse to intervene through subversive activities or military force in furtherance of their own national interests. We condemn this version of imperialism that often parades as international responsibility.

We support United Nations efforts to develop international law to govern the sea, especially through the Law of the Sea, and to ensure that the world’s common resources will be used cooperatively and equitably for the welfare of humankind.

We urge the appropriate boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church to continue and expand efforts to bring about peace and justice in cooperative and multilateral action between peoples and governments of all countries.

V. Peace Research, Education, and Action

“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:42 ESV).

The 1960 General Conference established the landmark study “The Christian Faith and War in the Nuclear Age.” That study said, “The Christian Church and the individual must accept responsibility for the creation of a climate of opinion in which creative changes can occur.” It called for the work of these creative alternatives “our
mission field as we live as disciples of the Prince of Peace.’

In a more recent study, “In Search of Security” by the Council of Bishops Task Force on Safety and Security, asserted: “Fear causes us to accumulate weapons and to devote all too much of our resources to the goal of deterring our supposed enemy. Paradoxically enough, it is the special temptation of the strong and the rich to overreact in this way. This blocks resources that could be used much more creatively for development and social justice around the world.”

Living out of peace prospers in a climate of mutual understanding, tolerance and the acknowledgement of the inherent dignity and self-realization of every human being, indeed of every child of God. Peace, security and human rights help realize sustainable development and social justice in the world.

For true peace and security to take root in the lives of people and in the relations of nations, we call The United Methodist Church, especially those engaged in informal and formal learning from primary to higher education, in the light of its historical teachings and its commitment to peace, human rights and self-development of peoples, to:

1. Seek the establishment of educational institutions and the development of programs and curricula devoted to the study learning and living out of peace and human rights;

2. Develop alternatives to vocations that work against for peace, and support individuals in their quest;

3. Explore and apply ways of resolving domestic and international differences that affirm human fulfillment and tolerance rather than exploitation and violence;

4. Affirm and employ methods that build confidence and trust between peoples and countries, including training in multicultural understanding and appreciation of differences, rejecting all promotion of hatred and mistrust;

5. Continue to develop and implement the search for peace through educational experiences, including immersion and educational exchange programs, church school classes, schools of Christian mission, and other settings throughout the church;

6. Encourage local churches and members to take actions that make for peace and to act in concert with other peoples and groups of goodwill toward the achievement of a truly just, peaceful world; and

7. Develop study and action materials that incorporate the understanding and practice of peacekeeping actions that keep the peace through law and order, peacemaking actions that make for peace in personal, institutional and social relations, and peace building infrastructures and fostering values that secure peace and constitute justice.

Peace is the vocation of Christ’s disciples. For the healing of the nations, we must live peace in our lives and in our communities.

Adopted 1984
Amended and Readopted 2000
Amended and Readopted 2008
Resolution #338, 2004 Book of Resolutions
Resolution #318, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 165B and C.

Rationale:

The Bible makes justice the inseparable companion of peace because both point to right, sustainable relationships in human society, the vitality of our connections with the earth, the well-being and integrity of creation. When justice and peace are lacking or set in opposition, we need to reform our ways.

R6117.

Petition Number: 20866-CA-R6117-G; Lewis, Dan -Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

Saying No to Nuclear Weapons

Amend and readopt current resolution 6117 as follows:

In 1986, the United Methodist Council of Bishops, after nearly two years of prayerful and penitent study, adopted a pastoral letter and foundation document entitled In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace.

The bishops’ statement was deeply rooted in biblical faith. They wrote:

At the heart of the Old Testament is the testimony of shalom, that marvelous Hebrew word that means peace. But the peace that is shalom is not negative or one dimensional. It is much more than the absence of war. Shalom is positive peace: harmony, wholeness, health, and well being in all human relationships. It is the natural state of humanity as birthed by God. It is harmony between humanity and all of God’s good creation. All of creation is interrelated. Every creature, every element, every force of nature participates in the whole of creation. If any person is denied shalom, all are thereby diminished. New Testament faith presupposes a radical break between the follies, or much so-called conventional wisdom about power and security, on the one
hand, and the transcendent wisdom of shalom, on the other. Ultimately, New Testament faith is a message of hope about God’s plan and purpose for human destiny. It is a redemptive vision that refuses to waver in doubt.2

Based upon this faith, the

The bishops in their pastoral letter stated unequivocally that “we say a clear and unconditional No to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. We conclude that nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church’s blessing.”2

The implication is clear. If nuclear weapons cannot be legitimately used for either deterrence or war-fighting, no nation should possess them. Accordingly, in the foundation document the bishops indicated:

We support the earliest possible negotiation of phased but rapid reduction of nuclear arsenals, while calling upon all other nuclear-weapons states to agree to parallel arms reductions, to the eventual goal of a mutual and verifiable dismantling of all nuclear armaments.3

Continuing this calling and expanding its meaning in their 2010 pastoral letter, God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action,4 the Council of Bishops reminds us that, although God’s creation is in crisis and caught in interconnected threats to life and hope, God calls us and equips us to respond.

In 1988, the United Methodist General Conference affirmed and supported the statements of the Council of Bishops contained in In Defense of Creation.5 Four years later, in a resolution entitled “Nuclear Disarmament: The Zero Option,” the 1992 General Conference stated that “now is the time to exercise the zero option: to eliminate all nuclear weapons throughout the globe.”6 and the conference offered a series of concrete actions for achieving this goal.

Our Commitment—We reaffirm the finding that nuclear weapons, whether used or threatened, are grossly evil and morally wrong. As an instrument of mass destruction, nuclear weapons slaughter the innocent and ravage the environment. When used as instruments of deterrence, nuclear weapons hold innocent people hostage for political and military purposes. Therefore, we call upon all possessors of nuclear weapons to implement the following actions as soon as possible:

1. renounce unconditionally the use of nuclear weapons for deterrence and war-fighting purposes;
2. pledge never to use nuclear weapons against any adversary under any circumstance;
3. immediately take all nuclear weapons off alert by separating warheads from delivery vehicles and by other means;
4. embark upon a program to systematically dismantle all nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles as soon as possible with adequate safeguards and verification, carried out under multilateral treaties and through reciprocal national initiatives;
5. ratify and implement the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
6. cease all research, development, testing, production, and deployment of new nuclear weapons and refrain from modernizing the existing nuclear arsenal;
7. halt all efforts to develop and deploy strategic antimissile defense systems because they are illusory, unnecessary, and wasteful;
8. respect the requirements of nuclear weapon-free zones where they exist;
9. enter into a multilateral process to develop, adopt, and carry out a nuclear weapons convention that outlaws and abolishes all nuclear weapons under strict and effective international control; and
10. develop and implement a system for control of all fissile material with international accounting, monitoring, and safeguards.

We call upon all nations that do not possess nuclear weapons to:
1. cease all efforts to develop these instruments of mass destruction and their delivery systems;
2. ratify and carry out the provisions of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
3. adhere to all provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and
4. respect the requirements of nuclear weapon-free zones and extend this approach to other nations and continents.

**Implementation**  To promote the achievement of goals and objectives specified in this resolution:
1. We ask the Council of Bishops to transmit a copy of the resolution to the heads of state of all nations possessing nuclear weapons.
2. We ask the General Board of Church and Society to publicize the resolution with appropriate governmental officials, legislators, the media, and the general public.
3. We call upon the Council of Bishops and the General Board of Church and Society and all pastors to provide continued leadership, guidance, and educational advocacy material to United Methodists, congregations, and conferences in order to assist them in understanding and working for advocating toward the goal and objectives of nuclear abolition.
4. We request that the General Board of Church and Society prepare an annual “report card” to be included with Peace With Justice Sunday materials in relation to: a) countries that possess nuclear weapons and their compliance with the recommended actions in this resolution, and b) countries that do not possess nuclear weapons and their compliance with the recommended actions in this resolution.

**Conclusion**

**RATIONALE**  fervently believe that these These recommendations will greatly enhance global security by eliminating the possibility of nuclear war. Furthermore, the resources of human talent, production capacity, and money released can become available to deal with urgent human problems around the globe. Nuclear abolition provides great hope for global peace and prosperity.


See Social Principles, ¶ 164C.
3. Ibid., page 28.

---

4. Ibid., page 92.
5. Ibid., page 76

R6122.

Petition Number: 20227-CA-R6122-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

**Prohibition of Arms Sales and Transfers**

Amend Resolution 6122 as follows:

6122. Prohibition of Arms Sales and Arms Transfers to Foreign Countries for Purposes of War

WHEREAS, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (US, Russia, United Kingdom, France & China) account for 85% of all arms sales in the world (see Stockholm International Peace Research Institute www.sipri.org); and

WHEREAS, the United States sells more armaments around the world than any other country ($22.6 billion (39.3% of all arms agreements) of a total worldwide of $57.5 billion in 2009—see Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2002-2009 (Congressional Research Service, September 10, 2010) ($18.6 billion in sales in 2000, of $36.9 billion worldwide—Frida Berrigan, World Policy Institute, August 21, 2004); and

WHEREAS, these arms are frequently used in conflicts which deeply affect civilians—particularly women and children and especially in impoverished developing nations we do not support and have even been used against our own troops in combat; and

WHEREAS, prohibitions against the resale of such arms have proven to be unenforceable in the world market; and

WHEREAS, the global arms trade takes precious resources away from meeting people’s needs and redirects them into deadly weapons; President Jimmy Carter has said, “We cannot have it both ways. We can’t be both the world’s leading champion of peace and the world’s leading supplier of arms”; and

WHEREAS, the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church states that “...the militarization of society must be challenged and stopped; the manufac-
ture, sale, and deployment of armaments must be reduced and controlled; and that the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” (¶ 165C of The Book of Discipline, 2008 Edition); and

WHEREAS, the prophets Isaiah and Micah call on nations to “beat their swords into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:4 & Micah 4:3); and

WHEREAS, Jesus taught us that “blessed are the peacemakers,” and valued all human life;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church supports the strict global prohibition of sales and transfers of arms for purposes of war to foreign countries, and urges all governments to support a strong and comprehensive UN Arms Trade Treaty as an important step towards monitoring and reducing the international flow of arms.

ADOPTED 2004
RESOLUTION #341, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 165B and C.

R9999.
Petition Number: 20013-CA-R9999; Lawson, René P. - Lake Dallas, TX, USA.

Support for Clergy in U.S. Military

WHEREAS, Reserve/National Guard members are protected from losing their employment status if called to duty by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), Chapter 43 of Title 38, United States Code, passed by the United States Congress on October 1994; and,

WHEREAS, this law states, in part, that employers are required to reemploy, without loss of seniority, service members that have been called to duty; and,

WHEREAS, clergy members within the United Methodist Church may serve in the dual roles as ministers of local parishes and chaplains within the Reserve/National Guard of the United States military; and,

WHEREAS, there may be occasions when reserve chaplains are called to serve their country, either voluntarily or involuntarily, for long periods of time; and,

WHEREAS, Resolution 5061 of The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church 2008, states in part “The United Methodist Church . . . honors and supports those United Methodist clergy who serve as chaplains; and

WHEREAS, clergy members, considered self-employed and exempt from the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, who serve in the Reserve/National Guard community, may feel at risk of employment loss or reduction of employment status; and,

WHEREAS, the 2007 North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, recognizing the need to address this situation, unanimously voted to support the resolution entitled “Resolution to Support the Spirit of the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) for Clergy Members that Serve the Reserves and Guard Communities of the United States Military” Legislative Action 25;

Therefore, be it resolved, the United Methodist Church respect the spirit and intent behind the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act for its clergy members;

Be it further resolved, in accepting the spirit and intent behind the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act the church would give its Reserve/National Guard clergy members the same consideration given to civilian employees,

Be it further resolved, that this stance would demonstrate that the church is eager and willing to support not only its Reserve/National Guard chaplains, but more importantly the extension ministry that is being supplied to all members of the military forces.

R9999.
Petition Number: 20051-CA-R9999-G; Olson, Harriett Jane - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries - Women’s Division.

Seeking Peace in Afghanistan

*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord of hosts.*
—Zechariah 4:6

U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan now represents the longest war in U.S. history. The involvement of North American Treaty Organization (NATO) forces constitutes the largest military operation outside of its role in Europe. For Afghans, the current war involving more than 100,000 foreign military troops is simply the latest in a long history of foreigners trying to impose by military might their own agenda in Afghanistan.
While generals and government officials all acknowledge that there is “no military solution” in Afghanistan, they continue to place their primary trust in weapons. Yet the psalmist reminds us, “The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save” (Psalm 33:17).

Tragically, the situation on the ground has worsened. The number of U.S./NATO foreign troops in Afghanistan has tripled since 2008, and so has the number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Consequently, civilian casualties have escalated significantly, with many going unreported. The majority of the public in the United States and NATO countries opposes ongoing war and troop involvement. Most Afghans want an end to decades of war and for foreign troops to leave.

Since 2006, the steady increase of troops has fanned popular resentment at foreign troops and the corrupt Afghan government officials they support. More troops—both foreign and Afghan—has increased the number of violent attacks by insurgents and coalition forces alike and devoted precious resources to weapons rather than health care, education, and community development.

The war has expanded to Pakistan as well. Armed insurgent groups operate on both sides of the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, and the United States has greatly increased unmanned drone strikes in remote Pakistani villages. Very little effort is made to account for civilian casualties from these strikes, and some bombings are based on faulty intelligence. Such remote bombings—especially in noncombat zones—create widespread resentment among the families and communities hit, making them a recruiting tool for armed groups. These attacks in noncombat zones are similar to targeted assassinations or extrajudicial killings that are strongly prohibited under international law and sharply criticized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extra-Judicial killings and numerous human rights advocates. It sets a disturbing precedent for governments to take the law into their own hands.

For more than 30 years, governments and armed groups have pumped billions of dollars in weapons into Afghanistan with bitter consequences for the people. The continuing militarization of Afghan society has taken significant resources away from diplomatic and development work in a deeply impoverished, war-torn land. United Methodists have long expressed concern that those who suffer the most in war are women and children. Indeed, Afghanistan has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates, and average life expectancy is mid-40s. While each year the United States and other governments devote over $100 billion dollars to weapons and soldiers, one in four Afghan children still will not reach the age of 5. By contrast, for more than 45 years United Methodists and other humanitarian organizations, in partnership with local Afghans, have supported health care and community development work in Afghanistan.

The United Methodist Social Principles recognize that “Conflicts and war impoverish the population on all sides, and an important way to support the poor will be to work for peaceful solutions” (¶163E). United Methodists also recognize that women have long taken the lead in calling and working for peace. In October 2001, Women’s Division directors adopted a resolution that asked United Methodist Women to: “Urge the president to use diplomatic means to bring the perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice and to end the bombing of Afghanistan.”

We recall the words of U.S. representative Barbara Lee (California) in September 2001, who was the lone voice at that time in the U.S. government to question military action against Afghanistan. She warned in a House of Representatives floor speech on September 14, 2001, “If we rush to launch a counterattack, we run too great a risk that women, children, and other noncombatants will be caught in the crossfire .... [W]e must be careful not to embark on an open-ended war with neither an exit strategy nor a focused target. We cannot repeat past mistakes.”

We confess that years of war and pumping of weapons into Afghanistan, along with years of silence by too many of us in churches, has not served the needs of people—in Afghanistan or at home—but rather prolonged a cycle of militarism, violence, and suffering. Today the United States as 5 percent of the world’s population devotes almost the same amount of resources to military spending as the other 95 percent of the world combined. Forty-five years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned that “a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death” (“Beyond Vietnam” speech, April 4, 1967). We are haunted by the prophet Habakkuk’s lament, “Their own might is their god!” (Habakkuk 1:11). May we find the courage to join with Afghans and neighboring Pakistanis and all who seek to transform today’s glut of swords into plowshares.

In November 2009, 79 United Methodist bishops signed an open letter to the U.S. president calling on him to turn from military escalation “to set a timetable for the withdrawal of all coalition forces by the end of 2010.” Our long-standing conviction that “war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ” and
our call into discipleship as peacemakers have led us in our Social Principles to declare, “We oppose unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government” (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008, ¶165C).

Now in the ongoing war in Afghanistan we must also challenge any preemptive arguments for prolonging war and militarization of the society. The argument that more than $100 billion per year should be devoted to waging war in the hopes of “denying a future safe haven to terrorists” when those same funds devoted to meeting the Millennium Development Goals in health care would save tens of thousands of lives across the globe is neither moral, sustainable, nor realistic.

We offer the following points for reflection and action as we seek to live out our Christian vocation as peacemakers:

1. Urge prompt and complete withdrawal of U.S./NATO forces as a necessary step toward demilitarizing the region and promoting Afghan-led peace talks among all parties. We urge an immediate unilateral cease-fire, an end to night raids, and an end to bombings as initial confidence-building steps toward demilitarization and reconciliation. We support peace that includes Afghan women in all negotiations in a substantive way.

2. We call for an immediate end to drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which have escalated exponentially since 2008. We support full and independent investigations into all such bombings to account for civilian casualties.

3. End the militarization of Afghanistan. Most U.S. foreign aid to Afghanistan currently goes to training, equipping and funding the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, and to private security contractors. Foreign aid has helped train several hundred thousand Afghan men as soldiers and police while funding training for only 2,500 Afghan midwives. This is neither just nor sustainable in the short or long term. Lasting human security and stability in Afghanistan will come through diplomacy, education, and health care, not more weapons, more police, and more soldiers. We urge an end to all arms shipments from all sources.

4. Shifting resources from military spending and training to health and education, where many more women work, is one of the best ways of supporting and empowering Afghan women’s leadership. We recognize and commit our support to the creative ways Afghan women are organizing and working in their communities despite war and conflict.

5. Ongoing war in Afghanistan costs $100+ billion per year. It costs $1 million per year for each U.S. soldier serving in Afghanistan. These funds are being targeted by the military for recruitment. Support plowshares, classrooms, and hospitals into weapons. Teachers, firefighters, and other public employees are facing layoffs in part because the U.S. government keeps redirecting tax dollars from local communities to war overseas. Each dollar spent on war in Afghanistan is taken from women and children and communities in the United States and around the world. War spending endangers civilians in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the home countries of U.S./NATO forces.

6. Military spending should be shifted to humanitarian work that is not at all connected with any military forces. Humanitarian work should be nonpolitical and not connected with any of the warring parties. Nongovernmental organizations report that health and education work in highly militarized areas is now far more dangerous for internationals and Afghans alike, and many parts of the country are no longer accessible for aid workers. We call for an end to Provincial Reconstruction Teams and a strict separation of humanitarian work from military operations as called for in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct.

7. The apostle Paul reminds us, “God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow” (Galatians 6:7). Corruption is best challenged by “first examining the log in our own eye” (Matthew 7:3). We urge cutting off the source of funds for bribes. The huge amounts of foreign money flowing into Afghanistan are largely diverted by warlords and private contractors (both international and Afghan). U.S. forces end up subcontracting warlords to secure the vast military supply line.

According to U.S. Representative John Tierney’s (Massachusetts) June 2010 congressional report “Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan,” $400 million per year of U.S. security funding ends up in the hands of Taliban—more than they get from drug sales. Military contractors and defense corporations (e.g., Blackwater/Xe Services LLC, Dyncorp, Halliburton, Lockheed, etc.) are among the most accountable actors in Afghanistan. Cut off funding for private security contractors, as it masks the level of U.S. war spending and personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

**ACTIONS**

Urge all United Methodists to:

1. Call for a “swords into plowshares” approach in government spending and to develop church and peacemaker alliances with local governments to press national governments to redirect money from war spending to meet human needs.

2. Many young people facing unemployment are being targeted by the military for recruitment. Support
peace education, provide counseling on selective conscience objection, and offer alternative service education options for all high school students, with an emphasis on impoverished communities.

3. Support veterans, families of veterans, and Afghans civilians facing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It has been reported that in 2009 and 2010 more U.S. veterans and active duty soldiers died from suicide than were killed in combat. Raise awareness about the high number of suicides, the increase in domestic violence, and other destructive behaviors brought on by war-related trauma. Support full funding of health care, especially mental health care and traumatic brain injury (TBI), for all affected by war.

4. The so-called war on terror has been used to justify ongoing war spending and increasing repressive measures that stifle dissent and encourage racial profiling of Arab and Muslim people in many countries (see other General Conference resolutions: “Taking Liberties: On the Stifling of Dissent” and “Prejudice against Muslims”). We call on United Methodists to stand with communities facing discrimination and urge all governments to restrain their use of measures that increase racial profiling and scapegoating.

5. Support regional negotiations and diplomacy throughout Central/South Asia with all parties to build cooperation. We support and encourage our partners to monitor that women’s leadership is central in these negotiations; women must be involved in all peace negotiations, and this participation must be real and not simply a token gesture. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted on October 31, 2000, directly calls for women to participate equally and fully in all levels of peacemaking and decision making, from conflict prevention and mitigation to postconflict recovery and transformation. It also calls to end impunity against those who commit violence against women. Durable peace, security, and reconstruction in Afghanistan will not occur without the direct participation of all in the society, including women, who represent half of the population.


Petition Number: 20052-CA-R9999-G; Olson, Harriett Jane - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries - Women’s Division.

Caring for God’s Creation

God has given humankind responsibility for the care and keeping of the earth as God’s steward. (Genesis 2:15) The Bible’s message, however, goes beyond just managing natural resources wisely. It calls us to live justly and compassionately with our brothers and sisters, to work for justice and peace by restoring right relations with the land, and, in fact, with all of nonhuman Creation, and to liberate the poor and suffering. (Mark 16:15; John 3:17; Romans 8:18-21).

We live in a time in which climate change is causing grave human suffering in many parts of the world, including but not limited to deaths due to extreme weather events, greater food and water insecurity, displacement of peoples, the extinction of plant and animal life and certain traditional cultures, and the threat of ecological catastrophe and major human rights crises. Indeed, studies indicate 300,000 people a year are already dying due to the effects of global warming, and almost all affected are “the least among us” who have done almost nothing to contribute to the problem.

In light of the biblical mandate and our Social Principles, The United Methodist Church, as people of
faith, commits to fulfill the divine mandate and meet human need by responsible care of creation through support of the following policies and actions:

**General Policy Recommendations**

**LEADERS, CHURCHES, ORGANIZATIONS, VARIOUS BOARDS AND AGENCIES,** as appropriate, will advocate and act on the following policies designed to bring about the equitable and sustainable transformation of national and international economies:

- Codify reductions of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are sufficient to reduce atmospheric levels of GHG to below 350 parts per million (ppm). This is the latest scientific evidence as to what is needed to prevent dangerous or irreversible climate change effects.\(^2\)
- Promote international dialogue and the development of appropriate human rights frameworks and procedures for addressing the human rights challenges that are expected to emerge as climate change permanently displaces large numbers of people and, indeed, entire nations.
- Promote and support the human right of indigenous peoples to determine the best use of their land and energy resources.
- Promote just, sustainable economic development that addresses energy poverty in ways that strengthen community involvement and control thus enabling equal access to energy and natural resources.
- Promote strategies to maximize the economic opportunities for low-income consumers, workers and communities as nations shift toward green energy economies and encourage greater conservation.
- Advocate that wealthy nations provide substantial *funding, over and beyond existing foreign aid commitments,* for those nations that are most affected by climate change. Advocate also for transition assistance for vulnerable communities in wealthy nations.
- Advocate that in all cases, national and international planning and implementation mechanisms should be transparent, democratic, participatory, inclusive, equitable, effective and accountable to those most affected by climate change, such as women, indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities.
- Advocate that the United States become a full party to a strong, binding international climate change agreement under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) so that the United States is globally accountable for the reduction of its own greenhouse gas emissions and addresses the need for climate adaptation.
- In the United States, support the Environmental Protection Agency’s continued ability to implement and enforce the Clean Air Act to the full extent of its authority as a complement to congressional action on climate change.

**ACTIONS**

The Creation Care/Climate Change Task Force established by the 2008 General Conference is to be commended for its work and will continue in the next quadrennium. The task force is urged to expand its membership to include representatives from all United Methodist boards, agencies and other appropriate United Methodist bodies and assist with the following:

- Serve as a communications and planning hub for cross-board and agency efforts to reduce the Church’s carbon footprint.
- Produce a report for the 2016 General Conference to what extent specific boards and agencies have reduced their carbon footprint.
- More effectively and aggressively develop and implement church policies, educational materials and advocacy strategies promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy conservation and corporate responsibility, including purchasing and investing practices that encourage the same.

**Footnotes:**


(2) This position is supported by the World Council of Churches (Executive Committee minutes dated February 23–26, 2010, on the UNFCCC-COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen); by Church World Service (2009 and reaffirmed 2010); by various national governments; by scientists such as NASA’s Dr. James Hansen, in James Hansen et al., “Target Atmosphere CO2: Where Should Humanity Aim?” *The Open Atmospheric Science Journal* 2 (2008): 217–231; by the Committee on Stabilization Targets for Atmospheric Greenhouse Gas Concentration in its *Climate Stabilization Targets: Emissions, Concentrations, and Impacts over Decades to Millennia* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2010); and by Johan Roestrom et al., “Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity,” *Ecology & Society* 14, no. 2 (2009); and by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (position statement 2009).

R9999.

Petition Number: 20053-CA-R9999-G; Olson, Harriett Jane - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries - Women’s Division.
Criminalization of US Communities of Color

There is an increase in mass incarceration in the United States that disproportionately impacts people of color due to institutionalized racism, racial profiling, and mandatory sentencing. Now, U.S. immigration enforcement policies are replicating this model, increasing the mass detention of migrants of color. The United Methodist Church needs to actively work to dismantle current policies that depict whole groups of people as criminals and that respond with profiling and mass incarceration.

Economic Crisis and Demonization of Communities

Globally and within nations there is a widening gap between rich and poor. In order to maintain this wealth and resource inequality, governments are increasingly following the policies of dividing workers and exploiting migrant labor as Pharaoh did in Exodus 1: “Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land” (Exodus 1:10). In Genesis Chapter 47, Joseph and other migrants cooperated closely with Egyptians in a time of famine to share resources. However, prolonged famine also meant that many Egyptians lost their livestock and their land and became enslaved to Pharaoh just to survive. Today, citizens and migrants face similar exploitation by the powerful.

Pharaoh’s fear was not the presence of migrant labor but that impoverished Egyptians and migrant workers would unite in demanding equal rights. In the name of national security, governments today, like in Pharaoh’s day, use fear-based policies to divide and control populations that might challenge the growing concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of a few. Today this comes in the form of incarcerating the poorest and most marginalized citizens of a nation, building barricades to keep the poor from having equal rights when they move across borders and creating policies that criminalize both citizens and migrants of color. While this phenomenon of criminalization of communities of color is not new, it is being expanded in the context of economic crisis.

The concept of criminalization refers to the growing number of government policies and practices based on fear that apply punitive laws for largely nonviolent offenses in racially selective ways on whole communities. Over the past three decades, the “war on drugs” in the United States has generated a system of mass incarceration that has disproportionately affected impoverished African-American and other communities of color. The United States, as 5 percent of the world’s population, incarcerates 25 percent of all prisoners in the world. Now, in the name of a so-called war on “illegal” immigration and war on terror, similar punitive policies are being imposed on migrant communities, and copycat legislation is being enacted state to state. In effect, these policies render whole communities of color—citizen and migrant—as guilty until proven innocent. African-American, Arab, Muslim, Haitian, and Latino communities in the United States are among those groups particularly targeted. In a time of shrinking resources, like the famine in Pharaoh’s day, political leaders are able to stir up fear in efforts to “protect what’s ours” by erecting symbolic and real barriers that divide people. This approach is based on a theology and worldview of scarcity. In contrast, The United Methodist Church affirms, “God’s vision of abundant living is a world where we live out a theology of ‘enough’ for all.”

We also see efforts to create borders regarding human rights. Rather than universal rights, those with felony convictions in the United States become secondary citizens, and migrants are increasingly unable to demand basic rights. A push in the United States to end birthright citizenship, enshrined in the 14th Amendment to the Bill of Rights in the aftermath of the Civil War, is part of the current effort to create a hierarchy of rights. This debate over who is and is not a full citizen is not new in the United States. It is centuries old. The exclusion of indigenous peoples and slaves was written into the Constitution at the nation’s founding.

The Merger of Criminal Justice and Migration Enforcement Systems

A growing merger of punitive and increasingly militarized criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems reflects the ongoing criminalization of citizen communities of color compounded by the newer criminalization of migrants. Public policies reflect a fear and demonization of “the other” and efforts to respond with punishment rather than with equal rights and restorative justice.

Today, migrants are being racially profiled, criminalized, and imprisoned, often in an expanding network of private “detention centers” or prisons, in similar ways to the longstanding systemic selective enforcement and imprisonment targeting African Americans, Latinos, and Native peoples. The United Methodist Church has long condemned the practice of profiling by police due to race, language, religion, or national origin, which disproportionately channels communities of color into the criminal justice system.

These trends have devastating effect on both citizen and noncitizen communities of color. Roundups target-
ing specific communities of color, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids or drift-net arrests, sweep up large numbers of people without probable cause, almost none of whom has committed any violent crime. We are seeing mass incarceration through mandatory sentencing policies for nonviolent offenses (e.g., drug abuse, property crimes) and immigration status violations in both communities. Both citizen prisoners and migrant detainees are frequently detained/imprisoned far from families and legal counsel, placing further burdens on families. Families are divided, with years spent away from children and potential loss of child custody. The focus on “documents” impacts both ex-offenders who have lost many citizenship rights and migrants in irregular status. In both cases documents are used to restrict access to privileges, rights, and resources of government, often dividing people along racial lines.

Common Challenges of the Criminal Justice and Migration Enforcement System

Private for-profit companies are often contracted by governments to incarcerate citizens as well as hold migrants in detention. In 2010, private companies in the United States operated over 250 correctional facilities, housing almost 99,000 prisoners. Detention and deportation have become multibillion dollar industries in the United States. These companies regularly lobby in Washington, DC, for more detention, even if it is not the most effective use of taxpayer dollars. When private prisons make money based on the number incarcerated and the longevity of sentences, they become a powerful lobby for maintaining and expanding the current system of mass incarceration. The Church has noted that this growing privatization of prisons creates a perverse incentive to expand prison populations, even when this is more costly to taxpayers than alternatives to mass incarceration.

Policing based on racial or ethnic identity undermines community safety. For decades, the race-based and militarized enforcement of drug laws in poor communities of color has created a climate of fear. Increasingly, local police are being asked to enforce harsh immigration policies that demonize impoverished communities and thereby undermine community safety for all. When whole communities do not trust the police, they are unwilling to call the police when crimes occur or share information that helps prevent or solve crimes. This has made both migrant and citizen women of color more vulnerable to domestic abuse. These tactics are producing insecure communities.

Additional Impact on Women and Families

Women in prison and detention face sexual harassment and sexual abuse, and they struggle to keep families together. The number of women in U.S. prisons, a third of whom are incarcerated for mostly nonviolent drug offenses, is increasing at nearly double the rate for men. Most women who are incarcerated, including mothers behind bars, were first survivors of sexual and physical abuse and violence that often began during girlhood. African-American and Latina women make up the fastest growing population in U.S. prisons and jails. Criminalizing mothers for trauma and addiction is a recent phenomena, brought on by the introduction of mandatory sentencing to federal drug laws in the mid-1980s, which resulted in a 400 percent increase in the number of women in U.S. prisons. Women who have suffered physical and sexual abuse now face further abuse in prison and detention where they fear speaking out and cannot flee violence and abuse. There are documented cases of sexual abuse of women in U.S. prisons and detention centers, requests by officials for sexual favors in exchange for papers or privileges, and the loss of child custody. Both imprisoned and detained women have been chained and shackled during child birth. Many migrant women must wear electronic ankle bracelets under house arrest. Women become heads of households when spouses are arrested, detained, or deported, and most incarcerated mothers have minor children for whom they were the primary caretakers.

Today’s criminalization and mass incarceration policies divide and devastate families in communities of color. In addition, the criminalization of children of citizen communities of color further traumatizes and separates families. An estimated 200,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year across the United States. Most of the youth prosecuted in adult court are charged with nonviolent offenses. The United States is the only country with more than 2,500 youth serving life sentences without parole, termed juvenile life without parole (JLWOP). These children, 60 percent of whom are first-time offenders, will die in prison. The overuse of juvenile detention is particularly harsh on citizens youth of color. African-American and Latino/a youth are more likely to be sentenced to jail or prison, while white youth are more likely to be sentenced to probation. In 2003, African-American youth were detained at a rate 4.5 times higher than whites, and Latino/a youth were detained at twice the rate of whites. Today’s criminalization and mass incarceration policies divide and devastate families in communities of color.
The United Methodist Church’s Response

Just as the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1 resisted government efforts to divide and destroy their community, the United Methodist Church affirms the inalienable human rights of all persons, regardless of race, class or national status. These political, social, and economic rights do not stop at borders of nations or boundaries of communities.

The Charter for Racial Justice, first adopted in the 1980 General Conference, calls us to challenge systems that institutionalize racism and cause unequal outcomes regardless of intent. We call on the church to actively work to dismantle these systems of white privilege and institutional racism.

In The United Methodist Church’s Social Principles, United Methodists are called to practice restorative justice. United Methodists are called to seek alternatives to retribution when people commit crimes. In seeking to restore right relationships among all God’s people, we commit to looking at global distribution of wealth, power, and racial privilege that lie beneath poverty, inequality, punitive criminal justice policies, and global migration.

United Methodist Call to Advocate.

In keeping with these principles and in light of the destructive impact criminalization has on citizen communities of color and migrants, the United Methodist Church seeks to mobilize members and its agencies, notably the General Board of Church and Society, the General Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Women, to advocate with national and local governments to:

1. Make the enforcement and protection of international human rights law central to criminal justice and immigration policy.
2. Stop profiling, raids, and wrongful imprisonment.
   a. Prohibit all forms of racial, ethnic/nationality and religious profiling by law enforcement at local, state, and national levels, including police sweeps in targeted communities; improve police–community relations; end “zero tolerance” policies that criminalize students in schools; and challenge and reverse racial disparities in police stops, arrests, sentencing, and incarceration.
   b. Suspend all raids, detention, and deportation of migrants, instead shifting resources to services for underserved communities. End local police involvement in immigration enforcement through such ICE ACCESS initiatives as 287(g), Secure Communities and the Criminal Alien Program.
3. End mandatory sentencing, especially for nonviolent offenses
   a. End mandatory sentencing in the context of the U.S. “war on drugs” such as “three strikes and you’re out” laws. Several states have already adopted such measures (see www.sentencingproject.org).
   b. End mandatory detention policies in immigration law and support the Child Citizen Protection Act, which gives judges discretion in deportation rulings to consider the needs of children; end the practice of jailing people only because of their immigration status; end incarceration of asylum-seekers while their cases are reviewed; and grant asylum to larger numbers of those seeking refuge.
4. Investigate and end abuses in public and private corporate prisons, detention centers, and jails; stop expansion of detention centers; and work to reduce the number of current facilities.
5. Stop the militarization of poor communities of color by police, including drift-net arrest policies; end militarization of borders; take legal responsibility for the deaths of migrants in transit due to current border policies, and provide redress to families who have lost loved ones; and end “prevention through deterrence” border policies that lead to deaths.
6. Enable people to work.
   a. Remove the barriers to employment for formerly incarcerated persons and invest in education and job creation that will lead to good livelihoods for poor communities of color. End suspension of citizen rights due to felony convictions and support reentry programs to hire former prisoners. End felony disenfranchisement for all when they are released from prison.
   b. Repeal employer sanctions that criminalize undocumented migrants seeking to work and end the e-verify program. End the use of Social Security “no-match” letters and the prosecution of so-called “ID theft.”
7. Institute legalization programs for migrants that restore and protect civil and labor rights, keep families together, and strengthen communities, and institute programs that place all migrants on a path to citizenship, not a select few.

The United Methodist Church Call to Action

1. The United Methodist Task Force on Immigration, representing the Council of Bishops, Agencies, and racial/ethnic caucuses:
   a. Utilize a framework that examines links between criminal justice and immigrant enforcement policies as they impact communities of color;
b. Work to challenge the criminalization of migrants in the United States and globally by engaging annual and central conferences in advocacy at the local, state/provincial, national, and regional level. Build alliances with ecumenical and secular groups to challenge criminalization of migrants and rights violations.

2. General Board of Church and Society, General Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Women:

a. Work with national and international civil rights, human rights and migrant rights organizations to develop resources and advocacy materials for use in local congregations regarding unjust criminal justice and immigrant enforcement policies. Work with Central Conferences to deepen research, analysis, and action on migration enforcement policies globally and how these may connect to policies and selective enforcement toward citizens of color/marginalized citizens within nations.

b. Mobilize congregations to challenge private prisons and detention centers, call on states and the federal government to halt prison and detention center construction, release prisoners held for nonviolent offenses as well as those who pose little threat to society, and use funds for needed social expenditures in current economic crisis.

c. Work to educate and advocate for the rights of women and their children who face specific vulnerabilities and challenges as a result of the criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems.

d. Build alliances between citizen communities of color and new migrant communities, particularly around police racial profiling, working with the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, councils of churches, clergy coalitions, and civil rights groups.

3. Annual conferences and local congregations:

a. Challenge police engagement in immigration enforcement, including through ICE ACCESS programs such as Secure Communities and 287(g) agreements and state legislation that would legalize local immigration enforcement and racial profiling. (See also Resolution 3378, “Racial Profiling in the US.”)

b. Call United Methodists to discernment on these issues through use of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral; the values of human rights, racial justice and restorative justice; and a critical lens regarding mass media (See Resolution 8011, “Proper Use of Information Communication Technologies.”)

c. Local congregations provide ministries of compassion and solidarity with communities subjected to police sweeps, high incarceration rates, racial profiling, immigration raids, detention, and deportation. This may include direct service, detention visitation, safe space for dialogue and organizing, and offering sanctuary, among other responses.

Footnotes:

(1) The United Nations system refers to “migrants” to name people on the move within and across borders for multiple reasons. In the United States, “migrant” is more frequently used to refer to farmworkers who move to harvest crops, so “immigrant” is of more common usage to describe someone who migrates to the United States from another country. This is the U.S. government language. Here, we use “migrant” unless referring to U.S. government programs.

(2) “See The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2008, Resolution 3128, “Prejudice Against Muslims and Arabs in the USA.”

(3) See The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2008, Resolution 4056, “Greed.”

(4) See The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2008, Resolution 6028, “Global Migration and the Quest for Justice.”


(7) “Drift-net” refers to police sweeps within a specific community and arrests without probable cause in order to sift out potential criminals.


(9) See The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2004, Resolution 257, “Prison Industrial Complex”: “Private prison companies typically are paid on a per-capita and per-diem basis. Therefore they have little incentive to rehabilitate prisoners or to prevent recidivism. Indeed, it is in their economic interest to have more crime, more incarceration, and more recidivism, all of which lead to more profits” (p. 653).


(15) “The use of local law enforcement as immigration agents should be stopped.” See The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2008, Resolution 3281, “Welcoming the Stranger to the US.”
Petition Number: 20054-CA-R9999-G; Olson, Harriett Jane - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries - Women’s Division.

**Compassion**

“So justice is driven back and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. God saw that there was no one. God was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so God’s own arm worked salvation.”

—Isaiah 59:14-16 (NIV)

And therefore, put off falsehood and speak truthfully, for we are all members of one body.

—Ephesians 4:25 (NIV)

When Isaiah observed that “justice has stumbled in the streets” and “truth is nowhere to be found,” he said, “God was appalled.” At a time of rising vitriol, racism, hate, and violence in the world born of deep economic crisis and global shifts, it is time for the Church to speak out. If we do not, God will be appalled. We feel compelled to raise a prophetic voice challenging the climate of distrust, distortion of truth, and fear, shifting the conversation to our common future. In many nations, the level of anger has crossed a line in terms of civility. Whatever the disagreement about policy or program, this behavior is unacceptable. It represents a spiritual crisis that calls for us to respond by deepening our understanding of God’s call and filling our own deep yearnings for spiritual wholeness, that can empower us to love and show compassion without giving up our responsibility to speak out for justice.

Many parts of the world are facing a deep economic crisis. In 25 of the world’s poorest countries, 50 percent or more of those employed live on less than $1.25 per day. More and more people in the United States are learning the harsh realities of job loss, reduction of work hours, bankruptcies, lack of affordable health care resources, foreclosures, predatory lending, declining wages, and budget cuts for education and critical social programs. In the United States, overall unemployment rates in February 2011 were 8.9 percent but were 11.6 percent and 15.3 percent for Latinos and African Americans respectively. We recognize that there is cause for anger among all economic and social groups. However, we are alarmed by the climate of hate in public discourse in the United States that has emerged in the wake of these difficult economic realities. We challenge the misdirection of anger toward the most vulnerable, for all are impacted by these crises.

As Christians we are called to be models of compassion. The United Methodist Social Principles affirm “all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. ... We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate and violence against groups or persons based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or economic status” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, ¶162*), and “The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. 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” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, ¶164B*). The Charter for Racial Justice states that “all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God...that racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ...that we must work toward a world in which each person’s value is respected and nurtured.”

We remember our roots in speaking out for justice. Methodist women organized against lynching in the 1930s. The Church spoke out boldly during the 1960s in support of the civil rights movement. In South Africa and the United States, Methodists were strong in the opposition to apartheid. We spoke boldly for peace and reunification of Korea. In the 1980s we called for an end to United States government funding of paramilitary groups in Central America. When the United States began bombing Afghanistan in 2003, we called for an end to the bombing as well as for long-term support for the United Nations and international human rights. We continue to speak out in support of migrants and immigrants who are demonized and criminalized in many countries.

We do not want God to be appalled. We confess that we have not always behaved well as a Church. We have violated one another and acknowledge the need to reexamine our own behavior in following our impulse to first protect our own needs and our own security. It is time to act boldly, and with God’s grace truth will be found and we will know justice.

We call on the Church—individuals, congregations, conferences, boards and agencies, clergy, and laity—to enter into dialogue and action, speaking out for compassion and against hate. A faithful dialogue requires the courage to speak up without misusing privilege and power. This will include:
**Church and Society Committee A**

- Redefining compassion as the process of inviting and sustaining faith in full dialogue.
- Acknowledging the wholeness of the human family by staying in community with those with whom we disagree and embracing both patience and humility.
- Committing to a lifelong journey of personal and collective discipline.
- Committing to listening attentively, respectfully, and never using dialogue as an excuse for talk and no action or to mask dishonesty.

We call on the Church at all levels to create sacred spaces for common prayer and community discussion as an invitation to reconciliation to convene conversations in family gatherings, churches, communities, and the political arena about current realities, fears, and the need for faith-filled compassionate response.

We call on conferences, boards, and agencies to use resources in the global Church to share models and strategies for faithful dialogue and to intentionally practice words and attitudes that will help us find common ground.

**Footnotes:**

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20062-CA-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin M. - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

**Drop the I-Word**

WHEREAS, the use of the term “illegals” (the I-word) when referring to people dehumanizes and divides communities, contributing to punitive and discriminatory actions aimed primarily at immigrants and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the racially derogatory I-word endangers basic human rights including the presumption of innocence and the right to due process; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Scripture reminds us of the inherent worth and value of all people; and, the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church “deprecate acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race” ; and

WHEREAS, as people of faith, we honor the diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds reflected in the body of Christ and understand that immigrant rights are often framed within a hateful and hostile discourse in media, government and the church; and

WHEREAS, certain racially derogatory language used in media, political discourse and other institutional settings has historically fostered harmful actions including racial profiling practices, hate crimes and violence;

Therefore, be it resolved, that as a denomination we:

1. Ask United Methodists to commit in both written and verbal communication that no child of God is “illegal”;

2. Strongly encourage local churches, annual conferences, general agencies, campus ministries, and any other place where the United Methodist Church has a witness to expand awareness within the church and communities the negative racial impacts of calling people “illegals”;

3. Continue to affirm the human rights and dignity of all persons regardless of their nationality or legal status;

4. Call on United Methodists to strongly denounce xenophobic and racist language used to describe human beings;

Therefore, be it further resolved, that United Methodist publications refrain from using the word “illegals” when referring to people and instead use the term undocumented or non-citizen.

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20067-CA-R9999; Hawkins, Erin M. - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

**Racial Profiling in the USA**

WHEREAS, racial profiling is a local/federal government activity directed at people based solely on race and has been a concern of numerous civil rights organizations and The United Methodist Church for several decades; and

WHEREAS, the insidious practice of racial profiling by law enforcement agencies around the country is once again on the rise; and the most current study by Amnesty International USA (2007), Threat and Humiliation: Racial Profiling, National Security, and Human Rights in the United States, states that “racial profiling is so pervasive that it has impacted nearly 32
WHEREAS, racial profiling is a violation of the respect for human rights, an abhorrent manifestation of racism, and violation of the moral standard of the United States and the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS Arizona Senate Bill 1070 was signed into law and other copycat legislation is pending; and if federal court challenges fail, it would give local law enforcement the right to arrest anyone they suspect is in the country illegally which violates the equal protection clause in the U.S. Constitution; and

WHEREAS, racial profiling threatens the safety of both its citizens and immigrants;

Therefore, we call on our Council of Bishops to denounce through an official communication to the President of the United States of America, members of the United States Congress, the United States Attorney General and our local churches that racial profiling as an unacceptable, unjust and an evil reality contrary to United Methodist principles and needs to be eliminated from law enforcement practices; and

We further call on The United Methodist Church, its members, boards and agencies and Council of Bishops to support legislation enacting comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship for persons living in the United States without documentation, protecting the most vulnerable in our society; and

We specifically call on the Council of Bishops, our annual conferences and members of local churches to contact their members of Congress urging that they would prioritize and enact End Racial Profiling legislation allocating sufficient funds for its vigorous enforcement so as to:

a. Ensure a federal prohibition against racial profiling.

b. Ensure retraining of law enforcement officials on how to discontinue and prevent the use of racial profiling, and

c. Ensure law enforcement agencies are held accountable for their continued use of racial profiling.

THEREFORE finally, we call on The United Methodist Church through its annual conferences, districts and local churches and under the leadership of the General Board of Church and Society and the General Commission on Religion and Race, in coordination with the General Board of Global Ministries and the Women’s Division, to be proactive in educating the constituency about racial profiling and establish networks of cooperation with criminal justice and law enforcement agencies.

Petition Number: 20125-CA-R9999-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Call for Civility

A Call for Civility in Public Discourse

All too often public discourse on political and social issues has devolved into name calling, personal attacks, demonization of vulnerable groups, and a general dehumanization towards others. This often lends itself to acts of violence against individuals and groups. Inflammatory statements, often uttered in the heat of debate, lead only to continued deterioration of civility, further impeding finding solutions to the complex issues facing our world. As the Council of Bishops emphasized in its “Beloved Community” statement: “Hateful rhetoric and escalating violence “diminish life for the victims, the perpetrators, and the total community. They are ultimately attacks on the sacredness of God-given life” (November 5, 2010).

Regrettably, these same patterns of public discourse have also been found among the community of believers, even among United Methodists. While never yielding in his commitment to truth, Jesus modeled a patient, welcoming love for even those who disagreed vehemently with him. The apostle Paul reminded the divided Corinthians that “the body of Christ is not one member, but many” (1 Corinthians 12:14), and their greatest calling is to love (1 Corinthians 13). The false accusations and personal attacks of his critics did not deter Jesus’ call to proclaim and live out God’s unconditional love for the world. In staying committed to his mission, Jesus’ love transformed the world.

In this call to tone down the heated rhetoric among politicians and commentators in the media, we, as Christians, must model respect in our civil discourse with one another. We are called to exhibit a “perfect love that drives out all fear” (1 John 4:18). We will be known as disciples of Jesus by our love for one another (John 13:35).

Public discourse that dehumanizes others, especially vulnerable groups, must end. Unfounded accusations, misleading charges, and personal attacks have no place in the words of leaders in the church or in society. Positions of leadership come with great responsibility. Accountability without exhortation is like instruction without empathy, it is repressive.

Our prophetic call to our elected leaders to put away dehumanizing rhetoric must also be lived out in the
Caring for Victims of Crime

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus emphasizes the importance of caring for victims of crime. The Samaritan’s lovingly generous care specifically addresses the needs of the man robbed, beaten and left for dead: The Samaritan personally bandages the victim’s wounds; shares his own wine and oil for healing; shares his own animal so that the beaten man can ride to an inn; stays with the victim and cares for him during the night; and then covers all the victim’s expenses while promising to return to check on him. Jesus says the Samaritan’s outpouring of mercy on the victim defines a neighbor. For us to be neighbors today means that we must follow the Good Samaritan’s example. We, too, must care for victims of crime.

Many people are crime victims. They and their families suffer shock and a sense of hopelessness. In addition to financial loss, a spiritual and emotional trauma ensues often accompanied by a lack of support and direction. Many victims feel frustrated because there often seems to be no provision for them to be heard. Their injuries are not redressed, and they are not always notified of court procedures. Victims should have a greater voice within the criminal justice system.

The United Methodist Church believes in healing through the ministries of restorative justice. As stated in our Social Principles: “Restorative justice grows out of biblical authority, which emphasizes a right relationship with God, self, and community. When such relationships are violated or broken through crime, opportunities are created to make things right” ([164H, 2008 Book of Discipline].

Making restitution to victimized persons is at the heart of restorative justice. Judges and other criminal-justice officials are urged to consider this to help make victims of crime as financially whole again as possible when appropriate.

Strategic ways exist for United Methodist congregations to effectively live out Jesus’ call to be a neighbor to victims of crime. These include:

- prayers for the healing of victims of crime and their families;
- funeral assistance;
- groups to care for the crime victim;
- participation in support of and utilization of advocacy groups for victims of crime;
- referral to individual counselors and support groups that help crime victims;
- space for crime-victim support groups to meet;
- helping the victim understand how the criminal-justice system works;
- transportation to and from court;
- child care for young children while the victim is in court;
- good writers to help prepare a victim’s impact statement; and
- financial aid to help with monetary losses or income losses that occur from missed work.

Congregations can advocate for the rights of crime victims. Victims of crime should be informed that these include the right:

- to participate and be heard at all phases of the criminal justice process;
- to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect by criminal justice and church officials;
- to be notified about the criminal case disposition;
- to discloseable information about the case; and
- to request compensation that includes state victims compensation, restitution in the courts and paroling authorities, and civil-justice tort claims.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church calls for:

- its congregations to embrace and care for victims of crimes by identifying leaders and necessary resources, both within the congregation and the local community;
- pastors and congregations to study the biblical basis of restorative justice and discuss how they might engage in restorative-justice ministries. Resources for this study include “Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime & Justice” by Howard Zehr. “Ambassadors of Reconciliation: New Testament Reflections on

- the General Board of Church & Society to help develop models of strategic plans for local churches to care for victims of crime; and
- the General Board of Church & Society to advocate for the recognition of the needs and rights of victims of crime.

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church believes in healing through the ministries of restorative justice. For us to be neighbors means that we must follow the Good Samaritan’s example. We, too, must care for victims of crime.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20140-CA-R9999-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Enabling Financial Support for Domestic Programs

Delete current resolutions 4111 and 4115 and replace with the following new resolution titled “Enabling Financial Support for Domestic Programs”

The United Methodist Church has a long history of advocacy for causes that support the well-being of all, including women, children and people of all races. Since the earliest of our Social Creeds, we have affirmed these shared values. Our Christian faith has always compelled us to carry special concern for people living in poverty, from Deuteronomy’s commands to care for the widows and orphans to Jesus’ shocking revelation that we are caring for him when we care for the “least of these” in our midst (Matthew 25).

The United Methodist Church also has a long history of teaching and advocating for peace, and for resistance to the violence of war. Our Social Principles clarify that we find war to be “incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ,” as revealed in Matthew 5:38-42 and Isaiah 2:4.

Contemporary challenges in all our nations would be served by governmental spending in areas that address immediate and long-term human need and invest in solutions that overcome inequalities currently based on dividing characteristics like race, socio-economic level and region. Unemployment — particularly among minority ethnic groups — lack of access to educational and educational inequalities among racial and ethnic groups and the poor, and lack of access to health care are all too common tragic consequences of current funding priorities.

Concurrently, alarming portions of resources in many of our nations are devoted to military spending. Everywhere around the world, we caution our nations in their use of national resources for the proliferation of weapons and the preparation for war.

Particularly, we lament the dedication of vast federal funding in the United States to fund ongoing wars and interventions in foreign countries, and the ever-increasing dependence of the industrial sector on military spending. Additionally, we note the continuing practice of funding U.S. military action with deficit spending, a policy that borrows from future generations and threatens long-term stability.

We call upon our governments to reduce spending on militaries. Particularly, we call on the U.S. government to take significant measures in reducing military spending, both on wars and on its ongoing operations.

We call upon our governments to reapportion national revenue diverted from military spending, prioritizing domestic programs that invest in the needs of a nation’s people and invest in the future by providing opportunities and services to those people. We support programs that increase the quality of educational offerings in public school systems, improve access to health care for all, create affordable housing, and support creation of employment opportunities and training programs. In particular, we urge governments to support these domestic programs in ways that will reduce social inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity, background or any other factor.

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church has a long history of advocacy for causes that support the well-being of all, including women, children and people of all races. It also has a long history of teaching and advocating for peace, and for resistance to the violence of war.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20144-CA-R9999-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Economic Exploitation

New Resolution titled “A Faithful Concern About Exploitation in the Economic Marketplace”
Biblical and Theological Foundation

The Bible is consistent in its witness that God desires humans to live together in authentic community: in an economy of abundance in which neighbors love and care for each other and no one lives in scarcity. God created humankind to inhabit the good earth on which God amply supplied the needs of all creatures (Genesis 1). In the Sinai covenant, God commanded the people of Israel to refrain from usury and to care for the most vulnerable among them (Exodus 22:25, Deuteronomy 26:12). Isaiah, Amos, Micah and other prophets warned the people of Israel to honor God by seeking justice for the poor. Jesus Christ taught his followers to treat others as they would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12), and he warned against measuring the abundance of life by possessions (Luke 12:15). The earliest Christian community lived with “all things in common” (Acts 2:44).

In the General Rules, John Wesley warned Methodists against doing harm by greedy or self-indulgent behaviors, including “the giving or taking things on usury,” and “borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them” (United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶103).

Current Concerns

Today’s global economy is premised on credit involving individuals, businesses and institutions that exchange goods and services with the promise of future payment. This credit market has enhanced efficiency and brought many consumer benefits. These markets have also given rise to abusive and predatory practices, however, that challenge the conscience of Christians. Among our most pressing concerns are contemporary financial practices and business models that entrap people in cycles of debt. These practices are exacerbated by lenders employing tactics to exempt themselves from banking regulation and traditional usury laws.

In the United States, these practices include:

- Operations that profit by charging unconscionable rates of interest, often disguising the costs as “fees” rather than “interest,” thereby exempting themselves from financial oversight and effectively extracting very high rates of return at the expense of the borrower. Such operations include Payday Lending, Check Cashing Facilities, Rent-to-Own Businesses, Tax Refund Anticipation Loans, and Car Title Loans.
- Bank and Credit Agency fees that entrap consumers into schedules of penalties that charge the equivalent of interest rates up to 1,000% for “services” such as Overdraft Loans or “Bounce Protection” plans in which consumers are enrolled without knowledge or consent. In addition, consumers are burdened with hidden transfer charges, inappropriately large late fees and sudden-rising interest rates.
- Credit card marketing practices and convoluted contract agreements lack transparency and clarity on full pricing, fees and alterations to the terms of agreement.

Our history of concern for the poor calls us to be attentive to these alternative banking systems that are often the way people living closer to the economic margins find space to participate in our economy. We call our congregations to investigate the current situations in their communities, states and nations. We call our congregations to demand that our systems be regulated in a way that does not profit the rich at the expense of the poor, that benefits both parties involved in the transaction and that has integrity in that it is characterized by honesty, disclosure, equal access and equal power to begin or end the transaction.

We call on United Methodist members, churches, institutions and agencies to adhere to and advocate for the following faithful principles:

- Promoting honesty, clarity, transparency and evenhandedness. All sides should have the same opportunity to understand and negotiate a contract. Kickbacks and fees should be eliminated that distort lender and broker incentives to deal fairly with customers.
- Prohibiting unconscionable rates of interest. Usury caps should be reinstated to address abusive lending.
- Restoring traditional underwriting standards. Lenders have a responsibility to assess whether borrowers can repay.
- Establishing equity in credit across communities. Practices must be ended that particularly burden communities of color or low-income communities.
- Limiting fee-based penalties and business models that depend on consumer over spending and recurrent indebtedness. Penalties against repaying debts early should be eliminated.
- Requiring that the interest and fees charged on a loan are reasonable and proportional to the services rendered.
- Ensuring that banks and credit unions provide responsible financial products in their communities.
- Establishing financial institutions that adhere to these principles in poor neighborhoods and other underserved communities.

Rationale:

Today’s credit market has enhanced efficiency and brought many consumer benefits, but they have also given rise to abusive and predatory practices that entrap people in cycles of debt. These practices are exacerbated...
by lenders employing tactics to exempt themselves from banking regulation and traditional usury laws.

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20148-CA-R9999-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Just Tax Structures**

Delete current Resolutions 4112 and 4115 and replace with the following:

A Call for Just Tax Structures

Biblical and Theological Foundation

The Law of Moses expresses God’s expectation that society should care for its most vulnerable members both by refraining from exploiting them and by providing for their basic needs. The prophet Amos reminds the covenant community of God’s expectations and rebukes his society for oppressing, trampling, and even crushing the poor and needy (Amos 2:6-8, 4:1, and 8:4-6). Amos gives voice to God’s demand for just and equitable taxation as he cries out: “Because you trample on the poor and take from them the levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone ... you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe and push aside the needy in the gate” (Amos 5:11-12).

In today’s world, we recognize and affirm the vital role of governments in ordering society and enabling us to do together that which none of us could do alone. Tax laws are necessary to provide adequate revenue that supports our shared commitment to a just society, including the maintenance of a safety net of services and opportunities for those most in need. Unfortunately, current tax structures often have perpetuated rather than addressed economic injustices and have failed to provide sufficient revenue for the health, safety, educational and welfare needs of our communities.

Current Concerns:

The gap between the rich and poor continues to widen worldwide. In the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the income gap between the richest and poorest is at its widest ever. The richest 400 taxpayers have a combined income that exceeded the combined income of the nations of Botswana, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda — a total of 161 million people who live on an average annual income of $350.

As our Companion Litany to the Social Creed states: “God cries with the masses of starving people, despises growing disparity between rich and poor ... and so shall we.”

The challenges of establishing fair and just tax systems are global. While some nations offer stronger social safety nets funded through more equitable tax systems, everywhere the forces of power and privilege seek to change structures to their benefit, oftentimes at the expense of our poorest and most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

Given the clear injustice of many tax structures, and growing disparity between rich and poor, we affirm the need to reform these tax structures. Our Social Principles state our support for “efforts to revise tax structures and to eliminate governmental support programs that now benefit the wealthy at the expense of other persons” (¶163).

Principles for Tax Reform:

The United Methodist Church calls for changes to current tax systems to better embody the following faithful principles:

Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable: All tax decisions must be judged by their impact on children, low-income families, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations.

Community: Systems should strengthen and uphold values of our common life together. Any nation’s well-being is dependent on that of all its members. Tax and revenue systems enable governments to provide for the needs of the common good.

Justice: Each government should ensure that both the burdens and the benefits of a nation’s common life are shared equitably and proportionally among its citizens. Laws should address inequalities not institutionalize them.

Rationale:

Governments should ensure that both the burdens and benefits of a nation’s common life are shared equitably and proportionally among its citizens by eliminating laws that institutionalize inequalities.

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20528-CA-R9999-G; Irvin, Dianne - Peoria, AZ, USA.

**Sovereign Israeli Borders**

Add new resolution:

As members of the body of Christ, United Methodists stand with the sovereign nation of Israel as
Church and Society Committee A

she autonomously decides what borders she must maintain in order to insure her own existence.

In as much as God declares his sovereignty over all nations and men:

In as much as God declared Israel to become a great nation with her boundaries written in our Holy Scriptures, the Bible:

In as much as God gave the land of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an everlasting possession;

In as much as Christ will return as the Messiah, our blessed hope, to rule and reign from the throne of David in Jerusalem, Israel;

In as much as God has warned all to stand by Israel into eternity;

In as much as the body cannot be separated from its roots;

In as much as our grafted inheritance is taken from the same source of the promise as that of Israel;

In as much as the Son died that all should exist that they might come to choose his final reign as Lord and King;

In as much as we are the vessels of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit:

United Methodists stand firm with Israel’s self-determination in maintaining borders that will help to ensure her continued existence including those borders initially outlined when she became an independent State as well as those borders maintained as a result of aggression by others; and we stand ready to speak out on behalf of Israel’s sovereign right to negotiate any return of land gained in the defense of aggression by anyone who would seek to destroy her.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20798-CA-R9999-G; Peacock, Rich - Waterford, MI, USA.

Peace Economy

Create a Worldwide Peace Economy

The United Methodist Church supports a Peace Economy for the United States and every country on planet earth.

We recognize as The Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower stated, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children...This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.”

We remember the prophesy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “When a nation continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift, it is approaching spiritual death.”

We understand the preaching of this truth by Jesus, who is called the Prince of Peace. “...all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52b)

Therefore,

1 - We call upon world leaders to order a thorough review of weapons systems and other military spending programs with the objective of bringing about at least a 25% reduction in financial expenditures and the number of armed forces without cuts that harm veterans and their families.

2 - We call upon world leaders to reinvest those financial resources, which derive from taxes and borrowing, in societal improvement programs such as food security, health care, clean energy, housing, education, and the development of infrastructure.

3 - We call upon the leaders of our congregations such as Lay Leaders to advocate for such a Peace Economy as they lead their congregations.

4 - We call upon congregations to network with local peace, environmental, health care, educators, and other groups to lobby their local and national leaders to create a Peace Economy.

5 - We request that District Superintendents ask for a report during their Charge Conferences describing the implementation of this resolution.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20799-CA-R9999-G; Peacock, Rich - Waterford, MI, USA.

End War in Afghanistan

End the War in Afghanistan

We see that the U.S. Congressional Resolution, which authorized President Bush to use all necessary and appropriate force against those whom he deemed planned, authorized, committed, or aided the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks within the United States, has been fulfilled. The mission is over.

We are heart broken by the deaths of thousands of people from many nations over the last ten years in
Afghanistan. We recognize the grief caused by death, displacement, and the destruction of property.

We are aware of the courage of women and men of many nations who have served in as diplomats, development workers, and soldiers in the belief they could help bring about stability, freedom, and democracy in Afghanistan. We are concerned about the mental and spiritual health of the veterans of the war and advocate for increased resources in serving veterans and their families.

We have learned that the best way to deal with al Qaeda is not by war making, but instead by good intelligence, good police work, sustained diplomacy, and development.

We acknowledge that with al Qaeda largely displaced from Afghanistan, there is no real progress towards a safer world that justifies the presence of thousands of foreign troops and the expenditure of billions of dollars for war making in Afghanistan. A rational expenditure of financial and military assets calls for a huge decrease in waging war in Afghanistan.

We realize that the use of military troops to wage war in Afghanistan is not morally right because war was not a last resort, and there were viable alternatives. The probability of a military triumph was so low as to make the war morally wrong.

We are convinced that war falls short of God’s will for creating peace with justice. We witness that the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus demonstrates that war is incompatible with his lifestyle and counsel. We have learned again that those who take up the sword experience blowback.

We know that more jobs per tax dollar can and should be created in infrastructure construction, clean energy, education, and healthcare than by spending on war in Afghanistan.

Therefore,

1 - The United Methodist Church champions the safe and responsible withdrawal from Afghanistan of the combat troops of the United States and N.A.T.O. by the end of 2012.

2 - We advocate for the United Nations to work to insure the universal rights of everyone in Afghanistan. The United States should be the chief funder of such work as a token of reparations.

3 - We advocate for regional diplomacy and development in Afghanistan and its neighborhood.

4 - We advocate for research to discern the factors that led to war by the U.S. in Afghanistan with the goal of preventing future unjustified and immoral wars.

5 - We invite all clergy and lay leaders in our congregations to share this resolution with their congregations and lobby for its recommendations in their respective governments in 2012 and subsequent years.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20829-CA-R9999-G; Terwilliger, Mark - Beach Lake, PA, USA.

Eating Habits

Whereas The United Methodist Church’s four areas of focus for 2009-12 include “engaging in ministry with the poor” and “stamping out killer diseases of poverty by improving health globally”, and

Whereas United Methodist employees are engaged in the Virgin HealthMiles program that encourages exercise and better health, and

Whereas many health problems are brought on by poor food choices and eating habits, and

Whereas poor health requires a greater investment of time and money in medical care, leaving less time and money for ministry, and

Whereas the increased cost of food-related health care problems ultimately results in a greater cost to local churches, and

Whereas we United Methodists have inherited a strong legacy of ministries connecting food, health, social justice and economic justice.

Therefore be it resolved that United Methodists intentionally and continually examine their purchasing and eating habits in light of their own health and the social and economic well being of others.

Be it further resolved that we make positive changes based on our findings and become advocates, in our local churches, for food purchases and eating habits that are beneficial, and do no harm, to consumer and producer alike.

Rationale:

Making better food choices resulting in healthier bodies is a better witness to others, results in more time and resources devoted to ministry instead of addressing self-inflicted health concerns, is a church-wide concern and has ecological and economic justice consequences.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20865-CA-R9999-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.
Interfaith Advocacy in Support of Israel/Palestine Peace

WHEREAS, it is the position of The United Methodist Church that all United Methodists in the U.S. should reach out to local synagogues, mosques, and Christian faith groups by engaging in interfaith and ecumenical dialogue on how to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land (Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land; The United Methodist 2008 Book of Resolutions, pg 832), and

WHEREAS, in order to be productive, any such interfaith and ecumenical dialogue designed to lead to action relating to any specific advocacy position must take place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, and

WHEREAS, establishing such mutual understanding and trust can, at times, appear almost unattainable in as much as various constituencies, even within the United Methodist Church as well as within other faith groups, support such a wide range of specific and often divergent advocacy steps designed to bring about a just peace in Israel/Palestine, and

WHEREAS, mutual understanding and trust can be established, however, when all parties recognize that from a moral and ethical standpoint, there is a single universal standard of human rights that applies to all stake holders in every situation, and

WHEREAS, interfaith and/or ecumenical dialogue on how best to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land can be most productive when it engages particular committees, task forces, or boards within faith communities that are committed to this universal standard of human rights and that are open to the principal of supporting an end to military aid to any country and/or group that commits human rights abuses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, in order to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land, the 2012 General Conference supports the efforts of existing or newly formed Conference-wide and/or locally based United Methodist and/or interfaith or ecumenical committees, task forces, boards or agencies that are committed to engaging in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue leading to achieving common goals relating to Israel/Palestine. Such goals to include the recognition of a single universal standard of human rights that applies to all stake holders and support for an end of military aid by any country, including the United States, to those parties in the conflict that commit human rights abuses.

It is the position of The United Methodist Church that all United Methodists in the U.S. should reach out to local synagogues, mosques, and Christian faith groups by engaging in interfaith and ecumenical dialogue on how to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land. In order to be productive, any such interfaith and ecumenical dialogue designed to lead to action relating to any specific advocacy position must take place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust.

Establishing such mutual understanding and trust can, at times, appear unattainable in as much as various constituencies, even within the United Methodist Church as well as within other faith groups, support such a wide range of specific and often divergent advocacy steps designed to bring about a just peace in Israel/Palestine.

Mutual understanding and trust can be established, however, when all parties recognize that, from a moral and ethical standpoint, there is a single universal standard of human rights that applies to all stake holders in every situation. Interfaith and/or ecumenical dialogue on how best to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land can be most productive when it engages particular committees, task forces, or boards within faith communities that are committed to this universal standard of human rights and that are open to the principal of supporting an end to military aid to any country and/or group that commits human rights abuses.

In order to promote justice and peace in the Holy Land, the 2012 General Conference supports the efforts of existing or newly formed locally based United Methodist and/or interfaith or ecumenical committees, task forces, boards or agencies that are committed to engaging in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue leading to achieving common goals relating to Israel/Palestine. Such goals to include the recognition of a single universal standard of human rights that applies to all stake holders and support for an end of military aid by any country, including the United States, to those parties in the conflict that commit human rights abuses.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20903-CA-R9999; Alegria, Raul, USA for Methodists Associated to Represent the Cause of Hispanic Americans.

DREAM Act

Whereas for generations workers and their young children have come to the US without authorization to
satisfied the labor needs of our nation contributing to its economic development, and,

Whereas, these children are being penalized by increased college tuition and are denied the opportunity to practice their profession because of their immigration status, and

Whereas, the Federal DREAM Act, first introduced in Congress in 2001, is a bi-partisan legislation, that would open the possibility of higher Education, as well as a conditional pathway to US citizenship, for undocumented students who were brought to the US as children (before their 16 birth date), and who are now caught in a situation that is not of their own making. The Act would require such students, sometimes known as “The Dreamers”, to complete a college degree or two years of military service in order to be granted temporary residency and then be eligible to apply for US citizenship.

Therefore, we, the General Conference of the UMC, urge the US Congress to adopt the DREAM Act and provide for these children, who have lived most their lives in this country, access to educational opportunities and full participation in the life of the only nation they have known, and identify with, the US.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20904-CA-R9999; Alegria, Raul, USA for Methodists Associated to Represent the Cause of Hispanic Americans.

Faithfulness in Response to Critical Needs

We express our outmost concern for the passage of anti-immigrant laws, which adversely affect the wellbeing of citizens and residents of this country as they engage in providing humanitarian aid to undocumented persons in several States.

The United Methodist Church is an open door church, where every person is invited to come in, get closer to God and become a part of a community of faith. That community is totally committed to attaining the good for all people through social and spiritual transformation. Any policies and laws attempting to limit or restrain the church’s work of responding to the needs of others, is contrary to its most fundamental beliefs as stated in the Gospel (John 3:16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so whosoever believes in him regardless of color of skin or legal immigrant status shall not perish but have eternal life. Similarly, the Parable of the Good Samaritan incites us, as Christians, to do good to all people irrespective of their place of origin.

We want to issue a call to the United Methodist Church and all other members of the Christian community to renew their commitment and strengthen their resolve to be faithful to respond to the needs of others, particularly as we face laws, whose primary intent is to discourage Christians from fulfilling their Mission; to love and help the neighbor. We remember when the Apostles were faced by similar circumstances after the authorities wanted to impede the fulfillment of their mission, they firmly declared in Acts 5:29: It is necessary to obey God before man; hence the Christian mandate to engage in civil disobedience when laws and policies deem to be unjust.

We urge the General Conference of the United Methodist Church to request the U.S. Federal Government to ensure the protection of the Freedom of Religion in the United States by stopping the promulgation of laws that penalize church members for helping immigrants in need; actions that aside from being congruent with Christian faith, are vivid examples of God’s love for every person.

At the same time, we ask the various governmental entities in every community to respect, at all times, the places of worship as well as all religious activities within and outside our sanctuaries or other church property.

We bid the United States government to give due legislative recognition to the legal right of every human being to exercise his/her faith without the fear of persecution, particularly while coming together to give public expression of their faith.

R9999.

Petition Number: 21064-CA-R9999-G; Sander, Ellen Kay - Newburgh, IN, USA.

Standing Against Anti-Semitism

Whereas, acts of Anti-Semitism and violence against Jewish persons are on the rise around the world.

And whereas “Replacement Theology” has been used to justify both the Holocaust and modern anti-Semitism.

Be it resolved that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church:

- Calls on all United Methodists to stand up against every form of Anti-Semitism.
- Disavows any theology that maintains that God has rejected Jewish people or that Jewish people are cursed as “Christ-killers”.
Further disavows the idea that God’s covenant promises to Jewish people have been invalidated or transferred to the Church.

Recognizes that gentile believers are blessed by being grafted into the root of the Jewish faith. (Romans 11) For this reason Christians should love Jewish people.

Encourages pastors to teach and preach on the Jewish roots of our faith.

Urges United Methodist Churches to work with Jewish congregations in their communities on common causes.

Encourages United Methodist Churches to engage in interfaith dialog with their Jewish neighbors.

Rationale:
According to the US State Department report on International Religious Freedom published on September 13, 2011 acts of Anti-Semitism and violence against Jewish persons are on the rise around the world. United Methodists need to take a stand against anti-Semitism in every form.

R9999.

Petition Number: 21065-CA-R9999-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA. 1 similar petition.

Statement on Hamas

Add this new resolution to the Book of Resolutions:

**Statement on Hamas**

WHEREAS, Hamas has been widely classified as a terrorist organization; and

WHEREAS, Hamas is responsible for numerous acts of unjustified and murderous violence against Israelis, political rivals in the Fatah faction, and Palestinians suspected of collaboration with Israeli authorities; and

WHEREAS, the leaders of Hamas continue to refuse to recognize Israel’s right to exist; and

WHEREAS, the Hamas Charter calls for Islam to obliterare Israel (Hamas Charter, 1988); and

WHEREAS, since 2006 Hamas has been part of the ruling Palestinian government.

Therefore, be it resolved, that we call on the leaders of Hamas to immediately recognize Israel’s right to exist, renounce violence, and reform their charter (which calls for the destruction of Israel); and

Be it further resolved, that we call upon the leaders of the Palestinian Authority to seek a peaceful resolution to conflict through direct negotiations with Israel; and

Be it further resolved, that we affirm Israel’s non-negotiable right to exist within secure borders and to use appropriate means to protect its citizens from terrorism as; and

Be it further resolved, that we re-affirm our commitment to human rights, justice, and self-determination for all people in the region.

Rationale:
The refusal of Hamas to recognize Israel and renounce terrorism is a major impediment to peace, justice, and human rights in the Middle East.

R9999.

Petition Number: 21069-CA-R9999-G; Hughes, Mary Elizabeth - Morganfield, KY, USA.

Supporting Israel

Whereas Jerusalem was established forever for the Jewish Nation (Genesis 17:7-10, Land Genesis 15:18, 2 Samuel 7:13, Psalm 76:2, Psalm 48:8)

WHEREAS God made an unconditional Covenant and promises to Israel (Genesis 12:1-3, 17:7-10, 15:8, 26:1-5, 28:10-15, 35:12, Jeremiah, 31:31-34, 2 Samuel 7:16, Psalm 105:7-15.)

WHEREAS God’s covenant promise to bring children of Israel back to their land has been fulfilled and is being fulfilled (Amos 9:14-15, Isaiah 11:11-12, 43:5-6, Zechariah 8:7-8, Zephaniah 3:14-20, Ezekiel 20:40-42, 37:12-14, Joel 3:1-2, 6-7, 20-21).

WHEREAS Israel is the only nation that has God’s promise to endure forever (Jeremiah 30:11).

WHEREAS out of Zion comes salvation (Romans 11:25-26).

WHEREAS Gentiles believers are grafted into the Jewish root which is our foundation (Romans 11:16-18) and Jesus came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. (Matthew 5:17).

WHEREAS God calls Gentle Christians to show love and mercy to unsaved Jews (Romans 11:31).

WHEREAS in the future Jerusalem is to be the center of worship for the entire world (Zechariah 14:16, Isaiah 60:11-12, Micah 4:2).

WHEREAS God calls for all to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and there can be no peace Jerusalem divided between nations who do not worship the same God. (Judaism & Christianity do but Islam does not. This is the crux of the conflict and will not be settled by man’s reason. Love and pray for those in
Islam to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior as He died for us all. This can only be accomplished through the Holy Spirit.

Be it resolved that The United Methodist Church will support the right of Israel to exist and the right of Israel to have Jerusalem as its capital.

Be it further resolved that The United Methodist Church will call upon all governments to do the same.

Rationale:
Many Scriptures teach us that God has a special covenant relationship with Israel.
Proposed Amendments to the Book of Discipline

¶161.

Petition Number: 20061-CB-¶161; Hawkins, Erin M. - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Culture and Identity

Add a new sub-paragraph after ¶161. A

B) Culture and Identity

We believe that our primary identity is as children of God. With that identity comes societal and cultural constructions that have both positive and negative impacts on humanity and the Church. Cultural identity is evolving through history, traditions and experiences. The Church seeks to fully embrace and nurture cultural formation and competency as a means to be fully one body, expressed in multiple ways. Each of us has multiple identities of equal value that intersect to form our complete self. We affirm that no identity or culture has more legitimacy than any other. We call the Church to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities. Through relationships within and among cultures we are called to and have the responsibility for learning from each other showing mutual respect for our differences and similarities as we experience the diversity of perspectives and viewpoints.

Rationale:

Human diversity is the signature of God. While our primary identity is as children of God, multiple realities, including culture, form our identity. Everyone is a part of many cultural identity groups which shape values, perception, and behavior. Each culture that shapes a person’s identity is important and should be...

¶161.

Petition Number: 20154-CB-¶161-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Pornography

Add new § to ¶ 161 as follows:

Pornography

Throughout the Bible, themes highlight the imperfect nature of humanity and the hope for redemption as God’s children held in God’s loving arms. Old Testament laws of purity invite an understanding of our body created in God’s image and accountable to God through right relationship. Sexual images pervade all human cultures. Some images celebrate the goodness of God’s created universe. Others exploit that creation to destructive ends. We affirm the goodness of human sexuality and its positive depiction in art, literature and education. We deplore, however, images that distort this goodness and injure healthy sexual relationships.

Pornography is explicit material intended primarily for sexual arousal. It often portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation or degradation. Most pornography sexually exploits and objectifies women and victimizes children. It alters behavior in a dysfunctional manner. Addiction to pornography ruins lives, careers and relationships.

We oppose all forms of pornography. Furthermore, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is abhorrent. Resources and strategies to eradicate pornography, especially child pornography, should have high priority.

The church should be a place of transformation and healing for all persons adversely affected by pornography. Churches should provide a place for open, transparent conversation and education around sexuality, addiction and sexual ethics. Congregations are encouraged to enact policies that send a clear message of our opposition to pornography and commitment to safe environments for everyone. We believe that people can be rehabilitated and should have the opportunity to receive treatment. Therefore, we encourage education and promotion of resources that provide a pathway to recovery.

Rationale:

We oppose all forms of pornography because addiction to it ruins lives, careers and relationships. Furthermore, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is abhorrent. Resources and strategies to eradicate pornography, especially child pornography, should have high priority.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20268-CB-¶161-G; Burton, M. Garlinda - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.
Pornography

Add new § to ¶ 161 as follows:

**Pornography**

Throughout the Bible, themes highlight the imperfect nature of humanity and the hope for redemption as God’s children held in God’s loving arms. Old Testament laws of purity invite an understanding of our body created in God’s image and accountable to God through right relationship.

Sexual images pervade all human cultures. Some images celebrate the goodness of human sexuality and its positive depiction in art, literature, and education. We deplore, however, images that distort this goodness and injure healthy sexual relationships. Societies are inundated with inappropriate, sexualized images in advertisements, entertainment, and other media.

Pornography is sexually explicit material that portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation for the purpose of sexual arousal. Most pornography sexually exploits and objectifies women and victimizes children. It alters behavior in a dysfunctional manner. Addiction to pornography ruins lives, careers and relationships.

We oppose all forms of pornography. Furthermore, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is abhorrent. Resources and strategies to eradicate pornography, especially child pornography, should have high priority.

The church should be a place of transformation and healing for all persons adversely affected by pornography. Churches should provide places for open, transparent conversation and education around sexuality, addiction and sexual ethics. Congregations are encouraged to enact policies that send a clear message of our opposition to pornography and commitment to safe environments for everyone. We believe that people can be rehabilitated and should have the opportunity to receive treatment. Therefore, we encourage education and promotion of resources that provide a pathway to recovery.

**Rationale:**

This is nearly identical to legislation proposed by GBCS except that it uses the existing definition of pornography found in BOR 2008, p. 149. Pornography is notoriously difficult to define, so we must define what it is about pornography that we find objectionable: violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, and degradation.

** ¶ 161.**

Petition Number: 20531-CB-¶161-G; Van Namee, Gordon D. - Havana, FL, USA.

**Supporting Pregnant Women**

Add new paragraph to Book of Discipline following ¶ 161:

¶ 161 K: It is recognized that the United Methodist Church understands the need to approach the area of supporting women in the process of pregnancy with Christian love and compassion. For this purpose each local church shall develop a plan of ministry for entering this mission field, and that this ministry will be for the declared purpose of offering the love, truth and grace of Christ Jesus to those who are struggling with the contemplation of abortion, to those who have undergone abortion, and to those who are wounded by the choice of a past abortion. This is to be done within the boundaries of our United Methodist General Rules ¶103: “By doing no harm” and “By doing all good”.

**Rationale:**

The Social Principles declare that United Methodists believe “in the sanctity of unborn human life” (¶161.J). This belief is in agreement with Scripture which states that everything is created through Jesus Christ and it is He who has dominion over the purpose of that life (Jn 1:3; Phil 1:6)...

** ¶ 161.**

Petition Number: 20910-CB-¶161-G; Van Namee, Gordon D. - Havana, FL, USA.

**Sexual Assault**

O) Sexual assault is wrong. We affirm the right of all people to live free from such assaults, encourage efforts of law enforcement to prosecute such crimes and condemn rape in any form. It does not matter where the person is, what the person is wearing, whether he or she is intoxicated, if he or she is flirtatious, what the victim’s gender or any other circumstance.

**Rationale:**

Sexual assault is insidious. It is inexcusable for our Church to avoid condemning it. The FBI estimates a woman is raped in the US every two minutes. Rape is used as a political and social engineering tool by governments and religions. It is time to condemn this vicious crime unequivocally.
161.
Petition Number: 20658-CB-¶161.A-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Mothers and Fathers

Amend the second sentence of Discipline ¶161.A as follows:

¶ 161 J) The Family - ... We affirm the importance of loving parents for all children, and we affirm the unique role of both mothers and fathers.

Rationale:
Both mothers and fathers have God-given roles that are very important to children and meriting the church’s affirmation.

161.
Petition Number: 21008-CB-¶161.A-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA.

Mothers and Fathers

Amend ¶ 161.A as follows:

¶ 161. A) The Family—We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity. We affirm the importance of loving parents both caring mothers and caring fathers for all children. We also understand ...

Rationale:
Reinstates, plus the word “caring,” language that was overwhelmingly adopted by the 2004 General Conference, but replaced by a much narrower margin in a 2008 General Conference vote suspiciously scheduled when many African delegates were absent. It is ideal for kids to have healthy models of marriage, womanhood, and manhood.

161.
Petition Number: 21011-CB-¶161.B-G; Myers, Kevin Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual Conference; Jackson, Fredric O. - White Plains, NY, USA for New York Annual Conference. 7 similar petitions.

Marriage Equality

Amend ¶161.B as follows:

B) Marriage—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. 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.

161.
Petition Number: 21012-CB-¶161.B-G; Hermes, Steven E. - Kalispell, MT, USA for Yellowstone Annual Conference. 3 similar petitions.

Eliminate Discriminatory Language

Amend ¶ No. 161B of The Book of Discipline as follows:

B) Marriage - 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 individuals. 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 two individuals.

Rationale:
The characteristic of Inclusiveness is built into our church constitution. The United Methodist Church (UMC) has historically welcomed into membership “all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition” (Article IV, Constitution, Discipline). Moreover, General Conference asserts, “Inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.” [¶139, 2008 Discipline]

161.
Petition Number: 21013-CB-¶161.B-G; Bartlett, Laura Jaquith - Eagle Creek, OR, USA for Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

Marriage Definition

Amend Social Principles II. The Nurturing Community B) Marriage (Para. 161B) 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. 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 two consenting adults.

Rationale:
This action will take a step towards implementing our broken goal of inclusiveness. It is important for our stated policies to be inclusive and non-discriminatory.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21014-CB-¶161.B-G; Fisher, John - South Haven, MI, USA. 1 similar petition.

Marriage Definition
Amend ¶ 161.B as follows:
¶ 161 B) Marriage—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 people who love, and are committed to each other. 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 two people who love, and are committed to each other.

Rationale:
God is moving in our midst, through our courts, and policies, to let us know that the pain and suffering caused by denying loving, caring, faithful partners the rights of spouses, is not morally, nor theologically, supportable. Furthermore, one hundred years ago, the church decided that sex is not just...

¶161.
Petition Number: 21015-CB-¶161.B-G; Shaffer, John J. - Stanwood, WA, USA for Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. 10 similar petitions.

Marriage Definition
Amend ¶ 161.B as follows:

Marriage—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.

Rationale:
Marriage is a sacred commitment because it is God’s gift of love that has brought two people together. Marriage is not a privilege reserved for only one group—heterosexuals. That is discrimination. These changes will eliminate discrimination against same-sex couples, who have equally been given God’s gift of love.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21016-CB-¶161.B-G; Fitzgibbons, Kevin - Olathe, KS, USA.

Marriage Definition
Amend ¶161B as follows:
Marriage—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 people who love, and are committed to each other.

Rationale:
Marriage is a sacred commitment because it is God’s gift of love that has brought two people together. Marriage is not a privilege reserved for only one group—heterosexuals. That is discrimination. These changes will eliminate discrimination against same-sex couples, who have equally been given God’s gift of love.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21028-CB-¶161.B-G; Ryder, Jack E. - LaGrange Park, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference.
Marriage Definition

Amend ¶161B

B) Marriage - 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 individuals. 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 two adult individuals.

Rationale:
The General Conference asserts, “Inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.” [¶ 139, 2008 Discipline]. And Jesus taught “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” Mt. 18:5 Evangelistic love is meant to be wide and inclusive. We follow the example of Jesus: “All Means All”

¶161.
Petition Number: 20681-CB-¶161.C-G; Hester, John W. - Salem, SC, USA.

Remarriage after Divorce

Amend ¶ 161 C as follows:
C) Divorce—God’s plan is for...
Although divorce publicly declares ... The welfare of each child is the most important consideration.
Divorce does not preclude a new marriage. We encourage an intentional commitment...

Rationale:
Jesus Christ our Lord and Head of the Church criticized the religious leaders of his day for their hypocritical manner of applying God’s Law. Jesus never taught against homosexuality nor same-sex marriage. He did teach against remarriage after divorce, and he called it the sin of adultery.
Let us therefore...

¶161.
Petition Number: 20814-CB-¶161.C-G; Robbins, Carol - New York, NY, USA.

Engaging Brokenness

C) Divorce-God’s plan is for lifelong, faithful marriage. The church must be on the forefront of premarital, marital, and postmarital counseling in order to create and preserve strong marriages. “Brokenness” will no longer be used as a vague and broad catch-all reason for divorce. The church’s attempt to preserve marriage needs to be as whole-hearted as its support of the original marriage covenant. The church should offer clear constructive processes for discerning and defining brokenness which hold open the possibility of healing and reconciliation within the marriage. However, when a married couple is estranged ... often part of our current judicial processes.

Clergy divorce creates a special form of upheaval within a church community. Because of this, the superintendent and bishop must be involved in the discernment process in order to better care for the clergy and his/her spouse and the church community.

Rationale:
This petition proposes that the church offer better support for discerning and defining what constitutes “brokenness” in a marriage. To date, the term “brokenness” has been used as a vague catch all for unexplored no fault separations, whereas an open, constructive, engagement with it may prove to be an avenue...

¶161.
Petition Number: 20136-CB-¶161.D-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Human Sexuality

Amend ¶161F) Human Sexuality as follows:
We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.
We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. 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. (See Judicial Council Decision 702.)

As a part of the Body of Christ, we affirm all people are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We affirm human sexuality as God’s good gift to all persons. We affirm it as an intrinsic part of our personhood, and as a rich, complex element of human life.

Our faith tradition spells out the importance of a comprehensive approach to human sexuality that relies on an examination of scriptural principles, an application of the tenets of Wesleyan theology, and a prophetic witness to God’s grace in a broken world. We believe that each of these sources mandates welcome to all God’s people within the life of the church.

We call all people to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift of human sexuality. We reject all forms of commercialization, abuse and exploitation of relationships merely for sexual gratification.

As a denomination, we are conflicted regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Regardless of deeply held personal positions by faithful people, in naming the truth of our differences we seek to dissolve the wall of hostility between us and to be the Body of Christ together. The apostle Paul confirms this when proclaiming, “As it is, there are many members, yet one body.” While recognizing the inevitable differences of opinion, we pray for compassion in the midst of differing perspectives. As disciples of Jesus Christ transforming the world, we commit ourselves to continued study, prayer, and holy conferencing, while seeking understanding in love.

We commit our life together to the eradication of homophobia and heterosexism. We implore church members, clergy and congregations not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members or their families, and friends.

All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence and all forms of discrimination. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for effective protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children.

We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons. We are called to create safe spaces for people, young and old, to discuss concerns related to human sexuality and healthy human relationships. We support the provision of age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education for children, youths, and adults. All persons deserve the ministry of the church in their struggle for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self.

Rationale:

We affirm all people are of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We affirm human sexuality as God’s good gift to all persons. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20612-CB-¶161.E-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

God’s Gift of Male and Female

Add to the end of ¶ 161.E: We affirm God’s gift of male and female and grieve the anguish leading to gender confusion and attempts at gender change. Loving and Godly counsel should emphasize the sacredness of the human body.

Rationale:

The church must help persons struggling with gender confusion with Godly counsel affirming their fully personhood and the sacredness of God’s gift of male and female.

¶161.

Petition Number: 21009-CB-¶161.E-G; Lobacz, Steve, IL, USA.

Inclusiveness of Gender Identity

Amend ¶161E as follows:

E) Women and Men Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation – We affirm with Scripture
humanity of male and female, both having equal worth in the eyes of God. We are of equal worth in the eyes of God. We reject the erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another, that one gender must strive against another, and that members of one gender may receive love, power, and esteem only at the expense of another. We especially reject the idea that God made individuals as incomplete fragments, made whole only in union with another. We call upon women and men alike all people to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete and to respect the wholeness of others. We seek for every individual opportunities and freedom to love and be loved, to seek and receive justice, and to practice ethical self-determination. We understand our gender diversity to be a gift from God, intended to add to the rich variety of human experience and perspective; and we guard against attitudes and traditions that would use this good gift to leave members of one sex gender identity more vulnerable in relationships than members of another.

Rationale:

The characteristic of Inclusiveness is built into our church constitution. The United Methodist Church has historically welcomed into membership “all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition” (Article IV, Constitution, Discipline). Moreover, General Conference asserts, “Inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.” (Paragraph 139, 2008 Discipline). And Jesus taught “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” Mt. 18:5 Evangelistic love is meant to be wide and inclusive. We follow the example of Jesus: “All Means All”

161.

Petition Number: 21029-CB-¶161.E-G; Ryder, Jack E. - LaGrange Park, IL, USA.

Inclusiveness of Gender Identity

Amend ¶161E E) Women and Men Gender Identity - We affirm with Scripture the common humanity of male and female, both having equal worth in the eyes of God. We are of equal worth in the eyes of God. We reject the erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another, that one gender must strive against another, and that members of one gender may receive love, power, and esteem only at the expense of another. We call upon women and men alike all people to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete and to respect the wholeness of others. We seek for every individual opportunities and freedom to love and be loved, to seek and receive justice, and to practice ethical self-determination. We understand our gender diversity to be a gift from God, intended to add to the rich variety of human experience and perspective; and we guard against attitudes and traditions that would use this good gift to leave members of one sex gender identity more vulnerable in relationships than members of another.

Rationale:

The General Conference asserts, “Inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.” [¶ 139, 2008 Discipline]. And Jesus taught “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” Mt. 18:5 Evangelistic love is meant to be wide and inclusive. We follow the example of Jesus: “All Means All”

161.


Removal of language

Amend: ¶161 (F) by deleting the word heterosexual:

Amend Third sentence:

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous heterosexual marriage.

Rationale:

Our church affirms the sanctity of the marriage covenant. Commitment as an essential for the stability of all relationships, whether in the form of marriage or civil unions, should be our standard. Heterosexual and homosexual couples in committed relations can by God’s grace meet these characteristics of faithful marriage.

161.

Petition Number: 20024-CB-¶161.F-G; Lyon, Louie, AZ, USA for Desert Southwest Annual Conference; Ryder, Jack E. - LaGrange Park, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 1 similar petition.
Removal of Language

Amend by deleting the sentence as indicated in ¶161 (F) Human Sexuality:

Delete third sentence of final paragraph: The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.

Rationale:

The dignity of every human being resides in the infinite love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. With Wesley we understand that God’s prevenient grace is offered universally to all of humanity. All persons should be welcomed as participants in our church.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20659-CB-¶161.F-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Internet Pornography

Add to end of third paragraph in ¶161.A: We grieve the pervasiveness of internet pornography, including among Christians, and especially its impact on young people and marriages. The Church must prioritize healing ministries among its users, emphasizing God’s purpose for sex as the expression of love between husband and wife.

Rationale:

Internet pornography is an enormous problem in every sector of society, and The Church must present an alternative, healthy form of God’s purpose for sex.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20874-CB-¶161.F-G; Naapi, Leo - Reedsport, OR, USA; Woodie, Shirley H. - Ozark, AL, USA for Alabama - West Florida Annual Conference, 4 similar petitions.

Homosexuality

Retain current ¶ 161.F without amendment.

Rationale:

The above statement in our DISCIPLINE is in agreement with GOD’S scriptures. The homosexual issue has been shifted from a sin issue to a discrimination issue. GOD very clearly calls a homosexual act a sin in Leviticus 18:22. Other pertinent scriptures are

Deuteronomy 4:2 and Hebrews 10:26. Deuteronomy 4:2, “You...

¶161.

Petition Number: 20923-CB-¶161.F-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Definitions

Add new text and subparagraphs to the last paragraph of ¶ No. 161F (beginning “We affirm that all persons ...,” pp. 103-104) and rearrange it as shown:

1. Amend the opening section as a paragraph (p. 103):

   We affirm that all persons ... care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self based on Scriptural holiness.

2. Add the next sentence (p. 103) as a new subparagraph:

   The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.

3. Add new subparagraphs:

   Concerning the terms, transvestitism, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender(ed), for too long the Church has been confused and undiscerning. Some of these words have changed meaning over the years, causing increased confusion. Moreover, some of the words have become politically charged. Therefore, to speak the truth in love, we must understand what these words mean.

   Transvestitism or cross-dressing refers to wearing clothing, make-up, or ornaments typically worn by the opposite sex. For millennia, it has been a mainstay of the theater, particularly comedy. Transvestitism is sometimes accompanied by homosexual yearnings or activity, but not always. Psychiatrists recognize some transvestitism as a compulsive disorder.

   A bisexual is one who has sexual yearnings toward others of both sexes or one who engages in sexual activity with members of both sexes.

   The meaning of transsexualism has changed over the years. Formerly, psychiatrists described it as a condition in which one wishes to deny or change one’s biological sex and become a member of the opposite sex. Transsexuals often describe themselves as “trapped in the wrong body.” Transsexualism may or may not be accompanied by homosexual yearnings or activity. Psychiatrists now refer to this condition as gender identity disorder. Their only recognized “treatment” for this
condition is the so-called “sex-reassignment treatment” or “sex change operation,” usually a combination of hormone injections and drastic cosmetic surgery to alter the outward bodily appearance to mimic the appearance of one of the opposite sex. It does not alter the person’s genetic blueprint, so that the change in gender identity is more illusory than real. Psychiatrists report that these operations, even when successful technically, do not always relieve the negative feelings associated with the condition. More recently, some have restricted the word transsexual to those who have received “sex-reassignment treatment” or are preparing to do so.

Transgender(ed) has become an umbrella term including transsexuals, transvestites, and sometimes homosexuals and bisexuals.

Like suicide (¶ 161N), both the yearning to become a member of the opposite sex and the execution of steps to become one represent a denial of God’s wisdom in creation. They say that God erred in deciding a person’s sex. Moreover, the superficial happiness sometimes proceeding from “sex-reassignment treatment” may subvert and prevent acquiring true happiness found only in Jesus Christ. Similarly, compulsive transvestitism, forbidden in Scripture (Deuteronomy 22:5; a part of the Old Testament moral law which we are committed to obey, according to the Articles of Religion, art. vi), belies the words of Paul, “I will not be dominated by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12). Sexual activity with more than one partner, including bisexual activity, is incompatible with the Church’s commitment to fidelity in monogamous marriage and celibacy in singleness. Therefore, The United Methodist Church does not condone any of these practices and consider them contrary to Christian teaching. However, God’s grace through the Holy Spirit is more than sufficient to deliver all persons from these and other yearnings and to remake all into godly, faithful, fruitful disciples. Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) and worldly experience both testify that such deliverance is possible and we have the Holy Spirit’s own promise, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Amend the final section of the paragraph (beginning “We affirm that God’s grace ...” pp.103-104):

4. Amend the final section of the paragraph (beginning “We affirm that God’s grace ...” pp.103-104):

This grace, we affirm that God’s grace, is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay family members and friends who are engaged in these practices. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.¹


Rationale:


¶161.

Petition Number: 21030-CB-¶161.F-G; Grenz, Jeanette, KS, USA. 25 similar petitions.

Human Sexuality

Amend ¶ 161.F as follows:

161.F) Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Sexual relations are only most clearly affirmed in the marriage bond. Sexual relations are only most clearly affirmed by a sacred covenant. Sex may become exploitive within as well as outside the covenant of marriage. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us at birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual relations where one or both partners are exploitive, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the social order.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God regardless of their sexual orientation and identity. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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 sexual identity and sexual orientation, we affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore
families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends on the basis of sexual identity or sexual orientation. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:

The current language in ¶161.F in the 2008 BOD is judgmental and discriminatory toward lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender persons. Such language displays a lack of understanding of current scientific knowledge and ignores the findings of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association.

¶161.

Petition Number: 21031-CB-¶161.F-G; Ruggles, Bruce - Minneapolis, MN, USA for Minnesota Annual Conference; Oduor, Ralph R.R. - Lawrence, MA, USA for New England Annual Conference; Chu, William W. - Williamston, MI, USA for West Michigan Annual Conference; LaGree, Patty - Des Moines, IA, USA for Iowa Annual Conference; Bartlett, Laura Jaquith - Eagle Creek, OR, USA for Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference; Sachen, Kristin L. - San Francisco, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference; Myers, Kevin Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual Conference; Hermes, Steven E. - Kalispell, MT, USA for Yellowstone Annual Conference. 6 similar petitions.

Human Sexuality

Amend ¶161.F of The Book of Discipline as follows:

F) Human Sexuality—We affirm ...

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms ...

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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 considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all...

Rationale:

The United Methodist Church has historically welcomed into membership "all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition" per Article IV of the Constitution.

All people will recognize that even though we disagree with each other the United Methodist Church is truly welcoming people regardless of...

¶161.

Petition Number: 21032-CB-¶161.F-G; Pasion, Earlie - Cauayan City, Philippines for Global Young People’s Convocation and Legislative Assembly.

Human Sexuality

Delete current ¶161.F and replace with the following:

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. United Methodists, along with other Christians, have struggled to find principles for applying traditional teachings to contemporary understandings of human sexuality.

We recognize that sexuality is part of the larger human mystery, to be received and acknowledged in grateful responsibility. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us. We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sexual relationship, with the 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 adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for children thus abused. We believe that the Church family should support all families in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We challenge all members of community of faith to commitment, integrity, and fidelity in their sexual relationships.

We know that all are God’s children and are of sacred worth; yet we have been, and remain, divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Faithful, thoughtful people who have grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another; yet all seek a
Church and Society Committee B

faithful witness. We continue to reason and pray together with faith and hope that the Holy Spirit will soon bring reconciling to our community of faith. The fire in our disagreements points to a deeper human mystery than we knew. We believe that the Spirit has brought our collective conscience to acknowledge this mystery more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before God and our neighbors. We therefore ask the Church, United Methodist and others, and the world, to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices until the Spirit leads us to new insight. In the meantime, let us seek to welcome, know, forgive, and love one another as Christ has accepted us that God maybe glorified through everything in our lives.

Rationale:
Honor the work done at past General Conferences and consider this majority report in revising The Book of Discipline, 2008, ¶161F. To affirm the majority report of the Church and Society 2 majority report to General Conference 2008 recommending the replacement of Discipline 2004 ¶ 161G (¶161F in Discipline 2008).

¶161.

Petition Number: 21033-CB-¶161.F-G; Robertson, Karen - Topeka, KS, USA for Kansas East Annual Conference.

Human Sexuality

Amend ¶161F as follows:

¶161.F) Human Sexuality - We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous heterosexual marriage. Sexual relations are only most clearly affirmed in the marriage bond. Sexual relations are only most clearly affirmed by a sacred covenant. Sex may become exploitive within as well as outside the covenant of 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 exploitive, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the social order.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God, regardless of their sexual orientation and identity. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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 sexual identity and sexual orientation, we affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends on the basis of sexual identity or sexual orientation. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:
The current language in ¶161F in the 2008 BOD is judgmental and discriminatory toward lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender persons. Such language displays a lack of understanding of current scientific knowledge and ignores the findings of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association.

¶161.

Petition Number: 21034-CB-¶161.F-G; Fitzgibbons, Kevin - Olathe, KS, USA.

Human Sexuality

Amend ¶161F as follows:

F) Human Sexuality—We affirm ...

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are most clearly affirmed only with the covenant of a monogamous heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence and discrimination. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.
We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, regardless of sexual orientation, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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 considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. Christians of good faith disagree on what Christian teaching reveals regarding homosexuality. Some believe the practice of homosexuality to be incompatible with Christian teaching. While others believe this practice to be compatible with Christian teaching in the context of a monogamous relationship. We affirm that God’s grace...

Rationale:
The current language is not a true expression of our whole church’s mind on homosexuality; which makes the current language divisive, therefore it needs to reflect the truth that we are not in agreement on homosexuality. As a church, we need to state that we do not condone discrimination against...

¶161.
Petition Number: 21035-CB-¶161.F-G; Martin, A. W. - Lubbock, TX, USA.

Replace Term
Amend one sentence in the last paragraph of ¶161 F as follows:
The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.

Rationale:
a) The term “practice of homosexuality” is wrongly used here, because it can refer to many good actions characteristic of homosexual persons, such as support for bullied adolescents. b) We do not need another don-nybrook over this sentence. Let us affirm a general principle that we can all accept.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21036-CB-¶161.F-G; Loyer, Kenneth M. - York, PA, USA.

Identity in Christ
Amend the fourth paragraph of ¶161 (F) as follows:
We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church regards the practice of homosexuality as incompatible with Christian teaching. In continuity with historic Christian teaching, and the ongoing consensus of the worldwide Christian movement, the United Methodist Church regards the practice of homosexuality as incompatible with Christian teaching. We further affirm that the essential identity of persons is not to be found in contemporary cultural understandings of sexuality, but in the meaning of baptism as those who have died and risen with Christ, and are by grace children of God. We affirm that God’s grace...

Rationale:
Contemporary culture has overly sexualized all of life and many, even within the church have been seduced into defining themselves primarily in terms of sexual attraction and practice, rather than as persons made in
Church and Society Committee B

the image of God and the objects of his redeeming grace in Christ.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21038-CB-¶161.F-G; DiPaulo, Joseph - Radnor, PA, USA.

Human Sexuality

Amend the second paragraph of 161 (F), with an addition as follows:

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. God’s design for human sexuality is grounded in creation itself. This is well expressed in the UM marriage ritual: “The covenant of marriage was established by God, who created us male and female for each other.” Scripture also depicts the marriage covenant as representing the relationship between Christ and “his bride”, the church.

Rationale:
These changes reflect historic biblical teaching as affirmed by the ongoing tradition of the worldwide Christian Church for 2,000 years, and provides a biblical foundation in the orders of creation for the “incompatibility” clause of the Discipline.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21039-CB-¶161.F-G; Young, Kevin & Laura - Linden, TX, USA for Breaking the Silence - Texas Annual Conference.

Human Sexuality

Amend ¶161F as follows:

F) Human Sexuality—We affirm 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, everyone, to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this sacred gift. We also acknowledge the limited understanding of this complex gift and encourage the medical, theological, and social science disciplines to join in a determined effort to offer society a more complete understanding of human sexuality.

United Methodists, along with other Christians, have struggled to identify principles for applying traditional teachings to contemporary understanding of human sexuality.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We recognize that sexuality is part of the larger human mystery, to be received and acknowledged in grateful responsibility. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us. We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sexual relations, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personhood. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible, and We call for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church family should support all persons in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We challenge all members of our community of faith to commitment, integrity and fidelity in their sexual relationships.

We affirm that all are God’s children and persons are individuals of sacred worth; yet we have been, and remain, divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Faithful, thoughtful people who have grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another; yet all seek a faithful witness. We continue to reason and pray together with faith and hope that the Holy Spirit will soon bring reconciliation to our community of faith. The passion in our disagreements points to a deeper human mystery than we knew. We believe that the Spirit has stirred our collective conscience to acknowledge this mystery more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before God and our neighbors. We therefore ask the Church, United Methodist and others, and the world, to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices as the Spirit continues to lead us to new insight. Let us seek to welcome, know, forgive, and love one another as Christ commands, that God may be glorified through everything in our lives, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. 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.

Rationale:
The Spirit has stirred our collective conscience to acknowledge the mystery of human sexuality more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before God and our neighbors. We ask the UMC to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices as the Spirit continues to lead us to...
We believe that marriage is a spiritual and sexual union blessed by God. We affirm that God looks with equal favor on the married and the unmarried as well as on those who have children and those who do not, and that God’s blessings are available to all.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, sexual violence, and exploitation of sex individuals within sexual relationships. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality sexual wellness to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. 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.

We recognize that the members of The United Methodist Church hold widely divergent beliefs regarding the compatibility of Christian faith with same sex relationships that are expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity. We acknowledge with regret that we have not reached a consensus on this issue. We pledge ourselves to be in respectful dialogue about this matter and to respect the dignity of all persons of sincere faith, recognizing that God’s grace is intended for all and is available to all. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian or gay persons or those who embrace them. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:

The current judgmental, condemnatory language is in conflict with the present state of scientific knowledge and societal acceptance. Such language puts United Methodism at odds with the positions of other denominations most closely related to it and with the emerging ecumenical consensus. Most important, the current language is manifestly unchristian.

Amend ¶161. F) Human Sexuality. We affirm 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 everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. 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. United Methodists, along with other Christians, have struggled to find principles for applying traditional teachings to contemporary understandings of human sexuality.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. We recognize that sexuality is part of the larger human mystery, to be received and acknowledged in grateful responsibility. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse and exploitation of sex relations, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. We call for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for children thus abused. The Church should support the family. We believe that the Church family should support all families in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.
We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We challenge all members of our community of faith to commitment, integrity and fidelity in their sexual relationships. We know that all are God’s children and of sacred worth; yet we have been, and remain, divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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. Faithful, thoughtful people who have grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another; yet all seek a faithful witness. We continue to reason and pray together with faith and hope that the Holy Spirit will soon bring reconciliation to our community of faith. The fire in our disagreements points to a deeper human mystery than we knew. We believe that the Spirit has brought our collective conscience to acknowledge this mystery more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before God and our neighbors. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. 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. We therefore ask the Church, United Methodist and others, and the world, to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices until the Spirit leads us to new insight. In the meantime, let us seek to welcome, know, and love one another as Christ has accepted us, that God may be glorified through everything in our lives.

Rationale:
Various constituencies within the United Methodist Church support a wide range of specific and often divergent advocacy steps designed to bring about justice and fair treatment for all people. It is the position of the United Methodist Church that all persons are of sacred worth, and yet we have been...

161.

Petition Number: 21044-CB-161.F-G; Shaffer, John J. - Stanwood, WA, USA for Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. 10 similar petitions.

Human Sexuality

Delete current ¶ 161.F and replace with the following:

As a part of the Body of Christ, we affirm all people are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We affirm human sexuality as God’s good gift to all persons as an intrinsic part of our personhood and as a rich, complex element of human life.

Our tradition spells out the importance of a comprehensive approach to human sexuality that relies on an examination of scriptural principles, an application of the tenets of Wesleyan theology, and a prophetic witness to God’s grace in a broken world. We believe that each of these sources mandates hospitality and welcome to all of God’s people within the life of the church.

We call all people to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift of human sexuality. We reject all forms of commercialization, abuse, and the exploitation of relationships.

As a denomination we are conflicted regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Regardless of deeply held personal positions by faithful people, in naming the truth of our differences we seek to dissolve the wall of hostility between us and to be the Body of Christ together. The apostle Paul confirms this when proclaiming “As it is, there are many members, yet one body.” While recognizing the inevitable differences of opinion, we pray for compassion in the midst of differing perspectives. As disciples of Jesus Christ transforming the world, we commit ourselves to continued study, prayer, and holy conferencing, while seeking understanding in love.

We commit our life together to the eradication of homophobia and heterosexism. We implore church members, clergy, and church leaders not to reject or condemn church members and their families and friends based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence and all forms of discrimination. We oppose laws of any state or nation in which imprisonment, death, or any punishment is based on gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of all persons and for effective protection, guidance, and counseling for exploited persons.

Rationale:
As presented at the 1972 General Conference, this section of the Social Principles was a prophetic statement until it was amended with the ‘incompatibility
phrase. Several amendments have been added since 1972. This rewrite produces a more cohesive statement; additionally, it eliminates the ‘incompatibility phrase,’ the source of continuing discrimination.

¶161.

Petition Number: 21045-CB-¶161.F-G; Heaberlin, Charles - Decatur, TX, USA for Study Group - First UMC (Decatur, TX).

Human Sexuality

Add the following paragraph at the end of ¶161.F:

W e recognize that both the Church and the Scientific Community do not understand the root cause(s) of homosexuality, and to this end we encourage on-going inquiry and scientific research in the interest of gaining better insights into this issue.

Rationale:
This supportive statement is offered to strengthen and update the Church’s current stance on human sexuality. A number of scriptural passages call on us to enhance knowledge. Examples are:

Matt. 7:7 ...and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

Proverbs 4:6-7 Get wisdom, get insight....

Hosea 4:6 My people are...

¶161.

Petition Number: 21062-CB-¶161.F-G; Oduor, Ralph R.R. - Lawrence, MA, USA for New England Annual Conference.

Human Sexuality

We believe that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We advocate call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children, holding perpetrators legally and financially responsible, and advocate competent counseling...
for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the all families by providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. We challenge all members of our community of faith to commitment, integrity and fidelity in their sexual relationships. Although we affirm that all are God’s children and of sacred worth, we are divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the 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.

We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:
This judgmental, condemnatory language is in conflict with the present state of scientific knowledge and societal acceptance. Such language puts United Methodism at odds with the positions of other denominations most closely related to it and with the emerging ecumenical consensus. Most important, this language is manifestly unchristian.

§161.
Petition Number: 21035-CB-¶161.F-G; Vines, Darrell L. - Lubbock, TX, USA for St. John’s UMC - Lubbock, TX.

Human Sexuality

Delete the second paragraph of ¶ 161 F as follows:
Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous heterosexual marriage.

Rationale:
This sentence is vague, ill-defined, and ambiguous.
We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion.

The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth. We affirm and encourage the Church to affirm crisis pregnancy centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancies.

We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social services agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See ¶161L) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel.

Rationale:
We are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and unborn child, and recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion. In such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20522-CB-¶161.J-G; Statzer, Jondra - McKinney, TX, USA.

Oppose Abortion as Eugenics

Amend ¶161.J as follows:
¶ 161 J) Abortion— ... We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection or eugenics.

Rationale:
As pre-natal technology increasingly makes possible the lethal targeting of babies with undesired characteristics, our church should speak with a clear moral voice for the sacred worth all humanity. For more information on eugenics and American Methodism’s sad history with it, see Resolution 3185: Repentance for Support of Eugenics.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20523-CB-¶161.J-G; Statzer, Jondra - McKinney, TX, USA.

Disabled Babies

Amend ¶161.J as follows:
¶ 161 J) Abortion— ... We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection. We decry the targeting of unborn children with disabilities for abortion. ...

Rationale:
Advances in pre-natal screening have had the tragic side effect of putting disabled babies in the cross-hairs. The disabled population has been violently reduced through abortion, with the dignity and worth of remaining disabled persons being consequently denigrated. This addition would importantly affirm the sacred worth of ALL people.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20611-CB-¶161.J-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Legal Protection of the Unborn

Add to end of first paragraph in 161J: We affirm legal protections for the unborn.
§161.

Petition Number: 20924-CB-§161J-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Abortion

Amend § 161J:

I) Abortion — The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and whether new individuals will be born. The Church has confronted abortion from its earliest days. The ancient Romans practiced it shamelessly, but an early manual of church belief and conduct equated it with murder and listed it along with murder, theft, sorcery, and other sins as activities that Christians shall not practice (Didache, 2:2). John Wesley, during his ministry in Georgia, heard rumors of the widespread practice of abortion in parts of North America, believed them, and was indignant (Wesley, Journal, December 2, 1737). This tradition and our belief in the sanctity of the unborn child as God’s gift, the lives of the unborn as well as those of the mothers, make us reluctant to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well being of the mother and the unborn child.

We recognize tragic and rare conflicts of life with life, where the life of the unborn child directly and immediately threatens the physical life of the mother, that may seem to justify abortion, and in such cases we encourage clergy and congregations to pray for and support such mothers and their families, support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We hold that women considering abortion should be fully informed of all the health risks involved, both medical and psychological. We unconditionally oppose any form of coerced abortion, whether coerced by the pressure of family members, friends, or employers, by governmental decree, or solicited by promise of reward. We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection.

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial birth abortion), and call for the end of this practice, except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life.

We deplore the corruption of language through the multiplication of euphemisms to trivialize the intentional taking of a human life by abortion (e.g., calling the developing child in the womb a “glob of tissue,” a “foreign invader,” or a “parasite”; pretending that “fetus” for centuries an exact synonym for “unborn child,” represents something subhuman; referring to abortion as a mere “termination of pregnancy” or “medical procedure”; and calling it a “choice” when so many women “choosing” it do so because they think that their situation allows no other choice). We deplore also abortion’s transformation from a rare clinical necessity (now virtually unnecessary under current medical technology) into an expanding profit-making industry offering its “products”: dead babies for confused and hurting women, fetal tissue for medical research, and spare body parts and other articles for those already born. For these reasons, we reject the label, “pro-choice,” which signifies unconditional support for any and all abortions for whatever reason. We also deplore any threats or violence, including murder, inflicted on those who protest abortion, on those who perform abortion, and on those assist in performing abortions; such actions violate Christian teaching.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion.

The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies through the encouragement of chastity and celibacy among singles and the use of appropriate birth control means among married couples. We commit the church to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis difficult or unintended pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See § 161L.) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternative to abortion.

We recognize that governmental Governmental laws, regulations, and court decisions do not provide all the guidance required by Christians the informed conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel. Such pronouncements should not permit or advance a casual
disregard for unborn human life. In a culture which devalues human life, the Church must offer with love and compassion the life-giving, life-transforming gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rationale:
The present statement wrongly implies, asserts, or assumes that abortion is a new issue, there is no life after death, abortion does not harm women physically or psychologically, partial-birth abortion is sometimes medically necessary, abortion providers are altruists, and all abortion counsel is godly and helpful.

¶161.

Abortion

Amend ¶ 161.J as follows:

¶ 161 J) Abortion— ... Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia. Women seeking abortions should be given full and accurate information about abortion alternatives, the potential risks of abortion, and fetal development, including, wherever the technology is available—the opportunity to view ultrasound images of their unborn children.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion. ....

Rationale:
This would show our support for pregnant women being empowered in their decision-making. People should be fully informed as they make such serious decisions as those concerning abortion.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21018-CB-¶161.J-G; Sikes, Marget - Varnell, GA, USA.

Choice of Health Care Professionals

Amend ¶ 161J as follows:

¶ 161 J) Abortion— ... Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia. We support vigorous enforcement of laws in civil society protecting the right of health care professionals to not participate in abortions.

We call all Christians ....

Rationale:
This is fundamentally about supporting freedom of conscience. Adopting such a position is an important statement of ecumenical and interfaith goodwill, supporting the basic religious liberty of all people. Such protections should also cover our neighbors who are morally uncomfortable with abortion even without any specifically religious objections.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21019-CB-¶161.J-G; Garner, Sara, VA, USA. 1 similar petition.

Abortion

Amend ¶ 161.J as follows:

¶ 161 J) Abortion— ... or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. Whenever the unborn child may be capable of surviving outside of his or her mother’s womb, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve both lives. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia....

Rationale:
While it is important to address the specific matter of partial-birth abortion, that is only one of several late-term abortion methods. Our church should at least be broadly discouraging of late-term abortions, recognizing that late-term pregnancies involve TWO well-developed human lives (mother and near-birth baby) worthy of care and preservation.

¶161.
Petition Number: 21020-CB-¶161.J-G; Adams, Linda W. - Poplar Bluff, MO, USA. 2 similar petitions.

Abortion

Amend ¶161.J as follows:

¶ 161 J) Abortion—The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even
whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion. We acknowledge the fact that the historic Christian teaching, including teachings from the early first millennium after Christ, from John Wesley himself, and from the leadership of most of the worldwide body of Christ today, has been overwhelmingly discouraging of abortion.

But we are equally bound ....

Rationale:

Adds important historic and ecumenical context to our abortion statement. Key early Christian teaching such as the early first-millennium Didache strongly opposed abortion, as did the main Protestant Reformers. Wesley’s position is clear from his journal and in his commending a text which teaches that abortion violates the sixth commandment.

¶161.

Abortion

Delete current ¶161.J and substitute the following:

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion....

Rationale:

The sentence deleted above is a remnant of the original 1972 position on abortion, drafted in a setting oriented especially toward the American social agenda of its time—the social upheaval of the late 1960’s and a period of rapid development of medical technology in our country. The nascent feminist...

¶161.
Petition Number: 21022-CB-¶161.J-G; Wilson, John R., PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Abortion

Amend ¶ 161.J as follows:

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion....

Rationale:

The current Paragraph 161J is morally inconsistent. While noting “the unborn child,” 161J also “support[s] the legal option of abortion” of that same child. Therefore, 161J now encourages denominational institu-
tions to support pro-choice politics. This petition, if adopted, would move the church toward silence about all abortion politics.

[¶161.

Petition Number: 21024-CB-¶161.J-G; Knight, Jan - Bowling Green, FL, USA. 15 similar petitions.

Abortion

Amend ¶161.J as follows:

¶161 J) Abortion — We recognize tragic conflicts of physical life with physical life that may justify abortion, and in such cases ....
Rationale:
Some UMC agencies have used this sentence to defend broadly abortion-supportive politics. This change puts us on the side of life, in line with clear biblical principles and two millennia of church teaching. Jesus said to welcome little children, not cut them to pieces or drown them in poison.

[¶161.

Petition Number: 21025-CB-¶161.J-G; Puhr, Roger - Moss Point, MS, USA for Mississippi Annual Conference.

Abortion

Amend ¶161.J as follows:

J) Abortion — The beginning of life ...

Rationale:

We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot do not affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection.

We oppose the use of late-term abortion beyond 20 weeks gestation known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this barbaric practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is medically indicated or available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life as judged by a consensus medical opinion. Before providing their services, abortion providers shall be required to offer women the option of anesthesia...

We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See Paragraph 161L.) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision ...

Rationale:

The Church universal, through the ages, has consistently witnessed and ministered, within the Church and to society, to protect the mother and unborn child from abortion. The universal Church’s witness on life and abortion is represented by The United Methodist Church’s belief in “the sanctity of unborn human life” and...
§161.
Petition Number: 21027-CB-§161.J-G; White, Deborah - Arlington, VA, USA.

**Abortion**

Amend § 161.J as follows:

§ 161 J) Abortion— ... Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia. Government health care programs should be designed so that all taxpayers are not automatically forced to subsidize medically unnecessary abortions.

We call all Christians to a searching ....

**Rationale:**
It is fundamentally inconsistent to claim to support “choice” on abortion while allowing no choice to those who do not wish to pay for abortion. “Proposals ... to provide tax funding for abortions are very misguided. What you fund with tax dollars will increase.” -Bishop Scott Jones, 2010 Lifewatch sermon.

§161.
Petition Number: 20613-CB-§161.L-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

**Religious Adoption Agency Protection**

Add to the end of §161.L: We affirm legal protections for religious adoption agencies upholding traditional family structures, including mothers and fathers married to each other.

**Rationale:**
Some governments are forcing the closure of religious adoption agencies that will not compromise their traditional beliefs about children needing both mothers and fathers married to each other. Religious adoption agencies should have the right to practice their faith without unreasonable government interference.

§162.
Petition Number: 20153-CB-§162.G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Mental Health**

Add a new § to §162 as follows:

Mental Health

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” Unfortunately, mental health eludes many in our world resulting in considerable distress, stigma and isolation. Mental illness troubles our relationships because it can affect the way we process information, relate to others and choose actions. Consequently, mental illnesses often are feared in ways that other illnesses are not. Nevertheless, we know that regardless of our illness we remain created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

No person deserves to be stigmatized because of mental illness. Those with mental illness are no more violent than other persons are. Rather, they are much more likely to be victims of violence or preyed on by others. When stigma happens within the church, mentally ill persons and their families are further victimized. Persons with mental illness and their families have a right to be treated with respect on the basis of common humanity and accurate information. They also have a right and responsibility to obtain care appropriate to their condition. The United Methodist Church pledges to foster policies that promote compassion, advocate for access to care and eradicate stigma within the church and in communities.

**Rationale:**
No person deserves to be stigmatized because of mental illness, therefore, persons with mental illness and their families have a right to be treated with respect on the basis of common humanity and accurate information.

§162.
Petition Number: 20534-CB-§162.G; Case, Riley B. - Kokomo, IN, USA.

**Rights of the Unborn**

ADD A NEW § 162.D AND RENUMBER SUCCESSING PARAGRAPHS:

D. RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN - WHILE SENSITIVE TO THE RIGHTS OF PREGNANT WOMEN WE AFFIRM THAT THE DEVELOPING FETUS ALSO HAS THE RIGHT TO BE SEEN AS DEVELOPING LIFE, AND THEREFORE, DESERVING OF
Church and Society Committee B

TREATMENT THAT IS DUE THOSE WHO ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

Rationale:

THE NEW WORDING SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

¶162.

Petition Number: 20670-CB-¶162-G; Light, W. Greg - Greensboro, NC, USA.

Social Community

¶ 162. III. THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY

The rights and privileges ...

A) Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons-Racism is the combination ... self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society. We assert the obligation of society and groups within the society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic people. We further assert the right of members of racial and ethnic groups to equal opportunities in employment and promotion; to education and training of the highest quality; to nondiscrimination in voting, in access to public accommodations, and in housing purchase or rental; to credit, financial loans, venture capital, and insurance policies; and to positions of leadership and power in all elements of our life together. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within our Church and society.

B) Rights of Religious Minorities-Religious persecution ...

F) Rights of Women-We affirm women and men ... through policies of employment and recruitment. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within our Church and society. We urge employers of persons ...

N) Medical Experimentation-Physical and mental health has been greatly enhanced through discoveries by medical science. It is imperative, however, that government and the medical profession carefully ...

P) Rural Life-We support the right of persons ... Further, we encourage the preservation of appropriate lands for agriculture and open space uses through thoughtful land use programs. We support governmental and private programs designed to benefit the resident farmer ...

T) Information Communication Technology-Because effective personal ... and often provides a distorted view of human values. Therefore, we support the regulation of media communication technologies to ensure a variety of independent information sources and provides for the public good.

Personal communication technologies ...

V) Right to Health Care-Health is a condition of ...

Health care is a basic human right.

Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is a responsibility each person owes others; and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril. In Ezekiel 34:4a, God points out the failures of the leadership of Israel to care for the weak: “You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured.” As a result all suffer. Like police and fire protection, health care is best funded through the government’s ability to tax each person equitably and directly fund the provider entities. Countries facing a public health crisis such as HIV/AIDS must have access to generic medicines and patented medicines. We affirm the right of men and women to have access to comprehensive reproductive health/family planning information and services that will serve as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancies, reduce abortions, and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The right to health care includes care for persons with brain diseases, neurological conditions, or physical disabilities, who must be afforded the same access to health care as all other persons in our communities. It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community.

We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care.

W) Organ Transplantation and Donation-We believe ...

Rationale:

In the third paragraph of the Preface to the Social Principles it states, “The Social Principles, while not to be considered church law, are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical...

¶162.

Petition Number: 21047-CB-¶162-G; Ryder, Jack E. - LaGrange Park, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference; Hermes, Steven E. - Kalispell, MT, USA for Yellowstone Annual Conference. 2 similar petitions.
Gender Identity Equal Rights

Add a new sub-paragraph (K) and re-letter the remaining:

K) Equal Rights Regardless of Gender Identity – We recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals, regardless of gender identity. We affirm the responsibility of the Church and society to be in ministry with people of all gender identities. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are transgender and to advocate for justice for all. We affirm the right of transgender persons to receive medical care, access to education, access to employment, and adequate insurance. We affirm the right of transgender persons to live free from violence and abuse and urge governments to enact policies that protect transgender persons against all forms of violence and discrimination in any sector of society.

Rationale:

The General Conference asserts, “Inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.” ¶ 139, 2008 Discipline. And Jesus taught “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” Mt. 18:5 Evangelistic love is meant to be wide and inclusive. We follow the example of Jesus: “All Means All” ¶162.

Petition Number: 21051-CB-¶162-G; Merrick, Tracy R. - Wexford, PA, USA for First United Methodist Church - Pittsburgh, PA.

Broadening the Circle

Amend ¶ 162 as follows:

¶ 162 Social Principles – The Social Community

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons and groups of persons. We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person’s value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened. We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation.

Our respect for the inherent dignity of all persons leads us to call for the recognition, protection, and implementation of the principles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that communities and individuals may claim and enjoy their universal, indivisible, and inalienable rights.

Rationale:

A series of petitions are being submitted to expand and bring consistency in the Book of Discipline among the various lists of included constituencies. If this and the other changes are adopted, the following paragraphs would be consistent, except for contextual differences: ¶ 4, 162, 330, and 335.

¶162.

Petition Number: 20063-CB-¶162.A; Hawkins, Erin M. - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Equity

Amend ¶ 162 The Social Community and insert the following:

A.) Rights of Racial Ethnic Persons: Racism is the combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominant race is innately superior to the others. Racism includes both personal and institutional racism. Personal racism is manifested through the individual expressions, attitudes, and/or behaviors that accept the assumptions of a racist value system and that maintain the benefits of this system. Institutional racism is the established social pattern that supports implicitly or explicitly the racist value system. Racism manifested as sin, plagues and cripples our growth relationship with Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. White people are unfairly granted privileges and benefits that are denied to persons of color. Racism breeds racial discrimination. We define racial discrimination as the disparate treatment and lack of full access and equity to resources and opportunities in the church and in society based on race or ethnicity.

Therefore, we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons. We rejoice in the gifts that particular ethnic histories and cultures bring to our total life. We commit as the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access.
We commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society. We assert the obligation of society and groups within the society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic people. We further assert the right of members of racial and ethnic groups to equal and equitable opportunities in employment and promotion; to education and training of the highest quality; to nondiscrimination in voting, in access to public accommodations, and in housing purchase or rental; to credit, financial loans, venture capital, and insurance policies; and to positions of leadership and power in all elements of our life together. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within our Church and society.

Rationale:
While significant advancements in areas of racial justice have occurred within the Church and society, systemic barriers still exist. Structural racism is embedded in policies and practices which contribute to inequitable racial outcomes, legitimize racial disparities, and undermine progress toward racial equity.

¶162.
Petition Number: 20701-CB-¶162.A-G; Dunaway, Robert - Owaneco, IL, USA. 1 similar petition.

Delete Reference

Amend ¶162. A), Rights of Racial and Ethnic Person, as follows:
Racism is the combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominate race is innately superior to the others. Racism includes both personal and institutional racism. Personal racism is manifested through the individual expressions, attitudes, and/or behaviors that accept the assumptions of a racist value system and that maintain the benefits of this system. Racism plagues and cripples our growth in Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. White people are unfairly granted privileges and benefits that are denied to persons of color. Racism breeds racial discrimination. We define racial discrimination as the disparate treatment and lack of full access to resources and opportunities in the church and in society based on race or ethnicity. Therefore, we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons. We rejoice in the gifts that particular ethnic histories and cultures bring to our total life. We commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society. We assert the obligation of society and groups within the society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic people. We further assert the right of members of racial and ethnic groups to equal opportunities in employment and promotion; to education and training of the highest quality; to nondiscrimination in voting, in access to public accommodations, and in housing purchase or rental; to credit, financial loans, venture capital, and insurance policies; and to positions of leadership and in all elements of our life together. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within our Church and society.

Rationale:
Racial Profiling:
White people are singled out in this text as those who are unfairly pampered while allowing other races to be neglected. Isn’t it possible that there are some white people who are denied privileges and benefits also? Prejudice does not belong solely to racial discrimination but can also...

¶162.
Petition Number: 20610-CB-¶162.A-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Persecuted Christians

Add to end of ¶ 162B: The Church has a special loving duty to stand in prayerful solidarity with persecuted fellow believers globally. When any member of the Body of Christ suffers, all suffer.

¶162.
Petition Number: 20657-CB-¶162.B-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Legal Rights

Add to end of ¶ 162.B: We also affirm the legal rights of religious believers and communities, with others in society, to espouse traditional marriage and chastity.
§162.
Petition Number: 20791-CB-§162.G-G; Kenaston, Judith M. - Charleston, WV, USA for West Virginia Annual Conference.

Men as Victims of Domestic Violence

§162.
G) Rights of Men—Because we affirm women and men to be equal in every aspect of their common life, we also affirm the rights of men. We affirm equal opportunities in employment, responsibility, and promotion. Men should not be ignored or lose opportunities or influence because they are men.

We recognize that men are also victims of domestic violence and abuse. We encourage communities to offer the same policies and protection as provided for women in similar situations. We affirm the right of men to live free from violence and abuse and urge governments to enact policies that protect men against all forms of violence and discrimination in any sector of society.

We recognize that men’s ...

Rationale:
Domestic violence is “one person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate or control the other person” (http://www.helpguide.org). Approximately, 850,000 U.S. men are victims of domestic violence per year (publicpolicy@ncadv.org). Such abuse is under reported due to pressure for men to be “the head of household,” etc. (www.mensactivism.org)...

§162.
Petition Number: 21046-CB-§162.J-G; Myers, Kevin Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual Conference; Bartlett, Laura Jaquith - Eagle Creek, OR, USA for Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference; Jackson, Fredric O. - White Plains, NY, USA for New York Annual Conference; Oduor, Ralph R.R. - Lawrence, MA, USA for New England Annual Conference. 12 similar petitions.

Update Civil Equal Rights

Amend §162 (J) as follows:

J) Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation—Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. We see a clear issue of justice in protecting the rightful claims where people have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, civil marriage, civil unions, 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 all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

Rationale:
Discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations is a harsh reality for many gays and lesbians, therefore as United Methodists, we need to state our support for laws and policies that prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

§162.
Petition Number: 21049-CB-§162.J-G; DiPaulo, Joseph - Radnor, PA, USA.

Change to Equal Rights

Amend §162 (J) as follows:
Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting the rightful claims where 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. We believe that such legal rights and liberties can be protected contractually, and do not require changes to the legal definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

Rationale:
The need to address the basic justice issues regarding property, powers of attorney, etc., do not require altering the legal definition of marriage.

¶162.
Petition Number: 21050-CB-¶162.J-G; Shaffer, John J. - Stanwood, WA, USA for Pacific Northwest Annual Conference.

Gender Identity Equal Rights

Amend ¶162J as follows:

Equal Rights regardless of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. We see a clear issue of justice in protecting the rightful claims where people have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, civil marriage, civil unions, 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 all persons, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Rationale:
In an increasing number of states, legal language includes several hundred contractual rights and responsibilities under the categories of civil marriage and civil unions. This amendment makes clear our commitment to equal rights. Adding ‘gender identity’ insures that another marginalized group, the transgendered, is fully included in church and society.

¶162.
Petition Number: 20609-CB-¶162.K-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Affirming Children

Add to end of ¶ 162K: Children are God’s gift and blessing. We are also concerned about a growing number of countries struggling with declining birthrates. Healthy societies will encourage strong families and responsible parenthood.

Rationale:
A growing number of countries, especially in Europe but also including a growing number of once fast growing developing nations, are trying to reverse plunging birth rates that are creating potential social and economic problems. Among other issues, fewer young people need to care for expanding elderly populations.

¶162.
Petition Number: 20629-CB-¶162.N-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA. 1 similar petition.

Destruction of Human Embryos

AMEND Discipline ¶162N as follows:

¶ 162 N) Medical Experimentation—Physical and mental health has been greatly enhanced through discoveries by medical science. It is imperative, however, that governments and the medical profession carefully enforce the requirements of the prevailing medical research standard, maintaining rigid controls in testing new technologies and drugs utilizing human beings. The standard requires that those engaged in research shall use human beings as research subjects only after obtaining full, rational, and uncoerced consent. We cannot support medical or scientific practices that treat human embryos as mere commodities who are categorically unworthy of any respect or protection.

Rationale:
Defining ANY human life as completely beyond the scope of God’s image and care is contrary to Christ’s
example of pushing boundaries to extend his love to marginalized humanity. We share the goal of advancing science, but as Christians we must never “do evil, that good may result” (Romans 3:8).

Petition Number: 20448-CB-¶162.O-G; Wenner, Rosemarie - Frankfurt, Germany for Executive Committee of the Germany Central Conference. 1 similar petition.

Genetic Technology

Amend ¶ 162. O) as follows:

The responsibility of humankind to God’s creation challenges us to deal carefully with examining the possibilities of genetic research and technology in a conscientious, careful and responsible way. Negative impacts on people and the environment must be strenuously avoided. We welcome the use of genetic technology for meeting fundamental human needs for health and a safe environment, and an adequate food supply. We oppose the cloning of humans and the genetic manipulation of the gender of an unborn child.

Because of the effects of genetic technologies on all life, we call for effective guidelines and public accountability to safeguard against any action that might lead to abuse of these technologies, including political or military ends. We recognize that cautious, well-intended use of genetic technologies may sometimes lead to unanticipated harmful consequences. The risks of genetic technology that can hardly be calculated when breeding animals and plants and the negative ecological and social impacts on agriculture make the use of this technology doubtful. We approve modern methods of breeding that respect the existence of the natural borders of species.

Human gene therapies that produce changes that cannot be passed to offspring (somatic therapy) should be limited to the alleviation of suffering caused by disease. Genetic therapies for eugenic choices or that produce waste embryos are deplored. Genetic data of individuals and their families should be kept secret and held in strict confidence unless confidentiality is waived by the individual or by his or her family, or unless the collection and use of genetic identification data is supported by an appropriate court order.

Because its long-term effects are uncertain, we oppose genetic therapy that results in changes that can be passed to offspring (germ-line therapy). All the genetic procedures must be accompanied by independent, ethically-orientated measures of testing, approval and controlling.

Rationale:
We cannot approve of genetic technology for food production. Nobody can predict what changes are caused in the genome of the receiver by adding genes that are alien to a species and what the consequences are for humans and the environment. Genetic engineering does not solve the hunger problem.

Petition Number: 20449-CB-¶162.S-G; Wenner, Rosemarie - Frankfurt, Germany for Executive Committee of the Germany Central Conference. 1 similar petition.

Media Violence

Amend the first paragraph, delete the second paragraph and substitute new text:

The unprecedented impact the media (principally television and movies) are having on Christian and human values within our society becomes more apparent each day. In our society the media plays an important role. It influences people all over the world. Content, representations, pictures, scenes, however, are often in a stark contrast to humanistic and Christian values. We express disdain at current media preoccupation with dehumanizing portrayals, sensationalized through mass media “entertainment” and “news.” These practices degrade humankind and violate the teachings of Christ and the Bible.

United Methodists, along with those of other faith groups, must be made aware that the mass media often undermine the truths of Christianity by promoting permissive lifestyles and depicting acts of graphic violence. Instead of encouraging, motivating, and inspiring its audiences to adopt lifestyles based on the sanctity of life, the entertainment industry often advocates the opposite, painting a cynical picture of violence, abuse, greed, profanity, and a constant denigration of the family. The media must be held accountable for the part they play in the decline of values we observe in society today. Many in the media remain aloof to the issue, claiming to reflect rather than to influence society. For the sake of our human family, Christians must work together to halt this erosion of moral and ethical values in the world community. We oppose any kind of sexist images as well as those that glorify violence. We reject the implicit
message that conflicts can be resolved and just peace can be established by violence. Within the bounds of the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press the media are responsible for respecting human rights. In support of these matters we work together with all people of good will.

Rationale:
The present article does not always express principles. Mass media has undergone a revolution in our time. The positive impact on the global social network cannot be doubted. Simultaneously, the propagation of scenes that degrade humankind and glorify violence are becoming common practice, which contradicts the teachings of the Bible.

7162.
Petition Number: 20605-CB-¶162.V-G; Tooley, Mark - Fairfax, VA, USA.

Right to Good Health Care

Delete the second, third and fourth paragraphs of 162V. Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is a responsibility each person owes others and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril. In Ezekiel 34:4a, God points out the failures of the leadership of Israel to care for the weak: "You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured." As a result all suffer. Like police and fire protection, health care is best funded through the government's ability to tax each person equitably and directly fund the provider entities.

Countries facing a public health crisis such as HIV/AIDS must have access to generic medicines and to patented medicines. We affirm the right of men and women to have access to comprehensive reproductive health/family planning information and services that will serve as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancies, reduce abortions, and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The right to health care includes care for persons with brain diseases, neurological conditions, or physical disabilities, who must be afforded the same access to health care as all other persons in our communities. It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community.

We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care.

And replace with: Just societies must strive to maintain health, prevent disease and restore health after injury or illness for all people. We celebrate increasing lifespans and better health care around the world while acknowledging the urgency of greater efforts to provide quality health care to all. Quality health care in most societies typically involves cooperation by governments, private health care providers, insurers, religious institutions, charities, and private individuals. We affirm the greatest possible menu of medical choices available to patients and their families. We also affirm the dignity and right to health care of the terminally ill and dying. The Church should advocate healthy living and mobilized effort against the scourge of global pandemic diseases, including Malaria, Tuberculosis, and AIDS. We also pray for continued advances against Cancer.

7162.
Petition Number: 20732-CB-¶162.V-G; Dunaway, Robert - Owaneco, IL, USA.

Health Care as Individual Responsibility

Amend ¶162.V) as follows:

Health is a condition of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. John 10:10b says, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Ezekiel 34:16a says: "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Stewardship of health is the responsibility of each person to whom health has been entrusted. Creating the personal, environmental, and social conditions in which health can thrive is a joint responsibility—public and private. We encourage individuals to pursue a healthy lifestyle and affirm the importance of preventive health care, health education, environmental and occupational safety, good nutrition, and secure housing in achieving health. Health care is a basic human right.

Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is the responsibility each person owes others and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril. In Ezekiel 34:4a, God points out the failures of the leadership of Israel to care for the weak: "You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured." As a result all suffer. Like police and fire protection, health care is best funded through the government's ability to tax each person equitably and directly fund the provider entities.

Countries facing a public health crisis such as HIV/AIDS must have access to generic medicines and to
patented medicines, without infringing on a pharmaceutical company’s patent/licensing rights. We affirm the right of men and women to have access to comprehensive reproductive health/family planning information and services that will serve as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancies, reduce abortions and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The right to responsibility of health care includes care for persons with brain diseases, neurological conditions, or physical disabilities, who must be afforded the same access to health care as all other persons in our communities. It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community. We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care. We also recognize the role of governments in ensuring that each individual has access to those elements necessary to good health.

Rationale:
Health care is not a basic human right as asserted in the 2008 Book of Discipline but rather a responsibility. Responsibility for providing health care is dependent upon what authority has granted it and is not an inherent duty of government. Rights must be granted by a higher authority, the...

¶162.

Petition Number: 20765-CB-¶162.V-G; Miles, Rebekah - Fort Worth, TX, USA. 1 similar petition.

Access to Basic Health Care for All

Amend ¶162V by addition
Following the words:
“... We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care.”
Add the following as a new sub paragraph within ¶162V
We encourage hospitals, physicians, and medical clinics to provide access to primary healthcare to all people regardless of their healthcare coverage or ability to pay for treatment.

Rationale:
The right to basic healthcare is dependent on the cooperation of medical institutions. In the absence of fully-funded government healthcare, many lack access to primary care. Even those with coverage are sometimes denied basic treatment. The death of our mother, JoAnn Miles, was precipitated by the absence of basic care...

¶162.

Petition Number: 20805-CB-¶162.V-G; Davis, Thomas E. - Bossier City, LA, USA.

Health Care

Delete ¶162.V in the Book of Discipline.
Rationale:
This paragraph advocates that The United Methodist Church subscribes fully and without doubt to the philosophy of Socialized Medicine in the United States. Unfortunately, Socialized Medicine will be the first step in leading us toward a devastating pitfall in the future that will eventually destroy Christianity in America, to wit...

◊ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition Number: 20599-CB-NonDis-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Homosexuality

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church affirms that homosexuality is on a continuum of sexuality with heterosexuality and therefore be seen in the natural God-made way for human life.
The General Conference also affirms 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.

Rather than be against one kind of natural sexuality as opposed to another kind of natural sexuality, we focus on challenging those behaviors that are untrue to that individual, or are exploitative, violent, or otherwise cause harm to any other individuals.

Rationale:
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;
Whereas human knowledge and experience shows that all of us have elements of the heterosexual and homosexual, more or less, in our...

Petition Number: 20899-CB-NonDis-G; Brandly, Dale - Bellbrook, OH, USA.
Correct Index of BOD

Amend index of the *Book of Discipline*, homosexuality/homosexual persons, page 821; social principles, ¶161 F ¶161 H, 162 F.

Petition Number: 20989-CB-NonDis-G; Puhr, Roger - Moss Point, MS, USA for Mississippi Annual Conference; Woodie, Shirley H. - Ozark, AL, USA for Alabama - West Florida Annual Conference. 9 similar petitions.

Withdraw UMC from RCRC

The 2012 General Conference hereby directs the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/Women’s Division to withdraw immediately from the membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights (RCRC).

Rationale:

“RCRC [Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, originally named the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights] was founded in 1973 to safeguard the newly won constitutional right to abortion” in the United States, according to The Reverend Carlton W. Veazey, RCRC president and CEO (www.rcrc.org/about/index.cfm). The RCRC lobbies to defend and expand...

Petition Number: 20991-CB-NonDis-G; Van Havel, Carol J. - Morenci, MI, USA.

Withdraw UMC from RCRC

The 2012 General Conference withdraws all UMC agencies from RCRC, and prohibits any future membership support for organizations dedicated to pro-choice education, research, or advocacy, as the mission and goals are incompatible with United Methodist teachings.

Rationale:

The General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/Women’s Division are presently members of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC). The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice advances abortion rights in any and all circumstances without exception, and promotes (1) An absolute sexual and reproductive...
Proposed Resolutions

R2022.

Petition Number: 20124-CB-R2022-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Adoption**

Amend resolution 2022 as follows:

1. **The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church**, in the section...One of those options is the family that includes adopted children.

2. Throughout the biblical texts, references are made to the importance of parenting children. We can find story after story in the Old Testament of how God expresses love and care for children, including orphans. Jesus’ life reflects that same level of commitment: He was a voice for those widowed or orphaned, poor and oppressed. We affirm that God is our ultimate parent, and persons who choose to raise a family are called to be loving parents, whether they gave birth to or adopted their children.

3. Clinical and social service agencies...

4. Studies done by a variety ...

5. Some of the most recent ...

6. External assets include...

7. Internal assets include...

8. It has been observed that as the above-mentioned assets are experienced, children and families demonstrate stability and growth regardless of whether children are of birth origin or adopted. Therefore, The United Methodist Church supports and encourages adoption by all persons who demonstrate these attitudes, behaviors, and assets. The United Methodist Church also rejects any form of coercion, deception or profiteering associated with adoption, and affirms the use of reputable, certified agencies when engaging in the adoption process.

ADOPTED 2004

Resolution #21, 2004 Book of Resolutions

See Social Principles, ¶ 161L.

Rationale:

We believe the family is the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity. The family encompasses a wide range of options, including adopted children.

---

R2026.

Petition Number: 20781-CB-R2026-G; Evans, Cynthia M. - O’Fallon, MO, USA. 1 similar petition.

**Abortion Only When Appropriate**

Amend Resolution #2026: Responsible Parenthood as follows:

1. We affirm the principle of responsible parenthood...

2. safeguard the legal option of abortion, when appropriate, under standards of sound medical practice;

3. ...  

Rationale:

Because we believe in the sanctity of unborn human life and because we are reluctant to approve abortion (¶161J), United Methodists should not provide an unqualified endorsement of abortion as the solution to all unexpected or unwanted pregnancies.

---

R2026.

Petition Number: 20811-CB-R2026-G; Adams, Linda W. - Poplar Bluff, MO, USA. 1 similar petition.

**Abortion**

2026. Responsible Parenthood

We affirm ...

When an unacceptable pregnancy occurs, we believe that a profound regard for unborn human life must be weighed alongside an equally profound regard for fully developed personhood, particularly when the physical, mental, and emotional health life of the pregnant woman and her family shows reason to be seriously threatened by the new life just forming. We reject ...

When an unacceptable pregnancy occurs, a family-and most of all, the pregnant woman—is confronted with the need to make a difficult decision. When a pregnancy occurs that appears to cause the parent or parents hardship, we in the church should bring all our resources of compassion and support to their aid, including prayer and encouragement. We believe that continuance of a pregnancy that endangers the life or health of the mother...
R2026.
Petition Number: 20862-CB-R2026-G; Sikes, Marget - Varnell, GA, USA.

Responsible Parenthood

2026. Responsible Parenthood
We affirm the principle...
When an unacceptable pregnancy occurs, a family-and most of all, the pregnant woman—is confronted with the need to make a difficult decision. When a pregnancy occurs that appears to cause the parent or parents hardship, we in the church should bring all our resources of compassion and support to their aid, including prayer and encouragement. We believe that continuance of a pregnancy that endangers the life or health of the mother, or poses other serious problems concerning the life, health, or mental capability of the child to be, is not a moral necessity. In such cases, we believe ...

Rationale:
A Christian church should not support the possibility of a child’s having mental retardation or another disability being used as a reason for abortion. This is completely inconsistent with our Church’s defending the equal humanity of the disabled, who are no less “worthy” of being born than anyone else.

R2026.
Petition Number: 20945-CB-R2026-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Responsible Parenthood

2026. Responsible Parenthood
We affirm the principle...
To support the sacred dimensions...
When an unacceptable pregnancy occurs, we believe that a profound regard for unborn human life must be weighed alongside an equally profound regard for fully developed personhood, particularly when the physical, mental, and emotional health of the pregnant woman and her family show reason to be seriously threatened by the new life just forming. We reject the simplistic answers to the problem of abortion that, on the one hand, regard all abortions as murders, or, on the other hand, regard abortions as medical procedures without moral significance.

When an unacceptable pregnancy occurs, a family—and most of all, the pregnant woman—the pregnant woman is confronted with the need to make a difficult decision. When a pregnancy occurs that appears to cause the parent or parents emotional or economic hardship, we in the church should bring all our resources of compassion and support to their aid, including This includes prayer, and encouragement. Scriptural Christian counsel, information about adoption and other facilities to help those facing difficult pregnancies, economic help, and, where needed, job training. These ministries should continue throughout the term of pregnancy and beyond. We can support abortion only in the tragic and rare instances where the life of the unborn child directly and immediately threatens the life of the mother. We believe that continuance ... issue of abortion (see ¶ 161J).

We therefore encourage ...
6. make provision in ...
7. establish and support ministries for women and families facing difficult and sometimes unplanned and unwelcome pregnancies. Every church should be familiar with the crisis pregnancy and adoption facilities in their area and support them with material aid and volunteer service; safeguard the legal option of abortion under standards of sound medical practice;
8. make abortions available to women without regard to economic standards of sound medical practice; and make abortions available to women without regard to economic status; monitor carefully the growing genetic and biomedical research, and be prepared to offer sound ethical counsel to those facing birth-planning decisions affected by such research;
9. assist the states to make provisions approach with caution any proposal in law or in practice for treating as adults minors who have, or think they have, venereal diseases, or female minors who are, or think they are, pregnant, thereby eliminating the legal necessity for notifying parents or guardians prior to care or treatment. Parental support is crucially important and most desirable on such occasions, but should not be a barrier to receiving needed treatment, ought not to be contingent on such support. This statement shall not used to assert or imply that With only rare exceptions involving clear safety issues, The United Methodist Church opposes any requirement, with or without exceptions, of supports parental notification for abortion procedures about abortions performed on girls who have not yet reached legal adulthood minors;
10. ...

Rationale:
Once the EUB child-rearing/birth control statement, “Responsible Parenthood” was perverted to legitimize unrestricted abortion. “We support the legal right to abortion as established by the 1973 Supreme Court
decision,” is meaningless. The court issued two 1973 abortion decisions. The General Conference never specified which decision is referenced (¶ 509.1).

R2026.

Petition Number: 21010-CB-R2026-G; Evans, Cynthia M. - O’Fallon, MO, USA.

Delete Supreme Court

Amend Resolution #2026: Responsible Parenthood as follows:

We affirm the principle of responsible parenthood...

When an unacceptable pregnancy occurs, a family—and most of all, the pregnant woman—is confronted with the need to make a difficult decision. We believe that continuance of a pregnancy that endangers the life or health of the mother, or poses other serious problems concerning the life, health, or mental capability of the child to be, is not a moral necessity. In such cases, we believe the path of mature Christian judgment may indicate the advisability of abortion. We support the legal right to abortion as established by the 1973 Supreme Court decision. We encourage women in counsel with husbands, doctors, and pastors to make their own responsible decisions concerning the personal and moral questions surrounding the issue of abortion (see ¶161J).

Rationale:

Like Americans in general, faithful United Methodists are not of one mind on that Supreme Court decision. This reality should not be denied. Even some pro-choice legal scholars oppose the decision’s legal reasoning. Secondly, emphasis on US law does not belong in a statement of universal principles.

R2029.

Petition Number: 20489-CB-R2029-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

Nurturing Relationships

Replace current Resolution 2029 with the following:

1. We call upon pastors to take seriously the importance of relationship counseling for all single persons as well as for those couples seeking to live in a married or committed relationship with one another.

2. We call upon congregations to offer classes and programs dealing with communication skills, conflict management, and coping with situations related to living alone, parenting, partnership preparation and enrichment.

3. We call upon pastors and congregations to offer support and resources for those who live as single persons as well as couples living in married or committed relationships.

4. We call upon annual conferences to assist congregations through the development, identification, and promotion of programs and resources for those persons who live alone as well as couples who are either married or in committed relationships.

5. We call upon the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to offer resources for clergy in areas of relationship preparation and enrichment and in developing healthy relationships within their own households.

6. We call upon seminaries to train clergy in issues relating to living as single persons, as well as to marriage preparation, counseling, and enrichment.

7. We call upon the General Board of Church and Society to study state and federal legislation (both proposed and already in effect) related to single persons, committed relationships, civil unions, marriages and families and to make recommendations to annual conferences regarding the possible impact of such legislation.

8. We call upon The United Methodist Publishing House to continue publication of material in support of single persons, married couples, those in committed relationship, marriage, parenting, and family life.

9. We call upon the General Board of Discipleship to continue to develop, identify, and promote resources and materials for committed relationship, marriage and family ministries.

Rationale:

Relationships are the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained. Healthy relationships in all their various configurations have a positive impact on all concerned. Support from a faith community can help everyone to more effectively provide safety, nurture growth, and sustain healthy relationships.
R2042.

Petition Number: 21104-CB-R2042-G; Vines, Darrell L. - Lubbock, TX, USA for St. John’s UMC - Lubbock, TX.

**Homosexuality and the Unity of the Church**

Delete current resolution 2042 and replace with the following:

**WHEREAS**, the 2000 General Conference directed the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) to report on dialogue on issues related to homosexuality and the unity of the church (Resolution Number 29, Book of Resolutions 2000, page 134), and

**WHEREAS**, the GCCUIC followed that direction with work to create open, grace-filled spaces for persons with contending viewpoints to learn to know each other authentically, to explore divergent understanding through prayerful and civil dialogue, and whenever possible, to experience healing and reconciliation, and

**WHEREAS**, the GCCUIC developed models that promoted grace-filled and civil dialogue with which the Council of Bishops, the General Council on Ministries, and other United Methodist youth, young adults, and racial/ethnic groups were productively engaged, and

**WHEREAS**, the GCCUIC developed resources for dialogue in local churches, district, and annual conferences, and

**WHEREAS**, the 2004 General Conference received and commended the GCCUIC report of the Task Force on Homosexuality and the Unity of the Church, and recommended further dialogue throughout the entire United Methodist Church with worship at the center, and

**WHEREAS**, many local churches have not yet received, used, or even been aware of resources developed by GCCUIC and similar resources developed by United Methodist Boards; many district and annual conferences have not used them; and the goals of greater understanding, love, and care for each other and a more civil character for these concerns have not yet been achieved.

Therefore be it resolved that

- The 2012 General Conference shall direct that a specific plan be developed to encourage the use and distribution of previously developed GCCUIC Task Force resources and similar resources developed by other United Methodist Boards for local churches, districts, and annual conferences.

R2043.

Petition Number: 20946-CB-R2043-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

**Delete Resolution**

Delete Resolution No. 2043. Opposition to Homophobia and Heterosexism.

**Rationale:**

The positive aspects of the resolution are already asserted in the Social Principles. Negatively, it fails to distinguish between homophobia and asserting the Biblical witness that homosexual practice is forbidden by God and contrary to Christian teaching.

R2044.

Petition Number: 20118-CB-R2044; Burton, M. Garlinda - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

**Definition**

Amend 2044 (Definition). Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships (Book of Resolutions 2008, p. 134): “Sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid).”

**Rationale:**

There is an absence of meaningful consent in the context of a ministerial relationship, rendering the qualification “unwanted” confusing and misleading. This definition includes unwanted as well as seemingly “consensual” sexual behavior within ministerial relationships. These changes also provide greater consistency with the rest of Resolution No. 2044.

R2046.

Petition Number: 20132-CB-R2046-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Rights of All Persons**

Amend Resolution No. 2046 Rights of All Persons as follows:
A portion of the world’s population is gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT). Around the world, political and religious institutions have failed to protect the full human dignity of these persons. Some have targeted GLBT persons for discrimination in housing, employment, criminal statutes, health care, and access to redress for such discrimination. Some falsely portray the basic human rights laws that protect GLBT persons from hate crimes as unfair “legal preference.”

It is particularly disturbing when religious values have too often been improperly used to justify persecution of select groups. Christians proclaim that all people are God’s children who deserve full human dignity, as well as equal civil and legal protections for their human and civil rights.

Our Social Principles gives us clear direction in this matter:

We insist that all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured (¶161F).

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons or groups of persons, and they affect the protection of their human and civil rights.

We do this as part of our Christian witness and ministry. Never let it be said that United Methodists failed to speak for the “least of these.”

Rationale:

We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God, never let it be said that United Methodists failed to speak for the “least of these.”

R2046.

Amend Resolution No. 2046 as follows:

A portion of the world’s population is gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT). Around the world, political and religious institutions have targeted GLBT persons for discrimination in housing, employment, credit, education, public accommodations, adoption, health care, and access to redress for such discrimination. Some falsely portray the basic human rights laws that protect GLBT persons from hate crimes and discrimination as unfair “legal preference.”

It is particularly disturbing when religious values are used to justify persecution of select groups. Christians proclaim that all people are God’s children deserving the protection of their human and civil rights. Our Social Principles gives us clear direction in this matter:

We insist that all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured (¶ 161F).

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons and groups of persons.

Therefore, all United Methodists are called upon:

1. to refrain from signing petitions and to vote against measures that advocate the denial of basic human and civil rights to anyone;

2. to advocate for initiatives which would prohibit job and housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity throughout the world; and

3. to stand against any political or physical acts that deny human and civil rights and the sacred worth of all persons.

Therefore, it is resolved, that the General Board of Church and Society develop education tools designed to provide for open and healthy dialogue and understanding of sexuality in the world with the specific goal of protecting the human and civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons.
2. to educate congregation and community alike about the position of the United Methodist Discipline on civil rights and its broad applications; and

3. to stand against any political or physical acts that deny human and civil rights and the sacred worth of all persons.

4. to advocate for initiatives which would prohibit job, and housing, and public accommodation discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity throughout the world; and

5. to advocate for initiatives which provide for extra penalties for crimes which are expressly committed for the purpose of harming someone based solely on their race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or disability.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Board of Church and Society develop education tools designed to provide for open and healthy dialogue and understanding of sexuality in the world with the specific goal of protecting the human and civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. We call on the General Board and Conference Boards of Church & Society to support federal, state, and local laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

We do this as part of our Christian witness and ministry. Never let it be said that United Methodists were silent during this attack on the rights of all.

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church believes in the rights of all people, therefore the church should fight against all forms of discrimination against people on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity, including public accommodations.

R2046.

Petition Number: 20947-CB-R2046-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Delete Resolution

Delete Resolution No. 2046. Rights of All Persons.

Rationale:
Despite its high-sounding title, this resolution seeks to legitimize homosexual, bisexual, and transsexual/transgender practices, practices contrary to Scripture and Christian teaching. The Social Principles already address the basic rights of all persons.

R2081.

Petition Number: 20155-CB-R2081-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Pornography and Sexual Violence

Amend Resolution #2081, Pornography and Sexual Violence, as follows:
Throughout the Bible...
In the midst of our imperfect world...
The issue of pornography...
Common understandings of pornography no longer serve us well. Some may believe pornography is a social evil because it is sexual, while others may defend pornography as a universal right to freedom of expression because it is sexual. Yet the truth is that pornography is not only about sexuality; it is often about violence, degradation, exploitation, and coercion.
While there is not widespread agreement on definitions, the following are suggested as the basis for dialogue:

Pornography is sexually explicit material that portrays violence, abuse, exploitation, humiliation, or degradation primarily for the purpose of arousal. Pornography is sexually explicit material intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal. In addition, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornographic.

The impact of pornography on behavior is difficult to measure. While there is little evidence that consuming pornography causes an individual to commit a specific act of sexual aggression, several studies suggest that such consumption is addictive and may predispose an individual to sexual offenses, and that it supports and encourages sexual offenders to continue and escalate their violent and abusive behavior. Few dispute the fact that a society that supports multibillion dollar industries promoting sexual violence as entertainment and portraying the abuse and torture of women and children in a sexual context is a society in trouble.

"Pornography, by its very nature, is an equal opportunity toxin. It damages the viewer, the performer, and the spouses and the children of the viewers and the performers. It is a distortion of power and fosters an unhealthy understanding about sex and relationships. It is more toxic the more you consume, the "harder" the variety you consume and the younger and more vulnerable the consumer. The damage is both in the area of beliefs and behaviors. The belief damage may include Pornography Distortion, Permission-Giving Beliefs and
the attitudes about what constitutes a healthy sexual and emotional relationship. The behavioral damage includes psychologically unhealthy behaviors, socially inappropriate behaviors and illegal behaviors.”

The vast majority of pornography is inextricably linked to the oppression of women. Its appeal will continue as long as sexual arousal is stimulated by images of power and domination of one person over another, most often male over female. Pornography is also fundamentally linked to racism; women of color are invariably portrayed in the most violent and degrading ways. The destructive power of pornography lies in its ability to ensure that attitudes toward sexuality will continue to be influenced by images that negate human dignity, equality, and mutuality. Pornography contributes to alienation in human relationships and distorts the sexual integrity of both women and men.

The expansion of pornography...
Pornographic materials ...

Our position on pornography is clear: We oppose all forms of pornography. We support laws that protect women and children and incarcerate those who are purveyors in the “industry” that instigates and expands child and adult pornography activities.

Addiction to adult pornography...
Addiction to child pornography is a deviant and criminal behavior that must be addressed through rehabilitation and legal means. We deplore the use of the criminal justice system as the sole means to address addiction; however, when the pornography addict resorts to criminal behavior that harms or hurts another person, especially children, or should rehabilitation not succeed, we support legal means by which the addict person with the addiction is held accountable and monitored by the legal system so as to protect the addict and the victims from future harm.

The United Methodist Church...
Understanding pornography...
We call upon The United Methodist Church, its general agencies, annual conferences and local churches, to:
1. educate congregations about the issue of pornography, especially Internet pornography, and enact strict policies that provide oversight of church-owned computers and sexual ethics education and training;
2. seek strategies to reduce the proliferation of pornography;
3. work to break the link between sex and violence by encouraging healthy human relationships;
4. monitor and prevent access by children and youth to pornography and sexually explicit material;
5. participate in efforts to ban child pornography and protect child victims;
6. promote the use of United Methodist and other quality sex education materials that help children and youth gain an understanding of and respect for mutually affirming sexuality;
7. provide educational sessions for parents on minimizing the risk to children from Internet usage. Encourage parents to establish rules for teenagers and children; encourage parents to utilize screening technology;
8. call for social responsibility in all media, including the Internet and in all public libraries, and work with local, national, and international groups that advocate for global media monitoring of images of women, men and children; and
9. participate in ecumenical and/or community efforts that study and address the issue of pornography.

ADOPTED 1988
REVISED AND ADOPTED 2000
REVISED AND READOPTED 2008
RESOLUTION #42, 2004 Book of Resolutions
RESOLUTION #36, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 161G.
(R.2081, United Methodist Book of Resolutions, pp. 148-153)

Rationale:
Our position on pornography is clear: We oppose all forms of pornography. We support laws that protect women and children and incarcerate those who are purveyors in the “industry” that instigates and expands child and adult pornography activities.

R2121.

Petition Number: 20156-CB-R2121-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Suicide

Amend Resolution #2121, Suicide: A Challenge to Ministry, as follows:

Suicide: A Challenge to Ministry
The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that every day, almost 3,000 people commit suicide. For every person who completes a suicide, 20 or more may attempt to end their lives. By 2020, WHO estimates that one person will commit suicide every 20 seconds and one attempt will be made every 1-2 seconds. “In the last 45 years suicide rates have increased by 60% world-
wide. Suicide is among the three leading causes of death in some countries among those aged 15-44 years, and the second leading cause of death in the 10-24 years age group” (WHO). In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control reported 34,598 suicides in 2007, or 11.5 per 100,000, with slightly more than half employing firearms as the method. Among ethnic groups in the United States, Native Americans and Latinos have the highest rates.

Suicide rates vary by age, gender and ethnicity but affect all people everywhere regardless of education or socioeconomic status. “It is generally agreed that not all deaths that are reported as suicides are reported as such. Deaths may be misclassified as homicides or accidents where individuals have intended suicide by putting themselves in harm’s way and lack of evidence does not allow for classifying the death as suicide. Other suicides may be misclassified as accidental or undetermined deaths in deference to community of family” (National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, 2001, p. 32).

The apostle Paul, rooted in his experience of the resurrected Christ, affirms the power of divine love to overcome the divisive realities of human life, including suicide:

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

Paul’s words are indeed sources of hope and renewal for persons who contemplate suicide, as well as for those who grieve the death of friends and family members who have taken their own lives—committed suicide. These words affirm that in those human moments when all seems lost, all may yet be found through full faith.

A Christian perspective on suicide thus begins with an affirmation of faith: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Taking one’s own life Suicide does not separate us from the love of God. Paul’s words are sources of hope and renewal for all persons who contemplate suicide, as well as especially for those who grieve the death of friends and family members who have taken their own lives. These words affirm that in those human moments when all seems lost, all may yet be found through full faith. While the Bible sees the human body as God’s creation (Genesis 1:27) and even as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), it has no specific condemnation of suicide. The whole tenor of the Bible’s sympathy with wounded, fallen human nature implies that God loves and is heartbroken when anyone feels so desperate as to take his or her own life. We in no way encourage or support suicide. We affirm that possibilities for hope and renewal exist for those who have contemplated or attempted suicide.

Unfortunately, the church throughout much of its history has taught that suicide is an unforgivable sin. As a result, Christians, acting out of a sincere concern to prevent suicide, often have contradicted Christ’s call to compassion.

For example, victims have been denounced and presumed to be in hell, and families have been stigmatized with guilt and inflicted with economic and social penalties.

The purpose of this statement is to challenge and guide our caring ministries around the world to reduce the number of suicides and to share God’s grace so that the lives of those touched may be enriched, dignified and enabled for ministry to others.

Demography of Suicide Suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death claiming 30,000 lives each year or one every 18 minutes. More than 4,000 of those who commit suicide annually are under age 25. Because suicide occurs at all ages, it is the fifth leading cause of lost potential life, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Furthermore, it is estimated that between 500 and 1,500 people seek care in emergency rooms each day for suicide attempts. Research indicates that in any given year 20 percent of all high school students seriously consider suicide.

Suicide rates vary by age, gender and ethnicity, but affects all peoples, regardless of education or socioeconomic status. The highest rate of suicide generally occurs among white males in later life. Among some Native American and Alaskan Native groups, however, rates among youth are several times higher than the U.S. population as a whole. About 80 percent of those who commit suicide are male, but females are much more likely to attempt suicide.

It is generally agreed that not all deaths that are reported as suicides are reported as such. Deaths may be misclassified as homicides or accidents where individuals have intended suicide by putting themselves in harm’s way and lack of evidence does not allow for classifying the death as suicide. Other suicides may be misclassified as accidental or undetermined deaths in
deference to community of family.” (National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, 2001, p. 22)

Risk and Protective Factors of Suicide

Specific groups in society appear more vulnerable to suicide than others, especially if they experience certain precipitants in their lives such as disease, loss of family, friends, job, severe trauma, or other stress factors and have easy access to a method for ending their lives. That is, if they are in an enabling environment. An international study conducted in 2004 indicates that Studies show that 90%—87% of those who die by suicide suffer from a diagnosable mental illness—substance abuse or both. [Psychiatric diagnoses in 3,275 suicides: a meta-analysis, Geneviève Arsenault-Lapiere, Caroline Kim and Gustavo Turecki, McGill Group for Suicide Studies, Montreal, Canada, BMC Psychiatry 2004, Published: 4 November 2004]. These factors—vulnerability, precipitating events, enabling environment—must be recognized and addressed if there is to be any reduction to the suicide rate.

Youth experience alienation and rejection by society, family, and the church when dealing with sexual-identity issues, including homosexuality. For many youth, the only perceived way out is suicide.

Social interconnections, social support and life skills are shown to provide protection from suicide. These methods can be learned, and youth training, such as that taught annually by the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Commission, is a major force for suicide intervention and prevention.

Societal Attitudes

The prevailing attitudes of society, both secular and religious, have been to condemn the victim and ignore the victim’s family and friends.

“There are always two parties to a death; the person who dies and the survivors who are bereaved ... the sting of death is less sharp for the person who dies than it is for the bereaved survivor. This, as I see it, is the capital fact about the relation between the living and the dying. There are two parties to the suffering that death inflicts; and in the apportionment of the suffering the survivor takes the brunt.”—(Arnold Toynbee, from Man’s Concern with Death).

Churches have denied funerals and memorial services to bereaved families. Victims’ remains have been banned from cemeteries. Medical examiners have falsified records for families so they can receive economic aid. Federal and state Responses to suicide range from resistance, denial and fear to widespread support for suicide prevention. Social and religious stigma is widespread. One report told of a longtime teacher of church youth who lost her son to suicide. When she returned to her class a few weeks later, she was told that because her son had taken his life, she was no longer to teach. In contrast, several denominations have in recent years adopted informed and more compassionate statements on suicide for their members. Frequently mentioned are the needs to remove social stigmas that discourage youth and others from seeking the help they need and for providing mental health opportunities for those who suffer from depression and suicidal ideation. The understanding support of family and friends as a major factor in providing such effective support is now more widely appreciated.

The Church’s Response

“The church is called to proclaim the gospel of grace and, in its own life, to embody that gospel. It embodies that gospel when it is particularly solicitous of those within its number who are most troubled, and when it reaches beyond its own membership to such people who stand alone” (Dr. Philip Wogaman, while professor of Christian Social Ethics, Wesley Theological Seminary).

Recognizing that the church’s historical response to suicide includes punitive measures intended to prevent suicide and that there is no clear biblical stance on suicide, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church strongly urges the employment of major initiatives to prevent suicide, following the guidelines of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, the General Conference recommends to the boards, agencies, institutions, and local churches of The United Methodist Church that the ministry of suicide prevention should receive urgent attention. Survivors of loss through suicide and suicide attempts should receive priority concern in the overall ministry of the Church. Harsh and punitive measures (such as denial of funeral or memorial services, or ministerial visits) imposed upon families of suicide victims should not only be abandoned, but should be denounced and abandoned. The church should participate in and urge others to participate in a full, community-based effort to address the needs of people at-risk and their families. Each annual conference and local church should respond to issues of ministry related to suicide prevention and family-support services.

It must be emphasized that suicide increases in an environment or society that does not demonstrate a caring attitude toward all persons. The church has a special role in changing societal attitudes and the social environment of individuals and families. To promote this effort, the church should do the following we call upon:
1. United Methodist congregations to
   a) embrace all persons affected by suicide, including young children, in loving community through support groups and responsive social institutions, call upon society through the media to reinforce (following published guidelines for reporting suicide and related matters) the importance of human life and to advocate that public policies include all persons’ welfare, and work against policies that devalue human life and perpetuate cultural risk factors (i.e., nuclear armaments, war, racial and ethnic prejudice);

   b) affirm that we can destroy our physical bodies but not our being in God, and affirm that a person stands in relationship to others, but in our efforts to be more compassionate and care giving, avoid glamorizing the deaths of those who take their lives, especially young people. The loss of every person is a loss in community;

   c) support the United Methodist childcare institutions that provide treatment for emotionally disturbed children, youth, and their families and retirement communities that are home for those where suicide rates are highest; and

   d) strengthen the youth ministries of the local church, helping the young people experience the saving grace of Jesus Christ and participate in the caring fellowship of the church.

2. the General Board of Church and Society shall continue to support international and national public policies that: (a) promote access to mental-health services for all persons regardless of age, (b) remove the stigma associated with mental illness, and (c) encourage “help-seeking” behavior;

3. the General Board of Discipleship shall continue to develop curriculum for biblical and theological study of suicide and related mental and environmental health problems and promote the programs recommended by the American Association of Pastoral Counseling and the use of the scientific research of the World Health Organization, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States National Institutes of Health, and other credible institutions in the private sector, such as organizations within the National Council of Suicide Prevention;

4. the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry shall to develop materials for United Methodist-related seminaries to train church professionals to recognize treatable mental illness associated with suicide (e.g., depression) and to realize when and how to refer persons for treatment; it shall to ensure that all pastoral counseling programs include such training and strategies for ministry to survivors of suicide loss and suicide attempts; and to seek attention to suicide in courses in Bible, Christian Ethics, Preaching and Religious Education as well as Pastoral Care.

Conclusion:
“The church is called to proclaim the gospel of grace and, in its own life, to embody that gospel. It embodies that gospel when it is particularly solicitous of those within its number who are most troubled, and when it reaches beyond its own membership to such people who stand alone” (Dr. Philip Wogaman, professor of Christian Social Ethics, Wesley Theological Seminary).

ADOPTED 1988
AMENDED AND READOPTED 1996
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004
See Social Principles, ¶161N

Rationale:
Taking one’s own life does not separate us from God’s love, but the church throughout much of history has taught that suicide is an unforgivable sin. We need to remove social stigmas that discourage seeking help, and provide mental health opportunities for those who suffer from depression and suicidal ideation.

R3002.
Petition Number: 20200-CB-R3002; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion
Delete Resolution 3002.
Rationale: Relevant provisions of this resolution are proposed to be incorporated into the new resolution, “United Methodist Implementation of the Standards Outlined in the United Nation’s Standard Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” making R3002 redundant.

R3003.
Petition Number: 20201-CB-R3003; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion
Delete Resolution 3003.
Rationale:
Relevant provisions of this resolution are proposed to be incorporated into the new resolution, “United Methodist Implementation of the Standards Outlined in the United Nation’s Standard Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” making R3005 redundant.

R3005.
Petition Number: 20202-CB-R3005; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion
Delete Resolution 3005.
Rationale:
Relevant provisions of this resolution are proposed to be incorporated into the new resolution, “United Methodist Implementation of the Standards Outlined in the United Nation’s Standard Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” making R3005 redundant.

R3006.
Petition Number: 20203-CB-R3006; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion
Delete Resolution 3006.
Rationale:
Relevant provisions of this resolution are proposed to be incorporated into the new resolution, “United Methodist Implementation of the Standards Outlined in the United Nation’s Standard Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” making R3006 redundant.

R3007.
Petition Number: 20204-CB-R3007; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion
Delete resolution 3007.

R3008.
Petition Number: 20205-CB-R3008; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Deletion
Delete Resolution 3008.
Rationale:
Relevant provisions of this resolution are proposed to be incorporated into the new resolution, “United Methodist Implementation of the Standards Outlined in the United Nation’s Standard Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” making R3008 redundant.

R3041.
Petition Number: 20150-CB-R3041-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Alcoholic Beverage Advertising
Amend Resolution #3041 Alcoholic Beverage Advertising at the Olympics as follows:

3041. Alcoholic Beverage Advertising at the Olympics
WHEREAS, the Bible tells us that our bodies are “temples of the living God” (1 Corinthians 6:13-20) and since we are created in God’s own image, we should strive to perfect our bodies in God’s image;
WHEREAS, the founders United Methodism provide historical underpinnings for our strong witness on abstinence from alcohol; Susanna Wesley in a letter to John Wesley included the following advice: “Take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself,” and
WHEREAS, John Wesley in his sermon on the use of money urges, “Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbor in his body. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire commonly called ‘drams’ or spirituous liquor.”

Sports events receive great public attention and attract thousands of fans who attend or watch on television. Advertising of alcoholic beverages at these events is an attempt to increase the sale and consumption of alcohol by the viewing audience, many of whose members are under age. Abuse of alcoholic beverages contributes to many problems in society such as automobile accidents; violence, especially against women and children; risky behavior; and tragic deaths.

General Conference calls for these actions to be taken:
1. The General Board of Church and Society should provide advocacy, education and resources about the harmful effects of alcohol marketing practices and engage United Methodists in action campaigns prioritizing public health. Further that the General Board of Church and Society communicate with government leaders, public health organizations, elected officials, and sports organizations to achieve effective policies that protect public health and guard against predatory practices of the alcohol industry.
2. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits continue its long-standing exclusion of alcohol manufacturers from its investment portfolio, and asks the board to challenge public media in its portfolio not to carry promotions of alcohol products.
3. All United Methodist agencies and related institutions should take into account the church’s Social Principles and alcohol concerns and, specifically, consider the role of alcohol producers and their advertising and marketing practices as a factor in any decision concerning purchasing food products manufactured by them.
4. All United Methodist general agencies communicate, interpret and advocate for this concern with their affiliated institutions.

ADOPTED 2000
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004
See Social Principles, ¶ 1624L.
Rationale:
The United Methodist Church strongly protests the advertising of beer or any other alcoholic beverage at or near Olympics games and other sporting events.

Petition Number: 20149-CB-R3042-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.
Alcohol and Other Drugs

Amend Resolution #3042 Alcohol and Other Drugs as follows:

As God’s children and participants in the gift of abundant life, we recognize the need to respond to those who know brokenness from the widespread abuse of alcohol and other drugs in our world. The experience of God’s saving grace offers wholeness to each individual. In light of the reality of alcohol and other drug abuse, the church has a responsibility to recognize brokenness and to be an instrument of education, healing, and restoration. First, we must be committed to confronting the denial within ourselves that keeps individuals and nations from overcoming their struggle with alcohol and other drug abuse. Second, the alcohol and other drug problem must be understood as a social, economic, spiritual, and health problem. Third, the church has a fundamental role in reorienting the public debate on alcohol and other drugs by shifting the focus from punishment to prevention and treatment. This is rooted in the Christian belief in the ongoing possibilities for transformation in the life of each individual and in our world.

The alcohol and other drug crisis has reached global proportions. More alcohol and other drugs are produced and consumed than ever before. In consuming countries, with their attendant problems of poverty, racism, domestic violence, hopelessness, and material despair, alcohol and other drug abuse is a part of a continuing cycle of economic and spiritual turmoil.

Abuse of legal drugs (alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceuticals) remains a leading cause of disease and death around the world. While recreational use of illegal drugs in the United States has declined, the use of drugs remains socially acceptable as levels of addiction and abuse continue to rise.

Growing numbers of cities, small towns, and rural areas around the world are caught in a web of escalating alcohol and other drug-related violence. As the findings of the regional hearings in the United States stressed: “Drug addiction crosses all ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds.” Social systems are dangerously strained under the heavy weight of alcohol and other drug-related health and social problems. Meanwhile, the supply of drugs from developing countries continues to grow in response to high demand from the developed countries.

The United States policy response to the drug crisis has focused almost exclusively on law enforcement and military solutions. This policy, in some cases, has led to the erosion of precious civil liberties and human rights, especially for poor and minority communities.

International strategies should reflect the need for balanced, equitable economic growth and stable democratic governments in drug-producing developing countries. Most importantly, any alternative strategy must be rooted in local communities. The most creative and effective approaches to the present crisis begin at the local level. Governments should seek to work cooperatively across borders to initiate effective systemic approaches to eradicating the illegal drug trade which impacts addiction rates. For example, growers of opium poppies in Afghanistan have caused easy accessibility to heroin and explosive growth in the rates of heroin addiction in Russia.

The U.S. policy response to the drug crisis has focused almost exclusively on law enforcement and military solutions. This policy, in some cases, has led to erosion of precious civil liberties and human rights, especially for poor and minority communities.

The United Methodist Church has long opposed abuse of alcohol and other drugs. In 1916, the General Conference authorized the formation of a Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals “to make more effectual the efforts of the church to create public sentiment and crystallize the same into successful opposition to the organized traffic in intoxicating liquors.”

During the 1988-92 quadrennium, The United Methodist Church launched a comprehensive Bishops’ Initiative on Drugs and Drug Violence, which, through regional hearings across the United States, deepened the denomination’s awareness of alcohol and other drug problems. The report of these hearings concluded: “Therefore, The United Methodist Church must play a key role in confronting drug and alcohol addiction...”

Today, The United Methodist Church remains committed to curbing drug traffic and the abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

In response to the alcohol and other drug crisis, The United Methodist Church commits itself to a holistic approach, which emphasizes prevention, intervention, treatment, community organization, public advocacy, and abstinence. Out of love for God and our neighbors, the church must have a positive role by offering a renewed spiritual perspective on this crisis. We commend local congregations, annual conferences, and general agencies and seminaries to take action in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

I. Alcohol

Alcohol is a drug, which presents special problems because of its widespread social acceptance. We affirm our long-standing conviction and recommendation that abstinence from alcoholic beverages is a faithful witness to God’s liberating and redeeming love.
Church and Society Committee B

This witness is especially relevant because excessive, harmful, and dangerous drinking patterns are uncritically accepted and practiced. Society glamorizes drinking, and youthful immaturity can be exploited for personal gain. The costs associated with alcohol use/abuse are more than the costs associated with all illegal drugs combined. Worldwide, millions of individuals and their families suffer as a result of alcoholism. The medical consequences of alcohol abuse include fetal alcohol syndrome—which is a preventable cause of mental retardation, cardiac defects, and pre- and postnatal growth retardation. Chronic alcohol consumption can have a damaging effect on every body organ, including brain, liver, heart, stomach, intestines, and mouth. Alcohol is a factor in many other social problems such as crime, poverty, and family disorder. The societal costs of alcohol abuse include lost productivity, increased health-care costs, loss of lives in vehicular accidents, and criminal activity.

Thus, The United Methodist Church bases its recommendation of abstinence on critical appraisal of the personal and societal costs in the use of alcohol. The church recognizes the freedom of the Christian to make responsible decisions and calls upon each member to consider seriously and prayerfully the witness of abstinence as part of his or her Christian commitment. Persons who practice abstinence should avoid attitudes of self-righteousness that express moral superiority and condemnation toward those who do not choose to abstain. Because Christian love in human relationships is primary, abstinence is an instrument of love and sacrifice and always subject to the requirements of love.

Our love for our neighbor obligates us to seek healing, justice, and the alleviation of the social conditions that create and perpetuate alcohol abuse.

Therefore:

1. We urge individuals and local congregations to demonstrate active concern for alcohol abusers and their families. We encourage churches to support the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of problem drinkers.

2. We urge churches to include the problems of alcohol and the value of abstinence as a part of Christian education.

3. We encourage individuals and local congregations to develop prevention education for family, church, and community. We encourage sound empirical research on the social effects of alcohol.

4. We strongly encourage annual conferences to develop leadership training opportunities and resources for local church pastors and laity to help with counseling individuals and families who have alcohol-related problems; counseling those bereaved by alcohol-related deaths and violence; and teaching stress management to church workers in communities with high alcohol abuse.

5. We urge all United Methodist churches to work for a minimum legal-drinking-age of twenty-one years in their respective states/nations.

6. We oppose the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages within the confines of United Methodist Church facilities and recommend that it be prohibited.

7. We ask individuals and local congregations to study and discuss the problem of driving while intoxicated and impaired by alcohol or other drugs, and we support legislation to reduce such activity.

8. We direct the General Board of Discipleship and The United Methodist Publishing House to incorporate educational material on alcohol and other drug problems, including the material on prevention, intervention, treatment, and the value of abstinence throughout its graded literature.

9. We expect United Methodist-related hospitals to treat the alcoholic person with the attention and consideration all patients deserve. We urge the worldwide health-care delivery system to follow this example.

10. We urge all legislative bodies and health-care systems and processes to focus on and implement measures to help meet the special needs of those disproportionately affected by alcohol use.

11. We favor laws to eliminate all advertising and promoting of alcoholic beverages. We urge the General Board of Church and Society and local churches to increase efforts to remove all advertising of alcoholic beverages from the media. We urge special attention to curbing promotions of alcoholic beverages on college campuses as well as racial minority communities.

12. We urge the US Federal Trade Commission and agencies of other governments to continue developing better health hazard warning statements concerning the use of alcohol.

13. We urge the United States government to improve interagency coordination of drug and alcohol abuse efforts so that there are uniform policies and regulations, and we urge the cooperation of all governments in these areas.

II. Tobacco

The use of tobacco is another form of drug abuse, even though it is legal. Overwhelming evidence links cigarette-smoking with lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis. In addition, cigarette-smoking can negatively affect a developing fetus, and secondary smoke is a known carcinogen. The United Methodist Church discourages all persons, particularly children, youths and young adults, from using any form of tobacco.
We commend the suspension of cigarette advertising on radio and television. We are concerned about other advertisements that associate smoking with physical and social maturity, attractiveness, and success, especially those targeted at youth, racial minorities, and women. We support the rules of the US Federal Trade Commission and agencies of other governments requiring health warning statements in cigarette packaging. We are also concerned that the tobacco industry ismarketing tobacco in developing countries.

Therefore:
1. We recommend that tobacco use be banned in all church facilities.
2. We recommend a tobacco-free environment in all public areas.
3. We recommend the prohibition of all commercial advertising of tobacco products.
4. We support expanded research to discover the specific mechanisms of addiction to nicotine. We urge the development of educational methods that effectively discourage the use of tobacco and methods to assist those who wish to stop using tobacco.
5. We urge the Department of Agriculture and other government agencies to plan for and assist the orderly economic transition of the tobacco industry—tobacco growers, processors, and distributors—into industries more compatible with the general welfare of the people.
6. We support comprehensive tobacco control policies and legislation that includes provisions to: a) support The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the Global Tobacco Treaty and its provisions; b) reduce the rate of youth smoking by increasing the price of cigarettes; c) protect tobacco farmers by helping them shift from tobacco to other crops; d) give the US Food and Drug Administration full authority to regulate nicotine as a drug in the United States; and e) fund anti-tobacco research and advertising, as well as education and prevention campaigns.

III. Other Drugs
Pharmacologically, a drug is any substance that by its chemical nature alters the structure or function of any living organism. This broad definition encompasses a wide range of substances, many of which are psychoactive and have the potential for abuse. These include marijuana, narcotics, sedatives and stimulants, psychedelics, and hallucinogens. Additionally, commonly used products such as glue, paint thinners, Spice, K2, incense, bath salts and gasoline have the potential to be abused as inhalants. The United Methodist Church grieves the widespread misuse of drugs and other commonly used products that alter mood, perception, consciousness, and behavior of persons among all ages, classes, and segments of our society.

Abuse of drugs has risen dramatically in recent years. Some of these abused drugs are legal and some not. Very many abused drugs have a medicinal use. Numerous medicinal drugs, both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) have no attraction other than their medicinal value. Others, however, notably pain relievers, stimulants and tranquilizers, are perceived to provide a pleasurable sensation, and are thus subject to abuse. Other such drugs because of their psychoactive qualities are primarily abused for their mind-altering qualities. These drugs medical value, if any, is strictly secondary.

Prescription drug abuse has risen dramatically in recent years. Abuse of a prescription medication not prescribed for you, or taking it for reasons or in dosages other than as prescribed can produce serious health effects, including addiction. Commonly abused classes of prescription medications include opioids for pain, central nervous system depressants for anxiety and sleep disorders, and stimulants for ADHD and narcolepsy. Misuse of legal drugs has both a demand component and a supply component that must be strictly regulated.

A. Marijuana
Like alcohol and tobacco, marijuana is frequently a precursor to the use of other drugs. The active ingredient is THC, which affects the user by temporarily producing feelings of euphoria or relaxation. An altered sense of body image and bouts of exaggerated laughter are commonly reported. However, studies reveal that marijuana impairs short-term memory, altering sense of time and reducing the ability to perform tasks requiring concentration, swift reactions, and coordination. Some countries permit the use of marijuana in medicines. Recently, some states in the United States have passed legislation permitting medical use of marijuana. Some studies indicate circumstances in which marijuana can have an important palliative medicinal effect unavailable through other means. The medical use of any drug, however, should not be seen as encouraging recreational use of it. We urge all persons to abstain from all use of marijuana, unless it has been legally prescribed in a form appropriate for treating a particular medical condition.

B. Sedatives and Stimulants
Sedatives, which include barbiturates and tranquilizers, are prescribed appropriately for treatment of anxiety. These legally prescribed drugs need to be taken only under appropriate medical supervision. The use of this class of drugs can result in dependence.

Severe physical dependence on barbiturates can develop at doses higher than therapeutic doses, and
withdrawal is severe and dangerous. The combination of alcohol and barbiturates is potentially lethal.

Stimulants range from amphetamines such as methamphetamine (“crystal meth”) to mild stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine. Prescribed for obesity, sleep disorders, hyperactivity, fatigue, and depression, stimulants produce a temporary sense of vitality, alertness, and energy.

Unlike other stimulants, cocaine has limited medical uses. When the powder form is inhaled, cocaine is a highly addictive central nervous system stimulant that heightens the body’s natural response to pleasure and creates a euphoric high, and has the potential to be extremely lethal. “Crack,” a crystallized form of cocaine, is readily available because of its lesser cost. Addiction often comes from one use of the substance.

C. Psychedelics or Hallucinogens

Psychedelics or hallucinogens, which include LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, PCP, and DMT, produce changes in perception and altered states of consciousness. Not only is there limited medical use of psychedelics or hallucinogens limited, if present at all, but the use of these drugs may result in permanent psychiatric problems. We urge complete abstinence from such drugs.

We urge all persons to abstain from all use of sedatives and stimulants unless legally prescribed in a form appropriate for treating a particular medical condition, or legally available over the counter and is used in moderation in accordance with its labeled purpose.

D. Narcotics

Narcotics are prescribed for the relief of pain, but the risk of physical and psychological dependencies is well documented. Derived from the opium plant, natural narcotics include heroin, morphine, codeine, and percodan, while synthetic narcotics include oxycodone, methadone, and meperidine.

E. Medication Abuse

Above and beyond the forms of abuse described previously, one has to address a “medical culture” that sees problem solution primarily in pharmaceutical terms. This may be expressed in the home when children break into their parents’ medications to seek some pleasant sensation, or the purchase of over-the-counter cold medications to isolate a psychoactive component. It may also be expressed through physicians who prefer to medicate a patient to dull the experience of childbirth or grieving, or who prescribe medications when the real need of the patient is to address life challenges. Ultimately, this reflects an underlying philosophy that the most profound existential and spiritual challenges have a chemical solution.

Therefore, as The United Methodist Church:
1. We oppose the use of all drugs, except in cases of appropriate medical supervision.
2. We encourage the church to develop honest, objective, and factual drug education for children, youths, and adults as part of a comprehensive prevention education program.
3. We urge the church to coordinate its efforts with ecumenical, interfaith, and community groups in prevention, rehabilitation, and policy statements.
4. We encourage the annual conferences to recognize the unique impact of drugs and its related violence upon urban and rural areas and provide appropriate ministries and resources.
5. We strongly encourage annual conferences to develop leadership training opportunities and resources for local church pastors and laity to help them with counseling individuals and families who have alcohol and other drug-related problems; counseling those bereaved by alcohol and other drug-related deaths and violence; and teaching stress management to church workers in communities with high alcohol and other drug activity.
6. We support comprehensive tobacco control policies and legislation that includes provisions to: a) reduce the rate of youth smoking by increasing the price of cigarettes; b) protect tobacco farmers by helping them shift from tobacco to other crops; c) give support the US Food and Drug Administration full authority to regulate tobacco and nicotine as a drug in the United States; d) fund anti-tobacco research and advertising, as well as education and prevention campaigns.
7. We urge redevelopment of more effective methods of treatment of drug abuse and addiction.
8. We support government policies that restrict access to over-the-counter drugs such as ephedrine derivatives that can be converted to illegal and addictive drugs; for example, “crystal meth.”
9. We support government policies concerning drugs that are compatible with our Christian beliefs about the potential transformation of all individuals.
10. We urge all United Methodist churches to work for a minimum legal drinking age of twenty-one years in their respective states/nations.
11. We support strong, humane law-enforcement efforts against the illegal sale of all drugs, and we urge that those arrested for possession and use of illegally procured drugs be subject to education and rehabilitation.
12. We note with deep concern that U.S. law enforcement against possession and use of illegally
procured drugs has resulted in a dramatic increase in jail and prison populations, often consisting disproportionately of poor, minority, and young persons, often many times due to huge sentencing disparities, between possession of “crack” cocaine (the cheaper form, used more by poor minorities, where possession of only 5 grams is subject to a five-year mandatory minimum sentence) and possession of powder cocaine (the more expensive and purer form where possession of 500 grams or more is necessary to invoke a five-year mandatory minimum sentence), even though the two forms are pharmacologically identical, and Therefore, we call for fairness in sentencing through reform of sentencing guidelines governing drug laws the possession and use of powder and crack cocaine. In particular, we support the drug-court system that more fairly and comprehensively addresses problems of drug addiction with policies and sentences that encompass hope, transformation and compassion for the addicted person.

ADOPTED 1996
AMENDED AND ADOPTED 2000
amended and readopted 2004
amended and readopted 2008
resolution #83, 2004 Book of Resolutions
resolution #73, 2000 Book of Resolutions

Rationale:
We oppose the use of all drugs, except under appropriate medical supervision, and we need to respond to those who know brokenness from the widespread abuse of alcohol and other drugs. We encourage the church to develop objective, factual drug education for children, youths and adults.

R3067.

Petition Number: 20215-CB-R3067; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Readoption

Readopt Resolution 3067.
Rationale:
This resolution is due to expire yet several of the actions it calls for remain unfulfilled, underscoring the need for The United Methodist Church to continue to speak out on reparations and the harm done to African Americans during the history of the United States.

R3087.

Petition Number: 20129-CB-R3087-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Prohibit Corporal Punishment

Amend Resolution 3087 for Re-adoption:
Prohibit Corporal Punishment in Schools and Child-Care Facilities

Whereas, Some schools and child-care facilities are the only institutions in America around the world permit in which striking another person for the purpose of causing physical pain is legal. Whereas, Corporal punishment is humiliating and degrading to children, and sometimes causing emotional and sometimes physical injury. Whereas, it is difficult to imagine Jesus of Nazareth condoning any action that is intended to hurt children physically or psychologically. Jesus’ teachings on loving our neighbor and living in peace with one another are foundational for opposition to corporal punishment in institutions in ministry with and to children. Whereas, Corporal punishment sends a message that hitting smaller and weaker people is acceptable. Whereas, corporal punishment is used most often on poor children, minorities, children with disabilities, and boys.
Whereas, there As people of faith who value children and who are committed to non-violent conflict resolution, we are called to identify are effective alternatives to corporal punishment that teach children to be self-disciplined rather than to submit out of fear. Whereas, schools and child-care centers should inspire children to enjoy learning, and school and child-care personnel should be able to encourage positive behavior without hitting children.

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church calls upon all states governments and educational institutions to enact laws prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and day and residential child-care facilities.

ADOPTED 2004
Resolution #69, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶162C.
Rationale:
Corporal punishment is humiliating and degrading to children, causing emotional and sometimes physical injury.
Renewal

Renew Current Resolution #3087 - Prohibit Corporal Punishment in Schools and Child-Care Facilities.

Renew Current Resolution #3088 - Discipline Children without Corporal Punishment.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Amend Resolution #3184 Guidelines for the Oversight of Developing Genetically Modified Organisms as follows:

“In the beginning ... All of creation ... Human communities... Reflecting on this diversity... We have exploited... Humans... Given this context... Genetic modifications...

Among the specific concerns that warrant our study and action are:

- The distribution of genetically engineered grains to starving, impoverished, and war-ravaged peoples where the grain cannot be used later for crops to be sold in developed world markets. The distribution of food aid that includes genetically modified grain to impoverished or war-ravaged countries that can restrict or inhibit their ability to participate in world markets and undermine their own sustainable agriculture; Many African countries that might receive genetically modified grain from the US would not be able to later export that grain to Europe or Japan where genetically modified grain imports are restricted. They also may not be able to export the grain if the strains have been patented.

- The failure of refusal by food donor nations to mill genetically modified grains before distribution so the grains' seeds would not contaminate genetically engineered, organism-free ecosystems is an additional problem to prevent the contamination of the recipient countries' ecosystems;

- The failure of grain exporters to disclose the genetically modified nature of the grain being distributed;

- Engineering The production of pharmaceuticals using genetically engineered (GE) plants and animals raising concerns over their safe use, the impact of the production processes on animals and the possibility of these plants and animals entering the food supply; to produce pharmaceuticals;

- Including the moral aspects of these procedures particularly on animals

- Including the dangers of such animals and plants ending up in the food supply

- The Release of genetically engineered (GE) seeds, fish and other animals and growing GE crops without adequate testing of their environmental impact including effects on wild species; without adequate safety and ecological impact testing;

- The role of profit-focused corporate interests raising concerns over legal liability and intellectual property rights;

- Including the role of profit-oriented corporate interests in the process

- Including the lack of scientific evidence supporting a declaration of “substantial equivalence between GE and non-GE foods.”

- Including the dearth of knowledge of the long-term health effects of consuming genetically modified organisms;

- Including genetic contamination of nongenetically modified species and varieties and the impact on organic farmers

- Including issues of legal liability and intellectual property

- Including the problem of contaminating exports to preclude organic farming standards

- The effects of genetically modified traits in the overall food system of a region, their potential to increase trends toward monoculture of crops and further reduce farm animal and fish diversity;

- Increasing trend toward monoculture of crops
• Increasing elimination of farm animal and fish diversity.
  • The engineering of genetically modified organisms to allow greater use of specific pesticides and the unintended development of genetically engineered weeds that require ever stronger herbicides to manage.
  • Including the need to use more rather than less pesticides as advertised
  • Including the accidental development of unintended development genetically engineered weeds that need stronger and stronger herbicides to be killed.
  • The adverse economic impacts on farmers of using genetically modified crops.
  • The engineering of toxins into food crops as insecticides and the concomitant expansion of insect resistance to those toxins. These engineered toxins can have particularly adverse impacts on organic farmers and lead to the spread of disease through pesticide-resistant insects.
  • Including the adverse impact on organic farmers whose only pesticide has been naturally occurring insect toxins.
  • Including the impact of pesticide-resistant insects on the spread of disease.
  • The lack of labeling of fields containing GE crops which can have adverse consequences for surrounding farmers seeking to use non-GE crops.
  • The lack of regulation and universal labeling of genetically modified foods which should provide clarity to distinguish
  • Including clear labeling to distinguish true organic foods and organically grown products that come from involved those that contain genetically modified organisms.
  • The production and marketing of agricultural products that have been engineered to produce no seed or sterile seed so that farmers cannot plant seed from the crops they have raised.
  • The promotion of genetically engineered foods by multinational financial and trade institutions’ promotion of GE as a solution to global problems of hunger, and the interpretation and enforcement of trade rules to prevent local control over the use of genetically modified organisms.
  • Including interpretation of World Trade rules to prevent local governments from determining their own rules regarding genetically modified organisms.
  • Including the imposition of the use of GE crops as a condition of receiving international assistance.
  • The loss of genetic diversity, including the consequences of the loss of native seed and animal varieties, is a concern.
  • Including the impact of “industrial agriculture” on the impulse to create monocultures.
  • And in particular, the basic theological and ethical concerns raised by genetic engineering of plants and animals and the patenting of genes, microorganisms, plants, and animals raise major ethical and ethical concerns including which can give rise to the false notion that the gifts of God’s good Creation and life itself might be restricted for a single party or entity’s “use,” the “use” of any form of life to a single party or entity when we view all of creation as a gift.
  • The moral and ethical questions surrounding the limiting proscription of the “use” of any form of life to a single party or entity in the face of creation as a gift.
  • Including the moral and ethical issues surrounding the proscription of access to knowledge that might help diagnose or treat diseases.

Four Three Ethical Guidelines
It is possible to change the technology-driven direction of agriculture and rural development to one that is respectful and appreciative of creation as a gift of God that reflects our responsibilities as stewards and establishes right relationships of sustainability with creation. But we need guidelines. A sustainable agriculture must have three four attributes:

1. It must be just. A just society and a just agriculture provide the means whereby people can share in the inheritance of the earth so that all life can fully be maintained in freedom and community. The purpose of a just agriculture should be the maintenance and renewal of the necessary resources for food, clothing, and shelter, for now and for the future, recognizing the needs for space and sustenance of all of God’s creatures. It is an agriculture that is humane to both the cultivated animals and the wild animals near the farmed land.

2. It must be participatory. For an agriculture to be just, everyone has the right to be consulted and the needs of all species to thrive be considered. Participation in human society and in the ongoing process of creation is the necessary condition for justice. Ethical human participation requires recognition of everyone’s right to be consulted and understood, regardless of that person’s economic, political, or social status. Participation is not possible without power. In such decision-making, everyone has the right to be consulted about such issues as expenditures for armaments, nuclear power, and forms of employment, social services, and so forth. However, the power of participation in decision making should be weighted to local participation due to local community relationships and local risks rather than to economic or political centers of power.
3. It must be appropriate. Appropriate agriculture is appropriate to the region, context, and conditions of the area. It is one where the idea of permanent carrying capacity is maintained, where success (agriculture, energy production, forestry, water use, industrial activity) is measured by whether or not it sustains the soil and the ecosystems necessary to assure continuing supplies of healthful food. Rather than by the criteria of yields per acre or profits, appropriate agriculture ensures that waste products can be absorbed back into the ecosystem without damage.

4. It must be ecologically sound. Ecologically sound agriculture does not destroy the very basis of the ecosystem that agriculture works within. It respects the natural diversity of the place and attempts to preserve space for native life forms to survive in the air, water, and soil around the agricultural development. It looks to the effects that different kinds of agriculture and aquaculture can have on the health of the entire planet through changing the climate or depleting forests.

Sustainable agriculture—just, participatory, and appropriate, and ecologically sound—would meet basic human needs for food and fiber, regenerate and protect ecosystems, be economically viable, enhance the quality of life for farm families, be supportive of rural communities, be socially just, and be compatible with spiritual teachings that recognize the earth, including other creatures, as a common heritage and responsibility. For Christians, the idea of sustainability flows directly from the biblical call to human beings to be caretakers of God’s Creation.

Be it resolved that:

The General Board of Church and Society continue to monitor developments in this area, but especially advocate for the following:

1. The right of nations to set their own standards related to genetically modified organisms and their importation.

2. Labeling of genetically modified plants, animals, and microorganisms that will be used for human foods, medicines, and bio-fuels.

3. Adequate testing of genetically modified organisms to assure their safety to human health and the environment.

4. National and international regulations for the oversight of genetically engineered organisms and those being developed through synthetic biology techniques.

5. Ratification by countries where there is a United Methodist presence of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocol on Biosafety, which governs the international release of genetically modified organisms.

That other agencies of the church work to educate about the concerns raised in this resolution.

ADOPTED 2004

Resolution #104, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 162O.

Rationale:

We must address the threats to bio- and agricultural diversity posed by genetic engineering of plants and animals that are emerging within the context of a history of the overuse of land, the homogenization of agriculture, and the brutal exploitation of nonhuman animal life in search of ever higher profits.

R3201.

Petition Number: 20806-CB-R3201; Davis, Thomas E. - Bossier City, LA, USA.

Health Care in the US

Delete Resolution 3201.

Rationale:

This resolution advocates that the United Methodist Church subscribes fully and without doubt to the philosophy of Socialized Medicine in the United States. Unfortunately, Socialized Medicine will be the first step in leading us toward a devastating pitfall in the future that will eventually destroy Christianity in America, to wit...

R3203.

Petition Number: 20151-CB-R3203-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Health Care Justice Sabbaths

Amend Resolution #3203 Observance of Health Care Justice Sabbaths as follows:

Health Care Justice Sabbaths have been observed by the United Methodist and other congregations since their inauguration in 1994 by the Interreligious Health Care Access Campaign.

Health Care Justice Sabbath observances encourage persons of faith to demonstrate their faithfulness to the goal of health care for all in keeping with the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and in recognition of the restoration of health as a sign of the presence of God’s kingdom. Rather than specifying a particular date for
this observance, the campaign encouraged congregations and congregations are encouraged to select a Sabbath date that reflected their individual commitment to issues of health and wholeness. In support of this interfaith effort and in faithful witness to the beliefs articulated in the United Methodist Social Principle on Health Care (¶161T), The United Methodist Church calls congregations to designate one Sunday during the calendar year for the observance of a Health Care Justice Sabbath.

The Health Care Justice Sabbath should be a day of rejoicing and reflection. It should be a time for thanksgiving for the health and well-being enjoyed by many in the congregation and in our world community as well as and thanksgiving for the diverse caregivers who minister to our needs. It is a time to reflect on those who are sick, who struggle with chronic illnesses, who lack access to the health-care services they need, and who are denied those basic elements essential to achieving health. It is a time to reflect on acts of health care mercy and acts of health care justice and how each supports the other. It is a time to focus on our belief that health care is a right and a responsibility, public and private. It is a time to challenge our communities of faith to seek their role in making “Health Care for All” a reality.

To assist congregations in their observance of a Health Care Justice Sabbath, resources will be made available by the General Board of Church and Society. See Social Principles, ¶162T.

Rationale:

Health Care Justice Sabbaths encourage persons of faith to demonstrate faithfulness to the goal of health care for all in keeping with the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and in recognition of the restoration of health as a sign of the presence of God’s kingdom.

R3204.

Petition Number: 20988-CB-R3204-G; Puhr, Roger - Moss Point, MS, USA for Mississippi Annual Conference.

Delete Resolution


Rationale:

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) lobbies to defend and expand abortion rights—that is, legal rights to all abortions, whatever the circumstances, without exception—in American law. “RCRC was founded in 1973 to safeguard the newly won constitutional right to abortion,” according to The Reverend Carlton...

R3204.

Petition Number: 20990-CB-R3204-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA. 14 similar petitions.

Withdraw from RCRC

Delete current Resolution 3204 and substitute the following:

3204. Disapproval of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

WHEREAS, “RCRC [Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, originally named the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights] was founded in 1973 to safeguard the newly won constitutional right to abortion” in the United States, according to The Reverend Carlton W. Veazey, RCRC president and CEO (www.rcrc.org/about/index.cfm);

WHEREAS, RCRC lobbies to defend and expand the absolute right to abortion — that is, the right to all abortions, whatever the circumstances, without exception — in American law;


WHEREAS, RCRC, in its “Words of Choice: Countering Anti-Choice Rhetoric” (www.rcrc.org/pdf/Words of Choice.pdf), argues against the following words, phrases, and moral claims found in The United Methodist Church’s central teaching on abortion (The Book of Discipline [2008], Paragraph 161J): “abortion as...birth control;” “[abortion as...gender selection;” “adoption;” “crisis pregnancy centers;” “mother;” “notification and consent;” “partial-birth abortion” opposition; “sacredness of...life;” “sanctity of...life;” and “unborn child;”

WHEREAS, RCRC works for abortion rights in any and all circumstances, while The United Methodist Church teaches that moral discernment, on matters related to abortion, is essential; because the church is “equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child,” “cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control,” and “unconditionally reject[s] [abortion] as a means of...
WHEREAS, RCRC has consistently lobbied government for the preservation of partial-birth abortion rights, while The United Methodist Church has since 2000 “opposed[d] the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call[s] for the end of this practice” with rare exceptions (Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS, RCRC supported the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA, which if adopted would overturn all federal, state, and local laws restricting abortion), while The United Methodist Church’s General Board of Church and Society withdrew its support of FOCA in 2008, because The United Methodist Church’s position on abortion (Paragraph 161J of The Book of Discipline [2008]) is inconsistent with FOCA (“Living in the Truth,” Lifewatch [03/01/09], p. 6, www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-09.pdf);

WHEREAS, RCRC’s president and CEO, during the national debate on health care reform, called for the taxpayer funding of abortion: “Reproductive health care, including abortion services, is an essential component of women’s health...” (Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, www.streetprophets.com/story/2009/7/7/15472/95013, 07/07/09);

WHEREAS, Bishop Scott Jones, of the Kansas Area of The United Methodist Church, represented the position of many United Methodists when he stated: “While we United Methodists believe that persons have the right to health care, abortion is not normally a health care issue. Rather, it is sinful behavior. Proposals in the recent health care debate to provide tax funding for abortions are very misguided. What you fund with tax dollars will increase.” (“The Once and Future Church,” Lifewatch [03/01/10], p. 4, www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-10.pdf);

WHEREAS, Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker, of the Florida Area of The United Methodist Church, has declared: “At the 2004 General Conference, the church endorsed our [United Methodist] agencies’ continued participation in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice without much of a debate about how participation in this coalition compromises our public witness against abortion” (“Do No Harm!,” Lifewatch [03/01/05], p. 3, www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-05.pdf);

WHEREAS, the 2008 General Conference narrowly voted, when many African delegates were not present at the conference, to continue participation in RCRC;

WHEREAS, “the members of our denomination are not of one mind over the precise conditions in which abortion can be supported” (#2027, The Book of Resolutions [2008], p. 123), and therefore agencies of The United Methodist Church should not be permitted to join a political lobby for abortion, such as RCRC; and

WHEREAS, other mainline denominations, with positions on abortion similar to that of The United Methodist Church, have either never chosen to be members of RCRC (e.g., the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Disciples of Christ) or severed past ties with RCRC (American Baptist Churches USA and the Northern Province of the Moravian Church).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby withdraws the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/Women’s Division from organizational membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).

Rationale:
On abortion, The United Methodist Church and RCRC have starkly different aims. The church teaches moral discernment, while RCRC lobbies for pro-choice politics (including partial-birth abortion). Unfortunately, United Methodist membership in RCRC has not redirected or reformed RCRC’s work. Therefore, our church institutions should withdraw from RCRC.

R3243.

Petition Number: 20219-CB-R3243-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Amend Resolution 3243 as follows:

#3243 The Church and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic

In response to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, The United Methodist Church will work cooperatively with colleague churches in every region. The Bible is replete with calls to nations, religious leaders, and faithful people to address the needs of those who are suffering, ill, and in distress. Jesus Christ reached out and healed those who came to him, including people who were despised and rejected because of their illnesses and afflictions. His identification with suffering people was made clear when he said that “whatevsoever you do to the least of these, you also do to me” (Matthew 25:40, paraphrased). His commandment to “do to others as you
would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12) is a basis for the church for full involvement and compassionate response.

The Global Impact of HIV/AIDS

The global statistics are grim. At the end of 2006, 39.5 million adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS in the world; of these 37.2 million were adults and 2.3 million were children.

At this time, there is no cure for HIV/AIDS. It is mainly spread through intimate sexual contact with an infected person, by needle-sharing among injecting drug users, and, less commonly, through transfusions of infected blood or blood clotting factors. HIV can also be contracted if unsterilized needles tainted with infected blood are used by health care workers, tattooists, and acupuncturists. Other routes of transmission are through transplantation of organs from infected individuals, donated semen, and skin piercing instruments used in cosmetic, traditional, and ceremonial practices. AIDS is not caused by witchcraft, mosquito bites, or nonsexual contact such as shaking hands or hugs.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic compounds the strain on institutions and resources, while at the same time undermining social systems that enable people to cope with adversity. In seriously affected nations, HIV/AIDS compromises education and health systems, shrinks economic output and undermines sociopolitical stability. With life expectancy falling and the labor force becoming decimated, many countries are facing low economic growth rates. In parts of southern Africa, a food shortage has added to the woes. Agricultural productivity is declining as more and more women and young people are infected and become unable to work in the fields. The ramifications of HIV/AIDS are particularly grave for societies where the extended family is the system of social security for the care of elderly people, those who are ill, and orphans.

Women and Children

Women and children have been affected in increasing numbers. Deaths from AIDS have left 13.15 million orphans in Africa; the number is expected to rise to 25 million by 2010. These children are being looked after by extended families, older siblings in child-headed households, and orphan trusts. Older relatives, especially women, have to bear an enormous burden of taking care of the orphans. In countries that are also affected by war and civil strife, children and young people are more vulnerable to becoming infected with HIV because they are at the higher risk of sexual abuse, forced military recruitment and prostitution.

This burden is increased when women are also faced with stigma and discrimination and the hardships of civil strife, war, and famine. Women often have less status and less access to education, health care, and economic security than men, which in turn affect their ability to protect themselves from infection. Many cannot say “no” or negotiate the use of condoms because they fear they will be divorced or that their husband or other male partner will respond by battering them. Pregnant women who are HIV positive may be subjected to forced sterilizations or abortions. The use of rape and sexual violence as instruments of war adds a further serious dimension. As of 2006, according to UNAIDS, 17.7 million of the 39.5 million persons infected with AIDS are women.

Health budgets and resources are being adversely affected in countries that have to care for increasing numbers of citizens afflicted with HIV/AIDS. For example, it costs approximately $300 per year to treat a person for a year using the cheapest form of generic antiretroviral drugs, but very few can afford this medicine in sub-Saharan Africa. Antiretroviral drugs and other medicines must be made available at an affordable cost, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Until effective preventive strategies are implemented, helpful medicines are made universally available, and an effective vaccine is introduced, the future is bleak for deterring the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The suffering borne by individuals, families, and communities and the strain placed on health-care facilities and national economies, call for intensified cooperative efforts by every sector of society, including the church, to slow and prevent the spread of HIV, provide appropriate care of those already ill and speed the development of an effective and affordable vaccine. Those caring for AIDS patients need support too. Communities, health-care workers, and home-care programs must be equipped to meet the challenge.

Drugs and AIDS

Of the 39.5 million persons living with HIV, two to three million are injecting drug users. Many more have used, and continue to use, alcohol and other drugs.

The international drug trade knows no boundaries or frontiers and has no specific national identity. It is now worth an estimated $400 billion per year and is organized and managed like a multinational corporation. Drugs of all kinds are now produced in all regions of the world. Despite its illegality, drug production and distribution has become a major source of revenue for many countries. The most lucrative markets remain in the United States and Western Europe, but consumption is spreading fast in Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and throughout Africa.

In the United States, an estimated one-third of HIV/AIDS cases are related to injecting drug use.
Substance abuse is directly tied to the increase in HIV/AIDS among women. Women are primarily infected with HIV through injecting drugs (48 percent) or heterosexual transmission from an infected partner, who is often himself a drug user (54 percent).

Research has shown over and over again that drug use, injected or otherwise, can affect decision-making, especially about engaging in unsafe sex, which in turn promotes the spread of AIDS. A research study conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse revealed that of the 15- to 24-year-olds surveyed:

- 50 percent say “people their age” mix alcohol or drugs and sex “a lot”;
- Percent believe that their peers often don’t use condoms when alcohol and drugs are in the picture;
- Percent want more information about how alcohol or drugs might affect their decisions about having sex.

**The Role of United Methodists**

The global AIDS pandemic provides a nearly unparalleled opportunity for witness to the gospel through service, advocacy, and other healing ministries. United Methodist public health specialists, health workers, social workers, teachers, missionaries, clergy, and laity live and work in areas where the AIDS pandemic is spreading. United Methodist congregations, schools, health facilities, women’s, men’s, and youth groups can play a major role by providing awareness, support, education, and care to those affected by HIV/AIDS.

**Recommendations:**

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the world, The United Methodist Church commits itself to a holistic approach of awareness, education, prevention, treatment, community organizing and public advocacy. Out of our love and concern for our brothers, sisters and children in our local and global communities, the following actions are strongly recommended.

**A. Local congregations worldwide to:**

1. be places of openness where persons whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS can name their pain and reach out for compassion, understanding, and acceptance in the presence of persons who bear Christ’s name;
2. provide care and support to individuals and families whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS;
3. be centers of education and provide group support and encouragement to help men, women, and youth refrain from activities and behaviors associated with transmission of HIV infection;
4. advocate for increased levels of funding for HIV/AIDS. In the United States, persons should contact their US Congresspersons and urge adequate funding for the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria as well as the United States’ bilateral initiatives on AIDS. Additionally, funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) must be guaranteed from the United States each year. UNFPA works diligently to provide resources for reproductive health of women and girls as well as HIV/AIDS prevention;
5. observe World AIDS Day on or around December 1 each year. Materials for World AIDS Day are available from the Web sites of UNAIDS (http://www.unAIDS.org), the General Board of Global Ministries (http://gbgm-umc.org/health/), and the General Board of Church and Society (http://www.umc-gbc.org);
6. include problems of alcohol, drug abuse and unsafe sex and the value of abstinence as part of Christian education;
7. provide support, comfort, and care to those afflicted with alcohol-related problems, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS within their given mandate and work to implement needle exchange programs locally as a means of reducing the spread of AIDS;
8. make available creative programs and activities for school children, youth, and young adults that keep them away from alcohol and drug abuse; and
9. promote and make available peer education models based on empowerment and self-determination.

**B. General program agencies to:**

1. assist related health institutions to obtain supplies and equipment to screen donated blood and provide voluntary HIV testing;
2. support efforts by churches, projects, and mission personnel within regions to promote disease prevention and to respond to the needs of family care providers and extended families;
3. facilitate partnership relationships between institutions and personnel from region to region, as appropriate, to share models and effective approaches regarding prevention, education, care, and support for individuals and families with HIV/AIDS;
4. assist health workers to obtain regional specific, timely updates on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of HIV/AIDS;
5. facilitate the sharing of pastoral-care resources and materials dedicated to the care of persons and families whose lives have been touched by HIV;
6. respond to requests from the regions to develop training seminars and workshops for church-related personnel in cooperation with ecumenical efforts, private voluntary organizations, and programs already existing in the regions;
7. advocate national, regional, and international cooperation in the development, availability, and transport...
of appropriate/relevant equipment and supplies for infection control, disease prevention, and treatment;

8. support programs that focus on the enhancement of women through economic justice and education as well as programs that provide comprehensive reproductive health services, family planning, and HIV/AIDS prevention information;

9. work cooperatively with the Office of the Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence (SPSARV) of the General Board of Global Ministries on issues related to drugs and AIDS; and

10. urge the federal government to improve interagency cooperation and coordination to fight the double scourge of drugs and AIDS. (General Board of Church and Society and General Board of Global Ministries).

C. Annual conferences to:
1. explore HIV prevention and care needs within their areas and to develop conference-wide plans for appropriate, effective responses;
2. promote pastoral responses to persons with HIV/AIDS that affirm the presence of God’s love, grace, and healing mercies;
3. encourage every local church to reach out through proclamation and education to help prevent the spread of HIV infection and to utilize and strengthen the efforts and leadership potential of men’s, women’s, and youth groups.

D. Episcopal leaders to:
1. issue pastoral letters calling for compassionate ministries and the development of educational programs that recognize the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a public health threat of major global and regional significance; and
2. provide a level of leadership equal to the suffering and desperation that individuals, families, and communities are experiencing.
3. Partner with the UMC Global AIDS Fund to mobilize funding for AIDS projects around the world and in the annual conferences.

God’s Unconditional Love and Christ’s Healing Ministry

The unconditional love of God, witnessed to and manifested through Christ’s healing ministry, provides an ever-present sign and call to the church and all persons of faith to join efforts to prevent the spread of HIV, provide care and treatment to those who are already infected and ill, uphold the preciousness of God’s creation through proclamation and affirmation, and be harbingers of hope, mercy, goodness, forgiveness, and reconciliation within the world.

The United Methodist Church unequivocally condemns stigmatization and discrimination of persons with HIV/AIDS and violence perpetrated against persons who are or presumed to be infected with HIV. The United Methodist Church advocates the full involvement of the church at all levels to be in ministry with, and to respond fully to the needs of, persons, families, and communities whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS. In keeping with our faith in the risen Christ, we confess our belief that God has received those who have died, that the wounds of living loved ones will be healed, and that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is present among us as we strive to exemplify what it means to be bearers of Christ’s name in the midst of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

R3304.

Petition Number: 20221-CB-R3304-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

The Church and People with Disabilities

Amend Resolution 3304 as follows:

3304. The Church and People with Mental Intellectual, Physical, and/or Psychological and/or Neurological Disabilities

We call United Methodists to a new birth of awareness of the need to accept, include, receive the gifts of, and respond to the concerns of those persons with intellectual mental, physical, and/or psychological and/or neurological disabilities, including their families.

Because the experience of disabilities is included in all racial, social, sexual, and age groupings, and this experience is common to every family and at some time in every life;

And because a large part of the ministry of our Lord focused on persons with conditions such as mental intellectual, physical, psychological, and/or neurological disabilities;

And because the body of Christ is not complete without people of all areas of life, including people with all types of disabilities;

And because we cannot afford to deny ourselves fellowship with these persons and must intentionally develop more healthy attitudes and behavioral responses to people with disabilities:

And because there exist inadequacies in the church and in society with regard to concerns for the rights of people with disabilities, utilization of talents, and their full participation within the life of the church and society;
Ch...
University Senate should be withdrawn from institutions where persons who are disabled are excluded, either from attendance, services, or employment.

4. Strongly urge local churches to conduct needs-assessment surveys. Such a survey would suggest to a local church what particular actions must be taken to fully include people with disabilities within the life of the church.

Advocacy Within the Church:

Implement within each annual conference methods of recruiting, sensitizing, and training persons as advocates to work with and on behalf of people with disabilities on a one-to-one basis and to enable them to achieve their human and civil rights as well as to assume their rightful place in the life of the church and community. Each annual conference should also develop the larger concern of advocacy for people with disabilities to enable them to achieve appropriate housing, employment, transportation, education, and leisure-time development.

Advocacy Within the Society:

While there is much to be done within the church to make real the gospel of inclusiveness with regard to people with disabilities, there is a world society that also must be made aware of the concerns and needs of these persons. We admonish urge the church and its people to stand alongside people with disabilities and to speak out on their rights in society. These rights include access to jobs, public transportation and other reliable forms of transportation, adequate housing, and education. We are people under orders to minister to and with all God’s children. We are all a people in pilgrimage! We have too often overlooked those of God’s children who experience life in different ways from ourselves. We pledge ourselves to an inclusive, compassionate, and creative response to the needs and gifts of people with mental, physical, and/or psychological disabilities.

Barrier-Free Construction for People with Disabilities:

Be it resolved, that church monies from agencies of The United Methodist Church beyond the local church be granted, loaned, or otherwise provided only for the construction of church sanctuaries, educational buildings, parsonages, camps, colleges, or other church-related agencies or facilities that meet minimum guidelines in their plans for barrier-free construction;

That local churches utilizing their own funds or funds secured through lending agencies and institutions beyond The United Methodist Church be urged to make adequate provision in their plans to ensure that all new and remodeled church buildings shall be of barrier-free construction;

That local churches be urged to adapt existing facilities through such programs as widening doorways, installing ramps and elevators, eliminating stairs where possible, providing handrails, adequate parking facilities, and rest rooms so that people with disabilities may take their appropriate place in the fellowship of the church; and

That the appropriate national agencies provide technical information for local churches to assist in providing barrier-free facilities.

R3305.

Petition Number: 20152-CB-R3305-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Ministries in Mental Illness

Delete current resolutions 3302 Caring Communities and 3303 Mental Illness, Mental Health Courts and the Christian Community while incorporating them into current resolution 3305 Ministries in Mental Illness as follows:

Theological Statement

We believe that faithful Christians are called to be in ministry to individuals and their families challenged by disorders causing disturbances of thinking, feeling and acting categorized as “mental illness.” We acknowledge that throughout history and today, our ministries in this area have been hampered by lack of knowledge, fear and misunderstanding. Even so, we believe that those so challenged, their families and their communities are to be embraced by the church in its ministry of compassion and love.

Our model is Jesus, who calls us to an ethic of love toward all. As Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, his words and proclamations were accompanied by “healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matthew 9:35). As he went about his ministry, Jesus had compassion and healed those besieged by mental illness, included among those for whom Jesus had compassion and to whom he extended his healing were those besieged by mental illness, many of whom had been despised, rejected, persecuted and feared by their community.

John Wesley and the founders of The United Methodist Church practiced a faith grounded in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ, with a focus on healing the whole person: physical, spiritual, emotional and mental. The concern for the health of those within
Church and Society Committee B

the ministry of the church led to establishment of medical services for those in need without regard to financial means, thereby refusing no one for any reason. That spirit of all-encompassing love and compassion serves as a legacy and a model for us as we seek to respond to those challenged by mental illness.

Today, because of the achievements of the scientific and medical communities, we know more about the causes and treatment of the many disorders considered “mental illnesses.” More important, we know that the gift of healing is one of the spiritual gifts received from God, and that the call of those baptized in Christ includes a mandate to exercise the gift of healing by the church as evidence of God’s love, a precursor to the reign of God, and a sign of the presence of God’s Holy Spirit through the community of the church.

We therefore commit ourselves to the following: 1) learn more about the causes of mental illnesses; 2) advocate for compassion and generosity in the treatment of mental illnesses; and 3) prayerfully lead our congregations to be in ministry, demonstrating that our church, as the body of Christ, can work to provide the means of grace that leads to wholeness and healing for all.

Challenges Facing Persons with Mental Illness and their Congregations and Communities.

Mental illness is a group of brain disorders that cause disturbances of thinking, feeling, and acting. Research published since 1987 has underscored the physical and genetic basis for the more serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, manic-depression, and other affective disorders. Treatment should recognize the importance of a nonstressful environment, good nutrition, and an accepting community. Treatment should also recognize the importance of medical, psychiatric, emotional and spiritual care, psychotherapy, or professional pastoral psychotherapy—in regaining and maintaining health. Churches in every community are called to participate actively in expanding care for the mentally ill and their families and communities.

All aspects of health—physical, mental, and spiritual—were of equal concern to Jesus Christ, whose healing touch reached out to mend broken bodies, minds, and spirits with one common purpose: the restoration of well-being and renewed communion with God and neighbor. But those whose illness brought social stigma and isolation, such as the man of Gadara, whose troubled spirit caused fearsome and self-destructive behavior, were embraced and healed with special compassion (Mark 5:1-34). When the man of Gadara said his name was “Legion; for we are many” (verse 9), his comment was suggestive of the countless individuals, in our time as well as his, whose mental dysfunction—whether genetically, environmentally, chemically, socially, or psychologically induced—causes fear, rejection, or shame, and to which we tend to respond with the same measures no more adequate for our time than for his: stigmatization, isolation, incarceration, and restraint.

John Wesley’s ministry was grounded in the redemptive ministry of Christ with its focus on healing that involved spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects. His concern for the health of those to whom he ministered led him to create medical services at no cost to those who were poor and in deep need, refusing no one for any reason. He saw health as going beyond a simple biological well-being to wellness of the whole person. His witness of love to those in need of healing is our model for ministry to those who are suffering from mental illness.

We reaffirm our confidence that God’s unqualified love for all persons beckons us to reach out with fully accepting love to all, but particularly to those with disabling inability to relate to themselves or others due to mental illness.

We confess that our Christian concepts of sin and forgiveness, at the root of our understanding of the human condition and of divine grace, are sometimes inappropriately applied in ways that heighten paranoia or clinical depression. Great care must be exercised in ministering to those whose brain disorders result in exaggerated self-negation, for while all persons stand in need of forgiveness and reconciliation, God’s love cannot be communicated through the medium of forgiveness for uncommitted or delusional sins.

Challenges Facing Persons with Mental Illness and their congregations and communities.

Precisely because mental illness affects how we think, feel or act, it has an impact on our ability to function in community with others.

We understand there are many reasons that explain why persons with a mental illness diagnosis—who exhibit difficult or disruptive behaviors. The reasons include often do so for many reasons. They may have experienced traumatic events such as like abuse or domestic violence; they may have lived a life of physical or emotional poverty; they may have been deprived of social experiences and have limited social skills and etiquette; some persons with a mental illness who exhibit acting-out or difficult behaviors may do so because they have often been betrayed and isolated, being misunderstood, being powerless or the absence of joy in their lives, misunderstood, powerless, or are without joy in their lives.
Therefore, unlike physical illnesses, mental illness challenges our commitment to community. We experience this challenge in several key ways:

1. Stigma

Stigma has been with us for millennia and remains a major issue today. When the man of Gadara said his name was “Legion; for we are many,” his comment suggests the countless individuals in every age, whose mental dysfunction causes fear, rejection, or shame, and to which we tend to respond with the same few measures no more adequate for our time than for his: stigmatization, isolation, incarceration, and restraint. Jesus embraced and healed such persons with special compassion (Mark 5:1-34).

2. Incarceration

We believe all persons with a mental illness diagnosis should have access to the same basic freedoms and human rights as other persons in a free society. A fine line of distinction exists between criminal violation of the law and behavior that is criminalized because law enforcement agencies have had no other recourse for handling persons whose actions resulted from mental illness symptoms that affect thinking, perceptions and behavior. We oppose the use of jails and prisons for incarceration of persons who have serious, persistent mental illnesses for whom treatment in a secure hospital setting is far more appropriate. Moreover, many incarcerated persons with mental illness need psychiatric medications. Citing economic reasons as the cause for failure to provide medications to a person who needs them is unacceptable, as is imposing medication compliance as a condition of release or access to treatment and other services.

3. Deinstitutionalization

We express particular concern that while the process followed in the United States and some other nations in recent years of deinstitutionalizing mental patients has corrected a longstanding problem of “warehousing” mentally ill persons, it has created new problems. However, without adequate community-based mental-health programs to care for those who are dehospitalized, the streets or prisons, for too many, have become a substitute for a hospital ward for too many people. Consequently, often the responsibility, including the costs of mental-health care, has simply been transferred to individuals and families or to shelters for the homeless that are already overloaded and ill-equipped to provide more than the most basic care. Furthermore, the pressure to deinstitutionalize patients rapidly has caused some mental-health systems to rely unduly upon short-term chemical therapy to control patients rather than employ upon more complex pro-

grams that require longer term hospitalization or other forms of treatments that research has demonstrated where research provides are successful outcomes achieved. Such stopgap treatment leads to repetitive but ineffective expensive repeated short-term hospitalizations that produce, with little or no long term improvement in a person’s ability to function.

4. Misunderstanding of Faith

Sometimes Christian concepts of sin and forgiveness, at the root of our understanding of the human condition and of divine grace, are sometimes inappropriately applied in ways that heighten paranoia or clinical depression. Thus, Great care must be exercised in ministering to those whose brain disorders mental illness results in exaggerated self-negation, for While all persons stand in need of forgiveness and reconciliation, God’s love cannot be communicated through the medium of forgiveness for uncommitted or delusional sins.

The Response We Need

John Wesley’s ministry was grounded in the redemptive ministry of Christ with its focus on healing that involved spiritual, mental, emotional and physical aspects. His concern for the health of those to whom he ministered led him to create medical services at no cost to those who were poor and in deep need, refusing no one for any reason. He saw health as extending beyond simple biological well-being to wellness of the whole person. His witness of love to those in need of healing is our model for ministry to those suffering from mental illness.

1. Healing

Effective treatment recognizes the importance of medical, psychiatric, emotional and spiritual care, psychotherapy or professional pastoral psychotherapy in regaining and maintaining health. Congregations in every community are called to participate actively in expanding care for persons who are mentally ill and their families as an expression of their nature as the Body of Christ.

Treatment for mental illness recognizes the importance of a nonstressful environment, good nutrition, and an accepting community.

2. Congregations

The church, as the Body of Christ, is called to the ministry of salvation in its broadest understanding, which includes both healing and reconciliation, of restoring wholeness both at the individual and community levels, healing, and of salvation, which means to be made whole. We call upon the church to affirm ministries related to mental illness that embrace the role of community, family, and the healing professions in healing the physical, social, environmental, and spiritual
impediments to wholeness for those afflicted with brain disorders and for their families.

1. Caring Communities. We call upon all local United Methodist congregations, churches, districts, and annual or central conferences to promote United Methodist congregations as “Caring Communities.” The mission to bring all persons into a community of love is central to the teachings of Christ. We gather as congregations in witness to that mission, welcoming and nurturing those who assemble with us. Yet we confess that in our humanity we have sometimes failed to minister in love to persons and families with mental illness. We have allowed barriers of ignorance, fear and pride to separate us from those who most need our love and the nurturing support of community.

United Methodist congregations around the world are called to join the Caring Communities program, congregations and communities in covenant relationship with persons with mental illness and their families. Caring Communities engage intentionally in:

• Education. Congregations engage in public discussion as well as and responsible and comprehensive education about the nature of mental illness and how it affects society today. Such education not only helps congregations express their caring more effectively, but reduces the stigma of mental illness so that persons who suffer from brain disorders, and their families, can more freely ask for help. Such education also counters the stigma attached to mental illness that derives from a false understanding that mental illness is an adjustment problem caused by psychologically dysfunctional families.

• Covenant. Congregations through their church councils enter into a covenant relationship of understanding and love with persons and families with mental illness to nurture them. The covenant understanding may well extend to community and congregational involvement with patients in psychiatric hospitals and other mental-health care facilities.

• Welcome. Congregations extend a public welcome to persons with mental illness and their families.

• Support. Congregations think through and implement the best ways to be supportive to persons with mental illness and to individuals and families caring for them.

• Advocacy. Congregations not only advocate for specific individuals caught up in bureaucratic difficulties, but identify and speak out on issues affecting persons with mental illness and their families that are amenable to legislative remedy.

3. Communities.
We call upon the communities in which our congregations are located to communities need to develop more adequate programs to meet the needs of their mentally ill members who have mental illness and their families. This includes the need to implement governmental programs at all levels of administration that monitor and prevent abuses of mentally ill persons who have mental illness, as well as those programs intended to replace long-term hospitalization with community based services.

Mental Illness Courts. Mental illness courts, properly established, regulated and administered could and should be maintained to handle cases involving persons with serious mental illnesses. Such courts can ensure compassionate and ethical treatment. These courts are often able to avoid criminalizing behaviors that result from symptoms affecting thought, perceptions and behavior. When governing bodies institute such courts, they should:

• understand and embrace an ethical understanding of the compassionate intent of the law in the establishment of mental-health courts when mental illness is a factor in law enforcement.

• respect all human rights of persons confined for the purpose of mental-illness treatment in an accredited psychiatric facility, either public or private, including their legal right to have input into their treatment plan, medications and access to religious support as state laws allow. We hold all treatment facilities, public and private, responsible for the protection of these rights.

Community Support. Depending on the unique circumstances of each community, congregations may be able to

• support expanded counseling and crisis intervention services;

• conduct and support workshops and public awareness campaigns to combat stigma;

• facilitate efforts to provide housing and employment for deinstitutionalized persons;

• advocate for improved training for judges, police and other community officials in dealing with persons with mental illness and their families; and

• promote more effective interaction among different systems involved in the care of persons with mental illness, including courts, police, employment, housing, welfare, religious and family systems;

• encourage mental health treatment facilities; public and private, including outpatient treatment programs, to take seriously the religious and spiritual needs of persons with a mental illness; and

• help communities meet both preventive and therapeutic needs related to mental illness.
4. Clergy Support

Clergy: Mental Health Issues. We call upon the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to:

- give attention to addressing issues that arise when United Methodist clergy experience mental illness; and
- promote the development of pastoral leadership skills to understand mental illness and be able to mediate with persons in their congregations and their communities concerning the issues and needs of persons who have a mental illness.

5. Legislation

We call upon the General Board of Church and Society and other United Methodists general agencies with advocacy responsibility to:

(a) advocate systemic reform of the health-care system to provide more adequately for persons and families confronting the catastrophic expense and pain of caring for family members with mental illness; mentally ill family members;

(b) support universal global access to health care, insisting that public and private funding mechanisms be developed to ensure the availability of services to all in need, including adequate coverage for mental-health services in all health programs;

(c) advocate that community mental-health systems, including public clinics, hospitals, and other tax-supported facilities, be especially sensitive to the mental-health needs of culturally or racially diverse groups in the population;

(d) support adequate research by public and private institutions into the causes of mental illness, including, as high priority, further development of therapeutic applications of newly discovered information on the aspect of genetic causation for several types of severe brain disorders;

(e) support adequate public funding to enable mental-health-care systems to provide appropriate therapy; and to support the following community and congressional programs:

(a) adequate public funding to enable mental-health systems to provide appropriate therapy;

(b) expanded counseling and crisis intervention services;

(c) workshops and public awareness campaigns to combat stigmas;

(d) housing and employment for deinstitutionalized persons;

(e) improved training for judges, police, and other community officials in dealing with mentally ill persons;

(f) community- and congregational-involvement with patients in psychiatric hospitals and other mental-health-care facilities;

(g) community, pastoral, and congregational support for individuals and families caring for mentally ill family members;

(h) more effective interaction among different systems involved in the care of mentally ill persons, including courts, police, employment, housing, welfare, religious, and family systems;

(i) education of their members in a responsible and comprehensive manner about the nature of the problems of mental illness facing society today, and the public-policy advocacy needed to change policies and keep funding levels high;

(j) active participation in helping their communities meet both preventive and therapeutic needs related to mental illness; and

(k) collaborate with the work of entities like the National Alliance on Mental Illness for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), Washington, D.C., a U.S. self-help organization of mentally ill persons with mental illness, their families and friends, providing mutual support, education and advocacy for those persons with severe mental illness, and urging the churches to connect with NAMI’s religious outreach network. We also commend to our churches globally the churches’ Pathways to Promise: Interfaith Ministries and Prolonged Mental Illnesses, St. Louis, Missouri, as a necessary link in our ministry on this critical issue;

(l) build a global United Methodist Church mental illness network at the General Board of Church and Society to coordinate mental-illness ministries in The United Methodist Church.

46. Seminaries

We call upon United Methodist seminaries around the world to provide: (a) technical training, including experience in mental-health units, as a regular part of the preparation for the ministry, in order to help leaders and congregations become more knowledgeable about and involved in mental-health needs of their communities.

ADOPTED 1992
AMENDED AND READOPTED IN 2004
See Social Principles ¶162T.

Rationale:

We commit ourselves to learn more about the causes of mental illnesses, to advocate for compassion and generosity in treatment of mental illnesses, and prayerfully lead our congregations to be in ministry to provide the means of grace that leads to wholeness and healing for all.
R3305.
Petition Number: 20848-CB-R3305-G; Lightner-Morris, Tina, MD, USA.

Revise Teaching Scripture for Mental Illness

3305. Ministries in Mental Illness
Mental illness...

All aspects of health-physical, mental, and spiritual—were of equal concern to Jesus Christ, whose healing touch reached out to mend broken bodies, minds, and spirits with one common purpose: the restoration of well-being and renewed communion with God and neighbor.

But those whose illness brought social stigma and isolation, such as the man of Gadara, whose troubled spirit caused fearsome and self-destructive behavior, were embraced and healed with special compassion (Mark 5:1-34).

When the man of Gadara said his name was “Legion; for we are many” (verse 9), his comment was suggestive of the countless individuals, in our time as well as his, whose mental dysfunction makes him blind to his value in society, but also makes us blind to the painful stigmatization, isolation, incarceration, and restraint that people living with mental illness endure. But like the man from Bethsaida, Jesus is helping both him and us to heal.

Many interventions are needed to heal the often chronic conditions of the brain and nervous system, known as mental illness. The Body of Christ needs deeper healing in understanding, education, compassion, and adequate ways to support the families and individuals living with mental illness. Those impacted by mental illness also need to be supported in their quest for healing, knowing that most often Jesus heals over time, using a variety of healing modalities—whether genetically, environmentally, chemically, socially, or psychologically induced—causes fear, rejection, or shame, and to which we tend to respond with the same few measures no more adequate for our time than for his: stigmatization, isolation, incarceration, and restraint.

We confess that our Christian concepts...

Rationale:
As the mother of an adult child who has struggled with the biochemical imbalance of mental illness since infancy and a licensed mental health professional, I find the association with a man who is demon possessed, out of his mind, chained, bound and isolated deeply offensive. My child and the...

R3306.
Petition Number: 20838-CB-R3306-G; Knight, Jan-Bowling Green, FL, USA. 2 similar petitions.

Healing of Post-Abortion Stress

Revise and re-adopt Resolution #3306 as amended.

WHEREAS, we recognize that there is a legal right to an abortion in many countries, we also recognize that some regret that event later in life,

WHEREAS the church should be about offering healing ministries for all types of brokenness,

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2004-2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church urges pastors to become informed about the symptoms and behaviors associated with post-abortion stress; and

Be it further resolved that the 2004-2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages local churches to make available contact information for counseling agencies that offer programs to address post-abortion stress for all seeking help.

R3329.
Petition Number: 20066-CB-R3329; Hawkins, Erin M. -Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Native American Religious Freedom Act

Re-adopt Resolution 3329.

Rationale:
Today there is no protection for the practice of traditional Indian religions within the framework of American constitutional or statutory law. The only existing law directly addressing this issue, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, is simply a policy that
provides limited legal relief to aggrieved American Indian religious practitioners.

R3331.

Petition Number: 20065-CB-R3331; Hawkins, Erin M. - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Native American Culture and Traditions

Re-adopt Resolution 3331 (Adopted 2004).

Rationale:

God’s creating presence speaks through languages and cultures. Many Native traditions are erroneously feared rather than understood as vehicles for the grace of God. Such fears have resulted in persecution of traditional Native peoples and Native Christians and many traditions have been misinterpreted.

R3361.

Petition Number: 20133-CB-R3361-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

World’s Population

Amend Resolution: No. 3361 World’s Population and the Church’s Response as follows:

Historical and Theological Statement

The population of the world was about 300 million at the time of Christ and changed very little in the next thousand years. The population of the world reached one billion in 1804, three billion in 1960, and rose to about 6.8 billion in 2010. It is expected to reach about 9.2 billion by 2050 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division). From a finite globe, each human being consumes air, water, food, shelter and energy, and leaves behind waste to accommodate. Though there is no agreement on what earth’s capacity is, simple mathematics assert that at some point a growing population must reach the capacity of that finite globe.

Our scriptures contain both continuous and time-limited commandments. The Great Commandment to love God and our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 25:27) is continuous; it persists forever and its validity has no beginning or ending. By contrast, God’s commandment to the newly created man and woman, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth ...” (Genesis 1:28) is a time-limited commandment that ends when it has been fulfilled. For the first time in human history, humanity is faced with the challenge of determining if the commandment has been fulfilled, and if it has, whether human fruitfulness and multiplication is no longer mandated in the same way.

In Genesis 1:28, God goes on to command man and woman to “have dominion,” meaning to exercise stewardship responsibility on behalf of God, the world’s creator and owner. As stewards of the earth, we now have the responsibility of identifying how our stewardship of human reproduction is fulfilling God’s will, and how it may be thwarting it. To assist us in this stewardship, God has provided humans with methods of contraception previously unknown. In clear distinction from faiths that reject use of such methods, The United Methodist Church believes effective, safe contraception is indeed responsible stewardship.

The creation of the world out of chaos into order is the initial biblical witness. In this witness is the affirmation of the freedom and responsibility of humankind. We affirm God to be the Creator, the one who grants us freedom and the one to whom we are responsible.

Our stewardship responsibility for human reproduction in the context of the population challenges of the world is in the service of God’s ongoing creative and re-creative concern for the universe was expressed through Jesus Christ, who has called us to find the meaning of our lives in dual love of God and neighbor. In our exercise of stewardship in this context, we live responsibly before God, writing history by the actions of our lives. The imperative for the individual Christian and the Christian community is to seek patterns of life, shape the structures of society, and foster those values that will dignify human life for all in a world in which God’s love is infinite but the earth’s resources are finite.

Human Population Growth Impacts Many Issues

A review of today’s major problems, such as We are living in an age of possibility in which we are called under God to serve the future with hope and confidence. Christians have no alternative to involvement in seeking solutions for the great and complex set of problems facing the world today. These issues are closely interrelated: hunger, poverty, disease, lack of potable water, denial of human rights, economic and environmental exploitation, overconsumption, technologies that are inadequate or inappropriate, and rapid depletion of resources, suggests that all are affected by and continuing growth of population, which is estimated to reach 9.2 billion persons by 2050. None can be addressed in isolation.


- **Population Growth and Resources.** While numerous world bodies, including the International Conference on Population & Development and the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development, have affirmed the interrelationship of population growth and climate change, environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change result from poverty and lack of access to resources, and also from excessive consumption and wasteful production patterns. Mountaintop removal for coal mining in Appalachia, destruction of the rain forest in Brazil, or fires to clear land in Borneo all result from population pressures, degrade the environment, and affect global climate. Slowing population growth can give countries more time to meet human needs while protecting the environment.

The high rates of malaria and HIV/AIDS diminish life for many of God’s children. According to UNAIDS, it is predicted that by 2010 more than 80 million persons will have contracted the AIDS virus. And today malaria is found throughout the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world and causes more than 300 million acute illnesses and at least one million deaths annually. (World Health Organization, 2001-2010 UN Decade to Roll Back Malaria)

Gender inequality in parts of the world exacerbates these complex issues. We know that in many nations, women are considered property and lack basic human rights such as protection under the law and access to education, housing, and jobs. Women comprise 70 percent of the world’s poor and many are captives (knowingly or unknowingly) within patriarchal structures, policies, and practices.

- **Population and Aging.** Population growth combined with improved health results in faster recognition of the growing numbers of elderly, many in the world’s population. Many of them are among the world’s most poor. According to the United Nations Population Fund, there are almost 400 million people over the age of 60 in the developing world, and the majority are women. While just 8 percent of persons in developing countries today are older than 60, the proportion will jump to 20 percent in the next 50 years. It is estimated that the number of people over 60 years old is expected to outnumber children by 2040 for the first time in history. As communities engage in sustainable development, it will be important for the needs of the aging to be considered, such as economic sustenance, health care, housing, and nutrition. We must also ensure the elimination of violence against older persons and provide support and care for the many elderly who are caring for their children and grandchildren, including those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These concerns for the challenges faced by persons of different ages remind us that in our stewardship of human reproduction, parents must be concerned not only with their capacity to nurture an infant, but with the world’s capacity to sustain fruitful, fulfilling lives of increasing length.

Injustice Contributes to Population Growth

- **Oppression of women is a significant driver of population growth.** Gender inequality in parts of the world exacerbates these complex issues. We know that in many nations, women are considered property and lack basic human rights such as protection under the law and access to education, housing, and jobs. Women comprise 70 percent of the world’s poor and many are captives (knowingly or unknowingly) within patriarchal structures, policies, and practices. Numerous studies have demonstrated that when women’s status is improved by the building blocks of equal rights—access to basic health care, adequate nutrition, proper sanitation, increased educational opportunities—fertility declines dramatically (See Nafis Sadik, *Population Policies and Programmes: Lessons Learned From Two Decades of Experience*, [New York: UN Family Planning Association, New York University Press, 1991] pp. 247, 267, 384). One of the most important building blocks of equal rights is women’s full partnership in marital decision-making, including their expressions of sexuality. Meeting women’s unmet need for family planning would result in 150,000 fewer maternal deaths a year (Singh, Susheela, Jacqueline E. Darroch, Lori S. Ashford and Michael Vlassof [2009], *Adding It Up: The
A Call to Action

As people of faith, we are called to educate ourselves about the interconnectedness of life’s critical concerns and live as responsible stewards. The church can address these complex population-related issues on several fronts.

We call on all United Methodists to:

1. all United Methodists to access educational opportunities that focus on the issue of population and its inter-relatedness to other critical issues such as poverty, disease, hunger, environment, injustice, and violence, and to promote these opportunities in the local church;

2. urge the United Methodist medical facilities around the world to and mission facilities and programs provide a full range of reproductive health and family planning information and services;

3. the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries Women’s Division to advocate for legislation around the world that can help take the lead in upgrading the social status of women and which in societies and includes women in all development planning and processes. Specifically, we call on them to continue One such action would be advocating for the United States to ratify the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and to adopt the Equal Rights Amendment, and to encourage all countries to take action to ensure equal rights for women;

4. the General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Global Ministries to develop and implement programs within The United Methodist Church that provide and/or enhance educational opportunities for girls and women, making it possible for them to achieve levels of self-sufficiency and well-being;

5. call upon governments around the world to give high priority to addressing the malaria crisis and HIV/AIDS pandemic and urge adequate funding to eradicate and prevent these diseases;

6. call on the U.S. Congress and legislative bodies of the developed nations to recognize the crucial nature of population growth and to give maximum feasible funding to programs of population, environment, health, agriculture, and other technological-assistance programs for developing nations. International assistance programs should be based on mutual cooperation, should recognize the diversities of culture, should encourage self-development and not dependency, and should not require “effective population programs” as a prerequisite for other developmental assistance;

7. call on governments and private organizations to place a high priority on research aimed at developing a range of safe, inexpensive contraceptives that can be used in a variety of societies and medical situations. Promote greater understanding of attitudes, motivations, and social and economic factors affecting childbearing; and

8. call on governments to implement systems of social insurance and support for older persons to ensure adequate economic sustenance and housing, and quality health care and nutrition.

ADOPTE 2004
RESOLUTION #159, 2004 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶162K
Rationale:
We are called to live as responsible stewards to seek patterns of life, shape the structures of society, and foster those values that will dignify human life for all in a world in which God’s love is infinite but the earth’s resources are finite.

R3425.

Petition Number: 20134-CB-R3425-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Prohibition of Bullying

Amend Resolution No. 3425 Prohibition of Bullying as follows:

Bullying is a behavioral expression of aggressiveness that attempts to yield power over another person(s) or people(s). This may be expressed by physical or psychological means. Bullying can result in the death of the victim. We have only to look at scripture for evidence. The Book of Esther is about the bullying of one man and the grace God expressed through God’s persons. The questioning, beating and subsequent death on the Cross of Jesus the Christ is the ultimate example of expressed the abuse of power over a person, even the Son of God.
Prohibition of Bullying

Delete Resolution No. 3425 substitute the following:

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church vows that we will no longer be silent about the value of each and every life. To that end, we categorically oppose the practices of bullying (habitually cruel and overbearing behavior).

We urge all United Methodist related institutions, ministries and entities to create safe space for each and every child of God, without regard to religion, race, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, socio-economic status, gender identity, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, physical appearance and speech.

Further, in the spirit of advocating for safe sanctuary, we call upon every United Methodist to respond to acts of bullying with acts of compassion. We will take a public stand against speeches of hate, harassment and acts of violence filled with long-held prejudices against all persons. As a strong witness against bullying, the Council of Bishops will spend a portion of one meeting in the next quadrennium studying the reality and effects of bullying.

Moreover, we call upon the Church and society to intentionally validate, support, and empower persons being injured by bullying behavior in workplaces, in schools, and in all environments.

Rationale:

People hurt from the effects of bullying in the forms of physical and verbal harassment, oppression, and exclusion; and, healthy development can be halted of people socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Bullying leads young people to isolation and prevents them from creating healthy friendships. Isolation can lead to high risk behaviors.

R3425.

Petition Number: 20442-CB-R3425-G; Ingram, Kimberly T. - Charlotte, NC, USA for Western North Carolina Annual Conference; Ryder, Jack E. - LaGrange Park, IL, USA for Alaska Annual Conference. 2 similar petitions.

RESOLUTION #188, 2004 Book of Resolutions

See Social Principles, ¶162

Rationale:

United Methodist congregations will categorically oppose the practice of adult, youth, and child bullying, and diligently work to increase societal awareness of these destructive behaviors.

Stephen and a host of Christian martyrs have suffered similar personal attacks which led to death for the cause of Christ. There are persons today who suffer and die because another person(s) seek to overwhelm them by aggressive behavior.

It is hereby resolved that:

• categorically oppose the practice of adult, youth, and child bullying, mobbing (also known as scapegoating);
• diligently work to increase societal awareness of these destructive behaviors; and
• intentionally validate, enlighten, support, and empower persons being injured by such behaviors in workplaces, in schools and in all environments;
• welcome teens and offer safe places for teens to gather;
• post and widely distribute materials including contacts for hotlines and other local and national resources;
• incorporate the topic of adolescent bullying into sermons, making clear the church’s position;
• use language of responsibility and healing rather than blame and punishment;
• encourage family members, neighbors and friends who suspect or know of abuse to come forward;
• provide education and training for clergy and laity on abuse prevention, detection and intervention;
• create and nurture peer groups for adolescents to raise awareness of the stresses in their own families and issues that are risk factors for abuse.
• raise awareness about Internet bullying and peer pressure;
• organize forums, inviting outside speakers, including survivors, abusers and representatives of local and national organizations to facilitate discussions and encourage congregants to come forth about their own risk status; and
• encourage congregant volunteers to organize and run support groups and forums.

ADOPTED 2004

RESOLUTION #188, 2004 Book of Resolutions

See Social Principles, ¶162

Rationale:

United Methodist congregations will categorically oppose the practice of adult, youth, and child bullying, and diligently work to increase societal awareness of these destructive behaviors.

Petition Number: 20488-CB-R3425-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.
Bullying

Replace current Resolution 3425 with the following:

In the wake of increased reports of bullying in our schools, our neighborhood, and even in our homes via cyber space, United Methodists must address this seeming epidemic as a serious form of violence.

All United Methodist general agencies, boards, jurisdictional bodies, annual conferences, local churches, and individuals are called upon to:

• take a strong stand against bullying,
• endorse a zero-tolerance within their sphere of influence for bullying in any form,
• publicize this position through the use of websites, emails, printed materials and verbal announcements,
• stand together with anyone or any group being bullied or scapegoated.

Specifically, the General Board of Church and Society is called upon to use its available resources and connections to begin a campaign and develop up-to-date study guides to be used to educate about bullying as a serious form of violence that can have life-and-death consequences to the victims, as well as harming everyone involved.

Rationale:
In the wake of increased reports of bullying in our schools, our neighborhood, and even in our homes via cyber space, United Methodists must address this seeming epidemic as a serious form of violence. Resolution ¶3425 titled “Prohibition of Bullying” found on page 512 of The Book of Resolutions of...

R3444.

Petition Number: 20122-CB-R3444-G; Burton, M. Garlinda - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Eradication of Sexism in the Church

WHEREAS, sexism continues to be a pervasive and systematic force within our church and our society; and
WHEREAS, sexism deprives the church and society of the opportunity to use the skills and talents that women have; and
WHEREAS, a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2007 survey of local churches in the United States found that only 55% of small churches and 62% of large membership churches have policies against sexual harassment; inclusive language studies are rare in local congregations with only 4% of laity and 31% of clergy indicating they use inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language studies, harassment policies, and diverse use of female lay persons (as Board of Trustees members and ushers, for example); and
WHEREAS, this survey also found that bishops who are female appointed more district superintendents who were female, and their conferences had more local congregations with sexual harassment policies in place than conferences with Bishops who were male; and
WHEREAS, the Church remains committed to the eradication of sexual harassment against children, employees, volunteers, clergy and their families, and congregants. Yet sexual misconduct remains a serious problem in our conferences with 1 in 33 women experiencing sexual harassment in local church meetings and worship, and an alarming number of local congregations do not have policies, procedures, or training in place for laity or clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and
WHEREAS, women comprise 58% of the denomination’s membership but hold only one-fifth of the top leadership positions in the U.S. annual conferences and as leaders are largely relegated to committees without much financial power like women’s ministry and advocacy, racial-ethnic concerns and youth ministry rather than committees which exert considerable influence and control over funding as well as the allocation of money in annual conference ministries, and women employed by general church agencies hold 77% of administrative and clerical support positions (Data from the General Council on Finance and Administration 2009: Women by the Number: issues November 2010, December 2010, January 2011 and March 2011; THE FLYER); and
WHEREAS, the Church continues to lose clergy-women from local church ministry into more welcoming forms of ministry indicating a persistent, subtle, and often unchallenged sexism that denies women in The United Methodist Church the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all areas of the Church;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference continue to commit itself to eradicating sexism in the church and that it affirm the work and tasks and the necessity for the continuance of the work and tasks of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and of the annual conference related commissions and counterparts; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference commission or counterpart be given the financial backing to pursue projects that are aimed at educating the
members of the local churches about the issues of sexism and at sponsoring the leadership events that enable the annual conference commission members to be better advocates for all who seek equality and inclusiveness; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference, United Methodist seminary, and all United Methodist-related institutions are called to have policies on sexual harassment and equal opportunity; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference and local congregation is called to have policy, procedures, and training opportunities in place for lay and clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and that progress to full compliance will be reported through the Episcopal Office to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women at the Commission’s request. The Commission will be responsible to report to the General Conference 2016; and

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference support the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as the advocacy and monitoring agency of women’s issues for increasing opportunities for females in leadership, promoting equality in filling decision-making posts, and fostering inclusiveness in all facets of The United Methodist Church.

ADOPTED 1996
AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004
RESOLUTION #48, 2004 Book of Resolutions
RESOLUTION #40, 2000 Book of Resolutions
See Social Principles, ¶ 162F.

Endorse “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World”

Resolution Endorsing “20/20: Visioning An AIDS-Free World”

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has long been committed to creating an AIDS-free world, and beginning in 2005 started the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund as a global health initiative to raise funds to support church-oriented and Christ-centered HIV and AIDS ministries, and

WHEREAS, this Fund successfully has raised funds for distribution for more than 175 projects in over 37 countries (including the United States), and the need for continued and increased funding for programs of HIV and AIDS education, prevention, care, and treatment is everywhere evident, and

WHEREAS, more than 30 million people are infected worldwide, almost 50% of whom are women, and over 15 million women and children struggle to survive, we are reminded anew that “where there is no vision, the people perish . . .” (Proverbs 29:18) and that Jesus called his disciples to “heal every disease and sickness” (Matthew 10:1), and

WHEREAS, our founding leader, John Wesley practiced medicine himself and called his followers to care for the sick and suffering, and to avoid stigmatization and discrimination, and

WHEREAS, a gift as small as $20 can stop the transmission of HIV from several mothers to their new-born babies, supply nutrients to 20 HIV positive children suffering from dehydration, ensure nursing care for a newborn infant born with AIDS, teach young people and adults how to prevent HIV, feed an HIV positive person for a month so they can take powerful medicines, and provide free Upper Room biblical readings and prayers for those infected and affected. Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2012 General Conference endorses the new “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World” campaign of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Committee, and

1. Encourages every United Methodist to contribute yearly $20, $200 or more to the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Advance #982345 and to invite others to join in this mission of mercy. 25 percent of what the annual conference raises should be used within the conference for AIDS work, either locally or in global projects.

2. Asks each church and Annual Conference to educate its members about the HIV and AIDS crisis and to take up at least one major Annual Conference offering during the quadrennium.

3. Invites local congregations and individuals to join the 2020 Club composed of those who have committed $2,020 by 2020 to the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund.

4. Requests United Methodists to pray for an AIDS-free world, remembering the words of Galatians 6:9: “and let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.” And be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2012 General Conference requests that planners of the 2016 and 2020 General Conference set aside plenary time to review the progress of this “20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free
World” campaign, evaluating and highlighting the contributions United Methodists have made in this global health initiative.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20127-CB-R9999-G; Winkler, James - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society; Robertson, Karen - Topeka, KS, USA for Kansas East Annual Conference; Ryder, Jack E. - LaGrange Park, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference.

Maternal Health

Maternal Health: The Church’s Role

“I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

Motherhood is sacred. Women who are called to be mothers are entrusted by God to carry new life within themselves and bring it into the world. Mothers are important figures in our biblical tradition. Women like Eve, Hagar, Sarah, Elizabeth and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are remembered for their role as bearers of new life. But within the sacred texts, stories also tell of maternal tragedy and loss. Both Rachel (Genesis 35:16-20) and the wife of Phinehas (1 Samuel 4:19-20) died after prolonged and difficult labors.

Tragically, stories of maternal death are commonplace today. For many women, especially those living in poverty and in developing countries, giving birth is dangerous and life threatening. Worldwide maternal mortality is a leading cause of death for women of child-bearing age. Every 90 seconds a woman dies somewhere in the world from complications during pregnancy or childbirth; for every woman who dies, another 20 suffer disability.

The main causes of maternal mortality include infection, hemorrhaging, high blood pressure and obstructed labor. They are mostly preventable.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells the disciples that he came to bring abundant life to his followers. God desires that every mother, every child and every family not only survive, but thrive. Tragically, survival is often a daily struggle for those who lack access to basic services and care. God calls us to respond to the suffering in the world, to love our neighbors throughout the world. As followers of Christ, we are members of the same body. The loss of one member is a loss for all.

The global community is taking steps to address the tragedy of maternal mortality. Members of the United Nations established in 2000 the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that set targets for improving health, reducing disease and poverty, and ensuring human rights of all people. The fifth MDG, to improve maternal health, sets a goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75% by 2015.

Maternal deaths have dropped by a third since 1990. While such progress is significant, increased efforts must be implemented globally to reach the 2015 target of 75% reduction. Maternal deaths exist in both developed and developing countries. An example among developed countries is that maternal mortality in the United States is on the rise. U.S. maternal deaths have doubled since 1987.

Maternal mortality is a moral tragedy. Nearly all of the more than 350,000 annual maternal deaths occur in the developing world. Many factors contribute to this vast health inequity.

Health Barriers

In the developing world many women of child-bearing age lack access to reproductive health services such as pre-natal care, post-natal care and family-planning services. This is particularly dangerous for pregnant women. With no hospital or clinic nearby, women customarily give birth at home in unsanitary conditions. This puts both the woman and her baby at risk of infection. If a woman experiences a life-threatening complication while in labor at home, she may not be able to reach emergency care in time. Situations like these could be prevented if women had access to health information and medical care.

Unintended pregnancy is also a health concern. Globally, more than 200 million women would like to avoid or delay pregnancy, but they lack access to modern contraceptive services. This results in millions of unintended pregnancies every year. Supply shortages, lack of education, misinformation and cultural barriers all contribute to this unmet need. Without access to contraceptives, women are unable to manage the timing and birth spacing of their children. This is of particular concern to women who have given birth within the past two years and those who are HIV-positive: The former’s bodies may not have fully recovered, and the latter’s immunity is compromised.

Birth spacing is a key health intervention for reducing both maternal and infant mortality. When a woman spaces her pregnancies at least three years apart, she is more likely to have a healthy delivery, and her children are more likely to survive infancy. If a woman becomes pregnant too soon after giving birth, her body does not have time to recover and her risk for complications increases. To be able to space her pregnancies in the
healthiest manner, a woman must have access to safe, modern family-planning services.

Providing family-planning services to a woman is inexpensive, costing approximately $2 a year. The direct and indirect benefits, however, of women planning their families are priceless and countless: smaller family size, better health for both children and mother, less economic burden on the family, and women’s continued economic contribution to the greater community. By meeting all the unmet need for family planning, maternal mortality rates would drop by a third, and the need for abortion would be reduced significantly. Furthermore, the use of condoms reduces the risk of infection for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. In particular, access to female condoms is crucial for empowering women to initiate their own protection against these infections.

Cultural barriers

Many cultural differences complicate this issue. Having a large family is a sign of honor in many parts of the world. Having many children, especially boys, is a showcase of a man’s virility. Men who expect their wives to bear many children may not consider or support birth spacing or family planning.

The expectation of giving birth to many children comes not only from the husband, but also from other family members, particularly the mother-in-law. In some areas of the developing world, the mother-in-law makes the decision regarding contraceptive use. Such societal and familial pressures often conflict with a woman’s personal desires regarding her fertility, and can adversely affect her health.

Marrying age also affects maternal health. Child marriage is prevalent in many cultures. Girls marry and begin giving birth in early adolescence. If these young females are not practicing family planning, they could have multiple children before their 20th birthday. Young women not fully developed physically at the time of marriage are at great risk for complications such as obstetric fistula, a birth injury that leaves them incontinent.

The Call

Women are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families and communities. They deserve access to services and care that empower their personal decision-making. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women’s well-being.

Recommendations

1. Support United Methodist projects around the world working on maternal health and family planning;

2. Advocate with policy makers at all levels to increase access to maternal health and family planning services; and

3. Support local health initiatives that expand access to information and services for women’s health.

We call upon the General Board of Church & Society to continue placing a programmatic emphasis on education and advocacy for the next quadrennium on maternal health.

Rationale:

Women are crying out for the survival of their families and communities. They deserve access to services and care that empower their personal decision-making. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women’s well-being.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20213-CB-R9999-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Persons with Disabilities

Adopt new resolution as follows (This Resolution replaces Resolutions 3002, 3003, 3005, 3006, 3007, 3008):


WHEREAS, the General Board of Global Ministries three decades ago called “United Methodists to a new birth of awareness of the need to include, assimilate, receive the gifts, and respond to the needs, of those persons with intellectual, physical, psychological and/or neurological disabilities, including their families;” and

WHEREAS, the General Conference resolved in 1980 to take major steps in adapting facilities, new and existing, such as “church sanctuaries, educational buildings, parsonages, camps, colleges, or other church-related agencies or facilities” so that they meet minimum guidelines for “barrier-free construction” (see “Barrier-Free Construction for People with Disabilities,” 2008 Book of Resolutions #304); and

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has now been in existence for more than 20 years; and
WHEREAS, the United Nations adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (Standard Rules) in 1993; and

WHEREAS, the ADA’s and the Standard Rules’ primary goal is to promote access to all aspects of social interaction including education, employment, commerce, recreation, government, and transportation, and

WHEREAS, the Lord Jesus Christ set the example of ministering to those with disabilities as a priority of His earthly ministry; and

WHEREAS, we as United Methodist have a policy of “Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors;” and

WHEREAS, people around the world are affected by disabilities caused by land mines, war, disasters, and natural causes, and one in five Americans has one or more disabilities;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the assembled delegates to this General Conference of The United Methodist Church 2012 affirm our support of the full implementation of the provisions of the United Nations’ Standard Rules and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including Title I which states that employers “may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities” and will “reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result.”

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church 2012 urge all our congregations and agencies to implement and enforce the provisions of the Standard Rules, ADA and all disability-related programs within every area that members of The United Methodist Church reside with the same vigor and interest as they would any other law affecting their abled-bodied constituency. This includes, but is not limited to the provision of accessible buildings, bathrooms and parking; telephone access; hymnals and literature in large print and other alternative formats; closed captioning of all audio-visual media; amplification, assistive listening devices, and/or professional American Sign Language interpretation and real-time captioning when needed.

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church will show its adherence to the Standard Rules and the ADA by meeting in an accessible location and budgeting for accommodations needed by delegates and non-delegates, including but not limited to: providing large print and alternative format materials for visually impaired delegates and non-delegates; and providing Professional American Sign Language Interpretation and real-time captioning for delegates and non-delegates to General Conference. This is to be coordinated by the General Board of Global Ministries.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20403-CB-R9999-G; Pasion, Earlie - Cauayan City, Philippines for Global Young People’s Convocation and Legislative Assembly.

Alternatives to Abortion

Add new resolution to the Book of Resolutions as follows:

WHEREAS, on the difficult and divisive issue of abortion, our Social Principles notes “(t)he belief in the sanctity of unborn human life” and “recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion” (Book of Discipline ¶ 161J);

WHEREAS, the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church added to our nuanced statement on abortion the sentence: “We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion” (Book of Discipline ¶161J); and

WHEREAS, young adult women disproportionately face situations in which they would prefer to not choose abortion but feel that they have no choice due to financial, educational, relational, or other circumstances beyond their control; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, as youth and young women leaders of The United Methodist Church, we hereby call on local United Methodist congregations and campus ministries to be on the forefront of supporting existing and developing new ministries that compassionately help women in their communities find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Rationale:

To promote application of language recently added to the Social Principles.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20702-CB-R9999-G; Swan, Rita - Bronson, IA, USA.

Medical Care for Children

WHEREAS, the Christian faith calls upon parents and society to provide children with necessities of life, nurture them, and protect them from harm.

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Prince v. Massachusetts, 321 U.S. 158 (1944), that First
Amendment religious freedom rights do not include a right to abuse or neglect a child.

Whereas, many states have laws that appear to allow parents to withhold therapeutic medical care from children on religious grounds and five states (Idaho, Arkansas, West Virginia, Ohio, and Iowa) have statutory religious defenses to negligent homicide in deaths of children due to medical neglect.

Therefore, be it resolved that the United Methodist Church calls upon states to require all parents to provide children with necessities of life, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Rationale:
States should not have laws that discriminate against a class of children, depriving them of protections the state extends to other children. Freedom includes a balance of rights and responsibilities. A child’s right to health should take precedence over a parent’s right to practice religion.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20774-CB-R9999-G; Fields, Lynette - Winter Garden, FL, USA. 1 similar petition.

FDA Impact on Blood Donation

Whereas according to paragraph 162 particularly subsection V of the Social Principles, we recognize that as Methodists we are called to be in ministry with and for all people, and;

Whereas from time to time this means we must attempt to change a policy of government which limits our call to ministry, and;

Whereas the Methodist church has always been a strong partner with the blood donation and collection community, and;

Whereas we recognize the medical reality of blood shortages, and;

Whereas we acknowledge that over 50% of the country is disqualified from giving blood for various reasons, and;

Whereas we recognize that a portion of this percentage are needlessly prevented from donating this vitally important resource, and;

Whereas advancement of blood screening tests has made it easier than ever to detect blood borne diseases, such as HIV, with a window period of only a few weeks, and;

Whereas we acknowledge that the current policy of blood donor deferral for high-risk HIV groups has been described as sub-optimal by the Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability (ACBSA) in their recommendation to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and;

Whereas we recognize that this sub-optimal policy particularly affects gay men, Africans from certain nations and individuals in committed relationship with these persons, all of which are present in our churches, and;

Whereas we acknowledge that the Association of American Blood Banks (AABB), the American Red Cross (ARC), American Blood Centers (ABC), a special taskforce of 18 US Senators, countless doctors, the American Medical Association (AMA) and medical academicians have all supported a change in the current policy of blood donation deferral, and;

Whereas a one-year deferral period for all HIV-risk groups is more than sufficient given medical advances, and;

Whereas we recognize that through such a change we can be in ministry with more people, reduce the amount of people disqualified from giving and alleviate some of the pressure of blood shortage;

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church will submit an open letter to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services and Congress, supporting a change to the FDA Blood Donor Deferral Policy which reflects a standard of equality, joining with the Medical Community and others in preferring a one year deferral policy for all groups at varied risk of HIV infection.

Rationale:
The FDA policy on a lifetime ban on blood donations for gay men and Africans from specific countries is no longer necessary because of improved testing and technology. This law excludes many United Methodists from participating in this ministry and unnecessarily limits the US blood supply.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20864-CB-R9999-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

Death with Dignity

WHEREAS, individuals facing death are increasingly being offered an opportunity to ponder an important final life question, “What is the meaning of my life”, and
WHEREAS, for many, this is a profoundly spiritual question and answers come, not when they are consumed by a flurry of doctor’s appointments, treatments or tests but rather, in the comfort of solitude or in the company of family and friends, when they feel at peace with them self, their community, and their God, and

WHEREAS, disease and terminal illness represent less mystery now and are more associated with scientific and technological problem solving, and

WHEREAS, while many faith traditions adhere to ancient traditions and understandings of physical life’s final journey, this modern medical technology has provided new information opening the door for faith leaders to actively reconsider some previous held beliefs, and

WHEREAS, one of the greatest gifts God has given us as humans is the freedom to live in dignity according to one’s own beliefs and faith, and

WHEREAS, the growing death with dignity movement seeks to provide those persons nearing death with the same freedom to control their own end-of-life care, and

WHEREAS, death with dignity is not only a legal issue that allows - among other things - for a terminally ill patient to hasten an inevitable and unavoidable death when an underlying illness gets to be too much or quality of life too degraded, but a cultural and spiritual issue as well, and

WHEREAS, there is no clear biblical stance on end of life issues and some faith traditions have embraced the concept of allowing death with dignity as the ultimate act of compassion while others have rejected it, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church supports existing and newly organized efforts to educate its members and the community at large about the death with dignity movement.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20987-CB-R9999-G; Vines, Darrell L. - Lubbock, TX, USA for St. John’s UMC - Lubbock, TX.

Appreciation for “A Statement of Counsel”

Whereas, “[t]he role of the bishop is to be a prophetic voice for justice in a suffering and conflicted world through the tradition of social holiness” (Discipline, 2008, ¶ 403.1d), and

WHEREAS, one discipline required of bishops is “[a] prophetic commitment for the transformation of the Church and the world” (¶ 403.1d), and

WHEREAS, a task of the superintendents of the Church is “to see that all matters, temporal and spiritual, are administered in a manner that acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the Church” (¶ 401), and

WHEREAS, the 2004 General Conference (a) “reaf-[m] the commitment that each annual conference, led by the bishop and cabinet, develop comprehensive programs that place fresh emphasis upon inclusiveness—cultural, racial, lingual, gender—throughout the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church” and (b) instructed that “bishops and cabinets design specific strategies with timelines to make cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments the norm rather than the excep-
tion” (Resolution 8012, “Inclusiveness in All Dimensions of the Church.” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 938, 939), and

Whereas, in the past, United Methodist bishops have courageously and prophetically led the Church in facing issues of great social and moral import, as witnessed by In Search of Security, In Defense of Creation, and their Episcopal Initiative on Children and Poverty, and

Whereas, in 2011 some three dozen retired bishops of the Church issued “A Statement of Counsel to the Church,” which reads as follows:

Out of concern for the welfare of all God’s people, and, out of special concern for the people of The United Methodist Church, we, United Methodist Bishops – retired, believe The United Methodist Church should remove the following statement from The Book of Discipline (2008):

“...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.” §304.3

Our lives and ministries over the years have included prayerful, thoughtful consideration of our Holy Bible, our Wesleyan heritage, reflection on our experience of the church and world, and our conviction of God’s intention for a world transformed.

With this statement of conviction and counsel we seek:

• To affirm that the historic tests of “gifts and evidence of God’s grace” for ordained ministry override any past or present temporal restrictions such as race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

• To urge the Church, ecumenical and denominational, to change the manner in which it relates to gay, lesbian and transgendered persons in official statements, judicial proceedings, and in congregational life.

• To declare our conviction that the current disciplinary position of The United Methodist Church, a part of our historical development, need not, and should not, be embraced as the faithful position for the future.

• To make known our names and shared personal conviction on this matter and to encourage other church and Episcopal leaders to do the same.

With increasing frequency we observe and experience the following disturbing realities and know them to be detrimental to the mission of a Church of Jesus Christ:

• Lay and clergy, gay and straight, withdrawing membership or absenting themselves from the support of congregational and denominational Church life in order to maintain personal integrity.

• Young adults, especially, embarrassed to invite friends and expressing dismay at the unwillingness of our United Methodist Church to alter its 39-year exclusionary stance.

• Closeted pastors, currently called and ordained in our church, living divided lives while offering effective appreciated ministry.

• Bishops being drained of energy by upholding Church Discipline while regarding it as contrary to their convictions.

• Bishops caught between care for the Church by reappointing an effective gay or lesbian pastor and care for the Discipline by charging them under current legislation.

• Seminary leaders desiring greater flexibility and openness from the church in order to advance their mission of identifying, recruiting, enrolling, educating and spiritually forming Christian leaders.

• Christian gay men and women understanding themselves called of God to seek ministry opportunities within their United Methodist family Church home, but having to decide between:

  • leaving to go to accepting denominations, or
  • staying and praying for change, or
  • challenging Church law and accepting punitive actions.

Our United Methodist Church, ashamed and repentant in the past, ended official and unofficial restrictions on candidacy, ordination and appointment for reason of race, gender and ethnicity. We believe the God we know in Jesus is leading us to issue this counsel and call – a call to transform our church life and our world.

Therefore, be it resolved, recognizing and respecting the tension that our episcopal leaders face between their responsibilities “for ordering the life of the Church” (¶ 401) on the one hand and being “a prophetic voice,” as noted above, on the other, that the members of the 2012 General Conference

• Express our profound appreciation to our retired bishops for their challenge to our denomination with their insightful and courageous statement.

• Commit ourselves to working toward the creation of a Church that allows proof of gifts and graces “to override any past or present temporal restrictions” in our acceptance and approval of ministerial candidates.

• Pledge to accept the bishops’ “call to transform our church life and our world” as we strive to move toward a more “faithful position for the future.”
WHEREAS, such actions contradict Scriptures as contained in the Old and New Testaments, and the spirit and intent of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that no United Methodist Church, Church Building, or Church Property, be used in any way to promote homosexual unions, and that no Clergy Person within the United Methodist Church shall promote homosexual unions within church property or elsewhere.

Rationale:

Realizing that homosexuality was the main sin mentioned in regards to Sodom and Gomorrah, and that God did not destroy that city, sin did. God only carried the judgment on that city.

Not wishing to destroy The United Methodist Church by sin within, as many other denominations are now experiencing...

Respect for Scientific Medical Research

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church recognizes as part of “Our Theological Task” the use of reason to “relate our witness to the full range of human knowledge, experience, and service” (Discipline, 2008, ¶ 104, page 82); and

WHEREAS, “The United Methodist Church proclaims the value of each person as a unique child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons” (Discipline, 2008, ¶ 5); and

WHEREAS, our denomination views the advances of medical knowledge in a positive way, rejoicing that “medical science will continue to discover new forms of healing for humankind” (Resolution 3183, “Stem Cell Research,” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 334); and

WHEREAS, our Church accepts that “[d]evelopments in genetic science compel our reevaluation of accepted theological/ethical issues, including...the meaning of personhood” (Resolution 3181, “New Developments in Genetic Science,” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 325); and

WHEREAS, United Methodists provide medical care by supporting a large number of hospitals, clinics, medical centers, and health-related projects around the world, as seen, for example, in the United Methodist Committee on Relief’s list of over 300 “Projects for
Global Health” (<http://new.gbm-umc.org/advance/projects/ministrytype/details/index.cfm?all=0&lv=0&ri=203&rc=0002>); and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has “formally apologized[1]” for complicity by “Methodist leaders and bodies” in the tragic misuse of medical knowledge when they “supported eugenics as sound science and sound theology” and endorsed “the sterilization of persons deemed less worthy” (Resolution 3185, “Repentance for Support of Eugenics.” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 346); and

WHEREAS, our Church moves with caution where the ethical dimensions of possible medical advances need further discussion, as with “ethical standards” for stem cell research (Resolution 3183, “Stem Cell Research.” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 335); and

WHEREAS, on a particular medical issue our denomination urges a moratorium on medical research until there can be full discussion “by both the general public including significant participation from communities of faith, as well as by experts in agricultural and biological science, public policy, ethics, theology, law, and medicine, including genetics and genetic counseling” (Resolution 3182, “Human Cloning.” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 334); and

WHEREAS, although neurological studies regarding sexual orientation are still in relatively early stages, it is already clear that human brains show a high degree of variation where orientation is concerned (Dick F. Swaab, “Sexual orientation and its basis in brain structure and function.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Science 2008 105:30 [2008], 10273-74); and

WHEREAS, no evidence exists that early social environment has a key role in determining sexual orientation (Ai-Min Bao and Dick F. Swaab, “Sexual differentiation of the human brain: Relation to gender identity, sexual orientation and neuropsychiatric disorders.” Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology 32:2 [Special Issue, 2011], abstract); and

WHEREAS, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from that association’s official list of mental disorders in 1973 and did not include ego-dystonic homosexuality in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1987 (APA, “Psychiatric Treatment and Sexual Orientation: Position Statement.” 1998); and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has also determined that sexual orientation in and of itself should not be viewed as a disorder (World Health Organization, The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders: Clinical descriptions and diagnostic guidelines [1992]); and

WHEREAS, the American Psychiatric Association in 1997 found no scientific evidence supporting “reparative therapy” that attempts to change sexual orientation and concluded that this therapy could lead to depression and even self-destructive behavior (“Psychiatric Treatment and Sexual Orientation: Position Statement.” 1998); and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics holds that therapy designed to change sexual orientation has little if any possibility of success (American Academy of Pediatrics, “Policy Statement: Homosexuality and Adolescence.” 1993); and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics also notes that the presence of AIDS and suicide among adolescents emphasizes the importance of helping gay and lesbian young people grow both physically and mentally into healthy adults (Policy Statement, 1993); and

WHEREAS, our denomination “recognize[s] that teens dealing with questions about sexual orientation are at a greater risk for suicide” (Resolution 2041, “Church to Be in Ministry to Persons of All Sexual Orientations.” Book of Resolutions, 2008, 130):

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United Methodist Church

Affirms advances in scientific medical research when experience shows that they serve to promote human wellbeing, wholeness, and quality of life;

Strongly encourages and supports further careful scientific medical research into the factors that define sexual orientation; and

Calls upon all pastors, youth ministers, professional counselors, and sponsors of church youth groups to refrain, given current medical evidence, from directly or indirectly advocating reparative or transforming therapy for young persons who are struggling to understand their sexual identity.