Summary Report of the General Commission on Archives and History

The work of this Commission is the “ministry of memory.” Paragraph 1703 of The Book of Discipline enumerates the Commission’s responsibilities and states that its purpose “shall be to promote and care for the historical interests of The United Methodist Church at every level.” A faith grounded in Scripture arises out of historical events such as the Exodus and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. All of history may be regarded as the unfolding relationship between the triune God and creation. The Eucharist, as the central act of Christian worship, is observed because Jesus said, “Do this, in remembrance of me.” Therefore, the work of archives and history is to fulfill this mandate with stories of faith in the life of the church. It is committed to act as a faithful servant and steward of God in the collection, preservation, and dissemination of information about the history of The United Methodist Church and its antecedents. In remembering, identity is shaped, vision is ascertained, and mission is formulated. One of the essential elements in the renewal of the church is the recovery of, and appreciation for, its history and heritage.

The Commission serves the General Church by archiving the records of all the agencies and the episcopal offices, answering research requests, and providing historical materials. It services the annual conferences and jurisdictions with training events and offering advice as requested and has a priority of supporting racial and ethnic groups in the recovery and sharing of the history of those whose voices have been muted in the past. Support is also provided for the development of archives in the central conferences. It services the local church by offering archiving information, resources, and answering research requests.

A partnership with others engaged in this work is how the agency accomplishes its mandate with a small budget and small staff. The primary working relationship is with the Methodist library staff of Drew University, as the Archives Center is located on its campus. There is a close working relationship with conference commissions on archives and history and with conference archivists through the network of jurisdictional commissions of archives and history. Relationships are being developed with persons in the central conferences. The Archives Center is a safe depository for global materials, which can then be provided electronically around the world.

Attention to the Four Areas of Focus is given in the designation of the themes of Heritage Sunday for this quadrennium to each of the Four Foci. Historical resources are provided for each of the four areas. Leadership was addressed through a workshop for conference archivists held at the Archives Center and chairpersons of conference commissions on archives and history being included in a meeting of the General Commission. Also, students in the three schools of Drew University are hired and taught archival skills. Global health: an entire issue of Methodist History was devoted to the history of Methodist work in global health.

The Commission is a careful steward of its financial resources as its board of directors consists of only twenty-five persons and the Commission meets just once a year. An important gathering was the meeting of the directors of the Commission in Budapest, Hungary, in the summer of 2010, joining with the European Methodist Historical Commission and attending the European Methodist Historical Conference. This demonstrated one of the ways GCAH can be a global agency with close relationships with the appropriate regional entities.

Some of the significant evidences of efficiency, in other words “bang for your buck,” include the following:

- The Archives Center is an environmentally controlled and secure facility owned by Drew University. GCAH pays for its share of building costs, which is approximately $10 per square foot.
per year. This is well below market rates, with Drew bearing all capital expenses. This sharing is highly efficient.

- GCAH provides for archiving the records of all the agencies. This is much more efficient than each developing its own archives with a trained archivist. At times, research done for various agencies has been substantial.
- Collaboration with the African American Methodist Heritage Center and the Latino Oral History Project extends the work of GCAH into arenas that it could not otherwise afford given the size of staff and budget. Collaboration leverages other funds around common goals.

**Accomplishments of this quadrennium include:**

- Maintaining a vital archival and library collection for research and service to the church.
- Answering over 1,100 research requests per year from conferences, churches, and individual United Methodists.
- Processing over 300 cubic feet of documents per year.
- Placed its quarterly journal, *Methodist History* online.
- Redesigned the Web site, which receives upwards of 5,000 hits per day and the downloading of about 1.2—11 million kbytes per month.
- Partnered with the African American Methodist Heritage Center to maximize church resources and create greater access of materials.
- Support the Latino Oral History Project.
- Strengthened archival work in Mozambique and the Philippines.
- Connect with each jurisdiction and each region of the central conferences.
- The inspirational power of place is found in GCAH’s oversight and support for the 41 Heritage Landmarks and over 450 Conference Historic Sites. Over the past four years 20 of the Heritage Landmarks have received financial assistance based on an application process and review by the Commission.
- The General Secretary attends to a range of historical interests by serving as a trustee of the Epworth Old Rectory, and serves on the World Methodist Historical Society, the Charles Wesley Society, and the Board of Directors of the Wesley Work’s Project.
- Three hundred ninety-nine researchers were assisted in the Archives Center in the past year.
- Provided grants each year for research in racial/ethnic history, women’s history, and in history in the central conferences.
The work of this Commission is the “ministry of memory” and it has faithfully performed that ministry since its creation in 1968 as a successor to the Association of Methodist Historical Societies. Paragraph 1703 of *The Book of Discipline* enumerates the Commission’s responsibilities and states that its purpose “shall be to promote and care for the historical interests of The United Methodist Church at every level.” A faith grounded in Scripture arises out of historical events such as the Exodus and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. All of history may be regarded as the unfolding relationship between the triune God and creation. The Eucharist, as the central act of Christian worship, is observed because Jesus said, “Do this, in remembrance of me.” Therefore, the work of archives and history is to fulfill this mandate with stories of faith in the life of the church.

The General Commission understands its work as a ministry to the church and to the world of research and scholarship. It is committed to act as a faithful servant and steward of God in the collection, preservation, and dissemination of information about the history of The United Methodist Church and its antecedents. In remembering, identity is shaped, vision is ascertained, and mission is formulated. One of the essential elements in the renewal of the church is the recovery of, and appreciation for, its history and heritage.

The Commission serves the General Church by archiving the records of all the agencies and the episcopal offices, answering research requests and providing historical materials, and providing retention schedules for records no longer needed in the functioning of an office. In so doing it helps to maintain the transparency and accountability of denominational agencies. It services the annual conferences and jurisdictions with training events and offering advice as requested and has a priority of supporting racial and ethnic groups in the recovery and sharing of the history of those whose voices have been muted in the past. Support is also provided for the development of archives in the central conferences.

The General Commission on Archives and History is an administrative agency of The United Methodist Church. It has some limited program responsibilities such as the quadrennial Historical Convocation, Heritage Sunday, and services and publications made available to local churches.

A partnership with others engaged in this work is how the agency accomplishes its mandate with a small budget and small staff. The primary working relationship is with the Methodist library staff of Drew University, as the Archives Center is located on its campus. There is a close working relationship with conference commissions on archives and history and with conference archivists through the network of jurisdictional commissions of archives and history. Relationships are being developed with persons in the central conferences. In this quadrennium an archivist from the Philippines took two weeks of training with GCAH staff, a consultation was held concerning the Borgen collection in Norway, and funding was provided for local church training in Mozambique. GCAH has contributed copies of materials to archives outside the United States and commits itself to assist with this work in the future. The Archives Center is a safe depository for global materials, which can then be provided electronically around the world. Its archival work is done in a professional and competent manner according to the standards and evaluative questions of the Society of American Archivists. Relationships are maintained with related organizations worldwide.

Attention to the Four Areas of Focus is given in the designation of the themes of Heritage Sunday for this quadrennium to each of the Four Foci. Historical resources are provided for each of the four areas. **Leadership** was addressed through a workshop for conference archivists held at the Archives Center and chairpersons of conference commissions on archives and history being included in a meeting of the General Commission. Also, students in the three schools of Drew University are hired and taught archival skills. All of our resources contribute to leadership development. **Global health:** an entire issue of *Methodist History* was devoted to the history of Methodist work toward improving the health of people throughout the world.

The Commission celebrated receiving a gift from the estate of Josephine Forman, long-time archivist of the Central Texas Conference. The income from the gift has been designated for the training of conference
archivists and $10,000 from the principal will be used each year to provide a scholarship for a person of color who is in a graduate program in archival studies.

The Commission is a careful steward of its financial resources as its board of directors consists of only twenty-five persons and the Commission meets just once a year. In the summer of 2010, the directors of the Commission met in Budapest, Hungary, and then joined with the European Methodist Historical Commission to participate in the European Methodist Historical Conference. This demonstrated one of the ways GCAH can be a global agency with close relationships with the appropriate regional entities. The Commission co-sponsored the Seventh Historical Convocation with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and the Oklahoma Conference in July 2011 in conjunction with its annual meeting.

Some of the significant evidences of efficiency and fiscal prudence, in other words “bang for your buck,” include the following:

- Reserves are carefully invested to generate some income. Prudent spending over many years has created reserves that are adequate for the periodic fluctuations of the economy.
- The archives center is an environmentally controlled and secure facility owned by Drew University. GCAH pays for its share of building costs, which is approximately $10 per square foot per year. This is well below market rates, with Drew bearing all capital expenses. This sharing is highly efficient.
- GCAH provides for archiving the records of all the agencies. This is much more efficient than each developing its own archives with a trained archivist. At times, research done for various agencies has been substantial.
- Collaboration with the African American Methodist Heritage Center and the Latino Oral History Project extends the work of GCAH into arenas that it could not otherwise afford given the size of staff and budget. Collaboration leverages other funds around common goals.

**Accomplishments of this quadrennium include:**

- Maintaining a vital archival and library collection for research and service to the church.
- Answered 3,231 research requests in the past three years from conferences, churches, and individual United Methodists indicating a consistent pattern.
- Processing over 300 cubic feet of documents per year.
- Placed its quarterly journal, *Methodist History* online.
- Redesigned the Web site, which receives upwards of 2,000 hits per day and the downloading of about 1.2—11 million kbytes per month.
- Partnered with the African American Methodist Heritage Center to maximize church resources and create greater access of materials. The report of the Center is attached to the report of the Commission as an addendum.
- Support the Latino Oral History Project.
- Strengthened archival work in Mozambique and the Philippines.
- Connect with each jurisdiction and each region of central conferences.
- The inspirational power of place is found in GCAH’s oversight and support for the 41 Heritage Landmarks and over 450 Conference Historic Sites. Over the past four years 20 of the Heritage Landmarks have received financial assistance based on an application process and review by the Commission.
- The General Secretary attends to a range of historical interests by serving as a trustee of the Epworth Old Rectory and serves on the World Methodist Historical Society, the Charles Wesley Society, and the Board of Directors of the Wesley Work’s Project.
- Three hundred ninety-nine researchers were assisted in the Archives Center in the past year and during the quadrennium provided researchers such as Dr. John Wigger material to aid in the publication of his biography of Francis Asbury, *American Saint*. Researchers have come from every continent except Antarctica.
- Provided grants each year for research in racial/ethnic history, women’s history, and history in the central conferences.
- Methodist Library staff responded annually to over 350 research questions by e-mail, phone, Facebook, or postal mailing.
- In 2010-11 delivered 1,957 items to 381 researchers in the Methodist Center Reading Room.
- In 2010-11 added 742 new print titles and 36 new microform titles.
Independent Commissions

Conclusion

The Commission developed a set of powerful questions to guide its work in the coming years. These include:

- What else can we do by way of technology? A wider e-mail distribution list needs to be developed.
- What will be the demands of digitizing materials? How should “born digital” records be handled? This is especially important for conference journals and conference newspapers that are only in electronic versions and not print versions.
- How can we capture the enthusiasm of our youth? One answer already offered is to develop confirmation class days at the Center instead of having classes come upon request individually.
- How can we reenergize and publicize our awards and grants program?
- What would be missing if GCAH ceased to exist?

Without memory we lose identity and vision. The staff and directors of the General Commission are grateful for the longstanding support of this work and for the privilege in engaging in the “ministry of memory.”

Directors
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Bishop Kainda Katembo, Vice-president
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Marge Benham
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Frances Lyons-Bristol, Reference Archivist
Christopher Anderson, Methodist Librarian, Drew University
Summary Report of the African American Methodist Heritage Center

Mission Statement

The African American Methodist Heritage Center (AAMHC) exists to provide research, to preserve artifacts and other memorabilia, and to protect and promote the stories of African Americans who have been a part of Methodism since its inception in the 1700s.

History of Development

The idea for AAMHC originated with Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) in 2001. Organization of the Heritage Center with an independent board of directors and incorporation with nonprofit status under the IRS 501c3 category followed. In 2008, the General Conference approved a $100,000 per year grant, and Advance Special program status was granted. In that same year, the Heritage Center entered into partnership with the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) of The United Methodist Church, on the campus of Drew University, where its offices and staff are housed.

Key 2009-2012 Quadrennial Program Goals and Accomplishments

Goal One. Solicit, collect, and catalogue historic documents and materials that add to the wealth of materials on African Americans’ presence in Methodism already existing in the General Church Archives Center on the campus of Drew University.

Goal One Accomplishment. Boxes of letters, journals, pictures, and other memorabilia have been received by the Heritage Center. Drew Seminary has provided a seminary intern who is processing and cataloguing materials under the guidance of the GCAH Archivist.

Goal Two. Implement a local church workshop in the five United Methodist Jurisdictions by December 31, 2012, for the purpose of empowering local churches to preserve their histories.

Goal Two Accomplishment. Workshops over two-day periods occurred in the Northeast Jurisdiction held at Mother African Zoor United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, PA; the Southeast Jurisdiction held at Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA; and the South Central Jurisdiction held at Dillard University in New Orleans, LA, plus a Fall 2011 planned workshop for the North Central Jurisdiction. Each workshop has featured presentations of African American Methodist history, workshops on oral and written history, archival displays, history research and promotion in the local church, as well as opportunities for worship, fellowship, and availability of audiovisuals and other resources produced by AAMHC.

Goal Three. Explore partnerships with institutions that hold promise of expanding the collection of memorabilia, connectional contacts, and general publicity of the Heritage Center.

Goal Three Accomplishment. The AAMHC entered a process of developing partnerships with Dillard University in New Orleans and Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, and is exploring a partnership relationship with Claflin University in Orangeburg, SC.

Goal Four. Develop an AAMHC 2010-2013 Strategic Plan.

Goal Four Accomplishment. Through the help of a consultant, a 2010-2013 Strategic Plan was developed as an important multiyear management tool that reflects the AAMHC Board decision-making, action planning, and priorities that will shape and guide the Heritage Center toward a desired future.

Goal Five. Carry out special reporting, resourcing, and dissemination processes.

Goal Five Accomplishment. Reports and presentations have been made at annual meetings of BMCR. Heritage Center exhibits have occurred at the Eastern Pennsylvania, Greater New Jersey, and New York Annual Conferences. The Heritage Center emphasized the annual May celebration of Heritage Sunday; publishes a newsletter; and sponsored a 2010 Open House in collaboration with the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH). Information and resources appear on YouTube, a Center Web site, and Facebook. A 2012 African Methodist Calendar includes birth dates of notable persons and events of United Methodism and other African Methodist denominations.
Independent Commissions

**Goal Six.** Establish an AAMHC Foundation for fund-raising purposes.

**Goal Six Accomplishment.** The Heritage Center organized a Foundation to carry out fund-raising for immediate operations and long-term needs to assure the continuation of the ministry.

**Goal Seven.** Celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the AAMHC founding.

**Goal Seven Accomplishment.** The Heritage Center planned for the December 9, 2011, Founder’s Celebration of the Center and a tribute to Bishop Forrest C. Stith, the “spark plug and driving force” of the Center.

**Next Steps: Meeting Challenges and Forging the Future**

The AAMHC Strategic Plan asserts: “Preservation of our rich history and creation of our future requires strategic planning so that we may own our future and fulfill our long term vision. The leadership of the African American Heritage Center has come together to develop a plan to ensure that the Center remains a strong and viable institution and to increase collections, offerings and services that promote awareness and appreciation of that history.” To this end, the important next steps include the implementation of nine strategic goals.

- Develop more effective and consistent ways of communicating with the board, staff, partners, and constituencies in order to empower participation in accomplishing the mission of the Heritage Center.
- Improve AAMHC governance processes to enable the Heritage Center to effectively fulfill its mission.
- Use a partnership model to encourage and resource local churches.
- Develop partnerships with other entities that will strengthen the Heritage Center’s ability to help the church recover, preserve, disseminate, and tell the story of African Americans in Methodism.
- Broaden our fund-raising efforts.
- Continue to utilize technology and innovation to enhance the ministry of the Heritage Center.
- Actively engage in enabling the telling of the story of African Americans in Methodism and how the barriers to full participation have been/are being overcome.
- Identify research projects to develop participation in the academic community and to promote research on the unfolding story of Pan-Methodism.
- Engage in systematic and ongoing efforts to solicit, collect, and exhibit African American church historical data, material and artifacts.
The African American Methodist Heritage Center Quadrennial Report 2009-2012

Mission Statement

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Key 2009-2012 Quadrennial Program Goals and Accomplishments

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Independent Commissions

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**Next Steps: Meeting Challenges and Forging the Future**

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- Develop more effective and consistent ways of communicating with the board, staff, partners and constituencies in order to empower participation in accomplishing the mission of the Heritage Center.
- Improve AAMHC governance processes to enable the Heritage Center to effectively fulfill its mission.
- Use a partnership model to encourage and resource local churches.
- Develop partnerships with other entities that will strengthen the Heritage Center’s ability to help the church recover, preserve, disseminate, and tell the story of African Americans in Methodism.
- Broaden our fund-raising efforts.
- Continue to utilize technology and innovation to enhance the ministry of the Heritage Center.
- Actively engage in enabling the telling of the story of African Americans in Methodism and how the barriers to full participation have been/are being overcome.
- Identify research projects to develop participation in the academic community and to promote research on the unfolding story of Pan-Methodism.
- Engage in systematic and ongoing efforts to solicit, collect, and exhibit African American church historical data, material, and artifacts.

The Heritage Center painfully acknowledges the veracity of the African proverb “When an elder passes, a library perishes” and strives to be diligent in insuring that the legacy of our elders is available into the future.

**Board of Directors**

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Ms. Barbara Ricks Thompson, Vice President
Ms. Carol Travis, Secretary
Ms. Anne Flemming Williams, Treasurer
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The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns
Summary Report to the 2012 General Conference

That They May All Be One . . .
So That the World May Believe
John 17:21-22

The work of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns is guided by foundational principles expressed in the scriptural account of Jesus praying at the Last Supper: “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” John 17:20-21

As it works toward faithful witness and evangelism, the GCCUIC is organized to fulfill two overarching purposes:

1) “To advocate and work toward the full reception of the gift of Christian unity in every aspect of the Church’s life and to foster approaches to ministry and mission that more fully reflect the oneness of Christ’s church in the human community.

2) To advocate and work for the establishment and strengthening of relationships with other living faith communities, and to further dialogue with persons of other faith, cultures, and ideologies.” The Book of Discipline, 2008, ¶ 1902.1, 2

“The Commission has existed to serve all of us as United Methodist disciples,” said Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, GCCUIC president. “The work of Christian unity and interreligious relationships is the work of every one of us and critical to making disciples for the transformation of the world.”

To be ecumenical is to be evangelical. It is for the sake of credible witness that we strive to incarnate the gift of unity within the body of Christ. In accordance with disciplinary statements, the GCCUIC board of directors adopted the following mission statement in April 2009 in St. Louis: “As United Methodists our vision is of the Church united in Christ and of a world living into God’s purposes for the whole human family. Our Christian faith calls us to live this vision of God’s grace for the sake of the world.”

The work of the GCCUIC is informed by, but not limited to, the four foci approved by the 2008 General Conference. Much of the Commission’s work has focused on “developing principled Christian leaders for the Church and the world,” and “renewing existing congregations” through ecumenical engagement and interreligious involvement. Efforts have been made to help the church address them with ecumenical and interreligious insight.

The Commission’s mandate for its advocacy and work is founded on the traditional authorities of The United Methodist Church: 1) Scripture, 2) The Book of Discipline, particularly the Constitution and Our Theological Task, and 3) the General Conference.

The GCCUIC is petitioning the 2012 General Conference to insert the word pray in Article VI of the Constitution. It would read: “. . . The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life. . . .” Prayer would become a stated priority with other aspects of the Commission’s work. GCCUIC profoundly agrees with Yves Congar: “The way through the door of (Christian) unity is on our knees.”

The GCCUIC is the general agency of The United Methodist Church that has the disciplinary mandate to be the voice of one of the most precious desires of the heart of God and by extension the oikoumene, the whole inhabited earth. Therefore, the Commission uses the unity of Christians and humankind as the biblical lens through which it monitors and assesses the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

A priority of the Commission has been to expand resources and training on holy conferencing when the denomination deals with difficult, potentially church-dividing issues such as homosexuality, the global nature of the church, scriptural interpretation, and race. A one-page resource on holy conferencing has been prepared to help delegates at the 2012 General Conference.

United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training (UMEIT) represents the long-awaited creation
Independent Commissions

of a denominational network in the United States similar to those that have long existed in other churches. UMEIT is designed to encourage and support ecumenical and interreligious ministries in annual conferences, districts, and local congregations. A UMEIT model is also being created for the central conferences.

The Commission has provided substantial staff and consultation support to the newly established United Methodist Committee on Faith and Order. This General Conference committee is working on three resources for the denomination focusing on ecclesiology, as requested by the Council of Bishops.

Repentance for horrific crimes against indigenous peoples has been a major focus for the Commission during the quadrennium. Board and staff members took part in a monumental journey as they worked to prepare the church for an Act of Repentance at the 2012 General Conference. The Act of Repentance at the 2012 General Conference will inaugurate a church-wide focus on repentance at the annual and central conference levels of The United Methodist Church. Appropriately, the Council of Bishops will provide oversight and see that this long-overdue task is carried into the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

The United Methodist Church has entered into full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. During this quadrennium, the Commission adopted interim eucharistic sharing with the Episcopal Church USA, moving toward full communion; continued a bilateral dialogue with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and began a bilateral dialogue with the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church. The Commission has also worked to deepen relationships with The British Methodist Church. GCCUIC will propose to the 2012 General Conference full communion with Pan-Methodist partners.

The board members of GCCUIC unanimously agreed and took action to propose legislation to incorporate GCCUIC into the Council of Bishops.

In annual conferences, central conferences, districts, and local congregations, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns will continue to lift up the prayer Jesus prayed on the night of his arrest. It will continue to insist that The United Methodist Church adhere to the Lund Principle at every level of the church’s life, remembering that Christian unity originates in the very heart of God.
The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns
Quadrennial Report to the 2012 General Conference

That They May All Be One... So That the World May Believe
John 17:21-22

Introduction

For seminarian Blair Thompson, being a board member of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) has given her a new outlook and a set of tools that will be crucial in her ministry in The United Methodist Church.

“I came in as a board member completely new to this entire idea of ecumenism,” said Thompson, a student at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. “I realize, now, that ecumenism is a gift; unity is a gift. It has really opened my eyes to see the ways that I can build bridges of unity and understanding in my local church and community.”

Blair, other board members and staff have continued the work of the Commission guided by foundational principles expressed in the scriptural account of Jesus praying at the Last Supper: “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21).

The Rev. Gary Harke, a GCCUIC board member representing Churches Uniting in Christ, stresses the important role played by The United Methodist Church in the world faith community: “If you accept the premise that God intends the church to be one; and that the diverse expressions of the church are gifts that need to be shared and appreciated by everyone, then the work of GCCUIC is critical. Faith communities working together are able to achieve much more, particularly with full communion agreements, than those working in isolation. The building of partnerships is one of the many reasons why the GCCUIC adds great value to the denomination.” Harke, Director of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches is a member of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church.

For GCCUIC board member Walter Dry, knowing and understanding the meaning of ecumenism is important in moving the denomination forward. “I have always believed our own mission as individual Christians is to make disciples,” said Dry. “I have learned that we all have our own ways of completing the mission but we are united together in the belief of God and his Son, Jesus Christ.”

As it works toward faithful witness and evangelism, the GCCUIC is organized to fulfill two overarching purposes:

1) “To advocate and work toward the full reception of the gift of Christian unity in every aspect of the Church’s life and to foster approaches to ministry and mission that more fully reflect the oneness of Christ’s church in the human community.

2) To advocate and work for the establishment and strengthening of relationships with other living faith communities, and to further dialogue with persons of other faith, cultures, and ideologies.” The Book of Discipline ¶ 1902.1, 2

“The Commission has existed to serve all of us as United Methodist disciples,” said Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, GCCUIC president. “The work of Christian unity and interreligious relationships is the work of every one of us and critical to making disciples for the transformation of the world.”

Disciplinary, Theological, and Biblical Mission

The Book of Discipline forms the ecclesiological grounding for The United Methodist Church regarding its ecumenical commitments: “The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world, and its very dividedness is a hindrance to its mission in that world” (The Book of Discipline, “The Preamble to the Constitution,” page 21). “Christian unity is not an option; it is a gift to be received and expressed” (The Book of Discipline, “Our Theological Task,” page 84).

We acknowledge that disunity among Christians is scandalous, contrary to Christ’s will for the disciples, and a stumbling block for the world. Thus, for the “People Called [United] Methodist” ecumenism is not a
mere denominational option but an ecclesiological imperative. To be ecumenical is to be evangelical. It is for the sake of credible witness that we strive to incarnate the gift of unity within the body of Christ. The Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church (The Book of Discipline ¶ 120) focuses on making “disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” It may be that the world will await its transformation until the unity of Christ’s disciples is finally, fully, and visibly made manifest.

In accordance with disciplinary statements, the GCCUIC board of directors adopted the following mission statement in April 2009 in St. Louis: “As United Methodists our vision is of the Church united in Christ and of a world living into God’s purposes for the whole human family. Our Christian faith calls us to live this vision of God’s grace for the sake of the world.”

The Rev. Youngsook Kang, vice-president of the board, sees the work of ecumenism as critical to fulfilling the denomination’s primary mission. “We have huge issues to address in the world such as global disease and world peace,” she said. “If we don’t come together as Christians and people of faith, then who will?” Kang is a district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference.

Commission members recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in several statements of conciliar bodies in which The United Methodist Church holds membership. In particular, the Lund Principle serves as an important measuring rod. Threatening as this principle can be denominationally and horrifying as it is institutionally, the Lund Principle, adopted by the World Council of Churches, still stands as the most practical wisdom readily available to those who would take seriously the ecumenical commitment of The United Methodist Church as declared in the Preamble to its Constitution. The Lund Principle, adopted at the Third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden, in 1952, asks churches “to consider whether they are doing all they ought to manifest the oneness of the people of God [and] . . . whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other Churches, and whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.”

GCCUIC repeatedly asks the tough, probing questions posed by the Lund Principle. Despite the progress made at various levels of the church, it is hard to discern improvement in denominational behavior vis-à-vis this classic ecumenical ideal. The principle is often embraced with words but not fully lived out in actions.

**The Four Areas of Focus**

The work of the GCCUIC is informed by, but not limited to, the four foci approved by the 2008 General Conference. Much of the Commission’s work has focused on “developing principled Christian leaders for the Church and the world,” and “renewing existing congregations” through ecumenical engagement and interreligious involvement. Board members received the four areas with gratitude for their importance to both The United Methodist Church and humankind. Efforts have been made to help the church address them with ecumenical and interreligious insight. In terms of the Four Areas of Focus, ecumenical and interreligious questions remain.

**Biblical Basis**

The Commission’s mandate for its advocacy and work is founded on the traditional authorities of The United Methodist Church: 1) Scripture, 2) The Book of Discipline, particularly the Constitution and Our Theological Task, and 3) the General Conference.

On the night of his arrest Jesus prayed for his disciples to be one so that the world may believe that God had sent him for the purpose of transforming the world—the same purpose adopted by The United Methodist Church and stated in The Book of Discipline. In a profound sense, Christian unity begins in the very heart of God. It is a sacred request from the Son to the Father, a request that has already been granted preveniently by a loving, self-giving God and available to us through the ministries of the Holy Spirit. It is in the mystery of the Holy Trinity that unity is revealed as God’s very essence.

The relational essence of the triune God is beautifully depicted in Rublev’s icon, “The Hospitality of Abraham.” Three angels visit Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre. The creator of the icon shows them as three persons in relationship—talking, visiting, eating together, and speaking with one voice to Abraham and Sarah. The unified, interactive, personal essence of God is modeled in this picture of communal fellowship. The church, the body of Christ, is called to be the image of God—relationally and dynamically unified for the sake of the world.
Human beings, because of their suffering of the effects of the Fall, are not able on their own to completely accept or fully express this gift of unity. However, through God’s grace, Christians at times have caught the vision and realized instances of such unity. The United Methodist Church has been among the visible leadership of the ecumenical movement from its very beginning. The GCCUIC affirms the world-transforming principle that to be Christian is to be ecumenical. United Methodists believe this ecumenical and interreligious engagement is consistent with John Wesley’s biblical invitation issued in his sermon, *A Catholic Spirit:* “A man [person] of catholic spirit is one who . . . gives [sic] his hand to all whose hearts are right with [sic] his heart” [Paraphrase 2 Kings 10:15. Modern English Version, edited from 1872 reprint of 1771 edition of John Wesley’s 53 sermons].

The GCCUIC is petitioning the 2012 General Conference to insert the word pray in Article VI of the Constitution. It would read: “. . . The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life. . . .” Prayer would become a stated priority with other aspects of the Commission’s work. GCCUIC profoundly agrees with Yves Congar: “The way through the door of (Christian) unity is on our knees.”

The GCCUIC does programming but is not just a programmatic agency. Though it has monitoring responsibilities, it is not just a monitoring agency. More importantly, it is the general agency of The United Methodist Church that has the disciplinary mandate to be the voice of one of the most precious desires of the heart of God and by extension the *oikoumene,* the whole inhabited earth. Therefore, the Commission uses the unity of Christians and humankind as the biblical lens through which it monitors and assesses the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

**New Leadership and Organizational Priorities**

The Commission’s board of directors and executive staff began a time of intentional reflection and prayerful discernment to organize the priorities of the Commission. The work of GCCUIC to re-focus program priorities won praise from the Connectional Table after its evaluation and review of all boards and agencies in 2010. The GCCUIC Board of Directors adopted a new strategic plan for the quadrennium at its annual meeting September 12, 2009.

The Connectional Table report stated: “By the nature of its charge, GCCUIC is not an agency that can perfectly align with the mission and focus of the General Church. But regardless of that limitation, GCCUIC documented in its report that efforts were made to align the work of the agency with the mission of the General Church, the adopted goals of the agency, The Book of Discipline and the Four Areas of Focus. . . . As a result, the new board adopted more realistic goals and priorities that are measurable. GCCUIC is clear on its purpose and realistic about what it can accomplish given the budget and human resources it currently has to work with in this quadrennium.”

Mutti ended his service with the Commission on June 30, 2009, but continued as a consultant on certain projects. Gamble’s interim status ended February 1, 2010, when she became Associate General Secretary. Dr. Glen Alton Messer II joined the staff as Assistant General Secretary September 1, 2010.

**Leadership Education and Formation**

The Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church, describes partnerships as a way to better understanding and belief. “One of the gifts of ecumenism is that it helps us see new facets on the old jewels of our faith,” she said. The ideals of the Wesleyan tradition compel “the People Called [United] Methodist” to search for common ground in the most difficult of circumstances. Christian unity, one of our many jewels, has remained at the center of the GCCUIC work during this quadrennium. By providing training and resource materials, the GCCUIC has worked to remind leaders of the value of our ecumenical commitments, interreligious partnerships, and the need for holy conferencing. “[Christ Jesus] is our peace . . . and has broken down the dividing wall”(Ephesians 2:14 NRSV).
A priority of the Commission has been to expand resources and training on holy conferencing when the denomination deals with difficult, potentially church-dividing issues such as homosexuality, the global nature of the church, scriptural interpretation, and race. A one-page resource on holy conferencing has been prepared to help delegates at the 2012 General Conference. Board members also participated in training related to the principles of holy conferencing and are prepared to serve as facilitators.

Board vice-president Kang commended the resource as an important reminder that “we are called to come together and recognize our differences and listen to each other with respect and honesty so that we can find common ground.”

United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training (UMEIT) represents the long-awaited creation of a denominational network in the United States similar to those that have long existed in other churches. UMEIT is designed to encourage and support ecumenical and interreligious ministries in annual conferences, districts, and local congregations. Programs designed to date have provided the level of pedagogical sophistication necessary for the ecumenical and interreligious education and formation of United Methodists.

Held in conjunction with the annual National Workshop on Christian Unity in the United States, UMEIT events provide United Methodists with a wide variety of resources. UMEIT events were held in Phoenix in 2009, Tampa in 2010, and Pittsburgh in 2011. Leaders included Diana Eck, Michael Kinnamon, George “Tink” Tinker, Stephen Kim, John Stephens, Timothy Whitaker, Minerva Carcaño, and Gwynne Guibord. GCCUIC plans to replicate UMEIT in the central conferences in a manner that honors their distinctive identities and meets their particular needs. A UMEIT session is planned for the Philippines next year.

The Commission has provided substantial staff and consultation support to the newly established United Methodist Committee on Faith and Order. This General Conference committee is working on three resources for the denomination focusing on ecclesiology, as requested by the Council of Bishops. The committee has exchanged representatives with the Faith and Order Committee of The British Methodist Church with which it is seeking a deeper relationship.

“Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons”
(Resolution #3323)

Repentance for horrific crimes against indigenous peoples has been a major focus for the Commission during the quadrennium. Board and staff members took part in a monumental journey as they worked to prepare the church for an Act of Repentance at the 2012 General Conference.

Harry Askin, a Caucasian layperson from the East Ohio Annual Conference, said he started his journey at the beginning of the quadrennium with an intellectual idea of repentance. He thought he understood what it would mean to make an apology and to ask forgiveness—until he heard the stories told by two Northern Cheyenne descendants of 1864 Sand Creek Massacre survivors. “As these two men told their stories, I could see the pain and the anguish that still exists nearly 150 years later,” said Askin. “It was something I hadn’t thought about before. At that moment, the idea of repentance began to go from my head to my heart. My entire perspective changed.”

The Sand Creek Massacre has a direct connection to the church. It was a Methodist minister, Colonel John Chivington, who led the charge on a Cheyenne and Arapaho encampment where more than 165 were killed, mostly women and children. “We need to understand our history in this country regarding indigenous persons as well as the ongoing things that are being done around the world,” said Askin. “A single act of repentance is not enough.”

The Sand Creek Massacre is a microcosm of the injustices against indigenous people who, for generations, have experienced multiple violations of human rights, collective removal from their homelands, and cultural genocide. These historical traumas have left many skeptical that an act of repentance by The United Methodist Church will make a difference in attitudes or actions.

The Commission held nearly two dozen listening sessions with Native Americans in the United States and with indigenous peoples in two central conferences. The sessions were a starting point to appreciate what it will take to create a meaningful experience for the church that will have integrity and be authentic and credible.
Among participants in a listening session at Anadarko, Okla., in 2010 was Lupe Gooday, an Apache elder and member of the Little Washita United Methodist Church in Fletcher, Okla. He questioned how an apology from The United Methodist Church could be sincere. “People are going to have to change,” he said. “They forced our people to change. They took away the language; they took away the land. So, what can they apologize for?”

GCCUIC’s General Secretary Sidorak is urging The United Methodist Church to confront its past. “It is absolutely essential for The United Methodist Church to grapple spiritually with the ecclesiological implications attendant to the 2012 Act of Repentance and to provide ample and compelling evidence of demonstrable denominational contrition for our collective responsibility. . . . We must make a commitment to indigenous persons to do everything in our power to never let it—what the church has done and left undone regarding indigenous peoples—happen again or be allowed to continue,” he said. “Only with this commitment will we reach a level of comprehension and empathy where healing can begin.”

How the church will be different following an act of repentance depends greatly on the legislation that is adopted and the financial support allocated to achieve it, according to Rev. Thomas White Wolf Fassett, a Seneca from upstate New York and General Secretary Emeritus of the General Board of Church and Society. Fassett serves as the chairperson of the General Secretary’s Advisory Council on the 2012 Act of Repentance. “Many others, including me, see the event as the beginning, the launching, of a new order in the life of the church,” he said. “It cannot be found in any religious service without first adopting . . . legislation that will prevent this tragedy from being perpetuated. New demands must be brought on all levels of the church’s life from the local church to the Council of Bishops.”

The Act of Repentance at the 2012 General Conference will inaugurate a church-wide focus on repentance at the annual and central conference levels of The United Methodist Church. Appropriately, the Council of Bishops will provide oversight and see that this long-overdue task is carried into the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

“We hope to continue holding services and creating opportunities for healing in all the places that the Methodist movement may have been hurtful to indigenous peoples,” said Swenson.
Independent Commissions

Christian Forum, the World Methodist Council, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, other national and regional councils of churches, and Christian Churches Together (in the United States). The agency will continue its advocacy for a more faithful observance of the Lund Principle as it works together with these conciliar Christian bodies.

**Visioning for the Future**

GCCUIC, in concert with the Council of Bishops, is proposing a “new order” to the way The United Methodist Church carries out its ecumenical and interreligious ministries. This new order represents an attempt to keep faith with the radical claim of Henri J. M. Nouwen: “We do not think our way into a new kind of living but live our way into a new kind of thinking.” Following the example of Socrates, GCCUIC has sought to lead by asking questions. What is in the best interest of the church as a whole, not just GCCUIC? What good will it do to make this change? Commission members believe:

- It would deepen the relationship between the ecumenical and interreligious staff of The United Methodist Church and the membership of the Council of Bishops, especially its Ecumenical Officer.
- It would allow staff to attend dutifully to the ecumenical and interreligious education and formation of bishops.
- It would help cultivate a culture of undivided attention to things ecumenical and interreligious within the Council of Bishops.
- It would encourage and build stronger connections to the annual conferences.
- It would provide ecumenical and interreligious staff direct access to central conference bishops collectively and likely improve the prospects for deeper understanding and greater cooperation worldwide.
- It would empower staff to concentrate on the ecumenical and interreligious vision and mission, avoiding a preoccupation with endless agency self-justification.
- It would reflect more clearly the structural model used by some of our ecumenical partners and enable them to more readily comprehend the manner in which our ecumenical and interreligious ministries are structured and led.
- It would facilitate more felicitous conciliar and interreligious relationships.
- It would reduce the number of individuals involved in governance; create a constructive alternative to “business as usual”; represent a sincere attempt to be better stewards of dwindling financial resources; and save significant costs.

By incorporating GCCUIC into the Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church would be afforded a precious opportunity to lead ecumenically and interreligiously with more than money. A *kairos* moment may be upon us. GCCUIC is prepared to make the most of it.

The board members of GCCUIC unanimously agreed and took action to propose legislation to incorporate GCCUIC into the Council of Bishops. In a self-sacrificial act, board members voted for a new organizational vision to advance the visible unity of Christ’s Church, relations with different religious traditions, and expression of interreligious concerns. GCCUIC has recognized that even as the Council of Bishops approved GCCUIC legislation and drafted its own legislation, there was obviously no certainty about what the 2012 General Conference would conclude. Consequently, GCCUIC approved legislation that would enable it to continue as a general agency of the church, but reducing governing board members from 38 to nine.

GCCUIC is poised to be responsive to restructuring initiatives across the connection. Possessed with what John P. Kotter described as “urgent patience” and open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our midst, the GCCUIC board of directors has offered eloquent testimony to its ardent belief in “a future with hope.”

**Ecumenical and Interreligious Opportunities for The United Methodist Church in the Next Quadrennium**

Recognizing the need to be more systematic in empowering ecumenical and interreligious representatives, GCCUIC—or its successor body—plans to hold a consultation for United Methodist representatives by training them on expectations and how to provide feedback. Another important consultation will explore with United Methodist and selected conciliar leaders the ecumenical and interreligious landscape of the United States.

To help The United Methodist Church better understand the ecumenical and interreligious dimension of its worldwide nature, GCCUIC, or its successor body, will
provide a consultation specifically to identify and train leadership across the denomination in the areas of Christian unity and interreligious relationships. The event will be designed to recruit and cultivate a new generation of ecumenical and interreligious leaders with a strong emphasis on developing relationships in a worldwide context.

Interreligious Outreach and Relationships

Being religious means being bound together, even under duress. Interreligious relationships and dialogue provide opportunities for discovering how “to bind up” wounds of the past and present. The need for such a renewed approach to interreligious outreach and relationships is obvious in the very name given the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns. Rather than insipid interreligious separatism, our denomination is on record preferring the risk of vigorous encounters with “other living faiths.” GCCUIC is organized to enable those interreligious encounters.

Any carefully crafted immersion experience in interreligious relationships will make us better United Methodists and stronger Christians. In interreligious relationships, we can discover what Krister Stendahl called “holy envy”—the mutual respect, utmost regard, sacred trust, and complete affection those of one religious tradition can feel for those of another. Therefore, GCCUIC, or its successor body, will explore in the next quadrennium possibilities that enhance and strengthen interreligious outreach and dialogue worldwide that hold the promise for expanded and deepened relationships around the globe.

Conclusion: That They May All Be One . . . So That the World May Believe

In annual conferences, central conferences, districts, and local congregations, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns will continue to lift up the prayer Jesus prayed on the night of his arrest. It will continue to insist that The United Methodist Church adhere to the Lund Principle at every level of the church’s life, remembering that Christian unity originates in the very heart of God.

Thomas Merton pointed to John 17 as “the last will and Testament of Jesus Christ.” This “farewell prayer of Jesus” has become the biblical cornerstone of ecumenism. In it, Jesus prays for the Church universal. Jesus prays for the church of the future that it may be one in its witness and service so that “the world may believe.” As Rudolf Bultmann observed, Jesus looked past the disciples at the table of the Last Supper to include all Christians in generations to come.

GCCUIC Board of Directors 2008-2012

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Summary Report of the Pan-Methodist Commission

The Pan-Methodist Commission observed its 25th year of existence in 2010 and strives to fulfill its calling of moving toward unity and cooperation by redefining and strengthening our relationships in Jesus Christ. The mission statement of the Pan-Methodist Commission indicates that this group will “work to define, determine, plan, and in cooperation with established agencies of the several denominations, execute activities to foster meaningful cooperation among the Methodist denominations in the collaborations. Such cooperation shall include, but not be limited to, evangelism, missions, publications, social concerns, and higher education.”

The work of Pan-Methodism has challenged us first to get to know the members of the Methodist Family and second to explore new methods of working together. The journey has not been easy, but we trust God for leadership and direction through the process. We are reminded of Jesus’ prayer for the disciples recorded in the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John where Jesus prayed that we may be one so that the world would know and believe. Therefore, in the midst of the journey, the Commission has found ways to approach oneness through cooperation and working together. Some of the highlights are as follows:

➢ Affirmed and celebrated the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Union Methodist Protestant Church becoming members of the Pan-Methodist Commission.
➢ Followed leadership shared during the quadrennium between Bishop Ronald Cunningham (CME) and Bishop Alfred Lloyd Norris (UMC).
➢ Evaluated and modified the mission statement.
➢ Acknowledged Dr. Luther Smith (CME) for his continuing work with issues related to children and poverty. Under his leadership the Commission has sought to have member denominations work cooperatively for the sake of poor children.
➢ Continued the practice of gathering as Methodists in various cities for the purpose of fostering the development of Pan-Methodist relationships and ministries. At each Gathering, the hymn, “Christ the Church You Gave Is Broken,” written by UMC Bishop William Boyd Grove, is used.

➢ Commended the following congregations for their service as hosts to the Methodist Gatherings: Broadway Temple AMEZ Church and Quinn Chapel AME Church, Louisville, Ky.; St. Paul UAME Church, Wilmington, Del.; St. John AUMP Church, Chester, Pa.; Galloway UM Church, Pearl Street AME Church, Jackson, Miss.; and Big Bethel AME Church, Atlanta, Ga. The Rev. Tyrone Gordon chaired an ad hoc committee to develop policies governing Pan-Methodist work in communities where Gatherings are held and to foster more cooperation among Pan-Methodists.
➢ Acknowledged the work of Commission members who served as Pan-Methodist representatives (with vote) on General Boards and Agencies of The United Methodist Church. Attorney Juanita Bryant, Rev. Dr. W. Robert Johnson, and Bishop John White served on the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC). Dr. Leo Pinkett served on the General Commission for United Methodist Men. Rev. Dr. Rita Colbert served as the Pan-Methodist representative to the General Board of Global Ministries.
➢ Acknowledged with appreciation the tremendous contributions of all members of the Commission for their commitment to the mission of the Commission. The United Methodist Church currently provides leadership to the Commission as Bishop Alfred Lloyd Norris serves as chair. Other representatives who served faithfully this quadrennium include Bishop Violet Fisher, Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, Dr. Pamela Lightsey, Rev. Tyrone Gordon, Ms. Harriet McCabe, Ms. Dee Hicks, Rev. Victoria Baldwin, and Ms. Jerry Ruth Williams. Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader and Rev. Dr. Stephen Sidorak also served as affiliate members. The contributions of Ms. Jerald McKie who served the Pan-Methodist Commission as Assistant Administrative secretary are also appreciated.
➢ Participated in the Tenth Consultation of Methodist Bishops and welcomed newly elected bishops from each denomination. The theme was “A Crisis of Leadership: Methodism
"in the 21st Century." Bishop William Willimon served as the keynote speaker and the Leadership Team of Duke University guided the bishops in exploring the evidence of a crisis in leadership, harvesting the wisdom, and determining what can be done Pan-Methodistically.

- Presented a letter of encouragement to President Barack Obama and on behalf of the Children’s Initiative presented Bibles to the Obama daughters, Sasha and Malia.
- Revised the Pan-Methodist logo to show all member denominations and made a lapel pin.
- The Higher Education Committee chaired by Ms. Harriet McCabe continued its work of encouraging intentional Pan-Methodist involvement on all levels of the institutions of higher learning operated by the member denominations. It is also working to establish lines of communication regarding the work of the children’s campaign.
- Developed and distributed a publicity brochure under the leadership of Dr. Daryll Coleman who chaired the Publicity Committee of the Commission.
- Celebrated with the pastors of St. George’s UMC Church (Rev. Alfred Day) and Mother Bethel AME Church (Dr. Mark Tyler) in Philadelphia as the two congregations came together after more than two centuries of separation. This marked the 240th anniversary of the St. George’s Church and the 250th anniversary of the birth of Richard Allen. The experiences of Allen and others in St. George’s Church gave birth to the AME Church.
- Currently sharing in the petition to get a commemorative postage stamp issued by the United States Postal Service to honor Bishop Richard Allen, founder of the AME Church.
- Established a Strategic Plan with the goal of affirming Full Communion practices among the participating denominations, providing a visible witness to Full Communion, broadening the work on the children and poverty initiative and improving the use of technological tools such as Facebook to improve communication and branding. This effort was chaired by Dr. Pamela Lightsey.
- Shared reports from the General Conferences of the Pan-Methodist member denominations.
- Applauded and received a report from the “Great Gathering” of the three historic black Methodist denominations—AME, AMEZ, and CME—in March 2010. The three had not met together in more than 40 years. Out of the gathering came an initiative focusing on black males and the creation of The African American Black Methodist General Officers Association. Dr. Mary A. Love is current president of the new group.
- Continued to explore the approval of Full Communion by all member denominations and submit a resolution on this matter to this General Conference.
- Explored conversations around Pan-Methodist involvement with the newly formed organization of Christian Churches Together (CCT) and Churches United in Christ (CUIC).
- Established a Task Force on Policy Review for the purpose of consolidating all approved actions and amendments to our covenant policy and bylaws. This is chaired by Bishop Sharon Rader. Other members include Ms. Jerry Ruth Williams, Dr. Robert Keesee, Ms. Dee Hicks, and Dr. Donnell Williams.
The Pan-Methodist Commission, currently representing five historically black denominations and The United Methodist Church, observed its 25th anniversary in 2010. Two new member denominations joined the Commission during the 2009-2012 quadrennium: The Union American Methodist Episcopal (UAME) and the African Union Methodist Protestant Church (AUMP). Other members are the African Methodist Episcopal (AME), African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ), and Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME).

Purpose of the Commission is to move member denominations “toward unity and cooperation by redefining and strengthening our relationships in Jesus Christ” and to “work to define, determine, plan, and in cooperation with established agencies of the several denominations, execute activities to foster meaningful cooperation among the Methodist denominations in the collaborations.” Such cooperation includes, but is not be limited to, evangelism, missions, publications, social concerns, and higher education.

The Commission has faced the challenge of helping members of the Methodist family know one another and to explore methods of working together. The journey has not been easy, but trust in God has guided leadership and direction through the process. In the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John it is recorded that Jesus prayed that we may be one so that the world would know and believe. In the midst of the journey this quadrennium, the Commission has found ways to approach oneness through cooperation. Some of the highlights are:

- Affirmed and celebrated the membership of the UAME and AUMP denominations in the Pan-Methodist Commission.
- Celebrated the election of Commission member Sylvester Williams as a bishop in the CME Church; the election of the first women bishops in two denominations: Bishop Mildred Hines (AMEZ) and Bishop Teresa Snorton (CME), both of whom were appointed members of the Pan-Methodist Commission; the election of Bishop John F. White in the AME Church and his appointment as denominational ecumenical officer and a member of the Pan-Methodist Commission.
- Welcomed new members to the Commission: Bishop Alfred Lloyd Norris, Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, Ms. Jerry Ruth Williams, Ms. Dee Hicks, the Rev. Victoria Baldwin of The UMC; the Rev. Maurice Harden, the Rev. Haven Anderson (proxy), Ms. Loretta Goff of the AMEZ; Ms. Jeanette Bouknight, the Rev. Joseph Gordon, the Rev. Alfred Harrison, and Bishop W. E. Lockett of the CME Church. Bishop Lockett died in March while on an airplane trip from Africa to Europe.
- Evaluated and modified the Commission’s mission statement.
- Acknowledged Dr. Luther Smith (CME) for his continuing work with issues related to children and poverty. Under his leadership the Commission has sought to have member denominations work cooperatively for the sake of poor children.
- Currently all Pan-Methodist seminaries are involved in the campaign, especially Candler Seminary, St. Paul School of Theology, Hood Theological Seminary, and Wesley Theological Seminary.
- Partnerships have been formed with the Children’s Defense Fund, the Interfaith Children’s Movement in Atlanta, One Church-One School and the 2010 Peace Conference for the World’s Children.
- The Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children in Poverty booklet for local churches has been revised.
- A campaign website has been launched: www.panmethodistcampaignforchildren.org
- A commitment was made to visit and interact with children at sites of effective ministries and to provide financial contributions in areas when Methodist Gatherings are held. This was successfully done in Jackson, Mississippi, in 2010.
Continued the practice of gathering as Methodists in various cities for the purpose of fostering the development of Pan-Methodist relationships and ministries. At each Gathering, the hymn, “Christ the Church You Gave Is Broken,” written by UMC Bishop William Boyd Grove, is used.

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Acknowledged with appreciation the commitment and contributions of Commission members Bishop Alfred Lloyd Norris, current chairperson; Bishop Violet Fisher, Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, the Rev. Pamela Lightsey, the Rev. Tyrone Gordon, Ms. Harriet McCabe, Ms. Dee Hicks, the Rev. Victoria Baldwin, and Ms. Jerry Ruth Williams. Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader and the Rev. Dr. Stephen Sidorak served as affiliate members. Ms. Jerald McKie served the Commission as assistant administrative secretary.

Established a Pan-Methodist website (www.panmethodist.org) and a Pan-Methodist blog as first steps toward greater use of social media.

Participated in the Tenth Consultation of Methodist Bishops and welcomed newly elected bishops from each denomination. “A Crisis of Leadership: Methodism in the 21st Century” was the theme of the event. UMC Bishop William Willimon served as keynote speaker. The Leadership Team of Duke University guided the bishops in exploring the evidence of a leadership crisis, harvesting the wisdom, and determining what can be done as Pan-Methodists.

The bishops voted to meet every two years instead of four.

UMC Bishop Alfred Lloyd Norris chaired the Consultation; AME Bishop John White chaired the Steering Committee.

Twenty-two active bishops and six retired bishops of The UMC attended the Consultation.

Presented a letter of encouragement to President Barack Obama and, on behalf of the Children’s Initiative, presented Bibles to the Obama daughters, Sasha and Malia.

Remembered the contributions made to Pan-Methodist cooperation by bishops and others who are now deceased.

Revised the Pan-Methodist logo now available on resources and items, including lapel pins.

Continued cooperation at all levels of the institutions of higher education related to Pan-Methodist denominations, under the leadership of the Commission’s Higher Education Committee chaired by Ms. Harriet McCabe. The committee is also working to establish lines of communication regarding the work of the children’s campaign.

Developed and distributed a promotional brochure under the leadership of the Commission’s Publicity Committee chaired by Dr. Daryll Coleman.

Celebrated that two Philadelphia congregations—St. George’s UMC and Mother Bethel AME Church—came together after more than two centuries of separation to celebrate the 240th anniversary of St. George’s and the birth of Richard Allen. The experiences of Allen and others at St. George’s gave birth to the AME Church. Current pastor of St. George’s is the Rev. Alfred Day; current pastor at Mother Bethel AME is the Rev. Mark Tyler.

Joined others in petitioning the US Postal Service to release a commemorative postage stamp honoring Bishop Richard Allen, founder of the AME Church.

Established a strategic plan with the goal of affirming Full Communion practices among
the Pan-Methodist denominations, providing a visible witness to Full Communion, broadening the work on the children and poverty initiative, and improving the use of technological tools such as Facebook to improve communication and branding. This effort was chaired by the Rev. Pamela Lightsey.

➢ Shared reports from the general conferences of the Pan-Methodist member denominations.

➢ Applauded and received a report from the “Great Gathering” of the three historic black Methodist denominations—AME, AMEZ, and CME—in March 2010. The three had not met together in more than 40 years. Out of the gathering came an initiative focusing on black males and the creation of The African American Black Methodist General Officers Association. Dr. Mary A. Love is current president of the new group.

➢ Continued to explore the approval of Full Communion by all member denominations and submit a resolution supporting this move to this General Conference.

➢ Established a plan to involve more young adults in the work of Pan-Methodism. Member denominations are requested to appoint at least one youth or young adult to the Commission. Efforts are being made to involve more young adults in future gatherings. A targeted worship experience for young adults was held March 2011 in Atlanta.

➢ Explored Pan-Methodist involvement with the newly formed organization of Christian Churches Together (CCT) and Churches United in Christ (CUIC).

➢ Established a Task Force on Policy Review to consolidate all approved actions and amendments to the Commission’s covenant policy and bylaws. The task force is chaired by Bishop Sharon Rader. Other members include Ms. Jerry Ruth Williams, Dr. Robert Keesee, Ms. Dee Hicks, and Dr. Donnell Williams.

The Pan-Methodist Commission values the history, heritage, and contributions from each of the strands of the Methodist family and looks forward to strengthening relationships and finding ways to engage in ministry. To God be the glory!

Respectfully submitted:

Bishop Alfred L. Norris – Chairman
Bishop Linwood Rideout – Vice Chairman
Rev. Dr. Letitia Williams-Watford – Secretary
Mr. Derek Anderson – Treasurer
Ms. Elizabeth Reid – Financial Secretary
Dr. Mary A. Love – Administrative Secretary

The Pan-Methodist Commission

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Bishop John F. White, Sr. – Miramar, FL
Bishop Richard F. Norris – Philadelphia, PA
Rev. Theresa Bedford – New York
Dr. Letitia Williams-Watford – Montgomery, AL
Rev. Dr. Robert Keesee – Nashville, TN

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry – Jackson, MS
Rev. Albert D. Tyson III – Chicago, IL
Mr. Addison Young – Atlanta, GA
Mr. Derek Anderson – Columbus, OH
Mr. Larry Hollie – Katy, TX

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Bishop Roy A. Holmes – Chicago, IL
Bishop Mildred Hines – Los Angeles, CA
Rev. Dr. Rita Colbert – Mitchellville, MD
Ms. Lula Howard – Louisville, KY
Ms. Loretta Goff – Westbury, NY
Rev. Maurice Harden – Kannapolis, NC
Rev. Haven Anderson – Charlotte, NC (Proxy)

Bishop Kenneth Monroe – Rock Hill, SC
Rev. Eric Leake – Flossmoor, IL
Dr. W. Robert Johnson, III – Charlotte, NC
Ms. Elizabeth Reid – Heath Springs, SC
Rev. Dr. Donnell Williams – Tuscaloosa, AL (Proxy)
Dr. Mary A. Love (Staff) – Charlotte, NC

African Union Methodist Protestant Church
Bishop Delbert Jackson – Newark, DE

Mr. Larry Hollie – Katy, TX
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Ronald Cunningham – Dallas, TX
Bishop Teresa Snorton – Decatur, GA
Dr. Leo Pinkett – Atlanta, GA
Dr. Daryll Coleman – Jackson, TN
Rev. Joseph Gordon – Detroit, MI

Bishop Sylvester Williams – Cincinnati, OH
Dr. Luther Smith, Jr. – Atlanta, GA
Ms. Jeanette Bouknight – Detroit, MI
Rev. Alfred Harrison – Temple Hills, MD

Union American Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Michael Moulden – Wilmington, DE

Bishop Linwood Rideout – Wilmington, DE

United Methodist Church

Bishop Violet Fisher – Wilmington, DE
Bishop Alfred L. Norris – Jonesboro, GA
Ms. Harriet McCabe – Naperville, IL
Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey – Boston, MA
Ms. Jerry Ruth Williams – Chesterfield, MO
Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader – Ecumenical Officer

Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor – Columbia, SC
Rev. Dr. Tyrone Gordon – Dallas, TX
Rev. Victoria Sizemore-Baldwin – Senatobia, MS
Ms. Dee Hicks – Las Vegas, NV
Rev. Dr. Stephen J. Sidorak, Jr. (GCCUIC)–NY, NY
Changing the Conversation on Race in The United Methodist Church

I. Introduction: Vision and Mission

When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. . . . They were all surprised and bewildered. Some asked each other, “What does this mean?” Others jeered at them saying, “They’re full of new wine!”

Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! These people aren’t drunk, as you suspect; after all, it’s only nine o’clock in the morning! Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

> In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young will see visions. Your elders will dream dreams. —Acts 2:1-4, 6, 12-17, CEB

On this first Pentecost, the Jewish people were prepared for their usual harvest feast celebration. People from all across the Diaspora came to Jerusalem for the harvest festival Shavu’oth—a time to remember and celebrate God giving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai fifty days after the Exodus. It was like any other harvest feast—food and drink, fellowship and fun, praise and worship. But it was not your average Shavu’oth. This time was also fifty days after Easter, after the resurrection of Jesus. And on this day, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit like a sudden, mighty wind. Everything was made new.

It is fitting that the celebration of what God has done coincides with the amazing gift of what God is doing. Remembrance and vision are often inseparable. Through the ministry of the General Commission on Religion and Race, (GCORR), we see the reminders of the segregated past and painful remnants of racism, we celebrate what God has done, and we call upon the Church to continue to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit knowing that God’s transforming work is ongoing within the Church and the world. In spite of the gains and during a time when some people would claim that we are living in a post-racial era, the realities of racism and lack of equity continue to permeate the very foundations of the Church. As a denomination and world, we are not “post-racism.” The work of dismantling racism in the systems and structures of the Church are at the core of the mission of GCORR. As we remember the past and celebrate the places of racial healing and reconciliation, this is a time not to rest but one of visioning beyond what is to what can be.

The United Methodist Church is still on the journey toward racial justice and equity. The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) was challenged more than 44 years ago to support the denomination’s agencies, institutions, annual (regional) conferences, and congregations to achieve full, equal participation of its racial and ethnic minority constituencies in the total life and mission of the Church. Today the General Commission on Religion and Race exists to equip The United Methodist Church to live its mission in a diverse world and move the Church from racism to relationships.

Over the past quadrennium the Commission has given leadership in several key areas. A few highlights include:

The Minority Group Self-Determination Fund (MGSDF) or CORR Action Fund is a vehicle for connecting with local churches. MGSDF funds local churches, community groups and caucuses that offer services and advocacy on behalf of racial ethnic groups within the US. Since its inception the grant fund has granted over 20 million dollars of support to over 500 projects in local churches and communities and throughout the United Methodist connection. These projects have supported educational, social justice, and immigration
ministries of the church, and have resulted in stronger communities, the passage of just laws, and support for those on the margins of society. In 2008, GCORR surveyed MGSDF stakeholders including over 250 past grant recipients, current and past grant committee members, grant-related staff, and conference staff. Of the projects surveyed approximately 45 percent of programs continued after funding agreements were completed. The Commission has made increasing the capacity of grantees to sustain their work after funding ends a priority of its grant-making efforts. As of 2011, nearly 65 percent of grant recipients are sustainable—a figure that represents the industry standard in philanthropy. The funding priorities are connected to the work of GCORR’s strategic priorities, and grantees are not only supported by GCORR but become partners and collaborators with the agency.

Leading workshops and other types of educational and training programs, which are central to the ministry of GCORR. Seventy-five percent of staff time is spent responding to requests for training and resourcing in annual conferences and local churches. These trainings develop leaders, improve ministries, and help create visions for the future of a church struggling for relevance in a global reality. Post-training evaluation forms, conversations with leaders across the church, and direct observation of training by GCORR leadership has established training as a strength of the agency and has been a helpful source of information about areas of improvement. This quadrennium GCORR has established several evaluation mechanisms aimed at improving the training experience, updating trainer skill-sets, introducing content quality control, and improving learning transfer. In addition, online resources including podcasts, webinars, and social media outreach have expanded the impact and points of contact for the agency.

Monitoring ministry including the review of General Agencies, Annual Conferences and Theological Schools (in partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry) has represented the primary way in which the Commission pursues institutional change in the church. Since its inception, GCORR has conducted over 1,500 annual conference reviews/desk audits, 60 general agency reviews/audits, and 50 seminary reviews. These reviews have resulted in policy, process, and program improvements in these institutions as they live as reflections of the denomination’s commitment to anti-racism and inclusion. This quadrennium the monitoring and review ministry has been revised to update our monitoring tools and to make this ministry relevant to the needs of the church and to also include equity impact analysis.

GCORR in joint partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) completed a study of salaries for United Methodist clergy in the US context. The research focused on the question of whether there was a disproportionate difference between racial/ethnic clergy and white clergy salaries. Findings highlighted the need to address specific racial/ethnic groups’ salary gap in comparison to the average compensation.

As a fair process advocate, the Commission hears the cries of those who feel marginalized in the denomination. GCORR monitors the policies, processes of the Church and the places of learning (United Methodist Seminaries and Schools of Theology) and places of work and witness (general agencies, annual conferences, General Conference) to ensure racial equity in all levels of church leadership. GCORR has created strategic priorities to address the four areas of focus in The United Methodist Church as it pertains to racial justice and equity. Programming, advocacy opportunities, and resources have been developed for emerging social issues that are crucial to the quest for racial justice and inclusiveness in the Church and society, specifically global racism, immigrant rights, the elimination of offensive Native American athletic team names and mascots, racial profiling, and the use of the word illegal to describe undocumented immigrant people.

II. Mandates and Proposed Legislation

GCORR celebrates wholeheartedly what has been done to build the beloved community. Because human efforts fall short of God’s vision, the General Commission on Religion and Race stands open to a new vision, new dreams, and a renewed Spirit that will further The United Methodist Church in racial equity, inclusion, justice, and the making of prophetic disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

As the general agency responsible for challenging the Church to live in this new dimension and to model the beloved community, we must prepare for a new future, a new reality. This General Conference the GCORR Board of Directors is proposing a revision of the agency’s disciplinary mandates. Through greater clarity of purpose and ministry, the General Commission on Religion and Race seeks to move
Independent Commissions

beyond being known as simply a “monitoring agency” to an agency that resources congregations globally while supporting connectional leaders and structures to develop and employ cultural competence and equity in processes, policies, and decision making. By focusing on mandates with clear outcomes and impact, the General Commission on Religion and Race is ready to partner with local churches, annual conferences, and denominational leadership to equip the Church for relevance and relationships in a global community.

The legislative changes include a change in the purpose statement of the agency to reflect a need to partner with all members of our connectional structure to ensure that the church and world continues to work toward justice and inclusion. In addition, the responsibilities of the agency have been refined to give greater clarity and emphasis to the agency’s work on advocacy, training, dispute resolution, research, and capacity building on the issues of cultural competency, cross-racial/cross-cultural appointment and ministry, racial equity, and intersectionality within the Church.

The proposed legislation is as follows:

1. Advocating for visible and prophetic leadership at every level of the Global Church and mobilizing all people for action in the Church and in the world around issues of racial justice and inclusion, so that access to power and resources along with the gifts and graces of historically margin-

2. Ensuring racial equity, justice, and inclusion on matters such as but not limited to: resolving racially and culturally based disputes and provide accountability in creating and enacting policies, programs, and processes so that every level of the Global Church is more effective in ministry to increasingly diverse communities;

3. Conducting research and analysis for the purpose of engaging lay and clergy leadership in the complex social cultural realities facing congregations and conferences globally thereby deepening the relationships necessary to fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church in a diverse world;

4. Providing training, resources, and consultation at all levels of the Global Church in order to:

   - Increase culturally competent leadership;
   - Expand vital and relevant local church ministry;
   - Challenge white privilege and promote anti-racism efforts;
   - Further racial/ethnic/tribal justice, equity, and reconciliation;

   So that members of the Church become self-aware, learn to value and accept cultural differences, and become agents of change in the Church and world;

5. Identifying and responding to salient denominational matters such as culturally competent leadership development, cross-racial/cross-cultural and multicultural ministry, renewal of ethnic ministry, global racism, ethnocentrism, and tribalism in order for the Church to more effectively move its mission forward in a diverse and global society;

6. Administering CORR (Commission on Religion and Race) Action Fund. The CORR (Commission on Religion and Race) Action Fund is established by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church for the empowerment of diversity, inclusion, and racial justice work within and outside the Church. The fund is available through grants to congregations comprised of racial and ethnic persons, community agencies, and other groups for the purposes established by
the General Conference. The fund shall be administered by the General Commission on Religion and Race on behalf of The United Methodist Church. The General Commission shall be responsible for developing guidelines and policies regarding grants and for evaluation of projects receiving support.

**In the words of The United Methodist Constitution:**

*The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of racial justice at all times and in all places. (Article V, Book of Discipline (2004), ¶ 5)*

Since the Commission’s establishment by General Conference in 1968, the denominational and global landscapes have shifted. While much has been learned and gained since that time, The United Methodist Church is still not the diverse church we are called to be. Ideally, a vital local congregation reflects the demographics of its community. In broadest numbers. The UMC in the United States reports membership for people of color at 8.4 percent of the total membership. The general population, however, is at 33 percent. Since 2009, the percentage of central conference membership is 36.4 percent of the total United Methodist Church membership, which highlights the continual challenge of being an equitable global church. The new mandates proposed for GCORR reflect the need to engage the central conferences and reflect an intentional commitment to partner with them in the work ahead.

Although there are exceptions in a few locations in the connection, it is clear that The UMC membership is not reflective of the rapidly increasing racial ethnic diversity within the United States and inclusive of the central conferences. Many annual conferences are highly committed to addressing this yet struggle to sustain new church starts in communities of color or to renew declining congregations in communities of color or demographically changing communities. Today the racial and ethnic fabric of the United States is dramatically different than it was twenty years ago, so much so that recent census results have shocked even demographers and sociologists. In 2011, at 50 million persons, the US Hispanic/Latino population has more than doubled since 1990. Many of the nation’s African Americans are leaving cities where they were once the largest minority group and going to the suburbs. Africans from throughout the Diaspora are arriving in the US to face new challenges and discrimination as “new” African Americans.

Racial and cultural identity has many layers. We live in an ever-changing global community with a diversity of multiracial identities where racial ethnic identification is not limited to one category. Also much of the world bases identity on ethnic nationality rather than racial ethnic categories. The United Nations and countries other than the US have varying racial classifications and often include persons who have more than one racial or ethnic identity. This gives visibility to people who often are excluded. Many of the forms within our church are exclusive requiring the growing population of biracial/multiracial people to choose between identities and to identify themselves by selecting only one of the six dominant racial options: Asian, Black, White, Hispanic/Latino(a), Native American, and Pacific Islander.

The General Commission on Religion and Race calls The United Methodist Church to expand its inclusive language in all aspects of the Church to include biracial/multiracial persons by offering racial identifications options that are not limiting but embracing of persons with more than one racial or ethnic background. Human diversity is the signature of God. While our primary identity is as children of God, multiple realities, including culture, shape and form our identity.

During this General Conference, the General Commission seeks to add language to the Social Principles that recognizes the impact of culture on our identity formation. Each of us has multiple identities of equal value that intersect to form our complete self. With that identity comes societal and cultural constructions that have both positive and negative impacts on humanity and the Church. GCORR calls on the Church to embrace and nurture cultural formation and competency as a means to be fully one body, expressed in multiple ways. We affirm that no identity or culture has more legitimacy than any other and ask the Church to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities. Through relationships within and among cultures we are
called to and have the responsibility of learning from each other with dignity, showing mutual respect for our differences and similarities, and experiencing others from a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints, not just our own.

**III. Racial Equity**

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 that contribute to inequitable racial outcomes, legitimize racial disparities, and undermine progress toward racial equity. These injustices are not fully addressed by making representation the hallmark of inclusion.

Racial equity as a vision is not often understood. Racial equity is the condition that is achieved when a person’s race or ethnicity is not the primary predictor (statistically) of how a person thrives or succeeds. The goal of racial equity is to, through social justice and inclusion work, dismantle the systems, structure, and processes that make race a factor in the assessment of merit, or in the distribution of opportunity (The Aspen Institute, September 2009).

So a commitment to racial equity is a commitment to address the impact of policies, procedures, and budgets on different racial and ethnic communities at all levels of the denomination’s mission. Through equity impact assessments the vision of racial equity becomes central to our commitment to justice and inclusion in all aspects of the life of our church. The intent of equity impact assessments is to identify ways to maximize equity (breaking down disparities across race and ethnicity) and inclusion and minimize unanticipated impacts. Such assessments provide platforms for advocacy and transformation in the policies of the denomination.

Racial equity requires the transformation of all aspects of our society, from popular thinking to legislation. We distinguish racial justice from diversity and from multiculturalism. There can be diversity without equity. A diversity focus primarily addresses the symptoms of racism—with the goal of minimizing racial tensions and maximizing people’s ability to tolerate difference and get along. A racial justice focus primarily addresses the causes of inequality and the solutions and strategies for producing equity. [Rinku Sen, in “Fund Racial Justice Strategies, Not Just Diversity,”]

GCORR has produced a series of tools, including equity impact assessments, to measure the impact of legislation, proposals, and key initiatives of the Church at the conference and general Church level. These assessments help leaders consider the impact of major decisions on marginalized groups in the Church and ensure that justice and inclusion are key considerations in the decision-making process.

**IV. Cultural Competency**

The General Commission on Religion and Race is seeking to introduce and support cultural competency training and leadership development at every level of the Church. With The United Methodist Church becoming an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse denomination that seeks to be the effective and inclusive body of Christ, we must face the historical realities of social oppression that reflect the dominant culture and lead to a lack of effective participation in all levels of conference leadership.

We particularly find helpful for our local church settings and denominational structure the following understanding of cultural competency: “Cultural competency is a process of developing proficiency in effectively responding in a cross cultural context. It is the process by which individuals, agencies, and systems integrate and transform awareness of assumptions, values, biases, and knowledge about themselves and others to respond respectfully and effectively across diverse cultures, language, socioeconomic status, race, ethnic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. Cultural competence recognizes, affirms, fosters, and values the strengths of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the worth and dignity of each” (State of Wisconsin Mental and Physical Health Services).

Cultural competency is a leadership skill that can be learned. The United Methodist Church has a responsibility to resource and support annual conference leadership in their responsibilities for the effective participation of all members and most especially those members of historic and immigrant minorities. GCORR is proposing through legislation that the chairpersons of all annual conference boards, agencies, committees, and commissions, members of the Board of Laity, and the full membership of the committee on nominations participate in cultural competency training in order to better ensure the effective and full participation of all committee members. With the support and resourcing of
the General Commission on Religion and Race, such trainings ideally would take place each year within the first six months after an annual conference.

By committing ourselves to becoming more culturally competent, we transform our local churches and denominational initiatives into vital and effective inclusive communities in which the sacred worth and gifts of all persons are affirmed. We commend the Wesley Foundation of Iowa University’s Statement on Inclusivity: “… As a community of faith dedicated to worshipping and serving God, we are called to follow God’s example, erecting no walls that could limit our ability to grow as a loving Christian community. … We believe that in order to be a faithful community, we are called to see the face of Christ on each other, affirming our relationships as sisters and brothers in Christ. . . .”

The General Commission on Religion and Race calls the Church to develop the necessary assets of inclusivity and cultural competency in the areas of new church starts, annual conference and congregational leadership and development, and mission ministries. These assets cannot be assumed into the development but rather must be created and informed by church trends.

V. Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry and Appointments

The United Methodist Church has witnessed what many consider bold action, appointing pastors to lead congregations that are racially and culturally different than the racial ethnicity of the pastors themselves. For the 2011 GCORR/GBHEM Facing the Future: Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments in a Global Church convocation, GCORR prepared a report on the current state of such appointments based on a sampling of 25 United States annual conferences within our five jurisdictions.

Key findings included:

- A lack of understanding of cultural and racial factors in preparing pastors and congregations in a CR/CC appointment.
- Lack of training provided to cabinets and Boards of Ordained Ministry members on cultural understanding and factors impacting cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.
- Almost two thirds of annual conferences do not provide training for pastors in a cross-racial and cross-cultural setting.
- Unsuccessful cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments impact the pastor, the pastor’s family, and the congregation.
- Changing demographics of population and neighborhoods make the need for pastors and congregations who are trained and effective in working in cross-cultural contexts more urgent.
- Greater training and systemic support are needed in order to produce:
  - Culturally competent, equipped, and diverse church leadership at the bishop, cabinet, and Boards of Ordained Ministry levels.
  - Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointment standards are implemented using a church-wide vision that is inclusive of all the cultural gifts of the denomination.
  - Institutional culture is reformed and reshaped across clergy, larger church leadership, and congregational connections to the racial climate of an ever-expanding global church.

Strategies for Vital and Relevant Ministry

- View every congregation as a potential CR/CC appointment, which allows the necessary developmental work to occur prior to an appointment being made.
- Promote intercultural experiences and substantive CR/CC training at all levels of leadership and discipleship formation, including the appointment-making process.

Visions of the Future

- The church has witnessed an increase in racial/ethnic communities and has cultivated experts, culturally competent pastoral leaders, and educational resources to meet the growing needs for CR/CC appointments.
- When guided by an in-depth and inclusive CR/CC appointment process that includes training and intercultural experiences, stronger communities and churches will be built.

Trends in cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments show a steady increase on average across the five jurisdictions. The Church will double the number of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments in the next decade. This will be a greater increase than the denomination has experienced in the past 30 years. In spite of the growth of these appointments, tensions continue to arise in communities where white privilege and racism exist. The preconceived notion that cross-racial and
cross-cultural appointments are solely the work of racial/ethnic persons must be confronted and challenged. At this time it is important to have broad agreement that cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are a matter for all. GCORR through cultural competency training and partnership with the leadership of the Church, cabinets, and Boards of Ordained Ministry is actively addressing the systemic issues that prevent cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments from being a core value of the itinerant system.

Where we can and must focus our energy is on the unintentional practices, including lack of training and preparation for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, and the need for bishops, cabinets, Boards of Ordained Ministry, clergy, and laity all to be better equipped and prepared to experience, support, and strengthen effective appointments across boundaries.

It is imperative for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointed clergy to have an understanding of the dynamics that might lead to conflicts in a cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry setting. Cultural competency training and awareness is critical in building equitable partnerships. The General Commission on Religion and Race is ready to partner with local churches and annual conferences in this, a challenge that could help to transform the ethos of the Church as well as increase the effectiveness and vitality of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.

VI. Intersectionality and Multiculturalism

GCORR has partnered with many groups across the connection in the fight against oppressions of all kinds. The church affirms and we believe that as long as any group is oppressed no one is free. While the primary responsibility of GCORR is to address issues of racism, we know that often racial discrimination is often intertwined with discrimination based on gender, age, ability, and sexual orientation. It is ineffective and incomplete to address racial issues without considering and responding to the other “isms” that create a complex web of oppression prevalent in today’s society. New approaches to advocacy are needed that shift the focus from singular issue-based responses defined in mutually exclusive ways to organizing and interventions that are multi-layered, no longer framing group interests in exclusionary terms.

Intersectionality seeks to examine the complex ways in which various socially and culturally constructed categories interact on multiple levels to manifest themselves as inequality in society. Intersectionality holds that the classical models of oppression within society, such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, species, or disability do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate creating a system of oppression that reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination.

The monitoring, training, and advocacy work of GCORR embraces the idea of intersectionality as we continue to work with other general agencies, the racial ethnic caucuses and plans, and community groups to respond to oppression of all kinds.

Often as the Church, we define diversity as difference but fail in having the conversations that seek to understand deeper meanings of the differences that exist between and among United Methodists. Paul in Christian Scriptures calls the community toward “unity in Christ” and yet claims the many parts of the community as one body. Critical conversations are needed about the role and need for multicultural and ethnic specific ministries. Faith is experienced in a cultural context that undoubtedly shapes our understanding of God and neighbor. The adaptive challenge and witness of the gospel, however, is not to be limited to one cultural reality but instead to seek and know God through our interaction with one another in our various cultures. The work ahead is to move beyond superficial declarations of diversity and to be open to God’s signature of diversity that is ever changing and never ending. Engaging with others while in one’s cultural group but not clinging to culture as a sole identity is the future of the Church.

VII. The Questions Before Us

Race is deeply lived and profoundly a personal experience. Our ability to do the work of racial justice depends on our approach and the questions we ask ourselves as a denomination, seeking prayer and discernment, drawing from scriptural heritage and keeping Wesleyan theological foundations at the forefront.

The General Commission on Religion and Race seeks to support the Church in living into the vision of beloved community, where all parts of the body are respected and valued, where we work and serve together
in understanding the intersectionality and connectedness of our pain and humanity. God calls us to be a vibrant, loving people who do the hard work of intentionality when it comes to living in a multicultural world. As people called United Methodists, we are called to be leaders in the world—even when our communities are separated or strained, the Church is present to have a prophetic voice and to challenge our communities to live more fully into the kingdom of God. In order for the Church to take on this role with greater power, we must ask the question about what things have served us well in the past but may not take us to where we are called to go now.

Where are the growing edges and adaptive challenges for racial justice and equity in the Church? For so many years, our focus on race relations in the Church has been centered around focusing on the needs of individual groups. This has gotten us to where we are now, in a place much further than we were and much further than many people ever imagined possible. And, yet, we have more miles to go before we truly embrace the fullness of multiculturalism and defeat racism in our denomination.

Maybe to draw more closely to the multicultural vision of the Church and to better reflect the complex realities of society we are called to approach religion and race differently. We must do the work so that we all, even beyond our individual groups, challenge white privilege, promote anti-racism efforts, further racial/ethnic/tribal justice, equity, and reconciliation. We must all place value first on accepting cultural differences and living into God’s kingdom together. What if we allowed the lenses we used to see the world to help bring more to a collective table and not further divide? What if understanding our own cultural worldview and the impact it has on others also helped us approach other acts of injustice beyond race, such as gender inequality, poverty, sexuality? Imagine if we push ourselves to boldly live into multiculturalism, how much richer our church would be and how much of an impact we will make on a changing world in desperate need of God’s love, mercy, and truth.

How will we—the people of The United Methodist Church—choose to love God and love God’s people in a truly diverse and global community?

Submitted by:

Erin M. Hawkins
General Secretary

Bishop Linda Lee
Board of Directors, Chair
The General Commission on Communication
(United Methodist Communications)

Our Story

In The United Methodist Church, communication is the vital link that joins people and ministries in a global connection. How we communicate matters.

As the denomination’s communications agency, United Methodist Communications is responsible for meeting the communications, public relations, and marketing needs of the church. We take the message of the gospel to the world on behalf of the people of The United Methodist Church, delivering messages of hope, healing, and engagement and inviting people to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. We work to increase awareness and visibility of the denomination in communities and nations around the globe. We also provide services, tools, products, and resources for communications ministry.

Essentially, we work collaboratively with partners at all levels of the church around the Four Areas of Focus to advance ministries that change lives.

Making disciples for the transformation of the world

United Methodist Communications is a strategic communications asset to the church, using digital media, storytelling, and strategic messaging to support the denomination’s mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We seek to create supportive attitudes and a positive image of the church’s mission and ministries that are a necessary foundation for disciple-making to occur.

The Rethink Church campaign was launched in 2009 to reach out to people seeking a spiritual connection to help bring them into a relationship with Jesus Christ through local churches. More than an advertising campaign, Rethink Church is a Wesleyan-inspired movement to reenergize our church around life-changing service and outreach. We help to connect seekers with local churches by highlighting the many opportunities to get involved in making a difference in the world beyond the church doors. Through Find-a-Church, local churches can showcase what their congregations offer to those looking for a church family. Resources that tie in with the national campaign are provided for use by local churches.

Reaching younger audiences

Research shows the new generation of youth and young adults are looking for direct personal involvement in bringing about change. New models for communicating are essential to engage this age group.

Beginning in 2009, United Methodist Communications increased its emphasis on reaching younger, more diverse audiences. The agency restructured its staff to focus on developing content targeted at engaging youth and young adults, using new forms of media, and strengthening related functions.

The target audience for our advertising shifted from 25-54-year-olds to 18-34-year-olds. Rethink Church advertisements appearing in traditional and new media direct viewers to a new website designed specifically for this audience. RethinkChurch.org employs a very social platform that allows conversation from users logging in from a multitude of social spaces to reduce barriers and increase engagement. Once there, they can interact, learn more about the church, and find opportunities to get involved.

Supporting local churches in becoming vital congregations

We are in partnership with local churches to encourage people to be part of a face-to-face, supportive community. We work strategically to increase name recognition and influence, promote understanding of our beliefs and goals, and provide explanation, information, and resources about United Methodist beliefs and practices—all necessary elements in attracting people to our churches.

We offer communications solutions through a range of services, tools, products, training, and resources, including video and audio production, audiovisual and electronic resources, print materials, publications, and connectional giving resources. We have increased our capacity to train in welcoming, communications, crisis management, web ministries, photography, and connec-
tional giving, particularly through online courses. We also introduced an online program to support church marketing planning. A monthly e-newsletter provides practical tips and pointers for local churches on traditional and emerging communications tools.

We offer customizable ads for local churches, as well as coordination of media selection, estimates and media buying at no cost. We provided advertising assistance for the launch of 40 new church starts during the quadrennium. Partnership grants for media and marketing are offered to conferences, districts, and clustered churches to engage with their communities in outreach events. Since 2010, we have issued $723,259 in grants to encourage community-wide outreach events. The 14 grants involved 1,647 churches participating, 20 districts and more than 25,348 volunteers with more than 1,310,000 people served.

The annual Change the World event was created in 2010 to engage local churches in service projects and outreach events during a common weekend. More than 100,000 people from over 1,000 churches participated in outreach events the first year, touching the lives of nearly 805,000 people through active ministry in their communities. Participation more than doubled in 2011 with 2,047 registered events.

**Telling stories of hope**

United Methodist Communications has created a new focus on developing content that is more timely, topical, theologically grounded, and relevant to people’s lives. We employ traditional and new media communications strategies and technologies to connect people as we tell inspirational stories of individuals and congregations living out their faith, relating how Jesus Christ works in the world today through The United Methodist Church, as well as stories about current issues facing the church and the world.

The denomination’s official website, UMC.org, has been revitalized to make it a more interactive, go-to place that reflects the global nature of the church and its ministries. We’ve also embraced social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a means of engaging audiences in a wider, more relevant and more authentic way.

### By the numbers

- 700 million advertising impressions
- $18 million to fight malaria
- 3.24 million Find-A-Church visitors
- 49,000 church leaders trained
- 3,000+ Change the World events
- 40 new church starts assisted
- 3.4 million people served

### Saving millions of lives

The Global Health Initiative’s Imagine No Malaria campaign is working with other global partners to eliminate death and suffering from malaria in Africa by 2015. The campaign, launched on World Malaria Day 2010, has so far raised $18 million to eliminate death and suffering from malaria. We have built on the success of our partnership with Nothing But Nets by going beyond the provision of bed nets to empower the entire African continent to achieve a sustainable victory over malaria through prevention, education, communication, and treatment.

### Supporting global community

Communicating the story of the church at a global level means strengthening communications channels in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. We have established 17 communication centers in Africa and a national community radio station in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. We have provided in-depth training and equipment for communicators in the central conferences to share stories from their countries with the global church.
The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women at 40: Moving Forward

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people . . .

1 Timothy 4:9-10a

United Methodist sisters and brothers, God has done great things with us, through us, and—at times—in spite of us during the last 40 years.

When the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women was established in 1972, our world was undergoing radical shifts in power, presence, and priorities in both church and the larger society. The Civil Rights Movement for African Americans was nearing its pinnacle and opening doors for other racial-ethnic people across the United States to claim their own voice and stature in the push for equal rights and an end to legalized racism. Across the globe, indigenous people who, for centuries, had lived under colonial oppression were becoming ever more strident in their demands for freedom and self-determination.

Women in all aspects of society were increasingly expressing dissatisfaction with their historic and ongoing exclusion from leadership, decision making, and influence. Churchwomen, too, were challenging their respective Christian communions, dissatisfied with the severe underrepresentation of their gender at virtually all levels in program and policy-making channels and agencies of The United Methodist Church.

But winds of change were gusting. In 1972, Ms. magazine debuted, a groundbreaking publication launched by, among others, feminist icon Gloria Steinem. Pop singer Helen Reddy won Best Pop Female Vocal at the 1972 Grammy Awards for the women’s liberation anthem, “I Am Woman.” And in The United Methodist Church, the time had come for a change for women.

Thus, the study commission that, in 1972, became the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women was created by the leading of laywomen and clergymen to help the new United Methodist Church “respond responsibly to the women’s liberation movement.”

Nearly three decades earlier, in 1944, Grace Bragg, president of the Women’s Division of the former Methodist Church, had prepared a report on “Women and the Church.” By analyzing church polity and practices, she found widespread discrimination and lack of opportunity for laywomen and clergymen throughout church structures. As with most mainline Protestant denominations, women’s work in the church had been relegated to missions. Women started their own world missions groups because they were excluded from the core mission and ministry of their respective denominations.

Bragg’s work was foundational in the Women’s Division’s advocacy for full clergy rights for women, which was granted by the 1956 session of The Methodist Church’s General Conference.

Little more than a decade later, as the number of US women clergy was increasing and The United Methodist Church was being formed, the 1968 General Conference approved a proposal from the newly constituted United Methodist Women’s Division to create a task group to study the extent to which women were involved at all structural levels in the church’s program and policy-making channels and agencies.

The group’s findings: Women, who in 1972 comprised half the world population and half of church membership, were “greatly under-represented and sometimes totally absent from most significant decision-making arenas of The United Methodist Church.”

Consider that, in 1972, women made up 54 percent of United Methodist membership, but as leaders accounted for only

- 15% of lay leaders in local congregations
- .07% of ordained or licensed clergy
- 0% of all UMC bishops
- 0% of pastors leading churches with memberships of 1,000+
Emerging challenges

In our continuing quest in the cause of justice and equity in the church and beyond, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and annual conference commissions identified and began to address these issues during the 2009-2012 quadrennium:

- COLLUSION OF SEXISM AND RACISM. US clergywomen of color (and those pursuing ordination or licensing) reported that sexism and racism in annual conference structures still present obstacles to ordination, licensing, effective ministry, and career trajectory. In particular, in this quadrennium women cited lack of support, mentoring, and opportunities for growth as offered by conference and district boards of ordained ministries. Also, in 2008, while three women bishops were elected, none were US women of color. With retirement of two women of color, this left only two active US women of color on the Council of Bishops.

- GIVING VOICE TO CENTRAL CONFERENCE WOMEN. In 2008, United Methodists elected and appointed as bishop the first-ever African woman and the second woman elected to the episcopacy from outside the United States. Yet, even as women around the world are gaining ground, sisters from many annual conferences beyond the United States say they are still battling gender bias in the ordination process and that laywomen and clergywomen in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines are woefully underrepresented at regional and churchwide leadership tables. From breaking barriers as first women pastors to confronting domestic violence in the home, women from around the world want more church support to create indigenous resources, training, and models of advocacy to empower and engage women in their contexts.

- ENGAGING WOMEN UNDER AGE 40 AS CHURCH LEADERS. The Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship continues to challenge the denomination to give priority to reaching, engaging, and advancing leadership of people under 40. Still, young people are notably absent or underrepresented at decision-making tables from congregations to connectional structures. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has sought to address this by giving voice and visibility to young women in agency media and by championing young women in leadership across the church.

- SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/HARASSMENT. Nearly 100 requests for advice, support, information, and intervention from laypersons, bishops, superintendents, and pastors have been received regarding alleged sexual misconduct or sexual harassment. In addition, we estimate that The United Methodist Church at all levels has spent $50 million to $100,000
Independent Commissions

million during the last eight years on legal feels, counseling, intervention in congregations, and victim/survivor support related to misconduct of a sexual nature by ministerial leaders.

- RETREAT FROM GOAL-SETTING TO ACHIEVE GENDER INCLUSION. A number of church leaders, including bishops, agency heads, seminary administrators, and annual conference leaders have begun pleading “diversity fatigue.” They assert that the church has come “pretty far,” in empowering women, and they suggest that continuing demands for parity and power sharing between men and women are unreasonable and unattainable. Thus, in many areas, the work of conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women has been marginalized, efforts to audit and measure structures for inclusion have been met with resistance, and those who advocate are often silenced. However, the Commission asserts that the Church of Jesus Christ is authentic and reliable in its witness only when we live out the call of justice, equity, equal opportunity, and making room for all God’s people.

In response to these concerns and issues, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, through the leading of the Holy Spirit:

- Supported the establishment of three indigenous Commissions on the Status and Role of Women to do gender/justice ministries in annual conferences beyond the United States (South Africa Provisional, Mozambique South, Philippines).

- Developed and implemented training and discussion among clergywomen and laywomen to foster greater communications and partnership.

- Created a new partnership with the General Commission on Religion and Race to audit, evaluate, and report on diversity/inclusiveness at the 2008 General Conference. That partnership has grown into a full system of evaluating and reporting on diversity/inclusion efforts in churchwide agencies, schools of theology, and US annual conference structures.

- Expanded the coordinated, denomination-wide effort to educate clergy and laity to prevent, address, and bring justice and healing in the aftermath of ministerial/leader misconduct of a sexual nature. (See Sexual Ethics Task Force report, ADCA page 1263) New efforts included:

  - Creation of website (umsexualethics.org) specially designed to inform and assist congregations, pastors, and victim-survivors of misconduct.
  - Pilot testing of sexual ethics training in two United Methodist seminaries.
  - Development of teaching and training resources for bishops and cabinets, pastors and congregations.
  - Churchwide training and deployment of more than 300 Response Team and Safe Sanctuary leaders across the church.
  - One of the first sexual ethics training events beyond the US church, for clergy and laity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

  - Coordinated and completed an interagency survey of 3,000 US clergy spouses (more than 75 percent of whom are women), that has helped inform the collaborating general agencies’ (GBHEM, GBOD, GBOPHB) clergy wellness assessments, policies and practices affecting the health, effectiveness, and well-being of United Methodist clergy and their families. One outcome of that study was the development of a “best practices” manual regarding annual conference policies and practices on clergy housing, particularly parsonages.

  - Funded a survey of laywomen and clergywomen in the Philippines, to assess their needs, concerns, and hope regarding empowerment of women, addressing sexism, and combating sexual violence in their church and society.

  - Completed the first phase of a study of US clergy salaries (in cooperation with several agencies and led by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry), to track the correlation between clergy salaries and career trajectory AND gender and racial/ethnic identity.

  - Helped revive or start new Commissions on the Status and Role of Women in seven annual conferences: California-Pacific, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, Northern Illinois, Oklahoma, and Upper New York.
Held listening events with laywomen and clergymen of color in four US annual conferences, at the Northeastern Jurisdiction’s clergymen’s consultation and at two US United Methodist-related seminaries.

Audited the US annual conferences and released a report on progress on racial-ethnic and gender diversity (in collaboration with the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Council on Finance and Administration).

Audited all general church agencies—in light of massive layoffs and staff changes mid-quadrennium—to determine whether women and people of color were disproportionately affected.

New office of sexual ethics and advocacy

Shortly after the creation of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, clergymen and laywomen began calling the office for advice, support, and counsel regarding their gender-based harassment, abuse, and misconduct. Because that issue was not addressed formally in any other churchwide or annual conference agency, the Commission became the de facto entity for advocacy, intervention, advice, and support.

It was the Commission, in fact, that advocated requiring sexual misconduct policies and procedures in each annual conference. It was the Commission, too, that pushed successfully to require clergy under appointment to undergo sexual harassment prevention training and education about maintaining appropriate boundaries.

The 2000 General Conference asked the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to convene an interagency, interdisciplinary Sexual Ethics Task Force (see task force report, ADCA, page 1263). The purpose of this group was “to address the areas of prevention, education, intervention, and healing with regard to lay and clergy misconduct of a sexual nature.” The Commission added this to our considerable list of duties, with each member of our small staff sharing these responsibilities.

During this 2009-12 quadrennium, the Commission created and staffed a new Office of Sexual Ethics and Advocacy and expanded the membership of the Sexual Ethics Task Force to 26 laypersons and clergypersons, including representatives from annual conference Safe Sanctuary and Response Team ministries, the Council of Bishops, general agencies, and specialists in psychotherapy, law enforcement, cyber-safety, and victim advocacy.

With the creation of the new office and the increased functionality of the Sexual Ethics Task Force, the Commission was equipped to organize churchwide training and networking for Response Team and Safe Sanctuary leaders and to begin to establish standards for training clergy and laity in leadership (from seminary education through local-church curricula).

Signs of hope: Gaining ground

An exciting aspect of current United Methodist life is that membership and vitality are increasing most dramatically in Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Philippines. This global reality has made a significant impact on the focus and witness of our denomination. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women elected Chita Millan of Pangasinan, the Philippines, as vice president, the first Commission officer from outside the United States. In another first, our governing board in 2009-2012 included three women bishops, including the first African woman elected to the episcopacy.

In that spirit of women’s ever-emerging presence, participation, and leadership in The United Methodist Church worldwide, we celebrated some major gains made in the denomination since 2008:

- For the first time in history, women deans/presidents led four of our twelve US United Methodist seminaries (one retired in 2010).
- United Methodist laywoman and Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf addressed the 2008 General Conference as the first-ever woman head-of-state on the continent of Africa.
- US clergymen of color from five US racial/ethnic groups (Black, Hispanic/Latina, Asian-Pacific Island, Korean, and Native American) organized support and affinity groups, thanks to the initiative of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- Monika Zuber is in her second year of candidacy for ordination in the Poland Annual Conference. She is overcoming obstacles in a church and
nation still not accustomed to women pastors. However, if she completes the process, she will be the first woman ordained in the Poland United Methodist Church since the early 1970s.

- Meeli Tankler, a United Methodist laywoman, was named the first woman president of the Baltic Methodist Seminary in Tallinn, Estonia.

- Women comprised 40 percent of delegates elected to the 2008 General Conference (37 percent of clergy delegates and 50 percent of lay delegates). Also a record number of women, US people of color, and church leaders from the central conferences were elected as legislative committee officers at the 2008 assembly.

- Two women under age 29 were elected to and are active and vocal members of the Connectional Table.

- Mozambican Bishop Joaquina Nhanala was elected in 2008 as the first woman elected to the United Methodist episcopacy on the continent of Africa. Bishop Nhanala joined Germany’s Bishop Rosemarie Wenner (elected in 2005) as the only two women bishops elected outside the United States.

- Mozambican United Methodists in 2009 celebrated the 30th anniversary of the ordination of women in that nation, and church leaders renewed their commitment to empowerment of all women in that episcopal area, which includes Mozambique North, Mozambique South, and the South Africa Provisional conferences.

- The Rev. Maureen Fygland was appointed the first-ever district superintendent in the South Africa Provisional Conference.

- Women and men partnered in Mozambique, South Africa, and the Philippines to create the first three annual conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women outside the United States.

- A record 69 women served as senior pastors of US congregations with memberships of 1,000 or more.

Staying the course: Women and the Four Areas of Focus

Sexism, both institutional and personal, is contrary to God’s intention for the church. The imbalance of power, opportunity, control of resources, and access to health and relative freedom is literally killing women and girls. Consider:

- Women comprise 66 percent of the world’s illiterate adults; in some communities it is still illegal for women to be educated or attend school.
- Women own less than 1 percent of world property.
- Women and girls perform 67 percent of total workforce hours around the world, yet earn only 10 percent of total worker income.
- Women with children are twice as likely to live—and die—in poverty as men.
- Of the people going hungry today, 60 percent of them are women.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women is committed to our denomination’s Four Areas of Focus for ministry: leadership development, new places for new people, addressing global health, and ministry with the poor. And we believe that concern for women and girls—as demonstrated by the church at all levels—is essential to our faithful attention and success in these four areas.

Only a church that embraces the gifts and leadership of women and men equally is a church that is faithful to Jesus Christ.

Only a denomination that opens its doors to women and girls of all races, clans, cultures, and circumstances is one that is truly concerned with making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Women in poverty are more likely today to contract HIV/AIDS and to die of hunger. US women and children are most at risk when affordable health-care for all is denied. Our denomination must learn the stories and heed the cries of women if we want to foster healthy living around the world.

And United Methodist ministries with the poor must begin with children and parents—in many cases mothers who are the sole providers—and must be grounded in an understanding of the impact of gender discrimination on the lives of women. We must repent of
our complicity in sexism, ask God to guide our hearts to just thinking, and act with the boldness of the Christ who raises up the downtrodden in his name.

In this, our 40th year, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women praises God for the opportunity to be in this important ministry, and we challenge The United Methodist Church to stay the course of justice, empowerment, and raising up new nations of church women and men who will live lives of hope, equality, and community in the transforming and mighty name of Jesus.

Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

M. Garlinda Burton, general secretary
Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, president

The 2009-2012 members of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Pete Aguila
Mary A. Baldridge
Laarni S. Bibay
Roy Blackwood
Toni L. Carner
Nathaniel Dauphin
Karen A. Dial

Darryl Fairchild
Annie L. Fairley
Fay Mary G. Flanary
Dennis C. Fowler
Barbara E. Goodman
Anna C. Guillozet
Sally H. Haynes
Clara Soto-Ivey
Peggy A. Johnson
Diane M. Kenaston
Betty Kiboko
Sung-ok Lee
Kristianne V. Macaraeg
Maria C. Maine
Joaquina F. Nhanala
Brolin C. Parker
Deborah Pitney
Meg B. Procopio
Cerna C. Rand
Yvette K. Richards
Melissa A. Rivera
Donna K. Roberts
Tyler M. Schwaller
Marvin C. Shackelford
Dianne A. Spencer
Tara R. Sutton
Meeli Tankler
Mary Virginia Taylor
Ana-Haydee Urda
Lessie I. Vonner
Deborah K. Wallace-Padgett
Judith J. Whitney
Blessing Yap

Members of the 2009-2012 General Commission on the Status and Role of Women at their fall 2010 meeting in Nashville, Tenn.
GCSRW 2009-2012 officers, from left, are Chita Millan, a laywoman from Pangasinan, the Philippines, vice-president; Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor of South Carolina, president; and the Rev. Diane Kenaston of the West Virginia Conference, secretary.

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Empowerment of women leaders: a 40-year progress report.
The General Commission on United Methodist Men
Report to the 2012 General Conference

The purpose of the commission is to declare the centrality of Christ in every man’s life and in all their relationships. We are honored to serve this church as we bring men into a new relationship with Jesus Christ.

The eight-member staff of the Nashville-based General Commission on United Methodist Men raises 78 percent of its own budget. Twenty-two percent of the budget from World Service Fund is the smallest dollar amount granted to any agency in the denomination.

We appreciate the support from local churches in paying apportionments, and the financial gifts and services from the men of this great church.

In response to the Call to Action and to other voices within our denomination, the commission has modified itself in many ways in the last four years. Through these challenges and changes, we are in a much stronger and better place today.

Two broad areas of ministry are supported and resourced by the commission: men’s ministry and scouting ministry.

Men’s Ministry

The Why

In the past decade, the number of men in our congregations has declined. The average worship attendance in US churches is 39 percent male. Add in the facts that 60 percent of people in your community have no relationship with any faith community, and the strong evidence that men in our society are seeking worth in inappropriate and unholy ways, the need for ministries to, for, and with men has become obvious for both the church and the Kingdom.

Statistics indicate that churches decline when women make up 60 percent of worshipers, and they grow when there are equal numbers of men and women.

When a man discovers or rediscovers Christ at your church, his family will join your church 93 percent of the time, a rate four times higher than for women or children. Pastors often report that “if you get the man, you get the whole family;” and statistics support that statement.

The commission is the largest organized men’s ministry of any denomination in the US; we are the envy of our ecumenical peers.

We have seen some growth this quadrennium, but we are not where God wants us to be. Our goal is to create a sustained ministry for every man in your congregation and community.

Yes, UMM is often thought of as a group of older men sharing a meal, but men—particularly younger men—are finding new ways to be in relationship with Christ and with each other.

Men’s Ministry Specialists—Since the 1996 creation of the commission, we have looked for a way to train volunteers who will work with local churches and districts in men’s ministry. The tasks that are needed are much more of a teaching/training/consulting/listening role than the traditional role of the district president and require a different skill set. It takes 12 to 18 months of virtual classroom experiences, leadership development, and spiritual exploration to complete the requirements for the volunteer post. In 2009, we certified our first class of men’s ministry specialists. We expect to certify a total of 75 persons before the end of the quadrennium. The creation of the MMS curriculum, training, and certification involved staff from the General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Certification is now done in conjunction with the Turner Center for Church Development and Leadership within the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University.

Staffing—The Call to Action underscored the need to refocus our efforts on the local congregations and districts. When the director of men’s ministry retired in 2010, the commission filled that post with three volunteer deployed staff who have been specially trained and who bring unique gifts to our work. While continuing their current employment within their home communities, they represent the commission in a variety of places. Their travel and other expenses are covered by the commission, and they participate in a weekly video conference with the general secretary. They provide training in local churches, districts, conferences, and jurisdictions; and they have expanded our ability to be
Independent Commissions

present in more places at the same time. Each volunteer has been warmly received throughout the connection.

**Training**—We have moved from travel-to training to click-on training. Beginning in 2010, the use of webinars has increased our attendance at training events and moved needed and requested training deep into the connection. These live events are scheduled at times and days that allow for participation of both employed and retired men, and they are well attended with good interaction. Most are completed within one hour. These events are recorded as media files and copies are available to interested individuals and groups. This technology is also used for many of our committee meetings that take place throughout the year.

**Advanced Lay Speaking Course**—The commission has developed “Understanding Men’s Ministry” based on the book *No Man Left Behind*, by Patrick Morley, David Delk, and Brett Clemmer, and their training events offered through Man in the Mirror Ministries. This course is designed for individuals (lay or clergy) or for teams of men with their pastor. The end-product of this course is a 5-year plan for the sustained, dynamic, inclusive ministry to, for, and with men within local congregations.

**Partnerships**—The commission is engaged in partnerships with several organizations. Groups beyond the denomination include Man in the Mirror, Wesleyan Building Brothers, Letters from Dad, DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries, the Society of St. Andrew, and Stop Hunger Now. Groups within the denomination include the Upper Room Prayer Center within GBOD and multiple justice and mission ministries with GBCS and GBGM. Commission staff members also serve the general church on a variety of committees particularly in support of the four areas of focus.

**Growth**—The commission relates to individuals through EMS (Every Man Shares in Evangelism, Mission, and Spiritual Life), Legacy Builders, and Circuit Riders. It relates to local church units of United Methodist Men and churches through a chartering system. These relationships provide materials and resources to churches and individuals and the relationships provide funding for the ministries of the commission. In 2010, 29 annual conferences increased the number of charters from the previous year, and 52 annual conferences increased the number of EMS/Legacy Builders from the previous year. We need additional growth, but clearly men’s ministry in The UMC is growing in the right direction.

**Scouting/Youth Serving Ministries**

***The Why***

This area of ministry includes our formal relationships with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire USA, 4-H, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. When these programs are viewed as ministries of a local church rather than they-use-our-building attitudes, transformation takes place for everyone involved. When are the most unchurched families inside your church? It most often occurs when these groups meet, which is usually once a week. For example, in a typical Boy Scout or Girl Scout Troop, 25 percent of the participants are members of your church and 25 percent are members of other denominations. That leaves 50 percent who have no relationship with any faith community, and they are in a local church for several hours every week. What an evangelistic opportunity!

Youth from any background enjoy the activities and benefit from a mentoring relationship with a man or woman of faith. For those who come from less than ideal homes, the mentoring relationships are often the key element that changes their life direction. Ask an Eagle Scout or a Gold Award recipient; ask a “little” brother or sister. Yes, they had fun and great memories from their experience and activities in these organizations, but the mentor was the most life-changing. Additionally, scouting, by its very nature, brings in young men (see men’s ministry section of this document for supportive statistics), including their families.

**Amachi**—A mentoring program of Big Brothers Big Sisters, our newest youth agency partner, has been adapted to serve as an outreach ministry to poor and vulnerable families. Serving youth who have an incarcerated parent(s), Amachi has been introduced to 18 annual conferences, funded by two Human Relations Day grants and collaboration with GBCS. Over 40 mentoring matches have been established in 12 annual conferences. Additionally, Amachi coordinators have been established in each annual conference to nurture and increase the number of relationships. Statistics indicate that without a mentor, boys and girls with a parent in prison or jail have a 70 percent chance of following their parent into incarceration. The one factor that reverses that trend is a faith-filled mentor.

**Boy Scouts of America**—Our largest and longest running partnership is with BSA. The UMC is the second largest sponsoring agency for BSA in the world.
Even with a decline in the number of total available youth, participation in BSA increased in The UMC in 2010. A total of 371,000 youth meet in 11,300 packs, troops, and crews in almost 7,000 UM congregations. The commission is an active partner with BSA at the highest levels. We were instrumental in having “Nothing But Nets” selected as BSA’s first international “Good Turn” and the anti-malaria program was given national attention at the 2010 Centennial National Jamboree. Over 5,500 youth and adults attended the Sunday worship service at the jamboree, and over $17,000 was raised for this project. Commission staff members and volunteers attend national meetings for BSA and their representatives make presentations to the board and to our various scouting committees.

Scouting Ministry Specialists—In keeping our focus on local churches and districts, we began to recognize and certify men and women with special skills to develop scouting programs within local congregations. We will exceed our goal of 100 scouting ministry specialists by the end of the quadrennium. Not only are these leaders helping within districts and local congregations, but they have led national leadership events.

Training—Beginning in 2010, we provided bimonthly webinar training experiences for scouting ministry specialists and other volunteers. We use the same cost-saving software for committee meetings and other conferences. This approach has shortened our face-to-face meeting time. We have also hosted face-to-face training using the grants for Amachi, as well as participating in the annual training event for BSA held at Sea Base in 2010 and Philmont in 2011.

Partnerships—We appreciate the opportunity to extend our ministry through a close working relationship with PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth). PRAY (formerly called the God and Country program) offers age-appropriate religious education for children and youth in grades 1-12. The UMC is the largest user of the PRAY curriculum. Pastors serve as advisers and assign caring mentors to assist in the spiritual formation of not only scouting youth but youth in Sunday school and UM Youth Fellowship. The curriculum serves as a complement to official UMC literature.

Strength for Service to God and Country—In 1999, we received a phone call from a special young man who was looking for help with his Eagle Scout project. That initial conversation has grown into one of the most rewarding ministries associated with the commission. Strength for Service to God and Country, a book of daily devotions for members of the Armed Forces was first published by The United Methodist Publishing House in 1942. The historic book was out of print by 1950.

The California Boy Scout asked for our assistance to re-edit the devotions, add new selections, and raise funds to make the books available to service men at no cost. Motivated by his grandfather who read from the book each morning, this Eagle Scout’s goal was to deliver several hundred copies to a particular military post near his home. With support from The UM Publishing House and thousands of donors, the commission has now distributed over 450,000 copies all around the planet.

This report only touches on a few of our many ministries. More information is available at www.gcumm.org. We will host a booth with additional materials during General Conference. We are here to serve you and your local congregation. We want to learn from your successes in men’s ministry and in scouting ministry, as well as assist you as we journey together.
The Global Warming Task Force
2012 General Conference Report

Introduction

As directed by the 2008 General Conference, a task force comprised of individuals from a number of boards and agencies, annual conferences, camp and retreat centers, seminaries and local churches has been in prayer, reflection, study, and conversation to help equip The United Methodist Church to respond to the injustice of a changing climate. The members of this task force represent varied backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise, all committed to the goal of assisting The United Methodist Church in responding to our call to care for Creation as part of Christian discipleship. Although General Conference did not provide funding for the task force, members met faithfully via phone, online, and in person at creation care events where task force members were present.

Under the leadership of the United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries, the task force members stayed focused on the charge given us by General Conference: to provide tools for The United Methodist Church that help members across the connection—from individuals and local churches to agencies and conferences—better understand their global climate impact and to give them guidance on how to reduce that impact as part of Christian discipleship and lifestyles of faithfulness.

General Conference specifically asked for three elements to be included in this report: first, a plan for evaluating the current status of contributions to global warming throughout the United Methodist connection by churches, institutions, and staff; second, specific recommendations for reduction of contributions to global warming; and third, the development of an ecumenical effort to support changes that would reduce global warming.

The third element of our task was perhaps the easiest. The United Methodist Church—principally through the General Board of Church and Society—is already engaged in a robust ecumenical effort to confront the injustice of a changing climate through education and advocacy. Through the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program (www.nccecojustice.org), The United Methodist Church has provided leadership in developing resources for ecumenical education, worship and action to protect God’s creation—including green church guides, a national climate and energy campaign and international engagement in coordination with the World Council of Churches.

Given existing ecumenical efforts, the focus of the task force—and this report—is on the remaining two charges of General Conference: a plan for evaluating our church’s contribution to the problem of global warming and recommendations for reducing that impact. As will be clear in the report, the task force remains challenged by the tension between finding diagnostic tools that are both accurate and accessible as well as by finding action steps that are significant and achievable. What we are certain of, however, is that with God all things are possible. And so we believe it important that we begin our report with a theological statement lifting up the potential of creative restoration in the hope of God’s renewed creation.

We submit this report with the hope that it will help guide a faith-filled conversation among United Methodists who will find ways to give life to these recommendations and with the hope that General Conference will support further efforts to focus our church and its members on the critical need for prayer and action to care for God’s good creation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Global Warming Task Force

Earth Care and Our Christian Faith: A Theological Statement

In November 2009, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church adopted a Pastoral Letter entitled: “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.” In this letter and its foundation document, the bishops stated that the Earth that God had entrusted to our care is gravely threatened by our “neglect, selfishness and pride.” Furthermore, those whom the Gospel of Matthew contends that Jesus set apart for special care, “the least amongst us,” are bearing a disproportionate share of the burden of our excesses. The interconnected threats to “peace, people and planet,” can no longer be ignored.
In that letter, the bishops pledged to take specific actions to make God’s vision of renewal of creation a reality. “With every evaluation and decision,” they pledged to ask: “Does this contribute to God’s renewal of creation?” The bishops calculated their own episcopal operations’ carbon footprint and made plans for reduction. They also asked each congregation and each United Methodist leader to participate in God’s renewing work, in the hope and trust that God can accomplish much through willing hands and hearts.

The recommendations and resources included here take seriously the challenge by our bishops and the calling as Christian disciples. It is our hope that each of the United Methodist churches, camps and retreat centers, connectional agencies, conference green teams, and passionate individuals will utilize these recommendations, along with their own gifts, reason, and will to better love the world that God so loved. In loving the world as God has taught us to love, we pray that we connect our mission and vision to Christ’s call for us to act in the world, always loving God and loving neighbor.

If all of the complexities and nuances of the gospel can be summarized, it is in this act of loving God and our neighbor. How we treat the earth has a significant effect on the quality of life of our neighbors, be they our friends in the next pew or strangers thousands of miles away. Love is an active, intentional, and vibrant way of life.

Scientists tell us that our lives and lifestyles ripple in ever-widening circles, much like a stone thrown into a pond. The size of our churches and homes, how we heat and air condition our buildings, how much electricity we use, how we care for our lawns, the kind of food we buy, how humanely produced our food is, how we serve our food, how we transport ourselves, the policy issues we choose to become involved with, all have a decided impact on the lives and well-being of our neighbors. And we have the biggest effect on the most vulnerable, the most marginalized of our human and non-human neighbors, the very ones Jesus called out for special consideration.

Consider our neighbors in Bangladesh, who expect that 25 to 30 million people will soon be uprooted by rising sea levels. Consider our neighbors in southwestern Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky who are often forced to accept the ecological, health, and safety risks of living in coal country so that they might have income. Consider our non-human neighbors, too, for example, the fish and clams and oysters in the Chesapeake Bay and our human neighbors who depend upon catching them for their own livelihoods. Fewer and fewer of these creatures are winning their battle to live in waters that are increasingly depleted of oxygen from agricultural runoff and fertilizers we put on our church and home lawns. The importance of these examples, then, is that we have opportunity to reach out in love to our neighbors, and look within ourselves to change our sinful lifestyles. Our call is to transcend our own particularities and find common ground in seeking God’s call to be at peace in the world.

We invite each of us in our camp and retreat centers, congregations, and conferences to consider the impacts of our individual and collective actions upon our neighbors, particularly the most vulnerable, from those in the Chesapeake Bay to those in Bangladesh. We ask that you might use these accompanying materials to lessen significantly those impacts, to become advocates on behalf of all of our neighbors, to stir our hearts and use our hands to meet Jesus’ call to love God and to love our neighbors and to love the Creator and the creation. We ask that you discern in your own place, your own community, the possibility for transformation of ecological relationships, which are holy. Though we suffer from environmental and spiritual degradation, there is the hope of resurrected imagination and remembrance of God’s renewed creation.

This statement is open ended, but find in its practicum the potential for creative restoration in the hope of God’s Renewed Creation. Our Wesleyan foundation entrusts to us that holiness is always in community. As such, our call is to be members of the community of the cosmos and in community with one another, ambassadors for Christ’s call of love and justice. The hope of this work is that these means of change might also be a means of grace for the world, of which we are a part.

Prepared and Written by:

The Rev. Russell Casteel, Mississippi Annual Conference
Dr. Beth Norcross, Wesley Theological Seminary . . . On behalf of the General Conference Global Warming Task Force, April, 2011
Specific Recommendations for United Methodist Congregations, Ministries, and Members

Lifestyles of Christian love and discipleship involve concrete action to avoid harm and proactive efforts to do good. This call to love extends both to God’s creation and to our fellow human beings. In order to be effective in reducing our contributions to climate change and the resulting harm associated with it both locally and worldwide, we must grasp the root causes of climate change and make different choices about how we live.

We can have a significant impact as a Christian denomination that models earth care and a faith community that engages and inspires the wider world. Just as we are having a significant impact on malaria reduction, for example, we can combine our efforts and collaborate with others to reduce global climate change, too. We can act and when we do in a concerted way, it will make a difference.

The vast majority of scientists who are experts in the field now agree that the number one factor driving modern global climate change is human use of and dependence upon fossil fuels (primarily coal, oil, and natural gas). The combustion of these fuels releases carbon dioxide and other heat trapping emissions into the atmosphere, which is causing increasing amounts of heat to be trapped within the earth’s atmosphere. The outcome is rising global temperatures resulting in harmful impact on ecosystems and human beings (especially the most vulnerable).

Since human behavior is the primary cause, a change in human behavior is central to the solution. Reducing the amount of fossil fuels we consume as individuals, families, churches, ministries, businesses, countries, and societies is the fundamental act of love that will make a difference in reducing global climate change and the associated damage that will result if we continue in our current patterns. The human population on the earth is growing at the same time, making it even more crucial to take significant steps now. For more scientific explanation on the causes of climate change and its impact, see:

http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basicinfo.html

http://www.nationalacademies.org/includes/G8+5energy-climate09.pdf

The largest contributors to climate change are:

A. The burning of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and coal) for the following purposes in order of greatest impact
   • Generation of electricity and power
   • Burning of fossil fuels for transportation (automobiles and trucks, with air transportation increasing rapidly as a factor)
   • Industrial and Agricultural Processes using fossil fuels—beyond the generation of electricity—that release CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and methane
   • Residential and Industrial construction, heating and cooling of buildings and facilities

B. Deforestation and destruction of the natural environment (forests and other natural vegetation capture and store CO₂ and thus reduce greenhouse gases)

Ten Specific Recommendations

1. Have every United Methodist congregation and ministry provide education for members and the wider community on the causes of global climate change and the most effective ways to reduce human-caused contributors.

2. Regularly teach biblical principles of earth care and ecological justice as an important aspect of Christian discipleship through worship, Christian education, mission outreach, Creation Care Teams, etc. The establishment of Creation Care Teams in every congregation and UM agency would be a major advantage in moving these goals forward.
3. Engage UM congregations, ministries, and members to set specific goals for reducing their electricity usage at the church and at home. Establish ways to track and celebrate the progress and fulfillment of those goals. Provide resources and strategies that guide congregations in reducing their electricity usage—especially electricity generated using fossil fuels.

4. Engage UM congregations, ministries, and members to set specific goals for reducing their consumption of fossil fuels related to transportation at the church and at home. Establish ways to track and celebrate the progress and fulfillment of those goals. Provide resources and strategies that guide congregations in reducing their fuel usage.

5. Establish the expectation that all new construction and renovations incorporate as many energy saving features as is feasible through architectural design, energy efficient building materials, and new technologies that will reduce the church’s carbon footprint over the long term by reducing the consumption of fossil fuels for heating and cooling, lighting, etc.

6. Purchase food and products from local providers using “green” practices. Buying locally reduces the use of fossil fuels to transport the goods.

7. Create a positive culture of simplicity that advocates purchasing quality items second hand, borrowing, “re-gifting,” and sharing in order to reduce unnecessary or duplicate manufacturing of items. This decreases the amount of fossil fuels consumed in the manufacturing and trash processes (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Apply the savings to doing good in the world.

8. Support sound local, national, and international policies, laws, and practices that help reduce human caused global climate change.

9. Advocate for the protection of natural lands and reforestation locally and worldwide. Forests and natural ecosystems capture carbon dioxide and greatly help to reduce the greenhouse effect.

10. Establish a denomination-wide “Creation Care Recognition” for those congregations, ministries, and members that reach tiered levels of best practices and global impact reduction, and that model the implementation of these goals. This would also include highlighting stories about best practices being implemented by local churches, agencies, and extension ministries so that congregations can network and learn from each other.

11. Have UM congregations, ministries, and members annually measure their carbon footprints, comparing their carbon emissions from one year to the next and setting specific goals for reduction and report these findings as part of charge conference reporting that can be compiled on a denomination-wide basis. We recommend that online resources be created that directly aid congregations, agencies, and extension ministries to immediately begin to implement the reduction of their carbon footprints. This central resourcing location focused on this specific effort will, also, point faith leaders to the best sources of information, curriculum, action steps, etc. that are available from ecumenical sources and organizations focused on helping communities reduce global climate impact. Having it organized and gathered will enable ministry leaders to more quickly move into implementation and action.

We recommend that these web resources be developed as a collaborative effort between the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Women, the General Board of Church and Society, the Bishop’s Initiative on “God’s Renewed Creation: A Call to Hope and Action,” Camp and Retreat Ministries, and others who have interest and expertise.

**Carbon Footprint Assessment Tools**

The 2008 General Conference directed this Task Force to develop recommendations and identify resources to guide The United Methodist Church in creating a plan for evaluating the current status of contributions to global warming throughout the United Methodist connection by churches, institutions, and staff—in other words, to determine the church’s “carbon footprint.” In consulting with United Methodist and ecumenical leaders, we determined that there are varied approaches to evaluating an organization’s carbon footprint. Initially, we hoped to find a one-size-fits-all strategy to recommend, but the diversity of our institutional structures and congregations leads us to recommend several options from those we examined.

A variety of carbon footprint assessment tools are available for nonprofit, business, and personal use. Such tools require the user to input data on energy and resource usage—things like kilowatt hours of electricity...
used annually, and travel ranging from parishioners’ travel to church to bishops’ travel to international meetings. The questions asked through the various tools reflect the activities of the user. For example, tools geared toward congregations include questions about how many people attend church and how they get there, while tools geared toward small offices, like agencies and episcopal offices, include questions about employee commute and staff travel. To most accurately assess the carbon footprint of The United Methodist Church as a whole, we would need a tool that included different sets of questions for different ministry settings, while gathering comparable data across various structures. Such a tool would also need to reflect and respect the unique measurement challenges of the churches and structures of our central conferences located in developing nations. Unfortunately, such a multi-purpose tool does not yet exist.

Until new carbon footprint assessment tools are developed, the choice of which one to use is impacted by the varying time and resources available within churches and organizations that are part of the connection. For example, some congregations have staff and/or committees already tasked with ensuring their ministries use faithful environmental stewardship practices and can easily incorporate carbon footprint measurement into their work. Others have fewer persons available to engage in the process and may need to organize an effort from scratch if no groups exist that are leading the congregation, ministry, or agency in this aspect of Christian discipleship.

The disparity invites a question: How in-depth should a carbon footprint assessment tool be? Some tools require extensive data, requiring deep analysis of utility bills, transportation, hospitality practices, and more. Other tools take a broader approach for easy completion. The in-depth tools provide more accurate results and are more valuable for meeting specific emission reduction targets. The simple tools are more accessible to a wider range of people, but they provide a less accurate picture of an organization’s carbon emissions, making it more difficult to accurately quantify emission reduction.

Such challenges were illuminated in 2011 when the bishops of The United Methodist Church followed up on their commitment to measuring the carbon footprints of their episcopal offices. In their 2009 pastoral letter, “God’s Renewed Creation: A Call to Hope and Action,” the bishops pledged to measure the carbon footprints of their offices, determine how to reduce them, and implement necessary changes. They began their assessments using an adaptation of the small business carbon footprint calculator available from www.carbonfund.org. The assessment included questions about electricity use, commute, travel, and hospitality. Results varied widely, not only because their office’s emissions varied widely, but also because their contexts and approaches to collecting the necessary data varied widely. The more detailed the record keeping of the office, the more productive the assessment.

There were variables that were difficult to adjust for within the parameters of the tool; for example, some episcopal offices host annual conference gatherings and therefore included related emissions in their assessments, while others do not. Some episcopal offices in central conferences had more nuanced ways of assessing emissions, and their leaders expressed frustration with the limitations of the tool. The bishops concluded that the wide variation in approach to the assessment made it futile to attempt to compare carbon footprints across episcopal offices. Instead, they recommended continuing to do an annual assessment that would allow them to track their own emissions year-to-year and seek reduction strategies individually. In addition, some are working to promote policies within their episcopal areas to reduce or offset emissions. For example, in response to the bishops’ letter, the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe has committed to offset the costs of the emissions caused by those people participating in meetings of the Central Conference by contributing to the creation care ministries of the Conference, including energy-efficiency projects of campus ministries.

Our brothers and sisters in other Christian denominations are also grappling with strategies for developing accurate and accessible carbon footprint assessment tools. In 2008, The Episcopal Church committed to reducing its carbon footprint by at least 15-20 percent by the year 2020, and at least 80 percent by the year 2050. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in the process of developing a tool to assess the carbon footprints of its congregations. When tools used in other denominations become available, we can assess them and provide information to the United Methodist connection.

In the meantime, it is important for congregations and agencies of The United Methodist Church to begin measuring their carbon footprints and developing ways to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions using the tools
Currently available. Interfaith Power and Light has developed a carbon footprint calculator that is currently used by many congregations from a variety of denominations. It is relatively accessible and provides a good, surface-level snapshot of a congregation’s carbon emissions. The calculator is available at www.coolcongregations.org. Information on other carbon footprint assessment tools is available at the end of this document.

While there is no single carbon footprint tool appropriate for use by all the various bodies of the church, the Task Force recommends that the churches, institutions, and staff of The United Methodist Church commit to an annual review of their carbon emissions and suggests they refer to the list of currently available carbon footprint measuring tools provided here and choose one that best enables them to assess and reduce their global warming impact. The priority is to get started in a serious effort whichever tool is chosen.

**Carbon Footprint Assessment Tools**

**Carbonfund.org** offers a calculator with various options for the level of detail required for the data used. It is most appropriate for use by agency, episcopal, and other institutional offices. The site offers the opportunity to purchase carbon offsets. www.carbonfund.org

The **Environmental Defense Fund’s EDF+ Business** website offers a variety of resources for assessing, calculating, and tracking energy efficiency. http://business.edf.org

**Energy Star’s Portfolio Manager** program is an in-depth energy and water consumption assessment tool. This is a great tool for people who want to get deep into the details of their carbon footprints. http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=evaluate_performance.bus_portfoliomanager

**Interfaith Power and Light’s Cool Congregations Calculator** is an easy-to-use tool for providing a surface-level snapshot of a congregation’s carbon emissions. www.coolcongregations.org

The **United States Environmental Protection Agency** has a tool for developing a greenhouse gas inventory for small businesses that could be applied to churches and other institutional bodies. http://www.epa.gov/climateleaders/smallbiz/footprint.html

**The Task Force Participants:**

Convener: The Rev. Gary D. Lawson, Sr., Exec Director, Lakeshore UM Assembly, National Camp and Retreat Committee

Mr. John S. Hill, Director—Economic and Environmental Justice, General Board of Church and Society

The Rev. Kevin Witt, General Board of Discipleship related to Camp and Retreat Ministry

Dr. Beth Norcross, Adjunct Faculty, Wesley Theological Seminary

The Rev. Jenny Phillips, Director of Creation Change

The Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter, Author of Green Church Curriculum and Director of BridgeWorks

Mrs. Pall Callbeck Harper, Director of the Bishop’s initiative “God’s Renewed Creation: A Call to Hope and Action”

Mr. Loy Lilley, Director of Good Word Center, Coordinator of Caring for Creation, Lake Junaluska Assembly

Mr. Russell Casteel, Program Director, Camp Lake Stevens

Mrs. Marilyn Braswell, Caring For Creation, South Central Jurisdiction

Mrs. Esmeralda Brown, Women’s Division

Mrs. Martha Pierce, Director of Riverside Retreat, Florida Conference

The Rev. Rhonda Parker, Director of Chestnut Ridge, Virginia Conference

Mr. Troy Taylor, Program Director, Lakeshore UMA, Memphis Conference

Miss Lizzie McGurk, NCC Eco-Justice Ministries (Early participant prior to leaving the NCC)
Background

The United Methodist Church currently offers six churchwide Special Sundays: One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Sunday, World Communion Sunday, Peace with Justice Sunday, Human Relations Day, and United Methodist Student Day.

A proposal was made during General Conference 2008 (petition 80060-GA¶ 264) to combine five of these Special Sundays into one offering, resulting in only two Special Sundays: One Great Hour of Sharing and Opportunity Sunday. United Methodist Communications was charged with testing this concept.

Research Process

In 2010, the proposed Opportunity Sunday was tested in 700+ churches within 10 districts to determine if this was an effective alternative to the current system. All jurisdictions were represented in the study. Each church received information about Opportunity Sunday and offering envelopes to be used that allowed donors to designate the funds they wanted to support. Eight of the ten districts reported final numbers.

Results

The rate of participation and dollars collected during Opportunity Sunday were measured to compare the results to the Special Sunday data reported in 2009.

The collected data shows a decline in both the level of participation and dollars collected for Special Sundays between 2009 and 2010. Participation was down 4 percent, which resulted in a 22 percent decrease in giving from $66,670 to $52,223 for test churches. Overall, the denomination’s donations to the five Special Sundays declined only 5.3 percent, from $2,622,111 to $2,482,721.

The following tables represent results by number of members.

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<td>-20%</td>
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Attitudes Survey

A supplemental survey of participating clergy was conducted following the test to supplement giving statistics with a measure of attitudes toward Opportunity Sunday. The survey showed that communications materials for Opportunity Sunday were effective, in that the concept was understood by clergy. The survey shows that six out of ten agree that a combined offering would be an excellent alternative to five separate offerings. Clergy find it easier to implement and easier to explain to their congregations. However, the majority were aware that Opportunity Sunday resulted in less participation and fewer dollars collected.

The report is available in its entirety at www.umcom.org/opportunitysunday.
The Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force

“Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other.”
(1 Corinthians 10:24, NRSV)

The Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force celebrates ten years of formal existence in 2012, under the leadership of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Since the 1970s, the Commission has attended to issues of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and sexual abuse in the church.1

In 2000, General Conference resolved that the women’s Commission should “convene and coordinate a cooperative work team to address the areas of prevention, education, intervention, and healing with regard to lay and clergy misconduct of a sexual nature.”2 A year later, the Commission co-sponsored, with the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference, a national training event for Response Teams.

Out of that event developed the Response Team Network Steering Committee, composed of dedicated volunteers from several annual conferences. In July 2002, the cooperative work team of agency staff met for the first time with these annual conference representatives to collaborate on “a comprehensive, holistic, and integrated approach to prevention and response.”3 This meeting marked the birth of a task force whose work General Conference continues to mandate under the leadership of the women’s Commission.4

The Sexual Ethics Task Force hosted a national sexual ethics summit “Do No Harm . . . Do All the Good You Can” in July 2006, for United Methodist Response Team and Safe Sanctuaries leaders, drawing 238 participants from 48 annual conferences. The need for this collaborative approach to sexual ethics in the church is more vital now than ever.

Currently, the Sexual Ethics Task Force includes 21 members with expertise and ministry in sexual ethics, including representatives from 6 annual conference Response Teams and staff and board members from the following agencies: the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Council of Bishops, General Board of Discipleship’s Division on Ministries with Young People, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, General Board of Church and Society, General Council on Finance and Administration, United Methodist Insurance Company (formerly UMPACT), Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, and General Commission on United Methodist Men.

The purpose of the Sexual Ethics Task Force is to offer opportunity for leaders at the general church level to coordinate with each other, to consult on programs and materials, and to develop strategic responses to emerging issues and needs within The United Methodist Church.

Reviewing our work during the 2009-2012 quadrennium the Sexual Ethics Task Force points to the following milestones and accomplishments:

- We celebrate, for the first time, the presence of the Council of Bishops on the Sexual Ethics Task Force, beginning in 2009 with the ongoing participation of Bishop Max Whitfield.
- We have worked to improve ministerial readiness regarding professional ethics, sexual ethics, healthy boundaries, and self-care through a set of curricular guidelines for seminaries to implement in the master of divinity program. In April 2010, the women’s Commission convened a full-day seminar of seminary faculty, administrators, and consultants, with the participation of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, to examine the issue of ministerial preparedness and sexual misconduct. This multi-disciplinary, multi-ethnic, ecumenical group of scholars, clergy, and consultants unanimously agreed on the fundamen-

tal need to improve the structures of professional education for clergy and on recommendations for addressing this need. The development process continued as faculty at Candler School of Theology and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary offered pilot courses in fall 2010. The women’s Commission also facilitated listening sessions with faculty at Wesley Theological Seminary and Saint Paul School of Theology. The women’s Commission brings legislation to the 2012 General Conference to mandate these guidelines for all seminaries and Course of Study schools preparing United Methodists for ordained or licensed ministry.

- We coordinated, sponsored, and led a sexual ethics summit, “Do No Harm,” in January 2011. The theme of this event was coordinating conference ministries in sexual ethics. The event included Response Team personnel, judicatory leaders, Safe Sanctuaries coordinators, chancellors, and clergy trainers. The women’s Commission and the Sexual Ethics Task Force trained 300 leaders from 58 annual conferences, including Germany and the Congo, as well as ecumenical partners from the Presbyterian Church (USA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and World Council of Churches.

- We sponsored three central conference representatives to attend the “Do No Harm” event. Several months later, one of those participants, Rev. Kabamba Kiboko, along with her husband, the Rev. Kalamba Kilumba, led two boundaries trainings in Africa, with more than 300 clergy in attendance. These were the first trainings in sexual ethics ever held for United Methodist clergy in the Congo.5

- We trained 50 Response Team leaders and 30 Safe Sanctuaries leaders in six-hour workshops held on January 26, 2011, led by members of the Sexual Ethics Task Force.

- We trained over 70 judicatory leaders—bishops, district superintendents, assistants to the bishop, directors of connectional ministries, other cabinet members, and chancellors—during an “Episcopal Best Practices” eight-hour, face-to-face workshop on the supervisory response to complaints of sexual misconduct on January 26, 2011. This event was coordinated by the women’s Commission and included leadership from the Sexual Ethics Task Force and the chancellor to the Council of Bishops.

- We created an online, local church toolkit that includes a sample policy and guidelines, curricular resources, and articles, as well as definitions and training resources: http://umsexualethics.org/LocalChurches/CongregationalToolkit.aspx.

- We communicate with a broad constituency through our website www.umsexualethics.org, sexual ethics brochure, monthly articles published in the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women’s monthly newsletter The Flyer, occasional United Methodist News Service commentaries, the General Board of Church and Society’s “Sex and the Church” series, and academic journals. Several of our task force members contributed to an international anthology, When Priests and Pastors Prey: Identifying, Preventing and Overcoming Clergy Sexual Abuse of Women, ed. by Valli Batchelor. World Christian Student Federation, 2011.

There is much to celebrate, and we have made much progress in addressing sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships in The United Methodist Church.

Yet, our current reality is startling:

- Across the United States of America, 3 percent of women attending church at least once in any given month reported being sexually harassed or abused by a clergyperson at some point in their adult lives, according to a nationwide study.6

- The United Methodist Church averages between 140 and 500 known cases of clergy sexual misconduct annually in the United States of America alone.7


7. Sally Badgley Dolch, “Healing the Breach: Response Team Intervention in United Methodist Congregations” (DMIN, Wesley Theological Seminary, 2010), 131-2. This is an approximation based on surveys, phone interviews, and personal conversations with bishops—there is no aggregate data available. At the denominational level, no one knows exactly how many complaints of sexual misconduct are made in The UMC or how each of those cases is adjudicated.
Over the past 10 years, adjudicating cases of sexual misconduct by clergy has cost The United Methodist Church over $100 million. There are six critical areas of sexual ethics that need increased attention next quadrennium, according to the Four Areas of Focus of The UMC:

1. Partnering with central conferences: we have begun to partner with central conferences to address misconduct of a sexual nature. The Sexual Ethics Task Force sponsored three central conference representatives to attend the Do No Harm 2011 event. Several months later, one of those participants led two boundaries trainings in Africa, with over 300 clergy in attendance. These were the first trainings in sexual ethics for clergy in these conferences. The women’s Commission has also translated definitions pertaining to sexual misconduct from the *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions* into Korean, French, and Portuguese. We will continue to resource, educate, and promote indigenous leaders to address sexual ethics in variety of cultural contexts. **First Area of Focus. Fourth Area of Focus.**

2. Seminary and Course of Study curricula: Achieving a standard for ministerial preparation requires more than mandating a specific set of guidelines, as mentioned above. With General Conference’s voice of support, the women’s Commission and other members of the Sexual Ethics Task Force will work with seminary faculty and administrators to implement, teach, and measure the success of this program. We will also work with seminary faculty to develop resources to teach professional ethics modules for each course of basic graduate theological education. The women’s Commission, through the Sexual Ethics Task Force and in partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, will also assist in integrating these curricular resources into the Course of Study for local licensed pastors. **First Area of Focus.**

- Over the past 10 years, adjudicating cases of sexual misconduct by clergy has cost The United Methodist Church over $100 million.
- Clergy, unlike doctors, lawyers, nurses, psychiatrists, and persons in other helping professions, can complete their professional education and become licensed without a course in professional ethics.
- Fewer than 10 percent of incoming district superintendents report being trained and confident in their ability to handle complaints of sexual misconduct, and most judicatory leaders in The United Methodist Church never receive specialized training in this area.
- Only 40 percent of annual conferences in the United States have a trained, active Response/Intervention/Crisis Team implemented by the bishop to “provide a process for healing within the congregation” or other ministry context as mandated during the supervisory response and judicial process when an allegation of sexual misconduct creates a significant disruption.
- Staff-Parish relations committees lack training on sexual misconduct in ministerial relationships and for dealing with a misconduct complaint in their congregation, which is where many victims turn first for support and information.
- Three full-time general agency staff positions were eliminated in 2010: the General Board of Discipleship reduced its Safe Sanctuaries program staff by two and the General Board of Global Ministries eliminated its full-time Child Safety and Protection Officer, hampering this agency’s ability to respond adequately to the recommendations put forth in the Final Report of the Independent Panel for the Review of Child Abuse in Mission Settings.

As we move into the next quadrennium, the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force, under the coordination of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, plans to continue its work to address the above-mentioned concerns. We witness to a denomination committed to education, prevention, and justice in intervening in cases of sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships, endeavoring to make all United Methodist congregations and institutions safe from sexual exploitation.

8. Estimate by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, based on tracking individual cases, conferring with the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration.
11. The final report of the panel was received and embraced by Global Ministries’ directors at a semi-annual meeting in Stamford, CT on April 27-29, 2009. http://new.gbgm-umc.org/about/globalministries/childprotection/finalpanelreport/.
3. Lay education: Laity need and desire still more education and resources on healthy boundaries in ministerial relationships. We are developing plans for video-training modules for use by Staff Parish Relations Committees, local church staff, trustees, and other leaders among the laity. The women’s Commission will continue to work through and with the Sexual Ethics Task Force to promote systemic changes to foster safety and justice within The UMC and to promote awareness and resources on emerging issues regarding sexual ethics, healthy living, and congregational care. **First Area of Focus. Second Area of Focus.**

4. Judicatory training: We will continue our collaboration to train and resource bishops and those persons designated to handle the supervisory response in cases of clergy sexual misconduct. Those attending the January 2011 “Episcopal Best Practices” workshop unanimously would recommend the workshop to a colleague and overwhelmingly expressed a desire for further training themselves. A survey of incoming district superintendents revealed that fewer than 10 percent reported being trained and confident in their ability to handle complaints of sexual misconduct and that fully 66 percent of those surveyed expressed a desire for specialized training in this area. **First Area of Focus.**

5. Response Teams: We will develop a workbook and flowchart for annual conference Response/Care/Intervention Teams and promote its use through a national training event, on-site trainings, and/or webinars. In addition, we will train judicatory leaders in the use of Response Teams for congregational healing following an incident of sexual misconduct. This work is crucial for renewing existing congregations. **First Area of Focus. Second Area of Focus.**

6. Clergy training: Clergy sexual ethics trainers desire second-tier and advanced training modules to go beyond the introductory material. Many new issues have emerged with the increase in social networking, online dating, pornography use, clergy health, and work/life balance. We will continue to network conference sexual ethics trainers and to develop strategies for addressing these pedagogical needs. **First Area of Focus. Fourth Area of Focus.**

We, the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force, submit this report to General Conference with the prayer that The United Methodist Church continue to invest in developing principled leaders worthy of our sacred trust; renew existing congregations wounded by past incidents of sexual misconduct by a ministerial leader; seek to change conditions that are unjust, alienating, and disempowering for all persons affected by sexual misconduct; and commit to improving the health of clergy through appropriate self-care and work/life balance. Sexual ethics is integral to our mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

Respectfully submitted,

The 2009-2012 members of the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force

M. Garlinda Burton, General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Randy Cross, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Sally Dolch, Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference

Barbara E. Goodman, Dakotas Annual Conference

Mary Alice Gran, General Board of Discipleship

Susan Hay, General Board of Discipleship

Bob Hoover, Iowa Annual Conference

Irene Howard, United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust

Bonnie J. McOmber, Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

Joy Melton, United Methodist Property and Casualty Trust

Wendy Minnix, Susquehanna Annual Conference

HiRho Park, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Vinnie Payton-Hoover, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

Larry Pickens, Northern Illinois Annual Conference

Deborah Pitney, Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

Dan Ramsey, General Commission on United Methodist Men

Joanne Reich, General Board of Global Ministries

Marilyn Robb, New England Annual Conference

Frances Roberts, General Board of Church and Society

Darryl W. Stephens, General Comm. on the Status and Role of Women

Christina Sung, Iowa Annual Conference

Julie Taylor, General Board of Global Ministries, Women’s Division

Max D. Whitfield, Northwest Texas-New Mexico Episcopal Area
Varlyna Wright, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference
New members elected, following Do No Harm 2011:

Hwa-Young Chong, Northern Illinois Annual Conference
Michelle Foster, Western North Carolina Annual Conference

Melanie Gordon, General Board of Discipleship
Kabamba Kiboko, Texas Annual Conference
Rick Rettberg, General Council on Finance and Administration
Chris Wilterdink, General Board of Discipleship
Summary Report to The General Conference 2012
Socially Responsible Investment Task Force

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you God?”
Micah 6:8 NRSV

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you God?”
Micah 6:8 NRSV

“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.”
Luke 12:48b NRSV

Purpose: The Church’s investment philosophy is based on the biblical concept that all resources are God-given and can be used to promote the reign of God on earth. The 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, TX established a Socially Responsible Investment Task Force for the denomination to consider rewards and challenges of financial investments that seek a more just and sustainable world. Led and facilitated by the United Methodist Church Foundation (UMCF), the Task Force also includes representatives of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB), and the National Association of United Methodist Foundations (NAUMF).

Survey: The Task Force conducted a survey to determine the present status of Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) practices across the connection. There were 413 responses to the survey, with 51 percent coming from individuals. The survey offered insights into current SRI practices within the connection. The responses demonstrate the present range of support and interest in the work of the Task Force, and provide a basis for further evaluation.

Summit: The second major accomplishment of the Socially Responsible Investment Task Force was to host the Socially Responsible Investing Summit in Kansas City, MO, on October 18-19, 2010 at St. Paul School of Theology. The summit was designed to promote an interactive exchange of ideas about The UMC’s evolving understanding of SRI policy and practices and to evaluate the implications of the results from the Task Force’s SRI survey. Invitations to this event were spread across the denomination including UM agencies, foundations, universities, healthcare institutions, annual conferences, and local churches. While the 2010 SRI summit ended with uncertainty concerning where the responsibility lies within United Methodism for keeping the SRI conversation going and appropriately resourced, the body emerged convinced that this conversation needed to be sustained.

Opportunities and Challenges: The Book of Discipline (¶ 716) directs local churches, boards, and agencies at all levels of the denomination to discharge their fiduciary duties in conformity with laws of the country, state, or like political unit in which they are located. It also asks that these same entities “… make a conscious effort to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, or funds whose practices are consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles …” when investing their funds. This two-tier directive presents both unique challenges and opportunities to those responsible for investing United Methodist assets.

Recommendations

• The Task Force concluded that Paragraph 716 of The 2008 Book of Discipline and Resolution 4071 from the Book of Resolutions, when taken together, are in the nature of a common standard. Diversity of opinion and practice is a strength of The United Methodist Church, and the Task Force concluded that imposing a strict common standard, including a process for divestment, usurps the collective wisdom of those charged with integrating Church policy into their investment policies and investment decisions.

• Organizations within the Church with investable assets should consider ways that they can integrate their investment policies into Church policy moving forward.

• United Methodist investors should familiarize themselves with and consider the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as an engagement tool to encourage corporate human rights due diligence.

• United Methodist investors, both institutions and individuals, should consult the Book of Discipline, the Book of Resolutions, and the work of other
United Methodist organizations for guidance in developing and executing investment policies related to socially responsible investing issues. These policies should include, without limitation, previously identified tools such as proxy voting, corporate engagement, and divestment.

- United Methodist investors with socially responsible investment programs should develop a variety of cost-efficient communications tools to help facilitate educating institutions and individuals regarding SRI policies, guidelines, and resources.
I. Overview

The 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, TX, established a Socially Responsible Investment Task Force for the denomination to consider rewards and challenges of financial investments that seek a more just and sustainable world. Led and facilitated by the United Methodist Church Foundation (UMCF), the Task Force also includes representatives of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB), and the National Association of United Methodist Foundations (NAUMF). Members of the Socially Responsible Investment Task Force are: Byrd Bonner, UMCF executive director; Rev. Faith Fowler, GBCS board member; Dan Gara, treasurer, California-Pacific Conference and GCFA member; Bill Junk, president, Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation (NAUMF); Rev. James Mentzer, president, United Methodist Foundation of New England (NAUMF); Vidette Bullock Mixon, GBPHB director of corporate relations; Wayne Moy, GBGM associate treasurer and co-executive director, United Methodist Development Fund; Wesley Paulson, GBCS chief financial officer; John Redmond, GBGM board member; and Dave Zellner, GBPHB chief investment officer.

The enabling legislation in 2008 created the Task Force for the purpose of establishing, implementing, and promoting a common standard for determining prohibited investments and positive investment principles that are consistent with the United Methodist Social Principles and that can be utilized by both individual and institutional investors. The work of the Task Force is to include consideration of both avoidance and advocacy approaches to socially responsible investment. Of primary concern in the work of the Task Force will be global human rights needs, such as those in the Middle East, Sudan, and China.

The Task Force began its work in December, 2008 for initial organization, and met fifteen times throughout the ensuing quadrennium using technology and electronic means. Resolution 4071 “Investment Ethics” from The Book of Resolutions and ¶ 716 “Socially Responsible Investments” from The 2008 Book of Discipline were primary source documents used by the Task Force. To facilitate its substantive work, the Task Force organized into two subgroups. One subgroup considered the composition and application of social screens to long-term investment portfolios. The second subgroup considered corporate engagement through shareholder advocacy as a means of holy conferencing, as well as the deeper challenges of concerns about human rights violations. The 2008 enabling legislation directed the Task Force to report to the 2012 General Conference.

II. SRI Survey: Summary of Key Findings

As part of our initial work, the Task Force conducted a survey to determine the present status of Socially Responsible Investment practices across the connection. The survey was open for four months during 2010 and was publicized by members of the Task Force through newsletters, organizational listings, and the United Methodist News Service.

The Task Force sought input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Individuals, annual conferences, UM Foundations, and general agencies were encouraged to complete the survey. In addition to this primary pool of participants, members of the general church can also be considered stakeholders since the impact of SRI extends across the connection as we seek to be good stewards of God’s resources.

There were 413 responses to the survey. Persons were given choices of seven categories to describe their interest in responding. Individual responses made up 51 percent of total responses. It should be noted that individual responses included persons with interests in personal investments, as well a few persons responding on behalf of local churches, annual conferences, and other affiliated groups. The responses identified as “other” included Wesley Foundations and other UMC-related entities not specifically mentioned in the choices provided in the survey.
SRI Policies

The Task Force requested information about current SRI practices in two questions. An analysis of the first question shows that 171 of a total of 363 participants have an investment policy.

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When participants were asked about SRI principles, 146 of the responses indicated that they incorporated SRI principles.

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Participants who identified that they engage in SRI practices were invited to select one or more specific responses about their SRI activities.
The 2008 Book of Discipline, Paragraph 716

We also sought to test general awareness of Paragraph 716 of the Book of Discipline. The number of responses (259), when compared to those that skipped the question (154), generally parallels the split between institutional and individual responses in the initial questions.

Paragraph 716 and the Social Principles

Finally, we asked about interest in the work of the Task Force that is to establish, implement, and promote a common standard for determining prohibited investments and positive investment principles that are consistent with the United Methodist Social Principles.
Conclusions

The survey offered insights into current SRI practices within the connection. The responses demonstrate the present range of support and interest in the work of the Task Force and provide a basis for further evaluation.

III. The Socially Responsible Investing Summit

The second major accomplishment of the Socially Responsible Investment Task Force was to host the Socially Responsible Investing Summit in Kansas City, MO, on October 18-19, 2010 at St. Paul School of Theology. The summit was designed to promote an interactive exchange of ideas about The UMC’s evolving understanding of SRI policy and practices and to evaluate the implications of the results from the Task Force’s SRI survey. Invitations to this event were spread across the denomination, including UM agencies, foundations, universities, healthcare institutions, annual conferences, and local churches.

Over fifty individuals participated in the SRI Summit, offering their viewpoints on a wide range of topics such as: the current United Methodist resolutions dealing with investment ethics; the impact of SRI on portfolio performance; the challenges facing institutional and individual investors who desire to invest along SRI guidelines; the issues and opportunities involved in supporting human rights through socially responsible investing; and various shareholder advocacy tools available to SRI practitioners such as proxy voting, shareholder resolutions, and divestment.

The event itself was greatly enhanced by the facilitation efforts of Dr. Gil Rendle, who brought his extensive background in organizational and leadership development, as well as group and systems theory to the table. A key emphasis for the summit was to engage in the practices of discernment and holy conferencing while communicating a wide variety of differing perspectives on significant issues.

The keynote address at the summit was delivered by Mr. Timothy Smith, senior vice president of Walden Asset Management (Boston, MA). Mr. Smith is internationally recognized for his many years of commitment to the promotion of socially responsible investing, including 24 years as chief executive of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility. His address reviewed the history of socially responsible investing within The United Methodist Church and reflected upon possible future trends in SRI practices among faith-based investors.

The two-day summit confirmed many of the Task Force’s assumptions concerning SRI practices.

Describe your opinion about the development of common standards for investment principles

- Great idea! Once a common standard is developed, we will endeavor to follow it.
- While I think it is generally a good idea, I want to wait and see what the common standard is before we decide whether we want to follow it.
- We will probably evaluate the common standard and decide which of the standards we can follow, and which we won’t be able to follow.
- We are unlikely to follow the common standard.
Specifically, group discussion revealed that most of the denominational organizations represented

1. used investment portfolio screening based upon the format adopted by GBPHB;
2. believed their organization had a responsibility to share information on SRI investing with local churches and church leaders; and
3. desired to find opportunities to expand their SRI practices to include options such as low-cost housing programs and micro-loans.

The group discussion revealed several problems and barriers challenging denominational boards and agencies in their pursuit of stronger SRI practices. Most frequently cited was the felt need of foundation or institutional boards to evaluate their portfolios based on investment performance and total return, leaving little room for the “value-added” aspect of SRI investing. Others noted that the size of their asset pool limited their ability to invest fully along SRI guidelines. The cost of implementing proxy voting programs was also lifted up as a limiting factor, as was the belief among boards of directors and institutional leaders that their legal fiduciary responsibilities outweighed the Book of Discipline’s policy mandates to make a conscious effort to invest along SRI guidelines. This issue was compounded by the strong feeling that The United Methodist Church lacked a common definition for what it means to invest along SRI guidelines.

In the end, summit participants acknowledged that the younger generations within the denomination were more advanced than the baby boomers in the area of SRI investing, especially in the arena of environmental issues. Thus, there will be a growing demand to strengthen The UMC socially responsible investment practices. In particular, the body lifted up a need to transition from a “Thou shall not” approach to SRI investing to an investing mindset that is more focused on positive actions and outcomes. At the same time, some participants expressed the belief that an organization’s faith responsibility should be given equal weight to its fiduciary responsibility in the area of SRI investing.

To this end, summit participants lifted up

- the recognition that ownership in a company with questionable SRI practices could be a more effective way to achieve positive change than liquidating one’s ownership position;
- distribution of data that addresses the issue of whether investing along SRI guidelines provides investment returns comparable to more traditional investment practices;
- a cost-effective program for UM organizations to become actively involved in the area of shareholder advocacy and proxy voting; and
- development of a set of procedures for entering into the process of divestment, similar to The UMC process for initiating a boycott.

While the 2010 SRI summit ended with uncertainty concerning where the responsibility lies within United Methodism for keeping the SRI conversation going and appropriately resourced, the body emerged convinced that this conversation needed to be sustained!

**IV. Opportunities and Challenges in Implementation**

Socially responsible investing is an impactful way for investors to express their values, manage the resources entrusted to them, and work for greater accountability in the capital markets. Resolution 4071, “Investment Ethics” in the 2008 Book of Resolutions directs The United Methodist Church “to persuade corporations to integrate responsible business practices on environmental, social, and governance issues in their operations and to be transparent in documenting these endeavors in public reports . . .”

“Faith Responsibility vs. Fiduciary Responsibility”: Can we be faithful to both considerations?

When we take account of both fiduciary obligations (including financial returns) and denominational values (including social returns), we are investing in a socially responsible manner. Trustees, individuals, and committees responsible for the oversight of United Methodist assets are first legally bound to execute their responsibilities in a prudent manner. This responsibility is broadly referred to as “fiduciary duty.” The Book of Discipline is consistently clear in its directive to local churches, boards, and agencies at all levels of the denomination that these entities must discharge their fiduciary duties in conformity with laws of the country, state, or like political unit in which they are located. Hence, the decision for establishing investment policy
and the investment of funds rests solely with those appointed as fiduciaries. However, fiduciaries must also be mindful of Paragraph 716 that states it shall be the policy of The United Methodist Church that these same denominational entities “make a conscious effort [emphasis added] to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, or funds whose practices are consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles. . . .” when investing their funds. This two-tier directive presents both unique challenges and opportunities to those responsible for investing United Methodist assets.

**SRI Trends in the US and globally/Corporate Engagement**

Socially responsible investing/sustainable investing is an investment discipline that considers environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria to generate long-term competitive financial returns and positive impact on society. An increasing number of practitioners are transitioning from describing their endeavors as “socially responsible investing” toward sustainable investing that focuses on the impact of ESG issues. Such practices are widely considered mainstream outside of the United States, particularly in Australia, Scandinavia, and even some lesser-developed countries such as Brazil. In 2006, the United Nations introduced its Principles for Responsible Investment. Signatories pledge that they will integrate ESG considerations in making investment decisions. Through the end of 2010, 784 organizations around the world representing $22 trillion dollars in assets have pledged to apply the principles in their investment process.

Tools available for investors seeking to influence corporate policies and practices on ESG include proxy voting, letter writing, dialogue, filing shareholder resolutions, and divestment.

- **Proxy Voting**—an important channel for investors to influence a company’s governance and business practices. The typical absentee proxy ballot that is submitted to the company either by mail or electronically enables investors to exercise their ownership rights to elect boards of directors, ratify the company auditor, and vote on executive compensation and shareholder resolutions on ESG issues.
- **Corporate Engagement**—interacting directly with companies on ESG issues—traditionally involves writing letters, filing shareholder resolutions, and/or dialogue with company executives. Often the most effective form of engagement is dialogue where investors offer suggestions to corporate management and seek mutually agreeable positions on ESG and sustainability issues. Though engagement takes time, it has proven to be the most constructive way to influence corporate policies and practices.
- **Divestment**—an option for investors, but it is a commonly held strategy that other avenues of engagement should be exhausted before divestment is a consideration.

The Social Investment Forum (SIF) Foundation’s “2010 Report on Socially Responsible Investing Trends in the United States” reports that there is more than $3 trillion managed in a socially responsible manner, an increase of over 13 percent from the beginning of 2007.

**Business case for environmental, social, and governance (ESG); integration of ESG considerations into investing**

The management of responsible investing strategies has evolved beyond screening investments to avoid owning companies whose business practices, products/services, or governance practices are considered unacceptable. Analyzing the impact of a company’s ESG policies and practices allows for a comprehensive evaluation of risk and is quickly becoming a proxy for determining sustainability. ESG embraces corporate governance, the environment, product safety, workplace standards, and other issues. Engagement, proxy voting, and the filing of shareholder resolutions are among the tools used by ESG-aware investors to promote more sustainable business practices. Today, the integration of ESG analysis into the investment process is recognized as a more effective approach. Business decisions driven only by a narrow focus on profits have led to unwise—and unsustainable—practices across numerous industries. By focusing on the impact of business practices related to environmental, social, and governance issues, investors can redirect management attention from a short-term profit maximization focus, to long-term sustainable efforts.

**Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act**

Subsequent to the global recession that began in 2008 largely as a result of the failure of major US financial institutions, Congress enacted the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which provided important safeguards for investors and consumers including
• consumer protection against deceptive financial practices and products;
• rigorous standards to protect the economy against failed financial institutions and rules for transparency and accountability for credit rating agencies; and
• investor protection against financial fraud.

The bill requires
• companies who file with the Securities and Exchange Commission and use minerals originating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in manufacturing to disclose measures taken to exercise due diligence on the source and chain of custody of the materials and the products manufactured, and
• the State Department to submit a strategy to deal with the “illicit minerals” trade in the region and a baseline against which to evaluate effectiveness.

**Disparate voices within the Church regarding SRI**

United Methodist institutions collectively control tens of billions of investable assets and include general boards and agencies, colleges, universities, seminaries, hospitals, assisted living facilities, health care services, annual conferences, foundations, and local churches. The commitment to responsible investing practices aligned with the Social Principles varies widely among these institutions. Some have fully aligned their investment programs with Church values, while others are not even aware of ¶ 716 and its call for a “conscious effort” to invest in a manner that is consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles. Among investors that have fully aligned or partially aligned their investment programs, there exist differing views and opinions regarding policies and practices for investing assets in a manner that honors the Social Principles’ goals. Some United Methodist investors may adopt policies and/or issue public statements that conflict with the policies of other UM investors. Such conflicts may cause confusion among the public and/or companies toward which such policies and statements are directed if they view the policy and/or statement as one that represents the entirety of The United Methodist Church. The potential also exists that the actions or statements of one UM investor unintentionally undermines the efforts to advocate for change by another UM investor.

**Human Rights**

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that established standards intended to protect against human rights violations by individuals, groups, or nations. Subsequently, the UN enacted other global codes and goals including the UN Global Compact and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The UN Global Compact is a voluntary strategic initiative for businesses that are committed to ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anticorruption. The Global Compact was launched in 2000 and has grown to over 8,700 corporate participants in over 130 countries.

In 2005, building on the UN Global Compact, eight Millennium Development Goals were developed that advocate that everyone is entitled to basic human rights of health, education, shelter, and security along with the alleviation of extreme poverty by 2015. Resolution 4051 in the 2008 Book of Resolutions, “The United Methodist Church, Justice, and World Hunger,” calls for global implementation of these Millennium Development Goals by governments, foundations, businesses, civil society groups, and our denomination.


**Strategies to address investing in corporations doing business in “conflict-affected and high-risk areas”**

The UN Global Compact and the Millennium Development Goals provide concrete, credible, widely accepted, collaborative actions that can be taken by corporations doing business in high-risk regions of the world.

Socially responsible investors expect that companies can and should make a positive contribution to the realization of human rights in regions where they do business, especially conflict-affected areas. Many companies are involved in supporting human rights at local and global levels, which is encouraged by the UN Global Compact. Global Compact Principle 1: “Business should respect and support the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights” is interpreted to mean that companies must act with due diligence to avoid infringing on the rights of others. The Global Compact recommends that core elements of human rights due diligence include
1. having a human rights policy;
2. assessing human rights risks and impacts;
3. integrating human rights throughout a company;
4. having a mechanism to handle grievances; and
5. tracking, as well as reporting performance.

**The 31 Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights recognize**

- a) states’ existing obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- b) the role of business enterprises as specialized organs of society performing specialized functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights; and
- c) the need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached.

**Guidelines for community and other positive social purpose investing and identifying positive investing**

One of the socially responsible investing strategies outlined in Resolution 4071 is social impact investing. While trustees, individuals, and committees responsible for the oversight of United Methodist assets may recognize and accept the premise of undertaking investments to achieve specific social outcomes, they confront challenges in identifying and conducting the requisite due diligence for sourcing these kinds of investments. Financing the construction of affordable housing, neighborhood renewal projects, or expanding business ownership among segments of the population traditionally excluded from such ownership (activities suggested by Resolution 4071) is complex and requires a specialized set of skills and expertise for qualifying investments, establishing terms, negotiating agreements, and monitoring the financed projects. Hence, United Methodist institutions that recognize the importance of investing as prudent fiduciaries find it difficult to initiate such investments absent the requisite knowledge and expertise.

**Collaboration among UMC stakeholders**

Historically, boards and agencies of the Church have sought to collaborate on influencing company human rights policy and practices. For example, during the 2005–2008 quadrennium, representatives of the General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Church and Society, and General Board of Pension and Health Benefits met individually and collectively with corporations, yielding positive results. The Church can be more effective if there is a collaboration and agreement so that a unified voice can bring about change.

**V. Recommendations**

The 2008 General Conference established the Task Force “. . . for the purpose of establishing, implementing, and promoting a common standard for determining prohibited investments and positive investment principles that are consistent with The United Methodist Social Principles . . .” for use by both individual and institutional investors. After evaluating existing Church policy, specifically Paragraph 716 of the *Book of Discipline* and Resolution 4071, the Task Force realized that these documents taken together are in the nature of a common standard. As observed through responses to the survey that the Task Force administered and the dialogue held at the SRI summit, fiduciaries of United Methodist organizations with investable assets confront numerous challenges in implementing socially responsible investment policies. The Task Force heard and recognizes concerns voiced by some United Methodist investors relating to their legal duties as prudent fiduciaries. The Task Force acknowledges that diversity of opinion and practice is a strength of The United Methodist Church and believes that imposing a strict common standard, including a process for divestment, usurps the collective wisdom of those charged with integrating Church policy into their investment policies and investment decisions.

The Task Force recommends that organizations within the Church with investable assets consider the ways that they can integrate their commitment to the Social Principles and concepts outlined in Resolution 4071 in their investment policies.

The Task Force recommends that United Methodist investors familiarize themselves with and consider the *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* as an engagement tool to encourage corporate human rights due diligence.

The Task Force recommends that all United Methodist investors, both institutions and individuals, consult the *Book of Discipline*, the *Book of Resolutions*, and the work of other United Methodist organizations for guidance in developing and executing investment policies related to socially responsible issues. These policies should include, without limitation, previously identified tools such as proxy voting, corporate engagement, and divestment.

The Task Force recommends the development of cost-efficient communications tools to help facilitate
Independent Commissions

educating institutions and individuals regarding SRI policies, guidelines, and resources recognizing that different audiences are accustomed to accessing the same information in different ways. Ease of access will do much to maximize adoption and implementation. To that end, communications tools used will be developed and monitored by interested general boards, agencies, and the United Methodist Church Foundation. These tools include:

- Online, menu-driven audiovideo presentations of approximately five minutes for each SRI topic. (See *Living the United Methodist Way* on www.gbod.org as an example.) The presentations should be distributed through umc.org and on all websites of general boards, agencies, and the United Methodist Church Foundation, with links to these presentations provided by all conference and conference foundation websites. Printed packets of the materials including CDs should be made available on request. The boards, agencies, and The United Methodist Church Foundation should include notification of this information in their existing mailings. The information that they provide should include the websites from which the presentations are available and how one might request receipt of physical copies of materials. Perhaps an additional mailing specific to SRI could include a perforated return card for copies of materials.

- Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, dedicated blogs, a clearinghouse, or other similar vehicles for broadly disseminating relevant information to other United Methodist investors. Social media used should be monitored by interested agencies and other United Methodist-affiliated organizations with investable assets.
Summary Report to General Conference from the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church

From August, 2009 to July, 2011, the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church held six meetings to fulfill its mandate. It spent significant time in listening sessions in the United States, the Philippines, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Congo, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Europe. What the Study Committee heard was both a deep commitment to the worldwide unity of The UMC and a deep yearning for change. All over the world people wanted to be part of one global church and yet there were many ideas for how to live more fully into our worldwide nature.

The requests for change were many: greater equality among the parts of the church; less United States dominance of General Conference; locating General Conference in countries besides the United States; moving cultural issues out of General Conference into central conferences; greater emphasis at General Conference on the mission of the Church. We heard requests for more opportunities for interaction among the central conferences. We heard negative comments on the politicization of elections, both of delegates and of bishops; we heard concern about salary inequalities and desire that economic conditions in episcopal areas be taken into account in determining bishop salaries. We heard many comments about The Book of Discipline, in particular of its irrelevance to impoverished portions of the world and the need for a more useful and contemporary book. We heard requests for a smaller global Book of Discipline containing only those things necessary to the identity and common mission of The United Methodist Church, and for separate Books of Discipline dealing with what are currently the adaptable portions of the Discipline. There were many issues concerning boards and agencies, structural problems, financing, social principles, and the great need for more educational opportunities in Africa and in the Philippines. The Study Committee is aware that some of these issues, such as salary inequalities, are not addressed in the proposed model, but that they should require further study for integral change.

The Committee has sought to address the concerns raised regarding the constitutional amendments passed by the 2008 General Conference and not approved by annual conference members: increased financial burdens due to an added layer of bureaucracy; weakening of the denomination’s connectional unity; and relativization of the Social Principles.

Since the earliest forms of central conferences in 1884 there have only been slow modifications with additional powers given to them up to the union of 1968. Despite repeated calls for changes, the denomination’s worldwide structure remained the same, mainly due to the US church’s preoccupation with its own local concerns and interests. It is now imperative for The United Methodist Church to reconsider the global realities of its connection, as its parts outside the bounds of the United States, in particular in Asia and Africa, rapidly grow as never before. The Committee’s report, with three petitions and one model for conversation, constitutes its response to what its members heard. The Committee believes that living more fully into the worldwide nature of our church is a long process and it offers four next steps to the General Conference. Three are petitions to change the Book of Discipline. The most important of these is a covenant to continue shaping our hearts, minds, and behaviors throughout our denomination. Another of these offers clarity about what parts of the Book of Discipline are truly global and what parts can be adapted by central conferences. Another proposed change instructs general agencies to “build up and empower ministry through sustainable programs and infrastructure which enable local and regional units to increase ownership and responsibility.”

The Committee’s fourth contribution is a model to stimulate and guide the continuing conversation about the most appropriate global model for our worldwide structure. The key lesson of the constitutional amendments passed by the 2008 General Conference is that the church must take time to think these issues through as carefully as possible. The Committee is proposing a model for conversation during the next quadrennium. This model, we hope, will stimulate proposals for action in the 2016 General Conference to change our worldwide structure. The Committee strongly believes that significant conversation on our worldwide nature must continue.
Report to General Conference from the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church

Our Vision

The Study Committee sees a worldwide United Methodist Church driven to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To live more fully into this vision, we are working toward (1) deeper connections throughout the church, (2) greater local authority, (3) and more equitable sharing of power, representation, and responsibility around the world.

Our Process

The twenty members of the Study Committee and its thirteen consultants represent the rich diversity within The United Methodist Church. Its first meeting was held in Atlanta, United States, August 23-26, 2009. At this meeting, the Committee organized and identified issues, and adopted its policies and procedures. Members shared experiences from central conferences and jurisdictional conferences. They listened and asked questions, seeking to understand the life of The United Methodist Church throughout the world. Learning from previous work, the Study Committee saw the importance of transparency throughout the whole process. Out of this first meeting a process started with the leading words: transparency, listening, and being in conversation. In order to be transparent and to get knowledge about the worldwide church, the Study Committee actively sought input from The United Methodist Church around the world. Invitation was sent out to boards and general agencies, to caucuses and other church-related interest groups, to come and present their view of a worldwide church. Input was solicited from all affiliated autonomous and united churches. Members of the Study Committee attended a variety of meetings to listen and share our process, including the World Methodist Council Executive Committee, Global Young People’s meeting in Europe, the European Methodist Council meeting in Spain, and the Methodist Church of Great Britain (with representatives of Methodist Churches in Ireland, Portugal, and Italy). A website was started where everyone could give their input to the process and get information about the process. To be able to listen and be in conversation you need to meet people, therefore the Study Committee decided to place two of the six meetings in central conferences. The first meeting outside United States was held in Manila, Philippines, April 18-21, 2010. To be more effective the Study Committee was divided into four listening groups when the next meeting was held in Africa, August 2010. The Study Committee met people in Liberia, Congo, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Cote d’Ivoire. Between the meetings the Study Committee has been working in small working groups with different tasks to make the work move forward to the next meeting. Phone conferences and e-mail have been used in this work. The last two meetings were held in the United States, in Dallas, Texas, and Chicago, Illinois, in 2011 to finalize the work.

What We Heard

The following is a summary of what the study committee as a whole or in small groups heard across the connection.

I. General Conference

1. GC should be limited to issues essential to identity and essence of UMC (Philippines, Maputo).
2. Too much time is spent in GC on US issues (Philippines, Europe); central conferences are forced into US issues (Europe).
3. Take cultural items out of GC and place them either in central conferences, annual conferences, or jurisdictions (Maputo).
4. US not sensitive enough about keeping cultural differences in mind (Kamina/Lubumbashi).
5. We need time and space opportunities at GC for central conferences to meet together around pan-continental central conference issues (Liberia).
6. Need opportunities at GC to share central conference issues with the whole church, such as bringing issues that particularly affect African churches to the whole church (Liberia).
7. Central conference decisions made at the level of central conferences should be presented to GC (Liberia).
8. We need greater transparency in central conference election of delegates to GC, and training should be made available to help delegates to fulfill their responsibilities (Zimbabwe).
9. We should de-politicize the election of delegates to GC (Philippines).
10. The varying cultures of the worldwide church should be taken into account in GC worship services (Cote d’Ivoire).
11. The US location of GC, and the length of time it requires away from one’s home responsibilities are problematic both financially and missionally (Philippines).
12. GC too focused on legislation and too occupied with parliamentary rules (Europe).
13. We are too focused on doctrine and polity and not enough on mission and life together (Europe).

II. Bishops
1. Consistency in election is critical; the diversity of term elections/elections for life/re-election brings chaos to continent of Africa (Congo, Maputo). Limit terms of office so that more people can become bishops (Liberia).
2. Need consistency in election practices across church (Philippines).
3. Where there is no itineration of bishops, the affected episcopal area does the election (Zimbabwe).
4. Bishops should be able to itinerate (Maputo).
5. Inequality of salaries between bishops and pastors a problem (Philippines, Liberia).
6. For the election of bishops, have a monitoring system with independent observers who supervise the process from nomination through election (Zimbabwe).
7. Necessity, given strong cultural and language differences, for AC’s to elect their own bishops (Maputo, Kamina, Lubumbashi).
8. More bishops are needed, but episcopal funds are allocated to travel to US for retired bishops rather than for appointment of more bishops as needed (Zimbabwe).
9. College of African Bishops only has funding to meet once a year (Zimbabwe).
11. District superintendents are extensions of office of bishop, and should be funded just as bishops are funded (Philippines).

III. Book of Discipline (BoD)
1. No common BoD in Africa (Zimbabwe, Congo).
2. Widespread unavailability of BoD leads to arbitrary decisions (Zimbabwe) and to use of 1988 BoD as determinative (Maputo).
3. Need for more general global BoD (Zimbabwe, Congo, Liberia, Philippines, Europe).
4. Central conference persons should write CC adaptations of BoD (Liberia).
5. Central conference adaptations should be in the language/s of the CC’s (Congo).
6. Current ability to adapt BoD to CCs very important (Congo, Philippines, Europe).
7. Assimilate practices of central conferences into BoD (Liberia).
8. No functional BoD (Maputo).
9. What general Church requires does not fit domestic and cultural needs of central conferences; need freedom and power to adapt Discipline and ministerial practices to local context (Philippines).
10. Current BoD does not reflect cultural diversity (Europe).
11. Current BoD overwhelmed with too detailed regulations (Europe).
12. Better to keep a global BoD for at least a ten-year period, thus requiring fewer translation and publishing costs (Europe).
13. A global BoD can only give general guidelines, not precise legal stipulations, because of the wide differences of cultural and legal settings (Europe).

IV. Social Principles
1. Must be sensitive to cultural differences (Zimbabwe).
2. Very strong social ministry across African conferences and in Philippines (noted in every area we heard from).
3. Best to take cultural differences (homosexuality) out of Book of Discipline and leave such issues to central conferences (Maputo).
4. Child labor an issue (Cote d’Ivoire); in Liberia, child apprenticeships. Work with parents, such as family farms, a norm.
5. Human trafficking and sex trade an increasing problem (Cote d’Ivoire).
6. In US, “justice” orients mission; in Cote d’Ivoire, mission is to help people, and to train people to help. Organized humanitarian work, and fight against discrimination (Cote d’Ivoire).
V. Agencies
1. Agencies/donors typically do not listen to needs and priorities of local church. Ideally, AC leaders would meet, share, and list concerns, organize workshops together, then ask for funding. Programs are typically determined by US; if a US group wants church to do something, money is available, but if Zimbabwe initiates it, funding is difficult to find (Zimbabwe).
3. UMCOM training not applicable to African situation (Zimbabwe).
4. Some boards and agencies of GC are irrelevant to situation of CC’s (Philippines).
5. Need for regional boards and agencies (Philippines).
6. Although GBOD has planted an Upper Room ministries office in South Africa, the greater needs for educational/spiritual resource materials throughout the continent outstrip the financial capacity to print, distribute, or purchase them (GBOD).
7. GBOD experimenting with hiring local people for onsite training systems; “We need strong and robust regional efforts to build sustainable local ministry efforts” (GBOD).
8. Boards and agencies US oriented; come to European Central Conferences with US-based perspective or resources. Difficult for them to understand fully the cultural and social contexts of the Central Conferences (Europe).

VI. Pan-Connection Issues
1. Easier to travel to US than to various African ACs/CCs. Funding available from US for former, not latter.
2. Need time and place and funds to meet.
3. Appreciate ability to share experiences through central conferences (Cote d’Ivoire).
4. There are regional issues, and the regions of The UMC need to gather to address regional issues (GBOD).

VII. Finances
1. Poverty in Africa leads to financial dependence on US church.
2. Strong desire that US funds be used to start projects that will provide sustainable source of African income so that African churches can be more self-supporting (Liberia, Congo).
3. CCs must do their share in contributing financial resources to the whole church (Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Philippines).
4. Pastors are paid less than they can live on; necessary to provide pastors with living wage (Congo, Liberia).
5. GCFA doesn’t cover travel within continent, but only to US (Zimbabwe).
6. Power and financial resources linked too strongly; hence non-monetary resources of African church not recognized as valuable (Zimbabwe).
7. Rising new communities do not have the resources available to sustain growth of the church (Maputo).
8. Churches in Europe give more per capita than US churches. European Central Conferences contribute to general funds and to mission projects and theological education. European Central Conferences do various ministries cooperatively on equal terms (Europe).

VIII. Education
1. Ministerial education problematic and uneven across church (Philippines, Liberia).
2. Accessible educational institutions a huge need (Liberia).
4. Poverty makes tuition requirements a huge barrier (Congo).
5. Lack of education and no common language are two of greatest barriers to progress and ability to work within the connection (Congo).
6. Lack of basic structural needs, such as electricity, dormitories, and mattresses for students in new UM University (Congo).
7. Need for lay education at all levels (Liberia, Zimbabwe).
8. Need for local educational resources (Zimbabwe).
9. Need for African developed educational resources for whole church (Zimbabwe).
10. Lack of clarity regarding relationship between the conference and Africa University board (Zimbabwe).
11. Only a minority have internet access; need for hard copy accessibility (Zimbabwe).
12. Need education for women, laity.
IX. Laity
1. Association of Conference Lay Leaders US dominated; need regional association of lay leaders (Zimbabwe).
3. Education for laity—especially staff parish committees—essential (Liberia, Zimbabwe).
4. Board of Laity holds seminars to train lay leaders; also, have a Lay Leadership Academy (Cote d’Ivoire).

X. Other
1. Legal issues in Maputo involving courts, break-away pastors.
2. UMC presence in South Africa creating problems as Methodist Church of South Africa members switch to UMC, especially because of its more democratic structure (Maputo).
3. Need for greater transparency and greater democracy in all processes of global and local church life, but especially in terms of pastoral appointments (Maputo).
6. Crucial for European churches to be and remain part of the worldwide UMC in order to be fully recognized as a church and not a sect. Ecumenical relations very important (Europe).
7. Current UMC structures too complex and place unnecessary strain on small local congregations (Europe).
8. Need for clarity and details concerning any restructuring proposals, and for teaching sessions across the church prior to any General Conference legislation (Confessing Movement).
9. We promote our catholicity by taking our diversity seriously, such as by promoting regional boards and agencies in places other than the United States (National Association of Asian American United Methodists).

XI. From the Report of the Study Committee on the Relationship Between The United Methodist Church and the Autonomous Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean
1. Affirm a mutuality of mission, extending itself in both directions.
2. Create a comprehensive committee on connectional program, to meet once per quadrennium.
3. Encourage ongoing program of visitation of bishops and lay and clergy leaders to facilitate mutual understanding of each partner’s context of mission and ministry.
4. Support and enable direct relationships between local churches and annual conferences.
5. Activate the Conference of Methodist Bishops.
6. All communications between The UMC and the Methodist churches of Latin America and the Caribbean be conducted through official lines of authority in the official languages of the receiving churches.
7. Official Web pages include links to each other’s Web pages.
8. All GC documents be translated into Spanish and made available to delegates whose language preference is Spanish.
9. That all our churches join in being a prophetic voice in the face of multiple social justice issues, particularly to injustices caused directly and indirectly by US international policies.

A Covenant for The United Methodist Church as a Worldwide Church

Proposed New ¶ after ¶ 124

United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission. Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining “a vital web of interactive relationships” (¶ 131). Through a worldwide covenant relationship, we carry out our missional calling beyond national and regional boundaries. For our connectionalism to become a living practice, we need to carry the worldwide nature of The United Methodist Church deep into the life and mission of our local con-
gregations. Only when we commit ourselves to interdependent worldwide partnerships in prayer, mission, and worship can connectionalism as the Wesleyan ecclesial vision be fully embodied. Guided by the Holy Spirit, United Methodist churches throughout the world are called afresh into a covenant of mutual commitment based on shared mission, equity, and hospitality.

In covenant with God and with each other:

We affirm our unity in Christ, and take faithful steps to live more fully into what it means to be a worldwide church in mission for the transformation of the world.

We endeavor to understand, respect, and embrace the diversity of ethnicity and culture in our denomination, and commit ourselves to mutual love and trust.

We participate in God’s mission as partners in ministry, recognizing that our God-given gifts, experiences, and resources are of equal value, whether spiritual, financial, or missional.

We commit ourselves to full equity and inclusion in our relationships, structures, and responsibilities for the denomination.

We enter afresh into a relationship of mutuality, creating a new sense of community and joyously living out our worldwide connection in mission for the transformation of the world.

Global Book of Discipline Petition

New Part II, ¶ 101 (Renumber Parts III, IV and V)

The Book of Discipline reflects our Wesleyan way of serving Christ through doctrine and disciplined Christian life. We are a worldwide denomination united by doctrine, discipline, and mission through our connectional covenant. The Book of Discipline expresses that unity. Each central conference may make changes and adaptations to the Book of Discipline to more fruitfully accomplish our mission in various contexts. However, some portions of the Book of Discipline are not subject to adaptation. The following parts and paragraphs are not subject to change or adaptation except by action of the General Conference. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters has primary responsibility for proposing to General Conference revisions to this paragraph.

Parts I-IV (new Parts I-V)
1. Constitution ¶¶ 1-61
2. Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task ¶¶ 101-104
3. The Ministry of All Christians ¶¶ 120-142
4. Social Principles Preface, Preamble, and ¶¶ 160-166

Part V (new Part VI)
5. The Local Church and Church Membership ¶¶ 200-205
   a. The requirements, definition, and meaning of membership ¶ 214-242,
   b. local church organization ¶ 243-252, 259-260
6. Ministry of the Ordained ¶¶ 301-341, 343, 346-348, 353-369
   a. Paragraphs 324.3 through 324.7 are not global
7. The Superintendency ¶¶ 401-417, 419-435
8. The General and Central Conferences ¶¶ 501-11, 540-591
10. Administrative Order
a. General provisions ¶¶ 701
11. Church Property ¶¶ 2501–2512, 2524, 2532
12. Judicial Council ¶¶ 2601-2612, 2701-19

Addition to ¶ 335.(3) as a new (e): Annual conference boards of ordained ministry outside the United States are empowered to set different educational standards for candidates for full conference membership and ordination as elders so long as they include courses in United Methodist history, doctrine, polity and evangelism.

Addition to ¶ 330.(3) as a new (d): Annual conference boards of ordained ministry outside the United States are empowered to set different educational standards for candidates for full conference membership and ordination as deacons so long as they include courses in United Methodist history, doctrine, polity and evangelism.

**General Agencies Petition**

Amend ¶ 701.3 and create new ¶ 701.4:
Insert the following after “capable of rapid response”:

They contribute to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church both in the United States and in other parts of the world through a collaborative systemic and holistic approach. They build up and empower ministry through sustainable programs and infrastructure which enable local and regional units to increase ownership and responsibility.

4.

**A Model for the Worldwide Structure Of The United Methodist Church**

**STRUCTURE**

1. As the highest legislative body of The United Methodist Church, the General Conference has the authority for all things distinctively connectional and is the only body that speaks for the entire church.
2. The United Methodist Church shall consist of central conferences.
3. A central conference shall be created in the United States comprising the five jurisdictions. The US Central Conference shall have the rights and privileges defined by the Constitution except for the election of bishops, which would continue to occur in jurisdictions. Central conferences would not alter the Global Book of Discipline, which could be changed only by action of the General Conference.
4. Existing central conferences will remain the same, except that a larger central conference shall have the right to create jurisdictions within its boundaries.
5. Central conferences across the connection shall be decision-making bodies for initiatives, programs, and matters related to their particular missional contexts.
6. There will be a reconfiguration of agencies including some agencies that are global and others that are regional.
7. There will be a reconfiguration of connectional funding to the effect that some funds will be global and under the authority of the General Conference, and others be local and under the authority of the central conferences.
8. Economics within episcopal areas shall be taken into account in determining bishops’ salaries.

**THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

1. The Book of Discipline shall be comprised of two volumes.
2. Volume I shall be the Global Book of Discipline, which is amendable only by the General Conference:
   Parts I-IV
   • Constitution ¶¶ 1-61
   • Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task ¶¶ 101-104
   • The Ministry of All Christians ¶¶ 120-142
   • Social Principles Preface, Preamble and ¶¶ 160-166

Part V
• The Local Church and Church Membership ¶¶ 200-205
• The requirements, definition, and meaning of membership ¶¶ 214-242
• Local church organization ¶¶ 243-252, 259-260
• Ministry of the Ordained ¶¶ 301-341 (with the exception of ministerial educational standards), 343, 346-348, 353-369
• The Superintendency ¶¶ 401-417, 419-435
• The General and Central Conferences ¶¶ 501-11, 540-591
• The Annual Conference ¶¶ 601-612.1, 631, 635, 657-658
Independent Commissions

- Administrative Order
  - General provisions ¶¶ 701
- Church Property ¶¶ 2501–2512, 2524, 2532
- Judicial Council ¶¶ 2601-2612, 2701-19

3. Volume II shall consist of all paragraphs not included in Volume I and be adaptable by the central conferences in accordance with their missional and cultural contexts.

FUNCTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

General Conference

- Worship and Worldwide Missional Celebration
- Maintaining the Connection
- The Global Book of Discipline (Volume I) including Social Principles
- Reports from the central conferences concerning changes made to their respective Volume II of the Book of Discipline
- Opportunities for central conferences to engage with other central conferences in their geographical area to address common issues
- Election of Judicial Council
- General Church Programs and Initiatives
- Financial Action on Global Funds
- Accountability for Global Agencies
- Doctrines and Rituals for Worldwide Use
- Membership
- Opportunities to engage with Ecumenical Partners/Affiliated Churches delegates

Central Conferences

- Central conferences shall have the right to create jurisdictions within their boundaries for reasons such as the geographical size of the conference or different language areas within the conference.
- Election of Bishops and Episcopal Assignments in Central Conferences without Jurisdictions
- Establishment of Boundaries for Annual Conferences and Episcopal Areas in Central Conferences without Jurisdictions
- Formulation of Petitions to General Conference for the Global Book of Discipline (Volume I) and making changes in Volume II of the Book of Discipline
- Equitable Sharing in the Mission and Support of the General Church
- Financial action on central conference funds
- Accountability for relationships with regional agencies (United Methodist or ecumenical)
- Educational Standards and Opportunities for Clergy and Laity
- Lifting up Lay Leadership
- Existing central conferences may meet as they do currently; and the US Central Conference may meet either before or after General Conference. The general Church fund shall provide for the expenses of the sessions of central conferences.
- Judicial Court

Jurisdictions

- Election of Bishops and Episcopal Assignments
- Establishment of Boundaries for Annual Conferences and Episcopal Areas
- Formulation of Petitions to the Central Conference for changes in Volume II of the Book of Discipline

Annual Conferences

- Election of Delegates to General, Central, and Jurisdictional Conferences
- Formulation of Petitions to General Conference for the Global Book of Discipline (Volume I) and to Jurisdictions and/or Central Conference for changes in Volume II of the Book of Discipline

IMPLEMENTING PROCESS

1. The Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church will present a model for a new worldwide structure at the 2012 General Conference.
2. The Study Committee will develop a study guide on the proposed worldwide structure of The United Methodist Church for study and response by annual conferences during 2012-2014.
3. The Connectional Table shall enable a process to support the study and receive the results. In the fall of 2014, the Connectional Table shall oversee the development of recommendations, petitions, and constitutional amendments for the 2016 General Conference based on their consideration of the study results.

Membership of the Study Committee

Bishop Christian Alsted, Northern Europe Central Conference
Dr. David Beckley, Mississippi Annual Conference
Ms. Elisabeth Englund, Sweden Annual Conference
Rev. Ruby-Nell Estrella, Philippines Annual Conference
Ms. Sandra Ferguson, Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference
Dr. Richard Grounds, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference
Bishop John Innis, West Africa Central Conference
Bishop Scott Jones, chairperson, South Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Dr. Ilunga Kandolo Kasolwa, North Katanga Annual Conference
Mr. Matthew Laferty, East Ohio Annual Conference
Rev. Forbes Matonga, West Zimbabwe Annual Conference
Rev. Dr. Timothy McClendon, South Carolina Annual Conference
Ms. Christina Mlambo, East Zimbabwe Annual Conference
Rev. Lysette Perez, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference
Rev. Joon-Sik Park, West Ohio Annual Conference
Rev. Dr. Bruce Robbins, Minnesota Annual Conference
Bishop Leo Soriano, Philippines Central Conference
Rev. Dr. Cathy Stengel, Upper New York Annual Conference
Dr. Marjorie Suchocki, California-Pacific Annual Conference
Ms. Monalisa Tuitahi, California-Pacific Annual Conference

**Consultants:**

Bishop Minerva Carcaño (Affiliated Autonomous Churches in Latin America)
Bishop Lindsey Davis (General Council on Finance and Administration)
Rev. H. Eddie Fox (World Methodist Council)
Bishop Larry Goodpaster (Council of Bishops)
Mr. Moses Kumar (General Council on Finance and Administration)
Bishop Bruce Ough (General Board of Global Ministries)
Bishop Gregory Palmer (Council of Bishops)
Mr. Thomas Kemper (General Board of Global Ministries)
Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader (Ecumenical Officer)
Bishop Roy Sano (Affiliated Autonomous Churches of Asia)
Rev. Stephen Sidorak (General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns)
Bishop Patrick Streiff (Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters)
Bishop Mary Ann Swenson (General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns)
Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

§6.

Petition Number: 20322-IC-§6-C-G; Sidorak, Stephen J. Jr. - New York, NY, USA for General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

**Ecumenical Relations**

Amend §6 as indicated:

§ 6. Article VI. Ecumenical Relations—As part of the church universal, The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life: through world relationships with other Methodist churches and united churches related to The Methodist Church or The Evangelical United Brethren Church, through councils of churches, and through plans of union and covenantal relationships with churches of Methodist or other denominational traditions.

Rationale:

It is fitting that the Church should acknowledge God’s action in conferring the gift by including praying for unity among the tasks of the Church.

§609.

Petition Number: 20160-IC-§609-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

**AC Director of Communications**

Amend §609 as follows:

There shall be in each annual conference or episcopal area a director of communications or designated person to focus and guide the communications ministry of The United Methodist Church within the annual conference or episcopal area.

a) It is recommended that the director have the following primary responsibilities:

1. The director of communications may serve as an officer of the annual conference and shall sit with the extended (nonappointive) cabinet when the cabinet considers the coordination and communication of the conference vision and mission, and to provide advice and counsel concerning communications strategies relating to the conference programs, appointment and benevolence interpretation, crisis management, promote the mission and vision of the church and other matters as the cabinet and director may determine.

b) In partnership with the bishop and cabinet and the elected leadership of the conference, the director of communications ministries shall have primary responsibility:

1. To help identify, equip, and coordinate the work of a communications team (staff and/or volunteer);

2. To develop and guide the implementation of strategies for effective communication among annual conference agencies, districts, and local churches;

3. To promote and coordinate activities to enhance the awareness and reputation of the Church;

4. To help guide the strategy to interpret the conference budget and other benevolences;

5. To provide guidance and training in effective communications for annual conference, district, and/or local church leaders;

6. To lead the conference in developing effective relationships with the news media within the annual conference;

7. To guide conference leaders in developing and implementing an effective communication strategy under the connectional ministry;

8. To lead the conference in using new and emerging technologies as tools for ministry;

9. To provide the connectional relationship between the conference and United Methodist Communications.

Rationale:

United Methodist Communications believes that in order to communicate effectively, annual conference communicators should participate in some of the deliberations of the annual conference cabinet.

§625.

Petition Number: 20331-IC-§625.10; Sidorak, Stephen J. Jr. - New York, NY, USA for General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

**Pan-Methodist Title Change**

Amend §§625, 705, 1903, 2403, 2547, and 2548 as indicated:
\texttt{\textcopyright 625.10. In light of our constitutional commitment to Ecumenical Relations (Division One—General, ¶ 6, Article VI), the commission should give consideration in setting standards for clergy support for those ministers who have had their orders recognized for service in The United Methodist Church (¶ 346.2) and whose years of service include ministry exercised in other denominations, especially those coming from the churches of the Pan-Methodist Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union.

\texttt{¶705.3.b) Each general agency shall may elect at least one, but not more than three, member(s) with vote and voice from among the member churches of the Pan-Methodist Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union.

\texttt{¶1903.8 To develop and engage in dialogue—cooperation, and unity discussions...}

\texttt{¶2403.2. Pan-Methodist Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union—Given the relationship and shared history of the denominations of the Wesleyan tradition in America, there shall be a Pan-Methodist Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union established jointly among The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, and The United Methodist Church. The membership of the commission shall consist of nine persons from each member denomination, with each denomination naming three bishops, three clergypersons, and three lay persons to include at least one young adult.

The commission shall work to define, determine, plan, and, in cooperation with established agencies of the several denominations, execute activities to foster meaningful cooperation among the six Methodist denominations.

\texttt{2403.2.a) To fulfill the vision of full communion among its member churches, there shall be a Joint Committee on Pan-Methodist Commission Full Communion. The committee shall serve the following functions:

(1) Coordinate the implementation of action taken by the six churches to achieve full communion.
(2) Assist joint planning for mission.
(3) Facilitate consultation and common decision making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future.
(4) Report regularly and appropriately to each church.

The United Methodist membership of this committee shall be the Ecumenical Officer of the Council of Bishops, the President of GCCUIC if the President is not also the Ecumenical Officer, and one lay and one clergy member of GCCUIC elected by GCCUIC. If the President of GCCUIC is also the Ecumenical Officer, then the Vice President of GCCUIC shall be a member of the committee.

\texttt{¶2547.2. With the consent of the presiding bishop and of a majority of the district superintendents and of the district board of church location and building and at the request of the charge conference or of a meeting of the membership of the local church, where required by local law, and in accordance with said law, the annual conference may instruct and direct the board of trustees of a local church to deed church property to one of the other denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union or to another evangelical denomination under an allocation, exchange of property, or comity agreement, provided that such agreement shall have been committed to writing and signed and approved by the duly qualified and authorized representatives of both parties concerned.

\texttt{¶2548.3. Abandonment—When a local church property is no longer used, kept, or maintained by its membership as a place of divine worship, the property shall be considered abandoned, and when a local church no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized and incorporated (¶¶ 201-204), with the consent of the presiding bishop, a majority of the district superintendents, and of the district board of church location and building, the annual conference trustees may assume control of the real and personal, tangible and intangible property. If circumstances make immediate action necessary, the conference trustees, should give first option to the other denominations represented in the Pan-Methodist Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union.


AC Commission on Religion and Race

Amend ¶ 643.1-5 and substitute the following:

\texttt{¶ 643. 1. There shall be in each annual conference including central conferences a Conference Commission on Religion and Race or other structure to provide for}
Independent Commissions

these functions and maintain the connectional relationships. It shall follow the general guidelines and structure of the General Commission on Religion and Race as outlined in ¶ 2002 and 2008, where applicable.

2. The basic membership of the annual conference commission shall be nominated and elected by established procedure of the respective annual conferences. Each annual conference shall determine the number and composition of the total membership. Care shall be taken to ensure that membership is selected based primarily on the passion and expertise possessed in the areas of training, resource development, evaluation, consultation and strategic planning in the areas of diversity, cultural competency, racial justice, reconciliation and equity, and communicating/advocacy for change. The total membership shall have an equitable balance in the number of laymen, laywomen, and clergypersons. It is strongly urged that the conference commissions be constituted to reflect the widest sense of racial, ethnic, tribal and cultural diversity relevant to that area. Selection of commission members shall ensure adequate representation of women, youth, young adults, older adults, and persons with disabilities. Members of the General Commission on Religion and Race residing in the annual conference shall be ex officio members of the Annual Conference Commission on Religion and Race with vote.

3. The Annual Conference Commission will assume responsibility for such matters as:

a) Interpreting the intent of all responsibilities given to Annual Conference and Central Conference Commission on Religion and Race so that the responsibilities reflect the context for ministry and realities of the areas in which they serve.

b) Providing resources and training to enable the work of the local church ministry area of religion and race as specified in ¶ 252.2b, with particular emphasis placed on pastors and congregations involved in cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry. In the case of Central Conferences, cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry may include tribes, ethnic communities and cultural/language groups.

c) Reviewing and making appropriate recommendations for total inclusiveness and equity within the conference staff and all of the conference boards, agencies, commissions, and committee. Reports will be made yearly to the conference.

d) Partnering with annual conference boards and agencies as they seek to develop programs and policies of racial equity and inclusiveness.

e) Consulting with the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet to ensure racial/ethnic inclusion and equity in the recruitment, credentialing and itinerancy processes of the conference. The executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and cabinet shall meet at least once per year in joint sessions with the Conference Commission on Religion and Race to create and assess long term plans for identifying and developing clergy leadership who will serve the growing racial and ethnic populations in the Church.

d) Consulting with local churches that are experiencing changing demographics in the neighborhoods where they are located which may be different than the church’s racial/ethnic constituency, and have a desire to be in ministry with the community.

g) Coordinating conference leadership in and support of racial and social justice movements impacting local communities in consultation and partnership with other entities within and outside of the conference boundaries.

h) Supporting and providing programs of education in areas of cultural competency, racial justice and reconciliation at every level of the conference.

i) Partner with the appropriate denominational bodies to assist in resolution of complaints of racial/ethnic discrimination made by clergy or laity.

4. The Annual Conference Commission on Religion and Race shall develop an adequate budget for its operation as a commission to be included within the annual conference budget.

5. The Annual Conference Commission on Religion and Race, or other structure to provide for its function and connectional relationship shall have vote and voice in the decision-making unit of the conference such as the conference connectional ministries, or equivalent structure.

Rationale:

Through clarity of purpose and ministry, Annual Conferences Commissions on Religion and Race can be vital partners with conference structures and local churches as they move towards greater relevance and vitality in diverse communities and employ cultural competency and racial equity in leadership, ministry, process, policy and decision making.

¶1703.

Petition Number: 20021-IC-¶1703; Williams, Robert J. - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.
Amend Purpose

Amend ¶ 1703, third sentence:
It shall cooperate with other bodies, especially the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church, the African American Methodist Heritage Center, the World Methodist Historical Society, and the World Methodist Council in areas of mutual concern.

¶1712.

Petition Number: 20022-IC-¶1712.2; Williams, Robert J. - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Heritage Landmarks

Amend ¶ 1712.2
2. Present Heritage Landmarks—The present heritage landmarks of The United Methodist Church (and the year of their designation by General Conference) are: Acuff’s Chapel, between Blountville and Kingsport, TN (1968); Albright Memorial Chapel, Kleinfeltersville, PA (1968); Asbury Manual Labor School and Mission, Ft. Mitchell, AL (1984); Barratt’s Chapel, near Frederica, DE (1968); Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, FL (1984); Bishop John Seybert/Flat Rock Cluster, Flat Rock and Bellevue, OH (1992); Boehm’s Chapel, Willow Street, PA (1984); College of West Africa, Monrovia, Liberia (2012); Cokesbury College, Abingdon, MD (1984); Cox Memorial United Methodist Church, Hallowell, ME (1992); Deadwood Cluster, Deadwood, SD (1984); Edward Cox House, near Bluff City, TN (1968); First Evangelical Association Church Building and Publishing House, New Berlin, PA (1988); First United Methodist Church, Johnstown, PA (1996); Green Hill House, Louisville, NC (1968); Hanby House, Westerville, OH (1988); John Street Church, New York City (1968); John Wesley’s American Parish, Savannah, GA (1976); Keywood Marker, Glade Spring, VA (1988); Isaac Long’s Barn, Landis Valley, Lititz, PA (2008); Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, MD (1972); Mary Johnston Hospital, Manila, The Philippines (2012); McMahan’s Chapel, Bronson, TX (1972); Methodist Hospital, Brooklyn, NY (1972); Newtown Indian United Methodist Church, Okmulgee, OK (2012); Old McKendree Chapel, Jackson, MO (1968); Old Mutare Mission, Zimbabwe (2012); Old Otterbein Church, Baltimore, MD (1968); Old Stone Church Cemetery and Site, Leesburg, VA (1968); Organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Louisville, KY (1984); Peter Cartwright United Methodist Church, Pleasant Plains, IL (1976); Rehoboth Church, near Union, WV (1968); Robert Strawbridge’s Log House, near New Windsor, MD (1968); Rutersville Cluster, Rutersville, TX (1988); St. George’s Church, Philadelphia, PA (1968); St. Simon’s Island, Brunswick, GA (1968); Simpson House, Philadelphia, PA (2012); Wesley Foundation, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL (1996); Town of Oxford, GA (1972); United Brethren Founding Sites Cluster, Frederick, Keedysville, and Beaver Creek, MD (2000); Wesleyan College Cluster, Macon, GA (1992); Whitaker’s Chapel, near Enfield, Halifax County, NC (1972); Willamette Mission, near Salem, OR (1992); Women’s Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society founding site, Boston, MA (2004) Wyandot Indian Mission, Upper Sandusky, OH (1968); and Zoar United Methodist Church, Philadelphia, PA (1984).

¶1806.

Petition Number: 20167-IC-¶1806-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

Strategic Function

Amend ¶ 1806
Responsibilities—Communication is a strategic function necessary for the success of the mission of The United Methodist Church. Specific responsibilities and functions of the General Commission on Communication and its staff are as follows:
Rationale:
A new sentence identifies communication as a strategic function of The United Methodist Church.

¶1806.

Petition Number: 20524-IC-¶1806-G; Sherman, Gary B. - Silver Spring, MD, USA. 2 similar petitions.

Communications Responsibilities

Add new subsections 19 and 20 to ¶1806 as follows:
Section XII. General Commission on Communication
§ 1806. Responsibilities—Specific responsibilities and functions ...

18. It may develop ...
19. It shall produce and/or solicit Internet accessible educational materials including FAQs and resources on “Hot Topics” relating to the missions and teachings of the UMC such as evolution and global warming. These would be accessed by a sub-topic under the “Our World” button on umc.org.
20. It shall maintain Internet accessible “Sections” and/or “Paragraphs” from The Book of Discipline and “Resolutions” from The Book of Resolutions. New and/or amended Sections, Paragraphs, or Resolutions shall show near the bottom the date adopted with either the changes, or a link (other than CALMS) to the changes. Sections, Paragraphs or Resolutions that have been amended, deleted, have expired or will expire shall conspicuously note that fact at the top with the date of action.

Rationale:
Clergy and Members use UMC.org as an Internet accessible resource for religious issues. Subsection 19 will provide reliable information on important and/or controversial topics. Subsection 20 will facilitate determining applicability and history of various “laws” and “Resolutions.” Both will make this existing and valuable resource (UMC.org) more useful.

§ 1806.
Petition Number: 20165-IC-¶1806.15-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

Communications Content

Amend ¶1806.15 as follows:
1806.15. It shall provide content for clergy and laity in local congregations in a variety of accessible formats to promote understanding and appreciation of the global, connectional church, to develop support for and encourage participation in initiatives, ministries and missions of the general church and its agencies, and to provide resources and information to assist local congregations and their leaders in carrying out their ministries. It shall publish a program journal for pastors and other church leaders that shall present the program and promotional materials of the general agencies in a coordinated manner and shall be in lieu of general agency promotional periodicals. This agency shall determine the manner of selecting the principal editors, who shall be responsible for the content of the journal. This agency shall obtain from the churches or district superintendents the names of church officials leaders entitled to receive the journal this content so as to compile a subscription list compatible with U.S. Postal Service regulations.

Rationale:
The proposed language shifts the focus away from distribution channels and places it on content and resources. The change acknowledges that distribution channels change based on technology and the media environment.

§ 1806.
Petition Number: 20166-IC-¶1806.18-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

Resources and Databases

Amend ¶1806.18
It may develop information, resources, databases and other services that provide channels of communication to and from all levels of the Church.

Rationale:
It is important for United Methodist Communications to be able to communicate with its target audiences in a timely way. The denomination’s current system is not flexible enough to meet timeliness demands.

§ 1806.
Petition Number: 20161-IC-¶1806.2-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

Relationships with Public Media

Amend ¶1806.2:
It shall have primary responsibility on behalf of the denomination The United Methodist Church in the United States to relate to the public media in presenting the Christian faith and work of the Church to the general public through broadcast, the press and multimedia. It will provide may develop such structures and strategies for broadcast and multimedia communication purposes as are deemed helpful to the Church in its witness
through the media. It shall unify and coordinate public media messages and programs of United Methodist general agencies.

Rationale:

It is important that the United Methodist Church project carefully thought through and well-crafted messages to the public and to its internal audience. The addition of these words recognizes communication as essential in the environment in which we live today. It is critical that the United Methodist Church’s messages be...

§1806.

Petition Number: 20961-IC-§1806.2-G; Meyer, Mary - Arcadia, FL, USA.

PR Standards

Amend § 1806.2

2. It shall have major responsibility on behalf of The United Methodist Church in the United States to relate to the public media in presenting the Christian faith and the work of the Church to the general public through broadcast, the press, and multimedia. It may develop such structures for broadcast and multimedia communication purposes as are deemed helpful to the Church in its witness throughout the media. It shall unify and coordinate public media messages and programs of United Methodist general agencies. Presenting the Christian faith requires that all presentations, messages, and programs shall clearly testify that we “profess the historic Christian faith” (§ 101), that we maintain “established standards of doctrine” that may not be modified or superseded (§ 17), and that “we think and let think” only on matters “which do not strike at the root of Christianity” (Wesley, “The Character of a Methodist”). Spot ads on radio and television (thirty seconds or less) shall, at minimum, declare our mission: “to make disciples of Jesus Christ” (§ 120).

Rationale:

Recent UMCom failures demand increased “micro-management.” Unitarian Universalists could have written a 2006 TV ad, just changing “UM” to “Unitarian Universalist.” “Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors” (an expensive failure) portrayed us as doctrinally indifferent. Recent National Public Radio spot ads imply our main mission is disaster or hunger relief.

§1806.

Petition Number: 20162-IC-§1806.4-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

Communications Partnerships

Delete §1806.4 and substitute:

4. It shall represent The United Methodist Church in the Department of Communication of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and in other national and international interdenominational agencies working in mass communications. Budget allocations and other funds granted to these ecumenical agencies shall be administered in accordance with § 814.

It shall create and participate in partnerships with national, international, interdenominational, interfaith and other organizations working in communications as deemed relevant to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

In the horizontal world we live in, The United Methodist Church needs to be involved in multiple partnerships. United Methodist Communications deleted the references to the National Council of Churches (NCC) because United Methodist Communications no longer makes as significant a contribution to the NCC as it once did.

§1806.

Petition Number: 20163-IC-§1806.6-G; Hollon, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communications.

Public Relations Strategy

Amend §1806.6

It shall have general supervision over the conduct of public relations strategy and activity, activities for The United Methodist Church, in the United States, planning and doing public relations work at the denomination-wide level, and counseling the various units of the Church in regard to their public relations needs. It shall interpret to the constituency of the Church the significance of the denomination and its various programs.

Rationale:

The deleted language in the first line makes the statement simpler. The deleted language in the second
Independent Commissions

line recognizes that The United Methodist Church is a
global denomination.

¶1806.
Petition Number: 20164-IC-¶1806.7-G; Hollon, Larry -
Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on
Communications.

Resource Coordination

Amend ¶1806.7

It shall unify and coordinate the multimedia pro-
grams of all United Methodist agencies dealing with
projected pictures, recordings, videotape, and work with
all United Methodist agencies in coordinating resources
other multimedia or electronic materials produced for
strategic Church initiatives.

It shall develop and oversee a unified and compre-
hensive program of multimedia materials for the Church.
It shall plan, create, produce or cause to be produced,
and distribute or cause to be distributed multimedia
materials/resources that are informative and vital to the
religious life of all United Methodists.

Rationale:
The revision deletes outdated language and replaces
it with language that
better describes the contemporary communications
environment.

¶2006.
Petition Number: 20064-IC-¶2006; Hawkins, Erin M. -
Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on
Religion and Race.

General Secretary Election

Amend ¶ 2006 as follows:

¶ 2006. Staff—The General Commission on
Religion and Race shall elect its general secretary annu-
ally quadrennially by written, electronic or other means
of secret balloting ballots (¶ 713). The commission shall
select by whatever process it chooses the additional staff
needed to assist the general secretary in carrying out the
commission’s responsibilities.

Rationale:
This change, from an annual election of the general
secretary to the quadrennial election of the general sec-
retary, aligns the electoral process of the GCORR gen-
eral secretary with ¶ 713. It provides for greater contin-
uity of key leadership over the quadrennial program
implementation and for contemporary formats of accep-
table balloting.

¶2103.
Petition Number: 20117-IC-¶2103-G; Burton, M.
Garlinda - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission
on the Status and Role of Women.

Sexual Ethics

Add new paragraph section to ¶2103:

¶2103.11: The commission shall address the prob-
lem of sexual misconduct in the church. The commis-
sion shall provide leadership in providing resources for
the prevention of and education about misconduct of a
sexual nature, training opportunities for clergy and laity,
policy and procedural recommendations for transforma-
tive and administrative fair processes, victim/survivor
support, and congregational healing. The commission
shall promote interagency coordination through its lead-
ership of the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force and
by assisting annual conferences, local churches, coun-
cils, boards, commissions, schools of theology, and
other related institutions in witnessing to healthy bound-
aries within ministerial relationships.

Rationale:
For nearly 30 years, GCSRW has led the UMC in
advocating for complainants, conducting pastor training,
urging policy development in annual conferences, and
training Response Team and Cabinets re: ministerial mis-
conduct of a sexual nature [see <http://umsexualethics.org/
Education/UMCTimelines1972present.aspx>]. This new
legislation codifies what has long been an essential func-
tion in practice.

¶2108.
Petition Number: 20116-IC-¶2108-G; Burton, M.
Garlinda - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission
on the Status and Role of Women.

Staff Election

Amend the first sentence of ¶ 2108: Staff — The
general commission shall elect annually quadrennially
by ballot its general secretariat or general secretary who shall provide executive, administrative, and program staff leadership (¶ 713).

Rationale:
This revision conforms to the policy of quadrennial election specified in ¶ 713.

¶2303.
Petition Number: 20363-IC-¶2303.6-G; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

UMM Expenses
Delete the last sentence in ¶ 2303.6.
This shall include meeting and related expenses for the central conference representative.
Rationale:
The meeting and related expenses for the central conference representative are now included in the agency’s proposed budget, as they are for all other general agencies receiving general Church funds.

¶2400.
Petition Number: 20919-IC-¶2400.1-G; Spark, Stephen Lawrence - Indianola, MS, USA.

Commission on UM Unity
Add....
Section XX: General Commission on United Methodist Unity

¶ 2407. The United Methodist Church is deeply divided over the issue of homosexual practice, same sex marriages and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Part of the United Methodist Church sincerely believes that the practice of homosexuality, homosexual marriage covenants, and the opportunity for the ordination of practicing homosexuals is a human right, while another part of the United Methodist Church just as sincerely believes that Scripture teaches that the practice of homosexuality is sin, and that the homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with Christian teaching. Neither side can apparently in good conscience surrender their position since the positions are incompatible with one another; nor, in view of the spiritual and moral issues at stake, can either side likely in good conscience remain in a church body that takes the opposing position. Therefore, there shall immediately be a General Commission on United Methodist Unity.

¶ 2409. Membership - The General Commission shall consist of 21 members with membership allocated as listed:
1. Six Members nominated by the Reform and Renewal Coalition Working Group.
2. Six Members nominated by the Reconciling Movement Coalition.
3. Three Members nominated by the Council of Bishops. These persons shall be Active Bishops. At least one Bishop shall be from the continent of Africa, and, at least one Bishop shall be from the United States.
4. One Member nominated by the General Council on Finance and Administration. This person shall be a member of GCFA.
5. One Member nominated by the Connectional Table. This person shall be a member of the Connectional Table.
6. Three Members nominated by the Group of 100 largest UM church’s pastors.
7. One Member nominated by the Judicial Council. This person shall be a member of the Judicial Council. Each member shall be appointed by the constituent groups that they represent.

¶ 2410. Purpose - The General Commission shall study, report back to the next General Conference on and offer recommendations and/or Plans of Action to address areas of disunity within the United Methodist Church with the goal of restoring unity regarding:
1. Theological issues surrounding the practice of homosexuality,
2. Issues surrounding the application of the current disciplinary language surrounding homosexuality,
3. Issues surrounding the practical implications of current practices within the United Methodist Church regarding homosexuality including but not limited to geographical, sociographic, cultural and generational differences regarding the practice of homosexuality and the United Methodist Church’s response to it,
4. Issues surrounding the ability and/or desire to remain in full connection of pastors and churches that are so deeply divided from one another on the issue of homosexuality practices.

¶ 2411. Funding - The General Commission shall be funded by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

¶ 2412. Authority and Power - The General Commission shall all necessary power and authority to effectuate and accomplish its purpose and tasks as set forth in ¶ 2410.
Independent Commissions

Rationale:
The United Methodist Church is deeply divided over the issue of homosexual practice, same sex marriages, and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Part of The United Methodist Church sincerely believes that the practice of homosexuality, homosexual marriage covenants, and the opportunity for the ordination of practicing homosexuals is a human...

◊ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition Number: 20767-IC-NonDis-!; Anderson, JuDee - Sheridan, WY, USA.

1864 Sand Creek Massacre

The 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church hereby fully recognizes the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, and the Northern Arapaho of Wyoming as the Federally recognized Tribes as stated in the 1865 Treaty of Little Arkansas with U.S. Government, as the official representatives concerning the Sand Creek Massacre.

The 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church through the Council of Bishops and the appropriate boards and agencies shall consult on and support efforts pertaining to preservation, repatriations, healing, awareness, research, education and reparations with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, and the Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming and their official Tribal Representatives for the November 29, 1864 Sand Creek Massacre.

The 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church through the Council of Bishops and The General Commission on Achieves and History shall authorize research by a joint team including an independent body and provide full disclosure of the involvement and influence in the Sand Creek Massacre of John M. Chivington, Territorial Governor John Evans, the Methodist Church as an institution, and other prominent social, political and religious leaders of the time, and shall report back to the 2016 General Conference.

The United Methodist Church shall support and participate in the return to the “Tribes” of any Native artifacts or remains related to the Sand Creek Massacre.

Rationale:
Previous resolutions adopted by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church concerning the Sand Creek Massacre have contained inaccurate or incomplete information and were developed without consultation with official tribal representatives from the four tribes that have been recognized by the US government in the 1865 Treaty of Little...

Petition Number: 20876-IC-NonDis-G; Russell, John Caro - Abilene, TX, USA.

Establish Full Communion Partnership

The United Methodist Church through its appropriate ecumenical officers shall communicate to the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Presbyterian (USA) Church, Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ, the desire and eagerness of the United Methodist Church, to be in Full Communion with said churches. The United Methodist Church is ready to take all necessary steps to be in Full Communion in behalf of our common mission.

Petition Number: 20895-IC-NonDis-G; Thomas, H.O. Tom Jr., VA, USA for Evangelical Fellowship in Virginia Annual Conference.

ELCA/UMC Full Communion

The 2012 General Conference instructs the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns to follow-up the ELCA/UMC Full Communion Resolution of General Conference 2008 (¶1905.8) with the following action regarding the ELCA-UMC relationship:

• To express to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s corresponding commission the United Methodist Church’s dismay at the ELCA’s action to ordain practicing homosexuals and our concern that the ELCA’S action is divisive and threatens unity, not only with the UMC but with the worldwide Christian communion.

• To recommend the ELCA reconsider and rescind their action of ordaining practicing homosexuals in light of Holy Scripture and our apostolic faith and in order to continue to enjoy unity with the UMC and the worldwide Christian communion.

• To report back the ELCA’s response to General Conference 2016
Rationale:
The 2008 General Conference’s premise for full communion was ‘that there are no church-dividing differences precluding full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church’. The ELCA’s consequent approval of ordination for persons in ‘same-gender relationships’ now puts communion in untenable conflict.

Petition Number: 21089-IC-NonDis-G; Jen, Sheriff Sangari - Taraba State, Nigeria for Nigeria Annual Conference.

Allocation of Funds to African Ministries

United Methodist Communications shall specifically allocate one-third of its budget to ministry in Africa where it shall establish dependable internet communication centers and radio ministry in each Episcopal area in Africa.

Rationale:
There is tremendous need in the African church for the use of internet facilities and for modern methods of communication and evangelism. Young Africans are getting low-cost radios and plugging in their ear phones, it seems reasonable to have a goal of reaching youths with the gospel of Jesus Christ...
Proposed Resolutions

R3127.
Petition Number: 20602-IC-R3127-G; Brandly, Dale - Bellbrook, OH, USA.

Holocaust Memorial Day

ADD: “One may access an easy-to-use Hebrew Date Converter such as www.hebcal.com/converter <http://www.hebcal.com/converter> to annually calculate this date.”

This sentence may be added directly following sentence 1 on p. 277—and/or in parenthesis, as a complete sentence, directly following “the General Conference urges the observance of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day...” in the third line of paragraph 5 on p.277.

[Note: There are other calendar date converter websites that one may prefer to access. When one uses this converter, he/she will see the Hebrew year 5771 corresponding to the Gregorian calendar year 2011. In the spring of 2012 the use of 5772 & the 27 Nisan will convert to an April 19, 2012 date for the Holocaust Memorial Day – Yom HaShoah.]

Rationale:
I believe many (most?) UMC are either unaware of or refuse/neglect to participate re the Holocaust Memorial Day. It may be due to uncertainty over the precise date. Regardless of the reason(s), it is a UMC Leadership responsibility. With the HDC website individuals may very easily ascertain this date annually...

R3147.
Petition Number: 20854-IC-R3147-G; Brandly, Dale - Bellbrook, OH, USA.

Messianic Kingdom

3147. Building New Bridges in Hope
“God whom ... United Methodist Guiding Principles for Christian-Jewish Relations
In order to increase ...
2. Jesus was a devout Jew, as were many of his first followers.

We know that understanding ...
Because Christianity is firmly rooted in biblical Judaism, we understand that knowledge of these roots is essential to our faith. As expressed in a statement from the Consultation on the Church and Jewish People of the World Council of Churches: “We give thanks to God for the spiritual treasure we share with the Jewish people: faith in the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; knowledge of the name of God and of the commandments; the prophetic proclamation of judgment and grace; the Hebrew Scriptures; and the hope of the coming Messianic Kingdom. In all these, we find common roots in biblical revelation and see spiritual ties that bind us to the Jewish people.”7

3. Judaism and Christianity ...
Rationale:
In keeping with our acknowledged shared roots with Judaism or the Jewish faith, UMC as a Christian denomination needs to acknowledge in writing that Jesus, the Messiah, and His coming Messianic Kingdom is the shared hope of Jews & Christians. Using the term “Messianic Kingdom” will help to endear ourselves...

R3143.
Petition Number: 20216-IC-R3143-G; Kemper, Thomas - New York, NY , USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Readoption

Readopt resolution 3143.
Rationale:
This resolution is due to expire yet its content and actions otherwise remain relevant and should be renewed.

R3147.
Petition Number: 20855-IC-R3147-G; Brandly, Dale - Bellbrook, OH, USA.

Jewish Dialogue

3147. Building New Bridges in Hope
“God whom ...
United Methodist Guiding Principles for Christian-Jewish Relations
In order to increase ...
4. Christians and Jews are bound to God through biblical covenants that are eternally valid.

As Christians, we stand ...

Both Jews and Christians are bound to God in covenant, with no covenantal relationship invalidated by any other. Though Christians and Jews have different understandings of the covenant of faith, we are mysteriously bound to one another through our covenantal relationships with the one God and Creator of us all. To this end, members of the UMC, as well as other Christians, would be better prepared to dialogue with and understand the Jewish journey and heritage with a thorough study or review of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants which define their (and our) past, present and future destinies.

5. As Christians, we are clearly called ...

Rationale:
Again, the names of the historically significant Covenants that God gave originally to Israel which were to later be shared with the Gentiles need to be specified.

R3147.

Petition Number: 20856-IC-R3147-G; Brandly, Dale - Bellbrook, OH, USA.

Replacement Theology

3147. Building New Bridges in Hope
“God whom Christians ...

New Bridges to Christian-Jewish Understanding

The above statements of principle and affirmation offer a foundation for theological reflection within The United Methodist Church and with other Christians on our understanding of our relationships with the Jewish people. They are meant to be the basis of study, discussion, and action as we strive for greater discernment within the church. The United Methodist Church with the support of its General Conference, UMC clergy and lay membership is determined to diligently and thoroughly restudy what has become to be known as Replacement Theology, where the Gentile Christian church has possibly misinterpreted New Testament Scripture to give the Christian Church the authority to replace Israel with the Christian Church as the “new Israel,” due to traditional understanding that the Jews forfeited their rights & privileges.

Further, we hope ...

R3147.

Petition Number: 20857-IC-R3147-G; Brandly, Dale - Bellbrook, OH, USA.

Messianic Reign

3147. Building New Bridges in Hope
“God whom Christians ...

2. Jesus was a devout Jew, as were many of his first followers.

We know that understanding ...

Because Christianity is firmly rooted in biblical Judaism, we understand that knowledge of these roots is essential to our faith. As expressed in a statement from the Consultation on the Church and Jewish People of the World Council of Churches: “We give thanks to God for the spiritual treasure we share with the Jewish people: faith in the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; knowledge of the name of God and of the commandments; the prophetic proclamation of judgment and grace; the Hebrew Scriptures; and the hope of the coming Messianic Kingdom. In all these, we find common roots in biblical revelation and see spiritual ties that bind us to the Jewish people.”

3. Judaism and Christianity ...

8. As Christians, we share a call with Jews to work for justice, compassion, and peace in the world in anticipation of the fulfillment of God’s Messianic reign.

Together, Jews and Christians ...

Jews still await the Messianic reign of God foretold by the prophets. Christians proclaim the good news that in Jesus Christ, “the kingdom of God is at hand”; yet we, as Christians, also wait in hope for the consummation of God’s redemptive work. Together, Jews and Christians long for and anticipate the fulfillment of God’s Messianic reign. Together, we are “partners in waiting.” In our waiting, we are called to witness and to work for God’s Messianic reign together.

9. As United Methodist Christians ...

New Bridges to Christian-Jewish Understanding

The above statements ...

We dare to believe that such conversations and acts will build new bridges in hope between Christians and Jews, and that they will be among the signs and first fruits of our sibling relationship under our parent God. Together, we await and strive for the fulfillment of God’s Messianic reign.
Catholic Replacement Theology

3147. Building New Bridges in Hope
“God whom Christians ... United Methodist Guiding Principles for Christian-Jewish Relations
In order to increase ...
6. As Christians, we are called into dialogue with our Jewish neighbors.
Christians and Jews ...
Productive interfaith dialogue ... painful wounds of our history. Any dialogue initiatives need tempered by famed Jewish theologian, Dr. Emil Frackenheim’s perspective: “There can be no Jewish-Christian dialogue worthy of the name unless one Christian activity is abandoned, missions to the Jews. It must be abandoned ...not as a temporary strategy but in principle...The cost of that mistake in Christian love and Jewish blood one hesitates to contemplate...A post-Holocaust Jew can still view Christian efforts to convert Jews as sincere and well-intended. But even as such they are no longer acceptable. They have become attempts to do in one way what Hitler did in another.” Also, Jewish Theological Seminary Professor Rabbi Heschel, who has long worked for better Christian-Jewish relations said: “...a message that regards the Jew as a candidate for conversion and proclaims that the destiny of Judaism is to disappear is bound to foster reciprocal distrust as well as bitterness and resentment. As I have repeatedly stated to leading personalities of the Vatican, I am ready to go to Auschwitz any time, if faced with the alternative of conversion or death.”
7. As followers of Jesus Christ...

Messianic Prophets

3148. STRENGTHENING BRIDGES
In 1996 ...
We cannot know fully the way in which God’s Spirit will work, nor can we know in whom the Spirit will be made manifest. We have always proclaimed that God spoke through the prophets of Israel and Judah and that Jesus spoke and acted in the tradition of those Messianic prophets. “God’s grace is active ...
Catholic Replacement Theology

3148. STRENGTHENING BRIDGES
In 1996 ...

We believe that God has not abandoned God’s covenants with the Jews. We are indebted ...

R9999.

Petition Number: 20060-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin M. - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Cultural Competency Training

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church is an increasingly diverse denomination that seeks to be the effective and inclusive body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, historical realities of social oppression and church practices that reflect and favor dominant cultures, frequently lead to a lack of effective participation in all levels of conference leadership; and

WHEREAS, cultural competency is a leadership skill which can be learned and The United Methodist Church has a responsibility to resource and support annual conference leadership in their responsibilities for the effective participation of all members and most especially those members of historically marginalized communities;

Therefore be it resolved, the chairpersons of all annual conference boards, agencies, committees, and commissions, and the full membership of the Committee on Nominations and the Board of Laity are strongly urged to participate in cultural competency training; and the Annual Conference is encouraged to provide such cultural competency training in order to better ensure the effective and full participation of all committee members with the support and resourcing of the General Commission on Religion and Race; self-assessment tools are encouraged for use as part of the training, and may include but not limited to, the Intercultural Development Inventory [IDI] and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale [IES].

Therefore be it further resolved, such trainings ideally would take place each year within the first 6 months after Annual Conference and reports of the completion of trainings shared with the Chairperson of the Annual Conference Commission on Religion and Race or its equivalent body; and the responsibility for encouraging that the actions and values of this resolution are implemented shall be that of the Resident Bishop and/ or their designee.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20324-IC-R9999-G; Sidorak, Stephen J. Jr. - New York, NY, USA for General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

Charter for Compassion

Add a new Resolution to Book of Resolutions:

WHEREAS, the Scriptures teach “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt 22:37-39, NRSV)

WHEREAS, Jesus prayed for unity, “...so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and I have loved them even as you have loved me” and for God’s love to be lived by the community of faith “...so that the love with which you loved me may be in them...” (John 17:22-23, 26, NRSV)

WHEREAS, Paul taught believers to live lives of compassion, “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience... And above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (Col 3:12-14, NRSV)

WHEREAS, all of these teachings compel believers to love others, to respect them, and to act with compassion

WHEREAS, there is a clear recognition that in the Church and in the world around it, there are multitudes of failures to live consistently with these teachings

WHEREAS, The Charter of Compassion was crafted by thousands of people from around the globe as a call “to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion” and “to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world.”

WHEREAS, over 130 partner organizations including the Presbyterian Church USA have endorsed the Charter of Compassion

WHEREAS, the content of the Charter For Compassion and background information regarding it are included on the website charterforcompassion.org
Independent Commissions

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church:

1. Endorses the Charter of Compassion and will ensure that this endorsement is communicated across the denomination.

2. Commits The United Methodist Church, to joining with other partners in working to fulfill the provisions of the Charter of Compassion both within the worldwide United Methodist Church, in ecumenical/interreligious contexts, and in the world in which we live.

3. Encourages Annual Conferences and United Methodist churches across the connection to study the Charter For Compassion and to participate in its calls to action.

Charter for Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion— to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate— to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures— to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity— to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

Rationale:

The Charter of Compassion was crafted by thousands of people from around the globe as a call “to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion” and “to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world.” Many of our ecumenical partners, including the Presbyterian Church...

R9999.

Petition Number: 20330-IC-R9999-G; Sidorak, Stephen J. Jr.-New York, NY, USA for General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

Pan-Methodist Full Communion

Add the following new resolution to the Book of Resolutions

Implementing Resolution for Full Communion Among The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union African Methodist Episcopal Church, and The United Methodist Church

The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZC), The African Union Methodist Protestant Church (AUMPC), The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CMEC), The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church (UAMEC), and The United Methodist Church (UMC) hereby agree that in their legislative bodies there shall be one vote to accept or reject, without separate amendment, the resolutions which follow. If adopted by all churches, each church agrees to take the following measures to establish a relationship of full communion:

WHEREAS Jesus Christ calls us to unity so that the world may believe; and

WHEREAS The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, and The United Methodist Church share a common heritage of faith and a commitment to mission; and

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church has expressed in its General Conference through a formal
Act of Repentance its apology for the injury it inflicted on its African American brothers and sisters through its racist position and policies that led to the formation of the historically African American Methodist churches; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, and The United Methodist Church hereby:

1) recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic faith as it is expressed in the Scriptures, confessed in the Church’s historic creeds, and attested to in the common doctrinal standards of the six churches;

2) recognize the authenticity of each other’s Baptism and Eucharist, and extend sacramental hospitality to one another’s members;

3) recognize the validity of our respective ministries, including:
   • each other’s ordination of persons to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament;
   • the authentic diaconal service of deaconesses, home missionaries, and ordained deacons in the six churches; and
   • each other’s polity and ministries of oversight (including the interpretation of church doctrines, discipline of members, authorization of persons for ordained and lay ministries, and provision for administrative functions);

4) recognize the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament, subject to the constitutionally approved invitation for ministry in each other’s churches;

5) applaud one another’s ecumenical conversations with other church bodies acknowledging that each church remains free to pursue additional full communion agreements as each deems appropriate, so that the world may believe.

This agreement will be actualized upon an affirmative vote by the General Conference.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20775-IC-R9999; Fields, Lynette - Winter Garden, FL, USA. 1 similar petition.

UMC and Boy Scouts of America

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 policies that limit our call to ministry, and;

   Whereas the Methodist church has always been a strong partner with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and local troops, and;

   Whereas we recognize the positive influence of the BSA, and;

   Whereas we acknowledge that the BSA is allowed to disqualify volunteers/leaders on the basis of sexuality, faith, and/or belief system, and;

   Whereas we recognize that a significant portion of their funding comes from the Federal Government which, itself, has policies prohibiting discrimination, and:

   Whereas we recognize that local Boy Scout troops often meet in local government buildings or facilities that receive government funding and such discrimination is not allowed under these circumstances but continues, and;

   Whereas we acknowledge that while the BSA no longer makes a written statement to this affect, the National Council spokesman defends their decisions related to atheists and homosexuals based upon a quote from the Scout Oath “to keep oneself morally straight” and from the Scout Law, “A Scout is clean.” The National Council often cite their support of “traditional family values” and leaders as “moral role models”, and;

   Whereas we acknowledge that an internal memorandum leaked to the public in 1978 clearly defines the National Council views on homosexuality, and;

   We recognize that local troops and Councils often act upon what they refer to as “common community knowledge” of sexuality or lack of belief in God to dismiss atheists, admitted homosexuals, children of gay or lesbian parents, bisexuals, celibate homosexuals, and suspected homosexuals, and;

   Whereas we recognize that this sub-optimal policy affects well-qualified leaders and participants who may be homosexual, and individuals who identify with this group are present and openly participate in our churches, and;

   Whereas we acknowledge that, according to the General Commission of United Methodist Men, there are 10,880 units (packs, troops and crews) chartered in 6,640 United Methodist churches, and;

   Whereas we recognize that through a change in BSA policy, we can be in ministry with more people, and:
Independent Commissions

WHEREAS we acknowledge that if we are to truly live by Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors, we must take a stand on discrimination when we recognize it;

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church will submit an open letter to the Boy Scouts of America and Congress, supporting a change in actual policy and perceived policy to reflect a standard of equality, so that all may join, participate, and support the work being done every day by this group. We encourage every chartering United Methodist congregation to be in open dialogue with their local chapters about the implications of this resolution.

Rationale:
The Boy Scouts is a great organization for boys to learn social skills and responsibility and should be open to all boys regardless of their sexual orientation or their parents'. The exclusionary practice of BSA is not in line with the UMC's principle of being in ministry with all persons.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20842-IC-R9999; Dowell, John, FL, USA for National Association of Conference Presidents of United Methodist Men.

Expanding Outreach to Men and Youth

Add new resolution to the 2012 Book of Resolutions: WHEREAS membership in the United Methodist Church has declined every year since the 1968 merger of the Methodist Church with the Evangelical United Brethren Church; and

WHEREAS an ABC poll found that only 32 percent of American men attend church compared to 44 percent of American women, and 13 million more women than men attend church in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS 25 percent of married women attend church without their husbands; and

WHEREAS a Gallup poll shows declining interest among young people with only 47 percent of young adults indicating that religion is important in their lives compared to 75 percent of persons over 75 years of age answering in the same manner; and

WHEREAS only 10 percent of U.S. churches maintain vibrant men’s ministry programs, and most congregations struggle to find ways to minister to men and reach young people;

Therefore, be it resolved that churches be encouraged to expand their ministries to all men in the church and the community. The group of men that meets monthly for study, worship and fellowship serves an important purpose, but it should be only a fraction of a local church’s effort to deepen the spiritual lives of men and to minister to men and young people without church homes, and

Be it further resolved that all churches are encouraged to charter a United Methodist Men’s organization. Pastors and superintendents are encouraged to utilize DVDs, on-line training, lay-speaking courses, the services of men’s ministry specialists, and other resources provided by the General Commission on United Methodist Men to expand the ministry to all men within and beyond the congregation, and

Be it further resolved that United Methodist Churches be encouraged to charter Scout troops and to add other youth-serving ministries as a way to reach unchurched youth and as a way to minister to young people within their faith communities, and

Be it further resolved that local churches encourage members to become scouting ministry specialists as a way to expand their ministries through youth-serving agencies, and

Be it further resolved that local churches are encouraged to provide funding to enable one or more of their members to become men’s ministry specialists and to utilize the services and resources of those already accredited as men’s ministry specialists.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20843-IC-R9999-G; Dowell, John, FL, USA for National Association of Conference Presidents of United Methodist Men.

Support for Clergywomen

Add new resolution to the 2012 Book of Resolutions: WHEREAS United Methodist Churches have not always supported clergywomen; and

WHEREAS clergy women have gifts and graces that have enriched the witness of this denomination; and

WHEREAS clergywomen have been supportive of United Methodist Men as expressed in scouting ministry and men’s ministry,

Therefore, be it resolved that United Methodist men be encouraged to welcome women to the pulpits of their churches, and

Be it further resolved that clergywomen be invited to share in the studies and activities of local chapters of United Methodist Men.