

IX. PETITIONS TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NOTES:

The petitions to the 2005 session are printed here in the form in which they were acted upon by the conference, which is not in every case identical to the form in which they were originally submitted. In the interest of clarity and economy, the texts of petitions which received final votes of disagreement from the conference are not printed.

Whenever the text of a petition is printed elsewhere in the journal, as in the case of proposals from the agencies of the conference, the reader will be referred to the appropriate section.

The names of the persons or agencies submitting the petitions, together with the name of the forum group to which each petition was referred, may be found in the Petition Referrals report of the conference secretary in Section VIII.W.

PETITION 1 Subject: 2006 Conference Funds and Financial Policies

Text: See Proposals 1-24 in the report of the Council on Finance and Administration (Sec. VIII.A, pp. 215-225).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 2 Subject: Board of Trustees of Camp Tekoa

Text: See the nominations of Camp Tekoa Trustees in the report of the Committee on Camp and Retreat Ministries of the Commission on Nurture Ministries (Sec. VIII.B.1, p. 233).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 3 Subject: Advance Specials for 2005-2006

Text: See the proposal on this subject in the report of the Commission on Outreach Ministries (Sec. VIII.B.2, pp. 233-235).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 4 Subject: Golden Cross

Text: See the proposal on this subject in the report of the Commission on Outreach Ministries (Sec. VIII.B.2, p. 236).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 5 Subject: Directors of Wesley Community Development Corporation

Text: See the nominations of directors of the Wesley Community Development Corporation in the report of the Commission on Outreach Ministries (Sec. VIII.B.2, p. 238).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 6 Subject: Inclusiveness in Leadership Positions

Text: See the proposal on this subject in the report of the Commission on Religion and Race (Sec. VIII.B.4, p. 239).

Forum Group Action: Agreement as amended **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 7 Subject: Vital Partners: A New Funding Source for Congregational Development

Text: See the proposal on this subject in the report of the Council on Congregational Development (Sec. VIII.C, p. 244).

Forum Group Action: Agreement as amended **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 8 Subject: Tending the Flame \$1,000 Scholarship

Text: See the proposal on this subject in the report of the Commission on Church Colleges and Universities of the Council on Higher Education Ministries (Sec. VIII.D.1, p. 245).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 9 Subject: Brevard College Trustees

Text: See the nominations of Brevard College trustees in the report of the Commission on Church Colleges and Universities of the Council on Higher Education Ministries (Sec. VIII.D.1, p. 250).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 10 Subject: Duke University Trustees

Text: See the nominations of Duke University trustees in the report of the Commission on Church Colleges and Universities of the Council on Higher Education Ministries (Sec. VIII.D.1, p. 250).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 11 Subject: High Point University Trustees

Text: See the nominations of High Point University trustees in the report of the Commission on Church Colleges and Universities of the Council on Higher Education Ministries (Sec. VIII.D.1, p. 250).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 12 Subject: Campus Ministry Boards

Text: See the nominations of campus ministry boards in the report of the North Carolina State Commission on Campus Ministry of the Council on Higher Education Ministries (Sec. VIII.D.2, pp. 250-251).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 13 Subject: Aldersgate Boards

Text: See Proposals 1-2 in the report of Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc. (Sec. VIII.E.1, p. 252).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 14 Subject: Arbor Acres Directors

Text: See the single proposal in the report of Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc. (Sec. VIII.E.2, p. 253).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 15 Subject: Children's Home Trustees and Officers

Text: See Proposals 1-2 in the report of The Children's Home, Inc. (Sec. VIII.E.3, p. 253).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 16 Subject: Givens Estates Directors

Text: See the single proposal in the report of Givens Estates United Methodist Retirement Community (Sec. VIII.E.4, pp. 254).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 17 Subject: UMAR Trustees

Text: See the single proposal in the report of UMAR, Inc. (Sec. VIII.E.5, p. 255).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 18 Subject: Re-examine the Funding Paradigm

Text: Whereas, The Western North Carolina Annual Conference in 2004 passed a new funding paradigm which lists all program ministries as "FairShare Asking" items, meaning that it is no longer mandatory for the local churches to fund the program ministries from which they benefit and under which conference youth ministries are now listed; and

Whereas, Youth ministry, as well as other program ministries, has had its apportioned budgets cut 55% because of the *poor response* from the local churches to this new funding paradigm; and

Whereas, Because of this severe financial cut, the Office of Ministries with Young People and other program-related ministries may no longer be able to provide some of the events (*i.e.*, SpiritUs, SUMMIT, Choose2 Share Christ, Kaleidoscope, adult youth worker training, etc.) that have been provided in the past and are severely limited in their ability to assist local churches in their present and future ministries; and

Whereas, We have found that a large number of the local churches did not have the new funding paradigm explained comprehensively so that they could understand its far-reaching effects to their ministries and missions nor recognize what "Conference Benevolences and Program Ministries" encompasses; and

Whereas, Conference youth events reach over 5,000 youth and adult youth workers each year; and

Whereas, The vision of the Western North Carolina Conference is to focus on ministry and mission rather than "maintenance," and the conference program ministries exist solely to support and enable the local churches to do more effective ministry and mission; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, in session June 9-12, 2005, at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, direct the conference Council on Finance and Administration to (a) re-examine the funding paradigm to look for ways of putting ministry and mission first and (b) present a new funding proposal to the 2006 annual conference session.

Resolved, That this process include at least two members of the program ministries staff and that a clear, understandable presentation be communicated to all the local churches.

Forum Group Action: Refer to Paradigm Impact Study Committee

Conference Action: Sustained forum group

PETITION 19 Subject: Pension Programs and Policies

Text: See Proposals 1-6 and two Addenda A in the report of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Sec. VIII.K, pp. 267-269).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 20 Subject: Conference Insurance Program

Text: See Proposals 1-12 in the report of the Health Benefits Committee of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Sec. VIII.K., pp. 275-276).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 21 Subject: The Annual Conference Meeting

Text: See Proposals 1-7 in the report of the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting (Sec. VIII.M, pp. 278-279).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 22 Subject: Equitable Compensation Policies and Guidelines**Text:** See the entire report of the Commission on Equitable Compensation (Sec. VIII.T, pp. 282-284).**Forum Group Action:** Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group**PETITION 23 Subject:** Insurance for Lay Employees**Forum Group Action:** Disagreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group**PETITION 24 Subject:** Rural Life Sunday**Text:** Whereas, Paragraph 266.3 of *The Book of Discipline* (2004) states that:

Rural Life Sunday shall be observed on a date to be determined by the annual conference. Rural Life Sunday shall call the Church to celebrate the rural heritage of The United Methodist Church, to recognize the ongoing crisis occurring in rural areas of the nation and the world today, and to affirm the interdependence of rural and urban communities. The observance of Rural Life Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries. Anyone who desires to recommend a Rural Life Sunday theme for a given year may do so one year before the observance for which the recommendation is made. Recommendations are to be made to the General Board of Global Ministries, and the voting members of the board shall determine the annual theme of this Sunday.

And

Whereas, The rural crisis had led many rural residents of our country to suffer the loss of self-esteem and their way of life due to the closure of farms, businesses, schools, and health-care facilities; and

Whereas, The state of North Carolina continues to suffer the loss of rural and open land; and

Whereas, The good citizens of North Carolina in rural and urban areas face growing environmental concerns about the quality of our land, water, and air due to what is commonly called "urban sprawl"; and

Whereas, Rural Life Sunday has traditionally promoted themes related to health and wholeness, conservation, and stewardship of our natural resources; and

Whereas, These themes are of increasing importance; and

Whereas, *The Book of Discipline* gives authority to the annual conference to set Rural Life Sunday on the date best for the annual conference; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church designate the sixth Sunday after Easter, or another Sunday where needed, as Rural Life Sunday in 2006; urge the clergy and laity of its member congregations to observe this day; and encourage its member congregations to utilize resources for this observance from such sources as the General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Rural Fellowship, the Rural Chaplains Association, and county Soil and Water Conservation offices located across the region.

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group**PETITION 25 Subject:** Parsonage Furniture**Text:** Whereas, The Western North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church currently mandates that parsonages, if provided by churches or charges, be mostly furnished; and

Whereas, Clergy are committed to following Jesus, who set the example of itinerant ministry and yet had two locations that he called "home," both Nazareth and the town of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, from which he called his 12 disciples (cf. Matthew 4, which tells us that, when Jesus left his childhood home of Nazareth, he "made his home in Capernaum by the Sea"); and

Whereas, "Home" is both a location and a sense of belonging; and

Whereas, Clergy families need to feel a sense of "home," a sense of belonging and stability, in houses that are not their own; and

Whereas, In order for clergy families to achieve a better sense of "belonging," it is important for them to have their own "belongings," a word that means not only the items to which we become personally attached, but also the sense of security and memory that they provide us; and

Whereas, If the parsonage is, in fact, intended as a "home" for the clergy family, it must be a place where the family can feel comfortable; and

Whereas, The quality and care of parsonage furnishings varies among churches, with some demonstrating such excessive attention as to make them decorator showplaces that are too formal to be usable, while others display such neglect and insensitivity as to make the parsonage unfit for healthy and dignified living; and

Whereas, The current policy of parsonage furnishings fosters an unhealthy dynamic of entitlement by clergy and paternalism by churches; and

Whereas, The intense interest and emotional investment often exhibited by churches in their parsonages conflict with the privacy that housing should afford for all persons; and

Whereas, The tastes and preferences of each clergy family are different and may be different from the tastes and preferences of parsonage committee members; and

Whereas, The makeup of each clergy family is different, especially with regard to the number of children and their ages and genders, so that the furniture needs of each family are different; and

Whereas, Churches and parsonage committees should not be expected to accommodate the unique needs and preferences of every clergy family; and

Whereas, Clergy families should be afforded the same dignity of providing for their own needs that is available to non-clergy families; and

Whereas, A clergy person who is called to itinerant ministry as a second career already owns a full household of furniture that meets the needs of his or her family; and

Whereas, Clergy families should be allowed to own the type and style of furniture they need or want, without having to coordinate with existing parsonage furniture or negotiate storage issues; and

Whereas, *The Parsonage Guidelines of the Western North Carolina Conference* merely “recommend,” rather than “require,” that parsonage furniture be stored at the expense of the church (Section II.C.1); and

Whereas, Negotiations pertaining to the storage of parsonage furniture (Section II.C.3) have the potential to begin a clergy-congregation relationship with misunderstanding, hostility, and even resentment, especially in the case of “memorials or other gifts to the parsonage” (Section II.A.9); and

Whereas, It is more practical and financially responsible to purchase furniture as needed throughout one’s adult life than to purchase an entire household of furniture upon leaving the itinerant system (retirement, extension-ministry appointment, etc.); and

Whereas, Not all churches own parsonages, and clergy families appointed to these churches must rent or purchase furniture, which places a financial burden on the families; and

Whereas, Serial use of upholstered furniture and bedding is unhygienic; and

Whereas, *The Parsonage Guidelines of the Western North Carolina Conference* make no requirement pertaining to the quality or cleanliness of the furniture besides, “GOOD MATTRESSES AND BOX SPRINGS” (Section II.A.5), and, “Discarded furniture should not be put in the parsonage” (Section II.A.8); and

Whereas, The covenants of maintenance and cleanliness (Section VI.A.2-3 and Section VI.B.2) are too often ignored; that is, churches fail to provide furniture that is in good condition, and clergy families fail to maintain the quality of existing parsonage furniture; and

Whereas, The Western North Carolina Annual Conference reimburses a portion of a pastor’s moving expenses and recommends that “Each church/charge receiving a new pastor [be] strongly urged to pay any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the new pastor as a result of the move” (*Guidelines for Pastoral Transitions*, Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, p. 37); and

Whereas, The financial burden placed on churches by their paying moving expenses not covered by the conference would be comparable to the cost of properly maintaining the cleanliness of existing parsonage furniture (i.e., steam-cleaning upholstery, purchasing new furniture to replace worn pieces, replacing or reconditioning mattresses and box springs, etc.); and

Whereas, Non-reimbursed moving expenses can be deducted from a pastor’s taxable income; now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

1. That, in the Western North Carolina Conference,

- a. Parsonages shall not contain furniture, except standard kitchen appliances.
- b. Parsonage carpets and walls shall be neutral colors and styles.
- c. Parsonage windows shall have only blinds or shades.

2. That the Western North Carolina Conference establish and enforce more specific standards for basic cleanliness, safety, practicality, and comfort of parsonages.

3. That, in order to determine what will become of existing parsonage furniture, information be sought from other annual conferences that have discontinued the practice of providing furniture in parsonages.

Forum Group Action: Refer to Cabinet **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 26 Subject: Mission Congregations as Conference Advance Specials

Text: Whereas, The Western North Carolina Conference desires to provide a wide base of support for congregations which are officially designated as mission congregations by the bishop and cabinet, with due consideration of the Council on Congregational Development, as provided in ¶260 of the *Discipline*; therefore, be it

Resolved, That all such congregations be designated by the annual conference as conference Advance specials.

Resolved, That each local church in the conference be encouraged to support a mission congregation through the conference Advance program.

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 27 Subject: Selective Disinvestment

Forum Group Action: Disagreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 28 Subject: Adequate Health Care in North Carolina

Text: Whereas, *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church* (2004, p 306 reads: “... as it is unconscionable that any human being should ever be denied access to adequate health care due to economic, racial, or class barriers ... and the Council of Bishops has endorsed the Universal Declaration for Human Rights which clearly claims health care as a right due to every world citizen”; and

Whereas, The 2000 General Conference stated, “We seek a national health-care plan that serves and is sensitive to the diversity of all people in the United States and its territories” (*The Book of Resolutions*, (2004), p. 309); and

Whereas, In a similar concern for human dignity, the Constitution of North Carolina guarantees the benefits of education to all its children; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church join with other proponents to sponsor an amendment to the North Carolina Constitution that would guarantee adequate health care to all residents, regardless of circumstances.

Resolved, That the conference secretary immediately e-mail the heads of both branches of the state legislature to notify them of this action.

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group with one amendment

PETITION 29 Subject: Cole Foundation Trustee

Text: See the single proposal in the report of the Trustees of the Eugene M. Cole Foundation (Sec. VIII.AA, p. 289).

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group

PETITION 30 Subject: Volunteers in Mission Awareness Day

Text: See the proposal on this subject in the report of the Commission on Outreach Ministries (Sec. VIII.B.2, p. 235)

Forum Group Action: Agreement **Conference Action:** Sustained forum group