

Daily Christian Advocate

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Cleveland, Ohio

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Vol. 4, No. 8

Delegates Confront Challenges: Handguns, Team Logo, Bioethics

Handguns and baseball outside the convention center, and church business inside kept General Conference delegates reaching for their electronic voting pads Tuesday.

By a vote of 724 to 205, the conference called for a total ban on "ownership by the general public of handguns, assault weapons, automatic weapon conversion kits, and weapons that cannot be detected by traditionally used metal-detection devices."

The assembly, which sets United Methodist policy, asked that the ban cover the United States and all other countries where the church has a presence. The statement was debated for about 30 minutes.

"Gun violence is killing America's children," the resolution asserted. "Gun violence in America's schools has emerged as a growing and disturbing trend."

An Illinois delegate said she had a gun but was going to get rid of it. A Florida delegate said his family owns handguns and "the American people have a right to protect their homes."

On baseball, delegates approved engaging the ownership of the Cleveland Indians baseball team in dialogue regarding the use of a caricature of a Native American known as "Chief Wahoo" as an identifying team logo. The caricature frequently is regarded as demeaning by Native Americans.

Citing the rapid development of research dealing with human cloning and the mixing of human stem cells with animals or human embryos, the General Conference asked the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) to form a bioethics task force to advise the church on ethical issues.

Earlier in the session Tuesday delegates rejected a bid to eliminate the GBCS.

In debate Tuesday, the General Conference turned down proposals attempting to broaden council representation so each jurisdiction would have at least one member. A limit of two consecutive eight-year terms was approved.

Three of the church's special programs were endorsed for reference to the General Council on Finance and Administration: Native American Forum, Shared Mission Focus on Young People, and Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century.

Two proposals relative to lifestyles of general agency staff were rejected as unnecessary. One would have required staff to be "persons who model themselves after Jesus Christ."

Turning to the environment, delegates said the church and its members should "place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world."

Delegates removed a clause prohibiting a Judicial Council member from serving if he or she turns 70 before the next General Conference. The assembly also elected a replacement for a Judicial Council member who was being replaced because of that clause.

Agenda for Wednesday May 10

8:00 a.m.	Choral Music
8:15 a.m.	Ecumenical Worship Service Dr. George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, preacher
*9:15 a.m.	Recognition of Ecumenical Visitors
9:30 a.m.	Committee on Calendar and Agenda Report
9:40 a.m.	Calendar Items
12:05 p.m.	Conference Announcements and Committee on Presiding Officers
12:15 p.m.	Lunch Recess
2:20 p.m.	Gathering Music
2:30 p.m.	Calendar Items
5:30 p.m.	Dinner Recess
7:20 p.m.	Gathering Music
7:30 p.m.	Report of the Committee on Agenda
7:30 p.m.	Calendar Items
10:25 p.m.	Announcements
10:30 p.m.	Adjournment
	<i>*Order of the Day</i>

Some delegates contended that because the legislation is not generally in effect until 2001, no conflict exists. Others questioned the situation, and a majority called for a Judicial Council ruling in the matter.

—Robert Lear

Delegates Approve Contentious Anti-Gun Resolution

After a quadrennium in which no resolution on guns was passed by General Conference, 77 percent of the delegates voted Tuesday to accept a resolution decrying hand guns, assault weapons, automatic weapons and automatic weapon conversion kits, and calling for their elimination.

Clear statements were given on both sides of the debate. “I am not an NRA member, and I am not a gun enthusiast; but I believe we have a right to protect our selves in our own homes,” said the Rev. Scott T. Kelso, West Ohio Conference. The Rev. Beverly L. Wilkes, Illinois Great Rivers Conference, added hand guns to the petition. “I own a hand gun,” she said, “but I am also willing to give that hand gun up because of the society I am currently present in. We are calling for America to disarm itself for the sake of our children and for the sake of too many others who died too soon because we’re trying to police ourselves.”

Following much debate, the Church and Society Legislative Committee added hand guns to the wording of the original resolution. When the amended resolution came to the full plenary Tuesday, it was additionally amended to include a call for

an end to guns, not just in the United States, but in all nations where The United Methodist Church has a presence. Although much of the resolution cites specific gun violence statistics in the United States, the plenary affirmed gun violence is not unique to this country.

A similar resolution proposed by the General Board of Church and Society in 1996 was not passed by General Conference but was printed erroneously in the *Book of Resolutions* on page 535, creating confusion about the official church stance on gun violence. The *Book of Resolutions* includes no valid resolutions addressing gun violence. A resolution on gun violence, passed by the 1972 General Conference, was renewed each quadrennium until 1996 when the new resolution was proposed but failed to be approved.

The resolution passed Tuesday calls for The United Methodist Church to:

- convene workshops on gun violence;
- seek assistance from other community-based groups on educational efforts;
- develop advocacy groups within local congregations to advocate for reduction in gun availability;
- support legislation to regulate the importation, manufacturing, sale and possession of guns;
- call upon media and the entertainment industries to refrain from promoting gun use to children; and
- call upon governments to provide significant assistance to victims of gun violence and their families.

—Gretchen Hakola and John Thornburg

Daily Christian Advocate

Cleveland Convention Center

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Corrections

In the report of the nominations committee, Vol. 4, No. 3, page 1748, under Central Conference: Rhodi Lucero should read Rody A. Lucedro, Research Center, University of Mindanao, Bolton Street, Davao City 8000, Philippines.

On page 1949 of the *DCA*, in the article “Marshals, Pages, Recorders” which stated that an offering will be taken to defray the expenses of volunteers. One offering will be taken and divided between the marshals and pages only.

Jubilee 2000 Calls for Debt Forgiveness

A record number of Central Conference delegates are attending the 2000 General Conference, and many representatives burdened by debt they cannot pay. To address the situation, several resolutions before the conference urge The United Methodist Church to continue to call for debt forgiveness of poor nations.

The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), two of the lead agencies on the Jubilee 2000 initiative, submitted resolutions assigned to those respective legislative committees.

Countries in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean owe more than \$2 trillion to rich nations and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The world's poorest countries are the most heavily indebted, owing approximately \$370 billion. For many countries, the burden of repaying the debt has prevented them from providing health care, education and food for the masses. This debt burden inhibits social and economic development. Throughout the world, a call for Jubilee resounds: a call for debt cancellation.

Many United Methodist churches, annual conferences and jurisdictional conferences are involved in Jubilee action. The call for debt forgiveness comes from the Old Testament biblical practice of erasing debt every 50 years to grant a fresh start to those who were heavily indebted.

Scriptures mandate periodically overcoming structural injustice and poverty and restoring right relationships by forgiv-

ing debt and reforming land holding. In the earliest traditions, the Sabbath and the Sabbath year limited consumption and exploitation of the land. People and animals were to rest every seventh day (Exodus 23:10-12). The Sabbath year called for release from debts and slavery, and during the Jubilee year—every 50th year—all family lands were to be restored (Leviticus 25). Fulfilling these commandments proclaims “the year of the Lord’s favor” (Isaiah 61:1-2).

The 1996 General Conference mandated a “Concern for Worker’s Task Force” appointed by GBGM and GBCS to make recommendations to the 2000 General Conference.

- Petition 30509 calls for economic justice for a new millennium.
- Petition 30513 authorizes The United Methodist Church to continue advocating for international debt relief. Every nation asked to forgive debts owed it by impoverished nations has approved the funds, except for the United States.
- Petition 31282 calls for President Clinton to pardon the debt of the 468 million people in Latin America where the number of poor people continues to grow. The petition also asks the Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin American and the Caribbean (CIEMAL) and Methodists Associated to Represent the Cause of Hispanic Americans (MARCHA) to continue that work, especially those affected by hurricanes George and Mitch.

—Gretchen Hakola

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Medical assistance is available in two places in the Cleveland center! Reginald Perkins, paramedic with the Cleveland Emergency Service for 25 years, is well-prepared to take care of emergency needs. E.M.S. is on line with Direct Medical Command, in addition to having direct medical service with the surrounding hospitals. Rest assured the first-aid room has the needed equipment and medical supplies to give the emergency care needed. If you feel the need of medical help, speak to one of the guards stationed around the outer lobby, and the paramedic on duty will be contacted.
- Video tapes of the General Board of Church and Society banquet are available at the Good News TV booth. Also, Thom White Wolf Fassett’s statement on Cuba is available at the GBCS booth in the exhibit hall.
- Immediately after the Wednesday morning session, Joaquin Garcia and Jimmy Carr invite delegates who are delegates and reserve delegates to meet for a photo at the south wall in front of the coffee bar.

Translation and Distribution of Materials for Delegates of the Central Conference

If You Ask Them, They Will Come

The call came Thursday afternoon. “Can you be in Cleveland by 8 p.m. to night? We need people to translate Swahili for some of our Congolese delegates.” The request came from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

“I thought they were kidding,” said the Rev. Josephat Rungu, New York Conference. He said he would try.

“I called my lay leader and the staff-relationship committee, and they said it was all right,” said Rungu. “My lay leader agreed to preach for me, and we moved Communion Sunday back a week.”

This done, he was on his way to Cleveland. Well, almost. There were further logistics to consider. How would he get from South Norwalk, Conn., to a New York area airport during rush hour for an early evening flight? In no way could he get to LaGuardia, John F. Kennedy or Newark airport to catch a plane that would have him in Cleveland at a respectable hour. Rungu called the GBGM. “We’ll see what our travel agent can do.” Before he knew it, he was on his way to the White Plains airport in Westchester County.

The aircraft that would bring him to Cleveland was small. “My heart was in my hand by the time we landed. We had to circle the airport about five minutes because of a heavy storm,” he explained. They touched down at 9:20 p.m.

After a Friday morning orientation, Rungu and other newly arrived translators were ready for the task. The quickly recruited translators were brought to Cleveland to resolve a problem that surfaced Wednesday when the Church and Society Committee stopped its work because too few translators were available for delegates from Africa.

“I had a co-translator: a student visiting here with the Africa University Choir,” Rungu said. Originally from Kenya, Rungu noted the Swahili spoken in east Africa is not identical to that spoken in Congo.

“The high point for me,” said Rungu, “was when one of the delegates we had translated for stood up and addressed the entire legislative session in Swahili, speaking in opposition to moving the GBGM from New York to another location.” The delegate said money could be put to better use in places such as Africa where they struggle to build simple church structures.

“I really feel if we had not been there to translate,” he added, “the delegate would not have understood the legislative and could not have addressed this issue so articulately.”

Rungu’s presence at General Conference came as a pleasant surprise. His fiancée, Lesley Y. Crosson, GBGM public relations director, is also working as a translator here.

—Kate SantaColoma

Cleveland District Funds Indian Center; Conference Approves ‘Chief Wahoo’ Petition

The American Indian Education Center of Cleveland has new life because of a grant from the Cleveland District of the East Ohio Conference. The five-year-old social service agency is now housed in Broadway United Methodist Church in southeast Cleveland.

Urban Indians, or the “real Cleveland Indians,” as center director Robert Roche calls them, are an under-served, neglected and forgotten population, according to Sherrie Noble, the center’s program director. “They are the most marginalized, most invisible population group in Cleveland,” she said.

A sizable grant to the center for a substance-abuse treatment program came, in large measure, because the center is now housed in a United Methodist church. “Having the backing of The United Methodist Church makes a substantial difference,” said Noble.

The presence of Chief Wahoo, the mascot of the Cleveland Indians baseball team, creates real heartache for Cleveland area Native American families, said Noble. City of Cleveland schools have a “Cleveland Indians Day” on which all students wear team apparel and paint their faces. Because the painting of one’s face is a sacred rite in Native American culture, this confuses the children.

During yesterday’s plenary session, the conference approved a petition from United Methodism’s Native American International Caucus. The petition called for appropriate church agencies to work with Native American church groups “to engage the Cleveland community and the ownership of the Cleveland Indian Professional Baseball Team in a dialogue of understanding and sensitivity with demeaning ethnic caricatures and mascots.”

—John Thornburg

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

This room provides a respite for some very special people at General Conference. These people can not vote. They do not make speeches on the floor of General Conference, but they have the ear of the bishop when ever they need it. They have a unique, nurturing ministry that has far-reaching impact; yet, they seldom are acknowledged. Not all of them are here in Cleveland, but they all share a common bond and love for the church that is an inspiring witness.

This area is one of the most caring, loving places in the convention center.

See photo on page 2124 for the location.

United Methodist Participates in Ecumenical Witness Celebrating 20th Century Witnesses to the Faith

Editor's note: During the May 5 General Conference plenary, delegates extended greetings to Pope John Paul II and recognized "the profound statements of sorrow and regret that you have made in this Year of Jubilee regarding certain past practices of the Roman Catholic Church, . . .

"We accept your apology for the use of force in the search for truth practiced against our Protestant forebears in the Christian faith. In the instances of misunderstandings, in sensitivities and harm brought about by The United Methodist Church and its predecessors in the faith to the Roman Catholic Church . . . , we in turn ask for forgiveness for our deeds of commission and omission.

"We rejoice in the growth of mutual understanding . . . that has developed in the past decades. . . . We look forward to increased understanding that is brought about by prayer, dialogue and reflection."

Two days later the Rev. Joseph R. Hale, general secretary of the World Methodist Council, participated in an ecumenical commemoration in Rome celebrating witnesses to the faith in the 20th century. Here is his account of the experience.

This major event on the calendar of the Roman Catholic Jubilee Year 2000 was remarkable because Pope John Paul II invited leaders from most major churches and Christian communities to participate in the service. He expressed his conviction that "the witness to Christ borne even to the shedding of blood has become a common inheritance of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants" (from Papal letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*).

The 18 church representatives were first taken inside the Colosseum where, in the early centuries of Christianity, many witnessed to their faith with their lives. Here the Pope spoke with each ecumenical guest.

The commemoration was dramatic, set against the massive Colosseum wall beside which a huge platform was erected. As the stories of martyrs from every continent were told, and their words voiced, lamps were lighted at the foot of a cross, and incense was cast in arazier flame as a symbol of the prayer of the just. An estimated 20,000 persons attended, many sitting on the grassy hills rising around the ancient Roman Forum, the Arch of Constantine, and the Colosseum. Rain began to fall toward the close of the more than two-hour ceremony, but I saw no one leave.

I was invited to read the words of a Baptist medical missionary from Canada who died in Nigeria. He worked tirelessly to contain a meningitis epidemic in a leprosarium. He died at age 23, himself a victim. Reading his words, I thought of Methodist witnesses from Korea, Eastern Europe and Africa on a list we sent to the Vatican in anticipation of this service. Especially I thought of Burleigh Law, a Methodist layman shot by a rebel soldier in the attempt to rescue five missionary families in the

Belgian Congo in August 1964. His wife, Virginia Law Shell, served on the General Board of Discipleship staff and now lives in North Carolina.

I decided it was important to be in Rome because of the spirit I have experienced over 22 years in the life and work of Pope John Paul II. This was evident in what he said Sunday night at the Colosseum: "The presence of representatives of other churches and ecclesial communities gives to day's celebration particular significance and eloquence. . . . It shows that the example of the heroic witnesses to the faith is truly precious for all Christians. . . . It is a heritage [that] speaks more powerfully than all the causes of division. The ecumenism of the martyrs and the witnesses to the faith is the most convincing of all. To the Christians of the 21st century, it shows the path to unity."

—Joseph R. Hale

General Conference Jeopardy Game #2

In the game "Jeopardy," a contestant receives the answer and then is given a few seconds to come up with the question to which the answer is directed. Take a moment and take the challenge of "Jeopardy Game 2."

1. Fear of flying
2. Neck injury
3. Carolyn Marshall
4. Who cares?
5. Sauna
6. Comfortable shoes
7. The final petition
8. Outstretched hands
9. No-Doze
10. Free for all

Questions can be found on Page 2124.

—Brad Motta

Bowen, Wilson, Marshall

Keep General Conference Wheels in Motion

Between their two weeks of activity and no time, they labor for four years, of ten alone. Their vision and planning are vital to the success of General Conference. You've seen and heard them on stage. "They" are business manager Gary Bowen, music director Cynthia Wilson and secretary Carolyn Marshall.



—Photo by John Goodwin

Business Manager Gary Bowen

"I got this job the day after the last General Conference ended," said Gary Bowen, "and I'm not an expert in convention planning. I'm a CPA, and I've been with the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) for 26 years, so I know quite a bit about budget control. I've worked with an excellent local committee with hundreds of volunteers. We're United Methodists, and we take care of our own."

Perhaps Bowen is being a bit modest. He and his staff have made travel arrangements, dealt with housing needs, planned the use of physical facilities, handled support work, ordered office supplies, arranged for printing, and worked out thousands of details about hundreds of matters.

Midway through the conference session, Bowen is still smiling. Part of it is because of the quality and quantity of his help. Cleveland staff include:

- six workers in the business manager's office;
- 12 Commission on General Conference members;
- 60 translators with five support staff;
- technical staff to work on stage and backstage;
- GCFA members;
- General Conference secretary's staff; and
- treasurer's office staff.

This cadre of helpers strives to solve problems so delegates and visitors are free to work and worship.

Most hard-to-solve problems happen half a world away. "We heard from five Nigerian delegates two weeks ago. They had gone to Lagos to apply for their visas. They are still in Lagos, waiting, and can't leave because then they won't be there when the visas become available. We hope they will be able to be here for part of the second week," Bowen said.

An increasingly global General Conference membership complicates Bowen's logistics. "The General Board of Global Ministries has been very helpful in arranging for international delegates," he said. "Their staff has worked tirelessly to see that delegates from outside the United States are well accommodated and supplied with the services they need."

Of course, CPA Bowen looks at the bottom line. "We may spend as much as \$5.3 million on this General Conference," he said. "The budget was \$4.87 million, and the rest will come from reserves. But if we've made it possible for General Conference delegates to be well cared for and effective in what they need to do, we've done what we intended."

That hope is Gary Bowen's true bottom line.

Music Director Cynthia Wilson

She stands in a spotlight, singing amazingly high notes or directing a choir of hundreds of singers.

It didn't just happen.

Music director Cynthia Wilson, pastor of music, worship and communion at Ben Hill United Methodist Church, Atlanta, has been planning the music program for this General Conference since early 1998.

Music co-director for the 1996 General Conference, her goal was "to present a picture of the global church with images of our unity in Christ, as the conference theme shows."

After her first appeal for audition tapes from groups that wished to sing or play as a part of worship, she received 125 tapes, 100 from groups in Ohio — all White. Some of those choirs are appearing, but they are joined by other musicians recruited from a multitude of cultures around the world.

"Every one in The United Methodist Church will see someone in the music program with whom they can identify," Wilson said. "[Musicians] come from every continent except Australia. We have always celebrated the music of many cultures, but they often appeared in isolation. I'm trying to show our oneness in Christ by showing how our music goes together in ways we don't often expect."

Secretary Carolyn Marshall

Bishops come and bishops go from the presiding officer's chair. It seems, however, the person in the secretary's chair does n't change.

That statement describes General Conference secretary Carolyn Marshall's situation. She is, after all, the only person elected by the General Conference.

"I'm the only officer of the entire church," she said, "which is quite a vote of confidence. It's an inconvenience only if the denomination is sued. In that case, I'm the only person who can testify."

That seldom occurs. In stead, her tasks are more mundane. "The low time is the middle 18 months [between sessions]," she said. "In the 1993-96 quadrennium, I had a lot of letters from students asking about the church's stance on particular issues. Eventually I kept copies of pages from *The Book of Discipline* and *The Book of Resolutions* on hand to mail to them."

With a full-time job as executive director of the Lucille Raines Residence in Indianapolis, a halfway house for women released from prison or substance-abuse programs, Marshall devotes evenings and weekends to General Conference work. As General Conference approached, she moved her wakeup time to 3:30 a.m. to finish preparations.

On stage, Marshall is a calming presence who keeps track of referrals, makes announcements, and handles a host of details. "I get lots of scrappy, little notes," she said. "I tell people, 'Put it in writing,' and then I remember."

"While people think this is a powerful position, [I'm] really a keeper of rules," she said. "I don't make the rules. I enforce and interpret the rules because I believe the Holy Spirit moves through structure."

A recent note thanking her for faithful service as General Conference secretary called her "an icon of The United Methodist Church." "Not me," said Carolyn Marshall. "I'm no statue." Nevertheless, with her election to another term as General Conference secretary, she will remain in that chair on stage, while the bishops come and go.

— Tom Slack

All in the Family

Spouses Jacqueline "Jackie" and the Rev. Terry Euper, Detroit Conference delegates, are no strangers to General Conference. Jackie, Christian education project director in the Flint District, was elected to the 1992 and 1996 General Conferences. The Eupers' son, Steve, was also a delegate in 1992, and Terry, now senior pastor in Lapeer, Mich., was the first clergy alternate that year.

Korean-American Task Force Makes Recommendations, Sets Goals

With a focused presentation to General Conference delegates, the Korean-American Task Force proposed a new, challenging initiative to advance United Methodist ministries among Korean-Americans.

Findings of a survey of 429 pastors and 290 laypersons reflect that while the church has demonstrated growth in membership and attendance, United Methodism is challenged by the need to recruit and train leadership. The greatest need is to be in ministry to the “next generation” of Korean-American youth.

The task force recommended the following:

- challenge and develop new leadership especially in the areas of bilingualism and more female clergy leadership;
- nurture and develop congregations for mission and outreach; and
- foster a “next-generation” ministry to help close the language and cultural gap in youth ministry.

Six action goals were identified:

- develop lay and clergy leadership programs;
- recruit and train women for clergy leadership;
- develop 20 new congregations;
- strengthen 30 new mission congregations;
- recruit 40 “next-generation” clergy; and
- develop culturally relevant resources.

The task force recommended development of a United Methodist Council on Korean-American Ministries to work directly with the College of Bishops. The council would:

- strive to enable a more viable witness to pass on to the next generation;
- affirm ministry of belonging, rootedness, and strength for Korean-American United Methodists; and
- work at being an inclusive community of faith.

—Francisco Estrada

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

The lounge for bish ops' spouses is a ha ven for bish ops' hus bands and wives to be with each other. They keep an eye on their spouses through the live video feed in the lounge area. Dur ing ple nary they care fully fol low the pro ceed ings with the *DCA* in one hand and a pen cil in the other. They watch care fully as their spouses lead the church into the 21st cen tury. An at mos phere of warm th and car ing fills the room. When the photog rapher told ev ery one to "smile," a voice in the back said "say con currence." May God bless these faith ful ser vants and the many min is tries they rep re sent.

—Dewayne and Ginnie Lowther photo



Language Issues Continue to Confront Delegates

Diversity is cel e brated in The United Meth od ist Church. But sometimes with that diversity comes the barrier of lan guage.

From Span ish to Swa hili, tens of lan guages and di a lects are spo ken by del e gates from the Amer i cas, Af rica, Eu rope and Asia. Since all Gen eral Con fer ence busi ness is done in Eng lish, non-Eng lish-speak ing del e gates need as sis tance in un der stand ing the is sues they are ad dress ing.

That task falls to the trans la tors hired for Gen eral Con fer ence. Al though the trans la tors work hard, a lim ited num ber of them are avail able. This be came ev i dent when Af ri can del e gates assigned to the Church and Society Legisla tive Com mit tee lacked enough translators. Although the delegates wanted to serve on different committees, only one translator was avail able. The com mit tee voted to aban don its leg is la tive agenda un til the full General Conference could address the issue. Ad di tional trans la tors were found, but the sit u a tion raised con cerns about United Methodism's commitment to be a truly global church.

In an other com mit tee meet ing, an Af ri can del e gate tear fully said, "If you don't want us here, please let us know, and we will go home."

Nkonde Mukungwe, a lay del e gate from the North-West Katanga Conference, said most delegates from his conference don't speak English. Their primary language is Swahili, al though they all speak French. Mukungwe, who speaks fluent Eng lish, said the other Af ri cans find it frus trat ing when printed ma te ri als are not in a lan guage they un der stand.

All edi tions of the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* were printed in Eng lish.

To ad dress the prob lem, the Gen eral Con fer ence will con sider print ing the *DCA* in other lan guages and hav ing more trans la tors avail able: an ad just ment that would re quire up to \$1 mil lion more to hold Gen eral Con fer ence in 2004.

—Davie Burgdorf

General Conference Jeopardy Game #2

1. What would make some one from the west coast make the mo tion to ex tend Gen eral Con fer ence an other week?
2. What happens when you attach all of the General Conference but tons to your name tag?
3. Whose voice is a clue that you will soon be free for lunch or din ner, or bed?
4. Where in the con ven tion cen ter is Brad Motta?
5. Where do you go when you leave the con ven tion cen ter for lunch?
6. What does it look like ev ery one else is wear ing?
7. What do you pray for in your daily de vo tion?
8. What do you see when they hand out the cookies at break time?
9. What prod uct cou pon should be in cluded in the *DCA*?
10. What should the cost be for bot tled wa ter?

—Brad Motta

National Plan for Hispanic Ministry Enriches, Extends Outreach

Is there room for Hispanics in The United Methodist Church?

Yes, affirmed the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry (NPHM) of fice. With 61 annual conferences formally involved in Hispanic ministries since 1993, efforts have resulted in:

- 64 new chartered churches in 30 conferences;
- 32 Hispanic ministries in eight conferences;
- 263 church school extension programs in 30 conferences;
- 63 revitalized congregations in 25 conferences;
- 245 non-Hispanic local churches with Hispanic ministries;
- 538 faith communities in 46 conferences that continue to gather for worship and study of Scripture.

Leading these many ministries are 796 trained lay missionaries and 100 mentor-partnerships in 46 conferences.

The National Plan for Hispanic Ministry was an initiative of the 1992 General Conference to reach out to the growing Hispanic population in the United States. It is an effort of the church's goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ. The program has enabled the church to discover Hispanics are not limited to Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. Hispanics live across the United States.

The Rev. José L. Palos, coordinator, National Plan for Hispanic Ministry, General Board of Global Ministries, affirms the plan's intent: to organize faith communities who gather together to praise God, to study and reflect on Scripture, and to share in their struggles and miracles of life.

The goals of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry are:

- to continue to develop faith communities and outreach ministries with people of all ages;
- to continue transforming and mobilizing local congregations for ministries in their communities, both for Hispanic and non-Hispanic congregations;
- to continue equipping clergy and lay leadership for ongoing ministry; and
- to continue to nurture and administer human and material resources.

The plan challenges The United Methodist Church to work with Hispanics in a ministry of *acompañamiento* – walking with and being present for and with Hispanics to encourage and affirm solidarity in all issues that affect the Hispanic community. The challenge is “to walk the road of servant ministry together – *unidos*,” as Nebraska Area Bishop Joel L. Martinez challenged and the plenary session affirmed in song Monday night.

—Francisco Estrada



Christian Believers Meet Author

Wini Grizzle (left), director of Cokesbury seminars, and several visitors talk with Dr. Ellsworth Kalas (second from right) who wrote the “Christian Believer” study manual. Kalas visited with delegates and others who have participated in the study released last year. The “Christian Believer” booth is located at the rear of the Cokesbury display. If you have questions about the study, call 1 (800) 672-1789.

—Dewayne and Ginnie Lowther photo

United Methodist Delegates Welcome Ecumenical Guests

The Most Rev. and Most Hon or able George L. Carey,
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rev. Floyd Alexander,
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Allan C. Bjornberg,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rev. Robert W. Bohl,
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Rev. Tom Dipko,
Consultation on Church Union

The Rev. Robert W. Edgar,
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Dr. William M. Greathouse,
Church of the Nazarene

Bishop Thomas Hoyt,
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

The Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky,
Orthodox Church in America

The Rev. Jeffrey Mansell,
Wesleyan Church

His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Ainou,
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Midge Roof,
The Episcopal Church, U.S.A.

Bishop William S. Skylstad,
National Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Rev. Judson A. Souers,
International Council of Community of Churches

Dr. Jean Stromberg,
World Council of Churches

The Rev. John H. Thomas,
United Church of Christ

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Stefanie Davis
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Antoinette Eldemire
Acolyte

Chad Stephens
Crucifer

SPECIAL GUESTS

Mrs. George Carey
Church of England

The Rev. Kathryn Banister
Guest, Council of Bishops

Dr. Janice Love
Guest, Council of Bishops

Canon Richard Marsh
Church of England

Prayer Concerns

- Family and friends of Dorothy Earl, former General Conference lay delegate from Wyoming Conference, who died May 8. Earl also served as a director of the General Board of Global Ministries.
- Daryle Greene, a beloved brother of many in Missouri and a former General Conference lay delegate, battling cancer. If you wish to send him greetings, contact Carol Smith, Section D—Row 4—Seat 1.
- United Methodist Communications treasurer Sherri Thiel, whose mother died May 8. The funeral is May 10 in Dickson, Tenn. Sherri's address is P.O. Box 43, Charlotte, TN 37036.

Beginning today
it will take 10 signatures to lift items
from the consent calendar.

Also, beginning today,
General Conference may act upon petitions
the same day they are printed in the *DCA*.

Petitions Voided

The following petitions have been voided:

31786

30928

30320

A Response to Jim Gentile

The May 8, 2000, *DCA* (Vol. 4, No. 7, Page 2023) carried an excerpt from Jim Gentile's article in the Transforming Congregations' newsletter. He asked the question, "Help me understand! Why would people remain connected to a group who doesn't affirm them or approve of their behavior?"

Members and friends of the Northern Illinois Conference delegation chose to write a response to Gentile's question.

Dear Jim:

Thank you for your invitation to help you understand why we — and many others who believe in full inclusivity of all persons regardless of sexual orientation — choose to stay in The United Methodist Church. Granted, it seems the church does want to reject us and wants to deny our full humanity. But it is not because we want to be "voluntary victims," or because we are "emotionally immature" or "lacking self respect" or "ego strength." It is clear you don't understand.

You see, Jim, The United Methodist Church is our spiritual home, too. Here is where our faith grows. This is the church of our baptism. We belong because, like any human family, we just belong. We don't need to explain or justify our existence or our presence to you or anybody. We belong because we are your sons and daughters, your moms and dads, your nieces and nephews. Like us or not, we are your family.

There's a saying that "you can pick your nose, and choose your friends, but you're stuck with your family." Sorry, Jim. You're stuck with us.

And I'll grant you this, too, Jim. It probably would be easier to be part of the UCC or the MCC where we can live our faith in safety. But they aren't family. They just aren't "home" to us.

It may seem strange to you that we love The United Methodist Church so much that we put up with its inhospitality. Our staying is probably a sign of the foolishness of God and the folly of the cross.

No, you don't understand, Jim, because we choose to love our church home despite what it does to us. Some might even see this as a sign of spiritual strength, endurance, forbearance and faithfulness.

Jim, we're not looking to leave the home and family we love, even as some do and say the most hurtful things to us. But that's what love does, Jim. Love never gives up. Love never ends. Love never turns away. Love never fails.

If you want a church that is literalist in its interpretation of Scripture and rigidly doctrinal and legalistic about people's lives, Jim, the Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptists and others open wide their doors to your narrow views and limited love and measured grace.

We and The United Methodist Church would be less without you, though. God's grace is available here for you, too. We aren't giving up on you, Jim. If you give up on us, we'll understand and for give you.

You see, in our family, there will always be room for you at the table.

Submitted respectfully by members and friends of the Northern Illinois Conference delegation

Tim Jones-Yelvington

Lonnie Chafin

Harriet McCabe

Luis Reyes

Todd Singley

Ana Kelsey-Powell

Jack Ryder

Doris Rudy

Shirley Dare

Francine Taylor-Thirus

Erika Lemke Hundrieser

Deborah Fisher

Emery Percell

Philip Blackwell

Reports of Legislative Committees

Church and Society—(5/9/00 4:45 p.m.) All business completed.)

The committee recommended concurrence:

- Amending the 1988 Resolutions supporting self-determination and non-intervention;
- Opposing products made with sweat shop labor;
- Regarding GBCS and Women's Division alert constituencies re: crisis in reproductive and end-of-life health care;
- Amending 1996 "Human Rights" resolution to support the work of Amnesty International;
- Calling on GBOD to develop material for local churches to study and discuss evolution and creation;
- Declaring opposition to the prison industrial complex and privatization of jails.

The committee recommended non concurrence:

- Calling for ministry to local prisoners the use of restorative justice methods;
- Opposing profit-making prisons;
- Asking state legislatures to review requirements for political party president/vice president candidates to appear on ballot;
- Demanding that industry continue reducing dioxide emissions;
- Opposing abuse of animals and supporting laws and practices that teach awareness of all God's creation;
- Ensuring faithful care for the dying;
- Asking Congress to require placing tobacco products behind counters or out of reach of youth since it is redundant with existing resolutions;
- Readopting resolution calling for an end to prejudice against Muslims and Arabs in the U.S. since another resolution updates the same;
- Calling for an end to U.S. sanctions against Iraq which was already passed on by the full body;
- Reaffirming the call for ending economic sanctions in Iraq (redundant);
- Understanding living and dying;
- Asking the UMC to endorse the American Health Security Act of 1995.

The committee recommended referral to the General Board of Church and Society:

- Opposing privatization of Social Security;

- Calling for jurisdictional consultations to rehumanize and relocalize our food systems.

—Gretchen Hakola and Paul Widicus

Faith and Order—(5/9/00 4:45 p.m.)

The committee recommended concurrence:

- Adding to Para. 65: "We also encourage all individuals to be sensitive to others in language use by using appropriate language when referring to all people. Language of a derogatory nature (with regard to race, nationality, ethnic background, gender, sexuality, and physical differences) does not reflect value for one another and contradicts the gospel of Jesus Christ";
- Adding to paragraph 66: "We deplore acts of hate against anyone...";
- Resolving that the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) sponsor a series of dialogues on homosexuality and church unity. (The resolution comes from Donald Messer, The Iliff School of Theology, and William Abraham, Perkins School of Theology);
- Calling for an end to late-term abortion (also known as "partial birth abortion") except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in cases of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. A minority report will be filed.

The committee recommended concurrence with amendments:

- Amending "Call for a Rebirth of Compassion" (1996 Book of Resolutions) by calling for hospitality and compassion for all, including homosexual persons.

The committee recommended non concurrence:

- Dealing with abortion, having adopted a "partial birth" abortion amendment to current language on abortion;
- Forbidding ceremonies that marry a divorced person while ex-spouse is living and remarriage while ex-spouse is living;
- Adding to 65D that divorce and remarriage are incompatible with teachings of Jesus.

—Ann Whitling and Erik Alsgaard

Global Ministries—(5/9/00 3 p.m.)

- The committee retained as amended a petition opposing the building of radar in Juan Diaz on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

—Linda Bloom and Cheryl Hahs Edwards

Higher Education and Ministry—(5/9/00 5 p.m.)

The committee recommended concurrence:

- Including in Offices of Bishop and District Superintendent ministers of Service;
- Revising procedures dealing with complaints against bishops;
- Adding to the specific responsibilities of district superintendents;
- Encouraging longer pastoral appointments;
- Affirming the commitment to rural chaplaincy;
- Supporting the creation of a task force on immigration/naturalization issues related to clergy appointments (referred to GCFA);
- Making available to clergy families spousal rights during a marital separation/divorce;
- Reporting by administrative review committee prior to any action by the annual conference;
- Revising the representation on the jurisdictional committee on ordained ministry;
- Clarifying goals for seeking subsidy grants of equitable compensation;
- Referring to General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) Petition 31478 regarding appointment of local pastors as chaplains to institutions;
- Clarifying membership and duties of conference Boards of Ordained Ministry;
- Changing the deadline for meeting transitional provisions (Para. 365) from December 31, 2000;
- Approving qualifications for election and consecration to probationary membership and commissioning;
- Amending Petition 31105 concerning representation on the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry;

- Affirming mandatory retirement age of 70 for ordained clergy; however, in lieu of retirement the Bishop may appoint elders for one year at a time—including in the same appointment—for missional purposes. Minority Report to be submitted.

The committee recommended non concurrence:

- Clarifying responsibilities of local congregation and grounds for paying pastor's salary and for seeking subsidy grants of equitable compensation;
- Celebrating holy covenants between persons of the same gender by United Methodist or dained clergy;
- Electing Central Conference members to GBHEM by Committee on Central Conference Affairs rather than by the Council of Bishops.

—Duane Ewers and Terri Hiers

**Independent Commissions—(5/9/00 2:30 p.m.)
All business completed.)**

The committee recommended concurrence:

- Continuing ecumenical dialogues on native spirituality;
- Removing the General Commission on United Methodist Men from the jurisdictional pool process.

The committee recommended concurrence with amendments:

- Increasing the maximum membership of all general agencies to 667 to allow an increase in membership on the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

The committee recommended non concurrence:

- Supporting the General Commission on United Methodist Men's support of the Supreme Court appeal of the Boy Scouts of America to exclude homosexuals from leadership. Nonconcurrency came on the advice of Gilbert Hanke, Texas, incoming national UMM president, who explained the commission's brief did not address homosexuality but the right of the organization to name its own leadership.

—Andy Ellis and Kathy Kruger Noble



*General Conference plenary business is translated into sign language for deaf attendees
.UMNS Photo by John Goodwin*