

PRESS BOOK

2000 United Methodist General Conference



May 2-12, 2000
Cleveland Convention Center
Cleveland, Ohio

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ATTENTION:

The newsroom telephone number, beginning May 2, is (216) 348-2601. Before and after the General Conference, call United Methodist News Service at (615) 742-5470.

All stories and daily summaries for the duration of the 10-day meeting will be on the Internet and can be received automatically by e-mail. Visit <http://umns.umc.org/gc2000news> for additional information.

AGENDA AND PROGRAM

The most frequently asked question of the newsroom staff is, “When will the delegates be voting on _____?” Except for a few predetermined orders of the day, the answer is, “We don’t know!” We understand how frustrating that is for you --- and for us --- but we do not know what will be discussed until the agenda committee makes that determination late each night. Even then, if the delegates get wound up on a particular topic, the proposed agenda can be (and often is) changed. Our best advice is for you to check the proposed daily agenda that will be posted in the newsroom each morning (or consult the Daily Christian Advocate each morning). It is important to remember that, with few exceptions, legislative committees meet the first week and all delegates meet as a whole the second week. Decisions reached by legislative committees on a petition or group of petitions are not final. They can be, and often are, changed when the delegates meet as a whole. Decisions are not final until the entire group acts.

Monday, May 1

7:00 p.m. Reception for bishops and spouses (Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum)

Tuesday, May 2

1:30 p.m. Opening worship and Holy Communion
Preacher — Bishop Robert C. Morgan, President of the Council of Bishops

2:45 p.m. Organization of the conference

4:30 p.m. Organization of legislative committees

8:15 p.m. Episcopal Address, Bishop Emerito P. Nacpil, Manila Area

Wednesday, May 3

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship service
Preacher — Bishop Arthur F. Kulah, Liberia Area

9:00 a.m. Business or committee meetings
Laity Address
Connectional Process Team Report

12:30 p.m. Lunch recess

2:30 p.m. Business or committee meetings

5:00 p.m. Dinner recess

7:30 p.m. Evening programs, business, committee meetings

Thursday, May 4

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship
Preacher ---Bishop George W. Bashore, Pittsburgh Area

9:00 a.m. United Brethren in Christ & Evangelical Association 200th Anniversary Celebration

9:15 a.m. Millard Fuller, Habitat for Humanity
Business or committee meetings

7:30 p.m. Connectional Process Team time for discernment

8:30 p.m. Act of Repentance for Reconciliation

Friday, May 5

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship
Preacher --- Bishop Janice R. Huie, Arkansas Area

9:00 a.m. Africa University Report
Conference business

5:30 p.m. Higher Education Night (Convention Center Hall D)

Saturday, May 6

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship

Preacher --- Bishop Charles Jordan, Iowa Area

9:00 a.m. Business or committee meetings

Sunday, May 7

Free Day

7:00 p.m. Ohio Area Program

Monday, May 8

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship

Preacher -- Bishop Daniel Arichea, Baguio Area, the Philippines

9:00 a.m. Communities of Shalom Report

Business

7:30 p.m. National Plan for Hispanic Ministries Report

Tuesday, May 9

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship

Preacher -- Bishop Richard C. Looney, South Georgia Area

9:00 a.m. Business

Wednesday, May 10

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Ecumenical Worship Service

Preacher -- The Rev. George Carey,
Archbishop of Canterbury

Recognition of ecumenical representatives

9:00 a.m. Business

Thursday, May 11

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship

Preacher – Bishop Joel N. Martinez, Nebraska Area

9:00 a.m. Business

Friday, May 12

8:00 a.m. Choral music

8:15 a.m. Worship

Preacher – Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Denver Area

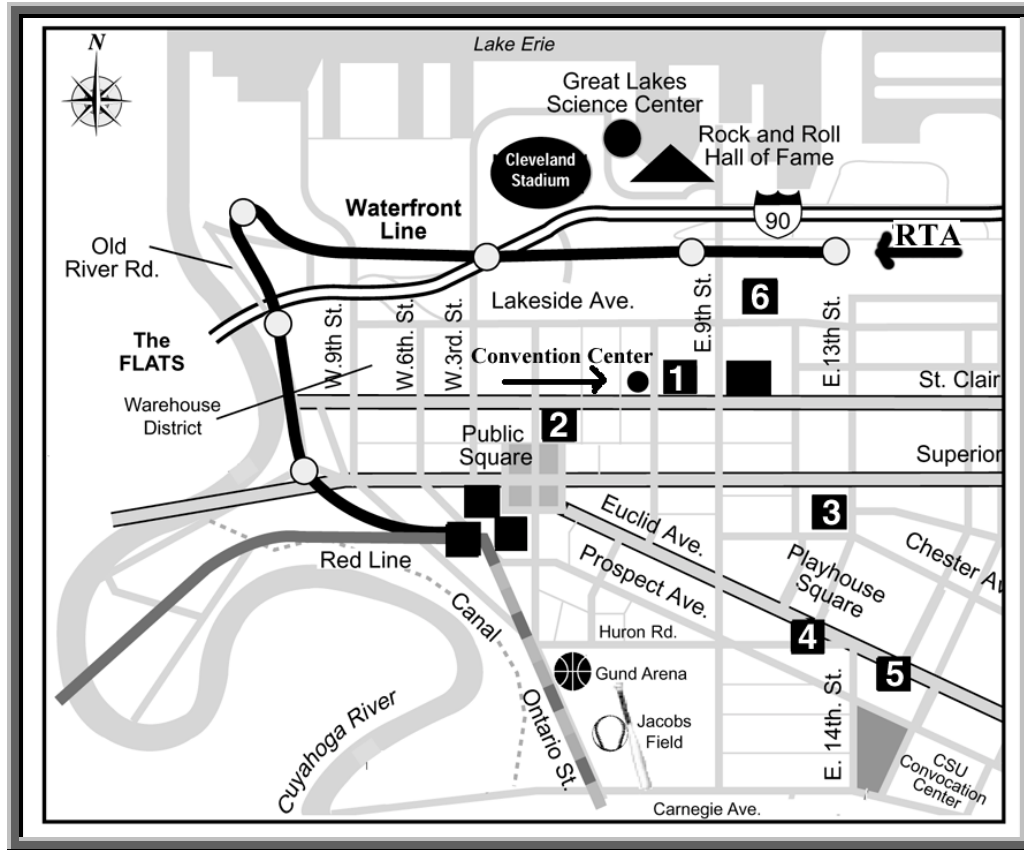
9:00 a.m. Business

10:00 p.m. Closing service

Preacher – Bishop William B. Oden, Dallas Area

Adjournment

DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND



1. Sheraton Cleveland City Center
2. Marriott Hotel Key Center
3. Hampton Inn-Downtown Central
4. Wyndham
5. Embassy Suites
6. Holiday Inn Lakeside

→● Cleveland Convention Center
← RTA Trainline

NEWS SERVICES

General Director of Communication Services	Wil Bane
News Director	Tom McAnally
Registrar/Receptionist	Administrative Assistant
News Editor	Tim Tanton
News Writers	Linda Bloom, Garlinda Burton, Linda Green, Joretta Purdue, Bob Lear, Barbara Nissen
Internet Liaison	Charlene Ridenour
Radio News Services	Bill Wolfe, Director
Video Services	Steve Downey, Director
Spanish-language News Services	Julio Gomez
Korean-language News Services	Jungrea Chung
Native American News Services	Ray Buckley
Photographic Services	Mike DuBose, Director Paul Jeffrey Sheri Alford Jackie Vaughan
Media Placement	Shirley Struchen
Production Services	Pat Dwyer Lisa Ferguson Tanya Maddox
<hr/>	
Internet Services	Susan Peek, Director Danny Mai, Webmaster
Computer Services	Chris Smith Eric West
InfoServ	Mary Lynn Holly

ABOUT THE NEWSROOM

OPERATING HOURS

The newsroom is located in Exhibit Hall C. Weekday hours will be 8 a.m. until 11 p.m. Weekend hours will be posted.

SMOKING

No smoking in the newsroom.

PRESS REGISTRATION AND BADGES

Individuals registering must be legitimate news reporters and must be prepared to give evidence that they will be filing stories to legitimate news publications and outlets. Free-lance writers for secular newspapers must have a letter from the editor indicating that he/she is a legitimate reporter for the newspaper.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m., Tuesday, May 2, in the newsroom and continue throughout the conference. Each person registered will receive a badge, which must be worn at all times in order to enter the newsroom, press seating and legislative committees. With few exceptions, **only one representative per news outlet will be accredited.**

SEATING FOR ACCREDITED NEWS REPRESENTATIVES DURING SESSIONS

Seating with tables is available in the balcony, stage right. We recognize that this is not ideal, but the age and design of this auditorium and the number of delegates make the situation difficult. Photographers may get access to the main floor with passes provided by the photo desk in the newsroom.

NEWS AND ASSIGNMENT DESK

This desk is the hub for the entire newsroom. It will be staffed at all times with people who can assist you with background information and other needs. Staff members can suggest people you may wish to interview or help you find spokespersons related to issues you are covering. United Methodist News Service will have a staff person covering each major activity and action of the conference. Our goal will be to have these stories in your assigned press box within an hour after each action. The news desk phone number: (216) 348-2601.

PRESS BOXES

Each accredited news outlet will be assigned a press box, in which news stories, phone messages and other information will be placed. Only newsroom staff will distribute information to press boxes or press tables. A special table near the entrance of the newsroom is designated for printed material from caucuses and special-interest groups.

PHONES/COMPUTER HOOKUPS/FAXES

Bring your own computer. Electrical and phone hookups will be available at the press tables. Printers will be available. You are asked to charge all calls to your own credit card. Fax machines will be available in the workroom.

PHOTOGRAPIC SERVICES

During plenary sessions, the number of photographers on the conference floor is limited to 10. Special passes will be issued at the photo desk each day on a first-come basis.

Please be as unobtrusive as possible. Do not use the flash during worship services, especially during the service of Holy Communion.

The photo desk is located just inside the newsroom. Mike DuBose is director. Mike and staff photographer Paul Jeffrey will provide photographs for United Methodist News Service and accredited media representatives. The photo desk will not be responsible for souvenir or delegation photos. These are available for a fee from Dewayne and Ginnie Lowther, who will be located elsewhere in the convention center.

UMNS photos will be available for downloading from the UMNS Web page or by e-mail transmission. Photo desk staff will be available to assist with selecting and downloading photos or arranging for e-mail transmission to your office. Hard-copy prints will not be available for delivery during the General Conference. Photo desk staff can direct you to nearby photo labs for processing of your personal film.

VIDEO SERVICES

Video services, available to accredited press, include:

- Video and audio feed of all plenary sessions;
- Videotape dubs of plenary sessions;
- Beta-SP camera crew; and
- Cuts-only editing (with editor).

All services must be scheduled in advance. Please contact Video Services in Room #E108 for more information.

RADIO NEWS

For assistance, see staff in Room #E109. A radio hot line with a 1-800 telephone number will provide radio stations with regularly updated stories from General Conference. In addition, stories will be available on the General Conference Web site (gc2000.umc.org) in a digitized form that can be used by stations. United Methodist Communications will notify selected U.S. radio stations by mail that this service is available.

United Methodist Church communicators are encouraged to contact stations in their area to find out how many want the General Conference 1-800 hot line number and calling instructions. The number will be available at a later date.

When possible, radio staff will arrange to provide knowledgeable spokespeople to discuss pertinent issues on the phone for live or taped interviews. Radio staff will also feed stories to regional and national news networks and services, including those with Hispanic formats.

CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION

Closed-circuit television in the convention center will carry conference proceedings. The newsroom will have several monitors. On the large screen in plenary sessions, the name of the person speaking will be superimposed along with the legislation paragraph number in the Daily Christian Advocate.

PRINTING AND COPYING

The newsroom clerical/production staff in the workroom will be available to make limited copies for accredited news reporters. If large numbers of copies are needed, you might be referred to a full-service print shop nearby.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

The Daily Christian Advocate is the most important reference for the General Conference. An Advance Edition is available before the conference; one issue is produced each day of the conference.

Representatives of all United Methodist and ecumenical publications will be responsible for ordering their own Daily Christian Advocates (advance and daily issues). Call Cokesbury: 1-800-672-1789. Secular press representatives will find two copies of the Advance Edition available for reference in the newsroom. Secular press representatives will be given complimentary tickets at the Registration Desk, and those may be exchanged at the Cokesbury Display Room for Daily Christian Advocates during the conference.

The Advance Edition includes all legislative proposals and reports from the study committees, general boards and agencies. It also contains a Handbook for Delegates, including an alphabetical listing of delegates, legislative committee assignments, seating assignments and rules of order for the conference.

The Daily Christian Advocate contains daily transcripts of the conference proceedings, news stories and features, and daily summaries of legislative committee actions.

The following resources will be available for reference in the newsroom:

- 1996 edition of the Daily Christian Advocate and proceedings from the 1996 General Conference;
- The Bible, New Revised Standard Version, and the United Methodist Hymnal (1989);
- The 1996 Book of Discipline and The 1996 Book of Resolutions (statements on social, political and moral issues);
- 1998 edition of The General Minutes (statistical information about church membership, ministerial appointments, etc.);
- Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches;
- A dictionary, a thesaurus and The Associated Press Stylebook; and
- Editor and Publisher Yearbook

COVERING THE CONFERENCE: GETTING WHAT YOU NEED

AGENDA

With few exceptions, it will be impossible to tell you exactly when a particular issue will come to the plenary floor for action. The daily agenda will be posted in the newsroom as soon as it is known each morning.

GETTING TO DELEGATES, BISHOPS, ETC.

If you need names of individuals to interview on specific legislative and other issues of the General Conference, contact the news and assignments desk.

Once you know whom you want, ask the news and assignments desk to help you reach that person. Pages can pass written notes to people during the plenary sessions.

NEWS CONFERENCES

A large number of special-interest groups will likely call press conferences throughout the gathering. Announcements of unofficial as well as official press conferences will be posted in the newsroom. Official press conferences will be called by the news and assignment desk and will be held in the press conference area in the rear of the newsroom. Questions regarding news conferences should be addressed to the news and assignment desk.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

All 10 legislative committees of the General Conference will meet in the Convention Center. Media representatives may attend, but space in some meetings will be limited. Names of people serving on each legislative committee can be found in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate.

The committees review, sort and refine legislative proposals. **No action is final until taken by the General Conference in plenary session.** Progress reports from each committee will be posted in the newsroom each evening and will appear in the next day's issue of the Daily Christian Advocate.

The 10 committees and the number of petitions and proposals they will be considering are:

- **Church and Society** -- General Board of Church and Society, social justice resolutions. (111)
- **Conferences** -- Annual, district, general, jurisdictional, missionary and provisional. (81)
- **Discipleship** -- General Board of Discipleship, National Youth Ministry Organization, lay ministry, lay speaking, youth ministry, young adult ministry and curriculum resources. (83)
- **Faith and Order** -- Social Principles -- including the preface -- Doctrinal Standards, Connectional Process Team, abortion, homosexuality. (221)
- **Financial Administration** -- General Council on Finance and Administration, General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, clergy support, special days, United Methodist Publishing House, trustees. (286)
- **General Administration/Judicial Administration** -- General Council on Ministries, Judicial Council, constitutional amendments, inclusiveness, the Advance, chargeable offenses, investigations, trials and appeals, special Sundays. (230)
- **Global Ministries** -- General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Committee on Relief, mission programs. (65)

- **Higher Education and Ministry** -- Ordained ministries, district superintendents, appointments, higher education, seminaries, chaplains. (264)
- **Independent Commissions** -- Commission on Archives and History, Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Commission on Religion and Race, Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Commission on United Methodist Men, United Methodist Communications, World Methodist Council, councils and consultations of churches, the American Bible Society, ethnic local church concerns and ecumenical relations. (56)
- **Local Church** -- Local church organization, membership, charge conference and property. (94)

HOW GENERAL CONFERENCE WORKS

Meets every four years

General Conference, which convenes every four years, is the top policy-making body of the United Methodist Church. No person or organization except the General Conference has authority to speak officially for the denomination as a whole. Cost of the 2000 conference is more than \$3.5 million, including travel, meals and lodging for all delegates. Cost of the next General Conference in 2004 is expected to be more than \$5 million.

Site rotates among jurisdictions

The meeting sites are rotated among the church's five geographic U.S. jurisdictions. Since the United Methodist Church was created in 1968, the conferences have been held in the following cities:

1968	Dallas (Uniting Conference)
1970	St. Louis (special session)
1972	Atlanta
1976	Portland, Ore.
1980	Indianapolis
1984	Baltimore
1988	St. Louis
1992	Louisville, Ky.
1996	Denver
2000	Cleveland (The last time a predecessor denomination of the United Methodist Church met in Ohio was the Evangelical United Brethren General Conference in Dayton, Nov. 10-20, 1950.)

The 2004 General Conference will be held in Pittsburgh.

Delegation is half clergy, half lay

Each annual conference is entitled to a minimum of two delegates. Beyond that, the number is determined by the number of lay and clergy members within the conference. A total of 992 delegates will be voting at the conference. About 2,500 visitors are expected during the 10-day meeting. Four concordat churches — two delegates from the Caribbean and the Americas, four from Great Britain, two from Mexico and two from Puerto Rico — will also be represented.

Book of Discipline, Book of Resolutions

The delegates revise the Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions. The conference will review and adopt the Social Principles of the church and adopt resolutions on various current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for churchwide programs for the next four years. The delegates can propose amendments to the church's constitution, but those must be ratified later in the annual conferences. General Conference also elects members of the Judicial Council, the church's "supreme court," and some governing members of churchwide agencies.

Sources of legislation

Primary sources of legislation are petitions and proposals from church agencies and organizations. Petitions must be submitted 150 days before the opening of the conference. Any organization, ordained minister or lay member of the church may petition the General Conference.

As in the U.S. Congress, the bulk of General Conference business is conducted in legislative committees, which receive petitions and proposals, debate them, and determine whether to approve, amend, combine, or disapprove them for recommendation to the full body of General Conference.

General (churchwide) agencies propose resolutions or changes in legislation affecting their respective policies and operations. These, along with petitions from annual conferences, are printed in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate.

Bishops don't vote

Members of the Council of Bishops attend General Conference but do not vote and cannot speak without permission from the delegates. A bishop presides at each plenary session. Each bishop usually serves during one morning, afternoon or evening session. All bishops, active and retired, attend the entire conference.

Also attending will be all members of the General Council on Finance and Administration, chief executive officers of all 14 general church agencies, and people serving administrative and staff functions at the General Conference.

STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Local Churches: Each local church is governed by a charge conference with an administrative board as the year-round supervisory agency. A council on ministries coordinates the program of the congregation. In smaller churches, the board and the council are combined. The denomination has 35,986 organized congregations in the United States, and about 7,163 in Europe, Africa and the Philippines.

Districts: Each church in the United States is in one of 520 districts, which are administrative and program groupings of about 40 to 80 churches. Each district has a full-time superintendent who is an ordained minister.

Annual Conference: This is the name for both the territory covered by, and the legislative body of, a given region. The denomination has 66 annual conferences in the United States, and 52 in Europe, Africa and the Philippines.

The conference approves program and budget for its area, elects delegates to General and jurisdictional

conferences, and examines and recommends candidates for ministry. A bishop, the presiding officer of a conference, annually appoints all ordained ministers in her or his episcopal area. Annual conference members are ordained ministers in "full connection"; lay delegates to annual conference are elected by each pastoral charge. Each charge elects at least one lay member; churches with more than one ordained minister on staff are entitled to one additional lay member for each additional clergy person.

Bishops and Episcopal Areas: Elected by jurisdictional conferences every four years, bishops are superintendents of their respective areas. The church has 50 active bishops and episcopal areas in the United States, and 18 in Europe, Africa and the Philippines. Episcopal areas include one or more annual conferences. The Council of Bishops is the corporate expression of episcopal leadership, which supervises and promotes the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire church.

Jurisdictions: There are five geographic jurisdictions (geographic divisions) in the United States, with eight to 17 annual conferences in each. Jurisdictional conferences meet simultaneously every four years (July 12-15, 2000) to elect and assign bishops and some members of general church agencies, and, in some cases, to develop jurisdictional programs. Members of the jurisdictional conferences are General Conference delegates from that region, plus additional delegates -- an equal number of lay people and ordained ministers -- elected by the region's annual conferences.

General (churchwide) Agencies: The structure of the United Methodist Church resembles that of the U.S. government. General Conference is the legislative branch; Judicial Council is the "supreme court." The Council of Bishops is similar to the executive branch, but although the council has a president -- elected each year -- **there is no single general officer or executive of the United Methodist Church.** General agencies are similar to U.S. cabinet departments but are primarily accountable to the General Conference rather than to the Council of Bishops. Boards of directors, who are lay and clergy elected jointly by General Conference and regional organizations, govern the agency staffs.

Judicial Council: The denomination's "supreme court" interprets church law and determines constitutionality of proceedings at all levels of church life. Its nine members are elected by General Conference and normally meet twice a year.

Ecumenical Relationships: The United Methodist Church is a member of the World Methodist Council, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America and the World Council of Churches. It is also one of nine denominations participating in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU). The United Methodist Church is officially part of a Pan Methodist committee looking at possible union of the denomination with three historically black denominations: African Methodist Episcopal; African Methodist Episcopal Zion; and Christian Methodist Episcopal.

STATISTICS OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

United States

Lay members	8,408,354
Total clergy members	43,688
Ordained women clergy under appointment.....	5,202
Enrollment in UM-related seminaries.....	5,338
UMs enrolled in UM-related seminaries.....	2,657
Diaconal ministers.....	596
Deacons	875
Active bishops	50
Active women bishops	9
African-American bishops.....	10
Hispanic bishops.....	2
Asian American bishops.....	2
Retired bishops (all nations).....	69
Organized churches	35,986
Annual conferences.....	66
African-American members.....	382,243
Hispanic members.....	40,652
Native American members.....	18,766
Asian American members.....	56,143
Pacific Islanders.....	8,245

Europe, Africa, and the Philippines

Lay members	1,223,567
Ordained ministers	3,259
Active bishops	18
Annual and provisional conferences.....	52

Education

Two-year colleges.....	8
Four-year colleges.....	82
Universities.....	10
Theological schools.....	13
Professional schools.....	1
Precollegiate schools.....	9

UNITED METHODIST U.S. LAY MEMBERSHIP BY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

(1997 statistics from 1998 General Minutes)

North Central Jurisdiction

Dakotas	47,619
Detroit	105,121
East Ohio	192,683
Illinois Great Rivers	180,114
Iowa	202,849
Minnesota	98,256
North Indiana	107,535
Northern Illinois	125,017
South Indiana	126,351
West Michigan	75,701
West Ohio	275,932
Wisconsin	107,561
TOTAL	1,644,739

South Central Jurisdiction

Central Texas	147,496
Kansas East	74,095
Kansas West	93,543
Little Rock	65,546
Louisiana	126,459
Missouri East	77,053
Missouri West	109,913
Nebraska	98,598
New Mexico	45,484
North Arkansas	80,779
North Texas	151,114
Northwest Texas	71,616
Oklahoma.	254,215
Oklahoma Indian	6,924
Rio Grande	15,060
Southwest Texas	114,185
Texas	278,412
TOTAL	1,810,492

Northeastern Jurisdiction

Baltimore-Washington.	217,041
Central Pennsylvania	165,895
Eastern Pennsylvania	140,279
New England	112,119
New York.	142,276
North Central N. Y.	89,674
Northern N.J	47,750
Peninsula-Delaware	97,329
Southern N.J.	72,568
Troy	59,689
West Virginia	119,648
Western N. Y.	62,835
Western Pennsylvania	204,493
Wyoming	68,670
TOTAL	1,600,266

Southeastern Jurisdiction

Alabama-West Florida	142,094
Florida	336,971
Holston	172,801
Kentucky	155,641
Memphis	92,576
Mississippi	188,910
North Alabama	162,891
North Carolina	223,688
North Georgia	295,579
Red Bird Missionary	1,350
South Carolina	241,574
South Georgia	142,113
Tennessee	112,137
Virginia	343,519
Western N.C.	286,290
TOTAL	2,898,114

Western Jurisdiction

Alaska Missionary	3,892
Calif.-Nevada	93,133
Calif.-Pacific	104,549
Desert Southwest	49,318
Oregon-Idaho	39,129
Pacific Northwest	67,673
Rocky Mountain	74,664
Yellowstone	18,342
TOTAL	450,700

ISSUES AT THE 2000 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Detailed background on some of the major issues such as homosexuality may be found online at www.umc.org/umns/background.html .

Homosexuality

Homosexuality has been an issue at every General Conference since 1972. Petitions to the 2000 General Conference represent a wide range of views. United Methodist members on one side of the homosexual issue are pressing delegates to retain the current language of the Book of Discipline, while members on the other side are working to have language removed, particularly the sentence prohibiting same-sex unions and a statement declaring the practice of homosexuality to be “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Delegates to the 1996 General Conference inserted in the church’s Social Principles a sentence saying, “Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.” The status of the statement was challenged, but the church’s highest court ruled that it is enforceable under church law. The church's Book of Discipline:

- condemns the practice of homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching";
- affirms that God's grace is available to all;
- commits the church to being in ministry for and with all people;
- supports basic human rights and civil liberties for homosexuals;
- condemns violence against gays and lesbians;
- prohibits the candidacy, ordination or appointment of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as clergy;
- prohibits the use of churchwide funds from being used by any group to promote the acceptance of homosexuality; and
- prohibits same-sex unions.

Connectional Process Team

The 1996 General Conference created a 38-member Connectional Process Team (CPT) to "manage, guide and promote a transformational direction" for the United Methodist Church. The team was asked to continue the work begun during the previous quadrennium by the General Council on Ministries' Connectional Issues Study Task Force and the Council of Bishops' study of the "Global Nature of the Church."

The CPT, chaired by Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher, Springfield, Ill., is bringing a 24-page report to the 2000 General Conference. If adopted, the report will have significant implications for how the church will be organized and function in mission and ministry around the world in this new century. Specific recommendations in the report include:

- creating "covenant councils" at every level of church life;
- putting churches in the United States in a "central conference" like those outside the United States;
- reconstituting the General Conference as a United Methodist Global Conference, a 500-member body that would meet first in 2008 for six days followed by a six-day session of the U.S. Central Conference. The U.S. body would have no more than 1,000 delegates.

- asking the five U.S. jurisdictional conferences and all central conferences outside the United States to meet before the Global Conference to elect bishops who would then be consecrated at the Global Conference;
- asking the churchwide Covenant Council to prepare legislation between 2001 and 2004 to implement the Global Conference and the U.S. Central Conference as proposed in the CPT report. A draft of that legislation is requested by July 1, 2002, with a final draft going to the 2004 General Conference.
- asking the Covenant Council to redesign and realign the work of the church (general) agencies.

Act of Repentance for Reconciliation

Two hours have been set aside on the evening of May 4 for an "Act of Repentance for Reconciliation." The service is being planned by the denomination's Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, in consultation with representatives of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The worship service will provide an opportunity for the predominantly white United Methodist Church to confess the sin of racism and to express regret for the way people of color have been treated inside and outside the denomination and its predecessor churches. All three historically black denominations originated through acts of exclusion or discrimination by white Methodists in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Delegates also will consider a study guide developed by the Commission on Christian Unity to help United Methodist congregations engage in an act of repentance for racism during 2001. The delegates will consider adding an amendment about racial justice to the church's constitution.

Complaints Against Clergy

The 1992 and 1996 General Conferences made sweeping changes in the way complaints against clergy are handled. Delegates to the 2000 conference will refine judicial and administrative processes, including violation of ordination and membership; statute of limitations when filing a complaint; what should be forwarded to a committee on investigation; separate listings of chargeable offenses for sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual abuse; and separation of the clergy trial and penalty phase.

Igniting Ministry

General Conference delegates will vote on a proposal to fund \$20 million for Igniting Ministry, a national television campaign proposed by United Methodist Communications. The campaign includes purchasing time on cable TV three times a year for four years. The media campaign is designed to proclaim the gospel by raising awareness and recognition of the United Methodist Church's basic beliefs; foster among nonmembers a positive feeling and willingness to visit a United Methodist church; and renew commitment in United Methodists. The intent of the total campaign is to provide local churches with new tools to call people to Christ.

The national media buys are one element of a five-part effort, but they are the only one seeking funding from General Conference.

Leadership for Post-Communist Europe

General Conference members will be asked to designate \$2 million toward a Fund for Theological Education in post-communist Europe for 2000-2004 to help the emerging church there respond to the need of trained pastoral leadership. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry also will provide \$2 million toward the fund.

Finances

The General Council on Finance and Administration – perhaps inspired by the success in bringing churchwide giving closer to budget during the current quadrennium – will propose a 2001-2004 budget that includes an increase of only 3.4 percent over 1997-2000. The proposal includes no increases for churchwide ministries during 2001 and 2002; an increase of 1 percent in 2003; and 2 percent in 2004.

Planned future expenditures of agency reserves resulted in more than a \$16 million reduction in the amount requested from General Conference to support the mission and ministries of the general program and communication agencies.

How these funds are raised through apportioning to the annual (regional) conferences may be altered somewhat if a plan developed by the Connectional Ministry Funding Patterns Task Force is adopted. The task force decided after considerable research that the traditional apportionment system is effective in funding the church, but the group is recommending removal of church membership from the formula used to compute apportionments.

The recommended formula would be based on the total dollars spent by each congregation in an annual conference, not counting capital expenditures and payments for churchwide apportionments.

Those figures would be modified by regional per-capita income (per the U.S. Department of Commerce) and operating costs for each congregation relative to average weekly worship attendance. The formula would be fully phased in by 2004.

Also related to finances is the recommendation of the joint General Council on Ministries/General Council on Finance and Administration that the number of annual churchwide special Sundays with offering be reduced from six to four. These would be Justice, Love and Mercy Sunday; One Great Hour of Sharing; World Communion Sunday; and Native American Ministry Sunday. Several caucuses and agencies are against this change and feel it will reduce the funds available for some special ministries.

Social Justice

Petitions from individuals, annual conferences and general agencies cover a wide range of concerns related to social justice, but this is the first General Conference to deal with a 12-year rule that eliminates all resolutions passed in 1988 or earlier, unless they have been updated or modified by subsequent General Conferences.

Consequently, the General Board of Church and Society and many other agencies and groups are submitting new or revised resolutions on such subjects as tobacco, alcohol, gun control, health care, racism, peace and others. In addition, resolutions on new topics such as hate crimes and human cloning are being proposed. One resolution in particular seeks a four-year moratorium on U.S. death penalties. The current Book of Resolutions has 763 pages and addresses hundreds of issues.

Constitutional Amendments

The General Board of Discipleship is seeking an amendment to the church's constitution that would pave the way for bringing legislation in line with the theology of "By Water and the Spirit," the denomination's official statement on baptism.

The Judicial Council ruled that "By Water and the Spirit" was in conflict with the denomination's rules regarding membership and that any form of membership in the church that did not require taking vows was unconstitutional and invalid. An amendment would pave the way for the church to enact future legislation in relation to "By Water and the Spirit." It also would allow the church to recognize all people who are baptized regardless of their age or ability to profess the faith.

Proposed constitutional amendments include one that would require that all church gatherings and meetings, including those of the Council of Bishops, be open. An open meetings policy, along with circumstances under which meetings may be closed, appears in a chapter on administrative order in the Book of Discipline.

Number of Bishops

A technicality regarding membership decline in the Northeastern Jurisdiction, which includes 11 states from Maine to West Virginia along with the District of Columbia, may prohibit the region from electing a bishop during the jurisdictional conference in July. Based on language in the church's Book of Discipline, a decrease in total church membership in the jurisdiction since the most recent conference in 1996 would require that the number of bishops be reduced from 10 to nine. Delegates will consider a resolution that would allow the Northeastern Jurisdiction to retain its current number of bishops.

Young People

The 2001-2004 proposal from the Shared Mission Focus on Young People, a four-year-old global initiative in the United Methodist Church, calls for the development of a consolidated, comprehensive plan for ministries with young people (ages 12 to 30). The proposal calls for a new way of building on what was learned during the 1997-2000 quadrennium. Intentional partnerships will be forged with general agencies, annual conferences and local churches to expand this movement. In addition, a fund for creative projects and training modules will be established to equip people for ministries with youth and young adults. The total budget request is \$3.4 million.

Strengthening the Black Church

The 1996 General Conference adopted Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century as a major program initiative to develop an avenue by which United Methodist churches with predominantly black congregations would become effective in mission and ministry. The plan of action was an extensive program and contained innovative approaches to congregational renewal. The initiative is still in its early stages, and the reality of declining and struggling black congregations remains.

The task of revitalizing and renewing these churches for mission and ministry is unfinished. For this reason, Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century is recommending that its work be continued for another quadrennium. The initiative is requesting \$2.3 million to continue its work of

developing innovative approaches to ministry and building partnerships across the United Methodist Church.

Korean-American Ministries

A Task Force on Korean American Ministries, established by the 1996 General Conference, is recommending an action plan to improve ministries to Korean Americans over the next four years, with a price tag of \$3.2 million. The plan focuses on developing leaders, fostering and expanding next-generation ministry and developing and nurturing new congregations. Delegates also will vote on a resolution asking the General Conference to adopt a Korean-English bilingual hymnal as an official resource of the church.

Asian American Language Study

The Asian American Language Ministry Study identifies ministry needs for 10 different Asian language groups within the United Methodist Church and asks for \$455,000, to implement its recommendations. The 10 language groups are Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Formosan (Taiwanese), Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Lao, South Asian (including Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Indonesian and Malaysian) and Vietnamese.

Hispanic and Native American Ministries

Continuation of plans adopted by previous General Conferences for ministry to Hispanics and Native Americans is being recommended.

"Caring for Creation"

The Native American International Caucus is recommending that the General Conference develop a four-year study on "Caring for Creation from a Native American Perspective." The caucus is proposing that the National United Methodist Native American Center be named the lead agent and work with program agencies of the United Methodist Church and other Native American entities in developing the study. The proposal requests that \$80,000 be allocated to complete the study and that a report with recommendations be made to the 2004 General Conference.

General Conference members also will decide on the implementation of a four-year study of the economic impact of colonialism and capitalism on Native Americans and how that impact has influenced contemporary mission and ministry with native people. The proposal requests \$100,000 for the National United Methodist Native American Center to develop an innovative and economically strategic report for a "God-centered alternative to gambling-centered economic development on Native American reservations." The report and recommendations would be presented to the 2004 General Conference.

Delegates will consider a resolution asking the church not to hold meetings in cities that have sports team and mascots demeaning to Native Americans, particularly "Chief Wahoo" of the Cleveland Indians.

Endowment for Historically Black Colleges

Delegates will be asked to authorize the development of a 25-year plan to raise \$300 million in endowment funds to strengthen the \$205 million endowment now collectively held by the 11

historically black United Methodist-related institutions of higher education. The denomination supports the largest number of historically black colleges and universities in the United States.

Africa University

Africa University is the only private United Methodist-related university on the continent. It opened in 1992 with 40 students and two academic disciplines — theology and agriculture. Today, the university has about 847 students enrolled and five schools of learning. Delegates to General Conference will be asked to increase the university's endowment to \$14 million for the next four years to help the college meet new technical challenges and sustain facilities. The university is planning to launch a school of health sciences that will include dental and medical disciplines.

National Urban Ministries

General Conference is being asked to continue Communities of Shalom, the denomination's church/community partnership program; reaffirm "Holy Boldness: A National Plan for Urban Ministry"; and approve \$2.6 million to continue the denomination's Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION ON THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 with the union of the former Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church.

The Evangelical United Brethren Church, established in 1946, represented the union of two U.S.-born denominations: the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. These two churches originated among German-speaking people during the great spiritual awakening in late 18th-century colonies.

The two fellowships and the Methodist Church were similar, particularly in terms of church polity and evangelistic zeal.

Jacob Albright of Eastern Pennsylvania was a lay preacher who gathered followers in the early 1800s. These "Albright people" formed the Evangelical Association, later to become the Evangelical Church. The Rev. Philip Otterbein, ordained by the German Reformed Church, started the United Brethren Movement in the late 1700s.

Meanwhile, the Methodist movement had begun in England in the early 1700s, under Anglican clergyman John Wesley and his followers. Wesley did not officially organize a new church but sparked a renewal movement within the Church of England. Nonetheless, Methodism spread from England to Ireland and the colonial United States.

Methodist classes and congregations met in the United States from the 1760s. Around Christmas 1784, some 60 ministers gathered in Baltimore and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the word "episcopal" referring to the church's administration by bishops. The denomination grew rapidly and was known for its "circuit rider" ministers on the advancing frontiers.

With rapid growth, philosophical differences and division were inevitable. In 1828, a group of people, largely moved by an insistence on lay representation, separated and became the Methodist Protestant Church. In 1844, the parent church split again over the issue of slavery. The offspring

denomination was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The north and south factions reunited in 1939, compromising on the race issue by creating a segregated system. Alongside the five geographic jurisdictions, an overlapping Central Jurisdiction was formed for African Americans. It was dissolved in 1968 with the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches.

GENERAL AGENCIES OF THE CHURCH

The denomination has 14 general (churchwide) agencies, each governed by a board of directors selected from across the denomination, with attention given to racial, gender, age and lay-clergy balance. Chief executive officers are called "general secretaries."

- **The General Council on Ministries** coordinates church program and elects chief executive officers for the four program agencies and five commissions of the church. Headquarters is in Dayton, Ohio. President is Bishop Woodrow J. Hearn, Houston; general secretary is C. David Lundquist.
- **The General Council on Finance and Administration**, fiscal and record-keeping agency for the denomination, administers trusts; coordinates and distributes church funds; and keeps official membership, real estate and other records. Headquarters is in Evanston, Ill. President is Bishop Richard C. Looney, Macon, Ga.; general secretary is Sandra Kelley Lackore.
- **The General Board of Church and Society**, social action arm of the denomination, addresses issues of global justice -- political, human, and economic rights; human welfare; and environmental protection. It is based in Washington. President is Bishop Charles W. Jordan, Des Moines, Iowa; general secretary is the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett.
- **The General Board of Discipleship** provides training and resources for churches in Christian education, evangelism, devotional life and worship, stewardship and lay ministries. Headquarters is in Nashville, Tenn. President is Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Denver; general secretary is the Rev. Ezra Earl Jones.
- **The General Board of Global Ministries**, the denomination's largest program agency, recruits, trains and deploys missionaries, and educates grass-roots United Methodists about global and national mission concerns. Headquarters is in New York. President is Bishop Dan E. Solomon, Baton Rouge, La.; general secretary is the Rev. Randolph W. Nugent.
- **The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry** oversees ordained and diaconal ministries, sets criteria for training United Methodist chaplains, coordinates United Methodist campus ministries and oversight of institutions of higher learning and seminaries, and administers loans and scholarships and the Black College Fund. Headquarters is in Nashville, Tenn. President is Bishop William B. Oden, Dallas; general secretary is the Rev. Roger W. Ireson.
- **The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits** oversees \$13 billion of assets used to support various benefit plans for clergy and other church professionals. It is based in Evanston, Ill. President is Bishop Bruce P. Blake, Oklahoma City; general secretary is Barbara A. Boigegrain.

- **The General Commission on Archives and History** houses historical documents, photographs and other materials of the United Methodist Church and forerunner denominations. It is based at Drew University, Madison, N.J. President is Bishop Emilio de Carvalho, Luanda, Angola; general secretary is the Rev. Charles Yrigoyen Jr.
- **The General Commission on Communication** (United Methodist Communications), media agency for the denomination, provides an ecumenical, nationwide film sales/rental service; radio and television ministries; a toll-free information hot line; interpretation for church programs and funds; program journals; and an international news service. The agency is based in Nashville, Tenn., and has offices in New York and Washington. President is Bishop Sharon Z. Rader, Sun Prairie, Wis.; acting general secretary is Peggy West.
- **The General Commission on Religion and Race** advocates racial justice and monitors racial/ethnic inclusiveness in church-related institutions and agencies. It is based in Washington. President is Bishop S. Clifton Ives, Charleston, W.Va.; general secretary is the Rev. Chester R. Jones.
- **The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women** advocates empowerment of women and monitors gender inclusiveness in all institutions and agencies of the church. Offices are in Evanston, Ill. President is Joyce Waldon Bright, Orlando, Fla.; members of the general secretariat are Cecelia M. Long and the Rev. Stephanie A. Hixon.
- **The General Commission on United Methodist Men**, created in 1996 to coordinate program and resources for men's ministries, including Scouting, within the denomination, is headquartered in Nashville, Tenn. President is Bishop Raymond H. Owen, San Antonio, Texas; general secretary is the Rev. Joseph L. Harris.
- **The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns** links United Methodists with the ecumenical movement. Offices are in New York. President is Bishop Roy Sano, Pasadena, Calif.; general secretary is the Rev. Bruce W. Robbins.
- **The United Methodist Publishing House** is independent and self-supporting. It does not receive funding through the World Service funding program of the church, as do other agencies. The agency is based in Nashville, Tenn. Chairperson is Randy Smith, Houston; president and publisher is Neil Alexander.

INDEPENDENT CAUCUSES AND SPECIAL-INTEREST GROUPS

AFFIRMATION (UMs for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns)

Spokespeople: the Rev. Jeanne Knepper, Portland, Ore. (503) 760-4215

Jay McCarty, Kansas City, Mo. (816) 363-6892

BLACK METHODISTS FOR CHURCH RENEWAL (BMCR)

Chairperson: the Rev. Tyrone Gordon, Wichita, Kan. (316) 681-2214

CONFESSING MOVEMENT

Executive Director: Patricia Miller, Indianapolis. (317) 356-9729

GOOD NEWS (Forum for Scriptural Christianity Within the UMC)

Executive Director: the Rev. James Heidinger, Wilmore, Ky. (606) 858-4661

MARCHA (Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans)

Executive Director: Mary Silva, San Antonio, Texas. (310) 634-5040.

METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Executive Director: the Rev. Kathryn Johnson, Washington. (202) 546-8806

MISSION SOCIETY FOR UNITED METHODISTS

President: Alvern Vom Steeg, Norcross, Ga. (770) 446-1381

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ASIAN-AMERICAN UNITED METHODISTS

Executive Director: Kathy Thomas-Sano, Oakland, Calif. (510) 836-0993

NATIVE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL CAUCUS

Executive Director: the Rev. Alvin Deer, Oklahoma City. (450) 634-2005

RECONCILING CONGREGATIONS

Program Coordinator: Marilyn Alexander, Chicago. (773) 736-5526

TRANSFORMING CONGREGATIONS

Coordinator: Jim Gentile, Penndel, Pa. (215) 757-5513