2019 General Conference Passes Traditional Plan

By Kathy L. Gilbert, Heather Hahn and Joey Butler
Feb. 26, 2019 | ST. LOUIS (UMNS)

After hours of delaying tactics by opponents, the United Methodist General Conference 2019 delegates passed the Traditional Plan 438 to 384.

A last-ditch effort to bring the One Church Plan back was defeated in the morning and was followed by efforts to amend the Traditional Plan to address constitutionality issues raised by the Judicial Council, the church’s top court.

The Rev. Tim McClendon, South Carolina, called for a vote on the Traditional Plan as amended, which affirms the church’s current bans on ordaining LGBTQ clergy and officiating at or hosting same-sex marriage ceremonies.

Later, the Rev. Timothy Bruster, Central Texas, made a motion to request a declaratory decision by the Judicial Council on the constitutionality of the Traditional Plan. The motion passed 405-395. The Judicial Council will address the request at its next scheduled meeting, April 23-25 in Evanston, Illinois.

The Rev. Gary Graves, secretary of General Conference, said any piece of legislation that the Judicial Council declares unconstitutional will not be included in The Book of Discipline, the denomination’s policy book.

Near the end of the day, delegates voted to adopt the minority report for one of the petitions on disaffiliation, which then passed.

Legislation closed with an omnibus motion to reject any remaining petitions.

At the end of a brief closing worship, Council of Bishops President Kenneth H. Carter wished everyone in attendance “the peace of the Lord in the midst of all you have experienced.”

When the Traditional Plan vote was announced and flashed on the screen, the room erupted with observers

United Methodist bishops hold hands in prayer during a day of prayer for the 2019 United Methodist General Conference on February 23. Delegates and bishops also joined together in prayer before a key vote on February 26, the final day of the conference. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.
singing “Blessed Assurance.” Some delegates gathered in a circle and joined in with the singing.

The delegates on the floor and people in the bleachers went into a call and response, chanting in protest of the vote.

A handful of observers unhappy with the day’s legislative results tried to gain entrance to the plenary floor, but security officers blocked them and eventually moved them through turnstiles farther away from the doors. The protesters continued to chant their demand to be admitted.

Bishop Carter said that bishops will have to do a lot of outreach after this General Conference, especially to progressives who feel hurt by what transpired.

“We are going to do a lot of outreach to progressives to say we see you,” he said during a press conference after General Conference adjourned. Carter is also the leader of the Florida Conference, which has congregations across the theological spectrum.

Bishop Scott Jones of the Texas Conference said in a statement that the vote resolves a long-standing debate about how the church “can best accomplish our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

“This decision is consistent with our denomination’s historic stance on human sexuality, outlined in The Book of Discipline since 1972,” Jones said.

“We will continue to welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer persons to our churches and affirm their sacred worth. I pray we, as a denomination, can now move forward, working with each other in the spirit of Christian love and joining together as one. We are stronger together in serving God’s mission as a diverse body of Christ,” Jones said.

One strategy opponents of the Traditional Plan embraced was to essentially “run out the clock” with amendments.

The Rev. Mark Holland, a Great Plains delegate, waved a stack of amendment forms and said, “We’re gonna amend until the monster trucks roll in,” referring to the conference’s need to stop business by 6:30 p.m. and evacuate the facility for a truck rally. Holland leads Mainstream UMC, which lobbied hard for the One Church Plan.

Many opponents’ amendments took the stance that, biblically speaking, any pastoral or episcopal candidate who is divorced or remarried is as ineligible as one who is a “self-avowed practicing homosexual.”

In the morning, after passionate speeches, prayers and tears, the “one, last shot” for the One Church Plan was defeated by a vote of 449-374. The plan was defeated the day before in the first vote.
The Rev. Tom Berlin, Virginia Conference, spoke for a minority report for the One Church Plan that was submitted Feb. 25. A minority report is a substitution for the report of the legislative committee.

“I have a love of the church that sometimes I do not even understand,” he said in presenting the report to the denomination’s top lawmaking assembly. “Sometimes I get emotional when I talk about it because I catch a glimpse of what we can be with God’s help.”

Berlin told delegates that approving the One Church Plan did not force any pastor or church to perform same-sex marriages, nor did it force anyone to change what they believe about the Bible. But the plan would allow conferences to ordain LGBTQ pastors, as well as allow churches to host and pastors to officiate at same-sex marriage ceremonies.

“If the Traditional Plan is voted in, it will be a virus that will make the American church very sick,” he said. “Many pastors are going to leave, many annual conferences will leave. … There will be trials, and they will be on the news. The only news about the church will be about people we don’t serve.”

And he warned the virus would cross oceans and make the whole church sick.

However, other delegates stood to talk about following God’s “true word.”

Nancy Denardo, Western Pennsylvania, cited Scriptures in her argument against the One Church Plan.

“Friends, please stop sowing seeds of deceit,” she said. “I’m truly sorry if the truth of the Gospel hurts anyone; I love you and I love you enough to tell the truth.”


“The Traditional Plan is not only traditional but biblical; it ensures God’s word remains foundational to the life and growth of the UMC. I submit we love our LGBTQ friends,” he said.

Lyndsey Stearns, West Ohio, a young person who described herself as a future pastor, spoke in favor of the One Church Plan and told the body that in the past twenty-four hours, 15,529 young people had signed a statement in support of unity.

The statement says young people are not all of the same mind about LGBTQ people.

“And yet through working together, sharing stories, and worshipping side by side, we have seen each other’s gifts and fruits for ministry! We have witnessed the incredible ways that God is working through each of us in our own unique contexts.”

Stearns said, “I read John 17, and it ruined me. I could not unhear the words of Jesus.”

Aislinn Deviney, Rio Texas, who described herself as a young evangelical delegate, said many young people “fiercely believe marriage is between one man and one woman.”

“We are here at the table because of our dedication, not because we demand a place because of our age,” she said. “We speak for ourselves. We all have family and friends who are LGBTQ that we love and value.”

Rey Hernandez, Philippines, said cultures are not the same around the world but the One Church Plan is “beautiful in our unity.”

“With the help of the gifts of Holy Spirit, I believe what we are trying to agree on is to spread the Gospel,” he said.

Before the vote, Berlin once again told delegates to follow the Golden Rule of Jesus.

“Be consistent, and modify The Book of Discipline to eliminate all the divorced, all those who cohabit before marriage, and apply those standards to yourself first,” he said.

There are clergy and bishops who would have to surrender their credentials for violating those Scriptures, he added. “But I don’t think that’s the church you want.”

The Rev. Joe Harris, chair of the legislative committee, addressed the delegates.

“After all the passionate debate, all I can say is God is with us and God will be with us and the Holy Spirit will guide us. Continue to do what you said you wanted to do yesterday, reject One Church Plan and continue on Traditional Plan.”

Delegates and bishops left their seats and drew close together for a prayer.


As they went back to their seats, those gathered in the stadium were singing, “This Little Light of Mine.”

Following the defeat of the minority report, debate moved toward the calendar items pertaining to the Traditional Plan.
Editor’s Note: The digest of Judicial Council Decision No. 1377, printed below, was read during the plenary session of the General Conference on Tuesday, February 26. Later in the day, the General Conference requested another declaratory decision from the Judicial Council regarding the constitutionality of legislation that was passed by the General Conference. The Judicial Council will make that ruling at their April, 2019 meeting.

Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church
Decision No. 1377

IN RE: Petition for Declaratory Decision from the Legislative Committee of the General Conference regarding the constitutionality of legislative petitions amended and/or approved by the Legislative Committee.

Digest of Case

The Judicial Council makes the following determination:

Petition 90032 is constitutional.
Petition 90033 violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90034 violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90035 violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90036 is constitutional.
Petition 90037 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90038 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90039 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90040 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90042 is constitutional.
Petition 90043 is constitutional.
Petition 90044 is constitutional.
Petition 90045, the second sentence:

In cases where the respondent acknowledges action(s) that are a clear violation of the provisions of the Discipline, a just resolution shall include, but not be limited to, a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation.

Petition 90046 is constitutional.
Petition 90047 is constitutional.
Petition 90059 violates ¶¶ 33, 41 and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90066 violates ¶ 33 and is unconstitutional.

Statement of Facts

On February 25, 2019, the Legislative Committee of the General Conference [hereinafter Petitioner] submitted to the Judicial Council a petition for a declaratory decision to determine the constitutionality of legislative Petitions 90032–90040 (ADCA, p. 182–186), 90042–90047 (ADCA, p. 190–194), 90059 (ADCA, p. 201), and 90066 (ADCA, p. 201) as amended and/or passed by Petitioner.¹


Jurisdiction

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction pursuant to ¶ 2609.4 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016 [hereinafter the Discipline]. As a “body created or authorized by the General Conference,” Petitioner has standing to file this request for a declaratory decision under the same provision.

Analysis and Rationale

1. Constitutionality of Petition 90032

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 30–31.

2. Constitutionality of Petitions 90033, 90034, and 90035

Petitions 90033 and 90034 seek to amend ¶¶ 408.3 and 410.5 by adding the sentence: “Members of the council relations committee and administrative review committee shall not vote on this matter.”

Petition 90035 amends ¶ 422.5 by adding the

¹ The Petitions 90016 and 90017 (ADCA, pp. 168–169) are not before us.
sentence: “Members of the council relations committee and administrative review committee shall not have voted on the referral of requests for involuntary leave of absence or involuntary retirement.”

In JCD 1366, the Judicial Council held that Traditional Plan Petitions 2, 3, and 4 denied a bishop’s right to fair and due process because “there is no separation of prosecutorial and adjudicative functions.” Id. at 32. Particularly, the “same body that refers the complaint to the [Council Relations Committee] is also the final arbiter in administrative matters,” Id., and the members of the Administrative Review Committee “are still voting members of the [Council of Bishops], the body responsible for initiating and resolving complaints.” Id. at 33.

Although these amendments address the problem of comingling different functions, they fail to meet another constitutional requirement. “We note the conspicuous lack of any provision granting a bishop the right to appeal the findings of the COB. The finality of the COB’s decision is a clear violation of the constitutional guarantee of ‘a right to trial by a committee and an appeal.’” JCD 1366 at 33. Absent language granting such an appeal right, amended Petitions 90033, 90034, and 90035 violate Constitution, ¶¶ 20 and 58.

3. Constitutionality of Petition 90036

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 34.

4. Constitutionality of Petition 90037

This petition violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional. See JCD 1366 at 34–37.

5. Constitutionality of Petition 90038

This petition violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional. See JCD 1366 at 37–38.

6. Constitutionality of Petition 90039

This petition violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional. See JCD 1366 at 38.

7. Constitutionality of Petition 90040

This petition violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional. See JCD 1366 at 38.

8. Constitutionality of Petition 90042

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 46–47.

9. Constitutionality of Petition 90043

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 48.

10. Constitutionality of Petition 90044

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 49.

11. Constitutionality of Petition 90045

The second sentence of this petition is unconstitutional. See JCD 1366 at 49–51.

12. Constitutionality of Petition 90046

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 51.

13. Constitutionality of Petition 90047

This petition is constitutional. See JCD 1366 at 51–54.

14. Constitutionality of Petitions 90059 (Disaffiliation-Boyte) and 90066 (Disaffiliation-Taylor)

Petition 90059 adds a new ¶ 2549. Sub-paragraph b) requires for disaffiliation the affirmative vote of “fifty-five percent (55%) of the church’s professing members present and voting at a duly called church conference or two-thirds (66.7%) of the members present and voting at a duly called charge conference.” The 55% majority threshold is in conflict with the two-thirds majority requirement of Constitution, ¶ 41.

Petition 90066 adds a new ¶ 2553. Section 4 of this proposed provision, entitled “Decision Making Process,” sets forth the procedure for a local church to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. The last sentence reads: “The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.” This language meets the first supermajority requirement of Constitution, ¶ 41.

However, both petitions completely omit the annual conference as the body ratifying a local church vote to change affiliation. “By sidestepping the mandatory annual conference ratification, the proposed legislation infringes upon ‘such other rights [of the annual conference] as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution.’” JCD 1366 at 45, quoting Constitution, ¶ 33. If an annual conference is to play a vital role in planting new churches and ministries, it must also be given a role in the disaffiliation process of local churches within its boundaries. Petitions 90059 and 90066 infringe upon the reserved rights of the annual conference in ¶ 33 and are, therefore, unconstitutional.
Ruling

The Judicial Council makes the following determination:

Petition 90032 is constitutional.
Petition 90033 violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90034 violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90035 violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90036 is constitutional.
Petition 90037 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90038 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90039 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90040 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90042 is constitutional.
Petition 90043 is constitutional.
Petition 90044 is constitutional.
Petition 90045, the second sentence:

In cases where the respondent acknowledges action(s) that are a clear violation of the provisions of the Discipline, a just resolution shall include, but not be limited to, a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation.

violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90046 is constitutional.
Petition 90047 is constitutional.
Petition 90059 violates ¶¶ 33, 41 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 90066 violates ¶ 33 and is unconstitutional.

February 27, 2019

Ruben Reyes was absent.

Warren Plowden, first lay alternate, participated in this decision.

Dissent

Petitions 90059 and 90066 add provisions to the Discipline which allow local churches to “disaffiliate based upon the local church’s declaration that it is in irreconcilable conflict for reasons of conscience with the doctrine or moral teachings and requirements of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, or with the way in which such requirements are being enforced, or with the resolution of those matters adopted by the 2019 General Conference” (Petition 90059) and “to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues” (Petition 90066). Petition 90059 requires the affirmation vote of 55% of the professing members voting in a church conference or two-thirds of those voting in a charge conference. Petition 90066 requires an affirmation vote of two-thirds of the professing members voting in a church conference.

Today the Judicial Council holds this legislation to be unconstitutional for failing to comply with ¶ 41 of the Discipline. That paragraph allows a local church to “transfer from one annual conference to another in which it is geographically located.” It is a very narrow provision which deals only with transfers within The United Methodist Church and not disaffiliations in which a local church leaves the annual conference and The United Methodist Church. Our holding to the contrary is JCD 1366 was erroneous and should be overruled.

This legislation allows a local church to follow the steps provided therein and consummate a disaffiliation without the consent of the annual conference. The Council concludes its holding of unconstitutionality with the statement that “[i]f an annual conference is to play a vital role in planting new churches and ministries, it must also be given a role in the disaffiliation process of local churches within its boundaries.” This sentence is a statement of policy which seeks to legislate for the General Conference. It is not grounded in ¶ 33 or ¶41.

We respectfully dissent.

W. Warren Plowden Jr.
Dennis Blackwell
J. Kabamba Kiboko
General Commission on the Status and Role of Women Monitoring Report

Throughout Monday afternoon, a number of delegates, visitors, and viewers from home sent us messages, concerned that the gender balance of speakers was weighted in favor of men. They asked us if GCSRW was monitoring. One asked if anyone was monitoring. Indeed we were, and yes, the balance was off. Males made up 75% of the speakers on Monday afternoon, while women were only 25%. The bishops were able to hear our report of concerns this morning before the day began, and things got better. When Bishop Gregory Palmer took the chair for the Tuesday morning session, women made up 39% of the speakers, just over their representation on the floor, which is 36% women. During Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey’s session, women made up 37% of the speakers. Thank you, Bishops!

So yes, your GCSRW monitors are counting, but we don’t have a voice during the sessions. We cannot come to the mic. and ask the presider if women are being called. We cannot come to the mic. and say that women (and some men as well) have been in the queue for a long time, being told that some in the queue will never be called, while other delegates return to the mic. two and three times. None of us can see the electronic queue, so it cannot be monitored. We don’t know who is not being called on—we can only see what you all see—who is being called on. And yes, Monday afternoon was not a good session for women. Tuesday morning got better, but delegates—call it out when you see it! When the presider says he or she is going to call names in a way to provide a diversity of voices, hold him or her to it. Only you know if you’re not being called on.

It was also reported to us that a few young women were bothered by the behavior of some fellow delegates from outside the U.S. They described men who hugged them uncomfortably, and in one case, asked one to marry him. On the one hand, this is a cultural difference, and we are clearly struggling to learn to live with one another as a diverse church. For some, close hugging and marriage proposals are normal, everyday life. We’re not saying it’s acceptable there either, but it’s certainly more common. For others though, hugs are shared only between close friends and family members, and only with permission with strangers, and marriage is proposed similarly—with persons very well known. As we continue to struggle to be one church, it will be important to continue to talk about these gender norms upon which we do not yet agree. In the meantime, at General Conference, if women do not want to be touched, do not touch them—and no one here wants a marriage proposal from a virtual stranger. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, and that’s as far as it goes. Sin may be a matter for God to decide, but sexual misconduct is defined by the recipients, and these recipients are saying, “No,” and many women here would say, “Me too.”

One piece of advice for the next General Conference, which is just over a year away: elect more women. Encourage your annual conferences to send delegations with equal numbers of men and women. That’s the best way to change the balance of speakers. As we’ve watched our women bishops increase in number, all of whom we celebrate, we can’t say the same for the delegates. We can do better.

---

General Commission on Religion and Race Monitoring Report

The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(Matthew 14:21, NIV)

For many people, statistics seem dry and disconnected from daily life and reality. Historically, the work of monitoring for inclusion at General Conference is to interpret the significance of those numbers.

During the 2019 Special Session, our GCORR reports have focused less on statistical analysis and more on the invitation to relationship and dialogue. This final report captures the tenor of the delegates’ work on Monday afternoon and one the last day, Tuesday.

A variety of delegates asked (and were subsequently invited) to modify, support, or denounce legislation during the full plenary. However, the figures from the legislative committee session on Monday are revealing. Of 108 speakers recognized by the presiding officer to speak, 60 of them were white; of those, 44 were white males.
A very limited number of young adults were recognized to speak. In conversations about the future of The United Methodist Church, and at a time when we seek to reach younger and more diverse populations, what does it mean when the voices of more young people are not heard?

Often, listening is confused with tolerance. Teaching people merely to tolerate those who are different from them is not enough; the work of equity and justice require authentic love and reconciliation. We are not called simply to tolerate our neighbors but also to genuinely hold their best interests at heart. The aim is not to be tolerant in diverse groups but to join in community with persons from various perspectives, heritages, and opinions.

Such community requires a capacity to see others and to hear their life experiences. When asked the self-monitoring question from Monday, “Have I had an adequate opportunity to express my perspective?”, some delegates of color expressed that they often feel that they are not truly heard even when speaking directly to another delegate at their table. One delegate equated a similar experience with the story in Matthew 14:21, where the women and children were not counted, because they were not considered as important as the men. In a denomination that sometimes seems a bit obsessed with numbers, does everyone count?

If you could only use one word to describe the deliberations of the legislative committee on Monday, what would be your word? We offered that question to the cloud of witness and this is what we heard:

**Crushing  Challenging  Troubling**

**Superior  Heartbreaking  Uneven**

**Struggle  Pain  Revealing  Devastating**

**Waiting  Invisible  Prayerful**

**Defeating  Daunting  Disemboweled**

**Draining  Rage  Hopeful**

When a small group of respondents were given index cards to write their level of hope, every card registered some level of hope. May this be our prayer . . .

> OUR hope is built on nothing less
> Than Jesus Christ, OUR righteousness
> WE dare not trust the sweetest frame,
> But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

> On Christ, the solid Rock, WE stand;
> All other ground is sinking sand,
> All other ground is sinking sand.

*(adapted from “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less,” by Edward Mote)*

---

**Report of the Committee on Ethics**

A delegate raised a concern regarding an alleged violation of the Rules of Order of the General Conference and moved to refer it directly to the Committee on Ethics. It was referred by a one-fifth vote of the body.

The Committee on Ethics brought in several people for conversation. At this time, the committee is unable to substantiate the allegation.
Worship Acknowledgments

The worship team would like to acknowledge and show appreciation to the following:

Stained Glass Window Acknowledgments:

“Diamonds,” Linda Mellor and Stephanie Parsons, © 2019
“Do This In Remembrance of Me,” image copyright Aanraku Glass Studios, used with permission
“Sun,” Linda Mellor and Stephanie Parsons, © 2019
“This Little Light of Mine,” Linda Mellor and Stephanie Parsons, © 2019
“Holy Spirit—Wind and Waves,” Linda Mellor and Stephanie Parsons, © 2019
“Hand of God,” image © Sally Weigand, used with permission, modified by Linda Mellor and Stephanie Parsons
“Cross,” Linda Mellor and Stephanie Parsons, © 2019

Liturgy Acknowledgments:

Sunday a.m.:

Sunday p.m.:

Monday a.m.:
Erik Park, © 2018. Used with permission.

Monday p.m.:

Tuesday a.m.:
Rev. Dr. Nora Colmenares, © 2018. Used with permission.

Tuesday p.m.:
Rev. Ximena Varas, Rev. Martha Vink, and Stephanie Parsons, © 2018. Used with permission.

Errata

Page 318, right column: The correct address for Margie Briggs, lay delegate from Missouri, is: 908B Hanks Road, Clinton, MO 64735.

Page 327, left column, line 31: The name of first delegate from Oklahoma is correctly spelled Kim, Donald Hyungjoon.

Page 393, left column, line 39: add the word “know” after “we don’t.”

Page 395, left column, line 25: change the period after “centering” to a comma; lowercase “let’s.”

Page 395, center column, line 13: “Rendle” is the correct spelling of the name.

Page 398, left column, line 13: Replace “George” with “Georgia.”

Page 398, center column, line 34: insert “are” between “there” and “40.”

Page 399, left and center columns: “Bryan” is the correct spelling of the name.

Page 399, left column, line 2: replace “you” with “your.”

Page 399, right column, line 27: replace “hearts” with “heart.”

Page 404, right column, line 17: “Graham” is the correct spelling of the name.

Page 405, left column, lines 9, 10, and 13: “Barrett” is the correct spelling of the name.

Page 407, right column, line 25: “Chafin” is the correct spelling of the name.

Page 408, center column, line 9: “MARDEN” is the correct spelling of the name.

Page 411, left column, line 19: replace “contended” with “intended.”

Page 411, left column, line 21: replace “is” with “has”—“there has not been calculated.”

Page 411, left column, line 32: insert the word “for the” before “explanation.”

Page 412, left column, line 33: replace “Legislate” with “Legislative.”

Page 414, left column, line 30: replace “but” with “what”—“what the faithful can see.”

Page 414, left column, line 43: replace “faith will concede” with “faithful can see”

Page 415, center column, line 4: replace “lead” with “leave.”

Page 423, left column, line 17: replace “address” with “addresses.”
Calendar Items R02

21-CC1-¶101-N-G
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #1 - General BOD - Par. 101
Petition: 90018-CC-¶101-G
Membership: 43; Present: 37;
For: 33; Against: 3; Not Voting: 1;
Date: 2/24
Committee Moves to Not Support
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:
Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlfis, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelynn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler

22-CC5-¶2800-N-G
Subject: Modified Traditional Plan - Dunnam - Implementation Process - NEW Par. 2801
Petition: 90079-CC-¶2800-1-G
Membership: 43; Present: 36;
For: 32; Against: 0; Not Voting: 4;
Date: 2/24
Committee Moves to Not Support
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:
Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlfis, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelynn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler

23-TC45-¶2800-N-G
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #2 - Implementation of Plan - NEW Par. 2801
Petition: 90019-TC-¶2800-1-G
Membership: 864; Present: 798;
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;
Date: 2/25
Committee Moves to Not Support
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:
Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlfis, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelynn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler

24-TC47-¶2800-N-G
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #3 - Transition Team - NEW Par. 2802
Petition: 90020-TC-¶2800-1-G
Membership: 864; Present: 798;
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;
Date: 2/25
Committee Moves to Not Support
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:
Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlfis, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelynn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Hayden, Jo Anne Kay
Earls, Janet Butler
Austin, Sharon G
26.-TC50-¶2602-N-G  
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #5 - Judicial Council - Par. 2602  
Petition: 90022-TC-¶2602-G  
Membership: 864; Present: 798;  
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;  
Date: 2/25  
Committee Moves to Not Support  
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /  
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:  
Stikes, William Henry  
Andone, Herzen De Vega  
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E  
Schneider-Oesch, Christine  
Cantrell, James Carlton  
Fullerton, Rachel  
Ritter, Christopher M  
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence  
LaSalle, Opal Ann  
Rohlf, Carl Walter  
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn  
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar  
Caton, Evelynn S  
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D  
Scott, Derrick  
Hammond, Dionne Chandler  
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk  
Williams, Alice Marie  
Dodge, David Allen  
Earls, Janet Butler  
Austin, Sharon G  

27.-TC51-¶9-N-G  
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #6 - Jurisdictional and Central Conferences - Par. 9  
Petition: 90023-TC-¶9-C-G  
Membership: 864; Present: 798;  
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;  
Date: 2/25  
Committee Moves to Not Support  
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /  
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:  
Stikes, William Henry  
Andone, Herzen De Vega  
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E  
Schneider-Oesch, Christine  
Cantrell, James Carlton  
Fullerton, Rachel  
Ritter, Christopher M  
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence  
LaSalle, Opal Ann  
Rohlf, Carl Walter  
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn  
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar  
Caton, Evelynn S  
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D  
Scott, Derrick  
Hammond, Dionne Chandler  
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk  
Williams, Alice Marie  
Dodge, David Allen  
Earls, Janet Butler  
Austin, Sharon G  

28.-TC52-¶14-N-S-G  
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #7 - General Conference Year - Par. 14  
Petition: 90024-TC-¶14-C-S-G  
Membership: 864; Present: 798;  
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;  
Date: 2/25  
Committee Moves to Not Support  
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /  
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:  
Stikes, William Henry  
Andone, Herzen De Vega  
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E  
Schneider-Oesch, Christine  
Cantrell, James Carlton  
Fullerton, Rachel  
Ritter, Christopher M  
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence  
LaSalle, Opal Ann  
Rohlf, Carl Walter  
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn  
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar  
Caton, Evelynn S  
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D  
Scott, Derrick  
Hammond, Dionne Chandler  
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk  
Williams, Alice Marie  
Dodge, David Allen  
Earls, Janet Butler  
Austin, Sharon G  

29.-TC53-¶16-N-G  
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #8 - Connectional Conference adaptation - Par. 16  
Petition: 90025-TC-¶16-C-G  
Membership: 864; Present: 798;  
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;  
Date: 2/25  
Committee Moves to Not Support  
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /  
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:  
Stikes, William Henry  
Andone, Herzen De Vega  
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E  
Schneider-Oesch, Christine  
Cantrell, James Carlton  
Fullerton, Rachel  
Ritter, Christopher M  
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence  
LaSalle, Opal Ann  
Rohlf, Carl Walter  
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn  
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar  
Caton, Evelynn S  
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D  
Scott, Derrick  
Hammond, Dionne Chandler  
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk  
Williams, Alice Marie  
Dodge, David Allen  
Earls, Janet Butler  
Austin, Sharon G  

30.-TC54-¶19-N-G  
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #9 - General Superintendency - Par. 19  
Petition: 90026-TC-¶19-C-G  
Membership: 864; Present: 798;  
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;  
Date: 2/25  
Committee Moves to Not Support  
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /  
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:  
Stikes, William Henry  
Andone, Herzen De Vega  
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E  
Schneider-Oesch, Christine  
Cantrell, James Carlton  
Fullerton, Rachel  
Ritter, Christopher M  
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence  
LaSalle, Opal Ann  
Rohlf, Carl Walter  
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn  
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar  
Caton, Evelynn S  
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D  
Scott, Derrick  
Hammond, Dionne Chandler  
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk  
Williams, Alice Marie  
Dodge, David Allen  
Earls, Janet Butler  
Austin, Sharon G  

31.-TC56-¶23-N-G  
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #10 - Standardize Connectional Conferences - Par. 23  
Petition: 90027-TC-¶23-C-G  
Membership: 864; Present: 798;  
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;  
Date: 2/25  
Committee Moves to Not Support  
[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:

Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlf, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelyn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler

33-TC60-¶45-N-G
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #12 - Episcopacy - Par. 45
Petition: 90029-TC-¶45-C-G
Membership: 864; Present: 798;
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;
Date: 2/25
Committee Moves to Not Support

[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:

Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlf, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelyn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler

32-TC58-¶37-N-G
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #11 - Establishes New Connectional Conferences - Par. 37
Petition: 90028-TC-¶37-C-G
Membership: 864; Present: 798;
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;
Date: 2/25
Committee Moves to Not Support

[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:

Stikes, William Henry
Andone, Herzen De Vega
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlf, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelyn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler

34-TC61-¶56.3-N-G
Subject: CoWF - Connectional Conference Plan #13 - Connectional Conference Judicial court - Par. 56.3
Petition: 90030-TC-¶56.3-C-G
Membership: 864; Present: 798;
For: 734; Against: 64; Not Voting: 0;
Date: 2/25
Committee Moves to Not Support

[ ] Adopted [ ] Not Adopted Date /
Brought To Floor by the following delegates:

Stikes, William Henry
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E
Schneider-Oesch, Christine
Cantrell, James Carlton
Fullerton, Rachel
Ritter, Christopher M
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence
LaSalle, Opal Ann
Rohlf, Carl Walter
Brim, Jefferson (Jay) Kearn
Avitia-Legarda, Edgar
Caterson, Evelyn S
McMillan, Samuel (Duncan) D
Scott, Derrick
Hammond, Dionne Chandler
Hearn, Jeremy Kirk
Williams, Alice Marie
Dodge, David Allen
Earls, Janet Butler
Austin, Sharon G
HARRIS: All right. We move to a speech against the amendment. We move to Tom Berlin, mic. 4.

THOMAS MARTIN BERLIN (Virginia): My name is Tom Berlin, clergy, Virginia Conference. I rise to speak against the amendment and ask delegates to vote against it. The original Traditional Plan was sent to Judicial Council, and approximately forty percent of it was ruled unconstitutional. Then, portions of the Modified Tradition Plan were ruled unconstitutional. Yesterday, more provisions sent to the Committee on Central Conferences, rejected. This plan keeps being ruled this way, because it is not the United Methodist way. The plan is trying to force us to become a church that we are not.

Now, its authors want to convince us with another round of modifications that it can work. They’re asking for one more chance, even after the rejection of the Committee on Central Conferences last night. The danger is that if we continue with this next round of modifications, we put ourselves in danger of passing something that violates our Constitution and its rules.

The problem is that people in The United Methodist Church have asked us to accomplish something at this General Conference. They do not want us to waste our time or their money on a meeting where we find out a day too late that this Traditional Plan has broken down again. If this plan was a car, I would’ve sold it by now. They have asked us to find some resolution. This plan has had multiple opportunities to show us a way forward. It continues to lead us to a dead end. Those who have put it together are very intelligent. They are very knowledgeable. But despite their best efforts, it keeps being shown to be unconstitutional and rejected by the committee or the Judicial Council. By an overwhelming majority, the Council of Bishops has not endorsed this plan. By an overwhelming majority, the U.S. church has shown that it is not in favor of this plan. But more importantly, here in the United States, for those of us who are Americans, pure research teaches us that younger generations will see this plan as anti-gay, because they support marriage equity. We will be seen by unchurched people in the United States in a similar way that we experienced protestors outside the street corner Saturday and Sunday. I encourage you to vote against this.

LANK: Correct.

HARRIS: All right. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: All right, there’s a second. OK, this is not debatable. It does need a two-thirds vote. So get your voting devices ready. Remember, this is a motion to close debate on all that’s before us on the Traditional Plan. If you’re ready to vote and you support that motion to close debate—oh, that they’re—OK. They’re putting it on the screen now.

HARRIS: OK. It’s on the screen. The motion to close debate requires two-thirds. If you’re in favor of closing debate on all matters, you will press one (1). If you’re not in favor of closing debate, you will press two (2). Vote now.

HARRIS: All right. The vote’s in. It requires a two-thirds majority. Let’s see the results.

[Yes, 577; No, 234]

HARRIS: All right. All right, so it’s received the required two-thirds, and we move, then, to a vote on all that’s before us on—first, we’ll vote on the amendment, and then we’ll vote on the entire plan and its attachments.

So, this is a vote either for or against the amendment. We’ll wait for the screen to come up. All right. If you would support the amendment, you would press one (1). If you do not support the amendment, press two (2). You may vote now.

THOMAS ALBERT LANK (Greater New Jersey): Thank you, Chair. Tom Lank, Greater New Jersey. I think it is time to call the question. I move that we call the question on all that’s before us.

HARRIS: OK, this is a call for the questions on all matters. Correct. So this on the amendment and on the Traditional Plan.

(pause for voting)
Amended Traditional Plan Approved

HARRIS: All right, we’re ready to see the results of this vote on the amendment. And the amendment passes, 451 to 375.

[Yes, 451; No, 375]

HARRIS: We now have the entire Traditional Plan before us and all its attached amendments for voting. And as they get the screen ready, you’ll be voting yes, you support the Traditional Plan and all its amendments, including the ones that have been amended; or if you do not support it, you will press two (2). That’s yes if you support, no if you do not support. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

HARRIS: All right, the results are in, and they’ll show on the screen shortly. The Traditional Plan has passed. Please hold the applause. I thank you for your work on this plan. It will be forwarded to the plenary tomorrow.

[Yes, 461; No, 359]

Pet. 90066 Disaffiliation Comes to Table

HARRIS: Now we’ll take up the next plan, which is Disaffiliation Pet. no. 90066, found on p. 205 of your ADCA. This is now before us. Those who would like to speak must register in the pool.

So, I don’t have anyone speaking in favor in the pool as of yet, so we’ll turn to Jorge Lockward, mic. 3, to speak against.

JORGE ALFONSO LOCKWARD (New York): Thank you. I’m Jorge Lockward, lay delegate, New York Annual Conference. Friends, our connection is a precious gift passed on to us by those who came before us—our mothers, our fathers in the faith. It is a gift to me from my great-grandmother, Beatrice, and from my grandfather, Jorge, whose namesake I am. It is a gift given to me by my mentors, Rev. Pedro Pidorn, Luisa Martinez, Doug Cunningham—I could go on. And I invite you all, as you contemplate voting on this disaffiliation, to bring into the space all of the saints that have given you the gift of this connection. They had to go through so much struggle to bring us to where we are, and yet here we are, and with the flicker of a thumb on an electronic device, we may destroy what they so painstakingly created and gifted to us.

It’s time to pause and really think about what we are doing here. Are your convictions of your righteousness, of your biblical interpretations so big that they will obscure the grace of God and the understanding that your brother and sister may have truth to offer to you? It’s time to pause, and I encourage us to defeat this proposal. Thank you.

HARRIS: We have several who are asking for amendments and so we’ll turn to Beth Ann Cook, mic. 1.

BETH ANN COOK (Indiana): Beth Ann Cook, Indiana Annual Conference. I move to amend, by substitution, substituting 90059, which is found on p. 201, and if there is a second, I’ll speak to it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Second. All right.

COOK: I believe that developing a gracious exit is very important to our witness as Christians. I began praying after the last night of General Conference in Tampa for us to love one another as Jesus calls us to love, and to treat one another as we would want to be treated. I think it is essential for us to communicate to the world that even though we are deeply divided on our interpretation and understanding of scripture, we love one another. And I would want to be treated in the way that the Boyette petition calls for whether or not, which one of our main ways forward is adopted, or if nothing is adopted. I want us to fair and gracious making sure that we take care of any issues related to unfunded pension liabilities, but at the same time recognizing that these are emotional issues, deeply held personal convictions, and that people on all sides of this debate are seeking to love one another and to serve Jesus. I want us to keep in mind that we are not debating if we will love and be in ministry with our LGBTQI brothers or sisters. We all agree that we should do that. The question is how and if I were on the other side of this debate and I ended up being told I could not minister in the way that I feel that I am called to, I would want to have the freedom to be able to go and to form a like-minded Methodist group and the same is true if the One Church Plan prevails, which I have said would violate my conscience. So, I urge us to amend by substitution and to take the Boyette petition found on p. 201.

HARRIS: All right. Let me call the house’s attention to the fact that the recommendation for amendment that is being made here by substitution is to replace the current petition with one that comes from a different paragraph, and our rules state that everything must be within the same paragraph as changed, so I’m going to have to rule the substitution out of order. It doesn’t mean that it couldn’t come back when we get to that part, but for substitution, that will not be appropriate as we move on. All right? Let’s continue.

We have an amendment from Jeff Jernigan, mic. 2.

JEFF S. JERNIGAN (North Georgia): Jeff Jernigan, North Georgia. That was to amend the petition you just said was out of order.

HARRIS: OK. Thank you. Let’s go ahead and clear the queue and
start over again—the pool, rather. If you want to speak to—of course, the petition is what we’re back on now, by any means, just register into the pool. They’re still clearing it. (pause) OK. Now, if you were registered, re-register and if you choose to register now, please do so now to speak in some manner. Remember we’re still on the petition. We have a speech for, Mike Slaughter, mic. 3.

MICHAEL BARRETT
SLAUGHTER (West Ohio): Mike Slaughter, clergy, West Ohio. The reason I support this Taylor resolution: I am for the One Church Plan, but at the same time if everyone cannot be included, then I can’t stay in a church where everyone is not welcomed; and if the One Church Plan passes, I know that some of my conservative brothers and sisters, by good conscience, can’t stay. So I would support this as a gracious exit that is just.

HARRIS: Thank you. Speech against. We move to Cedrick Bridgeforth, mic. 1.

BRIDGEFORTH: Mr. Chair, Cedrick Bridgeforth, clergy, California/Pacific Conference. I rise to speak against this action because I understood that we were coming here for this General Conference to work on matters that would unify us; matters that would, indeed bring us together; not matters that would have us necessarily agree on every point and every detail that was brought before the body. I stand here concerned about the impact that passing this petition would have on our overall ability to continue to function as The United Methodist Church. Concerned about that because I am an African-American male, clergy person, serving within this church, within the bounds of the United States.

I am aware that on our day of prayer, that in our time of sharing from the U.S. perspective, that the majority of what was lifted up from the stage where you now sit focused on black and brown people in the United States, many of them in cages. Those African-American males in prisons were lifted up as opportunities and as challenges for us as a church. For those brown brothers and sisters in cages were lifted up as opportunities and challenges within the United States and within The United Methodist Church. I heard that, and I took it seriously, as I sat in my seat and prayed alongside every other faithful United Methodist in this arena, and that home viewing on live stream. I trusted and believed that as we prayed those prayers that we were naming, that as a church, this is where we would want to serve and place some emphasis, because in the midst of those challenges we could also see that there could be hope if we bound ourselves together and worked on those matters. So, as I read this petition, I see us whittling away at our potential to remain together and to truly address the challenges so that those challenges indeed become the hopes, not of us gathered in this space, but for those who are not even privileged to know where we are, and who will not be privileged to know that we ever existed. So, I speak against this so that all of our resources are held together as a body for the future generations to know Jesus Christ and his love. Thank you.

HARRIS: Thank you. We move now towards amendment, and Judy Kenaston, mic. 3.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90066 Concerning Grants

JUDITH MODLIN KENASTON: Judy Kenaston, West Virginia Conference. I move to amend by deletion the C – Grants on p. 206. The entire paragraph which reads, “All grants received by the local church from the annual conference or its ancillary organizations within five years of the date of disaffiliation shall be repaid.”

HARRIS: So, you’re moving to strike it, that paragraph. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: OK, we have a second. You may speak to it.

KENASTON: I would first state that I am opposed to dissolution, the dissolution plans, but I fear that if this plan does pass, that this part of the plan will cause great harm. In 2016, the West Virginia Annual Conference area was devastated by flooding and our churches received numerous UMCOR grants. These churches may choose to leave under this plan and they are in no position to repay such grants.

HARRIS: The pool is open now, so if you would like to speak to the amendment, you could register in the pool at this time.

I don’t see anyone in the pool. Let me move to Bill Stikes. He has some kind of inquiry, if he’ll come to mic. 2 and state the purpose of his rising. If he’s going to mic. 4.

WILLIAM HENRY STIKES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Bill Stikes, lay, North Georgia. I’m not sure if I’m in order or not, but I wanted to request a Judicial Council review of the Traditional Plan as amended that was just passed.

HARRIS: This body cannot refer anything to Judicial Council. That would have to be done tomorrow.

STIKES: Thank you.

HARRIS: You’re welcome. We have also Katie Dawson. Please go to mic. 4, and state the purpose of your rising.

KATIE Z. DAWSON (Iowa): Katie Dawson, clergy from the Iowa Annual Conference. I have a question and my question is in regards to Diane’s [Judith Modlin Kenaston’s]
amendment. I serve on UMCOR. I am on the Board of Directors, and the way I read this Par. C, it refers to grants received by the local church from the annual conference or its ancillary organizations. And my question is, does that include general church grants? And that’s what I’d like information on.

HARRIS: All right. If we could have the maker of the motion come to the microphone and respond to that question.

(pause)

JUDITH MODLIN KENASTON (West Virginia): Our churches did not receive their grants directly from UMCOR. They received investment from our long-term recovery plan to be prepared for future events.

HARRIS: Thank you. So we’re back on the motion.

KENASTON: And that’s from our annual conference. Thanks.

HARRIS: We’re back on the motion now, and we heard a speech against. And we have a speech for. Lilian Gallo Seagren, mic. 4.

LILIAN GALLO SEAGREN (Iowa): Lilian Gallo Seagren, Iowa Annual Conference. I speak in support to the amendment. When we give or do ministry with the poor and afflicted, we do not go back if they don’t agree with us. It’s just like, I fed you, now I’m asking you to spit out the food that we give you. I support for the amendment.

HARRIS: OK. We move to Derrick Scott, for a purpose that he’ll state when he gets to the microphone.

DERRICK SCOTT (Florida):

HARRIS: Mic. 1.

SCOTT: —lay delegate, Florida Conference. I have a question. Am I in order?

HARRIS: Yes.

SCOTT: Are we aware of the constitutionality of this, of the petition that is before us?

HARRIS: I can’t answer that question, because that would be a Judicial Council decision, and so they’re the only body that could rightly answer the constitutionality of anything that comes from General Conference.

SCOTT: Was there a ruling, I believe Decision 1366, that someone could speak to, I think, related to this? I’m just curious if—

HARRIS: Yeah.

SCOTT: This is going to—

HARRIS: Sure.

SCOTT: —keep coming back.

HARRIS: I think this is a question that tomorrow could be asked, and perhaps responses come from that body.

SCOTT: Thank you.

HARRIS: All right. We have a point of order. Horátio Vilanculo, mic. 2. Please state the violation, what rule is being violated, and your rationale.

HORÁTIO ZEDEQUIAS VILANCULO (Mozambique South): OK, Thank you, Mr. Chair.

VILANCULO: (simultaneous interpretation): At this moment, my intervention, as far as it regards the ideas that are being circulated in these debates—we would like to request that we reflect through prayer, looking at matters related to the unity of the church.

HARRIS: I’m sorry, but this is not a point of order. A point of order has to be a violation of a rule, and so I’m going to ask you that that would be saved for another time, but not as a point of order. Thank you. All right. We have another point of order. Ian Urriola, mic. 1. Please state the rule that you feel has been violated and the rationale.

IAN CARLOS URRIOLA (Upper New York): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ian Urriola, Upper New York Annual Conference. I’m a layperson, and my point of order is in relation to, I believe it is Par. 2620.2.c, which I believe allows you as the chair to refer something to the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision. Is that correct, Mr. Chair?

HARRIS: What page is this on that you’re referring to?

URRIOLA: It’s in our Book of Discipline.

HARRIS: Oh, OK. What page of The Book of Discipline?

URRIOLA: Par. 2620.2.c, I believe.

HARRIS: OK, hold on a minute.

URRIOLA: I’m sorry, Mr. Chair. It is 2610.2.c. My apologies.

(pause)

HARRIS: You just have to remind us. We’re in committee, and so things that might be available for chairs of plenaries are not available for chairs of committees. And referral to Judicial Council is one of those.

URRIOLA: OK, Thank you.

HARRIS: Thank you. All right, we move back to the main motion, and we’re looking for speeches. Let’s move to Bill Hatcher, who would like to move to close the debate.

HARRIS: Mic. 2.

WILLIAM STANLEY HATCHER (South Georgia): 4.

HARRIS: OK, 4.

HATCHER: Bishop, Bill Hatcher, lay, South Georgia. I move the previous question on this amendment.

HARRIS: All right. The previous question, which is to close debate, has been moved. Is there a second? All right, and seconded. So, if you’ll get your voting device. Are you ready to vote on the amendment, which would be the effect of closing debate? So, as the screen prepares itself, if you vote for to close the debate, you would select one (1). If you vote not to close the debate, you’ll select two (2). Please vote now.
(pause for voting)

HARRIS: The results are in. Let’s see. All right, so you have voted to close the debate. And now we will be voting on the amendment to strike out the paragraph.
[Yes, 786; No, 223]

Grant Amendment Passes

HARRIS: And if you would support striking out the paragraph, and when they’re ready, you would vote yes. If you do not support striking out that paragraph, you would vote no. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

HARRIS: All right, we’re ready to show the results. And you have passed the amendment. So, that reference is stricken, and now the rest of it returns to the main petition, and that’s still before us.
[Yes, 599; No, 223]

HARRIS: So, continue to register in the pool if you want to have the opportunity to speak. Have an amendment. Cynthia Weems, you go to mic. 1.

Motion to Amend Terms and Conditions of Disaffiliation

CYNTHIA DEE WEEMS (Florida): Cynthia Weems, clergy, Florida. I also would like to state that I’m not in favor of petitions to exit. However, knowing that this one is solid in many ways and knowing this may be needed, I would like to amend point 3, where it says, “Initial and quick inquiry to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church.”

So move down a few lines. After the sentence, “a request to the District Superintendent to begin this process,” period. I amend it to read, “Part of the process will be to request the terms and conditions of the disaffiliation.” At that point, we will jump all the way to the bottom of the page, where in no. 5, it gives all of the terms and conditions, where it starts with, “established by the resident bishop of the applicable annual conference,” et cetera, et cetera.

HARRIS: Cynthia, let me interrupt you.

WEEMS: If I have a second, I’ll speak to it.

HARRIS: Let me interrupt you. In terms of what we had said earlier about trying to do two sections in this. And you remember the parliamentarian saying that in order to be able to do that, you’d have to really replace the whole section. And so—

WEEMS: Can I suggest replacing point 5 and moving it above 3, then?

HARRIS: Well, what page is that on?

WEEMS: Sorry, 205.

HARRIS: All right.

WEEMS: So, my amendment would be to replace 5, move it before 3. If I have a second, I can speak to it.

HARRIS: Right. So, you move 5 up, so it becomes 3, and move everything else down. All right. Is there a second? All right.

WEEMS: Thank you. Having been in lengthy conversations about terms and conditions and being a superintendent, knowing I may be in a position to walk with churches in this, some of the terms and conditions, like, for example, pension liability, may be exorbitant for some churches. A million dollars. So, the thought of a church voting to disaffiliate before they know the terms and conditions seems potentially unconscionable, really unconscionable, because of the possibility that the terms and conditions can be great.

People may think they’re voting on one issue, but really, it’s a larger process. And for us to be good stewards on both sides, it seems that church members, before a church conference, would need to know all of the ramifications before voting.

HARRIS: OK, so this amendment is before us, and if you want to register to speak either for or against the amendment, you’ll register into the pool now.

I don’t see anyone. Let me ask Jeffrey Kuan, if he will rise. He has some kind of inquiry. Please state the purpose of your rising to mic. 4.

KAH-JIN JEFFREY KUAN (California-Nevada Conference): Mr. Chair, Jeffrey Kuan from California- Nevada Conference. I rise to rebuke your previous ruling of the chair in relation to the declaratory decisions. If I am in order, I will continue.

HARRIS: Hold on a moment please. (conferring on platform) Let me respond. There are really not two opinions on this. Also, you didn’t register to make an appeal; you just had an inquiry, but I do want to speak to your concern here and we are clear at least in our conversations that there cannot be an appeal from this legislative committee. Now, tomorrow is a different story and so we are, I think we are going to leave the matter where it is.

KUAN: Thank you.

Amendment of Terms and Conditions Approved

HARRIS: Thank you. All right for those who would like to speak to the amendment the pool is still open. All right if there is no one in the pool speaking who hasn’t previous spoken on this subject either for or against, so I think we are ready to move to action on this amendment. This is to move Par. 5 up. And if you will get your voting devices ready and if you would support this amendment, you would vote yes. If you do not support this amendment, you would vote no. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)
HARRIS: OK, we are ready to display the vote. And you and you have passed the amendment.  
[Yes, 478; No, 343]  
Now, before we proceed on I wanted to let you know that we were actually doing some research now on the question of referral. Despite the things that we have already said we want to make sure we are as clear as possible about that. Our parliamentarians, some of the bishops, are also looking into—is this a body that can make referral this legislative committee. So hold steady. We will get back to you on that. Now, we have the main motion before us as amended. The pool is open for further debate or for other ways to reach the floor. We move to an amendment from Phil Schroeder, mic. 2. Mic. 4.  
PHILIP DANIEL SCHROEDER  
(North Georgia): Is 4 OK?  
HARRIS: Yep.  
Motion to Amend by Adding 33% Fair Market Value  
SCHROEDER: Phil Schroeder, North Georgia, clergy. I am concerned about these exit plans, and I am concerned about perhaps the 33% of people who don’t want to leave, so I would like to amend 5a on p. 206 with these words, “with a minimum repayment to the annual conference of no less than 33% of the fair market value of the local church property based on the average of three appraisals.”  
HARRIS: All right, is there a second? I am not hearing any second. OK. Thank you. You may speak to it.  
SCHROEDER: I just think it’s only fair if people who have been loyal to our churches want to stay as part of the denomination and the majority of their local church chooses to leave, a percentage of the value of that church should stay with the denomination, so we can start a new church in that area with those resources and the people that want to be a part of it. Thank you.  
HARRIS: All right.  
HARRIS: This is an amendment, and so the pool is open for those who would like to speak for or against the amendment, or have some other thing to bring our attention to. So, we move to Owen Ross, who speaks for the amendment, mic. 4. And please bring up the amendment, as written, to our secretary.  
CARLENE REBECCA FOGLE-MILLER (Florida): And keep the pink sheets. I get the yellow and the white copies. You keep the pink sheet. Don’t bring me your pink sheet.  
HARRIS: All right. Mr. Ross.  
OWEN K. ROSS (North Texas): Owen Ross, clergy for the North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, and, like Phil, I am the church developer working in my conference. Churches are born. Churches have life spans. Churches have life cycles. And as Phil says, as a church may vote to leave, another church may also be born in that area. And so this amendment is actually setting forth a way to reach more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ through multiplication. So, I believe that if we can, as a church, be mindful, gracious, considerate, and compassionate for those sisters and brothers of ours that desire to stay within the denomination, then those that are leaving can bless them and empower them to reach more people for the gospel and do the just thing as those 33% had supported their church; that 33% who have given to their church, as well as the saints that came before that built and invested in that church. Thirty-three percent is a number that is fair, that’s being set, and that can be invested in the birthing of something new that can reach more people for the gospel of Jesus Christ.  
HARRIS: Thank you. We move to a speech against. Beverly Maddox, mic. 2.  
BEVERLY BAGGETT MADDOX (Alabama-West Florida): Mic. 4.  
HARRIS: Mic. 4.  
MADDOX: Beverly Maddox, Alabama-West Florida Conference laity. I would like to speak against this because personally, I am in a very small, rural church. There would not be an opportunity for another church to be planted in that area. We are the only church in a ten-mile area in a very limited population. I am only one church in a whole area conference that contains many rural churches, and it would put an undue hardship on those churches who are strongly traditional. So, I would urge to vote against that. Thank you.  
HARRIS: All right. Now we turn to a speech for. Hortência Langa Bacela. Mic. 2. You need your translation device.  
HORTÊNCIA AMÉRICO LANGA BACELA (Mozambique South): Thank you and sorry, Bishop. I think I pressed the—somewhere on the device.  
HARRIS: OK. All right. Move to Riley O’Flynn, who has a motion to close debate. Mic. 1.  
RILEY REBA O’FLYNN (Upper New York): Riley O’Flynn, laity, Upper New York Annual Conference. I move to close debate on all that is before us.  
HARRIS: Is there a second? All right. This is on the amendment and then, this is to close debate, and so we’ve closed debate on the amendment and then we’ll vote on the amendment and then we’ll vote on the petition. So, as they prepare us, remember if you are for closing debate, you press one (1). If you do not favor closing debate, you press two (2). Please vote now.
All right. The votes are ready to be shown. And you have chosen to close debate. [Yes, 596; No, 214]

And so we now will vote on the amendment and that’s to move on paragraph 5. This is to deal with the 33%. You’ll have to get into the pool (conferring).

That’s because the previous question’s been ordered. And so, there’s no possibility to address, I’m sorry. We’re getting ready to vote on the amendment. It’s paragraph 5.a., p. 206. All right. I’m going to have our secretary read the amendment again so that we’re clear on what we’re voting on, and if she would do that now.

CARLENE REBECCA FOGLE-MILLER (Florida): It helps if I turn the mic. on. This amendment as to 5.a., the sentence, “with a minimum repayment to the annual conference of no less than 33 % of a fair market value of the local church property based on the average of three appraisals.”

Fair Market Amendment Fails

HARRIS: We’re ready to vote. Get the screen up. Once the screen says yes and no, of course, you’ll vote one (1) if you support this amendment and vote two (2) if you do not support the amendment. Please vote now.

[Yes, 279; No 544]

Amended Pet. 90066 Passed

HARRIS: Right, the previous question was ordered on all matters, and so we have the petition before us as amended. When you’re ready, it will show one (1) for yes and two (2) for no. If you support this petition as amended, you would say yes; if you do not support it, you would say no. Please vote now.

HARRIS: All right, we’re ready to see the results, and you have passed the Disaffiliation as amended. [Yes, 427; No, 385]

Pet. 90059 Disaffiliation Introduced

HARRIS: Now we move to the Disaffiliation, the Boyette petition, Pet. no. 90059, p. 201 of your ADCA. The pool is now open for those who would like to speak for or against, or have some other recognition that they’d like to be available for.

FOGLE-MILLER: We’ve had some questions directed up to the stage regarding minority reports. If you are interested in filing a minority report on anything that we do, come see me for the pink form. This must be received back to us, with all of the appropriate signatures, within two hours of the action taken by the body, so if you are interested in getting the form, come see me as soon as possible and you’ll need to fill out the form for a minority report as soon as possible and bring it back to be within two hours. Thank you.

HARRIS: And to be assured, we’re going to start the clock now on everything that we’ve already completed, so don’t think that if we’ve completed something earlier that the time has run out; it has not.

Move to a point of order. Jim Allen, mic. 1. Please state the rule that’s in violation and the rationale.

JAMES (JIM) R. ALLEN (Tennessee): Jim Allen, Tennessee Conference. I am raising to, perhaps this is a question rather than a rule. During the consideration of the last item, on at least two occasions, I instructed the chair through my device that I wished to make an amendment and yet while those were pending, we considered a motion to close debate. It was my understanding that motions to amend had higher priority and would have to be considered at least to be made before the motion to close debate.

HARRIS: Yeah, it is my understanding that they actually are lower priority, those questions of amendment, than closing the debate. And the other item I want to remind people, that once you put your name in the pool for any of these things, it is a request to be there, there is no assurance unless it is a point of order or something that we would—there is no guarantee that we would get to it. We do have a point of order, Jay Brim, mic. 2. Please state the rule and the rationale that has been violated.

JEFFERSON (JAY) KEARN BRIM (Rio Texas): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jay Brim, lay delegate from Rio Texas. I raise rule 33, sub. 2, which I believe mandates that this petition be laid aside as rejected because we have adopted the Taylor petition.

HARRIS: OK, so you are referring to the petition that is before us now?

BRIM: Yes, sir.

HARRIS: All right. Jay, could you stay at the microphone for a bit there, and just repeat what you just have said so we are clear?

BRIM: Having just re-read sub. 2, I will withdraw it because it’s a different paragraph.

HARRIS: OK. Thank you. We are back to the Boyette. Let’s turn to Bob Phillips for a speech for mic. 1.
 Speeches For/Against Petition 90059

ROBERT JOSEPH PHILLIPS (Illinois Great Rivers): Mr. Chairman and ought to be Bishop Harris (laughter). I’ve been in The United Methodist Church long enough to know that where there are two Methodists, there are three opinions and a potluck, and I have also read Walter Lippman’s line that where all think alike, no one is really thinking very much, and our own leader, John Wesley, who reminds us if we cannot all think alike, can we not love alike.

I support the Boyette proposal because it helps us to recognize the fact that sometimes we like people a bit better and love them a bit more if we are not necessarily in the same room.

I recall what happened with our Episcopal friends when some more traditional folks in Christian conscience felt they could not go along with the direction that church was taking and how it was that the leadership in that denomination decreed that while the members were free to go, the property stayed. They have a trust clause. And that they would not sell that property to the departing congregation for any price.

As a navy chaplain, I was affiliated in a conference a little west of where we are now when a number of United Methodist pastors of more traditional convictions wound up outside of the United Methodist ministry together with several of their churches. Again, over a matter of conscience of the way certain bishops and leadership were acting. And how it was that they left, but they could not take their churches with them without one lawsuit after another. That is something that no one wants to see. And the deeper issue, of course, is one of what are the boundaries of conscience in getting along with each other. If my wife, Christy, asked me, “Bob, are you faithful to me?” and I reply, “Frequently,” there would be words and should be. And when you have folks who, in response to the question, are you faithful to the vows you have taken, not in terms of disagreement, which we all do, but in terms of disobedience, and the best answer is, Frequently, we have got issues.

The Boyette proposal is a way to allow integrity for those from the left, the right, traditionalists, progressives, if conscience does not permit them to obey, to depart with grace and with a proper accountability to pay the legitimate bills of doing so, but to leave still as brothers and sisters in Christ.

HARRIS: All right, thank you. Now we have a speech against. Gail Douglas Boykin, mic. 3.

GAIL DOUGLAS-BOYKIN (New York): Good morning, Mr. Chair. I rise to speak against this petition for disaffiliation because my thought that our purpose here was for one of unity, not for one to split, not for one to leave, not for one of a gracious exit, but one to bring us together as a church. This is a plan to separate, to allow people to leave, and which would ultimately hurt the church overall. As a person, or a woman, of color, when I think back to history and how exit plans have hurt my people and people that look like me when property is put before people and taken, it just doesn’t speak to what is Christ-like and what we are here for. Leaving and disaffiliation is not of God, it’s not of love. And if love is the greatest gift of all, then I would ask those to vote against this petition. Thank you.

JOSEPH HARRIS: Thank you. We turn then to a speech for, and the Chuck Savage, mic. 2.

CHARLES WALTER SAVAGE (North Georgia): Chuck Savage, clergy, North Georgia Annual Conference, and I wish to speak for the Boyette amendment. I have a friend that is a marriage counselor. And what he says is that when we have a family situation, and we are family, that the best that we can have is a good marriage. He also says that the third best thing that we can have is a bad marriage. And the worst thing that we can have is a bad divorce.

The second best thing that we can have is a good divorce. And along those lines, as I look at the history of the Methodist church, there are many occasions where we have had good divorces and vital congregations have been created. And for us to create an environment that makes inhibitions for people to go and do the work of making disciples is just egregious. So, I would ask this body to vote completely for the Boyette proposal.

HARRIS: OK. We’ll hear a speech against. Laura Merrill, mic 2.

LAURA ANNE MERRILL (Rio Texas): Mic. 4, Mr. Chair. Laura Merrill, clergy delegate, Rio Texas. I speak against, I have to do this, I’m sorry. I speak against this petition. My objection lies at the bottom of p. 201 in the section where it says that unfunded pension liability of churches leaving the denomination shall be deducted from the general church’s and annual conference’s reserves. If we are to speak of a good divorce, I think we have already done that in the disaffiliation petition that we worked on prior to this one. This disaffiliation, instead to me, feels like setting the house on fire as you walk out the door. I don’t believe that if we come to a day when we have to part as brothers and sisters in the same church, that those who leave should wreck the connection that they are leaving as they go. I would urge you to vote against this petition.

HARRIS: Alright. We’ve heard two for and two against. Let me move to Craig Scott. He has a motion to close. Mic. 4.
VERNON CRAIG SCOTT  
(Iowa): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Long time listener, first time caller. I’d like to move to close debate on this matter. Thank you, sir.

HARRIS: Alright. Is there a second? Alright. It’s been moved and seconded that we close debate on this matter. So, if you will get your voting devices ready. If you would close debate, you would press one (1). If you are not ready to close debate, you would press two (2). Please vote now.

HARRIS: All right, the results are ready, and they’ll show on the screen. And you have voted to approve the closing of debate. [Yes, 744; No, 73]

**Pet. 90059 Disaffiliation Passed**

Now, we have the Boyette amendment—the Boyette petition rather—before us. For voting. And if you would support this Boyette petition, you will vote yes. If you do not support the petition, you will vote no. Please vote now.

**(pause for voting)**

OK. We’re ready to see the results. And you have passed Petition 90059. [Yes, 425; No, 392]

Let me say a word of forgiveness, or ask for your forgiveness, I should have not referred to these petitions by the submitter’s name, and I will work to avoid doing that in the future and just have the petition number, so that we will follow things by the petition number.

It’s time for our lunch break. A couple of items though that I want to bring to your attention that’ll be important for us to hear.

**Right of Committee to Refer to Judicial Council Affirmed**

One is, those who are doing research on a question of referrals have discovered something that we were not aware of, and that is that we have two Judicial Council decisions. Decision No. 1318 and Decision No. 887, that in fact, do say that there can be referral from committee to Judicial Council. So what does that mean for our work so far? If there was something that you had desired to refer that had, we’ve already acted on, we’re going to allow that referral to take place. So if there’s something that we’ve already acted on and you choose to refer it, and you make a motion to refer it, then that would be in order. We weren’t aware of, your chair was not aware of these two rulings. The whole house is now, and we’ll move accordingly.

Also, the information on minority reports, the two-hour rule is really for notification that a minority report is going to be filed. So, as long as you let us know within those two hours, you can get the paperwork to us in time for us to move it to the plenary on the next day.

The print deadline for DCA is 3:30. So just keep that in mind, for those of you who want to do minority reports.

**(conferring on platform)** All right, we’re in a little bit of a dilemma, but I’m reluctant to start a plan and then have to break and then come back to it, but I’m also told that if we break now, not all the lunch facilities are ready. They were scheduled to be ready at 12:30. So, and we really need to just take the hour and no longer than that. So, I guess our alternative is just to move forward, and then we’ll have to take a pause in dealing with the next plan and then come back to it when we can. All right? So, we move now to the One Church Plan, Petition 90001 to Petition 90014 except for Petition 90015. That’s found on pp. 164–168 of your DCA.

The pool is open for other considerations, so let’s see what—and we do have a point of order. Alex Shanks, mic. 1. Please state the rule and the rationale for violation.

ALEX SHANKS (Florida): Rule 25 found on p. 50 of your ADCA. Mr. Chairman, I know you’re trying to move us expeditiously and follow the order of motions, but my question is, we had a number of amendments to the past petition that were in the queue even before we started talking about speeches for and against before the motion was made to close debate. My question is, why aren’t we allowed to make those amendments? It seems like there’s no way to actually make an amendment if people begin to close the debates and then we’re just going to have make those same amendments tomorrow.

HARRIS: Yes. This is not a point of order but a loving response to what you were saying, is that the assembly makes the decision and so when close debate comes, it comes when the assembly decides to do that, it that actually takes priority over all that’s pending.

SHANKS: So what you’re saying is that even if the motion to amend is the first thing in the pool, as soon as someone makes a motion to close the debate, that takes precedence no matter what time things were in the pool.

HARRIS: Well, I think, I know, I’m the only one who one sees things come into the pool. And remember the pool is a request. All right? To have these things taken care of. We haven’t taken care of every amendment that has been on every situation because the body has decided to move forward from that point. And so, it’s the body’s decision.

SHANKS: I understand that but if we weren’t using the electronic pools and I had raised my card first, then because of the timing the motion to amend would be properly before the body.
HARRIS: I’ll just say that that isn’t properly before us again because of the explanation that I’ve just given. It’s the body that makes decision if we close debate and that’s over everything that’s pending. If there are other amendments, and the people want to, the vote would be not to close debate, but to continue on.

SHANKS: Thank you, Chair.

HARRIS: Thank you.

(pause)

HARRIS: Let’s do this. Let’s try this. Lunch, I’m just informed, is ready now. Rather than us beginning with all the debate on this, let’s, let’s prepare to break for lunch. Then come back and then we’ll be able to have the whole matter before us. That means one hour. At one o’clock return to your seats and we’ll begin a debate on the One Church Plan. You’re dismissed for lunch.

(music)

(applause)

Monday Afternoon, February 25, 2019

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma): Amen. I trust we had a good lunch. We’re ready to get on with our tasks. We have a few announcements from our secretary and we, we’ll turn to our secretary.

CARLENE REBECCA FOGLE-MILLER (Florida): First, a simple reminder that there is a prayer room on the concourse level across from 133 and 134. There are trained prayer volunteers and spiritual directors available there for you today and tomorrow, so please take advantage of that.

Next, a reminder. Your voting card must stay with you at all times. When you go out to lunch, when you break for dinner, when you go to the restroom, take your card with you. Please do not leave it in the device. Some of you did this over the lunch break. The pages are finding you with your voting card.

Finally, if you have or intend to file a minority report, anything that does not fit on the page, we would request that you please send us electronically, as well. Come see me for information on how to do that during our next break. Also, please include the contact information for whoever will sign the proof sheet. So whoever it is that is in charge of writing or giving us the minority report—we need your contact information so that we can contact you when we have things for you to sign. That’s all.

Explanation of how Speaker “Pool” Functions

HARRIS: Alright. Just a couple of reminders. Our goal this afternoon is of course to complete our work to move forward to plenary in the morning and so our job is to perfect these petitions, and so that’s what the task that is before us. I just want to remind us that points of order have to cite the rule. I’m going to call you out of order if it’s a speech for anything other than that, and then to give the rationale for why there’s a thought of it being out of order. And one of the things that some of you have come and asked us for is particularly before we do it, a close-the-debate vote; can we have any information as to how many amendments are pending, et cetera? And I’ve made the decision that we will do that; so if we get a motion to close a debate, I will let you know the numbers that are in the pool.

Remember, that the pool is like a drop of water. There’s a lot to select from and not everyone is going to be selected. I look around to make sure that we get people from all across the body here, from our Central Conference, to make sure that we give equal consideration for women and for others who might like to address the body. If you’re in the pool, no guarantee that you’ll be able to be recognized. Also, want us to move us along because we do have one enemy today and it’s the clock, and we’re challenged to do our work efficiently and sufficiently so that we cover all the things that we need to cover in preparation for tomorrow. Alright? So we move now on to the One Church Plan. That was before us before we had our lunch break. Just a reminder, that’s Petition 9001 to 90014, found on p. 164 to 168 of your ADCA. Remember all those petitions are grouped together for the purposes of this plan and this will be your opportunity to speak to a particular petition or to speak to the plan itself. The pool is open for folks who would like to speak for or against or needs some other recognition.

(pause)

Let me move to Alex Shanks, who will speak for the One Church Plan. Mic. 1.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I did not have my name in the pool.

HARRIS: Oh, I’m sorry. OK. All right, in order to be fair, this was opened at the beginning of the lunch. We’re going to clear the pool and then ask for those of you who want to have some status in addressing the conference to resubmit your status. Remember, we’re on the One Church Plan, and you have the ability to speak for or against the plan, to amend, and to get other considerations if you enter the pool. And so the pool is cleared now, and those who would like to participate
by addressing the conference can enter now.

Joe Daniels has asked to address the conference on a matter. Please go to mic. 3 and state the reason for your rising.

**Question about Disaffiliation Financial Implications**

JOSEPH WAYNE DANIELS (Baltimore-Washington): Mr. Chair, thank you for recognizing. Joe Daniels, Baltimore-Washington Conference. Before we go further, I have a question or questions that I’m hoping someone can address the conference about. We just finished having two votes with regards to Disaffiliation, and I’d like to know if someone can speak to us about the impact of money and finances and all of this, particularly around how this will impact pensions, as well as conference reserves, and other matters pertaining to annual conferences and central conferences across the world.

HARRIS: Though I don’t know who might be able to speak to it, perhaps a representative from GCFA or from Pensions. OK. The general secretary for GCFA is on his way here and will give us an answer to, at least some of the question that he’s able to.

DANIELS: I believe this information is highly important for the body, particularly as we’re moving forward in our voting.

HARRIS: Yes. So, we’ll wait for the General Secretary to get to the stage. Well, as he’s still making his way up here, let’s go for a speech for, and that way, we’ll have at least one of those done. OK, since we do have a representative from Wespath available to answer part of that question, why don’t we have our Wespath representative go to, is it mic. 2? Yes, mic. 2.

**Wespath Responds**

ANDY HENDREN (General Counsel, Wespath): Thank you. My name’s Andy Hendren, General Counsel for Wespath Benefits and Investments. The question as it relates to pensions in the last two petitions, the 90066 and 90059, both petitions have language about churches that Disaffiliate paying a pension withdrawal payment to their annual conference. Both petitions are fairly aligned with the Petition 90016 that we passed, or that this legislative committee passed yesterday that came from Wespath. However, Petition 90059, Disaffiliation, has an additional offset of that pension payment for annual conference reserves, unrestricted reserves, I believe it says, and general agency reserves. That adds an administrative wrinkle or complexity to the calculation. I can’t speak to the effect on agencies, other than it will draw down their reserves as churches depart. Some annual conferences have reserves that are dedicated to retiree medical benefits that could be impacted. But in the big picture, both petitions have a withdrawal liability payment of some sort.

MOSES KUMAR (General Secretary, GCFA): Brother Chair?

HARRIS: I see our General Secretary, Moses, at mic. 4. Why don’t we let him speak, and then you can respond to both of their presentations.

DANIELS: Thank you.

HARRIS: All right? Mic. 4.

**GCFA Responds**

KUMAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’m going to address what Andy ended at with 90059. I want to start with that. Then, I will talk about the financial impact for our annual conference as far as the general church. Petition 90059—the petition would first require the local church a share of unfunded pension liabilities to be paid by annual conference a proportionate share of unrestricted general agency reserves. Second part of the requirement is, any unrestricted reserves held by the annual conferences, GCFA would be required to take the necessary amount from the unrestricted general agency reserves, and send them to Wespath. GCFA neither has the legal authority to confiscate the unrestricted reserves of other general agencies, nor in most instances, the ability to even access them. So, I understand that it was passed, but I think it is always stretching, that when we don’t have a legal responsibility, or access to either the annual conferences or the agencies, that the General Conference asked us to do that.

So the second thing, can I proceed, Mr. Chair?

HARRIS: Please proceed.

KUMAR: The second thing is, in terms of financial impact to the general church or the annual conferences, we will not be able to evaluate that. The reason being, in the Disaffiliation, we have no idea how many churches will leave at this point of time. GCFA is not in the business of guessing, but we wanted to have real facts before we can really assess the financial impact for the annual conferences and to the rest of the general church fund.

HARRIS: OK.

JOSEPH WAYNE DANIELS (Baltimore-Washington): May I put before the body that we are making very serious decisions about our future without any clear understand of the financial ramifications that are going to be faced by all of us across the world. I don’t think that’s wise. I think that’s, it definitely is not biblical, theological, and spiritual; and I would hope that we would address this issue before taking any final votes tomorrow.
HARRIS: All right. Thank you, for the information and also for those who have shared the question that was asked. All right. We move back now to—let’s move to Scott Campbell; he has a question, mic. 4, and state the purpose of his rising.

WILLIAM MARTIN CAMPBELL (New England): Mr. Chairperson, Scott Campbell, from the New England Conference. I appreciate the willingness of the chair to reconsider its earlier ruling about requesting a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council. We obviously don’t want to find ourselves in the same place we did with Plan UMC. So at this time, I would request that the body refer the Traditional Plan, that was passed this morning, to the Judicial Council under the terms of Par. 2610.

HARRIS: I am sorry, Scott, you can make that motion but not while this motion is pending, and so you would come back when we have disposed of the main motion that we are considering now; then it would be in order.

CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Speeches For/Against One Church Plan

HARRIS: Now we return to the main motion of the One Church Plan. Remember, if you are in the pool, you can speak for or against this plan. OK, Patricia Farris, mic. 1, rises to speak for the plan.

PATRICIA ELLEN FARRIS (California-Pacific): Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Patricia Farris, California-Pacific Conference. It is my joy to rise and speak in support of the One Church Plan. I have been a pastor in our church for over forty years. It is our church that raised me up from a child, to a youth, to a young adult, to help me hear a call to ordained ministry, to challenge me, to educate me, and then to send me forth to serve God’s people in our own annual conference, in our congregations, and around the world, in a variety of places.

And I am so very grateful for our church, our big beautiful, dynamic, effective, powerful, missional, United Methodist Church. So many of the vital ministries that we heard about Saturday during our day of prayer, bringing people to the love of Christ, forming disciples, raising up children and youth, cheering with mission partners around the world to address needs in education, health, agriculture, immigration, incarceration, making peace in every place of war.

Let’s not do anything here to diminish our church or its mission even one little bit. We are here with the opportunity now to do and create something beautiful for God, to witness to the world that even people who clearly differ on important matters can, nevertheless, come together, worship and pray together, sing together, in the best of our Methodist way of conferencing and let our awesome God work through us by the powerful power of the Holy Spirit to create on this earth a new manifestation of unity. Unity that for us comes through our faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Let us witness now and long into the future to a still more excellent and beautiful way and to our determination to not let anything separate us from the love of God, or our love for one another. Let us rise above that which would divide us to show the world that even through our diversity—

HARRIS: Time has expired. Thank you. Now move toward a speech against and I call Rich Hoffman, mic. 4.

RICHARD HOFFMAN (Western Pennsylvania): Dr. Rich Hoffman, Western, PA. I rise to speak against the motion. As we talk about possible benefits of the One Church Plan, I urge the body to be cautious. The One Church Plan whose core principles would allow for same sex weddings and partnered gay clergy with the hope of benefitting the church would also bring about clear risks. We can look to history and see that churches who have made similar measures have experienced deep decline and division. If we want to preserve unity, this petition is not the way forward. Thank you for voting “no” to the One Church Plan.

JOSEPH HARRIS: Alright. We’ll move to a few who are asking for amendments. Becca Girrell, mic. 4.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90004

REBECCA J. GIRRELL (New England): Good afternoon, honored chairperson and the General Conference. My name is Reverend Rebecca, clergy, New England Annual Conference. I rise to make a motion to amend Petition 90004, found on p. 165 in the ADCA. Again, 90004, p. 165. I move to amend this petition by deleting a sentence. This petition relates to paragraph 304, with a change to .3. I move to delete the following sentence from this petition. This is the second underlined sentence in the petition. My motion is to delete, “The bishop may choose to seek the non-binding advice of an annual conference on standards relating to human sexuality for ordination to inform the Board of Ordained Ministry in its work.” As such, Par. 304 would end after “the clergy session of the annual conference.” If there’s a second, I’ll speak to it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Alright. Can you again cite the page number and the petition number, just so we’re clear?

HARRIS: Thank you. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Alright. Please speak to it.

GIRRELL: The Judicial Council has determined that bishops cannot seek such resolutions from the annual conference, and so this is the solution to that problem. Simply delete the entire sentence and keep this resolution simple.

HARRIS: OK. The pool is open for those who would like to speak for or against this amendment. I don’t see anyone seeking to hit the floor, so we’ll be ready to vote on the amendment. As the amendment is being prepared to show on the screen, take your voting device. And if you support the amendment, you’ll press one (1). If you do not support the amendment, you’ll press two (2). Please vote now.

Amendment to Ret. 90004
Defeated by Tie Vote

HARRIS: Is there anybody who hasn’t successfully voted? We’re ready to close the vote, and it will appear on the screen shortly.

(pause for voting)

[Yes, 409; No, 409]

HARRIS: All right. Hold on now. This is one reason we’re delaying it to make sure everybody’s vote got counted. That was in here. What does this mean? This means that there is no majority, so the vote is defeated. We move back now to the question. We’ll turn to Sam Powers, who will speak for the One Church Plan, mic. 2.

SAMUEL TYLER POWERS
(Oklahoma): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sam Powers, Oklahoma Conference. I’m speaking for the One Church Plan.

I’ve heard a lot about the One Church Plan going against biblical authority. A lot of that I’ve heard across the street and this is simply not true. In the rabbinic tradition of Jesus’ day, rabbis operated out of schools of thought. Those schools highlighted specific scriptures and spoke from those various lenses. There wasn’t a sense of all scripture being equal. That fundamentalist notion arose in the late nineteenth century.

Christians don’t hold the destruction of Nineveh, in the Book of Nahum, with the same importance as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, when we look to what shapes us. When Jesus was asked about what is the greatest commandment, he didn’t say, “Well, they’re all equal.” Two of the metanarratives or lenses that arise out of the Bible are the ideas of holiness, that we should make ourselves separate and our behavior from those outside the faith, and light to the nations, that we should share our understanding of God with those who do not know Jesus. Both traditions are important and both are present in our Wesleyan understanding.

Holiness is closer to our personal relationship with God, while light to the nations is closer to the social justice we encompass from our love for our neighbors. Both are present in what Jesus tells us is the greatest commandment, that we should love God with all our being, and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. Conservatives tend to lean more towards holiness, while progressives lean more towards light to the nations. Both are important. Wesleyan grace is present in both of these traditions, with holiness reminding us of sanctification, and light to the nations having many aspects of prevenient grace.

And so, as we understand that both perspectives are important, just as sanctifying grace and prevenient grace helps us to better understand justifying grace, salvation in Jesus Christ. The One Church Plan holds both of these tensions together by allowing the 55% of our church that leans towards holiness to celebrate their understanding, while remaining in communion with the 45% that celebrates light to the nations. Thank you.

HARRIS: We move for a speech against, and Randal Merab, mic. 2.

RUDOLPH J. MERAB (Liberia): Mr. Chairman, Rudolph Merab, Liberia Annual Conference, West Africa Central Conference. I hear my learned brother speaking about what the church is, but a church is not an American church. It’s not an African church. It’s not a Russian church. It’s not a Filipino church. It’s the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus has told us, “Deny self and follow me.” What is self? All of those things that we are talking about of human sexuality and things, and asks us to follow his divine purpose in creation, one man, one woman. We keep talking about trying to be united, when in fact we continue to talk about being divided. But it is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error. It is wrong for the Christian church not talk about a full counsel of God in Scripture. And so I will ask us to defeat the One Church Plan because it does not give us salvation. Salvation has the most powerful means of which Christ came to die. Love is an after fact. Thank you.

JOSEPH HARRIS: Thank you. We turn now to Kim Ingram for an amendment. Mic. 2.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90008

KIMBERLY TYREE INGRAM
(Mountain Sky): Good afternoon. I rise to make an motion to amend Petition 90008, found on p. 166 in the ADCA; 90008, found on p. 166. I move to amend this petition by...
ment process. I’m referencing Part C specifically. I move to delete the phrase, “... shall be reassigned” and replace it with “... may request reassignment” so that the new paragraph 340.3C, would read like this, “Clergy who cannot in good conscience continue to serve in a conference based upon that conference’s standards for ordination regarding practicing homosexuals, may seek to transfer under Par. 347, and shall be supported and assisted in that process. Similarly, clergy who cannot in good conscience continue to serve a particular church based on unresolved disagreements over same sex marriage as communicated by the pastor and Staff-Parish Relations Committee to the District Superintendent, may request reassignment. All clergy with security of appointment shall continue under appointment by the bishop of the annual conference. And with a second I will speak to it.

HARRIS: Alright, do we have a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Please speak to it.

INGRAM: The Judicial Council ruled that appointments are made by bishops and a guarantee of reappointment cannot be added to the Discipline. Some bishops have publicly stated that they will consider alignment of the views on sexuality between churches and appointed clergy when making appointments, by stating that clergy and other parties involved may request reassignment. We honor the authority of the bishop to make appointments, and the right of clergy and Staff-Parish Relations Committees to be communicative with the bishop and the cabinet members during the appointment process.

HARRIS: OK.

INGRAM: Thank you.

HARRIS: So, we have this speech for the amendment. Do we have any speeches against? We have a few people who have indicated the need for amendment and I am assuming that if they come, it will be an amendment to the words that we’re talking about now. This cannot be an amendment to another... alright, they just disappeared. OK.

(laughter)

Now, we do have an against. Tshiwewa(?) please forgive me, Albert, mic. 1. Tshiwewa. Albert.

ALBERT TSHIWEWA

MASENGO (South Congo): (simultaneous interpretation from French) Albert Masengo, South Congo. I believe that voting on this amendment is to burn down the church in Africa. It will make the church in Africa disappear (unintelligible) where people hold onto their culture. This amendment should not be adopted (unintelligible) from the world map.

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma): We have a point of order; Ian Urriola, come to mic. 1 and state the rule that is being violated and the rationale.

IAN CARLOS URRIOLA

(Upper New York): Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Ian Urriola. I am a lay delegate from the Upper New York Annual Conference. My point of order is in reference to Rule 8, in our plan of organization, p. 45, line 735, of our Discipline, of our ADCA, I apologize and that rule states that no delegate who has the floor may be interrupted except for a point of order, a parliamentary inquiry, a point of information, to challenge a misrepresentation, or to call attention that the time has arrived for an order of the day and with due respect to my brother from South Congo, I am afraid that in his speech against the amendment he has misrepresented the facts presented in the One Church Plan.

HARRIS: OK.

URRIOLA: And I can speak to how he, how it was misrepresented.

HARRIS: Proceed.

URRIOLA: On p. 133 of our Advance Daily Christian Advocate, the report from the Commission on a Way Forward, the paragraph entitled Global Church says no Central Conferences have to change their current practices and they would have the opportunity to compose their own disciplinary language regarding sexuality and practice to fit their national or regional context. So the amendment that is before us brings the petition into lines of constitutionality per Judicial Council 1366 and it does not impact our global church in a way that will destroy The United Methodist Church in African countries. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HARRIS: Thank you for that information. We move back now to our speeches for and against. So I turn to Dennis, Denise Honeycutt, mic. 4, for a speech for.

JANE DENISE HONEYCUTT (Virginia): My name is Denise Honeycutt. I am a clergy delegate of the Virginia Conference. Most importantly, though, is I am a passionate, joyful follower of Jesus Christ. As a pastor of small membership churches, and large membership churches in the United States, I have never been to one church or one congregation in which every person agreed with everything in that congregation, and I imagine that’s true for most of you, and yet we were able to be church, to love one another and to stay together. As a matter of fact, having difference of opinion made us all stronger.

I had the opportunity to be a missionary in Nigeria, and there I experienced some of the most wonderful welcome and love from people who were very different from me and for whom I was very different and yet, together we
learned from one another. I strongly encourage you to vote for the One Church Plan because together we are stronger. When I was on the conference staff, I visited some of our partnerships, strong partnerships, in Mozambique, in Russia, in Brazil, and Cambodia, and together we were able to do work there and in our own conference that we could not have done on our own. When I worked with UMCOR, being able to visit all around the world, Zimbabwe, DRC, the Philippines, India, I mean the work of our church is just phenomenal, and what I discovered there is a hospitality, a love that is the love of Jesus. It is welcoming, maybe especially to those who are not like us.

I encourage you to vote for the One Church Plan because it allows us to continue to offer welcome the way Jesus has welcomed us. It does not make any of us choose things that are contrary to our own conviction but it allows us together to be the body of Christ and joyful, passionate disciples of Jes—

HARRIS: Denise, let me remind the body that we’re on the amendment, so having a speech that does not relate to the amendment, I’m going to rule out of order from this point on; so please confine it to the subject that we’re on. We’ll have time for more for and against speeches on the plan itself, but we’re on the amendment currently. We have point of order. Tom Lank, mic. 2. Please state the rule that’s in violation and the rationale for it.

Clariﬁcation of Tie Vote on Pet. 90004

THOMAS ALBERT LANK (Greater New Jersey): Thank you Mr. Chair. Tom Lank, Greater New Jersey. The rule that I am referring to is on p. 53 in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate. It is Rule 31.5, and also Rule 43, on p. 59. This refers to the previous question where our vote came out . . .

HARRIS: What was the page numbers again, and the references one more time for our translators? Again, it would be helpful if we are as slow as possible so our translators and those who are internationals can follow along. Thank you.

LANK: My apologies. The rule I’m referring to is on p. 53 of the Advance Daily Christian Advocate. It is Rule 31.5, and I also call to attention Rule 43, on p. 59. The point of order has to do with the previous question where the vote came out 50–50, and my question about that is did the chair vote in the initial vote? Because my understanding is that according to Robert’s Rules of Order, the chair can only vote to break a tie. If the chair cast a vote in the initial vote, that would be invalid and we would not have a 50–50 tie.

HARRIS: I did cast a vote, so the results ended as they ended. My understanding is, let me have the parliamentary explain what all that means, when I cast a vote.

LEONARD YOUNG (Parliamentarian for General Conference): Thank you. The citations quoted are almost correct. What Robert’s says is that the chair may vote when there is a ballot vote. All of our votes so far have been ballot votes. Just like you elected officers by ballot votes. He cannot then turn around after he has voted with everyone else and cast the second vote to break a tie. He can only do that when there is not the option to vote electronically by ballot, so he votes with everyone else. He did say he voted with everyone else. He doesn’t get two votes.

HARRIS: Now, we are back to the amendment. I’m going to test the house here to see. We have zero against in the pool. Let’s invite Ruk Chikomb to come. He comes for a motion to close debate, mic. 1.

RUKANG CHIKOMB (Northwest Katanga): I move that we close the debate and we vote.

HARRIS: On the amendment?

CHIKOMB: Yes, sir.

HARRIS: Is there a second?

Moved and seconded that we close debate. I promised you that we would let you know before we voted on closing debate what we have in our pool. We have five “for” people who would like to speak for the amendment, and we have none against, one against, I’m sorry. And no amendments, so that’s what we have available, for your information as you vote to close or not to close the debate. Take your voting device, and if you would be for closing debate when the screen shows, you’ll vote yes. If you want to continue debate, you’ll press two (2) for no. Vote now.

(pause for voting)

HARRIS: OK. We’re ready to see the vote. And you have voted to close debate. [Yes, 740; No, 80]

So now we have the agenda before us. When the screen shows, you will vote yes if you support the amendment. Vote no if you do not support the amendment. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

Motion to Amend Pet. 90008

Approved

OK. I believe the vote is now ready to show. You have passed this amendment. [Yes, 418; No, 396]

Now we’re back on the main motion. And we’ll go into the pool if you’d like to speak for or against, or some other matter. We’ll turn, though, to our secretary who has a pastoral care announcement to make.

GARY GRAVES (General Conference Secretary): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do want to make you aware of one matter that has occurred within our United Meth-
prayers. Remember her and her family in your prayers. Judicial Council member, Deanell Tacha, who fell and has been taken to the hospital by paramedics and is being evaluated at this time. Please remember her and her family in your prayers.

HARRIS: Let’s bow for a word of prayer.

Father, we pray for our sister, Deanell, as she has fallen and that her recovery is quicker than her injury. But we know that you care for each of us and we care for her as we care for each other. Let your Holy Spirit so be with the doctors and the medical staff that’s taking care of her, so she might be restored completely. We’re grateful, Lord, for all those who care for us and we ask that you just be with her and her family at this difficult time. And we know that your Holy Spirit will be so inclined to favor her in her healing. We pray these things in Christ’s name. Amen.

We’re back now to our main motion, the One Church Plan. And have here . . . we have an amendment. Harriet Bryan, mic. 1.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90010 Concerning Deaconesses, etc

HARRIET JEAN BRYAN (Tennessee): Harriet Bryan, clergy, Tennessee Conference. I rise to make a motion to amend Pet. 90010. 90010. Found on p. 166 in the ADCA. It’s at the bottom of p. 166. If you would agree with the amendment to strike the words that were listed, you would say “yes.” If you disagree, you would say “no.” Please vote now.

Pet. 90010 Amended

HARRIS: Thank you. Alright. Nobody’s registered to speak for or against, so let’s move to the vote. So, striking the words in Petition 90010. If you would agree with the amendment to strike the words that were listed, you would say “yes.” If you disagree, you would say “no.” Please vote now.

OK. The results are ready. And you have passed the amendment.

HARRIS: So, we’ll now say a few words about the voting time. Several of you during the break had to come to me and asked could we do less than sixty seconds in order to speed things up, but I asked those who are providing our tech about this, and they indicated that it takes at least sixty seconds in order to receive all the voting that we have because of the size of the arena and all of that moving back the time would not work for our purposes at this conference. So, thank you for those who have asked that question. And we’ll proceed on now. So, we go back to the main motion, the One Church Plan.
HARRIS: We go to an amendment. Kelly Robier, mic. 3.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90013 Regarding 30 Month Interval

KELLY ALLISON ROBIER (Baltimore-Washington): Kelly Robier, Baltimore-Washington Conference. Mr. Chair, I rise to make a motion to amend Petition 90013, found on p. 167 of the ADCA. I move to amend Petition 90013, by deleting a sentence. This petition relates to paragraph 605 and adds new .10. I move to delete the following sentence from Par. from 605.10, provided however, that any clergy session of an annual conference that votes on such matters shall not take up any subsequent motion on that issue during any called or special session of the annual conference held within thirty full calendar months from the date of such vote regardless of the outcome. As such, the petition would end with, “certification, ordination, and appointment of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals.” If there is a second, I will speak to this.

HARRIS: Second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Please speak to it.

ROBIER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Judicial Council found that limiting potential actions to once every thirty months is not constitutional. To bring this into conformity with our constitution, I move to delete this sentence. Thank you.

HARRIS: OK. The pool is open now for those who would like to speak for or against this amendment.

JOSEPH HARRIS: We have one speech for the amendment. We already heard a speech for the amendment and none against. So let’s move on to vote. Take your voting device out and if you would support this amendment you would say yes. If you do not support this amendment, you would say no. Please vote now.

Petition 90013 Amended

HARRIS: OK the results are in and they will show on the screen.

[Yes, 404; No, 403]

HARRIS: So there are a couple of these. The amendment passes and will be added to the One Church Plan. We are going to return back to the main motion now. I think we are perhaps ready for a break so we will freeze things here right now and give ourselves a ten minute break. We will be back in ten minutes please and we will continue where we are at this point. Ten minute break. Thank you.

CARLENE FOGLE MILLER (Florida): If you made an amendment, please make sure you get your form to me as soon as possible so that I can start work on paperwork.

(music)

HARRIS: All right. Let’s gather back. As you’re finding your place, I’m going to ask Bishop Mike Watson if he will come for an introduction and a prayer.

CME Bishop Williams Invited to Pray

BISHOP B. MICHAEL WATSON: Good afternoon. We have with us an esteemed guest, the presiding Episcopal leader, the bishop of the CME Church here in the St. Louis Area. Bishop Sylvester Williams is our guest for this day, and I know that you would want to greet him. He will want to greet you. And we’ll ask Bishop Williams to open this session in prayer. But would you greet our dear friend, Bishop Sylvester Williams?

(applause)
your glory. And, O God, any way you bless us, anyway you bless, we’ll be careful to give you praise. It’s in the name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

BISHOP WILLIAMS: Amen.

(All: Amen)

BISHOP WILLIAMS: God bless you all.

(Applause)

HARRIS: As we begin our session, let me remind us that let’s try to listen to each other, even if we don’t agree, by not removing our earphones and to always be respectful of all those who are speaking. You all have been very good so far, and I wanted to remind us of this, so that as we continue on, we continue to act as Christian community and we continue to move forward.

Now we move back to our main motion. Now, I’m going to try this and see where we are, and let me call on Bob Lockaby for a motion to close debate, mic. 1.

ROBERT LEE LOCKABY (Holston): I move to close debate on all that is before us. I’m sorry. Bob Lockaby, laity, Holston Conference. I move to close debate on all that is before us.

HARRIS: All right, the motion is made to close debate on all that is before us. Is there a second? Yeah, I thought I heard a second.

HARRIS: OK. And it’s seconded. Let me tell you what’s left in our pool. We have forty-nine who wish to speak for the amendment, twelve who wish to—for the main motion, rather, twelve who wish to speak against the main motion. We have one amendment pending, and that’s it. So, as you vote on the closing of debate, keep those figures in mind. So, if you’ll take your voting device. Remember, this takes two-thirds. And if you agree to close debate, you would press one (1). If you do not want to close debate, you would press two (2). Please vote now.

(Pause for voting)

HARRIS: OK. We have the results in and they’re on the screen. [Yes, 487; No, 319]

HARRIS: Alright, it has lost. You would have said by the vote that we will continue to debate on the main motion. I believe we’re ready for a speech against. Rich Jones, mic 1.

RICHARD ANTHONY JONES (Northwest Texas): Rich Jones, Northwest Texas Conference, clergy. I speak against the One Church Plan for one reason. It inevitably moves us a large step from our connectional polity toward a congregational polity. It inevitably takes decisions that belong to this body and moves them to annual conferences, local churches, and individual clergy persons. We rationalize this massive polity change by causing it contextualization. It is not contextualization, it is congregationalism. If we adopt the One Church Plan, we will inevitably lose one of our most defining characteristics, our identity as a connectional community. For this reason, I urge you to vote no on the One Church Plan.

HARRIS: We now move for a speech for.

(Pause)

Anne Detjen. Mic. 1

ANNE MARIE DETJEN (Germany North): I believed I had cleared my name off the speaker pool.

HARRIS: OK. So, we’ll choose another one who has a name in the pool to speak for. Let’s move to Byron Thomas. Mic. 2.

BYRON ERIC THOMAS (North Georgia): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Byron Thomas, clergy North Georgia. In 1939, The Methodist Church was trying to figure out what to do with Black people. At that general conference, the Central Jurisdiction was voted into being. The late Bishop James Thomas in recalling the moment in his book entitled, Methodism’s Racial Dilemma wrote that the White folks stood up and clapped and the Black folks sat down and cried. I believe we are at another stand up and clap, sit down and cry moment.

However, the reason that I rise is to address this body is to bring up the answer that a Black woman by the name of Leontine Kelly gave in response to the question, “Why did we remain?” She said that those who remained did so because we believed that if we got it right in the Methodist Church, we could get it right in the larger society. Well, the truth of the matter is that we’re still trying to get it right, but we are still here because we understood then as we understand now that in the church we are still striving for perfection and as such, we live in dynamic tension with one another.

Instead of a gracious exit, can we not consider a more faithful stand, a faithful stand where we continue to grapple with the things that seek to disrupt the harmony that we built around so many life-changing ministries like UMCOR and Africa University, just to name two? As such, I encourage you to support the One Church Plan which continues to allow us to give witness to the world that we have a faith where we struggle but we stay together. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HARRIS: Thank you. We move now to those who have a question that they would like to address to the body. So we will ask Dave Nuckols if he might go to mic. 3, and state the reason for his wanting to speak to this conference.

DAVID BRANCH NUCKOLS (Minnesota): Truthfully, I thought I was out of the pool. To that, I could add that I don’t need to go to the bathroom.
I want to speak to Sam Jones’ reference to Scriptures. I mentioned earlier, Sam’s a good friend and a great scholar, obviously, and he talks about not all Scripture is equivalent. And I agree with that. I think there are different kinds of literature in the Bible and different kinds of contexts, but the words of Christ are on a whole other level. The words of Jesus are the words that we should follow, and listen to, and obey. Jesus himself said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” And so, when Jesus is asked about questions of marriage and sexuality, he gives to us in response to the Sadducees a definition of marriage that says marriage is a union between a man and a woman. So, The One Church Plan to redefine marriage is troublesome for me. I just have difficulty in presuming upon the authority of our Lord. So, that’s why I urge a vote against The One Church Plan.

HARRIS: We now move to a speech for and Rey Hernandez, mic. 1.

REYNALDO BUCACAO HERNANDEZ (Rizal Philippines East Conference): (simultaneous translation in Tagalog) . . . and that together with differences. I am, I did not grow up to be Methodist. I come from a faith that was Roman Catholic. When I got to know my Lord, Jesus Christ, the only one who helped me is The United Methodist Church and it is a big change to me to grow up with my Lord through The United Methodist Church. My whole life is filed with a lot of meanings. To be made right. My family has been made right. When I was not yet in this faith, I almost couldn’t see what my future would be, and because of The United Methodist church, I am now a pastor. I now have reached the United States in very unexpected ways. And all of that I learned the double guard and the image of the OCP, I see as the same as that of a defenseless . . . that is still a mission just like that in Corinth. What Peter cannot do can be done with God.

HARRIS: Thank you, sir, your time has expired. We move now to a speech against and Andrei Khen Su Kim, mic. 1.

(pause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is mic. 3.

HARRIS: Mic. 3.

ANDREI KHEN SU KIM (Northwest Russia Provisional): I am Andrei Kim from Northwest Russia Provisional Annual Conference. I would like to speak in Russian.

KIM: (simultaneous translation in Russian) It is very attractive. It sounds attractive. But as a matter of fact, it is not going to be a plan of one church, one united church. Reasons why each church is going to do what it likes. What it prefers. But we’re a global church. In the way The United Methodist Church, our Eurasian Methodist Church is part of global Methodist Church. Our church is lucky that in a place with eleven hour differences, time zones, in this plan of one church, it will kill the mission work and the church plan in the Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and I would like to say also a few words about a minister, a United Methodist minister. Anywhere. Because every minister is responsible in following the same standards, but One Church Plan says that all standards will be dependent on the church and they will not be one plan. So if we adopt One Church Plan we will not be able to explain in Eurasia, what does it mean to ordain? And this is a contextually in our place. I encourage you to vote no to One Church Plan.

HARRIS: Thank you. Go to someone who would like to speak for the plan. Eunice Vega-Perez, mic. 2.

(pause)

EUNICE VEGA-PEREZ (Greater New Jersey): Eunice Vega-Perez, clergy from Greater New Jersey Conference. I want to speak in favor of the One Church Plan. The One Church Plan is our best plan forward to live together as a community of believers. This plan has always been constitutional and has had the majority of votes from our bishops. I speak in favor because it gives people from all theological perspectives, conservatives, evangelical, progressive, and liberal, all people from all walks of life to stay together in conversation with one another. Together in mission, like my annual conference, Greater New Jersey, who is in mission with Tanzania. I have beloved brothers and sisters who are LGBTQ, and heterosexual brothers and sisters. I want to stay together. Worshiping together. Praying together, not separated. Together we can continue making disciples of Jesus Christ. Many of my own children’s best friends are LGBTQ. When my children tells them that I am a Christian and a pastor, I want them to know that I embrace them, love them and welcome them just as they are and just as Jesus loved them and embraced them. I have dear clergy, friends of mine, whom their children are also LGBTQ. They are suffering. They are hurting. They want their church that they were born, the church they were baptized, to welcome them and not to judge them. As a pastor, I have parishioners who are different theologically from my own perspective. I have always
loved them and embraced them. As an ethnic minority Latino woman, the One Church Plan is the only that acknowledged that we are not yet together in ages of racism, sexism, and so living the value that is so needed. The work of GCORR and COSROW. It is for these that I support the One Church Plan.

JOSEPH HARRIS: We have a point of order. I call on Ian Urriola. I’ll get his name right before this is over with. He’ll come and tell me the point that we violated and the rationale for it.

IAN URRIOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It’s Urriola. My point of order is in relation to rule no. 10, p. 46 of the ADCA. I, as far as I know, I was in the queue for another point of order during my brother from Northwest Russia’s speech against the One Church Plan. And it’s my understanding that, that should have been recognized before we heard a speech for the One Church Plan. And that is my point of order at this time.

HARRIS: We try to get the points of order as we see them, so I’m not sure what happened between the that time and now, so if you want to proceed to make your point, you can.

URRIOLA: Just that I’m rising to correct a misrepresentation again, pursuant to p. 133 of the ADCA when my brother stated that this passage of the One Church Plan will destroy the Church in Russia and the Ukraine. I would like to remind him and the entire body that the report from the Commission on a Way Forward stated that no central conference has to change its position on human sexuality. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HARRIS: Thank you. We have an opportunity now for a speech against. Then, I’m gonna test the house again. Let’s see. Marina Yugay, mic. 1. Marina Yugay.

(pause)

MARINA YUGAY (Northwest Russia Provisional): Mic. 1. Marina Yugay, Northwest Russia Provisional.

YUGAY: (simultaneous interpretation from Russian) I’m going to speak in Russian. I’m going to speak against One Church Plan because it is against biblical position. The church of Christ, in the church of Christ it is not allowed to have one sex marriages and we cannot ordain same sex marriages and ordain same sex, same sex, so, homosexual pastors. In Genesis it says that the purpose of God that the marriage will proclaim and praise the Lord, so we need to praise God and multiply, but one sex marriage will not multiply. It is a unit of one man and one woman. This is what marriage is. If you disagree with that, then . . . then you violate the law of our creator. It’s like Jeremiah said, “The pot cannot say to the potter that why did you make me this way.” A man and a woman in their unity, it is the reflection of the unity between church and Christ. And if we are going to go the way of One Church Plan, it is going to, it is going to make, to change the image, good image not just of United Methodist Church, but whole Christianity. If we accept this plan then people will turn away from God. We cannot raise disciples of Jesus. We cannot share the gospel. We cannot be the church of Christ in our context because it is not going to be welcomed and I am encouraging the church to keep its purity and to follow the teachings of Christ, so I encourage you to vote against One Church Plan. Thank you.

HARRIS: Now, we have at least four who have requested a point of order which we need to take, so remember when your name is called, you cite the rule that’s been in violation and give a concise rationale as to why you think that’s so. We’ll begin with Sergey Kim. Go to mic. 1, please. Remember, no speeches. Just telling us what the violation might be.

SERGEY KIM (Central Russia): (simultaneous translation from Russian) Dear Chair, I would like to point your attention to Rule 10 and it’s on p. 46 in DCA about the previous person who referenced to that violation of the rule, and he said that point of order, Rule 10 was violated. He just put his name in the pool and at the same time he said that he was against or he was for the petition. I just wanted this point of order. Instead of referring to Rule 10, he actually made a speech for the plan. If a person says that he’s going to be a point of order, he cannot say he is for.

HARRIS: I think the point to know that he didn’t make a speech. He was just trying to correct an action that was not taken so that he should have been recognized as a point of order at the time that he put it in the queue but for some reason it was missed and so he was correcting that and referring the corrections from a speech that had been made and so that is why that was allowed. OK? Thank you.

KIM: (simultaneous translation from Russian) But nevertheless, after he referenced rule and point of order, after that he said he supported and he said that our brother shouldn’t have condemned the plan.

HARRIS: Thank you for your point of information and it’s time for us to move to Jerry Kulah, who has a point of order. Mic. 2. Please state the rule in concise language how it was violated.

JERRY PAYE-MANFLOE KULAH (Liberia): Thank you very much Mr. Chair. Jerry Kulah from Liberia. I’ve had my name up to speak against and I’ve never been called until I heard this brother refer-
The United Methodist Church’s definition of marriage in the Social Principles and according to Par. 141, in a Judicial Council ruling, no central conference has a right to have its own social principles, but whatever we change in the Social Principles here is binding on all central conferences, so if we adopt the One Church Plan, we will change the definition of marriage in the Social Principles for Methodists all over the world. That’s just a factual thing, but I do question, in the previous concerns, if this continually raising points of orders to make what are really ‘this is why I think this plan is good or bad’ is the really the best way to proceed, and I hope we can move on from that.

HARRIS: We’ll move beyond speeches. Remember it’s a point of order. It’s correcting a rule that was violated. We’ll hear them, but I’m going to start ruling them out of order if we hear speeches come in for or against something. I’m going to try to see if we are ready to move forward. Tim Reaves, if you’ll go to mic. 1 for a motion to close debate.

TIMOTHY LLOYD REAVES (North Carolina): Tim Reaves, clergy from North Carolina Conference. I move to close debate and call to question.

HARRIS: Second? All right, it’s been moved and seconded. Remember, this takes a two-thirds vote as we did previously. So if you have your voting device ready, when the screen appears, if you are for ending debate then you would mark one (1); if you would like debate to continue, you would press two (2). So please vote now.

(paused for voting)

JOSEPH HARRIS: OK, the results are ready. They’ll show on the screen. All right. Two-thirds has been achieved, and you’re ready to vote now on the One Church Plan.

[Yes, 608; No, 210]

Amended One Church Plan Fails Vote

HARRIS: Remember, if you support the One Church Plan and all the petitions that are attached to it, those that were also amended, you would say or point or press one (1). If you do not support the One Church Plan with all its amendments that are attached to it, you would press two (2). Once again, if you support the One Church Plan and all the amendments to the petitions that we have dealt with, you would press one (1). If you do not support the One Church Plan and its amendments, you would press two (2). Please vote now.

[pause]

HARRIS: OK, received the vote, and it will appear on screen. So, you have not passed on the One Church Plan, and we move to our next item on our agenda, which is Disaffiliation, Petition No. 90058, p. 201 of your ADCA.

[Yes, 386; No, 436]

HARRIS: In this petition, the pool is open for those who would like to speak for this petition, as well as those who would like to speak against it, as well as any others who would want recognition for one of our reasons that we have defined. Turn to Kevin Goodwin for a speech against, mic. 4.

KEVIN G. GOODWIN (Peninsula-Delaware): Kevin Goodwin, lay delegate, Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference. We already have two dissolution plans in front of us that we have to deal with tomorrow. We don’t need a third, so vote against this one. Short and sweet.

HARRIS: All right. I don’t see any speaker—any person wanting
to speak for this item. So, I think we’re ready to vote. If you would get your voting device. If you would support this petition of disaffiliation, you would vote yes. If you do not support this petition of disaffiliation, you would press two (2) for no. Please vote now.

(pause)

HARRIS: All right. They’re ready. The results will appear on the screen. [Yes, 172; No, 634]

HARRIS: So, the petition for disaffiliation is defeated. It will not pass on, and we move now to retain paragraph 161.g, Petition No. 90062, found on p. 202 of your ADCA. The pool is now open for those who would like to speak for and those who would like to speak against. Any other attempt to be recognized would be available, too, at this time.

(pause)

HARRIS: I want to move to Bill Junk, who has an either point of information or a question. As he goes to mic. 2, if he would state the reason for his needing to address the body.

**Motion to Quash All Untouched Petitions**

WILLIAM ANTHONY JUNK
(Oklahoma): Dr. Harris, maybe I got it in the wrong queue. I was hoping to make a motion to reject the remaining petitions.

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma):
That is in order.

JUNK: I would move that we reject the remaining petitions.

HARRIS: Alright now, this motion which has been seconded is debatable and it is amendable and so if you wish to speak to this motion, then you would enter the pool. They are resetting that now and go ahead and express your desire as to what you might like to do. I have a speech against and Dorothee Benz, mic. 3.

DOROTHEE ELISABETH BENZ (New York):
Dorothee Benz, New York Annual Conference. I rise to speak against this motion. Of all the plans and proposals and petitions before us today, there is only one that holds LGBTQI people harmless and does not harm them with new or continuing discrimination and that is the Simple Plan. It has not been debated or discussed or gotten a vote and I would urge that we reject this motion and perhaps make a separate motion that all other petitions except for the Simple Plan be voted on in a bundle and then that the Simple Plan get the dignity of at least a discussion. Thank you.

HARRIS: Alright then, we move toward a speech for and Dixie Brewster, mic. 1.

DIXIE K. BREWSTER (Great Plains):
Dixie Brewster, Great Plains Conference, and I speak for this amendment to reject all other petitions not to speak against my LGBTQI brothers and sisters but because we have debated so many things and we have talked about so many issues that I believe that we know by voting up or down whatever it is that we have in our minds that we do not need to face the further petitions. We have debated and debated. We have disagreed about scripture, about our traditions, and I believe that it is in our best interest to continue with what we have before us and to reject all petitions. Thank you.

HARRIS: We have a point of order, by David Livingston, if you will go to mic. 1 and state the rule that’s in violation and your rational for that rule being in violation.

DAVID SCOTT LIVINGSTON
(Great Plains):
Thank you, David Livingston, clergy from Great Plains, and Mr. Chairperson, Rule 43 indicates.

HARRIS: What page?
LIVINGSTON: P. 59 of the ADCA indicates that Roberts Rules of Order would be a supplemental authority for us where our rules don’t speak differently and I believe with Roberts Rules of Order that in some places it states that more than one item cannot be pending at one time but a class of motions cannot be postponed and this is a motion essentially to postpone all remaining motions indefinitely, which is not in order.

(pause)

HARRIS: I am going to ask our parliamentarian if he will address this. I want us to be precise so I have asked him to come and address this question.

LEONARD YOUNG (Parliamentarian):
This is one of those cases where Roberts Rules doesn’t apply because you have a long custom and tradition in committees, and all of you have been in them, of taking multiple items and rejecting them in one vote. That is a well-established thing that United Methodists do in committees.

HARRIS: Alright, so we are back to the motion.

LIVINGSTON: I am sorry, just in terms of the parliamentaries and maybe it’s an appeal to will of the chair, we were very intentional yesterday in saying that we wanted to change some of those traditions because of how poorly we have managed some of that. That’s why I think in the spirit of what we were doing yesterday, this would be in order that it’s out of order.

(laughter)

HARRIS: I would think if we don’t want to do this, we would vote against this motion. So we are back to speeches for and against and let me move to amendments. We have several of those pending. Terri Rae, mic. 3., for an amendment.
Motion to Retain Pet. 90068
Simple Plan

TERRI RAE CHATTIN (Baltimore-Washington): I want to amend the motion to exclude all the petitions related to the Simple Plan 90068 on p. 207.

HARRIS: Alright, let me see if there is a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Alright, moved and seconded. Proceed with what you would like to do.


HARRIS: Please restate that so we can be clear.

CHATTIN: On p. 207 through 210 petitions 90068 through 90075 and I am excluding that from the motion to vote on all the remaining petitions.

HARRIS: That is in order so we have the pool open for this amendment.

CHATTIN: If I have a second.

HARRIS: We did have a second and if you want to speak to it, please do.

CHATTIN: Well, I just feel like we at least owe the opportunity to look at this plan and to also honor the LGBTQI community because this is the one plan that takes out all the discriminatory language and I just think that in fairness we need to have a discussion about that. We are not offering anything else or any additions; we are just taking out these discriminatory language.

HARRIS: We have a speech against, (unintelligible speech), mic. 1

FRANCOIS CHIPENG (South Congo): (simultaneous translation in French) I would first like to ask you to correct my name, it is Chipeng, Francois Chipeng. Thank you. I would like to speak against the Simple Plan.

HARRIS: No, the Simple Plan is not before us. What is before us is the motion from Bill Jock to not do vote, to vote non-concurrence (I’m using old language) non-concurrence on all that the rest that’s before us, or to vote not support for all the rest that’s before us. We’re not on the One Church Plan any more. That has already been dealt with. Ok? Thank you.

Speeches For/Against Retaining Simple Plan

Let’s move to a speech for. Bonnie Madren, mic. 4.

BONNIE MARDEN (New England): Bonnie Marden, New England Annual Conference, laity. I rise to speak in support of the amendment. There has been conversation for at least eight to ten years between conservatives and progressives about our Christian call to reduce the harm we unintentionally inflict on others. Our differences scare us. Fear has kept us from reaching out to each other. A brief discussion of the work that has been sent to this body, called the Simple Plan, gives us an opportunity to consider a part of our Christian community that has experienced harm. Acknowledging that causing harm is not anything that we Christians would do intentionally, by bravely considering the Simple Plan, we would give this body an opportunity to show the world that while we are not ready to consider supporting homosexual partners and marriages or ordination, but that we are committed to reducing harm. And that creates the opportunity to consider our incompatibility language in a new way, and potentially move out of that harm-triggering position. To begin to create a new way of being as a Christian community.

I believe that continues to honor both the traditional respect for Scripture, but also reminds us that God is continually doing a new thing in ways that we have yet to fully understand or celebrate. I believe that considering the Simple Plan briefly would be a gift to God, a gift to this community, and a gift to the world. Thank you.

HARRIS: Thank you. We move to point of order. Becky Sweet, please come to mic. 1 and state the rule that’s in violation and your rationale for statement.

REBEKAH BETH SWEET (UPPER NEW YORK): Good afternoon. I’m Becky Sweet from the Upper New York Conference. I believe this falls under Rule 35, but my friend from the Baltimore-Washington Conference was endeavoring to take, make an amendment of deletion for the motion that we are dealing with now.

HARRIS: Can you state the rule page that you said, say is in violation?

SWEET: Well, I’m looking at Rule 35 on p. 56, talks about how the Legislative Committee works, but there was an amendment by deletion, which has not been followed through on.

HARRIS: Well, we’re still in discussion on that and so it hasn’t been acted on yet.

SWEET: I’m sorry. I misunderstood. It sounded like we had moved back to the motion.

HARRIS: No, hold on.

(pause)

I want to be clear. Are you talking about the Simple Plan that we’re on now?

SWEET: I’m talking about deleting the Simple Plan from the list of petitions that would be bundled and rejected.

HARRIS: Right, and that’s what we’re on now. It hasn’t been acted on. We’re still in debate on it.

SWEET: Alright. Thank you. It just didn’t sound that way from my perspective.
HARRIS: Alright. Thank you. And we have one more point of order. Sergey Kim. Please state the rule as you come to mic. 1, and the rationale for feeling it’s been violated. Please give the page number of the rule that’s being violated.

SERGEY KIM: This is p. 44, Rule no. 46 — Rule no. 6. I do not understand what, what are we debating? I was pressing one number, then I was pressing another button, and then this way we destroy the order that was in front of us, so it does not clear for this moment. I don’t understand what we, what do we have this debate over? Are we discussing the amendment that is in front of us?

HARRIS: OK. This does not sound like a violation. It sounds more of a question. And let me respond to your question. What we are doing is there’s a motion on the floor now to delete from the motion that we’re dealing with, to delete the Simple Plan, so that we will, if it, if that were to pass, we would act on that separately from the current motion that’s on the floor. So, this is where we are. We’re in debate now on whether that plan ought to be deleted from the motion that was made by Mr. Junk. And the motion from Mr. Junk was to reject everything that remains, so this is an attempt to remove that part from his motion. OK? Thank you.

KIM: Chairman, did I understand correctly that we are discussing that we exclude Simple Church Plan out of the remaining list of petitions that—

HARRIS: That is correct.

KIM: If we vote to not review the following petitions, then the next item will be Simple Plan?

HARRIS: That is correct. Alright. Now, we’ll return to the debate on whether or not the Simple Plan should be removed from the Junk Amendment or motion. And this doesn’t have a petition number, I have to call it as the name is there, so, any, let’s see, if we go back to a speech against. Iuliia Stukalova. Mic. 1.

(pause)

IULIIA STUKALOVA (Eastern Russian-Central Asia Provisional): I am at mic. 3.

JOSEPH HARRIS: At 2. OK. 3. All right.

STUKALOVA: Iuliia Stukalova, Eastern Russian-Central Asia Provision, lay delegate. I would like to speak against the amendment because we have already discussed the similar plan, and we have voted no. So, we don’t want to start again the debate. That’s why I speak against. Thank you.

HARRIS: OK. Thank you. Move to a speech for.

(pause)

HARRIS: And Adam Hamilton, mic. 1.

ADAM JOSEPH HAMILTON (Great Plains): Thank you very much. Adam Hamilton, and I’d just like to say, I think the harm that we have an opportunity to inflict by saying, we don’t want to hear from you at this point on a subject about which this entire General Conference was called—it just brings more pain. And what I’m suggesting is that instead of inflicting more pain, we allow people to speak and allow us to consider this motion. Yes, it’s going to be debated. I think it appears clear. But I think it’s important. This is one opportunity to be able to say, we care enough to listen for a moment. I’m going to ask that we vote yes and exclude this from the things that we’re going to not vote on and allow us to talk about this. Thank you very much.

HARRIS: Thank you. We’ve had several who have asked to come to the microphone, and so, we’ll hear Tim Rogers. Please come to mic. 1.

and state the reason that you would like to address the conference.

TIMOTHY JULIAN ROGERS (South Carolina): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tim Rogers, South Carolina. And the timing is not what I intended. Scott Campbell had asked earlier to ask to ask for a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, and I believe he was ruled to be out of order at that time, and I’ve been trying to get back in the pool to make a similar motion. It’s been hard, like for a lot of people, to get in. May I try that motion? Now, I understand that we are in a different discussion at the moment.

HARRIS: Let’s do this. Let’s get through our motions and perhaps have our voting, and then we’ll make a commitment that you will be able to speak once we’ve cleared that out.

ROGERS: Thank you very much.

HARRIS: All right. All right. We would have at least one more speech against, so it would be even. And Fred Sayeh, mic. 2.

FREDERICK S. SAYEH (Liberia): Presider, I am here at 4. Fred Sayeh, lay, Liberia Annual Conference. I speak against the amendment to accord the Simple Plan an extra treatment. Every petition has been accorded and given the opportunity to be chosen. Since yesterday’s plenary, fellow delegates, up to this point, it is getting clearer the delegates of this Way Forward conference are finding a way forward. So, we do not need extra treatment for a single petition. I therefore call on delegates to vote no and against the petition on the floor. Thank you.

HARRIS: All right, thank you. We move now to a motion to close debate, and Alex Shanks to mic. 1.

ALEX ARTHUR SHANKS (Florida): Alex Shanks, Florida Conference. I move that we call the question on this amendment.
HARRIS: All right. Is there a second? All right, the question has been called on this amendment and seconded. Ready to vote, so this will require two-thirds to close debate. And when the screen appears, yes if you wish to close debate, no if you wish to continue debate. Please vote now.

(pause)

HARRIS: We’re ready to show the results of the vote. You have voted to close debate on the amendment. [Yes, 742; No, 73]

Pet. 90068 Simple Plan Retained for Discussion

So the amendment is before us. To strike out from the Bill Junk motion, the Simple Plan. If you would support this action, you would vote yes. If you do not support this action, you vote no. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

HARRIS: The results are ready and will appear on the screen.
[Yes, 476; No, 347]

So you have not supported the—I’m sorry, you have supported the striking from the Bill Junk motion. We will deal with those Simple Plan separately. Now, we return to the Bill Junk motion to defeat the rest of the petitions that are in front of us. If you would like to debate in support of that, you can enter the pool. If you are against that motion, then you can also enter the pool, or any other actions. No one appears to be in the pool, so we are ready vote.

A name just appeared. Latham Postell, mic. 2.

Motion to Retain 90018-90031 for Discussion

ANDREW LATHEM POSTELL (North Georgia): Thank you, Chair, Latham Postell, North Georgia Annual Conference, lay delegate. I rise to make an amendment by deletion. I move to amend the motion by the deleting the petitions surrounding the Connectional Conference Plan. In this way the amended motion would reject all other petitions, excluding petitions 90068 through 90075 of the Simple Plan, as just amended on the committee’s docket. And maintain petitions 90018 through 90031, found on pp. 169-182. If I have a second, I would like to speak to it.

HARRIS: Second? All right, you may speak.

POSTELL: Thank you. The purpose of our Special Session of the General Conference was to consider the report of the Commission on a Way Forward, to see if there was a way in which people of different minds on the matter of LGBTQ inclusion could find a way forward together. In the final report, the Commission provided us with three petitions that addressed this purpose. As I have travelled around the connection and spoken to many of my sisters and brothers in Christ, I have heard countless people from both sides of the issue state that the Connectional Conference Plan was something they could live in. This may not be the case, but it is worth seeing if it would work. This plan may be the last resort for unity in our denomination. Mind you, it would be a reimagined unity. I think it would be prudent and responsible to see if the spirit may be leading us to this unity through the Connectional Conference Plan. Striking it down now eliminates that possibility. For this reason, I encourage you to vote in favor of this amendment. Thank you.

HARRIS: The pool is open if you would like to speak for or against this amendment or have some other expression you would like to take, now would be the time to enter the pool. Seeing none, we’re ready to vote. This is a vote to exclude the Connectional Conference Plan from the Bill Junk motion. As the screen comes, if you support excluding the Connectional Conference Plan from the Bill Junk motion, then you would vote yes. If you do not support excluding the Connectional Conference Plan, you would vote no. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

Petitions 90018-90031 Connection Conference Plan Not Retained

HARRIS: All right. The vote has come in and it will appear on the screen. You have not supported taking this from the Bill Junk motion, so it remains in the main motion, and we will return to the main motion. I move to Curnell Graham for a motion to call the question. Mic. 3.

[CORNELL GRAHAM (West Ohio): Curnell Graham, clergy from West Ohio. Brother Chair, I call for the question on the motion that is before us.

HARRIS: Just to let you know we have two more speeches for and then one question and that’s it. Nothing else. So, as you vote you can remember that. If you are for calling the question, you would vote yes. If you want to continue debate, you would vote no. Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

HARRIS: The results are in. You’ll see them on the screen. So, you have voted to close debate. Now we have the Junk motion before us so that with the exclusion of the Simple Plan. If you would support the motion which is to reject the remaining petitions, you would vote yes. If you do not support that motion, you would vote no. Please vote now.

[Yes, 727; No, 519]

HARRIS: All right. The results are in. You’ll see them on the screen. So, you have voted to close debate. Now we have the Junk motion before us so that with the exclusion of the Simple Plan. If you would support the motion which is to reject the remaining petitions, you would vote yes. If you do not support that motion, you would vote no. Please vote now.
Conference Votes to Quash Remaining Petitions

(pause for voting)

HARRIS: Alright we’re, we are ready with the results. And they will show on the screen.

[Yes, 734; No, 64]

HARRIS: Alright you have passed the motion. What we do now is, we gonna ask Mr. Rogers to return to microphone 1, and he doesn’t have to even bring his sweater with him.

(pause)

HARRIS: For his motion.

Motion to Send All Traditional Plan Petitions for Judicial Council Decision

TIMOTHY ROGERS (South Carolina): It is always sunny in my neighborhood. I would like to offer a motion. Pursuant to Par. 2610 of The Book of Discipline, I move that we request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council as to the constitutionality, meaning, application or effect of each of the legislative plans as amended which have been or may be approved by this committee in the order of their approval. If I have a second I’d like to explain.

HARRIS: Do we have a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: Alright, please speak.

ROGERS: I was present in Tampa. Some of us may remember that day when we approved some major legislation and some moments before adjournment were told none of it was constitutional. The Council of Bishops has made efforts to try to make certain that any action we take would be constitutional as understood by the Judicial Council. I think that anything we have done today should have the same, same review done so that when we come tomorrow we might have the opportunity to do our best work.

HARRIS: This motion is debatable and it will require one-fifth or 20% of the vote of the conference to be adopted. So the pool is open for those that would like to speak for this referral and those that might want to speak against the referral. Alright. No one is in the queue. It’s, we have a couple in the pool now. We’ll start with Forbes Matonga who speaks against the motion.

FORBES MATONGA (West Zimbabwe): Thank you chair. My name is Forbes Matonga, from West Zimbabwe. I wish to speak against the motion. Indeed all the plans were sent to the Judicial Council, they were considered and we received what came from the Council on Bishops. What we were trying to do was to respond to what the Judicial Council has done. And I think we are right to do that this way. So I think to try and again to send them at this particular point is to try to kill all the work that we were doing. And I don’t think that would be fair for the time we spent today. So I request the delegates to vote against this motion. Thank you, bishop.

HARRIS: Move for a speech for. Roger Grace, mic. 3.

ROGER GRACE (West Ohio): Roger Grace, clergy, West Ohio Conference, I too was in Tampa and I remember the work that was put into the General Conference then. It only makes sense that we go ahead and get the approval now so that what we do is not done in vain. I am for referring this to the Judicial Council.

HARRIS: We have a few that would like to address the conference and I call on Lonnie Chafin to rise and to indicate to which you would like to address the conference. Mic. 1.

LONNIE ARTHUR CHAFIN (Northern Illinois): Lonnie Chafin, Northern Illinois Conference. Clarifying question, please. Does this amendment include the exit petitions, the disaffiliation petitions we have passed? The word that was used was plans and all that would pass this committee and I am wondering if those too would receive Judicial Council review under this proposal.

HARRIS: My understanding, and I could be corrected by the maker of the motion is that it includes the entirety of the plans that will go forth and he just indicated so. So it will. Is that your question?

CHAFIN: Thank you, I spoke unclearly, I did not speak clearly, I am sorry. I’m talking about 90066 and 90059 which were petitions, I don’t understand them as part of a plan. We voted on them separately then a plan.

(pause)

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma): All right. It seems to me—do you all have a—since you have been talking—mic. 1.

TIMOTHY JULIAN ROGERS (South Carolina): The intent is that anything—my thought was, we’ve ranked things by priorities, and each one of those was what I thought of as a plan. So, anything what we have acted on and approved would go to the Judicial Council, whether it had multiple pieces or not.

HARRIS: OK. Do you understand that to be the case then, Lonnie?

LONNIE ARTHUR CHAFIN (Northern Illinois): (unintelligible).

HARRIS: Thank you. All right. Now, some information has come my way that I want to make sure we’re clear on. In The Discipline, it’s determined that if we’re referring things to the Judicial Council, it takes, actually, a one-third vote. The one-fifth vote would come in the plenary, but in the committee, it would take a one-third vote. So, if
you want reference to that, that’s Par. 2609.4 in The Book of Discipline.
So, as we continue to debate on this, I just wanted us to be clear what it will take to refer this to the Judicial Council. Now, we go back to our debate. And let’s see. Have Chappell Temple, who will speak against the motion to refer. Mic. 1.

CHARLES CHAPPELL TEMPLE (Texas): Thank you, Dr. Harris. I was in Tampa, too, and I’ve completed therapy for that, so I’m doing better. But what I wanted to say was that I’m all for referral to the Judicial Council and for review, but not right now, because the truth is, there were several things that were already shared by the Judicial Council that needed fixing. We didn’t get the chance to complete fixing them, because we moved to vote on everything before us before all the amendments had been made. So, I’m concerned that if we refer it now, we’re going to get the same answer, and we already know that we need to fix some of those things. So, why don’t we fix them first tomorrow in plenary and refer it afterwards?

HARRIS: Thank you. We have Stephen Sparks, who’d like to come with a question or address the body. Please state the reason for your rising, mic. 1.

STEPHEN LAWRENCE SPARKS (Mississippi): Stephen Sparks, Mississippi Annual Conference, clergy. I rise to ask for some clarification around whether this is a referral or a request for a declaratory decision. In his motion, the maker of the motion called it a request for declaratory decision, but the chair has referred to it as a referral. And I’m just asking for clarification.

HARRIS: Right.

SPARKS: Thank you.

HARRIS: Yes, it is a request for a declaratory decision, but the decision of the body is to refer it for that purpose. So, speech for. J. J. Warren, mic. 1.

JEFFREY JOSEPH WARREN (Upper New York): Good afternoon, Chair. My name is J. J. Warren, from the beautiful Upper New York Conference, and I am a lay reserve delegate. I want to speak for this motion, because I think there are subtleties that can slip through that we may have not been aware are unconstitutional. And for me and the younger generation that is the church now among you and who want to be the church together with you for the future as well, we desire a church that seeks the justice of God, a church that doesn’t waste its money on a conference and come out with no decision, because it was unconstitutional. The pain that would happen from this crucifixion of putting the nails in our Methodist church, the pain of this death, might be worth a resurrection, but I’d like to see if that can happen together without being called unconstitutional with whatever we decide. So I support this motion to put this before the Judicial Council, so that we together can make a decision for the church, hopefully one that ensures that wherever we are, The United Methodist Church continues and allows people to feel their calling that God has put on their heart, no matter whom they love. So, that is my support. And as someone who has grown up in our church, as someone who is gay and goes to the least religious college in the US, my evangelism on campus has grown. We have brought people to Jesus, because they said they have not heard this message before. They didn’t know God could love them, because their churches said God didn’t. And so, if we can be a church which brings Jesus to people who are told can’t be loved, that’s what I want our church to be, and that’s the Methodist church that I love and that I want to be a pastor in one day. I want to be a pastor in the Methodist church, because I love our tradition. I love all of you. We are the church together. This is the body of Christ, and we are stronger together than we are apart, and no plan to separate us can unite us like God’s love. We are the church. We are God’s children. Let us be the church together.

(applause)

HARRIS: All right, that—

(applause)

HARRIS: All right, if we can be seated so we can proceed. We have an amendment. Derrick Scott, if you’ll come to mic. 1. One amendment.

DERICK SCOTT (Florida): Mr. Chair, Derrick Scott, lay delegate, Florida Conference. I move that we adjourn. I’m sorry, I move that we recess.

(laughter)

HARRIS: No, there’s no motion for recess. It’s either adjournment or no motion at all. All right? And so...

SCOTT: If I could move that we adjourn?

HARRIS: Remember if you move adjournment that means we will not complete the work that we have before us still to do. It’s also would be in violation of the rules, so I’m going to rule that out of order, that particular motion. All right? Well, there seems to be a sense that we at the very least, ought to take a break now. I get that. Hold steady for a minute so we can have some announcements and then we’ll take a brief ten minute break. Always fifteen, but. We turn to the secretary for announcements.

CARLENE FOGLE-MILLER (Secretary): I have a couple announcements and if the chair would permit me, I also like to offer a prayer before we break. First of all,
take your voting card with you on your break. Do not leave it in the machine. Where you go, the card goes. Take them with you. Second-ly, delegates must secure airport shuttle tickets by the end of morning break tomorrow. That is Tuesday, February 25th, to allow the transpor-tation volunteers time to make final arrangements with our transportation company. If you wish to utilize this service, you must have a ticket to board a bus. Volunteers will be at the tables near the Adtrav booth in pre-function hall B after today’s session, before tomorrow’s session and during morning break tomorrow, to assist you. Third, please engage in some self-monitoring if you have already spoken consider allowing others the opportunity to speak before the body. Finally, would you pray with me? God, we come before you, humbly, and ask for you to fill us with your presence in this room. There are many feelings across this floor. There is pain. There is joy. And we cannot do this work without your presence here. We cannot truly listen to one another is you are not here in our hearts as we continue to do this work, the work of your church. God, I give you thanks for every person in this room. Gay, straight, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, queer, questioning. You created all of us. You love all of us. And we know you love the church in whatever form it will present itself at the end of this conference. Be with us, we pray, as we take a break, as we take a breath, and as we continue to do your work. In your holy son’s name, we pray. Amen.

HARRIS: Ten minutes.

(music)

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma): All right, if you would gather back at your tables. As we left for our break, we were in the midst of having our debate on Judicial Council referral, and let me add some new information that we received on the break in consultation with Judicial Council, and that is that we are under the one-fifth rule. So, I told you something different earlier, and that came from the Judicial Council ruling, but that was on the legality of what that ruling referred to. But because we’ve already referred things in the one-fifth rule, this would pertain to us moving forward in the committee. So, we’re now open for debate. All right, we do have a point of order. Maurice Ngongo, mic. 2. Please state the rule that’s in violation and your rationale for it being in violation. Please put your cards in your headphones, handsets rather. I don’t see Maurice coming to the microphone, so we’ll move on. I’m sorry, he has come.

MAURICE KIKOMBA NGONGO (Central Congo): (simultaneous interpretation in Kiswahili) Maurice Ngongo, Central Congo. I wanted to ask a question to you as president. You said it was forbidden to applaud in the—but more than three times we have seen that people are applauding, and you remain silent. Are you telling us that way through your silence that you are accepting applause each time there is someone who speaks against or for? How can you justify your silence?

HARRIS: I need a rule that was violated and a page number so that we can follow along your rationale for saying that the rule was violated.

NGONGO: It was before. I have been in the line for a long time, but you had not given me the opportunity to speak.

HARRIS: Sorry, that’s not a point of order, and let me speak to what you suggested. I had a few people come up and say, well, I’ve never had a chance to speak; are you not recognizing me? Just to remind everyone, we have the pool and there are a number of people in the pool, and I’m being very conscious of making sure that we get Central Conference folks, that we get men and women, and that we get folks from across the conference here so that we are trying to be as fair as possible to everybody. But with the number of people wanting to speak, there will be some people who will never be called on. And so, it isn’t intentional; it’s part of our process, and when we close debate, then that of course keeps us from having any more people being able to speak. So, I wanted to make that clear as we continue to move forward. We’re on the debate about refer for declaratory decision to the Judicial Council and the motion to refer for and against, and we moved to Mickey Wilson speaking for. Mic. 1.

MILTON E. WILSON (Florida): I’m Mickey Wilson. I’m a lay delegate from Florida. Some things don’t come easy for me. I mean, concepts escape me, and I’m just not very bright. I have four children and ten grandchildren and two sons-in-law who will confirm that. But some things are so clear. I can’t imagine why we would not to refer this. This is the old let’s-pass-the-law-and-then-read-it-later. Yes, I’m for it. Of course I’m for it. I can’t believe anyone wouldn’t be for it. So, I would urge you to vote for this referral.

HARRIS: All right. Speech against. Rudolph Merab, mic. 2.

RUDOLPH J. MERAB (Liberia): Mr. Chair, I’m at 4.

HARRIS: OK, mic. 4.

MERAB: Rudolph Merab, Liberia Annual Conference, lay delegate. Bishop, I would like to not see us refer. Why? It’s only at the plenary that people have the opportunity to perfect or correct petitions and whatever comes before plenary. So, this process is not finished. You cannot send a process for referral in the middle of a ballgame. So, I would suggest that we do not refer.
Allow it to be brought on the floor tomorrow, and other corrected, and then passed. Thank you, sir.

HARRIS: OK. We have Russ Abel coming to speak to the conference. Please go to mic. 1 and state the purpose of your coming.

RUSSELL L. ABEL (Indiana): Thank you, Chair. Russ Abel, clergy, Indiana. I have a question or clarification. If I’m in order, I’ll proceed.

HARRIS: Please.

ABEL: Is there a rule that delegates must be seated during this legislative group?

HARRIS: Hold on.

(pause)

HARRIS: All right. As long as the delegates are within the bar, they’re legally voting. The question was must they also be seated. And we’ve not made a ruling—I have not—that everyone had to be seated in order to participate. And so, I would say as long as they’re within the bar, whether or not they’re seated or not, would be up to individual, as long as they’re not blocking people or causing any disruption to others.

ABEL: Thank you, sir. Then, with absolute respect for our process and with the words of J. J. Warren’s powerful witness in my ears, I respectfully choose to stand for the remainder of this session. Perhaps I’ll be joined by others on the floor, in the concourse, or even on the livestream.

HARRIS: Now, remember I did say, if it was disruptive to others, we may ask for everyone to be seated. But we’ll try this and see how it works. We have a point of order. Kenneth Levingston, please come to mic. 1. State the rule that is in violation and the rationale for it.

KENNETH R. LEVINGTON (Texas): Mr. Chair, Kenneth Levingston from the Texas Annual Conference. The rule is Rule 18.

HARRIS: Which page?

LEVINGTON: It is p. 48. Has to do with the conversation, I think, in which you just engaged. But line 826 says verbal and nonverbal distractions are prohibited. We’ve come here to do work. It’s hard work. It’s holy work. We are trying our best to, I think, do what we were asked to do, respect everyone; but that has to be on both sides. So, I think the distractions and demonstrations that have happened need to cease.

HARRIS: What we will do is see if those who are standing are disruptive to others. If that becomes the case, then I will ask everyone to be seated. At this point, that doesn’t appear to be the case, but we’ll move forward.

LEVINGTON: It was not the standing. It was the clapping and cheering and things that happened before—that we would be free of those things.

HARRIS: I understand your point now, and we’ve encouraged each of us not to do that. We also realize there are others who are observing here that aren’t under, that we don’t have that kind of control under. And I would just ask the body not to participate in that, simply because it distracts our business and may be disruptive to others. So, we’ll proceed with that knowledge and move forward to continue our business. I think that we’re ready to, perhaps, close debate, and I move to Ed Thomlinson to make the motion, mic. 2.

KYLE EDWARD THOMLINSON (North Georgia): Mic. 4, please. Ed Thomlinson, clergy, North Georgia. I move the question on the Rogers motion for declaratory decision by the Judicial Council.

HARRIS: All right. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: All right. It’s been moved that we close debate on the motion to refer. This requires two-thirds, and as the screen comes up, if you would be for closing debate on the motion to refer, you would press one (1). If you would like debate to continue, you would press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause)

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma): Alright, the vote is ready to be shown and you have voted to end debate. [Yes, 777; No, 22]

HARRIS: Now we have the motion to refer in front of us. Take one-fifth in order to refer to Judicial Council. So as the screen appears, if you would support referral, you will press one (1). If you are against referral, you will press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause)

Motion to Send Petitions to Judicial Council Approved

JOSEPH HARRIS: Alright, the results are in. They will show on the screen. [Yes, 437; No, 371]

HARRIS: We have voted to refer. Now we move to the items that we pulled from the Bill Junk Amendment, the Simple Plan. That is Petitions 90068 to 90075. The pool is open. We have a point of order. John Lomperis, mic. 1. Please state the rule that has been violated and the rationale for that violation.

JOHN SCOTT ANDERS LOMPERIS (Indiana): Thank you, Chair. Sorry, I tried to crank it up. The previous speaker must have been a little shorter than me. All right. This is in accordance with Rule 31.1 on ADCA p. 53 Par. 2610 of The Book of Discipline.

HARRIS: OK. Please slow it down for the interpreters.
Referral Vs. Request to Judicial Council

LOMPERIS: Oh, sorry. Rule 31.1 on ADCA p. 53 Par. 2610 of The Book of Discipline I have just been asking for the point of order for a while to just clarify that the term refer kept being used, but I saw the form that what we voted on and what it actually said request and that is an important legal, technical distinction, because when we refer that means we take it to some other body like we refer to the Judicial Council so we are not going to deal with it as a body and it is often used as a way of filibustering or delaying, but my understanding of the word request is that means OK we request the Judicial Council do its work but we—

HARRIS: John, I need you to slow down. Just so—

LOMPERIS: I apologize, I apologize.

HARRIS: Start again. We won’t count the time against you.

LOMPERIS: OK, thank you, thank you, I apologize. But my understanding of the word refer is something that is often used of a means of filibustering or delaying or preventing the majority from expressing its will or doing the work that it was entrusted with doing by taking the legislation away from the body and giving it to some other group. That is my understanding of the technical word refer. But the word in the form and I spoke with the author was request and I understand there is no mechanism in The Book of Discipline for referring to the Judicial Council by General Conference, there is only a mechanism in Par. 2610; the language used is to request a declaratory decision, so it would be helpful for all of us to have clarification that it was indeed a request as said on the form, which means that OK, the Judicial Council is going to go and do their work in the background but in the meantime we are going to still move on and keep doing our work. We will still come here tomorrow morning and vote on what we have to vote on and even if for some reason the Judicial Council doesn’t have a decision for us by first thing tomorrow morning we will still be able to continue doing our work since we’ve already heard plenty, plenty, lots of guidance from the Judicial Council but there’s never a General Conference we’re here on anything and everything.

HARRIS: John, your point’s been made and you are correct; this is a request for a declaratory decision and we thank you for the clarification of that and that’s how it will go to the Judicial Council.

LOMPERIS: So even if they have not ruled, we will still come ready to vote tomorrow morning.

HARRIS: We will be ready in the morning.

LOMPERIS: Thank you.

HARRIS: Thank you. Alright, we are on the Simple Plan and if you are in the pool to speak for or against the plan, and see Karen Prudente. Sorry, I don’t see what microphone she might be at. Mic.3.

HARRIS: Speaking for.

Speeches For/Against Simple Plan

KAREN GARCIA PRUDENTE (New York): I’m speaking for the Simple Plan. My name is Karen Prudente. And I represent a layperson from the New York delegation. (untranslated speech from Tagalog) I am a child of mission. My grandfather helped start the church in the Philippines, but it was the church that helped, helped me return to come back to the United States where my father learned to become a human rights activist to help our poor in the Philippines become educated. How do we keep our hospitals open? How do we—[Speaker stopped due to three-minute time limit.]

HARRIS: I’m sorry, your time has expired. We move now to a speech against. Cedrick Bridgeforth, mic. 1.

CEDRICK BRIDGEFORTH (California Pacific): Cedrick Bridgeforth, clergy, California Pacific Conference. I rise to speak against the Simple Plan. And that’s an odd thing for me to do. I was born in Decatur, Alabama; now live in southern California. Prior to moving to southern California, I was also blessed to serve my country in the Air Force before “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” But no one asked, and thankfully, I didn’t have to tell. So, I stand here today out of fear.

Speaking of this Simple Plan, the word that comes to mind, and what I feel is fear; fear that it doesn’t go far enough. Fear that it’s not
radical or progressive enough. Fear of retaliation and further ostracization because of what I have heard and sensed here. I already live with fear in the streets of what police or some suspecting passerby may think or feel just because of my mere presence. I don’t protest publicly because of what happens to African-American men in this country. The church? Silent. Me? Fearful.

I live with fear in the church. I haven’t protested. I haven’t come to the mic. about any of the human sexuality petitions because of what happens to LGBTQIA persons within this church. And the church has been silent. Me? Fearful. Today, we’ve taken care of clergy pensions. We’ve figured out how to hamstring clergy and entangle some laity. We’ve figured out how to give away properties, disregard persons of sacred worth, but still, don’t know the cost financially, spiritually, or physically of what shall remain.

On the issue of my safety, the church? Silent. On the issue of my sacred worth and continued affirmation, the church? Making a little noise today. On the issue of money, power and privilege, the church is loud and clear. I speak because I don’t trust the church to say what needs to be said and do what needs to be done today. Thank you.

HARRIS: Thank you. We now move to a speech for. Markus Jung, mic. 1.

MARKUS JUNG (Germany South): Thank you Mr. Chair. I will make it short. I have a dream that one day starting on Wednesday, 27 of February, 2019, inside The United Methodist Church no one will be discriminated by gender, skill color, county of birth, living social position, sexual orientation. Instead we are known to love God, to love all people and to love God’s creation. That will be the center of our church’s life. To start the process of change because the love of God has touched us all and so we all stand in the work for the kingdom of God. I have a dream that The United Methodist Church will be a church who is colorful, diverse, and full of love. I have a dream that God empowers us as Methodists to flood the world with God’s love.

HARRIS: We move now to speech against. Philippa Ruiz Laura, mic. 1.

BISHOP FELIPE RUIZ AGUILAR (The Methodist Church of Mexico): (simultaneous interpretation) Thank you Mr. President. I address you with all the respect that you deserve and I share the thought of The Methodist Church of Mexico saying that it’s not our intention to offend or harm anyone, it’s just our way, the way we think. We believe in a God of love and a God that loves all of us equally and loves us not so we remain in sin but so that our lives be transformed and changed into a change according to His way.

The Methodist Church doesn’t close its doors to anyone in Mexico because its way of thinking or sexuality is different. In no church no one has ever been thrown out because of sexual preference. The doors are open so that they can come and hear the message of salvation, the message of transformation for their lives. We have testimonies of people who have come in the condition of homosexuality and in a period of time have received the love of God. Their lives have been changed/transformed and now the men are well established with married to women and with children, creating a new home. I don’t believe that fact that today we decide for what we call an orthodox or conservative that it closes the doors to anyone because of their sexual preferences. I think that the church would never close its doors and we welcome everyone who comes in the desire to be transformed as all of us who arrive as alcoholics or addicted to drugs or any other condition of sin in our lives I invite you to pray to God and to be that church with open doors with those who come and take that love of God for their lives. We can change many passages or words in the Discipline but it’s clear to me the word of God cannot be changed because its forever. The word of Jesus the heaven and earth will pass but my words will not pass. The sermon is the same today, tomorrow and always. God bless you.

HARRIS: Now to a speech for, Diane Miller, mic. 4.

MILBROOK: As she approaches the mic a reminder to all of you who might speak from the tech team, please stay at the mic, do not remove the mic from the stand, it interferes with their ability to accurately capture the sound. So adjust the mic as needed but keep it on the stand and stay there.

DIANE MILLER (Western Pennsylvania): I come hoping to find a way that we will not divorce ourselves from one another because of the deep, deep division we have over this issue. A year and a half ago I met with my own pastor, my local pastor. And I live in a very rural, very conservative area of Western Pennsylvania. My pastor is very traditionalist. We talked a year and a half ago and I think agreed to disagree about this issue. The day before I left to come here, I met with him again. Neither one of us had changed our viewpoints. But I asked him, with the three plans that are before the group that are not traditional, is there anyone you can live with. He through about that, and he said maybe the Simple Plan. I asked why. His answer was, the descriptions, the definitions, the ways of understanding LGBTQ people on paper would be taken out. He could then continue to be in ministry in my local church.
and not have to be judging the churches of Western Pennsylvania or of California who would be doing something that he considered wrong. He could focus on the ministry and mission of our little country church without judging another pastor or another congregation or another conference for doing something that he considered wrong. I am for the Simple Plan.

HARRIS: Now move to a speech against. Yulia Starodubets, mic. 1.

YULIA STARODUBETS (Eastern Russia-Central Asia Provisional): Respected, Mr. Chair. I am Yulia Starodubets, clergy, Eastern Russia in Central Asia Provisional. I am so sorry that I am Russian speaking, but I will try to speak in English. I am speaking against of Simple Plan. I speak behalf of Eurasia and Central Asia. Our delegates have a deep respect and love to all creation of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. Let me share about myself. I was born and grew up in central Asia, Kyrgyzstan. It is former Soviet Union republic which was atheistic during many years. And now it is 90% of Muslim country in population. And Islamic influence grows day by day.

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and started ministry in Kyrgyzstan, and I was witness how our United Methodist Church appeared in this land. And now we have fourteen vibrant congregations which growing each year. We have very traditional society and have high value of traditional family. LGBTQ community is not common for us. We have another issues in our Christian life and ministry. Our church is almost underground. It is hard to register our congregations due to strict religious law. It is not allowed for us to have open evangelism. We are persecuted by the Muslim community. That is why in this environment, we should keep stand on the strong Bible basement.

And keep the Bible definitions of love and family. Simple Plan tells us to remove definition of family as a union between man and woman, which is rejected by my society in religious view, in secular view, and even in Christian. If you will accept it, we will rejected by our brothers and sisters of other denominations. They will stop any ecumenical relations with us. That is why I request you to vote against of the Simple Plan. Thank you.

HARRIS: Think we’ll go with one more for and one more against and then we’ll entertain a couple of motions that we have here to close debate. Jen Ihlo, mic. 3, speaking for Simple Plan.

JENNIFER ELLON IHLO (Baltimore/Washington): Brothers and sisters, my name is Jen Ihlo. I’m a lay member from the Baltimore/Washington Conference. I stand before you today to urge you, plead with you, in fact, beg you to vote for the Simple Plan. The Simple Plan does not mandate that anybody do something or believe anything they don’t believe. The Simple Plan simply enables those of us in the United States to live freely in our contexts.

If the Simple Plan fails, the reality is that we will be left with the Traditionalist Plan, and this body, in my view, will schism. And that, brothers and sisters, would break my heart. I’ve been a Methodist since my birth. I grew up in the Texas Conference. I moved to the Baltimore-Washington Conference as an adult. I’m queer and I want to say to this body that that is one tiny part of who I am. To be equated by the speaker from Mexico with alcoholics is, frankly, insulting. It is also wrong. We are all of us, myself and my queer brothers and sisters included, are children of God. We are beloved by God. We are faithful to The United Methodist Church. Please, please, I beg of you, vote yes for the Simple Plan.

(applause)

HARRIS: Thank you. We move now to Becca Girrell for a speech against. Mic. 1.

REBECCA GIRRELL (New England): Thank you, Chair. I’m at mic. 4. My name is Rev. Rebecca Girrell. I am a queer clergy person, from the New England Annual Conference. I know that I am a child of God no matter what decisions and pronouncements are made on me and on you. I also know that my gifts and the gifts of the LGBTQIA community, our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness, bless the church as we together reach the world with a love of God in Christ and in the spirit. Our church sadly has a long history of harm about which we say nothing. The sin of racism, of colonialism, the massacre of indigenous peoples, sins of sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and these sins and many, many more cannot be undone. They can be confessed but they cannot be undone. Here, with the Simple Plan, we could make a tiny step toward healing. But it does not undo our harm that we, the church, have caused to queer people around the world. In places where they are not safe, we are not safe. This plan endorses nothing. It does not bind anyone, not even bind people to inclusion and safety. The time has passed to say simply, if you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all. Now I know that we are not yet ready to say something nice, and I pray we one day will be. John Wesley does say, “first, do no harm.” But my siblings, he didn’t stop there. He said, “do good and grow in the love of God.” I do not support the Simple Plan because it’s time to do good and not—[Speaker stopped due to three-minute time limit]
HARRIS: Sorry, your time has expired.

(applause)

HARRIS: We have a point of order from Iuliia Stukalova. Please go to mic. 1. State the rule that’s in violation and a concise rationale for what you think’s in violation.

IULIIA STUKALOVA (Eastern Russia-Central Asia): Mr. Chair, Rule no. 7. Plenary speaking for and against. The last speech, excuse me. Rule 7. The last speech was not against, it was for. But it should be against so that’s not right.

HARRIS: Well, she stated in the end of the speech that it was against. (applause)

HARRIS: It’s out there and it’s done. Let’s move to Jonathan Rezon. I think we’re ready to act on this. If you’ll come to microphone 1 and you may not be ready for it, but let’s see what this does.

HARRIS: Motion to close debate.

JONATHAN REZON (Northeast Philippines): Yes, Mr. Chair. I now move to close debate.

HARRIS: Second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

HARRIS: All right. This is a motion to close debate. It requires two thirds. You have your voting devices. If you would vote to close debate, you’ll push one, which is yes. If you would like to continue debate, you’ll push two, which is no. Please vote now.

HARRIS: All right. The results are ready and they’ll show on the screen. You have voted to close debate. [Yes, 627; No, 186]

Simple Plan Not Supported

HARRIS: Now we move to vote on the motion, and that is on the Simple Plan. If you would support the Simple Plan, vote yes or one (1). If you do not support the Simple Plan, you vote two (2) or no. Vote now.

(pause)

(pause)

JOSEPH HARRIS: Results of the vote are in, and they’ll show on the screen. And you have decided not to support the Simple Plan. [Yes, 323; No, 494.]

HARRIS: Folks, we have completed our work for this day. I want to say a word of thank you for the stature at which each and every one of you have taken this task seriously. Tomorrow, all these will be moved on to plenary, where we’ll have further discussion and debate, but you have acted superbly, and I thank you for your patience with me in chair. I thank our officers for all their support.

HARRIS: And by the way, you’ll see me tomorrow, because I’ll be presenting these to the plenary, which is part of the chair’s responsibility to present these to the plenary. But I won’t have a lot of speeches, so you don’t have to worry about that. But thank you again for all that you did to make this day possible.

FOLGE-MILLER: Sean, if you please bring in writing your request, and we’ll submit it to the Committee on Privileges. That’s the way that it would be in order. Thank you. We have some announcements. Again, a reminder that you must secure your airport shuttle tickets by the end of morning break tomorrow. That’s Tuesday, February 25th. This will allow the transportation volunteers time to make final arrangements for your transportation to the airport.

FOGLE-MILLER: And by the way, you’ll see me tomorrow, because I’ll be presenting these to the plenary, which is part of the chair’s responsibility to present these to the plenary. But I won’t have a lot of speeches, so you don’t have to worry about that. But thank you again for all that you did to make this day possible.

There were those who said, we can never finish all of these in the little time we have. But you were serious to the purpose. You treated each other as kindly as I’ve seen. And I hope that—before we dismiss we have a couple of announcements—that you will go and get some rest and come back tomorrow in time to do the things that we’d like for things to do.

(pause)

I have someone who has placed themselves in the pool, and Sean McRoberts, if you’ll come to mic. 4 and state the nature of which you’d like to speak to the conference.

CARLENE REBECCA FO-GLE-MILLER (Florida): Friends, we have not yet adjourned. If you could please remain in your seats until we adjourn. We still have someone to speak on the floor. We have some announcements. We have our monitoring report, and we have worship. So please remain in your seats. Thank you.

SEAN COLIN DONELLY MCROBERTS (Iowa): Thank you, Chair. I’m Sean McRoberts of the Iowa Annual Conference. I rise for a point of personal privilege to address harm done by the conference.

HARRIS: I’m sorry. This is not in order for a committee. You can put it in writing and submit it, but no speeches of that nature would be appropriate at this time. Thank you.

Now we turn to our secretary for our announcements:

FOGLE-MILLER: Sean, if you please bring in writing your request, and we’ll submit it to the Committee on Privileges. That’s the way that it would be in order. Thank you. We have some announcements. Again, a reminder that you must secure your airport shuttle tickets by the end of morning break tomorrow. That’s Tuesday, February 25th. This will allow the transportation volunteers time to make final arrangements for your transportation to the airport.

If you’d like to utilize this provided service, please see them either today, before tomorrow’s session, or during the break tomorrow morning. Again, the prayer room is open.

There are prayer volunteers and spiritual directors available to you, if you would like to use that. Please take your voting card out of your
device and take it with you tonight, but leave the device, so that we can charge them for tomorrow. Lastly—actually, no, not lastly. We’re going to hear our monitoring report, if our monitors could come up. And while you all are coming up, Susan Brumbaugh has an announcement for the body.

Report of Coordinator of Calendar

SUSAN BRUMBAUGH (Coordinator of the Calendar): Good afternoon. I’m Susan Brumbaugh, Coordinator of the Calendar. In your Advance DCA, would you turn to p. 55. That’s p. 55 in your ADCA. I’m going to refer to a rule that I want you to be aware of p. 55. As stated in Rule 34.3, any twenty delegates may have an item that was not supported by a legislative committee to be presented at tomorrow’s plenary by having a request on file by 3 p.m. tomorrow. My staff will be available for thirty minutes after closing worship and adjournment so that delegates can request the appropriate form in the General Conference main office, which is located in locker room A, and the entrance to that area is just to the left of this B exit from the plenary floor. So, that’s locker room A. You can return these forms that are signed to me tomorrow by asking a page to deliver the form to me, Susan Brumbaugh, Coordinator of the Calendar, at the stage. I encourage you to return these forms as soon as possible tomorrow and by 3 at the latest, so that we can get these items calendared and make them available to the plenary. In the morning, I will share instructions for requesting the form while we’re in plenary, if needed. So again, if you need that form to request that an item that was not supported by the legislative committee to be brought to the floor, you can request that form from my staff for thirty minutes following adjournment in locker room A.

ERIN HAWKINS (General Commission on Religion and Race): I’m Erin Hawkins, General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race. The General Conference is a momentous event in the life of the United Methodist Church. Because of the important matters before us, every contribution must count. We invite you to pause for a moment and answer the monitoring question for today. Please get your voting pads ready.

I have had an adequate opportunity to express my perspective. If the answer to this statement is yes, please press one (1). If it is no, please press two (2). Please respond now.

(pause)

Please show the responses. Let us continue to claim that God has a purpose and has chosen each one to participate in this Christian conferencing. It is our hope that you will continue to contribute to the discussions that have taken place. Thank you. [yes, 514; No, 209]

HARRIS: We will be moving to worship just shortly. I want you also to be aware that the Judicial Council is coming back before we adjourn with a decision on the matters that were referred to them for declaratory decisions. So, we’ll hold steady after worship.

FOGLE-MILLER: It’s information not a decision.

HARRIS: Oh, I’m sorry. It’s information. So, they’ll have it available for us once worship is concluded. We now turn to worship.

(music)

(worship)

MARTHA DELORES MARTIN (Baltimore-Washington): You will have the opportunity to worship God by showing your gratitude to our pages and marshals through a special collection done at the end of this service. Please place your offering in the baskets as you leave.

Will you join me in prayer?

The church is not ours, but yours, O God. Use it however you desire. Rank it however you inspire. Activate it. Allow it to struggle. Use it to demonstrate your glory or let it be diminished so that you alone are praised. Lift it up or bring it low, whichever is more useful to your mission of salvation. Let the church be full. Let it be empty. Let it have it all. Let it have nothing. We freely and heartily yield the church to you, to enjoy what is yours or change what is yours. Open your church to the fresh breezes of your spirit. Baptize your church afresh with the rushing waters of your spirit. Renew, revive, renovate, revitalize your church. Bless it, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

(music)

MARTIN: We believe that God has created and is creating.

ALL: That our God is above change, always seeking to do a new thing, the great potter who is forming us out of clay, able to go far beyond anything we could ask for or imagine by the power at work in us.

MARTIN: We believe that God’s life-changing power is like the wind.

ALL: It is the voice of creation that brings all into being. It is the still, small voice upon a gentle breeze that gives us courage and duration. It is the voice speaking out through the whirlwind, which was rushed to drive us to silence before such raw power.

MARTIN: We believe that God’s life-changing power is like the stream that flows from the throne of God.
ALL: Along its banks are planted the trees of life that bring healing to the nations. It is the life-saving justice that is an ever-flowing stream wearing away the hardest hearts. It is the streams in the desert that alone bring forth new life.

MARTIN: We believe that we are being changed by the movement of the Spirit.

ALL: The waters of baptism that we all share continue to perfect us, the Spirit acting upon our lives, coming and going as it pleases, bringing to fruition the word God has stated in us. As we respond to the touch of God, we are being shaped into that more perfect vessel, fulfilling the vision of God. Amen.

(music)

RUKANG CHIKOMB (North-West Katanga): Please be seated. Just like a deer that craves streams of water, my whole being craves you, God.

ANNE MARIE DETJEN (Germany North): My whole being thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I come and see God’s face?

CHIKOMB: My tears have been my food both day and night, as people constantly questioned me, “Where’s your God now?”

DETJEN: But I remember these things as I bare my soul: how I made my way to the mighty one’s abode, to God’s own house, with joyous shouts and thanksgiving songs—a huge crowd celebrating the festival!

CHIKOMB: Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed? Why are you so upset inside? Hope in God! Because I will again give him thanks, my saving presence and my God.

DETJEN: Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed? Why are you so upset inside?

CHIKOMB: Hope in God! Because I will again give him thanks, my saving presence and my God.

DETJEN: With my bones crushed, my foes make fun of me, constantly questioning me:

CHIKOMB: “Where’s your God now?”

DETJEN: Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed? Why are you so upset inside?

CHIKOMB: Why do I have to walk around, sad, oppressed by enemies?

DETJEN: Why do I have to walk around, sad, oppressed by enemies?

CHIKOMB: By day the Lord commands his faithful love; by night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.

DETJEN: I will say to God, my solid rock, “Why have you forgotten me?”

CHIKOMB: Why do I have to walk around, sad, oppressed by enemies?

DETJEN: With my bones crushed, my foes make fun of me, constantly questioning me:

CHIKOMB: “Where’s your God now?”

DETJEN: Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed? Why are you so upset inside?

CHIKOMB: Hope in God! Because I will again give him thanks, my saving presence and my God.

READER FIVE: You are a God who seeks perfection of love in our lives. This is the holiness we seek, a holiness not based upon externals: upon how we appear, but on internals: how we love. If we do not care for one another, are we not worse than the unbelievers? If we cannot find it in us to show mercy and forgiveness to our enemies, do we not rebel against you? If we do not seek to tear down the wall that divides us, can we still place our offering upon your altar?

(music)

READER FOUR: We are the body of Christ, and we are made up of many unique parts. Every part has its own essential calling. Every part must be free to be itself. We must allow the eye to see and the ear to hear. Some parts are not fully understood by us. Sometimes we do not really understand or see the need for the other. At times, we are even tempted to say I have no need of you.

READER FIVE: The presence of Christ is also found in the struggles of others. You ask us to extend mercy, to show grace because how we treat others we treat you. If we choose not to forgive, are we denying forgiveness to you? If we do not shelter others from the storms of life, is it you that we leave out in the cold? If we choose to exclude others, will we be excluding you? If we seek to silence the voices of others, are we failing to hear what your Spirit is saying to your church?

(music)

READER FOUR: Your commandment is for us to love one another. Your desire is for us to love as you have loved us, to love even those we see as unlovable. This is how the world knows that we are truly your disciples by how we love each other. You are love itself and if we do not love then we are just noise.

ALL: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(music)

MARTHA MARTIN (Baltimore/Washington): May the Lord be with you through the night, and with the morning, may you find refreshing light. Go in the assurance of a steadfast love from the God who is love, the fullest expression of love, and the power of love. Amen.

(music)

JOSPEH HARRIS: We have information from Judicial Council available. Information hasn’t come, so it will be given to us in the morning. Thank you again for your patience. This legislative committee is adjourned.

CARLENE REBECCA FOGLE-MILLER (Florida): Take your cards with you and don’t take the voting device.

(music)

Tuesday Morning, February 26, 2019

(music)

BISHOP ROBERT T. HOSHI-BATA: Good morning church. Good morning General Conference.

ALL: Good morning.

BISHOP HOSHIBATA: We need to rev up this spirit and energy for us for this day. Let’s stand together and sing a new hymn to a familiar tune. Let’s stand and sing with all of your heart.

(music)

BISHOP THOMAS J. BICKERTON: Listen if you will to this litany of disasters that in recent times have beset our world. Hurricanes in Alabama and Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico; wildfires in California; flooding in West Virginia, Michigan, and Louisiana; the displacement of people in Congo; thousands dying from HIV AIDS and malaria. But listen if you will to the level of these responses. $20 million of support for Puerto Rico, $11 million of support for Florida, $1.5 million of support for wildfire recovery, $11 million of support to Texas, a new sustainable agricultural initiative in Africa, $5 million for global health, improving access to water and food services with native Americans in Mexico and Alaska, and an acknowledgment from the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the U.S. government that the United Methodist recovery efforts in Puerto Rico are among the best on the island.

(appause)

BISHOP BICKERTON: This friends is the ministry of UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. A history of being the first on the scene and the last to leave. A history of being able through the connectional system of the church to make major impacts in the saving of lives, the rebuilding of hope all across the world. A history of being able to tangibly demonstrate that we are stronger together than we are apart. A history of being able to extend our witness to the most needy and vulnerable people of the world. This is the ministry of UMCOR, a ministry that is only possible by the coordinated connectional ministry of caring people in The United Methodist Church. Our offering today goes to that ministry, a ministry that demonstrates our collective ability to be the face of Jesus Christ and to change lives for good in the ministries that we proudly call UMCOR. We ask you to give generously as the baskets are passed.

(music)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let us pray. Gracious God, we give you thanks for all your blessings and the ways in which you act in the world using the hands and feet of your people as if they were your own. Receive and bless this offering and those who give it. Give us the strength, O God, to go into the world, transforming this world in your name. And all God’s people said, amen.

LAZARE BANKURUNAZE (Burundi): Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?

ALL: The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

BANKURUNAZE: Do not be afraid when the winds and the sea of life batter all around.

ALL: The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

BANKURUNAZE: Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

ALL: The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

BANKURUNAZE: Though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds us by the hand.

ALL: Into your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. Amen.

FREDERICK K. BREWINGTON (New York): Draw near. Hear these words.

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him, and as they went, a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being
swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. And he said these words to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

FREDERICK K. BREWINGTON (New York): . . . and have faith and the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things yet unseen. And what we seek in all that is peace, knowing that God holds us in the palm of God’s hand. And as God holds us in his hand, resting we must in the assurance of God, that God is with us. God’s presence envelops us. We can have faith. When Jesus tells you to take this time as a time of prayer; that we spend the next moment or two praying silently. And if you wanna sit, that’s OK. If you wanna stand, that’s OK. If you wanna lay yourself flat on the ground, that’s OK, but we need to take some time with each other to pray. Let’s pray in these next few moments that we as a people will not be afraid. That we will not just depend on cover . . .

In John 14, verse 27, when Jesus is preparing the disciples for the time when he will not be with them physically, he tells them this: Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

You see, from Jesus’ viewpoint, fear is counteracted by faith. It’s a pushback to fear. When Jesus tells us that it is a counteraction, we must ask ourselves questions, because our faith leads us to peace. But hear the questions. What do we do when we are afraid? What do you do, and what do you do, and what do you do when we’re afraid? Do we hide? Do we turn and face the danger? Do we face uncertainty? Do we close our eyes? Do we point fingers in blame? Do we push others away, so that we can be in our corner alone? Do we dwell in worst-case scenario? Do we pray?

Brothers and sisters, can we will ourselves to not be afraid? Probably not. But what we can do is have faith, the faith that brought us here to St. Louis. The faith that keeps us bound together in the tether of God’s love.

Let all God’s people say, “Amen.”
Brothers and sisters, would you join me as we recite together. For the decisions before us, Lord.
ALL: Make plain your way.
BREWINGTON: For the actions our decisions require.
ALL: Grant us courage and resolve.
BREWINGTON: For those touched by the decisions we make.
ALL: Fill us with compassion and guide us with your wisdom. In the name of Jesus Christ, in whom we live, lead, and pray. Amen.

(pause)

Let us pray. God of life, we come before you amidst all the forces of death and hopelessness, dilemma and confusion, apathy and divisions. Help us realize that this the world we live in be the church we serve in, and this is our reality. Therefore, we come to you with our pain and agonies, tear and struggles, anxiety and fear. But above all, we come to you today with hope for a new life. God of Lazarus, come and bring us back to life from our own death, deadly behaviors, and actions. Set us free. God of Ezekiel, come and transform our valleys of dry bones into a real flesh, a real body, and a real people of God again. God of Jesus, our father and mother of life, come and raise us from death and bring all of us and your whole creation to shalom. Send us in mission to the world as your emissaries of shalom. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life to all, Amen.

GRAVES: We will be on break until 8:45.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Thank you dear friends. Have we not been blessed by this ensemble and they’ve just been faithful and steady and generous? Give them some love today.

(applause)

Good morning to all of you, and it’s my privilege to invite us to begin after that beautiful service of worship and some afterglow to call on Pastor Judy Zabel who is the chair of the Committee on Presiding Officers.
Committee on Presiding Officers Report

JUDITH ZABEL (Minnesota): Good morning church! ALL: Good morning! ZABEL: It is good to be here with you on this day. The Committee on Presiding Officers would like to announce that our presiding bishop this morning will be Bishop Gregory Palmer from the West Ohio Area (applause). Following Bishop Palmer will be Bishop Fierro Harvey. We ask that you keep both of our bishops in prayer and will you pray with me now?

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the leadership that our bishops provide The United Methodist Church and we pray that your hand will be upon Bishop Palmer and Bishop Harvey this day. Fill them with your holy spirit, anoint them with wisdom, power, and grace as we offer this time to you in the name of the Christ. Amen. This concludes our report, bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you madam chair. The Committee on Presiding Officers has done a gargantuan job to work collaboratively throughout this process as was indicated in Judy’s report the other day. Let’s give them a hand, would you? All right. (applause) I want to turn to our secretary, Brother Gary Graves, who will guide us through the early work of this morning with some reports from our committees of the General Conference.

GARY GRAVES (Secretary of General Conference): Thank you bishop. We will hear first from the Committee on Credentials. The chair is Jo Anne Hayden. Jo Ann, if you would come and share.

Committee on Credentials Report

JO ANNE HAYDEN (Alaska): Thank you. My name is Jo Ann Hayden. I’m from the Alaska Conference. Thank you, bishop and secretary. The Credentials Committee met in response to an appeal from a delegation. The secretary’s decision was affirmed by the committee. That is the report.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. GRAVES: Our next committee will be the Committee on Journal. Randy Biggerstaff, chair, will be presenting.

Committee on Journal Report

RANDY BIGGERSTAFF (Missouri): Good morning, General Conference! GRAVES: Good morning, Randy!

BIGGERSTAFF: Thank you, thank you. (laughter) I represent the Journal Committee. We’ve been meeting each morning to go through the DCA, as you have in front of you. I would like to call to your attention the errata that’s in each one of the issues that we’ve been going over. The one from Saturday, the errata is on pp. 270 and 271 and also an addition on p. 282. On Sunday, it was on p. 346; yesterday, p.356; and today, you’ll find it on p. 378 and then an addition on p. 382 that was a correction to the journal. I’d like to take a little personal privilege and thank Amy Aspey as well as Lorene Wilburn, who have also worked with me. If you have any additions, if you happen to find something in the DCA that you need corrected, it can either be given to Gary Graves or brought to our table. I’m back at 116. If not, that completes my report.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother chairman. Thanks to the committee, as well.

GRAVES: Reporting now on behalf of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision, Bob Burkhart, chair.

Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision Report

J. ROBERT BURKHART (North Central Jurisdiction): Good morning. I would call your attention to p. 26 and p. 38 in your Advanced DCA to find out what the responsibility of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Review is. Just two brief thoughts about that.

One, is our responsibility is to propose legislation, report it in the DCA or present it in special reports to the General Conference to make sure that things are not duplicated, things don’t contradict each other, and that the inconsistencies are resolved. If you look on p. 38, we also have a responsibility with some other important persons when it comes to editing the Discipline. Maidstone Mulenga is one of our members; he’s the secretary of our committee, and he’s here to report on something you need to know about.

MAIDSTONE MULENGA (Baltimore-Washington): Good morning General Conference! My name is Maidstone Mulenga. I’m clergy from the Baltimore-Washington Conference and I’m honored to serve as the secretary of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision. According to our plan of organization, one of the duties of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision is to report to the General Conference contradictions, duplications, and inconsistencies discovered in proposed legislation. We have found contradictions and duplications in legislation that was approved yesterday in the legislative committee.

MAIDSTONE MULENGA (Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision): The legislative committee yesterday approved two disaffiliation petitions, Petition No. 90059 and Petition No. 9006, which are now calendar items 19
and 20. Both these petitions are new paragraphs in two different places about the same issue. If these two petitions are approved as they are by the plenary session, there will be contradictions and duplications in The Book of Discipline on this issue. Our duty is not to offer solutions, but to make the body aware of the contradictions and the duplications. Bishop Palmer, this concludes our report.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Thank you, Maidstone.

Privilege Honoring M.C. Dean

J. ROBERT BURKHART (Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision): Just a moment of privilege. I’d like to ask the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Review to stand. Thank you for your work.

(applause)

Marj Pon is the person, the staff person that works for us. She’s the managing editor of The United Methodist Publishing House, and also in charge of church school, editor of Church School Publications. For many, many years, Mary Catherine Dean was in a position very similar to that; worked very closely with this committee and others. Many of you know that Mary Catherine Dean retired this past year and then died. I just want to say a word of thanks in memoriam for her work, and I want you to keep her in your prayers.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother Burkhart. Thanks so much and we remember Mary Catherine with affection and appreciation. Brother Secretary.

GARY GRAVES (Secretary of General Conference): Thank you, I second that. We want to hear now from Courtesies and Privileges. The chair is Sue Sullivan.

Committee on Courtesies and Privileges Report

SUE SULLIVAN (Committee on Courtesies and Privileges): Greetings. I am Sue Sullivan, Chair of the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges, from Texas Annual Conference. At the close of our Legislative Committee meeting yesterday, the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges received a referral. Our committee received the referral and has reviewed it. And it was not clear to our committee in the written material we received as to what was really intended as it appeared to be a speech in support of one of the plans that was presented yesterday. Therefore, the committee did not consider it to be a matter for the courtesy and privileges. Our committee will meet again today at the lunch break, at the beginning of the lunch break, in room 152 to consider another referral we’ve received. Bishop this concludes our report.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. And to your committee, let’s thank God for them. Give them a little hand.

(applause)

GRAVES: We hear now on matters regarding our agenda and our calendar. They will be brought by the coordinator of the calendar, Dr. Susan Brumbaugh, and Emily Allen, the committee chair.

Report on Agenda and Calendar

SUSAN BRUMBAUGH (Calendar Coordinator): Good morning. In today’s DCA, please turn to p. 383. It’s close to the front, p. 383, where you will find all of the items passed by our legislative committees and available for discussion today. Note that the items appear in the order the committee paperwork was processed. So, the Traditional Plan items are not in petition number order.

Now, please turn to p. 387. That’s 387. Where you will find all items not supported by a legislative committee. Please note that the instructions at the top of that page still reflect information from 2016. Category 1A is not applicable because of The Book of Discipline Par. 507.11.

Also, the location for requesting and returning the form to bring a non-calendared item to the floor is not room B117. That doesn’t exist here. Instead, here is the process for requesting a form. Please send a page to the stage with a note addressed to the calendar coordinator that indicates the petition number you wish to have calendared, or the plan and the petition numbers that go with the plan and your seat location, and ask the page to wait for the form so they can bring it back to you. I’m going to repeat that. Send a note to the stage by a page and indicate the petition number you wish to have calendared or the plan and the petition numbers that go with it, and your seat location so we can send the form back to you. To return a completed form, before 3 p.m., send it by page to the stage, addressed to the calendar coordinator.

EMILY ALLEN (Committee on Agenda and Calendar): Good morning. I am Emily Allen, chair of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar. The committee met this morning to determine the order of the legislative work before us. I thank the committee members, staff and presiders for their work. In our considerations for ordering the legislation today, we weighed the percent approval each plan or petition received, its global impact, and the presence of a minority report. The order of legislation, I hope, will appear on the screens.

As Susan mentioned, the calendar items start on p. 387 of today’s Daily Christian Advocate. In order,
they are Petition 90015, One Church Plan No. 15, Central Conference Implementation Time; Petitions 90016 and 90017, Wespath Recommendations; Petitions 90032 through 90040, and 90042 through 90047, Traditional Plan, excepting those listed; Petition 90066, Disaffiliation; and Petition 90059, Disaffiliation. If the calendar coordinator receives a request to present in plenary a plan or petition that was not supported in legislative committee, it will be added to the end of this order of legislation coming before us in the order that the form is received and processed. This ends my report, Bishop.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Thank you, Madame Chair. And what a great job you and your team have done. Let’s express our appreciation.

(applause)

GARY GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. That ends the reports from our administrative committees for this morning, and we will be moving into the calendar items as you are ready.

Announcement and Prayer for Faith Geer

We will have one announcement to share, if you would. We have received word that Faith Geer, who was a member of the delegation from the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference, has died after a lengthy illness. Please be in prayer for Faith’s family and for the delegation from Western Pennsylvania and all who knew Faith in our Northeastern Jurisdiction.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Let’s prepare ourselves to offer ourselves to God in prayer. I want to call on Bishop LaTrelle Easterling to lead us to the throne.

BISHOP LATRELLE EAST-ERLING: May we be in a spirit and attitude of prayer. God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power. As your people, we have the blessed assurance that we may call upon you in times of distress, and you hear us. You hold us, and you steady our feet when all around us feels as though it will give way.

God, we give you thanks for this your daughter and your servant, Faith Geer. We thank you for her life. We thank you for the lives that she touched. We thank you that she committed herself to you in witness, in service, and in praise. We pray with her family now as they live with this devastating news. God, we say often that tomorrow is not promised and it becomes something that we utter but that we don’t necessarily really grasp. And so comfort her family at this time. Comfort those from the Western Pennsylvania Conference, who are sitting in grief and mourning right now. Be with her bishop, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, who is a pastoral presence to those that are here and longs to be with those who are back home. But you, God, are not bound by space nor time, so you are here with us, and you are there with them.

Pour out your grace and your mercy and help us to know that living we are in Christ, dying we are in Christ, so in all things, we are with our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power. Amen.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Bishop Easterling. Friends, thank you for this opportunity to serve you, and I’m always pleased to identify those who are particularly giving the chair help, and you’ve had them before you already, Bishops Hope Morgan Ward and Christian Alsted. You’ve met repeatedly throughout these days as he’s assisted us, particularly from the orientation on, Dr. Leonard Young, who has been serving as our parliamentarian. You know of this great staff of the General Conference secretary and all of his team that he has assembled.

When we sit here in front of you, I really sit here on behalf of all of your bishops and in one sense we are leading you together, or attempting to do so, and attempting to hold the whole that is this General Conference and that is The United Methodist Church. There will likely be some fumbles. There have been already. We hope that you’ll charge them to our heads and not to our hearts, i.e., we just made a mistake and it’s not—there’s not a conspiracy against anyone or anything. The only conspiracy I want to be a part of is the divine conspiracy to do all the good that I can do in the church and in the world. So, I will fumble. I tend to recover quickly and—thus far—and so you’ll be the judge of that, and you’ll be a part of the recovery program, ‘cause let me just say, we are all recovering from something all of the time. Have I got any witnesses in the house? Yeah.

You can expect some frequency of prayer as we move through our work. I’m grateful for these musicians. I don’t know if anybody queued you up, but I just want you to know at some point I’m gonna call on you, and I’d love as a prayerful response portions of the refrain or the refrain to, “‘Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus” I just love it. I just love it when the Holy Spirit puts it in my heart to begin singing, (singing) “Oh, for grace to trust him more.” (spoken) Now, I want the house to join me.

ALL: (singing) Oh, for grace to trust him more.

Legislation from the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

BISHOP PALMER: Amen. I’m pleased to call upon Bishop Francis-
co, who is the Chair of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. It appears that Bishop Patrick Streiff, who has previously chaired that group, is coming with him. Bishop Francisco will present our first calendar item rightly before us.

BISHOP CIRIACO Q. FRANCISCO: Good morning!

ALL: Good morning.

BISHOP FRANCISCO: I said, “Good morning!”

ALL: Good morning.

BISHOP FRANCISCO: God is good!

ALL: All the time!

BISHOP FRANCISCO: All the time!

ALL: God is good!

Petition 90015 Central Conference Implementation Time


But let me first say something before I give the report. If this petition be approved by the body, this is no longer about One Church Plan, but everything that we pass in this session pertaining to the implementation aspect. So, let me ask if the text is in the screen so you can read. This petition as amended and add the following at the end of paragraph 543.17. Is it in the screen? (pause) All right, if none, then let me read to you. It’s in your handbook.

It says, “Legislation passed at the 2019 called session of General Conference shall not take effect in Central Conferences until twelve months after the close of the 2020 General Conference in order to afford the necessary time to organize a Central Conference and to make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries, including such changes in adaptation of the general Book of Discipline as conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference. Paragraph 31.5 of the Constitution without regard to the language used in a Central Conference.” Ninety-seven percent of the members of the Standing Committee move to adopt this about petition as amended by substitution.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Thank you, Brother Chairman. And you want the house to understand that this is merely a motion, should it prevail, to facilitate any actions of this General Conference. Is that the spirit of it?

BISHOP CIRIACO Q. FRANCISCO: Yes, sir.

BISHOP PALMER: Anything else you want to say about it?

BISHOP FRANCISCO: Well, I think I have said what I should say.

BISHOP PALMER: OK. All right. I just, I just.

(laughter)

Thank you, Bishop. Friends this is before you and are there voices wishing to speak. I don’t see any in the pool at this moment. And may I take it that you’re ready to act on this? One just came up. I’m sorry. Tell me where I am.

BISHOP FRANCISCO: If you have a question, Bishop Patrick is willing to answer that.

BISHOP PALMER: OK.

(laughter)

All right. All right. These are all speeches for. And, so let me—

(pause)

All right. I’m still adjusting to the technology, and I told you I would fumble and stumble and it happened sooner than I thought. Let me, I’ve got at mic. 4 Scott Campbell with an amendment. And let’s, let’s hear that voice and that friend and then we’ll get to some other voices that are here in the pool.

Proposed Amendment to Petition 90015

WILLIAM SCOTT CAMPBELL (New England): Good morning, Bishop.

BISHOP FRANCISCO: Morning.

CAMPBELL: I am Scott Campbell of the New England Conference. I wish to propose an amendment to delete the reference in the very first sentence to Central Conferences or Provisional Central Conferences using a language other than English. If I could have a second, I would like to speak to that.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, I hear voices that are giving it a second. Why don’t you begin, Brother Campbell, before your clock of speech begins, let’s hear it stated again. And we need it up at the table as quickly as possible to help the secretarial staff. OK?

CAMPBELL: Yes. I move to delete the first dozen words or so that read, “In a Central Conference or Provisional Central Conference using a language other than English.” So, that it would read, the sentence, rather, would begin with “Legislation passed by the General Conference” and continue on from there as amended previously.

BISHOP PALMER: So, I’m struggling a little bit, Brother Campbell, and to all you sisters and brothers. It appears to me that what the committee actually brought forth is what you are suggesting as an amendment. And I’m reading from—I’ve got them side-by-side—I’m on p. 383 of today’s Christian Advocate, item No. 1, and it reads precisely as I think I heard you read.
And so that’s what’s before the house, so I’m not getting the effect of your amendment.

CAMPBELL: I apologize to the body if I don’t have the most current version. I’m reading from the advanced edition.

BISHOP PALMER: I understand. Are you OK if we work on the motion as presented by the committee since it is where you were headed in terms of amendment?

CAMPBELL: Let, let me clarify what I’m trying to do, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: OK.

CAMPBELL: I would like this legislation not to apply simply to the Central Conferences, but rather to the entire Church given the complexity of many of the plans that are before us.

BISHOP PALMER: So, in effect, with the material from the DCA for this morning, you would want to strike Central Conferences and then substitute this other language?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

BISHOP PALMER: So, let me attempt to be generous on behalf of all of us, and help you and then the house do whatever it wishes to do. It—can you amend this in the way that you propose your amendment to what’s in today’s Christian Advocate?

CAMPBELL: A quick look at it would call for us to delete the words “Central Conference” and “Central Conferences” so that it will read, “shall not take effect until 12 months after the 2020 General Conference.”

BISHOP PALMER: OK.

CAMPBELL: And wherever Central Conferences are mentioned throughout the remainder of the petition, that designation would be deleted.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Is that supported? All right. I hear voices supporting it. Anything else you want to say at this time about it?

CAMPBELL: Just to indicate that there are some major changes being proposed that will take time across the church to implement. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, and forgive me if I didn’t understand what you were attempting to invite the house to engage.

CAMPBELL: It was entirely my fault.

BISHOP PALMER: No, no. Not at all. It’s fine. So, we’re on the amendment that we’ve just heard and I hope it—is it at the table already?

GARY GRAVES: It is not.

BISHOP PALMER: OK. If we could get that to the table and I was gonna—first of all, before anybody entered into conversation about the amendment, ask the secretary or his designee to read it one more time so that we’re all operating from the same location in the material.

GRAVES: As a point of clarification, it appears to me that this is in a paragraph designated about Central Conferences, and so we will have some issues for CCER that I would like to alert you to. Second piece is a reminder to everyone to please have your motions pre-written on your motion forms. They are on your tables or available from the page at the microphone. You need to send those up here as soon as you are recognized. Please do not hold them until you have finished reading whatever you have written and then gone back to your seat. We will not be able to keep up with that if you wait until that point. So, please, as a procedural reminder, have any motions pre-written, and send them as soon as you are recognized by the page who is near the microphone.

GRAVES: As I have the motion that is before us. The motion is to strike by amendment the words in the third line of the text on p. 383 of today’s DCA. Strike the text, “in Central Conferences.” Four lines later, “to organize a,” strike the word, “Central”, and leave the word, “conference.” I do not see any other references, other than the last reference to central conference saying regard to the language used in a conference. If those three are the correct points, Scott, that is what I have.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. I want to turn to some voices against this, and then we’ll alternate as our rules permit. Let me turn to Jeffrey Kuan at mic. 4. And this is a speech against.

KAH-JIN JEFFREY KUAN (California-Nevada): Good morning, Bishop. Jeffrey Kuan, California-Nevada Conference. Bishop, I speak against this amendment, because this particular section refers to article 31.5 of the Constitution that refers only and has implication only to central conferences. I am in support of my brother Scott’s sense of the direction, but it does not apply to this particular section of The Book of Discipline, so I urge that we vote against the amendment.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother Kuan. Let me turn to mic. 3, a speech for, Gail Douglas-Boykin.

GAIL DOUGLAS-BOYKIN (New York): Good morning, Bishop. I would suggest that we stop treating the central conferences as an exception and start considering their needs as a core part of our work. With this in mind, we should set a timeline that the whole Church can observe. Therefore, I ask you to support this with one timeline for the whole church. It will address that amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Let me turn to a speech against, and I want you to be aware that I’m doing some conferring about the matter that has been raised about the location of this in The Discipline, and so, that’s why you see me turning back and forth some. So, I think that was a speech for, and
I’m now coming to a speech against. And I want to come to mic. 1, and Audun Westad. I hope I’ve said that correctly. Mic. 1. Think he’s on the way. OK.

AUDUN WESTAD (Norway): Thank you, Bishop. I’m on mic. no. 3. My name is Audun Westad, from Norway Annual Conference. I want to speak against this amendment. Simply as the first speaker against said, this is a paragraph regarding central conferences, and it should clearly state that this is a central conference matter. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Let me turn to mic. — to a question, and the microphone is mic. 4, Katie Dawson. Mic. 4.

**Question about Current Timeline for Implementing Legislation**

KATIE Z. DAWSON (Iowa): Thank you, Bishop. Katie Dawson, from Iowa, clergy. My question is, what would the timeline be as is currently in The Discipline for implementation of any legislation we pass at this General Conference?

BISHOP PALMER: My understanding is that it would be January 1, 2020, unless otherwise specified. Unless otherwise specified, OK? Thanks, Katie. Let me—we’ve had two speeches against and one for. Let me turn back to a speech for, and this is mic. 2 this time. Steve Zekoff. OK, Steve, you go on to 4.

STEVEN E. ZEKOFF (Wisconsin): Steve Zekoff, clergy, Wisconsin, and proudly retired. I was blessed during my ministry to spend most of it in administrative work on behalf of our church at both the general church level and the annual conference level. I urge you to vote for this, because there are a lot of details that will need to be worked out in all of our conferences as they make decisions about how their future will be in their setting. I recognize that is an awkward place in The Discipline. I would urge us to vote for this. If we pass it, then obtain a report from CCER as to other places in the legislation that would need to be brought into alignment of what this amendment intends.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Thank you, brother Steve. Let me turn to Andreas Elfving, a speech against, and then let’s see if you’re ready to express yourselves through voting. And that’s mic. 1. You’re going to 3? OK, all right.

ANDREAS JAN MARTIN ELFVING (Finland-Swedish Provisional): Mic. 3. Thank you, bishop. Andreas Elfving, Finland-Swedish Provisional Annual Conference. As much as one can appreciate the spirit that the people speaking for this amendment have. It just makes no sense to do it this way and I think it’s important that we keep the Discipline clear, and this place where this is going clearly talks about the Central Conferences. So, I would urge you to vote against this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. I want to turn—does the committee chair have anything you’d wish to say before we ask folks to vote on behalf of the committee? Bishop Streiff.

BISHOP PATRICK STREIFF: In due respect to what was proposed in the amendment, if you want to do that, you would need to do it in a different place. The paragraph is really related to Central Conferences and if you want to do something in general for all annual conferences and all parts of the church, you would need to do that in a different place with a different amendment. So, I from the standing committee, I urge you to keep it in line with the legislation linked to Central Conferences and therefore, to vote no to the amendment.

Vote on Amendment to Petition 90015

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you Bishop Streiff. Let’s get our voting devices ready, and just let’s offer ourselves to God in prayer as we move to this vote. Gracious and loving God, we have sensed already this day your presence. We ask that you would not leave us nor forsake us. Give us wisdom that we need in each of the moments of our lives and our work, and help us to do that which will be helpful to your cause of hope and healing in the church and in the world. For, we ask it in the name of the healer from Galilee, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. All right, if you favor the amendment, and this is all gonna get on the screen, you will press one (1); if you oppose the amendment, you’ll press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

[Yes, 150; No, 672]

All right, I think we’re ready to show the results on the amendment. All right, you have not sustained the amendment, and we’re on the main motion from the committee. You think you’re ready to act on it? Let’s give it a try. OK. Keep your voting devices nearby. There’s some folks here wishing to speak. OK, I’m sorry. All right. Let’s hear. I think we have some folks wishing to speak for the motion from the committee. Let me turn to Jorgen Thaarup at mic. 1.

JORGEN THAARUP (Denmark): Bishop, Jorgen Thaarup, Denmark Annual Conferences. Can I use mic. 3?

BISHOP PALMER: Sure. Please.

THAARUP: Thank you.

Bishop, as the Central Conferences, according to paragraph 13 at the constitution will only meet within twelve months after the quadrennial
session of General Conference. This amendment will allow every Central Conference to decide on the changes and adoptions for the respective areas and thus prevent a legal vacuum for Central Conferences. In addition, this amendment does not limit the extension of time to make changes and adoptions to Central Conferences that are not English-speaking. It is important to note that this amendment is only related to this called extra session of General Conference which is outside the timeline of regular Central Conferences and will not change the procedures given in the Book of Discipline for regular sessions of Central Conferences.

Furthermore, it is important to know that this paragraph only applies to Central Conferences. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much, friend. I’m trying to see if…Let me turn to mic. 2. Karon Mann with an amendment.

BISHOP PALMER: Are you headed to mic. 4? OK, thanks. Karon Mann.

GARY GRAVES: And please be sure to send any amendment written on a motion form to the table as soon as possible.

KARON SUE MANN (Arkansas): Yes, yes sir, thank you, Bishop. Actually, I was in the queue before the delegate from New England with substitute language for the, for this. I’m not sure. May I ask you a question?

BISHOP PALMER: Let’s give it a try. Go ahead.

MANN: OK. I would like to just make a motion to the conference and not necessarily a substitute. I would like to move that legislation passed at the 2019 called session of the General Conference shall not take effect until twelve months after the close of the 2020 conference.

BISHOP PALMER: So, I think there’s a place for the house to consider that. I believe where the committee has brought us, and what the house did, the way in which it dealt with the previous amendment, is that these paragraphs are so focused on the central conferences that we need to stick with that, and then try your voice, or another sister or brother, to come back with matters of effect if you want to speak differently than what The Discipline already says following a general conference. OK?

MANN: Yes, sir, thank you. I’ll do that.

Vote on Petition 90015

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, thank you very much. Friends, we’re on the main motion from the committee. Are there other voices that haven’t spoken that want to speak in favor of this, or against it. I have none in the queue against. Would you like to try to give it, you know, your ‘once over’ as the delegates? Let’s get our voting devices. We are on the motion as presented. It’s in DCA p. 383, it’s the number one item. And it effects central conferences only at this point. Before we vote, would you just, however your posture of prayer, just take 30 seconds and breathe, and pray before you vote? Would just do that? It won’t be a spoken time.

Amen. If you favor the motion that came from the standing committee, you’ll press one (1); and if you are opposed to it, press two (2). You may vote now.

(pause)

BISHOP PALMER: The results are in. They are all through, all amongst us.

(applause)

BISHOP FRANCISCO: They are there! Thank you so much for your cooperation and work and kindness to one another. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. I want to turn now to the legislative committee chair, Dr. Harris, and the vice-chair, Pastor Musau, to lead us in our work.

Legislation from the Legislative Committee

JOSEPH HARRIS (Oklahoma): Good morning, Conference. I hope we all slept well. I’ll sleep better tonight. (laughter) We’re grateful to be, to have the opportunity to present the legislation that you all worked on yesterday. For our first presentation, I’ve asked our vice chair, Betty Kazadi Musau, to present the first set of petitions.

Petitions 90016 and 90017 Wespath Recommendations

BETTY KAZADI MUSAU (North Katanga): Good morning, church! Our report is in the DCA p. 383, calendar item two and three. Petition Nos. 90016, 90017. In the ADCA p. 168 and 169, on Wespath recommendations, pension liabilities, and CRSP amendment, Par. 1505. The legislative committee present these to the plenary. Thank you, Bishop.
BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Madam Vice-Chair. These are properly before us from the legislative committee of yesterday. Are there—I’m not seeing—I do now see. This is a proposed amendment coming. Tim Riss at mic. 3.

Proposed Amendment to Petition 90016

TIMOTHY J. RISS (New York): Thank you, Bishop. I’m Tim Riss from New York Annual Conference, a clergy delegate. I would like to move that at the end of the first sentence of Petition 90016, insert a comma, and add these words: “provided that the annual conference certify that all other obligations of the church or charge to the annual conference have been satisfied.” And if I have a second, I’d like to speak to it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, I hear support. Go right ahead, friend.

RISS: Well, in our annual conference, we have churches that are leaving now and again or are disbanding because of lack of vitality. And we have policies that when their assets are sold, that the money from the assets goes to provide for a couple of years’ worth of missed apportionment payments, for any loans that had been extended through our parish development process, and similar other obligations that are owed the annual conference. So, just to have the pensions dealt with is, I think, insufficient.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, I hear support. Go right ahead, friend.

RISS: Well, in our annual conference, we have churches that are leaving now and again or are disbanding because of lack of vitality. And we have policies that when their assets are sold, that the money from the assets goes to provide for a couple of years’ worth of missed apportionment payments, for any loans that had been extended through our parish development process, and similar other obligations that are owed the annual conference. So, just to have the pensions dealt with is, I think, insufficient.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. We’re on the amendment. Are there voices wishing to speak to the amendment?

GARY GRAVES: Bishop, we need that at the table as soon as possible.

Vote on Amendment to Petition 90016

BISHOP PALMER: I’m not seeing any. Let’s see if you’re ready to act upon it. Oh, it just opened. OK, I’m sorry. All right, I don’t see any voices wishing to speak for or against. Let’s see how you want to care for this, and if you’ll get your voting devices ready. Breathe deeply, and when you see the opportunity on the screen, if you favor the amendment, you’ll press one (1). If you oppose it, you’ll press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause)

BISHOP PALMER: All right, I think we’re ready for you to see the results of your action on the amendment. All right, you have sustained the amendment.

Vote on Petition 90016 as Amended

BISHOP PALMER: It’s now a part of the main motion, and I’m looking at my monitor to see if there are voices that want to speak to it as amended. All right, I see one—OK, the pool has been cleared, and thank you. Friends, let’s get your voting devices ready, and see how you want to speak into these proposals that have come from the legislative committee. I want to ask Bishop Sue Haupert-Johnson if she’d give us a prayer before we vote, OK?

Prayer for Injured Volunteer

BISHOP FRANK BEARD: Let us pray. Gracious and loving God, it is always your property to be merciful. We thank you for those that were trained to provide emergency care, and they are now in a St. Louis-area hospital receiving more, more care. I’d like to call on Bishop Frank Beard to help us join him and the folks from Illinois Great Rivers and this person’s family in holding them in prayer.

BISHOP HAUPER-JOHNSON: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

BISHOP HAUPER-JOHNSON: Let us pray. Gracious God, we are your children standing in need of your wisdom and a vision larger than ourselves. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, and may our work be your work. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

PRAYER FOR INJURED VOLUNTEER

BISHOP PALMER: Amen.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Alright friends, let’s see how you have acted on this.

[Yes, 561; No. 254]

Friends, looking at what’s ahead of us in the next little bit, I want to say you we’ll be in recess for 15 minutes so that you can handle the break that you need. Amen?

BISHOP PALMER: …in three minutes, that’d be a good thing. Thank you. Just walk and talk as you need to.

Prayer for Injured Volunteer

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Friends, let’s be in order. Let’s be in order. I want to share with you that we received a note that indicated that one of the volunteers from the Illinois side of this region, who has been serving among us and making our life and work possible, had a serious medical incident. They were tended to by folks that are trained to provide emergency care, and they are now in a St. Louis-area hospital receiving more, more care. I’d like to call on Bishop Frank Beard to help us join him and the folks from Illinois Great Rivers and this person’s family in holding them in prayer.

BISHOP FRANK BEARD: Let us pray. Gracious and loving God, it is always your property to be merciful. We thank you for those that were available to assist our brother today. We thank you for his life, that it is
valued by you. We thank you for his family and we ask that you would tend to them in these moments of anxiety and worry. We thank you, Lord, that we do live in a land of great medical care.

We pray for those that assist and attend his physical body. And Lord, we know that thou art the great physician. And so we ask, O God, that you would touch him with your hand as only you can, from the top of his head to the sole of his feet. Let the healing virtue of your holy spirit flow. We pray not only for this brother, our volunteer, but we pray for all those that suffer this day. We ask, O God, that you would continue to bind us together, at this conference, with cords of love that cannot be broken. Bind up the broken-hearted. Heal those that are hurting, and help us, Lord, to be sensitive to you and to one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Thank you, Bishop Beard. We’re exercising some discretion on the name until this person’s family is able to get to them. They’re about 2½ hours away. And as we’re able to say more, it likely will come back through an announcement either from this desk or from the secretarial staff so that you can pray more, in a more focused way. But thank you for your understanding and sensitivity to that matter. I’d like to turn to mic. I before we come back to the committee. Brother Gray Souther is attempting to speak.

Brother Gray.

H. GRAY SOUTHERN (North Carolina): Thank you, Bishop. Gray Southern, clergy, North Carolina. I was trying to take myself out of the pool because later I would like to make a motion to reconsider an earlier action.

BISHOP PALMER: Are you not wanting to do that?

SOUTHERN: Oh, but now—if you’ll receive it now I’d be happy to.

BISHOP PALMER: Let’s, well let’s give it a try, and the house will decide.

Motion to Reconsider Petitions 90016 and 90017

SOUTHERN: Bishop, I’d like to make a motion to reconsider our earlier actions, approving Wespath plans, which are Petitions—I have to find them now—the Wespath plans, I don’t have the number in front of me, not anticipating coming up.

GARY GRAVES: 90016 and 90017, found on pp. 1168 and 169 of the ADCA, and p. 383 of the DCA.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Gary.

SOUTHERN: Bishop, having spoken to the Wespath staff, I think in our action, we have voted in some unintended consequences.

BISHOP PALMER: Let, let me just make sure there was a second and then you can speak to it. All right. Thank you, friend.

SOUTHERN: Thank you. Bishop, I think in approving these proposals, we have voted in some unintended consequences that would have serious adverse effects on pensions for lay and clergy people as well as negatively impact the life of annual conferences. I’d also like to, in my motion, include inviting Wespath staff to address the issues at hand.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. I think I have a duty to remind this house and let you speak for yourself. You did vote on the prevailing side.

SOUTHERN: I did.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Indeed. And also to have the house know this is debatable, and we are right now only debating if we want to reconsider and brother Southern has gotten us started with a speech favorable to that and indicated some ways this body could be helped, if you choose to reconsider it. We can’t hear from Wespath with any information they have until you’ve chosen to reconsider the matter. So, are there voices that want to speak for and against reconsideration, or do you think you’re ready to exercise your franchise, in that sense? All right. We’ve got—let me come to mic. I again, and it’s the only person waiting to speak. Alex Shank. Shanks, excuse me.

ALEX ARTHUR SHANKS (Florida): Alex Shanks, clergy delegate from the Florida Conference. I would speak for reconsideration. The Commission and the Council of Bishops and Wespath and this body has worked very hard to make sure that what we pass about Wespath is excellent in every way and looks at all the different pieces, and I think the amendment may have unintended consequences, and so I would ask us to reconsider, hear from Wespath, and then vote again, possibly on the original motion, unamended. So, I’m speaking for reconsideration.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. Let me turn to mic. 3, Tim Riss. And this is a speech against reconsideration, I’m assuming.

TIMOTHY J. RISS (New York): I’ve had some conversation with Wespath. May I use that as parts my speech?

BISHOP PALMER: Well, I called on you. Are you going to speak against reconsideration?

RISS: Against. Yes, yes. ‘Cause I made the amendment.

BISHOP PALMER: Yeah, I don’t think it’s mine to counsel you on how to make, use your three minutes.

RISS: All right. Thank you. So, if I make, if I may say, I had some conversation, and I heard that their concern was that this would put annual conference obligations in line
ahead of pension obligations. My read of it is, the annual conference is responsible both for pension obligations and for other obligations that they have to care for and if a church with assets is leaving the domain—denomination or has been abandoned, their assets should go for all those things that the annual conference feels it needs to go for, not just pension.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: All right, thank you. Let’s hear a voice for the motion for reconsideration. I want to turn, get to another part of the room. Jennifer Burton Lineberry. Mic. 2, I believe.

(pause)

JENNIFER BURTON LINEBERRY (Western North Carolina): Thank you, bishop. Jennifer Burton Lineberry from the Western North Carolina Conference. I rise to speak for this reconsideration. I don’t know that I can say much more or any better than Alex Shanks did, but I will also add that being a part of the Board and Audit Committee of Wespath, I know that they put many years and hours of work into these petitions, and I do hope that we will reconsider it and have them speak to the necessary changes. Thank you.

Vote on Motion to Reconsider

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. We’ve had three speeches for. I don’t have anyone in the queue to speak against. Let’s see if you’re ready to determine if you want to reconsider the matter; and if you’ll get your keypads awakened. And if you favor reconsideration, you’ll press one (1). If you’re opposed to it, you’ll press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause)

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: All right, I think in just a few seconds, it’ll be on the screen. All right. All right, you have chosen to reconsider the matter, and as I understood the motion and its intent and some of the speakers was to get some information in front of this house from staff or board members of Wespath. And I’m going to assume that your vote to reconsider is really granting that.

[Yes, 664; No, 153]

And Barbara, I don’t know if it's you and Andy, if it's Andy alone. OK, you’re pointing to Andy, Chief Legal Counsel at Wespath, to come. Are you coming to mic. 2, Andy? OK, please come. Let’s hear from our brother. Go right ahead, friend. Is the microphone on?

Information from Andrew Hendren of Wespath

ANDREW HENDREN: I believe so, yes.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, great.

HENDREN: Thank you, Andy Hendren, Wespath Benefits and Investments. I appreciate the chance to come up here and speak to this. When we drafted the language with the commission, it was carefully done. I believe, we believe that the amendment, the way it’s drafted, using the term “provided that” after the first sentence puts other annual conference obligations in a higher priority than the pension obligations.

What we need to remember is that the annual conference is the responsible legal entity under the denominational pension plans. We respect the fact that there are other annual conference obligations, like retiree medical benefits, loans, et cetera. But the pension obligations are there to take care of those who have dedicated their lives to service of the church, and we think that that’s the priority order that it needs to take.

With respect to the person who made the amendment, if this body feels that it needs clarification, that the pension obligation is not the only amount that a local church or charge should pay as it leaves, perhaps a better approach would be to add language something like this at the end of the paragraph 1504.23, that would be added by Petition 90016. And that language would read something like, “Nothing in the foregoing prevents an annual conference from also collecting other annual conference obligations from the local church or charge.” I don’t mean to advise the body that that is what it should do. It is in your purview to do as you wish.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother Andy. Friends, let’s take the matter up that you’ve clearly wanted to take up and treat this in this way, as if the amendment is in effect before us for the first time. And let me solicit some speeches for and against that. We’ve had some information. If we need additional information from either the staff or members of the board of Wespath to help us, I think we can call upon that as we need it. So, let’s treat this as the amendment is before us, and I’ve got some people in the queue. And let me turn to brother Gray Southern. Let me see how you want to help us, brother Southern. And that’s mic. 1, and then, I’ll come to the next one I have.

Substitute Amendment to Petition 90016

H. GRAY SOUTHERN (North Carolina): Gray Southern, clergy, North Carolina. Bishop, I’m looking for some direction. If I understand you rightly, the amendment before us is the one that the clergy member of the New York Conference presented, correct? Then, I would move a substitute amendment.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, let’s give it a try.

SOUTHERN: This would amend Petition 90016, so that after the text as presented, we would add
the language, “Nothing in the foregoing prevents an annual conference from collecting other obligations from a church or charge.”

BISHOP PALMER: All right, is it supported?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, is there—you want to—

GARY GRAVES: Could you please get that onto a motion form and up here as quickly as possible?

SOUTHERN: I will.

GRAVES: Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Brother Gray, go ahead and speak to it if you wish.

SOUTHERN: I think Andy presented the concern. No one at Wespath, I’m certain, nor on the board of directors, nor, I’m sure, any of us wants to prevent an annual conference, should a community within our communion choose to disassociate, from fulfilling all its obligations. But Andy has spoken to the reality that Wespath would submit, that for people and their survivors who’ve given a lifetime of service, in Wespath’s language, that they care for those who serve, they should become a first priority for satisfaction before community, church, or charge were to leave the denomination. I’d ask you to vote in favor of that. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. I’m looking to see for speeches for or against this substitute at this time. Let me come to Eddie Bromley, I believe. And that’s mic. I also. And then we’ll look for some other voices. And we’re only on the substitute now. OK?

Vote to End Debate

EDWARD BROMLEY (Memphis): Eddie Bromley, Memphis Conference, clergy delegate. I move the question and all that’s before us.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Is that supported? I hear some voices and there’s a motion to close debate on this whole matter. We need, should you take that action, to take the substitute and so for and so on, and we’ll try to guide you each and every step of the way. Get your devices at the ready on the motion to close debate. It’ll take two-thirds of you to do that. Let’s just breathe for a few seconds before we actually call for the vote.

(pause)

All right, if you’re ready to express your desire, or not, to end debate and vote through these matters before us, you will press one (1). If you want that to be the case, and if you don’t want to end the conversation now, press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause for voting)

BISHOP PALMER: All right. So we’re voting on if we want to substitute this language now for what was previously an amendment, and if you’ll get your keypads ready and as you do, breathe deeply and whisper a prayer for wisdom. A yes, vote number one (1) will adopt the substitute as your preference. And then we’ll come to actually amending the motion. Number two (2) is a no vote against the substitute. We are in the process of voting now.

(pause for voting)

[Yes, 489; No, 325]

The results on whether or not to substitute what’s before us is ready. You have done that. The next step is, you actually have to adopt the substitute. The vote you just took was to say you wanted it to take precedence over the other matter.

Vote on New Amendment to Petition 90016

Let’s get your keypads ready again, and if you want to amend the motion that was before us on the Wespath petitions that were worked on in the legislative committee by adding this is as an amendment, you will vote yes, and that’s a one (1). If you oppose amending the report from the Legislative Committee on the Wespath petitions, you’ll vote, hit number two (2) as a no vote. Please vote when you see the screen up here. Let’s go. You’re in the vote now, friends.

(pause for voting)

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: All right, your action on the amendment is going to come on the screen in just a second.

[Yes, 500; No, 309]

Vote on Amended Petition 90016

All right, you have amended the motion that you have previously
indicated you wanted to proceed through all the votes. So now, the whole matter of the Wespath petitions that you acted on in Legislative Committee yesterday are before you as you have amended them.

Take just fifteen seconds and breathe deeply. (pause) All right, friends, if you favor the adoption of this as you’ve amended it, press one (1); if you do not favor it, press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause)

I just want to say to you another word about these musicians. They’ve been good in everything they’ve done. When they hit the strains of the Rev. Dr. Charles Albert Tindley, they ring my bell (laughter) and I just need to join the keyboardist and invite you to join while we’re finishing this up and just hit, By and By, doc. OK. When the morning comes. All right, help us out.

(singing)

BISHOP PALMER: I was doing this to give space for the technology. (laughter) I think the results are coming on the screen. Thank you for joining in. All right, you have adopted the motion as you amended it, and thank you so much friends. You’re doing good work and you’re in good order.

[Yes, 561; No, 256]

I want to turn to the Secretary of the General Conference now, brother Gary Graves, who’s going to give us a word from the Judicial Council deliberations.

Judicial Council Decision 1377
Constitutionality of Legislative Petitions

GARY GRAVES: We have received Decision no. 1377, Decision no. 1377. Regarding a petition for declaratory decision from the legislative committee of the General Conference regarding the constitutionality of legislative petitions amended and/or approved by the legislative committee, The Judicial Council makes the following determination:

Petition 90032, found on p. 182 of the ADCA and 384 of today’s DCA is constitutional.

Petition 90033, found on pp. 182 and 183 of the ADCA, p. 383 of today’s DCA. Petition 90033 violates Pars. 20 and 58 and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90034, found on p. 183 of the ADCA and p. 384 of today’s DCA. Petition 90034 violates Pars. 20 and 58 and is unconstitutional.

Found on pp. 183 and 184 of the ADCA, Petition 90035; today’s DCA p. 383. Petition 90035 violates Pars. 20 and 58 and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90036, found on p. 184, of the ADCA and 383 of today’s DCA. Petition 90036 is constitutional.

Petition 90037, found on p. 185 of the ADCA and 383 of today’s DCA. Petition 90037 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90038, p. 185 and p. 383 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90039, pp. 185 and 383 violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90040, pp. 185 and 186 of the ADCA edition, and 383 of today’s edition, violates the principle of legality and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90042, pp. 190 and 191 and on p. 384 of today’s DCA. Petition 90042 is constitutional.

Petition 90043, pp. 191 and 384. Petition 90043 is constitutional.

Petition 90044, pp. 191 and 192, and in today’s DCA, p. 192 and in today’s DCA, p. 384. Petition 90044 is constitutional.

Petition 90045, the second sentence, it is found on pp. 192 and 193; in today’s DCA p. 384. The second sentence of Petition 90045, “In cases where the respondent acknowledges actions that are a clear violation of the provisions of the Discipline, a just resolution shall include, but not be limited to, a commitment not to repeat the action or actions that were a violation.” This sentence violates Pars. 20 and 58 and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90046, pp. 193 and 194; in today’s DCA, p. 384. Petition 90046 is constitutional.

Petition 90047, found on p. 194 and p. 384. Petition 90047 is constitutional.

Petition 90059, found on p. 201 of the ADCA and p. 386 of today’s edition of the DCA. Petition 90059 violates Pars. 33 and 41 and is unconstitutional.

Petition 90066, found on p. 205 of the ADCA and 386 of today’s edition of the DCA. Petition 90066 violates Par. 33 and is unconstitutional.

GRAVES: This is the digest of Decision No. 1377.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother secretary. Let me just humbly ask if I could have a few minutes to confer with a few folks. Just kind of rest at your seat or on your feet as you see fit. Thank you.

(pause)

BISHOP PALMER: As we are ready ourselves to continue this worshipful work, we want to turn back to the chair of the legislative committee and proceed with their presentation. He will then help us to segue and I will help to facilitate calling on a Minority Report that you are already aware of. Brother Harris.

Traditional Plan Petitions 90032-90040, 90042-90047

JOSEPH HARRIS: Bishop. I will be presenting this as it is
presented before in your DCA and ADCA with keeping in mind what we just heard from Judicial Council, and that will be sorted out later. We are at DCA 383 to 386, Calendar Items 4-18, Petition Nos. 90032-90040, Petitions 90042-90047. Found in the ADCA on pp. 182-186, 190-194. This is the Traditional Plan. The exception is Petition 90041 and 190-194. This is the Traditional Plan. Found in the ADCA 90040, Petitions 90042-90047.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Judicial Council and other members of the Judicial Council, we just heard from Judicial Council, with keeping in mind what we have heard before in your Tuesday Morning Proceedings February 27, 2019.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother chairman. Is brother Berlin nearby? He’s coming. OK.

Minority Report on Traditional Plan—One Church Plan

TOM BERLIN (Virginia): Brothers and sisters in Christ, my name is Tom Berlin, and I am a clergy member of the Virginia Annual Conference. I come to you today to consider the Minority Report that is before you in the DCA. I come to you to express my love of the church. I have a love of the church that I do not even understand. It is certainly not because she is perfect. It is certainly not because its members are all in agreement. I have a love of the church that stems from a biblical vision of what God has said we can be found in the Revelation. Sometimes when I talk about it and I get emotional and people think that I am upset or something’s wrong, but it’s only because in that moment I just caught a glimpse of what we can be by God’s help. And you share that vision with me. You know that same vision, or you wouldn’t spend this arduous time in these seats. We are all here because of that same love.

Let me tell you why I want you to vote for the One Church Plan. I want you to do it for the church. To those who want marriage equality and ordination for all qualified people, this is your only shot at change. If you are withholding your vote because it’s just not enough, I doubt you are going to get a better offer today. To those who would like to retain the current Book of Discipline, you can still have it that way. No one can make a pastor perform a wedding. No church has to change its practice. No annual conference is compelled to do anything it doesn’t desire. To the Central Conferences, none of your practices change. None. And you will have the adaptable Book of Discipline where you can codify the practices of your culture as you desire.

Oh, some will say, but the Social Principles! Friends, we all have the Social Principles, but they’re not the same as the Book of Discipline. And we know it. But to everyone, I need to make some things transparent today. It’s time we have that conversation. What’s being said in private conversations is that if the Traditional Plan, the Majority Plan, is voted in today, you will be putting a virus into the American church that will make it very sick. And it will make it sick quickly. Many of us have members who will leave, and have already notified us to tell us so, just by watching yesterday’s proceedings. I have those texts. And the reason is, whether you like it or not, they feel that their church is exhibiting itself as being against gay people, along with others. It’s not your intention, I know, but it’s what they experience and that matters.

Many pastors are going to lead their church away from the connection. Some conferences will leave, I believe. Other people will stay and fight. And they will do weddings. They will break the Book of Discipline. There will be trials. It will be in the news. And the news about The United Methodist Church in the culture that we are trying to reach is not going to be news of the good things we do together and we do them abundantly. It’s going to be about the people we don’t serve and the disagreement that will continue.

This virus of conflict will spread and spread, and soon it will jump the ocean, and it will spread to the entire connection. It won’t just be here in the United States. Because the model of church that we have is based on the health of every region. And so, while you may not have disagreement where you live, the disagreement that is here will impact every model that we use. The organizational model, the economic model, it will all begin to be sick. So, I ask you to affirm this Minority Report of the One Church Plan. And if you cannot affirm the Minority Report, I ask you to simply abstain. That is a legitimate act. I ask you to abstain, and let the spirit speak to others more clearly than it does to you.

But if you can do neither, I ask you to vote against the Traditional Plan, and leave the Book of Discipline the way it is right now, because friends, if we bring this virus into our church, it will bring illness to us all. My friends in Sierra Leone—where I have been in ministry with the Sierra Leone Annual Conference for many years, for 20 years—where the people that figured out that if they put pans of water out during the Ebola crisis, that if they just wash their hands, they could get rid of a potential illness that was infecting and damaging and killing people. So, they trained, not just themselves, they changed their culture to just wash their hands, and I am asking you to wash your hands of this Traditional Plan today, because it will bring that illness into our house. I hope you can support the One Church Plan. I hope you can abstain if you don’t. But it is in your hands.

BISHOP GREGORY PALMER: Thank you, brother Berlin.

(appause)
The Bible further defines all other sex as sexual immorality. The One Church Plan was not agree with the words of our Savior. In so doing, deceives young persons into believing that same-gender marriage is OK with God when clearly it is not. There is danger in that, not only for those being deceived but the deceivers as well.

Matthew 18:6 tells us, “If anyone causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

The One Church Plan perpetuates this deception.

Galatians 6:1, “Brothers and Sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself as you also may be tempted.” And in verse seven, “Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A person reaps what they sow.”

Friends, please stop sowing seeds of deceit. The word became flesh, not the flesh becomes the word. I’m truly sorry if the truth of the gospel hurts anyone. But know that I, and those who support the Traditional Plan, love you enough to tell you the truth.

BISHOP PALMER: Nancy, watch your time.

DENARDO: God gave you freewill. Choose wisely, choose wisely. Choose God’s truth.

BISHOP PALMER: Nancy, Friends, I’ve got a couple of points of order. Let me try to turn to one of them. Amy Lippoldt? Mic. 1.

AMY LIPPOLDT: (Great Plains Annual): Thank you, Bishop. Amy Lippoldt, Great Plains. I apologize for the timing of this. I had hoped to share this before we started with the minority report. I rise to a point of order about Rule 7, Point 3, found on p. 45 of the ADCA. The motion to call for the previous question, which is itself non-debatable, is not in order without opportunity having been given for at least two speeches for and two against the proposal. With tremendous respect for the chair, I simply want to point out that when we were debating the substitute amendment, two speeches were not given for and against the substitution before you allowed for the call of the question of everything before us.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Thank you, Amy. I’m trying to recall if the queue was cleared. I think I moved forward in that sense but you’re right. I did not explicitly solicit. I was watching the queue. It’s trying to manage back and forth between the technology side and the database. Thank you. I’ll keep that very much in mind.

LIPPOLDT: And whatever information you can give us as you make those decisions will be helpful. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Thank you very much. I’m very sorry, friends. OK. Let me, I think we’ve had a speech against the minority report becoming our primary work. Let me turn to mic. 3, Lyndsey Stearns.

BISHOP PALMER: Speech for.

LINDSEY ANN STEARNS (West Ohio): My name is Lindsey Stearns, laity, and a future pastor. In the last 24-hours, 15,529 diverse young people from across The United Methodist Church signed a statement in support of unity. My brothers and sisters, I come to you with hope in my heart representing the young people of The United Methodist Church. May our voices be heard. Friends, it is time that we live into our name as The United Methodist Church. Last night, we proclaimed in worship, “May They Know We Are Christians By Our Love.” My prayer is that these will not be empty words but will be lived out faithfully. Unity is the heart of God.
Before I came to General Conference, I read John 17, and it ruined me because I could not un-hear the words of Jesus, “My prayer is not for them alone, I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” Please do not ignore our voices. I hope you are able to hear us. Come, Holy Spirit, come! May we be one! Dearly beloved, may we be one. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Lindsey.

(applause)

We turn to a speech against. Cara Nicklas, mic. 2. is what is showing up here as closest.

CARA SUE NICKLAS (Oklahoma): Cara Nicklas, Oklahoma Conference. I have a niece who is a lesbian. My niece knows I don’t agree with her decisions in that regard, but she knows how very much I love her. We’ve had a conversation and she has said to me, “Aunt Cara, I know you love me even if you don’t agree with me.” She is a person that is a sacred worth, made in God’s image. She is a person that I love deeply. Like you, I received numerous letters and emails leading up to this conference. I read many blogs and articles from all perspectives. I listened to the speeches yesterday and I have listened so far to the speeches today.

And by those advocating for The One Church Plan, I was either told explicitly that I am mean spirited and unloving for holding to the church’s doctrine on same-sex relationships, or the general tenor of the communications implied, I am unloving if I don’t agree to change the church’s Discipline. I don’t loved all I am told. When that is the message, when gay persons become convinced I don’t love them because I don’t condone their behavior, it hurts my relationships with them. It causes damage to my relationship with my niece when you promote the narrative that love must equal agreement. She might come to believe you instead of me no matter how much I show her love.

That’s why this isn’t working. This constant discussion about this issue and the manner it is discussed is harmful to my ministry, to my relationships with gay persons, and with my relationship with heterosexual persons who disagree with me on this. If the dialogue on this issue continues to be whether I love all, we won’t have unity. We won’t be one church. You surely don’t want to be united with me if I am as mean and unloving as I am accused. If The One Church Plan passes, I am certain you will not stop trying to make me fit your idea of a loving person. It is a false narrative that this One Church Plan fixes our problems or allows each of us to minister as we see fit. Vote no to The One Church Plan and please do not abstain. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Let me turn to a speech for. Rey Hernandez at mic. 1. I hope I have pronounced that correctly.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: —will be the third speech for, and then we’ll have an opportunity for one more speech against.

REYNALDO BUCACAO HERNANDEZ (Rizal Philippines East): Bishop, can I use mic. 1?

BISHOP PALMER: Yes, please, sir.

HERNANDEZ: (speaking in Tagalog)

BISHOP PALMER: Brother Rey? Brother Rey, can you hold a minute? Some of us are not hearing any interpretation. Is that your experience as well, friends? So, let’s give the interpreters a minute to get positioned, and then we’ll let you start over. We’ll start the clock over, OK? And somebody send me a signal when we have an interpreter. (pause) You’re speaking in Tagalog?

OK, great.

HERNANDEZ: OK.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ready now.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, all right. Let’s start the clock over, and if you’ll start from the top, Brother Rey. OK.

HERNANDEZ: (speaking in Tagalog)

BISHOP PALMER: I think the interpreter—some of us are hearing you, too—that they can’t hear what you’re saying. Let’s just take two minutes and get this piece of our technology straightened out. Don’t go away. Don’t go away. Tara, let me know when we’re ready.

(music)

BISHOP PALMER: Let’s give it a try, brother Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: (simultaneous interpretation in Tagalog) Yes. OK. Well, my belief and understanding of the One Church Plan—it’s like the ministry of the first faithful. In the church of Corinth, there were problems about ministering to people with different cultures. There were a lot of the trained from the gifts of the Spirit. What Paul did was done by others in the context of other cultures. What the Filipinos can’t do can be done by Americans. What the Americans can’t do can be done by Koreans. Different cultures, different traditions, but that all our ears are the same, and it is all our inner mission to spread the gospel.

The One Church Plan is a design that God wants us to understand, so that we can see how beautiful is our unity with the help of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I believe that what we are trying to agree on—to spread the gospel—is pointed and focused—those that we can’t do, but that God
tries to open the door, so that this can be fully implemented. So, why are we, if we are going to block this, we are going to impede, then we will continue. Our mission will have nowhere to go. The One Church Plan is a good thing—is to reflect the reality that we are trying to reach. Thank you so much.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Thank you very much. Let me—if we can take one more speech against, and then, I’ll turn to a couple of—I guess I’m hearing myself here—a couple of procedural opportunities. Let me turn to—I lost it here in the queue. Had a colleague from Rio Texas Conference in the queue, in the pool, Aislinn Deviney, and you correct that if I have it wrong when you get up. That person still in the pool? Mic. 2. Thank you.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: … coming from the back.

AISLINN ELIZABETH DEVINEY (Rio Texas): Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: OK. Thanks.

DEVINEY: My name is Aislinn Deviney and I am a lay delegate from the Rio Texas Conference. I rise to speak against adopting the discussion of the One Church Plan over the Traditional Plan today, and I rise to speak in favor of the Traditional Plan. I am a young evangelical delegate. While you have heard and will hear young people stand in support of other plans, we young evangelicals want you to know that we are here, and we are striving to leave a legacy of scriptural holiness for generations to come.

We have found ourselves at the table of our worldwide church because of our dedication and not because we demand a position here based on our age. We stand on the shoulders of the giants that have come before us, but hear us say that we think and speak for ourselves and we represent young orthodox believers from all around the globe. We all have friends and family in the LGBTQIA community that we love and we do value as beloved brothers and sisters. Contrary to messages you may hear propagated in culture and at this conference, we have found ways to get along and to live in relationship with each other. We may disagree but we hope and pray for God’s best in their life. Our desire is to serve in ministry alongside them, a representation of the reconciling work of God.

Our aim is to include, not exclude, while remaining steadfastly committed to the clear witness of Scripture. We believe in the care of people, soul and body. We pray for a world that is just, loving, caring, and whole and also holy and sanctified. We are passionate about our Wesleyan heritage, uniting head and heart, cultivating personal and social holiness, and carefully balancing grace and truth. We want our Christian witness to be faithful, honest, and true.

As we stand on the floor of this conference, it may be easy for onlookers to believe the church is void of voices like ours. Let me assure you, this is not true. There are thousands of us in your local churches fiercely committed to a traditional definition of marriage, one man and one woman. I urge you brother and sisters, to vote no and to support the Traditional Plan.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Aislinn. Thank you. I want to turn to mic. 3, Dorothee Benz, point of order. And if you’ll come, Dorothee, and state the problematic matter before us, and then we’ll turn to brother Berlin and brother Harris to move us forward. Number 3.

Point of Order Concerning Violent Language

DOROTHEE ELISABETH BENZ (New York): Thank you. I’m not quite sure how this gets formulated, but the problem is that we had a delegate on the floor a few minutes ago who suggested that LGBTQI people deserved to be drowned, and I longed for a correction from the chair or a sign of outrage from the body, that this is unacceptable.

There are thousands upon thousands of queer people every year who are assaulted and killed, and this is an invitation to visit violence upon us. Last year in the United States, a record of twenty-eight transgender people, the vast majority of them transgender women of color, were murdered in this country alone.

BISHOP PALMER: Dorothee, would you tell us in our rules, how that is also a concern. I understand the moral side of it.

BENZ: Honestly, I don’t know what in our rules prevents an incitement to violence, but I hope something does.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you.

(appause)

Thank you, Dorothee, for calling to our attention that violation of the community. I did not hear it, but I don’t doubt that others may have heard it, so please forgive me if I was conferring. And I will try to be more attentive that if any language is pejorative toward anyone in the body, I will invite us to kindness and to care and sensitivity with one another. Please forgive me and if forgiveness is needed otherwise, I do sincerely beg of it for whom that may be necessary. Let me turn to brother Berlin. You have the opportunity to make a three-minute word, as the maker of the minority report. And then we’ll turn to brother Harris.

Minority Report Final Remarks

THOMAS MARTIN BERLIN (Virginia): Brothers and sisters in Christ, we don’t see it the same way;
we all know that. And yet, what I also know is that you’re not afraid. Those of you who disagree with me, you’re not afraid, and you don’t hate LGBTQIA persons. I don’t believe you do in your heart. In fact, I think you’re longing to express a love that is hard for you to figure out how to express. Those of you in the Central Conference, some of you have said to me, you know people say we’re afraid of gay people. I don’t think you’re afraid of those people, of any people. I do think that you may be afraid of what will be said about you when you go home, other people will speak ill of you no matter what you do. That’s just how people are. If you don’t believe that, look at my Facebook feed.

\textit{(laughter)}

But here’s the truth: when you go back to your place, to your home, your practices won’t change, and they won’t be able to speak anything about you because nothing that you are doing will offend them, and so that will go away so quickly. It’s my understanding that traditionalists desire an uncompromised practice of holiness regarding marriage and intimacy, and they believe that gay marriage violates their pursuit of a holy church in this regard. And many see the church as a soccer field with rules and referees, but I’ve always found that the church was more like a playground where you were expected to play nice and there were rules, but there weren’t referees always throwing flags. There were teachers who helped us understand how to do life together.

I wish that we had a purely holy church, too. But when I became a United Methodist, there were Methodist pastors—in 1975 when I became a professing member—who were marrying people after two or three marriages. We went to the weddings. And I said, “Isn’t that against the \textit{Book}?" And they said, “Well, we’re a gracious people.” There were other problems and there have been ever since.

So, I ask you to affirm the One Church Plan, or abstain today from this vote in a spirit of convicted humility for the sake of the salvation of those who have yet to come to know Jesus. But if you vote against this plan, and if you do it because of your desire for personal holiness, I hope you will follow the Golden Rule of Jesus himself, and in so doing, I hope you will modify the \textit{Book of Discipline} in the areas of divorce and remarriage and cohabitation before marriage, and bring what you consider to be scriptural holiness to yourself, to your children and to your grandchildren and to your church and to all you love that you demand and require of others. There may be some of us who are clergy in that moment that will be surrendering our credentials because we’ve already failed the Scripture, some bishops that need to surrender their consecrations because they’ve already violated it. But I don’t think that’s the church you want.

\textit{(applause)}

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Tom.

\textit{(applause)}

THOMAS MARTIN BERLIN (Virginia): . . . word of prayer. And I wish we could have a prayer where we stood. I wish we could have a prayer where we stood, not to say you support the minority report, but that you support the beauty of the church, the vision, the vision of the body of Christ. Bishop, I want to know ahead of time, there are some people that are going to want to come to the center, and they’re not here to protest. They’re not here to break anything. There are some people who asked to stand earlier, and I asked them, I said, please don’t. Please just let us have the conversation. But they’re going to want to come and pray in the center for the unity of our church.

BISHOP PALMER: Let’s figure out the logistics of some additional prayer. We’ve been praying as we’ve been going this morning, after we hear from the chair of the legislative committee, OK? Brother Harris.

JOSEPH HARRIS (Chair, Legislative Committee): Having had the privilege of sitting in this chair yesterday; hearing a very vigorous debate on this, a very passionate debate; having heard the debate this morning, all I can say is, God is with us. God will be with us. And the Holy Spirit will instruct us. My sense of the actions that you took yesterday was that you wanted this body to affirm the Traditional Plan. So, I would ask us to continue to do what you said you wanted to do yesterday and reject the One Church Plan and move forward on the Traditional Plan. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother Harris. Thank you very much.

Friends, we are at the place where we’ll need to act on this matter that’s before us, but we have been invited to a time of prayer. And I’ve conferred a little bit with some colleagues, including brother Berlin, and we want to invite any delegates who wish to kind of close the space between us, so to speak, perhaps by coming more to the center aisle as you’re able, or to the cross-aisle to be in solidarity with one another in prayer. And then, other sisters and brothers around the colosseum to stand as you are able, and we don’t want anybody for ability or not of standing to not feel included in that opportunity. And if you can connect with some people that you know and maybe some that you don’t know,
that would be a good thing. And I’m
going to ask my episcopal colleagues
to figure out what the gesture is for
us. And then invite someone to pray.

(pause for movement)

BISHOP PALMER: Friends,
we’re happy to move toward you.
Please recognize this is about two or
three steps, so let’s figure out how to
move together.

(pause for movement)

OK. I’d ask Bishop Sharon
Brown Christopher to lead us in
prayer, and as soon as she gets in
position near a microphone, we’re
going to do that, and others of us are
going to try to get closer with the
deleagues and with all of you. I want
to thank you for your patience and
forbearance as we try together to be
a sign act of the church that we hope
to be.

BISHOP SHARON A. BROWN
CHRISTOPHER: The Lord be with
you.

ALL: And also with you.

BISHOP BROWN CHRISTOPHER: Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, Holy Spirit, come! Come,
Undo us. Open us. Lead us. Move us beyond the ordinary to the extraordin-
ary, so that we may hear with new
ears, see with new eyes, love with new hearts. So, it is not your will, O
God. It is not our will, O God, but it
is indeed your will, your will, your will, O God! That will be heard by
us, and seen by us, and lived by us,
so that our world in the midst of di-
vision and despair may see the hope
of unity and love among us and with-
in us as we live our lives as United
Methodists around the world. It’s in
Jesus’ name, in Jesus’ name, that we pray. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

(music)

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN
PALMER: Friends, thanks for
creating a space for the opportunity
for us to pray together. We are going
to be moving to a vote here pretty
quickly. I want to just say this over
the loud speaker. We continue to
work on some technology matters,
particularly when interpretation is
going on, and if you believe you are
not hearing the interpreter or the
translator, you may want to clarify—
and this may not be the answer—but
you may want to clarify that you are
on the channel that you want to be
to hear it in the language that you
need to be. And we’ll ask, certainly
by the time we come back together
this afternoon, that the channels and
their languages would be projected
on the screen at the beginning of
the afternoon session so that we can
all be clear that we are not on zero
when we should, for example, be
on channel one (1). So, that’s just
one possibility of how we might be
going to turn sideways on this, this
kind of thing. I do ask that after that
prayer—and we thank you Bishop
Sharon Brown Christopher—that
you’d get your keypads ready.

(pause)

One Church Plan Minority
Report Not Supported

And the question is on wheth-
er or not you want to substitute, in
effect, the one plan for the other
and then you’ll have opportunities
wherever we are to continue to
perfect that work. So, if you wish
that the One Church Plan would
become what we would continue
to work on for however long you
determine by your actions, you will
press one (1). If you do not want that
to be the case, you will press two
(2) and when the screen appears and
the little descending numbers in the
upper right corner, please begin to
vote then.

(music)

BISHOP PALMER: All right,
you may begin to vote now. Thank
you.

(music)

BISHOP PALMER: All right, I
think we are ready to have the results
projected on the screen.

[Yes, 374; No, 449]

Work Resumes Speeches For/
Against Traditional Plan

BISHOP PALMER: All right
friends, you have not substituted
the matter so we are back on the
commit—legislative committee’s
report, and the pool will be opened
for the conversation that you want to
have about the report that came from
us—from you, really—to this body
this morning. That is the report on
the Traditional Plan, and I am seeing
some people in the both for and
against column. Let me turn to mic.
, , and this is a speech for, and then
we will turn to a speech against.

JERRY KULAH (Liberia):
Thank you, Bishop. I am the Rev.
Jerod Kulah from the Liberia Annual
Conference. I stand here, Bishop, to
support the action we took yesterday
that the Traditional Plan is not only a
traditional plan but the biblical plan
that insures that God’s word remain
foundational for the life and growth
of The United Methodist Church.

I submit that we love our gays,
lesbians, transgender, bisexual
friends; because it is not only limited
to America. This is a global issue.
For all have sinned and fallen short
of the glory of God. And so, we
support the Traditional Plan because
it has helped the church in Africa.
Today, the church in Africa is grow-
ing in leaps and bounds because we
are committed to biblical Christian-
ty. The word of God as our primary
authority for faith and Christian
living. I want to establish here that The United Methodist Church is not a United States church; so for someone to suggest that if you support some other plan it will be limited, actions will be limited to America. That is a delusion. Because the Scripture is very clear. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 says that we are one body in Jesus Christ. So whatever hurts the hand affects the leg or affects the eye. We are one body. You cannot be performing Christianity differently in Africa while we do something differently in Africa or Central Conferences.

You claim that we are one church. That would suggest that we are a fragmented church. OK? I want to establish here that if any attempt was done, on the contrary, the church in Africa would cease to exist. Because we are struggling against the Islamic forces and other religious bodies in Africa and other parts of the world. So we cannot attempt to do anything but to support the Traditional Plan, because indeed it is the biblical plan. And that is why we support the Traditional Plan. Thank you very much.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother Kulah. Let me turn to a speech against. I want to call on Shayla Jordan. Mic. 1.

SHAYLA JORDAN (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. My name is Shayla Jordan. I’m from the Great Plains Annual Conference. One of two 21-year-olds and serve as one of the youngest delegates here. I would like to invite my fellow young delegates to join me here at the microphone especially those 15,500 young UMC leaders from around the world who have signed for their support. I stand against the Traditionalist Plan for several reasons.

This summer the Global Young People’s Convocation met in South Africa where we worshipped, prayed, and engaged in holy conferencing. The conference included two youth, two young adults, and two adult workers, each from the jurisdictions and central conferences. Although there was much that we respectfully disagreed upon, we were all united in our love for one another and for our church. One item discussed by the conference was the Commission on the Way Forward. But we agreed that we loved the diversity that comes from being a global United Methodist Church.

We stand against the spirit of hatred, judgment and discrimination which creates division instead of unity. We pray that the Holy Spirit can remain united. However, we are not of one mind, but when the youth and young adults were polled of their support, though 38% of those there supported the Traditionalist Plan, a majority, a clear majority, 61% supported the other plan, the One Church model. The plan highlights diversity and celebrates unity. This plan is not as progressive or traditional as some would like but leaves us with a church as a space where we can be faithful with our call. Today, we ask that you vote against the Traditional Plan because it does not create unity for the church that is tomorrow.

A large number of people have been speaking here at General Conference that do not represent the Church that will be left years down the road. We need a Church that is still alive. This is our Church, too, and I have thousands of people with me urging you to hear this call. Over the 12 hours over 15,000 have signed on to this. Church, are you listening? Young people are speaking. We are passionately asking you to hear the children praying. We are praying for our denomination to be united. We are here. Are you listening? Are you hearing us? We love this church. We are imploring you to vote against the Traditionalist Plan that does not create unity.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Shayla. Thank you, friends. We turn to a speech for. Want to come to mic. 4, Ron Henderson?

RONALD D. HENDERSON (North Texas): Sir, that was a mistake. I have not been in the pool.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you, friend. Forgive me, friend. Thank you.

Let me try, I’m trying to move this around in the pool to varying parts of the room. Let me try at mic. 2, a speech for, Ble Leon Nathan Akre. You can get me straightened out on the name when you get to the mic.

BLE LEON NATHAN AKE (Côte D’Ivoire): Hi, Bishop. I’m going to speak French.

BISHOP PALMER: Give us a second to get our headphones on, OK?

GARY GRAVES: Please be sure that you have your device pressed on, the blue button on the front. If you are listening for English, the channel is one. Make sure your volume button is up enough that you can hear the translator.

BISHOP PALMER: Ready to go?

AKE: (starts speaking in French)

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Hold on. I think the interpreters are not quite synced electronically. OK?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The interpreter is ready.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Let’s give it another try, friend.

AKE: (simultaneous translation in French) I would like to support the Traditional Plan. The first reason that I support the Traditional Plan is that I was born a United Methodist. And since my birth, my parents, my teachers have taught me about the Wesleyan doctrine. I have always grown in a United Methodist church,
where I was taught values. And my grandfather always taught me that the Bible is our compass that shows us how to live. To respect the teaching of my grandfather and those who have taught us in the faith, I cannot go against this faith and this message that they taught me.

The second thing is my personal conviction as a Christian. The Bible tells us that we need to stay faithful to the word, and that we should not add to the word or take away from the word. It is for this second reason for my Christian life that I say that I support the Traditional Plan. In reality, the word traditional is what they say to really mean that this is a position that always was. But really, it’s God’s plan. It’s the will of God. It is the biblical way. God communicated through people that taught us in our faith, and that it’s written in God’s word.

The third thing I would like to say, I have heard many people say youth say this, youth say this, I am a young adult. I come from Africa. We have many youth in Africa and in the whole world who are saying no to the One Church Plan, and who support the Traditional Plan. So for this reason, I would like to ask for people to support the Traditional Plan. I believe it is God’s word. We want to make a distinction between what the world says and what the Bible says. We want to support a biblical position. We are wanting to help those within the church but it’s not because of love for my brothers and sisters that I have to abandon by love for God. My love for God leads me to love my brothers and sisters that one day that they would know the salvation of God.

(applause)

BISHOP GREGORY PALMER: Thank you, friend. We have got a number of people in the pool in both regards and also in our pool for potential amendments. I want to turn Anthony Tang at mic. 1. Anthony Tang. Another one is, is there another one closer?

ANTHONY J. TANG (Desert Southwest Conference): Three?

BISHOP PALMER: No. 3, sure. Thank you.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90032 Qualifications for Ministry

TANG: Bishops, distinguished members of the General Conference, and guests, I move to amend Petition no. 90032 on p. 182 and 384 of the DCA, to make an addition towards the end of the petition so that it now reads, “self-avowed practicing homosexual is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual or is living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership, or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual, and is either living in an adulterous relationship, polyamorous relationship, or other deviations from any civil definitions of marriage.” And if I get a second, I would like to speak to my amendment.

BISHOP PALMER: I hear one, go right ahead friend.

TANG: My dear brothers and sisters of The United Methodist Church from around the world, I humbly greet you in the bold name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We extend grace to all people because we know we are all sinners in need of God’s grace and redeeming. But as it is, this petition does not go far enough to protect our beloved church, the Bride of Jesus Christ, from the destructive and slippery slope being created by those who would undermine the biblical authority of our church with the sexual permissiveness that opens the doors of our church to all sorts of sinners.

Sexual sin and undisciplined, excuse me, sexual sin and undisciplined sexual relationships corrupt the body of Christ from the inside to the outside and we must be bold and strong in setting a good example to the world as Matthew 5 tells us starting in v.13, “you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world, a town built on a hill cannot be hidden, neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house.”

We are to be salt and light and to set a good example for all that they may know that The United Methodist Church is the place where they can come to experience the holiness of the Spirit and a hope for faithful and disciplined living, and we cannot allow our bride to be soiled by the sin of the world. I pray that my brothers and sisters, both lay and clergy, on the floor of this sacred delegation will join with me in committing to uphold our highest standards of sexual self-discipline and faithfulness by voting affirmingly with a yes vote to this amendment, because a no vote against this amendment

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Brother Tang, I think we’re at the end of the three minutes. Thank you very much. Has the amendment come to the table yet?

GARY GRAVES: It has not, and a reminder to our pages, you need to receive that paper before the writing begins. That’s why there are three copies. Please go ahead and bring me the top two, and let them read from the pink copy.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, great. I think it’s on the way. Let’s have the secretary to read it, and
then, you all can enter into the conversation you want to have on this amendment.

GRAVES: Following the words, “she or he is a practicing homosexual,” add the words, “and is either living in either an adulterous relationship, polyamorous relationship, or other deviations from any civil definitions of marriage.”

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much, brother Secretary. Let me turn to mic. 1 with a point of order. While that person is coming, J. J. Warren, to cite the rule that is concerned, I want to read a note that’s been given to me that says that the house should note that votes are not recorded by name. There seems to be some confusion on the part of some delegates that that is the case. So, that’s information for your good work as the General Conference. Brother Warren.

JEFFREY JOSEPH WARREN (Upper New York): Bishop, my name is J. J. Warren, and I’m from the Upper New York Conference, lay delegate. I’m not sure if it’s in order. I wanted to, my point is on Rule 8, p. 45 of the ADCA, about misrepresentation.

And I wanted to discuss my brother from Liberia, who said that ‘this was always God’s way,’ and that, this is ‘always the way the church has viewed marriage’. Now, I just want to discuss that misrepresentation, because, as you can see, I’m pretty dedicated to our church here. So, it was fascinating to me to study Hebrew at Oxford last year and to study theology for the year at Oxford. And so now, looking at seminaries, you know, this is pretty important, marriage in church history and LGBTQ people in church history. And so my point of misrepresentation is that the term “sodomy” wasn’t even in church language until the eleventh century by a monk, Peter Damian, who coined it. So, we cannot say that the church has always been against people together in the same-sex, because the church has not always been that way, and our history shows that. That’s a misrepresentation of the word of God and a misrepresentation of our history. Jesus told the little children to come when the disciples tried to shoo them away. Don’t shoo us away. Let us come.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, brother J. J. Warren. Thank you very much.

All right, we’re on the amendment that the Secretary read a few moments ago, and let me come to some persons wishing to speak against the amendment. Let’s try mic. 4, Diane Miller. Mic. 4.

DIANE M. MILLER (Western Pennsylvania): Bishop, I put myself in the queue not for this amendment, but for what was going before.

BISHOP PALMER: OK. All right. I’m sorry. Thank you very much. Let me try Joe DiPaolo, mic. 4.

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: We’re on the amendment.

JOSEPH FRANK DI PA O LO (Eastern Pennsylvania): Bishop, the amendment proposed by the brother strikes me as incoherent. It defines heterosexual adultery to be fitting the definition of practicing homosexual. I don’t understand how that belongs in that paragraph. The deeper concerns that he addresses are things that we need to struggle with in the whole concept of dealing with being gracious but also seeking to call people to the highest of standards of fidelity in marriage. And those things are covered in other parts of the Discipline. We do have standards of fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, so it’s both unnecessary and incoherent, and I don’t understand it.

BISHOP PALMER: Thanks very much brother DiPaolo. Let me come to a speaker for, at mic. 3, Bill Brownson.

WILLIAM H. BROWNSON (West Ohio): That was an error, Bishop. I’m sorry.

BISHOP PALMER: No problem. No problem. Let me turn to Brother Sergey Kim at mic. 1 with a point of order and if you’ll tell us right early where the concern is friend. Get your headphones if you need them.

SERGEY KIM (Central Russia): (speaking in Russian) Dear Bishop, I would like to call your attention to the violation of Rule 6 and Rule 7.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. I think we have you now, friend.

KIM: (simultaneous interpretation in Russian) Dear Bishop, I would like to call your attention to the violation of Rule 6 and Rule 7. The previous delegate who was talking about violating the order actually was speaking for, asking to vote for. He chose the point of order in order to come ahead of other people and not to let other delegates to speak who are against, because if I understand correctly, the point of order has a higher priority.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, friend. I’ll try to be wiser in discerning what the speaker is trying to do. Thank you brother Kim. Thank you. Spacibo. Thank you. Thank you. I think we’ve had one for and one against on the amendment, so let me turn to mic. 3, Bill Brownson.

ALEXANDER JAMES PLUM (Michigan): Thank you Bishop. Alex Plum from lay delegate from Detroit, now the Michigan Annual Conference. I can’t speak for my
brother, brother Tang, but I can speak for the Spirit that’s moving in me about how I interpret what he’s trying to say.

There seems to be such a gross disparity with how some people want to define sexual morality. Why are we only focused on one small part? Jesus says nothing about homosexuals but he says so much about divorce, about unity in marriage, and this body stands silent about that. A brother of mine, in 2008, at that General Conference used an analogy from American football called “piling on.” Piling on is a penalty in American football because after that tackle has been made, you can’t keep running and jumping, and piling on. Friends, that was nine years ago. It spoke to me then and I hope it speaks to you today because that is what that petition is trying to do; it is piling on one group when there are so many more who we could say are guilty of sexual immorality.

God have mercy on us for treating our brothers and sisters so unequally. God have mercy on us for piling on. I don’t know how to recommend you vote on this amendment other than to say, can we not love one another?

BISHOP PALMER: Alright, thank you, friend. I want to come to a speech against and then we will have had two of each and then you may want to determine if you are ready to move forward. At mic. 2 I want to call on Brenda Weir.

BRENDA WILSON WIER
(Central Texas): Bishop, Brenda Wier, Central Texas. I just wanted to make a statement to say how punitive can we continue to be? Enough has been said. I vote to vote against this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Alright, thank you, thank you. I want to call on someone that I think has been waiting, John Steth? Seth, excuse me, mic. 4.

JOHN WILLIAM SETH
(Western Pennsylvania): John Seth, Western Pennsylvania. In respect to our time, I would move the question, end the debate on the amendment.

BISHOP PALMER: I think that’s properly before us. Would you like to express yourselves on that, friend, if you want to do that on the amendment? No, no, I meant express yourselves with a vote, yeah, yeah, yeah. I wasn’t calling for speeches, forgive me. Let’s wake up our devices if they need to be awakened. And this is just on the amendment. If you want to end debate on that, you will press one (1). If you would like to continue conversation on the amendment, you will press two (2). Please vote now.

BISHOP PALMER: And I failed to say that it does take two-thirds, please forgive me, but continue in what you are doing.

BISHOP PALMER: Alright, there—be up in about five second I think—the results. Alright, you have voted to close debate on the amendment so keep your keypads handy, and we are on the amendment. [Yes, 736; No, 80]

BISHOP PALMER: Brother Secretary, if you would read what would be different one more time so everybody is clear, then we will move to the vote. Just on the amendment.

Pet. 90032 Is Not Amended

GARY GRAVES: On Calendar Item No. 18, found on p. no. 384 of today’s DCA, amending Petition 90032 by adding, following the words “she or he is a practicing homosexual,” the following words: “and is either living in an adulterous relationship, polyamorous relationship, or other deviations from any civil definitions of marriage.”

BISHOP PALMER: Alright, thank you, friends. Let’s have your keypads ready. Then we will turn to some other procedural things if we need to so you can finish with this whole matter and move on toward your lunch break. If you favor the amendment, you will press one (1). If you oppose it, you will press two (2). Please vote now.

GRAVES: Friends, we’re having a reminder session in the booths about turning the switch. They have a hearing device and a transmitting device and in the process of hearing that much information and doing as much as they are doing, we will give a moment of grace as they are reminded about how to flip from receiving into transmitting mode. As soon as that has been completed, we will be sharing that with you. Was that primarily in the Russian channel? That was the area that I was hearing.

GRAVES: I am told that we are ready to go.
think we’re ready now with the interpretation, and forgive me if I hasten this on too quickly. This is on the amendment only, and if you favor it, you will press one (1). If you oppose it, you will press two (2). Please vote now.

(pause)

BISHOP GREGORY VAUGHN PALMER: Alright, the results are coming in on the amendment. Alright, you have not amended it, so we’re back on the main motion. [Yes, 203; No, 605]

BISHOP PALMER: And not seeing any folks wanting to speak just now. Alright, so we need to act on the whole—we can pause here? OK. All right. I’m told that we can hit pause here, pick it up after lunch. Let me turn to the secretary for some announcements. Thank you for your loving-kindness toward me and others this day. And then, if at the end of your announcements, you will announce the time we are to return, and then, we’ll part with a blessing for the lunch break, OK?

GARY GRAVES: Thank you. We know the importance of needing to charge your electronic devices. We hope that you are able to do that, utilizing as many power cords and power strips that we have been able to assemble, and they are at your tables. Please avoid the temptation—in case there are not enough or in case there’s some other issue, please avoid the temptation of unplugging anything that is being used as an antenna or a transmitter. If it is taped to the floor, it has a purpose. If there is something already plugged into it and you have to remove a plug to plug in your charger, you may be causing part of the issues that we are hearing about people not being able to hear or the speed of the voting devices. Please do not unplug the official equipment to charge your phone. Have a wonderful lunch, and we will see you at—let’s say—it’s a quarter ‘til 1 now. Let’s say a quarter ‘til 2. We’ll see you in an hour.

BISHOP PALMER: Would you join me in whatever tongue in this blessing that I think will be familiar to you and speak it with me? Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored. These mercies bless and grant that we may feast in fellowship with thee. Amen.

Tuesday Afternoon, February 26, 2019

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Two minute warning, how ‘bout that. I am going to invite the secretary of the General Conference, who’s got a few things that we need to clear up before we begin our work this afternoon.

GARY GRAVES: The first item we have, if Sue Sullivan can make her way to one of the floor microphones, I understand you have a report for us from the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges. Sue Sullivan? If you could make your way to a mic.

BISHOP HARVEY: If you’ll go to mic. 1. That’s the closest.

Report of Committee on Courtesies and Privileges

CATHERINE SUE SULLIVAN (Committee on Courtesies and Privileges): Sue Sullivan, chair, Committee on Courtesies and Privileges, Texas Annual Conference, laity. Our committee met during lunch hour and we had two items to review. One was from a statement of appreciation that we would like join with Jean Hawxhurst from Kentucky in giving our public thanks to all our ecumenical partner churches and other Methodist families around the world who have currently been in prayer for us while we have been in session.

(applause)

Our second item is that our Courtesies and Privileges would like to recommend a moment of personal privilege at the end of our plenary session of today’s proceeding to allow Donna Pritchard to make a comment. It’s our recommendation that she be allowed to do that for a moment at the end of this session before our worship.

GRAVES: We will schedule that just prior to the closing session.

SULLIVAN: As time allows.

GRAVES: Great. Thank you very much for your report. Bishop, that is the end of our housekeeping moments as we begin the afternoon session.

BISHOP HARVEY: Great. Thank you all. I’m Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey and I serve in Louisiana, and grateful for that. We are in the season of carnival, mardi gras in Louisiana. So, laissez les bon temps rouler. We’re going to have an afternoon of, they have beads or anything you might want back there at their table. But as we begin the afternoon session, I’d like to thank the Committee on Presiding Officers for their confidence in the leadership of the bishops in this chair. I realize there are a lot of people behind me that could be in this chair and I am honored and privileged to be with you this afternoon. I also give thanks for my colleagues, Bishop Streiff and Bishop Bickerton, who are back ing me up and whispering in my ear and anything we can do to help this afternoon go well for you, because our goal has been, all along, is to help you do your best work.

Thank you also to the secretary of the General Conference and the whole staff here who’s been amazing throughout and I am just so appreciative of them. This has been a miracle to make this conference happen as quickly as they’ve done. So I am thankful for you all very much.
Also, I thank Dr. Leonard Young in advance. Len has been on this journey with the presiding officers as we have been trained for a while and I thank you in advance for helping us through this process, Dr. Young. I am sure that we are going to have a few missteps along the way. I know I will. So if you promise to extend a little bit of grace to me, I know that I will extend some grace to you, because I know you are going to have a few missteps even still this afternoon.

I do want to take a minute here and acknowledge the hard work that you did yesterday in committee. These are incredibly weighty matters and decisions that impact not only you who are gathered here, but those people in the stands, those people back home in the mission field who still need to hear the good news of Jesus. I’d like you to imagine, yes, there is a bar here for the delegates, but this table extends around the world. So please don’t forget that.

We also need to acknowledge that there is a lot of pain and disappointment in this room, and also around the world for those who have been watching. But, friends, we still have work to do. We still have work to do for the sake of the mission. So I pray that we will work faithfully, that we’ll work together with a heart of peace. Also remind you that this is worshipful work. Worship is not something we did on Saturday or early this morning. It is work that we continue to do.

Bishop [Kenneth] Carder, retired Bishop Carder, who is unable to be with us this week because he continues to do his own worshipful work as he cares for his spouse, shared these words on social media and I asked him if I might be able to share them with you as we begin this session this afternoon. He said, “Authentic worship is inseparable from faithful work. The worship God desires overflows in the practice of mercy, justice, and compassion. And acts of mercy, justice, and compassion are forms of worship.” So I pray that it may be so for us today. I thank Bishop Carder for allowing us to share those words.

And finally, throughout these last few months I have used Ephesians 4 as my daily prayer. As we begin this afternoon, I invite you into a time of prayer with me as we are reminded once again of these words. “I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

So, we have work to continue. Worshipful work. I’ll do my best on task. We’re going to pray a little, sing a little, and confer a little as we go along. And before we keep going, Gary Graves.

Meaning of Principle of Legality

GARY GRAVES: Bishop, as a part of that worshipful work and preparing for the deliberations that are before us, the Judicial Council Decision 1377 contained the phrase “violates the principle of legality.” I was asked during the lunch break for a definition of the principle of legality. We have researched and found that it is primarily included in Decision 1366. 1366. If you search the Judicial Council decisions, you will find the primary portions that would help you define it on pp. 3 and 35. pp. 3 and 35, of Decision 1366. The basic statement as a tenet of United Methodist Constitutional-
They’re upset. They’re hurt. spired them to action. They’re mad. And for that I thank you. You’ve in-
really engaged in the struggle before. an awful lot of people who are not they still are. But, you’ve inspired
of mine, or at least have been. I hope appreciate, many of these are friends
days, I want the WCA to know, and I’ve gotten over the last couple of
number of emails and text messages in the future? I guess based upon the
test less or more for LGBTQ persons
with teeth? Will these churches pro-
cept this regressive Traditional Plan
progressives, but also centrists. You
adds teeth, you’ve not only alienated
But with the Traditional Plan, that
they were tired of fighting about this. But with the Traditional Plan, that
adds teeth, you’ve not only alienated progressives, but also centrists. You think these churches will quietly ac-
cept this regressive Traditional Plan
now if they don’t love
the Bible, read the Bible, interpret
the Bible, understand the Bible. Paul
says more about the role of women keeping silent in the church, praying
with their heads covered, women not
men, men submitting to
men, women not wearing jewelry,
then he says about same-sex acts in
the New Testament. Yet the WCA
has clearly stated that they support
women in ministry. You say that
Paul had women in leadership. True.
Despite this, he was clear women
must not teach a man, and they are to
remain silent. How did you get there?
You interpreted the text in the light of
the cultural context and with an ear to
more important biblical ideas.

On Sunday, it was interesting
that the highest priority for conversa-
tions chosen by our delegates was to
talk about our pensions. Even higher
than the Traditional Plan. Interesting
given that Jesus said, “Don’t store up
for yourselves treasures on earth…
and go sell all you have and give it to
the poor.”

(appause)

So I’d like to invite those of you
who believe that the Bible says that
I believe and that settles it, to turn
in your pensions funds to fund the
unfunded liabilities.

Now while there are three texts the New Testament that speak of
some kind of same-sex acts, there
are over a hundred that call for unity
and working to stay together. I want
to finally ask this: If you voted for
the Simple Plan or the One Church
Plan, would you please stand? And
bishops, I’d like to ask if you’d
do the same. If you supported the
Simple Plan or the One Church Plan,
would you please stand?

(appause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank
you. To let you know where we are,
we had three speeches for and two
against. We have a few people in
the pool that would like to offer an
amendment. And I will now ask John
Miles to go to mic. 2. He’s still in
my queue. Sorry about that.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO
HARVEY: —trying to work my way
around the room.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is
4 OK?

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
Excuse me. Hold on just a moment.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
Yes, ma’am.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
It appears that on my screen you’re
gray, so that you’re not back in the
pool.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
OK.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
All right. Have you put your card—
GARY GRAVES: Have you
inserted your card back into your
machine?
BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
—into your—OK. And we’ll go
to the next person. I’ll invite Tyler
Amundson to go to mic. 1.

TYLER FLINT AMUNDSON
(Mountain Sky): Good afternoon,
Bishop.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
Good afternoon.

Motion to Delete Pet. 90032 from Traditional Plan

AMUNDSON: My name is Tyler Amundson. I am a pastor in
Billings, Montana, in the Yellow-
stone Conference. I’d like to make
a motion to amend. I would like to
amend, by deletion, Petition 90032
from the Traditional Plan. This is
calendar item 18. In your ADCA, it’s
on p. 182. In your DCA, it’s on p. 384.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
OK. Is there a second?

AMUNDSON: With your per-
mission, I’ll speak to it, Bishop.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY:
Please.

AMUNDSON: In Philippians
1:27-29, it reads, “Most important,
live together in a manner worthy of
Christ’s gospel. Do this, whether I
come and see you or I’m absent and
hear about you. Do this so that you
stand firm, united in one spirit and
mind as you struggle together to
remain faithful to the gospel. That
way, you won’t be afraid of anything
your enemies do. Your faithfulness
and courage are a sign of their com-
ing destruction and your salvation,
which is from God. God has gener-
ously granted you the privilege, not
only of believing in Christ but also
of suffering for Christ’s sake.”

Before I left for this conference,
I told a story to my congregation
that said, there was two brothers
that lived together for a long time
on farms next to each other. They
lived together in peace. They shared
equipment with each other to do the
work of the fields. They worked hard
to be in relationship with each other,
so that they could accomplish something. They could work together to grow things to feed their families and feed their neighbors.

Well, they got in a fight over a calf that one said was his and the other said was the other’s. And so, they continued to fight and fight, until one night, one brother got up, and he dug a trench from the pond up above, so that there was a stream flowing between the two properties. That stream divided them. And then one day, a man was happening along after the stream had been built, and he said, “I’m a carpenter. I’ll help you out.” He said, “How can I help you?” And one of the brothers said, “My brother dug a stream through our property, and they’re no longer connected. I want a fence built. I want a fence built between these two properties.” Well, the man then went to town, and he came back, and the carpenter had done something that the man didn’t want. He built a bridge across that river.

Friends, we follow a carpenter named Jesus, who built a bridge across the river, who invited us to be, and follow one another, in unity. And if you look in Paul, if you look in the gospels, it is much more about unity than a couple passages about human sexuality. Friends, we are called to be united as a church. So, I invite you today to continue to consider voting against the Traditional Plan, and additionally, I invite you to vote for this amendment to delete Petition 90032 from the Traditional Plan. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY: Thank you. It appears we have no one to speak against. Well, no, there was a point of order that came up, and all along, we said we didn’t want to interrupt your speeches. So, I’m going to invite Carlene Fogle-Miller to go to mic. 1. Please state what the issue is, the violation of the rule. Page number would be helpful.

Request for Referral to Ethics Committee

CARLENE REBECCA FOGLE-MILLER (Florida): Carlene Fogle-Miller, lay delegate, Florida. I served as secretary, so I think I’m going to do this correctly, based on my understanding of parliamentary procedure. The rule I’m referencing is Rule 12 on p. 46. It falls under section 3, rights and duties of delegates in our Rules of Order. I’m also going to be referencing section 7, subsection C, Committee on Ethics in our Plan of Organization on p. 30. Rule 12 says, “A spirit of Christian conferencing is expected.” I have heard rumors, and I have heard other delegates have heard them too, that there has been bribery. There has been the giving of money in exchange for votes in this body! I would refer that to our Committee on Ethics, which is in order from the plenary by a one-fifths vote. I think that this is incredibly important for us to investigate, because if we are having to buy votes, there is something wrong with our church!

(applause)

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY (Louisiana): Thank you. This requires a one-fifth vote, so if you would get your devices awakened. (pause) We’re waiting for it to be on the screen. If you vote one (1) yes, to send it to the Ethics Committee. If you are against, you push two (2). Are you ready to vote? Let’s vote. It requires one-fifth.

(pause for voting)

It will take a moment to get that calculated and up on the screen. We are ready. If you will populate the screen for us. [Yes, 417; No, 388] (applause)

BISHOP HARVEY: It passes from the screen.

GARY GRAVES (Secretary of General Conference): Stephanie Henry, if you will come to the stage, please.

BISHOP HARVEY: We will go back to where we were. We were on an amendment. Secretary, could you read that amendment for us one more time as we go back to the pool.

GRAVES: I will be happy to do so. On calendar item 18, Petition 90032, found on p. 182 of the ADCA and the p. 384 of today’s DCA. Amend by deleting Petition 90032 from the Traditional Plan. You would best be able to find the full text of the petition on p. 182 as the committee item is simply, “The petition stands as submitted.”

BISHOP HARVEY: In the meantime, we have another point of order. If Senesie T. A. Rogers will go to mic. 2. Please state the rule. Is anyone going to mic. 2? Senesie T. A. Rogers. Here you go, mic. 2. Thank you.

Speeches For/Against Deletion of Pet. 90032

SENESIE TIMOTHY AROUNAH ROGERS (Sierra Leone): I was in the queue waiting for recognized my being there, so it is of no moment now. Thanks.

BISHOP HARVEY: Now we are back to the amendment. Now we’ll have a speech against the amendment. If Stephen Sparks will go to mic. 1.

STEPHEN LAWRENCE SPARKS (Mississippi): Stephen Sparks, Mississippi delegation, clergy. Just arising in opposition to the amendment by deletion. The additional language helps us be more clear in our definition of how we define, and how we judge, whether someone is a self-avowed practicing homosexual. I think any time we can be clearer and more precise in our language it is more helpful. Thank you.
BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. If Dawn Taylor-Storm will go to mic. 4, for a speech for.

DAWN TAYLOR-STORM (Eastern Pennsylvania): Thank you, Bishop. Dawn Taylor-Storm, Eastern Pennsylvania. I rise to speak in favor of the amendment. I speak for all that are at home who are feeling betrayed, harmed, undermined by this work of the general conference. I speak to you friends at home because the church is not the General Conference! I speak to you because as much as I love these 863 friends here, this conference is not a full expression of who we are as United Methodists! Hear me friends. Resurrection happens on the third day, not because people voted for it! Resurrection happens on the third day because the movement of God could not be legislated! You see God does not depend on a majority vote. God is not contained by any boxes we seek to create. Resurrection happened because those told to be silent and in full submission finally found their voice and proclaimed what they had seen and heard! Resurrection happened because people came out of their boxes and doors and like J.J. who led us yesterday, they began to tell a different story, a story not of control or power or dominance, but a story of one who gave his life not for some but for all! A story of one who made the hearts burn because his grace was free and not merited, not meant for only some but a grace—an amazing grace, meant for all. Resurrection happened because Jesus is the one in the face of legislation called out these words, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they have done.” And then this same Jesus refused, refused to give up on us. On Sunday morning, many of us will stand in pulpits and we will look out at the church, not the General Conference, and oh, what a beautiful church! What a beautiful church it is!

(applause)

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: I’d like to remind you of a couple of things when you come to the mic. I know you are passionate, and we appreciate that, but slow down so that the interpreters can track your message, and if you would also please leave the mic. on the stand that will also help us be able to hear, the interpreters be able to hear you in the back and us to be able to hear you better here in this room. So, now we have two for, one against. I am going to invite Fred Sayeh to mic. no. 2 for a speech against.

FREDERICK S. SAYEH (Liberia): Thank you, Bishop. Sorry. Yes. OK. I got it. Thank you. So, Bishop, the message here is that the various petitions as contained in the Traditional Plan are those petitions that make the plan what it is. Briefly or concisely I want to commend and encourage my fellow delegates to vote against this amendment that is attempting to delete the petition and the question. Vote no to this amendment so that the Traditional Plan can sustain its importance. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. If Joe Daniels will go to mic. no. 3, and let us know why you are coming to the mic. please.

JOSEPH WAYNE DANIELS (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. Joe Daniels, Baltimore-Washington Conference. I have a question. Yesterday I came to the mic. asking for clarity around questions around money, particularly as it pertained to the disaffiliation actions that will impact pensions and conference reserves. I stand here as a representative, like all of us, for the whole church. I particularly stand here along with other colleagues as one who represents the Black church. The Black congregation that I represent predominately has persons from—

BISHOP HARVEY: Excuse me.

DANIELS: —from twenty-four different nationalities.

BISHOP HARVEY: Excuse me. I don’t mean to interrupt you, but I need to ask you what your question is and if you are talking about the other petitions having to do with disaffiliation, we are not there yet. We are on the amendment.

DANIELS: I have been in the queue since this morning.

BISHOP HARVEY: I appreciate that.

DANIELS: And, if I will be invited back to ask my question, I would be honored to do so, but I have questions that will allow us not to walk in the dark as we are considering these votes we are about to take, but that we will get the necessary financial information from the persons of our General Conference—

BISHOP HARVEY: Yes, sir, we will—

DANIELS: —we have to for the last two and a half years been working on—

BISHOP HARVEY: You can, when we get to that—

DANIELS: —financial matters.

BISHOP HARVEY: —point, you can get back into the pool and ask your question along with the other folks in the pool. Thank you.

(pause)

We have got two for, two against, if I invite Aly Shahan—I’m sorry if I pronounced that incorrectly—to mic. no. 2 for a speech for. We are still on the amendment.

ALYSON ELIZABETH SHAHAN (Oklahoma): Thank you, Bishop. I am a mom and a lesson that I have to teach my kids again and again is that there will be times in which our decisions will harm others even when that is not our intention. We may have good inten-
tions, but when our actions harm others, we then need to reevaluate. I believe that is what is happening today. There is a lot of well-meaning behind the Traditional Plan, but it is, indeed, causing harm and, friends, we need to reevaluate. Now I would like to ask for those of you who feel comfortable to raise a hand if you have a child or a grandchild who has left our Church. For a denomination who claims to so desperately want young people in our churches, maybe we need to reevaluate. I am a thirty-two-year-old, and I am one of the youngest delegates here. For a denomination who claims to so desperately want young people in our churches, maybe it’s time we reevaluate. While young LGBTQAI+ suicide rates are skyrocketing, the response we have cannot be, “Come to my church where we will baptize you and nurture you in your growth in ministry but only until God calls you into ministry.” I am unsure of many things, but here is what I do know: The voting of this body has not reflected the voice of the majority of our young people. This body is not where the disciple-making happens. Thank the good Lord. Am I right? In America, our young people are told time and time again that they are not enough. Their friends are telling them they’re not enough. Our society tells them they are not enough, and now, this Traditional Plan is asking me to go back home and tell all of these young people that I work with that now our church is telling them that they are not enough? I can’t do that. This body does not get to decide who God affirms, and this body does not get to decide who God calls into ministry. Please vote for this—yes for this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Let me remind you once again to speak to the amendment. These are not speeches for or against the main motion. We are on the amendment, and while I appreciate again your passion and your desire, we need to stay on task on what we are doing. We have one person in the pool to speak against. Sergey Kim, you’ll go to mic. 1. I am going to give you a few minutes. This will also be a test, because I know we have issues with the Russian translation. So we’re going to just go slowly on this one. Sergey, we’ll give you a thumbs up when it is time. Let’s give it a try.

(pause)

SERGEY KIM (Central Russia): (simultaneous interpretation in Russian) Dear, Bishop…

BISHOP HARVEY: Go ahead.

KIM: (simultaneous interpretation in Russian) I am against this amendment because the petition of Traditional Plan, the petition that was under discussion, the petition that was before us, it had been already thoroughly prepared and making this amendment ruins the work and our opponent are trying to lead us astray. They are trying to lead us away from the Traditional Plan. That is why I came out to express my position and I am encouraging brothers and sisters, those who support Traditional Plan to be alert and to be very cautious when they are voting, because first, there is a petition, then, those who are for One Church Plan and those are for Simple Plan, they try to amend the petition, and actually those amendments cancel out all the positions that were expressed in petitions according to Traditional Plan. That is why I am against this amendment to the petition for Traditional Plan. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: We have had three speeches for and three against. We need to prepare to vote on the amendment. I’m going to ask the secretary to read it one more time, so that we make sure that you know what you are voting on.

GRAVES: The amendment is to delete Petition 90032 from the Traditional Plan. The petition text is located ADCA p. 182.

Amendment to Delete Pet. 90032 Rejected

BISHOP HARVEY: I am going to invite you to get your voting devices ready. Ready to put this up on the screen. If you favor this amendment press one (1), opposed to the amendment press two (2). You may vote now.

(pause)

You’ll project the results on the screen.
[Yes, 356; No, 463]

The amendment does not pass. We are back to the main motion. Every time we take a vote we have to refresh our screen, so just give me a couple of seconds. We’ve had three speeches for and two against, so I will call at this point Emanuel Cleaver to go to mic. 4 for a speech against and then we will move on.

EMANUEL CLEAVER (Missouri): Emanuel Cleaver III, Missouri. There is a story in the Gospel of Matthew of Jesus feeding the multitudes. It actually says that he fed 5,000. Men were counted, not including women and children. That means more people were not counted than those who were actually counted. The reason why only the men were counted is because the disciples counted people who were just like them. That means they overlooked people who were not like them. This plan overlooks other important and pressing issues.

It overlooks taking a hard stance when unarmed black men are shot and killed by those who give an oath to protect them. What this plan overlooks is taking a hard stance on
gender pay equality. What this plan overlooks is the fact that there are a number of social ills that we are simply not talking about.

We are bringing up one issue when this denomination is overlooking some problems of its own. For one, there are many women who will not be appointed to serve as senior pastors in some of our largest churches. We’re overlooking that. We’re also overlooking that many African-Americans are very limited in the number of appointments they can actually serve. We’re actually overlooking the fact that this denomination, as of 2019, the South Central Jurisdiction has never elected a black woman to serve in the Episcopacy. We are overlooking the fact that the South Central Jurisdiction tried to force a black bishop to retire under the disguise of ineffectiveness when we have current bishops who are ineffective and some who should not have been elected in the first place.

When you look at the story, the disciples counted people who were like them, but Jesus fed everyone, even those who were not there. There was stuff left over. If we are going to get biblical, let’s get real biblical.

(appause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Those of you delegates, I know again you’re passionate on a lot of these issues but I invite you, no applauding, no cheering. I’m now going to invite Holly Grant to mic. no. 2. I believe you have an amendment?

Motion to Amend Pet. 90037 Composition of Board of Ordained Ministry

HOLLY JEAN GRANT (East Ohio): Bishop, I move to amend by substitution, Petition 90037, on p. 185 of the ADCA and Calendar Item no. 6, p. 383 of the DCA.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is there a second? Repeat the numbers one more time just for us, please?

GRANT: Petition 90037—BISHOP HARVEY: Page number?

GRANT: P. 185 of the ADCA, Calendar Item 6 on p. 383 of the DCA.

BISHOP HARVEY: Give us a minute to locate those. Done? Is there a second? OK.

GRANT: I would amend by substitution in removing the parts that’s currently underlined in the ADCA and replacing it with the following: Prior to being nominated for membership on the Board of Ministry by the bishop, any individual must certify to the bishop that he or she would uphold enforcement and maintain the Book of Discipline in its entirety, including but not limited to all the qualifications for ordination, parenthesis Pars. 304, 330, 335, 336. And I will speak to this if I may. I can get this copy to you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is there a second? OK.

GRANT: I would amend by substitution in removing the parts that’s currently underlined in the ADCA and replacing it with the following: Prior to being nominated for membership on the Board of Ministry by the bishop, any individual must certify to the bishop that he or she would uphold enforcement and maintain the Book of Discipline in its entirety, including but not limited to all the qualifications for ordination, parenthesis Pars. 304, 330, 335, 336. And I will speak to this if I may. I can get this copy to you.

GARY GRAVES: I move to amend by substitution for petition 90037, on p. 185 of the ADCA which amends Discipline Par. 635.1a, concerning the composition of the—OK, what you wrote on the motion form is not the text. So, the text must be the page you have attached to the back. Is that correct? Holly?

BISHOP HARVEY: She’s making her way back.

GRANT: You have the attached page right in your hand.

GRAVES: I do, but the question is, on the attached page there are bold text, there are not bold text they’re underscored.

GRANT: What I read, right there, just needs to be substituted in.

GRAVES: Substitute all that is underscored.

GRANT: I substituted all that was underscored in the ADCA.

GRAVES: Thank you.

GRANT: With what is written there.

GRAVES: OK. I was just wanting to make clear about the different types of font and was that something?

GRANT: That does not need to be worried about.

GRAVES: OK. Thank you.
BISHOP HARVEY: This is an amendment, not a substitute. All right. I’m looking at the pool here for a speech against the amendment. I’m going to invite Mark Holland to mic no. 1.

Speeches For/Against Amending Pet. 90037

MARK R. HOLLAND (Great Plains): Brothers and sisters in Christ, I stand to speak against the motion for this substitute to certify people because what it does is it elevates our Book of Discipline above the Bible, and it says we’re going to certify everything that’s in this brown book but we’re not going to certify everything that’s in the Bible, and when we elevate this, we’ve entered an era of the Pharisees that cannot stand. I want to read from this gospel if I might, the other half of Matthew 19 that’s been ignored in our deliberations: “Whoever divorces his wife except for unchastity and marries another commits adultery.” And I’m convinced that there might be bishops on the stage who are guilty by Jesus’ red letters. I’m convinced that there are people in the bar of this General Conference pushing a button to oppress people for the first half of Matthew 19 who are guilty of the second half. Jesus has words, if I can continue with the red letters in Matthew 23. “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for you neglect the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy.” Where is the mercy for the people in this group who are hurting? Whatever the One Church Plan would have done, this hateful Traditional Plan will do to our churches. We had ours voted down. I’m asking you to lay down the sword; but we owe it to our brothers and sisters in Christ who are LGBTQ who have been harmed to never let this Traditional Plan pass, and to that end, I have picked up my stack for amendments and we’re going to amend until the monster trucks roll in at 6:30.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY (Louisiana): Mark.

(Cheering)

HOLLAND: I want every OCP person to vote against every call for the question. We will not be certified. We will not be Pharisees. We’re going to play your—[Speaker stopped due to three-minute time limit.]

BISHOP HARVEY: Mark. Friends, please. Please. I’m going to invite now—there’s a point of order, for Ruk Chikomb to come to mic. 2. We are talking, by the way, point of order. Mic. 2.

(Noise)

BISHOP HARVEY: Would you mind speaking up, please?

rukang chikomb (North-West Katanga): Rukang Chikomb, North-West Katanga.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

Chikomb: My point of order.

BISHOP HARVEY: What rule is being violated, if you would?

Chikomb: It is the Rule 18, disrupting behavior.

BISHOP HARVEY: What page?

Chikomb: On p. 48, Rule 18. Bishop, we came to do the job. I remember when I was growing up, a missionary—[cut off]

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Thank you. This isn’t time for a speech. You’ve pointed out the point of order, so I thank you and it is well taken and I will invite the house.

We’ve got work to do. We’ve got a 6:30 hard stop and that will include worship, so I will invite you to stay on task, stay to the point, don’t use the time to give your speeches and for and against unless it’s the appropriate time for a speech for and against. It’s not a time to disparage one another. This is a time for us to do the work that is in front of us.

I’m going to now invite Cara Nicklas to mic. 2 for a speech for.

Cara Sue Nicklas (Oklahoma): Cara Nicklas, Oklahoma Conference. This amendment respects the decision of the Judicial Council and we just ask for integrity from our leaders. We ask that we restore our covenant where it is broken, so vote yes to this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. I’ll now invite—we’ve had two speeches for, one against, so I’m going to invite Kim Ingram to mic. 2.

Kimberly Tyree Ingram (Western Northern Carolina): I will begin by explaining that this relates as the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry, has to do with qualifications for ordination. My dear brothers and sisters from around the world, I humbly greet you in the strong name of Jesus Christ. I am Kim Ingram, a member of the University Senate and specifically a member of the Commission on Theological Education. I stand to speak on behalf of the Associations of United Methodist Theological Schools, which voted yesterday to authorize this statement. The associations is composed of the heads of the thirteen seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Boston School of Theology, Candler School of Theology at Emory, Claremont School of Theology, Drew University Theological School, Duke Divinity School, Gammon Theological Seminary, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Iliff School of Theology, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Perkins, St. Paul’s, United, and Wesley. Ever since the General Conference in Portland, our United Methodist students and those who are considering seminary have been waiting to see what will happen in St. Louis at the Special Session of the General Conference. Most of the students are young with a majority
under 30 years old. Public opinion polls in the United States clearly demonstrate that younger people in this country, including deeply devoted Christians, do not want to organize their spiritual and church lives around the question about excluding LGBTQIA persons. It is clear to the heads of the seminaries that if the Traditional Plan passes, many students and prospective students will decide there is no place for them in this denomination. If the Traditional Plan passes, The United Methodist Church will very soon lose an entire generation of leadership in the United States. This may not be true in Africa or elsewhere in the world, but the future of The United Methodist Church in this country is at stake. The NASCUMC also had a statement about the colleges and the United Methodist colleges that may leave if this decision is made. I support United Methodist education and encourage you to vote against this amendment.

(applause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you, now we are going to move to a speech for. If Gregory Gross could go to mic. 1. Before you go, just make sure we are still on the amendment.

GREGORY DEAN GROSS (Northern Illinois): Yep, on the amendment.

BISHOP HARVEY: Okay, good. We are on task.

GREGORY GROSS: I am Gregory Gross. I am a clergy delegate from Northern Illinois, and I rise in favor of this amendment because let’s be honest what this is really about. This is to try to bring this amendment, the Traditional Plan, to make it constitutional because as we heard this morning it is sickeningly unconstitutional. Let’s be honest, the original was trying to keep me out. I am a man who loves another man. That’s who I am.

So, let’s be equal opportunity here. Let’s really investigate people that we name to the Board of Ordained Ministry in our candidates. So, let’s really investigate. You know, that celibacy in singleness, fidelity in marriage? Let’s investigate all of the clergy and the laity that we’re going to appoint to the board of ordained ministry. Have you committed adultery? Have you been committed to your spouse? Have you? I confessed. How about those of you here? Do you want to confess? No? How about those of you on the stage? Want to confess? OK, maybe that’s a little too far.

Have you really followed the entire Book of Discipline? All of you? Have you had every Special Sunday? An offering for every Special Sunday? That’s in the Book of Discipline. Let’s investigate. So yes, I am in favor of this amendment so that we can all be on an equal footing. If we are going to go after me. Let’s go after everyone. Because I believe the bible also says, “Let he without sin, cast the first stone.” Thank you.

(applause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. We have had three speeches for and two against the amendment. I am going to invite Emily Allen. If you would make your way to mic. 4.

EMILY RUTH ALLEN (California-Nevada): Thank you, bishop. Emily Allen, California-Nevada. Yesterday the Legislative Committee worked on Petitions 90033, 90034, on 90035, making amendments that we were told would bring them into constitutionality. We heard today that those amendments did not, in fact, make them constitutional. And so, I hear this amendment today that I am told will make this petition constitutional, and once again I don’t believe it. I believe that this amendment does not go far enough to make this petition constitutional. It still encourages the selective or increased observation of some of the parts of the Book of Discipline over others even though it says, “including but not limited to.” That is still encouraging selective and partial application of the Book of Discipline as I quote from the Judicial Council Decision 1366.

So, I have to tell you when we are told that all of the amendments coming before us today will bring the petitions into alignment with the Judicial Council Decision, I want you to question whether they actually will. We already know that the ones we were told about yesterday did not do so. I think this work is flawed. I think this amendment is flawed. I think you need to consider carefully whether all of the amendments which were planned before this conference’s Judicial Council Decisions really will bring us into alignment with the constitution. I am not convinced, and I urge you to consider very carefully whether the work we do will end up being constitutional. So sure, make your amendments. I will vote against every single one of them. Thank you.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Thank you, Emily. We’ve had three speeches for and three against, which means we need to go to a vote on the amendment. Repeat the amendment one more time.

GARY GRAVES: The amendment is to Petition 90037. Strike the words that are included in the petition on p. 185 and insert the following: “Prior to being nominated for membership on the board of ministry by the bishop, any individual must certify to the bishop that he or she will uphold, enforce, and maintain The Book of Discipline in its entirety, including but not limited to all the qualifications for ordination. See parenthesis, paragraphs 304, 330, 335, 336. Additionally,
the bishop must certify to the annual conference secretary that he or she only has nominated individuals who will uphold, enforce, and maintain *The Book of Discipline* in its entirety, including but not limited to the qualifications for ordination. See parenthesis, paragraphs 304, 330, 335, 336.” The text continues as it is in the original paragraph.

BISHOP HARVEY: All right. Let’s get ready to vote. You’ll hold on just one moment. We have an electronic signal issue. I don’t know what that means.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We’re about to learn.

BISHOP HARVEY: All right. We are going to improvise. We’re going to be nimble. We’ve got the camera on the computer, so if you are ready to vote in favor of the amendment, you press one (1). If you’re opposed—you’re voting on the amendment. One (1) yes, two (2) no. You may vote now.

BISHOP HARVEY: I believe we’re ready. If you’ll put the decision on the screen on the amendment. And it passes. It’s passed, OK? [Yes, 428; No, 391.]

So, this is what we’re going to do. We’ve got to address this technology. Otherwise, these guys are going to have to sit there and hold this computer for the rest of the day. So, if you’ll just give us—let’s take a ten-minute break, and let them address the challenge that we have here. And we’ll be right back.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Oh, you can keep singing a little ‘til they take their seats. It’ll help us.

BISHOP HARVEY: All right, if you will take your seat. Put your cards back into your device, if you would. That helps us as we refresh our pool. All right, friends. We’re trying to work through this, so I’d like to invite Lynne Gilbert to mic. no. 2. Thank you. I think we’ve got the technology working. If we get another blip, I will let you know. Yes, please, go ahead.

MARY LYNNE GILBERT (Western North Carolina): Lynne Gilbert, Western North Carolina. I have a question, and I’d like to try a motion if I’m in order. Earlier today, Karon Mann tried a motion about the timing of effectiveness of legislation passed by the General Conference, and I’m wondering if this would be a moment to try that.

BISHOP HARVEY: This is out of order at this time. You’ll have to do it between the items after we complete this main motion. So, if you’ll hold—you can bring that back—

GILBERT: OK. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: —and get back in. Going to invite Jeffrey Kuan—there you are—to mic. no. 4. Thank you. I think we’ve got the technology working. If we get another blip, I will let you know. Yes, please, go ahead.

KAH-JIN JEFFREY KUAN (California-Nevada): Yes, Bishop. I’m Jeffrey Kuan from California-Nevada Conference. I’d like to make a motion by adding the following words.

BISHOP HARVEY: Tell us where.

KUAN: Item 936, p. 184, Calendar Item No. 4 on p. 383.

BISHOP HARVEY: Got it.

KUAN: And there are three places where I would want to add the following words, but I understand from our parliamentarian that we can only do it sentence by sentence. So, if that is the case, I hope that I will be able to come back at another point to make the other insertions.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is it the same words in several different places?

KUAN: The same, slightly different. But it is almost the same words.

BISHOP HARVEY: If it’s the same, you can in one—

KUAN: OK.

BISHOP HARVEY: —but can we just try it and just see, and if I interrupt you, it just means we’ve gone too far and can’t do it.

KUAN: Bishop, let me quickly grab my *ADCA*.

BISHOP HARVEY: We’re going to try it. We’ve got a few questions over here from the general, from the secretary, and so let’s just try. And I’ll try not to interrupt you in the middle of a sentence, but if it’s not working, I’m going to need to do that. OK?

KUAN: OK. On the *ADCA* p. 184, item 936, line 7, “Bishops who are self-avowed homosexuals”—that’s the first place. I would like to insert the words, “polygamous, divorced, and/or remarried.” The second place, line number 12, “the individual is a self-avowed homosexual,” insert the words, “polygamous, divorced, and/or remarried person.” And the last place from the bottom—fifth line from the bottom, “the individual is a self-avowed homosexual,” insert the words, “polygamous, divorced, and/or remarried person.”

BISHOP HARVEY: OK.

KUAN: If I have a second, I will speak to it, Bishop.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.
is compatible with the Bible. Persons with whom we hail as heroes, heroes of faith, Abraham, David, Solomon, all had multiple wives! What ethical standards are we using to determine what is compatible and incompatible with biblical teaching and Christian practices? If we want to single out one form human sexuality, we need to capture all of the others. I have said this before and I will say it again, when are we going to stop our hypocrisy? Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Before we move on, we have got a couple of points of order. I am going to first invite Ron Enns to mic. 1. These really do need to be points of order. So if you could point us to the rule.

Presiding Bishop’s Ruling on Amending Pet. 90036 Is Appealed

RON ENNS (Northwest Texas): Bishop, yeah, Ron Enns, Northwest Texas Conference, the parliamentarian indicated to us yesterday that in order to amend a petition, you had to amend the entire petition with the changes you wanted to make. Could not be done piecemeal as this attempt was made, and I rise to that point.

BISHOP HARVEY: I think because these were the same words in several different places.

ENNS: Is that your ruling, Bishop?

BISHOP HARVEY: It is.

ENNS: I would appeal the decision to the body.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is there a second to the appeal? Thank you. The decision of the chair has been appealed, and the question is before us of whether the decision of the chair will be upheld. Under the rules for appeal, the chair will have three minutes to state the reasons for the ruling and then the delegate, Mr. Enns, you will have a chance for three minutes for your reasons for the appeal. Then, the motion will be put to vote, and it will require a majority vote opposed to chair’s ruling to overturn it. So if you will give me a couple of minutes to confer with my friends behind me. Thank you.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Right, Mr. Enns, I’m gonna give this a shot. Yesterday, I think it was, I’m trying remem—these days have been like dog years; they’ve been long, seven years for every day or something. Each time that Mr. Kuan inserted the words, they were the same words, same paragraph, same section. I believe the attempt before was different words and different parts in different sections. (pause) I’m just going to invite you. I’m not gonna take my three minutes. Go ahead.

RON ENNS (Northwest Texas): I don’t need three minutes, Bishop. I don’t believe this is debatable because the point that I rose to was not debatable. I just really believe that the rules we followed yesterday should apply today.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. (pause) So we are not going to vote. We are gonna appeal of the decision of the chair. The motion requires a majority that’s opposed to the chair’s decision to overturn it. If you agree, we’re gonna open the queue—the voting here in a moment. If you agree with the ruling of the chair, you will press one (1); if you disagree with the ruling of the chair, you will press two (2). You may vote now.

OK, let me just clear that up. Questions come. If you agree with the ruling of the chair—and the
ruling of the chair was that Mr. Kuan’s amendment was in order. If you disagree with that ruling, then you press two (2). That make sense? Let’s clear it. So if you sustain the decision of the chair, you’ll press one (1). If you disagree with the ruling of the chair, you press two (2). So is it open yet? It’s about to be. (pause) Here it is. If you uphold the decision of the chair—sustain the decision of the chair—you press one (1). If you disagree, you press two (2). Vote now.

(pause)

Alright we are ready. The chair has been sustained.

[Yes, 434; No, 374]

BISHOP HARVEY: We have the amendment before us. (applause) In the meantime we also have another point of order. Tim McClendon, if you will go to mic. no. 1 and state the rule that you are addressing in your point of order. Thank you, sir.

WILLIAM TIMOTHY MCCLENDON (South Carolina): Bishop, Tim McClendon, South Carolina, clergy. I’d like to cite Rule 7 found on p. 45 in ADCA, line 728, which states that after three speeches for and three against that the question is automatically put. I would like for us to be done with all these amendments. Get it done. Vote on the Traditional Plan.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK that’s good. Thank you. As long as—we can do that as long as there are no secondary motions that are pending. And we st—right now we have a pend—we are in the middle of an amendment, so I’d like to complete that. So I am looking for the speeches against the amendment. Fred Sayeh, go to mic. no. 2.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK, mic. no. 4.

Speeches For/Against Amending Pet. 90036

FREDERICK S. SAYEH (Liberia): Thank you, bishop. This conference is defined to treat a particular issue on sexuality. So, it is not that. The other issues of infidelity or polygamy are disregarded. But it is good that we remain on course and decide on the issue of homosexuality. That is why I’m encouraging all delegates to vote against the amendment because the amendment is intended to confuse the provisions of the Traditional Plan. So, vote no to the amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. I’m now going to invite Dee Stickley-Miner to mic. no. 3. Speech for.

DEANNA STICKLEY-MINER (West Ohio): Thank you, bishop. My name is Dee Stickley-Miner, clergy, West Ohio Conference. I stand in favor of the amendment. This special-called General Conference was about human sexuality. And what—the way we do things when a paragraph is opened, it can be amended, and this is about human sexuality. I think we have a strong case in the Bible around polygamy, around divorce. Jesus spoke about that, and so why would we not look at also our heterosexual practices? Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. So, we’ve had two speeches for, one against. I’m going to invite Cynthia Weems to mic. no. 1.

CYNTHIA WEEMS (Florida): Cynthia Weems, clergy, Florida. I speak against the amendment on the grounds of our mission field in evangelism in the world. I want to read from the mission statement of the Traditional Plan found on pp.140, 154 of the ADCA. The traditional model provides freedom for progressive pastors, churches, and conferences to evangelize persons who they believe would be reached—best reached—by a form of Methodism that is fully inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities. At the same time, it provides assurances that traditional United Methodists can continue to make disciples among people who value traditional teaching on marriage and sexual behavior. I think if we had a title to this paragraph, it would be called exclusive evangelism. I don’t think any of us would support exclusive evangelism. In the district I serve in the greater Miami area, we evangelize in Español, in Portugués, in Français, in Creole, in Korean, and in English. We evangelize in our poorest communities and in our wealthiest. We evangelize to Central Americans, to Venezuelans, to Caribbean islanders, even to New Yorkers who moved to Miami wisely. I cannot support opening up more, although I completely understand the hypocrisy. I cannot support a plan, or amendments to the plan, that create an exclusive evangelism. I don’t know where you live, but where I live people need Jesus. And currently, all of our United Methodist churches in our district are able to evangelize all of the people who live there because we are people of Matthew 28. In Matthew 28 it’s held that to make disciples to the ends of the earth. Not to make disciples with an exclusive evangelism based on one particular way of thinking about one particular issue.

Adding more and more criteria for our practices, basically practices that indicate that we live in a world that’s broken, only separates us. I won’t support the amendment. I won’t support the Traditional Plan. I won’t support exclusive evangelism because I believe our current church lives by Matthew 28. Go to all the earth, making disciples of Jesus Christ. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. I’m going to invite—there’s a point of order. I’m sorry about pronuncia-
tion here. Eshacko Duhu? Mic. no. 1. For a point of order, please state the rule that is in question.

ISHAKU BAGUDU NUHU (Southern Nigeria): Bishop, sorry, it is an error.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Sorry to make you walk all of that way for that. All right. We’re back still to the amendment. We’ve had two speeches for, two against. If Tom Price would come to the mic. no. 3 for a speech for.

JOSEPH THOMAS PRICE (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. One of the things that, well most of the things that I would say have actually been said by the person that presented this initially. But I would like to share one or two things that are additional reasons why I support this. One of the reasons certainly is fairness and equality across the board, regardless of what the issue may be regarding human sexuality.

But I don’t think this particular point has been raised in the body. And that is the reality of our history as a church. And please forgive me, I am by no means a theologian. I did not attend seminary but I worked for almost thirty years with young people, and by the grace of God brought thousands and thousands of people, young people, into relationship with Jesus Christ. One of the things that I don’t think has been stated is the reality that, and in all—excuse me, it’s a little confusing. And I also am suffering from cancer, and the various medications are causing some problems right now. And I thank you.

But the reality is, we have had gay and lesbian leaders, clergy leaders, in every level of the church. And for me, as a lay person, what’s really critical is that we have competent leadership that loves people and loves Jesus. My experience has been as I’ve woken up from several surgeries, one of the faces I almost always see is a member of the LGBTQIA-plus community who is a clergyperson who is not out so I won’t even use a pronoun, but this person represents Jesus to me because of the love shown. I can’t stand here as a youth, but as I say, I have been in ministry to thousands of youth and have been blessed to see them accept Jesus Christ.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY (Louisiana): Mr. Price. And now we have had three speeches for, two against, so we’ll make this last speech against, if Sky McCracken will make his way to mic. 1.

SCHUYLER J. LOWE-MCCrackEN (Memphis). I’m Sky McCracken, Memphis Conference, clergy. I rise to speak against the amendment. Of course, all that we have before us in this amendment points toward absurdity and also an enormous amount of time that we have spent on this issue. It reflects over forty years of general conferences where this has been an issue. I’ve been coming to general conferences since 1988. My passion is not being the sex police. My passion is about discipleship. We have heard very little since 1988 about discipleship, but I have heard more than I ever wanted to hear about sexual practices at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Isn’t it important? Yes. But as one delegate said earlier, it is about “this much” of the totality of a person and I would like to think “this much” of the totality of the church. I’ve been very blessed to be a pastor, a district superintendent, and I wouldn’t call it a blessing, but I’ve served the church in investigative capacities and I can tell you that homosexual affairs have taken up about “this much” of the time and effort of the church investigation and of the disruption of a local congregation; but I can also tell you heterosexual affairs have split churches apart. So, what I would say in response to this amendment is that we need to be about the business of the church, and I’m a very pragmatic person. We are dealing with an issue that this is “this small” in a world that is “this big,” that we have yet to be effective making disciples. I plead that we not only vote against the amendment but we remember our priorities as we do the work of the church. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. We’re now going to a vote on the amendment. I’m going to ask you to read it one more time so we know what we’re voting on. That’s important.

GARY GRAVES: Glad to do that. To add the following words each time at three points where the phrase “self-avowed homosexual” is included in the text. We will add the word polygamist, divorced, and/or remarried at those three places.

Motion to Amend Pet. 90036 Fails

BISHOP HARVEY: I would invite you to get your voting devices ready. If you support this amendment, you push one (1); if you oppose the amendment, you push two (2). We’ll start the voting now.

(Vote)

BISHOP HARVEY: Voting is closed. We’ll wait a moment. The amendment fails. [Yes, 274; No, 545]

We’re going back to the main motion and if you want a point of order, you need to go into the pool. Rev. McClendon, do you want to try again?

WILLIAM TIMOTHY MCCLENDON (South Carolina): Thank you bishop. Tim McClendon, South Carolina, clergy. Indeed, I think that we have—
BISHOP HARVEY: What’s the rule?

MCCLENDON: Rule 7, line 728 on p. 45. I believe that we have already arrived at three speeches for, three speeches against. I would hope that we would move to a vote on the Traditional Plan.

BISHOP HARVEY: We are and we must at this point, but I’d like you to stay at the mic. for a moment before we take this vote. Would you mind praying for us as—one moment. We’re going to vote. Lonnie Chafin, would you take your seat? You are in the queue and you seem to really want to speak, so I’m going to invite you—we’re going to take a little pause here. I’m going to invite you to come to the mic. 1, state your point and the rule that’s in question. But stand by Rev. McClendon.

LONNIE ARTHUR CHAFIN (Northern Illinois): The pool wasn’t open. I was trying to jump in. I’m sorry to. I’ve been ridiculously distracted.

BISHOP HARVEY: Grace is important here.

CHAFIN: I live by grace.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank God for that.

Point of Order Raised for Financial Implications of Traditional Plan

CHAFIN: I rise to bring a point of order. In our rules, section 7b, 7b requires that before a vote on a matter with financial implications can have its final vote, it must go to GCFA for an opinion. I feel the rules require us now to refer this matter before a final vote to General Council on Finance and Administration for a review of the financial implications. The rule addresses two things in the Traditional Plan that require GCFA review before it can be considered by the body. One is it creates a new body task force or council or commission in the episcopal accountability section, and secondly, it expends funds from the Episcopal Fund which is an expenditure of funds and therefore are required to be sent to GCFA before we can act. I feel our rules obligate us now to refer the Traditional Plan to GCFA for them to give us a financial implications report before we can take this vote. Thus, my jumping.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Let me confer with my colleagues back here. I get your point.

BISHOP HARVEY: Words are important so we are conferring here on some particulars, so don’t go far. Can we, can we something? Something? Something jazz? Something that maybe gets us out of our seat, to stand up a little bit? Move around? We need it at this point.

pause

BISHOP HARVEY: Words are important so we are conferring here on some particulars, so don’t go far. Can we, can we something? Something jazz? Something that maybe gets us out of our seat, to stand up a little bit? Move around? We need it at this point.

music

BISHOP HARVEY: If I could invite you now to make your way back to your seat. Thank you! Thank you all for being so flexible and quick to respond!

BISHOP HARVEY: So as we have conferred here this is what we know: In the Traditional Plan there are no financial indicators that were submitted by the submitter of the petition. The other plans did have noted financial implications noted. This is what I am going to do. Just in fairness to honor the work of the body I’m going to ask you, the body, whether you would want to refer this to GCFA to determine the financial implications. They are prepared to do that if you chose to do that. So if you will take your seat. I think you would be out of order if you’d do that. Thank you, and Tim, I’ll call you back later. Thank you. So if you would grab your voting device. This is a little outside our norm, but I want to honor you as you do your work. So if you would want to refer this plan to GCFA to consider the financial implications. Yes if not vote no. It is now open.

pause for voting

Voting is closed.

[Yes, 361; No, 451]

We will not be sending this back to GCFA.

We have several points of order in our pool. I am going to give you a chance here. If it’s a really a point of order, I will call on you. If it’s not a point of order, and you cannot name the point or rule I am going to give you 30 seconds to take yourself out of the pool. (pause) So instead you added more. (laughter) Thanks.

I am just going to remind you of the time. It is 4:22, and monster trucks start rolling in at 6:30. No not 6:30. We got to be out of here at 6:30. So I am going to invite Alex Melnikov to mic. 1 and you might want to get your headsets ready. Mic. 3.

ALEX MELNIKOV (Southern Russia): (simultaneous interpretation from Russian) I will speak Russian. I respected the chair conference, I think—

BISHOP HARVEY: What rule is being questioned?

MELNIKOV: (simultaneous interpretation from Russian) Rule 7, p. 44. The people who speak in favor of the amendment, what I hear they speak against, so the point that they try to represent is absolutely opposite from what they claim.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you sir. Your point is taken. It is out of order, but your point is well taken. Thank you. Tim Rogers, mic. 1. Just going down the list. Please state the rule that is in question.

TIM ROGERS (South Carolina): I’m sorry. I had requested to come out of the pool. Apologize.
BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Getting your steps in today. Marie Stanovsky, mic. 1.

GRAVES: As Marie is making her way to the microphone, a reminder please press the microphone button, and then confirm that you want to leave the pool. You have to take the two button step. It actually asks you to confirm, and you need to press yes, you do wish to leave the pool.

MARIE KUCH-STANOVSKY (Pacific Northwest): I rise to a point of order for rule 7 part 3. The rule states that after three speeches for and three speeches against and provided no secondary motions come before the floor, the question shall be put automatically. I believe there are secondary motions in the pool. My seatmates, my colleague delegates are offering secondary motions.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Those motions are not on the floor. Secondary motions.

KUCH-STANOVSKY: They are asking to come before the floor.

BISHOP HARVEY: They do not get preference and recognition. It’s just when there is something pending that is on the floor. Thank you so much. I invite Kelly Robier, mic. 3.

Point of Order to Divide the Question

KELLY ALLISON ROBIER (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. Kelly Robier, Baltimore-Washington Conference. I rise to a point of order. Rule 17, p. 48 of the ADCA. Bishop, before any vote is taken, a delegate shall have the right to call for a division of any question. I have been in the queue for point no. 8 for this entire day to divide the question. It is my right to divide that question, and we are currently in violation of it.

(pause)

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: I’ve conferred with our parliamentarian. All along, we have been voting on these as a bundle. So, these are conferring, conforming, and there is no way to divide the question.

ROBIER: I respectfully appeal the decision of the Chair.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. All right, let me remind you how this works. You have appealed the decision of the Chair. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is that—if you are on the floor, in the bar, and you second, please waive your hand. Thank you so much. So, the decision that we’ve made here has been appealed, and the question is, shall the decision of the chair be upheld or sustained? Under the rules for appeal, the chair’s going to have three minutes, and then, you’ll get your time as well. And this is a majority vote that we will take. So, if you’ll give me two seconds to locate that portion in our Robert’s Rules and the Conference Rules, I will get right back to you, I promise. Thank you.

(pause)

BISHOP HARVEY: All right. Kelly, you’re still standing by there?

ROBIER: Yes, ma’am.

BISHOP HARVEY: Great. So, let me just read to you. Actually, this was shared on the first day with the delegates. We’re applying Par. 507 from The Discipline, and then also Robert’s Rules. So, let me read to you both of those. This is from Robert’s Rules. “A set of amendments are considered as conforming amendments where all of the individual amendments must be made if any one of them is made in order to leave a coherent resolution pending if the motion to amend is adopted.” Then, from our Book of Discipline, 2016, Par. 507. “If the Discipline is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the Discipline, except that if two or more paragraphs in the Discipline are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another. Petitions that meet these criteria are called composite petitions and shall not be separated into pieces.” And that was covered on the first day from our parliamentarian. So, if you—this is your chance to respond.

ROBIER: Respectfully, bishop, I disagree with what the parliamentarian has stated. The Rule 43 on the ADCA specifically says that Robert’s Rules of Order only apply where our rules are silent. Our rules here are not silent. These petitions of the Traditional Plan are not, quote, “so closely related,” unquote, that they must be treated together. These petitions are separately numbered. They deal with completely different paragraphs in our Book of Discipline. Therefore, they are divisible. One amendment does not necessarily affect the other, and Bishop and members here, half of these are completely unconstitutional, with no hope of being salvaged. Therefore—

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

ROBIER: I believe I still have a minute and fifty-one seconds to go. Thank you. Therefore, these petitions are divisible, and I move that we divide these petitions to be voted on one-by-one, as is the right as we have it here as elected representatives of not only LGBTQIA persons, but as elected delegates of all people who have experienced oppression by The United Methodist Church. These petitions continue to inflict harm and must be divided for a vote one-by-one. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you
Presiding Bishop’s Ruling on Dividing the Question Sustained

BISHOP HARVEY: We’re going to now vote. This is a majority vote. If you sustain the ruling of the chair, you press one (1). If you do not, if you disagree with the ruling of the chair, you press two (2). The voting starts now.

(pause)

BISHOP HARVEY: The chair has been sustained.

[Yes, 522; No, 301]

If I could extend a word of grace here. I know it’s been a long couple of days and we’re all so incredibly passionate about this. So I just invite you to speak slowly so that the interpreters can catch up to you and if you will stay on point what you stood for or against in any of these matters, I certainly would appreciate that. I am now going to invite Joe Daniels, who also has a point of order. Rev. Daniels, if you would state the rule.

JOSEPH WAYNE DANIELS (Baltimore-Washington): Bishop, I have risen to raise a question for the last two days that has not been responded to. I have put my name in the queue and I have been bumped out of the queue on numerous times, so for some reason—

BISHOP HARVEY: Could you just tell us the rule.

DANIELS: Some reason my tablet is not working, therefore, I rise. My tablet is not working consistently so I rise.

BISHOP HARVEY: If you could raise a checkered flag, we will bring you a new one.

DANIELS: I have been raising a checkered flag.

BISHOP HARVEY: I’m so sorry, what, but then, and we just need to help you because that wasn’t a point of order, so we just need to be able to help you figure out where to bring that, so I appreciate that. We are going to work on that right now.

BISHOP HARVEY: Rev. Daniels, if you would state the rule.

DANIELS: I just need the issue to resolve.

Chair of GCFA Speaks to Financial Implications of Traditional Plan

BISHOP HARVEY: Got it. Let’s work on that. Thank you. I have invited Bishop Mike McKee to the podium. He is the chair of GCFA. He is going to answer that question.

BISHOP MICHAEL MCKEE: That question, so they are working on the particulars of your question, but any of the financial implications that we found on this are minimal and by that I am saying in terms of some travel costs, registration of trademarks which some people evidently have been concerned about and so they are minimal. They are within the budgets that we have and so it does not require anything other than that. We are focusing on one other thing for you and we will get back to you.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK, thank you. Thank you, Bishop McKee. Jorge Lockward also for a point of order if you would got to mic. no. 3 and state the rule that’s in question.

Point of Order on Suspending the Rules


BISHOP HARVEY: Jorge?

LOCKWARD: Yes.

BISHOP HARVEY: Excuse me, this really isn’t a point of order at this time.

LOCKWARD: It is if you let me explain why, what is the point of order.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK.

LOCKWARD: May I.

BISHOP HARVEY: I will give, I give that to you.

LOCKWARD: It will take five seconds. You ask me the number of the rule. I thought you wanted me to read it.

BISHOP HARVEY: Please, go ahead.

LOCKWARD: But I can just go ahead.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

LOCKWARD: Bishop, I believe that unintentionally, and I really want to emphasize unintentionally, you found a majority vote solution to a matter that is a two-thirds vote that was a rule that was invoked by delegate Lonnie Chafin. You found a solution of good will by taking a majority vote, but in truth the solution requires a two-thirds vote because you were, I believe, effectively suspending our rules.

BISHOP HARVEY: Hang on one second.

LOCKWARD: Sure.
(laughter)

(pause)

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: OK, Jorge, let me try this, OK, in response. Because there’s a lot going on, and we’re trying to keep up with everything. So, you’ve raised—in order to raise a point of order, you’ve got to do it at the time where you’re raising the point of order of what’s happening at the moment. OK? So, I appreciate the fact that it’s hard to get into this pool. I know some of you’ve been trying for a while. I don’t believe that we have actually addressed suspension of the rules.

JORGE ALFONSO LOCKWARD (New York): If I may?

BISHOP HARVEY: Please.

LOCKWARD: The delegate Lonnie Chafin brought an issue that had to do with a rule. The rule that he quoted was a rule dealing with sending things for—that have financial considerations to GFA. That is a rule. You tried to help us finding a solution, but the solution that you found required a majority vote. There is already a solution when rules need to be changed, bended, altered for the benefit of our work as a body. That is Rule 41. I submit to you that that is the proper rule to address the concern that was brought by Delegate Chafin.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

(pause)

LOCKWARD: You asked me about the timing, bishop, and I put my request immediately after you made that decision. But this is electronic system. It’s imperfect, so help us, please.

BISHOP HARVEY: As are we. So, thank you.

LOCKWARD: Absolutely.

BISHOP HARVEY: Where we are right now is that GCFA is con-
sidering—could you speak to that for just a moment?

(pause)

OK, I don’t know that I can go back and then do what you’ve just asked. So, thank you for the input, but at this point, we can’t go back there. So, I’m now going to recognize the next person, and that—

LOCKWARD: Can I appeal? May I appeal your decision respectfully? And I’m sorry to do it. I would have preferred to just take a vote. It would take one minute to take a vote of a two-thirds majority to suspend the rule. If the body wants to suspend the rule, we can. But it needs to be done. Bishop, this is an (unintelligible) moment in our history. This is important stuff. I believe it needs to be done, as they say in English, “by the book.”

BISHOP HARVEY: Certainly. Thank you. Let me just confer how to best address this, OK?

LOCKWARD: Thank you. I appreciate your struggling with me here. Thank you.

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY: No, no. I’m with you. I’m with you, OK?

LOCKWARD: Thank you.

(pause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Jorge, in my attempt to honor your work and ask the house what you wanted to do—I’m guessing that is what you’re addressing. We were just trying to figure out how to connect the two. So, if you’d like to appeal the decision of the chair, you are welcome to do that. I’m going to stand by the decision that we made. I try to extend some grace to the body, believing that I was going to help you do your work and honor the work. So, if you’d like to appeal that decision, you may do so.

LOCKWARD: With this deep respect, bishop, and only because this is such an important time in our church—if it were any other time, I would just let it go. But in the interest of transparency for those who are watching us, and in the interest of the reputation of all, I do appeal the decision.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP HARVEY: So, we’ve done this now. So, the decision of the chair—and I’ll have this one memorized before the end of the night.

LOCKWARD: Oh.

BISHOP HARVEY: The decision of the chair’s been appealed, and the question is shall the decision of the chair be upheld? Repeat this, just because I believe you need to know where we’re going. Under the rules for appeal, the chair will have three minutes to state the reasons for the ruling, and then, you’ll have a chance to do the same. And then, we’ll take a majority vote. So, we have had—I don’t know that there’s any more that I can say about that. I gave you—I honored the work of the delegates, believing that I needed to honor your work and help you do your work as we move forward. I don’t know that there’s much more that I can say or need to say at this point, so the time is yours.

LOCKWARD: Thank you, Bishop Cynthia. I really appreciate—and I want to affirm, first of all, to you that I do believe that you are well-intentioned in what you are doing. However, if we had just taken one, two minutes to address this the proper way, we would not be investing the six, ten minutes that we’re investing. It’s not a complicated matter. It’s a matter of integrity. Not that there’s no integrity in what we have been doing, but rather that we have an opportunity to reclaim integrity now that new information is provided. We were trying faithfully to do our work. You tried to help us to do our work. In doing that, I believe an error was committed. The error, as I named, is the error of
solving an issue that requires a two-thirds majority vote with a solution that requires a simple majority vote. All that I have been requesting is that we vote again according to our rules and that the chair would humbly say, “I tried to help,” but in reality, there was another way of doing it that is already in our rules. Why you would say, “I insist on this”? I am sure that some are thinking, oh, he’s just playing with the time and the clock. I am not, although I wish sometimes that I would. But I am not right now. What I am trying to help us is that whatever decision we make here does not become tainted by a simple not following of rules that are carefully written so that our work may have integrity. I want to repeat, I am not calling the work that we did as not having integrity. It was the best we could do at that time. But with new information, it’s hard for me to accept that we just don’t have time to do a simple solution of a new vote. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

Bishop Upheld on Suspending the Rules Ruling

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Thank you. You will get your voting devices ready. Voting on the Traditional Plan as it’s been heard, thus amended. You may vote now.

(pause)

Voting is now closed. Passes.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

Amended Traditional Plan Approved

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Now I’ll invite Rev. Harris back to the podium for the next item of business.

JOSEPH HARRIS: Item is DCA 386, Calendar Item 19, Petition 90066, ADCA 205. Disaffiliation: Taylor. New paragraph 2553. There is a minority report that Beth Ann Cook will present.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Rev. Cook if you could present the minority report. Then we will come back to the floor.

BISHOP HARVEY: Stop it.

CHARLES CHAPPELL TEMPLE (Texas): I’m not to take that personally.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you, Chappell.

TEMPLE: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP HARVEY: And thank you for your patience.

TEMPLE: Yes, ma’am. Under rule 41, I’m calling for the suspension of the rules to limit speeches to one speech for, one speech against each no more than one minute. We have less than hour, friends. We’ve talked about hypocrisy. The hypocrisy here is.

BISHOP HARVEY: Stop it.

TEMPLE: OK.

BISHOP HARVEY: Stop. No speech. No speech. Thank you. You got it. We heard you. All right. You’ve moved it. Is there a second? OK. This requires a two-thirds vote. It is not debatable, so if you will pick up your voting instruments, and open voting now. You may vote now.

(pause)
BISHOP HARVEY: The voting is now closed. It did not require, receive the required two-thirds vote. [Yes, 497; No, 289]

We will now move on to our next order of business. And we introduced it in the last, right before we took the break. We are now going to hear the minority report from Beth Ann Cook. Before you start her time, she does have one correction. Could she address that? Is it editorial? I think we can handle that. OK.

Minority Report on Disaffiliation

BETH ANN COOK (Indiana): For those who are trying to make sense of this in the DCA on p. 386, if you look at number one, at the end where it says point five, that should be point three. If you looked at that and you thought, how are you deleting point five in its entirety and then in line two changing the language in point five? That’s why that didn’t make any sense and I apologize that my eyes were not good last night. I was tired and so was the typist, and between us we made a mistake.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

COOK: My name is Beth Ann Cook and I serve as the pastor of Logansport First United Methodist Church in Indiana. I want to let you know that our flagship ministry is a day care and preschool with one hundred and forty beautiful children. One lesson every child learns at Logan First is that we should treat one another as Jesus taught us to in Matthew 7:12. That verse says we should treat one another as we want to be treated. Some of the fights in other churches over how to be in ministry with LGBTQ persons have gotten uglier than any fight I’ve ever seen among preschoolers. Honestly, they fight and kick sometimes. And yet it’s true. The Episcopal Church wasted over sixty million on legal battles but the toll on hearts and minds was much higher and there were broken relationships.

Those of us bringing this minority report are seeking to avoid such ugly fighting and hurting in the UMC. We already feel pain in this room. We do not want to force any church to leave the denomination. This does not force anyone to do so. What it does, it says that any church that discerns that because of today’s votes, they cannot faithfully live out the gospel, would have an opportunity to have a fair process and to leave. The intended process is literally how I would want to be treated if I were the one hurting because of that. As it is currently written, the petition gives a blank check to annual conferences to add additional requirements to departing local churches. We all know there is deep mistrust in The United Methodist Church. Some annual conferences have small theological minorities who fear the misuse of power and I believe that’s true on both ends of this issue. This would be a uniform plan across the entire United Methodist Church.

The Judicial Council ruled that this petition as it’s currently worded is unconstitutional for two reasons. The first is that it is the conference board of trustees and not the bishop that has the responsibility of formalizing the agreement. The other would require an amendment from the floor to bring a vote of two-thirds of the annual conference to make sure that we are doing things legally. But this minority report is a way for us to seek to love one another in the midst of deep disagreement. Jesus said you will know that we are disciples because of our love for one another. Let us be known as disciples because of our love for one another. Let us be known as those who love in the midst of deep disagreement and pain are seeking to have a fair process.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Thank you. We have a couple of points of order that I will—they need to be real points of order. Remember we’ve got to be very specific at this point. I’d like to call Ginger Gaines-Cirelli to mic. 3.

GINGER ELISE GAINES-CIRELLI (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli. Thank you, Bishop. This is Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, Baltimore-Washington Conference. Thank you. I’m not the greatest at the rules, so I hope I’ve gotten here on the right, pushing the right button.

BISHOP HARVEY: We’ll help you.

GAINES-CIRELLI: All right, thank you. Pursuant to Par. 56.1 and 2609.1, I move that the body vote to appeal the General Conference’s passage of the Traditional Plan.

BISHOP HARVEY: Could you cite the location of those page numbers again. It’s in The Book of Discipline, I’m guessing, you’re referring to.

GAINES-CIRELLI: Yes. Par. 56.1 and 2609.1. I move that the body vote to appeal the General Conference’s passage of the Traditional Plan to the Judicial Council.

BISHOP HARVEY: This is not, this isn’t proper before us, because you can’t make a motion if you signed in for a point of order.

GAINES-CIRELLI: I didn’t know what to use.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Which, which button, if you wanna refer, there’s no button that says “refer.” You have to use that other button; that no. 8 button.

GAINES-CIRELLI: Do I have to start over?

BISHOP HARVEY: I’m afraid so.

GAINES-CIRELLI: OK. Well, you’ll know what I’m dialing in for.

BISHOP HARVEY: I gotcha.

GAINES-CIRELLI: Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. A point of order, Dave Nuckols, mic.
3. So, Dave, the rule and what is the infraction of that rule?

DAVID BRANCH NUCKOLS (Minnesota): The rule related to misleading information, and I would like you to, Chair, to help me some. I had a stroke 47 days ago, and I am just now talking and walking. But I ask your, one of your associates on the podium, where did I find, who, is there such a rule, and she said that she thought so, but I would look for the number and I am having a hard time processing it. I think it might be helpful to the body to understand the misunderstanding that I am talking to, ’cause it helps explain the disruption that is rupturing our body. So, I feel it would be constructive for you to just give me a brief minute to explain.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Let’s see if we could help you locate that rule that you’re referring to. You’re, tell us what, what is the essence of the rule you think that is in violation?

NUCKOLS: That bad information had been given.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. OK. You know what I’m gonna suggest—

NUCKOLS: From your parliamentarian.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. One suggestion I might have is that you might find a buddy, looks like somebody standing next to you. Why don’t you locate it and then come back? OK. So, I’m gonna go on.

NUCKOLS: The thought is it’s rule 8. The buddy you had just sent to me, and your associate on the floor, I mean not on the stage, said that there was such a rule, but we couldn’t find it. Would you allow me just to share with you was for the benefit of the body?

BISHOP HARVEY: I would love to be able to do that, but in the interest of the time that we have in front of us, Dave, can I ask you to get with someone, come back to the microphone, give us the rule, and I will recognize you. OK?

NUCKOLS: I rise to challenge a misrepresentation is what your delegate you sent to me says. Rule 8.

BISHOP HARVEY: Eight. What do you believe is being misrepresented?

NUCKOLS: Thank you, Bishop. I’ll explain. So, we were directed to consult the commission’s parliamentarian for questions, and I wanted to make an amendment affecting the implementation timeline and where it would be, and so I did consult your parliamentarian, who I think is a very fine guy. He said there was a way to do it, making an amendment, and he explained the process, but then he said to me, you might not get called on, because there are 40 amendments before you and I don’t know what, whether we have time.

But I come to see that amendments were on the queue that never got called. I asked the parliamentarian so, when you say there are these amendments, does this calling of the question pertain to the end of the day, answer, “yes.” But that advice from the parliamentarian, it turns out was correct, or was not understood that or followed by the chair. So, this misunderstanding is one of the reasons why there is so much upset in the conduct for the vote. So, I just wanted to be made known that I was trying to properly follow the rules, consulted how to do the amendment, was assured that there would be a way, unless we ran out of time, ’cause the question never called. But that didn’t happen. And as a result, we failed to improve the Traditional Plan, which the commission never have a chance to improve. And I think that’s regrettable. Unfair.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. There was three speeches for, three speeches against, and at that point, we really have no choice but to take the vote. That’s where we were. So, I’m gonna go back to, we’re back, we’re back to the majority, or minority report.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK, so we now need to hear from Rev. Harris. Dr. Harris?

JOSEPH HARRIS (Chair, Legislative Committee): So, consistent with your actions yesterday as a legislative committee, I urge you to vote no on the minority report and yes to the petition.

Speeches For/Against Substituting Minority Report

BISHOP HARVEY: So now we are open for discussion here. I will begin by taking a speech against and remember that this isn’t a speech against content so much as against insertion or the substitution of the minority report. Whether or not, whether you want the minority report to substitute the original. So I am going to invite Tyler Amundson to mic. 1.

TYLER FLINT AMUNDSON (Mountain Sky): Bishop, to gathered delegates, my name is Tyler Amundson. I am from the Yellowstone Annual Conference. I rise in opposition to this minority report. It reads in Matthew 28:16-20, “now the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. Where they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. Jesus came near and spoke to them and I have said I have received all authority in earth an on heaven. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nation baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Friends this continues to divide us. This minority report continues to show how divided we are and I stand today to speak against that. I was baptized by a United Methodist who grew up in Alabama standing against racism. He chose to get
ordained in the church and with us looking at being divided, he would have never found connection in another place. He would have never found connection in Montana to baptize me, and we cannot continue to divide our church this way. To provide for division. To provide places for churches to leave this denomination and this minority report continues to find ways for churches to do that.

Friends, I stand heavily against this minority report because it creates a church where not all people are welcome. It creates a place where people will leave a denomination that once united people across the vast spaces to bring the baptism of Jesus Christ to amazing, amazing people who have stood against all sorts of discrimination. God, we, we can’t allow this to happen. It is so important for us right now to stand together and understand that we are called together in unity according to Scripture. So we must vote against this minority report.

BISHOP HARVEY: That was a speech against. I am now going to invite Bob Phillips to mic. 1 from Illinois-Great Rivers. Remember what we need to talk about is the value of replacing this minority report for the majority report. If you would not get into the speech for or against. OK. The actual report.

ROBERT JOSEPH PHILLIPS (Illinois-Great Rivers): Thank you, bishop. The theologian, Dolly Parton, has insight that is applicable to this when she said, “A bird and a fish can fall in love but where are they gonna live?” We have a reflection of that in what’s going on now among people all of whom are of good will and deep faith. This minority report seeks to provide a constructive way forward for those whose conscience, whether it leans toward the left or the right, will enable them with accountability to the larger church, to exercise that conscience, perhaps in another venue.

You can take a crocodile and a lion and tie them together by the tail and you will have unity, but you won’t have much fellowship. A system that insists on keeping the two tied together is going to have more trouble than it knows. If, however, the minority report is a way to reflect the first steps of a healthy kind of new vision for our collective church, that is all to the good. The dream of any healthy, living cell is to become two cells, and whether in the body of Christ, The United Methodist Church, that dream is acted out in the classic, biblical way of bringing new people into faith in Christ and discipling them. Well, that’s wonderful. But there are times also as, for example, in our history where a spiritual mitosis took place that created an organization, a church called The Salvation Army, and I don’t know of anybody who today would say, “Oh, that’s terrible, they left the Methodist Church of Britain.” They did, but God was in that move without judging the Methodist Church of Britain.

Now I am not advocating schism or dissolution, but rather, to say that, with the language of the minority report that corrects the legitimate objections of the Judicial Council to the original application, folks of whatever standing or position on the issue of sexuality will have a way with integrity to move forward, if it be that conscience says I am a bird, you’re a fish, I love you, but we just can’t live together.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. I’ve got one speech for, one speech against. I’m now going to invite Jim Allen to mic. 1. Speech for. Sir, the only way I can recognize you is in the queue. Are you in the pool? State your rule, and next time, you don’t need to shout. Just wave a flag or something, OK?

IAN CARLOS URRIOLA (Upper New York): I apologize Bishop, I’m a little passionate right now.

BISHOP HARVEY: So is everybody else. I gotcha. No worries.

URRIOLA: My point of order, I question whether or not the body of the General Conference.

BISHOP HARVEY: State your rule.

URRIOLA: Yes, yes. It is Pars. 17 of our Book of Discipline and Par. 104 of our Book of Discipline.

BISHOP HARVEY: Give us a minute to locate that.

URRIOLA: Sure.

BISHOP HARVEY: Say that one more time slowly.

URRIOLA: Par. 17 and Par. 104. (pause) May I speak, Bishop?

BISHOP HARVEY: Yes.

URRIOLA: Thank you. Pursuant to Par. 17 of our Book of Discipline, the General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion.

BISHOP HARVEY: Speak slowly.

URRIOLA: I’m sorry. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion. Par. 104 contains our Articles of Religion, and I would like to direct the body and the chair to Article 21 on the marriage of ministers, specifically this clause, “Therefore, it lawful for them as for all other Christians to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same, to serve best to godliness.” When we passed the Traditionalist Plan, we have violated, it is my belief that we violated that Articles of Religion by imposing standards on the marriage of our ministers and all Christians.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you.

URRIOLA: Therefore, I request that it be ruled out of order, or I don’t know if I need to refer it to the
Judicial Council? I’m happy to do that.

BISHOP HARVEY: That is really your best path.

URRIOLA: Referring to the Judicial Council?

BISHOP HARVEY: Yes.

URRIOLA: Will the Chair recognize me when I put my name in the pool?

BISHOP HARVEY: You will put it into the pool. I will do my best to get back to you.

URRIOLA: Thank you. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP HARVEY: All right. I called on Jim Allen.

JAMES (JIM) R. ALLEN (Tennessee): You had called Jim Allen.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. There you are. Thank you, for your patience.

ALLEN: Thank you Bishop. I’m a lifelong Methodist, a line of six or seven generations of lifelong Methodists, and we’ve been part of Methodist churches that were paid for over the generations and the centuries and they’re still available for use of a United Methodist. While I am totally opposed to anything that smacks of doing away with the trust clause or disaffiliation, if there’s any interest in this body of doing it, I believe this minority report is the least painful way to do it. And the reason I believe that, in addition to those previously stated, is that it includes these words, “Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure.” Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: —you. I’m going to go to—there’s quite a few folks in the no. 8 pool, and I don’t always know what you are wanting to come and speak to. So, I’m going to invite Tim Bruster to go to mic. no. 2.

Motion to Request Judicial Council Decision on Constitutionality of Amended Traditional Plan

TIMOTHY KEITH BRUSTER (Central Texas): Bishop, mic. 4. Tim Bruster, Central Texas Annual Conference. I move to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council on the constitutionality, meaning, application, and effect of the Traditional Plan as amended, pursuant to paragraph 2609.1 of The Book of Discipline.

BISHOP HARVEY: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Will you speak to it?

BRUSTER: Yes, bishop. Clearly, we have seen over and over and over again the unconstitutionality of the Traditional Plan. Instead of being drawn to the center, who is Jesus Christ, we’re trying to define our church by boundaries. And so, I think it’s really important we understand what action we have taken and what its application, meaning, and effect is, in addition to its constitutionality. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. So, this is debatable. So, if there is someone who’d like to speak against this, we’re going to—give us a second to clear the pool. And give it a second or two. OK, there we go. I have no one in the pool to speak against, so I’m going to go to a for, to speak for. And I’m going to go to Denmark, because I’ve never been to Denmark. I’m going to go to Denmark. Jorgen Thaarup, mic. no. 3, if you would.

JORGEN THAARUP (Denmark): Dear bishop, welcome to Denmark. My name is Jorgen Thaarup from the Denmark Annual Conference, and I want to speak in favor to appeal to Judicial Council for a ruling on all the paragraphs bunches together in the Traditional Plan. What we have done before when we asked the Judicial Council was for declaratory decisions before the decisions was made. But now, we have taken all the decisions around the plan, and first, now, the legislation is ready for a real ruling. I support that we appeal to the Judicial Council for a ruling on all the amended paragraphs. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you, sir. We do have a point of order. Dr. Benz, if you would go to mic. no. 3. Dorothee Benz.

DOROTHEE ELISABETH BENZ (New York): Thank you. The rule in question is Rule section—Rule 7, Section 3, that requires that after three speeches for and against and provided no secondary motions come before the floor, the question shall be put automatically. And there were, as you are aware, people in the queue trying to make an amendment, so that whole vote was out of order.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you, Dr. Benz. Actually, we’ve already addressed this, and unless there is an active piece—

BENZ: I would’ve—

BISHOP HARVEY: It’s already been appealed. Unless there’s an active piece of work on the floor, we can in fact go ahead and take the vote. And we did.

BENZ: I have one thing to say. This—

BISHOP HARVEY: That’s okay. Dr. Benz, thank you. Now I’m going to invite John Seth to mic. no. 4 for a speech against.

JOHN WILLIAM SETH (Western Pennsylvania): John Seth, Western Pennsylvania.

BISHOP HARVEY: You’re going to have to speak up just a tad. SETH: John Seth, Western Pennsylvania. Bishop, I have a list
here, and I’m trying to understand what we need to refer to the Judicial Council for, because at this point of time, I see that they’ve already given us good, clear directions and ruling. I believe that the minority report wants to clean one piece up to make it acceptable. I would just plead with the body to give us the opportunity to vote that up or down. But I’m speaking against the referral so that we might do the business. I’m asking those who are opposing the Traditional Plan or the gracious exit paths, to give consideration. If I’m wrong, the Judicial Council will come back and say so at the appropriate time. Please, we’ve had enough tactics of just stalling. We have a couple items of business. Let the General Conference speak. I would encourage us to vote two (2), no, against referral.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Thank you. So as promised Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, if you would go to mic. 3.

GINGER GAINES-CIRELLI (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. So again, I am rising for a referral pursuant to Par. 56.1 and 2609.1 in The Book of Discipline. I move that the body vote to appeal the General Conference’s passage of the Traditional Plan to the Judicial Council.

BISHOP HARVEY: I believe that’s the motion that’s the work on the floor right now that Tim Bruster made.

GAINES-CIRELLI: It’s different, Bishop.

BISHOP HARVEY: If you would, just wait.

GAINES-CIRELLI: Ok, I thought you had called me for the thing I was going to bring.

BISHOP HARVEY: I wasn’t even sure what you were going back to. So, you mind?

GAINES-CIRELLI: So I will just hang out.

BISHOP HARVEY: Just hang out. So we are back to the Tim Bruster referral to the Judicial Council. We have had two speeches for, and one against so, (conferring) I invite Sergey Kim to mic. 1. Let’s give the translators and interpreters a moment or two. Sergey, would you just slow down because we have to get our headsets on.

SERGEY KIM (Central Russia): (simultaneous interpretation in Russian) I just want to say, I just wanted to express my gratitude for leading this session. And I will just say I am against referral. I don’t want to linger and to waste our time. Thank you very much.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you very much. We have had two speeches for, and two speeches against the Bruster referral requesting a Declaratory Decision from the Judicial Council. In the meantime, we have had another point of order. Bob Zilhaver if you would go to mic. 4.

BOB ZILHAVER (Western Pennsylvania): Bishop, Bob Zilhaver, Western Pennsylvania. My question is about Rule 29, starting on p. 51. Have we voted on the minority report to make it the majority report? Are you allowed to amend or refer or take any action before that action takes place?

BISHOP HARVEY: We have not, and you are not in order to do anything to the minority report. All we are doing is decided if you want to replace the minority report.

ZILHAVER: OK, so the next question I have is according to our bylaws in 20610 which is a paragraph for the referral would be a motion that is separate ‘cause that line says ‘a petition.’ Is that to the subject matter of this motion? Cause, there will be two different motion on the floor, and we have to take care of one motion. If the motion to refer to the Judicial Council is a separate action, we would have to finish our work on the current motion before that motion would be in order.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. What we are going to do is go back to finish the minority report piece. We will hold on the referral to Judicial Council that Dr. Bruster has made. Is that fair?

ZILHAVER: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. So back to the minority report. We have had two speeches for, and one against. Got the pool back up. I need to refresh, I do need to refresh probably more than just my computer. Going to invite Charlie Moore to mic. 3 for a speech against the minority report. The substitution of the minority report. That is what we are talking about not a speech for.

CHARLIE MOORE (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. Charlie Moore, lay person from Baltimore-Washington Conference. I stand in opposition to approving the minority report. In so doing, I also ask the body’s permission to invite Moses Kumar, general secretary of GCFA, to come and speak to some about the possibilities of the financial impact if indeed the Taylor proposal is passed. Thank you.

(pause)

BISHOP FIERRO HARVEY: I’m going to assume that this information might be helpful to you as you then decide whether to substitute the minority report in place of the majority report, so I’m going to invite Bishop McKee to give us that information. Hopefully, this will help you do your work.

GCFA Chair Speaks to Financial Implications of Disaffiliation

BISHOP MICHAEL MCKEE: In response, one of the things that has been challenging, and it
continues to be challenging for the General Council on Finance and Administration, is to guess or speculate. Let’s say for example that 20% of the churches leave, so which 20% are those churches? The 20% of our largest churches, our smallest churches, or an average? We’ve calculated an average of churches. If 1% of the churches in the United Methodist Church leave, approximately $1.3 million will be lost in apportionments to the general church. If you count the general church, as well as take it together, the non-general church giving purposes to annual conference is $9 million. For 1% of the churches, the average of that 1%. In terms of annual conferences and to the general church, then we’re talking about $5.2 million for any 1% of the churches that leave. Again, we’re losing an average for the churches. What we have done instead, in order to help each annual conference, is to develop for each of those conferences in the United States, an analysis tool with relevant data on every local church within the annual conference. We want you to understand that this is a number for the general church and not an annual conference and this information gives you an idea of the financial impact of 1% of the churches who choose to exit or leave. Also, let’s remember that the challenge of that is when people talk about percentages. Are we talking about percentages of churches or percentages of people or what? So, we’re using the figure basically 1% of the churches, and that’s the average of all 30 thousand-plus churches together for that. OK? Is that helpful?

BISHOP HARVEY: Hopefully that helps the body make the decision.

ALLEN: That’s as helpful as I can be.

BISHOP HARVEY: We have two speeches for, two speeches against the replacement of the minority report into this majority report. I’m going to invite Karen Millar mic. 2 for a speech for.

KAREN L. MILLAR (Arkansas): Bishop, my speech was for the minority report, but I would just like to say, bless you.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. That is what we’re on. We’re on the minority report. I’m going to count that as three speeches for. Next would be a speech against. I’ll invite Ivan James to mic. 4 and then we’re prepared to take a vote.

IVAN CECIL JAMES (Missouri): Ivan James from the Missouri Conference. I put my name in to move that we close the discussion, but you had called on someone else for, so I must be a mistake.

BISHOP HARVEY: OK. Thank you. So, speeches against the minority report, I’ll invite Bradley Laurvick from Rocky Mountain to mic. 1.

BRADLEY DAVID LAURVICK (Rocky Mountain): Brad Laurvick, clergy delegate, Rocky Mountain Conference, Mountain Sky Area. We don’t need to do the minority report, because minority reports are usually about taking something that’s different, and this isn’t different, and this isn’t different. It’s just a version that didn’t get as much support, so why are we going to go against the will of the body. We had one we liked better. Let’s work on the one we liked better. We don’t need to do anything with the minority report today. I’d love to speak to the content, too, but we are working hard.

Disaffiliation Minority Report Substituted for Majority

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRRO HARVEY: —appreciate that very much. So, we’ve now had three speeches for, three speeches against. We’re now prepared to vote, if you’ll get your little voting devices out. If you wish to substitute the minority report for the majority report, you’ll press one (1). If you do not wish to substitute the minority report for the majority report, you will press two (2). You may vote now.

(Bishop Harvey pauses a moment)

BISHOP HARVEY: Voting is now closed. So you see here—wow. You have substituted the minority report for the majority report.

Yes, 402; No, 400.

BISHOP HARVEY: Beth Ann, don’t leave. So, now we’re going to deal with the content of the minority report. So, we get three speeches for and three speeches against the minority report. I’m going to remind you of our time. It is 6:06. We’ve got to deal with this, and we’ve got a pending request to the Judicial Council that we need to finish before we leave. Not before we leave, before we go to worship. So, I’m going to refresh. I’m going to invite Katie Dawson to mic. no. 4 for a speech for the minority report.

Speeches For/Against Substituted Report

KATIE Z. DAWSON (Iowa): Katie Dawson, clergy, Iowa. I noticed that we have two disaffiliation petitions before us, and one of the things that was said is that these two are in conflict with each other, and if we’re going to pass one, we have to choose. I think that this petition takes seriously the obligations we have to each other—the commitment to shared ministry through apportionments, the investment of previous generations of faithful people.

Yes, it will be expensive to leave, but isn’t that the point? Isn’t it true that we value the body of Christ, and we don’t want any hand or foot or eye to easily be able to separate and say they have no need of us? I think, however, the other petition, the Boyette petition, which we will con-
sider, makes it easier for churches to leave. But it does something else. It harms the church that remains. I want to draw your attention to p. 201 in the ADCA. 201. Two-thirds of the way down in the petition, it says that exiting churches will have to pay their share of unfunded pension liabilities. That’s great. All the exit plans say that.

But this petition also says that before the figure is calculated, we subtract the reserves of annual conferences and our general agencies. I serve on global ministries, and I can tell you that we are currently under-reserved. We do have reserve funds, but the amount of reserve funds that we have are not sufficient to sustain us in a time of crisis. The other petition robs the church of its savings in order to make it easy for some to leave this body of Christ. The choice between these plans is clear. And so, if you want to support a disaffiliation petition, I urge you to support this one.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you, Katie. We have a point of order. I’m going to invite Dr. Tom Choi to mic. no. 1. If you will state the rule and the infraction.

THOMAS S. CHOI (California-Pacific): Yes, bishop. Thank you. Tom Choi, Cal-Pac Conference, clergy. I’m referring to Rule 29, No. 2 on p. 52. My question is if the makers and writers of the minority report voted for or against the original petition.

BISHOP HARVEY: I believe they sign it, and that is the affirmation, as the ten persons noted here.

CHOI: All right. Thank you.

BISHOP HARVEY: That—so now, we’re back to the minority report. We’ve had one speech for. I’m going to invite Alice Williams to mic. no. 1 for a speech against.

ALICE MARIE WILLIAMS (Florida): Thank you, Bishop. Alice Williams, Florida. I am looking at this. I am going to encourage that we vote against it. And the reason for that is a couple of things. One, we don’t have a full copy of exactly what this looks like. I will tell you that we did look at some of this and it has been reviewed. This is important. This is something that we really feel we need to have a very good understanding of, and it’s too important for us to just try to assimilate based on what has been said. And what I mean by that is that it appears that the recommendation is to remove No. 5, and No. 5 actually provides the standards, or the way that we would implement and look at this. And so, we don’t even have that now. So it’s, it may be a good idea in theory, but it is far too important for us to try to approve until we can take a look at the full piece to this. If someone wants to come forward and perhaps give that detail, it would be helpful, but I’m going to recommend to the body that we do not approve this amendment.

(chanting in background)

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: Thank you. I’ll now invite Eddie Bromley, mic. no. 1, for a speech for.

EDWARD ROYAL BROMLEY (Memphis): My name is Eddie Bromley. I’m a clergy delegate from the Memphis Conference. And I am about to risk losing every friend I have in this room. I’m a strange guy. I’m a traditionalist who did not vote for the Traditional Plan. I voted for the Connectional Plan because I didn’t come here to fight for a position. I came here to fight for a family. And though I am a traditionalist, a part of my own spirituality is recognizing that there are other people who love Jesus just as much as I do, who take the Bible seriously, and come to different conclusions than I. I am also ashamed of some of my fellow traditionalists who stand up and smugly act as if inviting others to leave is a gracious act.

(applause)

And so while I recommend this plan, I wanna say that there is a big difference between walking away—walking away because of conscience sake and kicking others out because of what you think and feel.

(applause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Now, I’m going to invite Linda King to mic. no. 3 for a speech against, and while I don’t wanna take your time away from you, you don’t have to take all three minutes if you don’t need it.

LINDA U. KING (Kentucky): Linda King, Kentucky Conference, and I won’t take three minutes, Bishop. Thank you. As a United Methodist, the Trust Clause that John Wesley helped create was created, I feel, to make it harder to leave, so that we would stay together and solve our problems instead of, like when I was a little girl, if I didn’t get my way, my mother wouldn’t let me run to my bedroom. We had to stay and figure out the problem. And so, I’m happy with the Trust Clause that we have now, and I’m against changing this in any way.

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you. Thank you. Now I’m going to invite—we’ve got two speeches for, two against, and if I could invite Emily, I’m gonna, I just call somebody from that area. I call David Livingston, mic. no. 1.

DAVID SCOTT LIVINGSTON (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. David Livingston, clergy from—

BISHOP HARVEY: Excuse me for just one second.

LIVINGSTON: Certainly.

BISHOP HARVEY: Excuse me. We’re gonna have to—if you would put the cross on the stage.

(pause)
You do not have access to the stage.

(pause)

I’ll keep going. OK. David Livingston, are you at the mic. no. 1?

LIVINGSTON: I am. Thank you, Bishop. David Livingston, clergy from the Great Plains, and out of respect for our time, I will not take the full three minutes. I’ll be brief. This is not a speech I ever would’ve thought that I would give, ’cause I hate exit. But I also know who proposed it. Traditionalists made the original exit plan. Traditionalists made the minority report that we’re voting on now. Traditionalists passed their plan. This is their exit. This is not my exit. This is not an exit for Centrists. This is not an exit for Progressives. This is an exit for Traditionalists. And Traditionalists, if you wanna take the exit, you can take the exit, and I’m gonna give it to you, but we will not leave this church of Jesus Christ.

(applause)

We will not be moved. You can’t do it to us. You won’t do it to us. And we will not leave this church.

(applause)

BISHOP HARVEY: Thank you, David. We have an Order of the Day for worship. So, we have a few things pending, but we do have an Order of the Day. We’re going to deal with one last item. I’m gonna go ahead. I’m gonna make this decision. We’ve had three speeches for, two against. What I would like to do, I’m gonna go ahead and take the ma—the vote on the minority report. So, if you would get your devices ready. So.

(pause)

Vote to accept the minority report, press one (1). If you do not, press two (2). Vote now, please.

(pause)

Substituted Minority Report Approved

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO HARVEY: The voting is now closed. You now have a minority report. It is the main motion. We’ve adopted the minority report. [Yes, 420; No, 390]

Return to Request for Judicial Council Decision

So now we’ve got kind of a couple dangling pieces that we’ve got take care of. We need to go back to Dr. Bruster’s Judicial Council referral. So far we’d had had four speeches for and two against. And because we have an order of the day, I’m going to just call for a vote at this point. If you will pick up your devices. This requires twenty percent requests this declaratory decision. So if you would vote now.

(pause)

Amended Traditional Plan Sent to Judicial Council

The voting is closed. So it will go to the Judicial Council. [Yes, 405; No, 395]

OK, so, I’m going to turn to the secretary of the General Conference to deal with this other piece of legislation that we have to deal with before we go to worship.

GARY GRAVES: As we are at an order of the day, and we do have one more piece of legislation that is before us, in order to be in compliance with Par. 507, points 10 and 11, we need to have one omnibus motion for all that is before us. The only item that is before us is Petition 90059, and the motion the chair would entertain is a motion to not support, and we would be moving forward into our order of the day.

(pause)

Omnibus Motion Approved

BISHOP HARVEY: Voting is now closed. Passes. [Yes, 482; No, 314]

Friends, thank you. Thank you for your patience. It’s tough to be the closer. But I thank you for your patience and know that I don’t take anything that you said about me, to me, personally. So I give thanks for you. I give thanks for the fact that you have remained faithful to that which you have been called to do and be about as we gather as a General Conference. So I give thanks
for you. I pray for travel mercies for
you. I will continue to pray for you,
and I covet your prayers as we all
go back to our respective mission
fields to serve the least and the lost
and those who need to hear the good
news of Jesus. Donna Pritchard, I
believe you had one final word. I
pray that you do that, and then I will
give it back to the general secretary,
or the secretary. We just keep giving
you all kinds of new titles.

Western Jurisdiction Responds
to General Conference

DONNA PRITCHARD (Oregon-Idaho): Thank you, bishop. I’m
Donna Pritchard, clergy from the
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference,
chair of the Western Jurisdiction
Leadership Team, which includes
our College of Bishops and the
Director of Connectional Ministries
from each annual conference in the
Western Jurisdiction. I bring a word
from all of the Western Jurisdiction
leadership, and I would invite them
to stand if they would like. We have
long appreciated the richness of
the global diversity of our United
Methodist Church and have em-
braced opportunities to join with
all of you in making disciples for
the transformation of the world. We
also understand the purpose of the
church to be mission and ministry.
Consequently, we in the west have
been functioning for years as one
church, committed to full inclusion,
seeking to be a home for all God’s
people. Rooted in the Wesleyan
traditional, grounded in Scripture,
and committed to mission and
ministry, the Western Jurisdiction
intends to continue be one church,
fully inclusive and open to all God’s
children across the theological and
social spectrum. (applause) We
know from our experience that we
are stronger when we live together
as progressives, traditionalists, and
centrists in our Church. Many times
during this conference we have sung
or prayed or blessed each other
with the reminder that we need each
other, and the world desperately
needs grace United Methodists have
always preached. We know there are
others who feel the same way today.
So we invite you to be in dialog with
us as we move forward to discern
what new thing God may be wanting
to birth. Go to our website, western-
jurisdictionumc.org, to register your
interest in this conversation and let
us move forward in joy.

BISHOP CYNTHIA FIERRO
HARVEY: Thank you, Donna. Go
ahead, Gary.

GARY GRAVES: Thank you,
bishop. We have two reminders for
you. One as you are leaving your
tables following worship, please be
sure to remove your cards from the
voting—or leave your cards and the
voting devices on the table. Please be
sure to remember to exchange your
listening devices for the interpreta-
tions, and do not forget to do those.
The final piece that I would like to
share is my thanks, as well, for the
work of many, many, many volun-
teers, for our staff, for the coopera-
tion of the body as we have worked
through this special session of the
General Conference. Thank you for
your graciousness, for your forgive-
ness, and for the work that we will
do as we go forth from this place.
Thank you, bishop.

BISHOP HARVEY: We will
give you about—give us about a ten,
fifteen-minute transition to worship.

GRAVES: Let’s go. If we can
go—

(music)

BISHOP KENNETH H. CAR-
ter: People of our church, in the
midst of brokenness, God is with us.
We wish you the blessings of God
as you return to your communities,
to your churches, to make disciples
for the transformation of the world.
Again, we wish you the peace of the
Lord, even in the midst of all that we
have experienced. And, the blessing
of Almighty God, the Father, the
Son, and the Holy Spirit will be with
us. Amen.

(music)