

**GENERAL CONFERENCE 2004
PITTSBURGH, PA**

*A resource for
communicators and
first-elected delegates at the
Pre-General Conference
News Briefing*

January 29-31, 2004
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Sponsored by
United Methodist
Communications

GENERAL CONFERENCE GUIDE 2004

(Note: This guide will be updated regularly at <http://umns.umc.org> leading up to General Conference, April 27-May 7. Last updated Jan.20.)

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AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

This will be a first General Conference for at least 40 annual conference staff communicators, and many of the delegation heads are serving in that role for the first time. Even seasoned veterans can find the rules and procedures of the 10-day international gathering confusing and difficult. We hope this guide will help you find your way through the assembly more easily.

DESTINATION: PITTSBURGH

■ The United Methodist Church's top legislative body, the General Conference, will gather April 27-May 7 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh. Nearly 1,000 delegates from around the world will set policy and direction for the church.

■ Sites for the international gatherings, held every four years, are rotated among the church's five regional U.S. jurisdictions. The 2000 conference was held in Cleveland, in the church's North Central Jurisdiction. Pittsburgh is in the church's Northeastern Jurisdiction.

■ The General Conference is the only body that speaks officially for the church. The actions of each conference, such as new laws and policies, are included in a revised *Book of Discipline*. The conference also produces statements on social issues that are included in a revised *Book of Resolutions*.

■ **The theme for the 2004 conference** combines the biblical imagery of baptism and Pentecost with the three rivers that converge in Pittsburgh. "Water Washed and Spirit Born" is taken from the words of the hymn, "Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters" by Ruth Duck, in the *United Methodist Hymnal*:

*We your people stand before you,
Water washed and Spirit born.
By your grace, our lives we offer.
Re-create us; God, transform!*



LOOKING BACK

Pittsburgh last hosted a General Conference in 1964, when the former Methodist Church met there. People who attended it undoubtedly recall the unusual venue, a new, downtown dome-shaped arena with a retractable roof. To show off this architectural marvel, known then as the Pittsburgh Civic Arena, city officials planned a time during a night session when the pie-shaped portions of the arena opened slowly to give delegates a view of the stars. Instead of stars, the delegates were overwhelmed with a sudden burst of cool air that swooped down into the arena, picking up papers from the desks and transforming the whole auditorium into what looked like a shaken, water-filled snow globe. Technicians had to work late into the night to get the temperamental roof to close. Today the building is known as the Mellon Arena and is home of the Pittsburgh Penguins, a National Hockey League franchise.

Here's a quick reference list of phone numbers and Web sites for church and secular journalists and delegates.

Secular reporters and church communicators:

Contact the Public Information Office at United Methodist Communications, (615) 742-5411 or sdrachler@umcom.org.

Questions about the General Conference

Newsroom: Contact United Methodist News Service, (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

General questions about the United Methodist Church or General Conference:

Contact InfoServ, (800) 251-8140 or infoserv@umcom.org. Web site <http://infoserv.umc.org/>

General Conference Web site: www.gc2004.org

United Methodist Church Web site: www.umc.org

United Methodist News Service's General Conference coverage: <http://umns.umc.org/gc2004news/>

GENERAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Registration

Monday, April 26 2-8 p.m.
Main Lobby of the David Lawrence Convention Center

Tuesday, April 27 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Main Lobby of the David Lawrence Convention Center

Wednesday, April 28 8 a.m.-12 noon
Main Lobby of the David Lawrence Convention Center.

Registration afterward will be in the Business Manager's Office.

The Committee on Agenda will plan in detail the schedule for each day of the conference. The first week is assumed to be for legislative committee work through Saturday. The second week is for plenary sessions.

Monday, April 26
9 a.m. (all day)— Committee on Reference
10:30 a.m. (all day)— Commission on Central Conference Affairs
1-2 p.m.— Orientation for heads of delegations
1-5 p.m.— Training of recorders
3-5 p.m.— Organization of Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
Organization of Committee on Presiding Officers
Organization of Committee on Credentials
Organization of Committee on the Journal
Organization of Committee on Agenda and Calendar
7-9 p.m.— Opening Reception for Bishops (Heinz History Center)

Tuesday, April 27
8:30 a.m.-10 a.m.— General orientation for all delegates
10:30 a.m.— Opening worship and Holy Communion
2 p.m.— Episcopal Address
3 p.m.— Organization of the Conference
Report from Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order
Report from Commission on the General Conference
Recognition of delegates, from affiliated autonomous and concordat denominations
4:45 p.m.— Organization of legislative committees
Election of officers

5:30-7:30 p.m.— Dinner and training for legislative committee chairs and vice chairs

Dinner and training for legislative committee secretaries, assistant secretaries and recorders

7:30-10 p.m.— Legislative committees

Wednesday, April 28

8 a.m.— Choral music

8:15 a.m.— Worship service

9 a.m.— Conference business or committee meetings

9:15 a.m.— Report from General Council on Ministries (April 28 only)

11:15 a.m.— Laity Address (April 28 only)

12 p.m.— Financial State of the Church Report from General Council on Finance and Administration (April 28 only)

12:30 p.m.— Lunch recess

2:30 p.m.— Conference business or committee meetings

5 p.m.— Dinner recess

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

(The Wednesday schedule above will generally apply to the succeeding days of the conference, with the exception of Sunday.)

Thursday, April 29

9 a.m.— Nomination of University Senate and Judicial Council

Friday, April 30

9 a.m.— Service of Appreciation for African Americans who stayed in the church during the segregationist era.

Sunday, May 2

7:30 p.m.— Area Night Program, Heinz Hall

Monday, May 3

9 a.m.— Africa University report

Election of University Senate and Judicial Council completed

Tuesday, May 4

8:15 a.m.— Ecumenical worship service

9 a.m.— Recognition of ecumenical representatives

Friday, May 7

10 p.m.— Adjournment

PLANNING FOR YOU

For four years, a 16-member Commission on the General Conference, headed by the Rev. James Perry of Minnesota, has been hard at work planning the 2004 conference.

For the first time, an orientation is scheduled for all delegates before the conference. It will be from 8:30 to 10 a.m., April 27, before the opening worship service.

A local committee from the host Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference has also been working to make your stay in Pittsburgh enjoyable. Chairperson of the local committee is the Rev. Brian Bauknight, pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Bethel Park, Pa. Host bishop is Hae-Jong Kim. Host conference communications director is Mark Rehn.

LODGING

Delegates are receiving housing information directly from the Commission on the General Conference. Reporters interested in reserving a hotel room should send an e-mail to Russell Elenz at relenz@gcfa.org and request a General Conference housing form. Include your street and e-mail addresses in the message. Hotel rooms are on a first-come, first-serve basis.

EXPENSE

The cost of the 2004 General Conference is expected to

exceed \$5 million. Of that, about \$2 million will be spent for delegate expense (travel, meals and lodging). The *Daily Christian Advocate*, which provides updates on legislation and other General Conference business, will cost about \$250,000. Translating and printing the *Advance DCA* in Portuguese and French is expected to cost an additional \$350,000. The *Advance DCA*, a compilation of all General Conference legislation, goes to delegates and others in advance of the assembly. Voice translation during the conference will cost about \$310,000.

For reporters, communicators and others who cannot attend the entire conference, United Methodist News Service recommends coming for the second week when most, if not all, proposed legislation from legislative committees will be presented to the entire assembly for consideration.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Delegates can check the General Conference schedule for registration times. A pre-conference reception for bishops is planned for the nearby Museum of History on Monday evening, April 26.

Regardless of the date of arrival, reporters and communicators may go to the General Conference Newsroom for credentials and an identification badge. All individuals with credentials will have full access to

the newsroom and reserved seating in the auditorium.

NEWSROOM

The newsroom is reserved for working press only. To be accredited, individuals must show proof that they represent a legitimate publication or news organization and will be filing stories during the conference.

The newsroom will be wireless, and wireless cards will be available for those who need them. The newsroom also will provide printers, electrical outlets, limited technical assistance, updates, news conferences with key individuals, reports on every major activity and action, as well as TV segments and photographs.

The newsroom, staffed by United Methodist News Service, will be open from early morning until late night. The hub of the newsroom will be a news and assignment desk, staffed at all times with people who can assist you with background information and other needs. If you have questions before the conference, contact Tim Tanton at ttanton@umcom.org, or call (615) 742-5470.

RESOURCES

Reporters are expected to bring their own computers. The newsroom will be equipped with printers.

An essential resource for communicators as well as delegates is the *Daily Christian*

Advocate, edited by United Methodist Publishing House staff member Marvin Cropsey. The *Daily Christian Advocate*, actually a series of publications, is somewhat comparable to the *U.S. Congressional Record*. It includes an advance edition, daily editions during the confer-

ence and a round-up edition. Any or all of these can be ordered by calling the United Methodist Publishing House at (800) 672-1789. An order form will also appear in *Circuit Rider* magazine. *Daily Christian Advocate* prices:

Advance Edition (Vol. 1, Sec. 1 and 2): All board and agency reports, plus all legislative proposals organized by committee. (U16-518146; \$40; mailing Feb. 28)
Handbook for Delegates (Vol. 2): Names, addresses and com-

KEY PEOPLE

Delegates

The primary focus of the conference will be on the elected delegates who have the authority to set new directions and speak officially for the denomination. Just as the U.S. Congress redistricts every 10 years in the wake of the national census, the number of lay and clergy delegates to the General Conference changes to keep total representation to 1,000 or less.

The biggest shift for the 2004 conference is an increased representation of those bodies outside the United States — in Africa, Asia and Europe — known as “central conferences.” The total number of delegates these conferences have elected for 2004 is 188, an increase of 36 since the 2000 gathering. As is true of all conference delegations, half are clergy, half laity.

For the 2004 session, a total of 998 delegates have been elected — two more than for the 2000 session. That includes 10 voting delegates from the “concordat” churches: four from Great Britain and two each from Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Caribbean & the Americas. The United Methodist Church has special covenant relationships with the Methodist traditions in those countries.

Bishops

Retired and active bishops attend the conference but do not vote and may not speak in plenary sessions without permission from the assembly. Individual bishops preside over business ses-

sions, normally serving for one morning, afternoon or evening period. Delegates at the 2004 conference may also permit bishops to chair legislative committees.

Conference officials

Secretary of the General Conference is Carolyn Marshall of Veedersburg, Ind. Treasurer is Sandra Kelley Lackore, general secretary of the General Council on Finance and Administration. Business manager of the conference is GCFA staff member Gary Bowen.

Judicial Council

If questions related to constitutionality emerge during the conference, the nine-member Judicial Council will meet and make a decision. Chairperson of the council is the Rev. John G. Corry of Nashville, Tenn. Members of the denomination’s “supreme court” for 2005-08 will be elected by the delegates in Pittsburgh.

Musicians

Music director will be the Rev. Barbara Day Miller, assistant dean of worship at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. Day Miller will oversee liturgy and music throughout the assembly, including inviting choirs and worship groups from across the church to participate.

mittee assignments for all delegates, plus information about the conference and proposed rules of order.

(U16-518493; \$8; mailing Feb. 28)

General Council on Finance and Administration Report (Vol. 1, Sec. 3): Report of the council. (U16-518227; \$10; mailing late March)

Daily Christian Advocate and Round-up: Every issue of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, plus the round-up edition. (\$50)

For those attending the conference, the *Daily Christian Advocate* will be available at a special booth in the convention center.

The Web site for General Conference, <http://www.umc.org/gc2004>, provides links to general agency petitions, proposals and reports; and a list of delegates, along with the legislative committees and paragraphs of the *Book of Discipline* with which they will be dealing. This same information will appear in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate*.

A continually updated version of this guide will be available at <http://umns.umc.org> leading up to the conference. A limited number of hard copies will be available at the conference. If you don't find what you need in this resource, contact newsdesk@umcom.org.

Highlights

■ The Commission on the General Conference has invited President George Bush or Laura Bush, both United Methodists, and Boris Trajkovski, the United Methodist president of Macedonia, to address the delegates.

■ A reception for bishops will be held Monday, April 26, before the opening day of the conference at the nearby Museum of History.

■ The conference will open with a Service of Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 27.

■ The traditional Episcopal Address, prepared by the Council of Bishops, will be given at 2 p.m. during the opening afternoon session of the conference April 27. Bishop Kenneth Carder of the church's Mississippi Area will deliver the address.

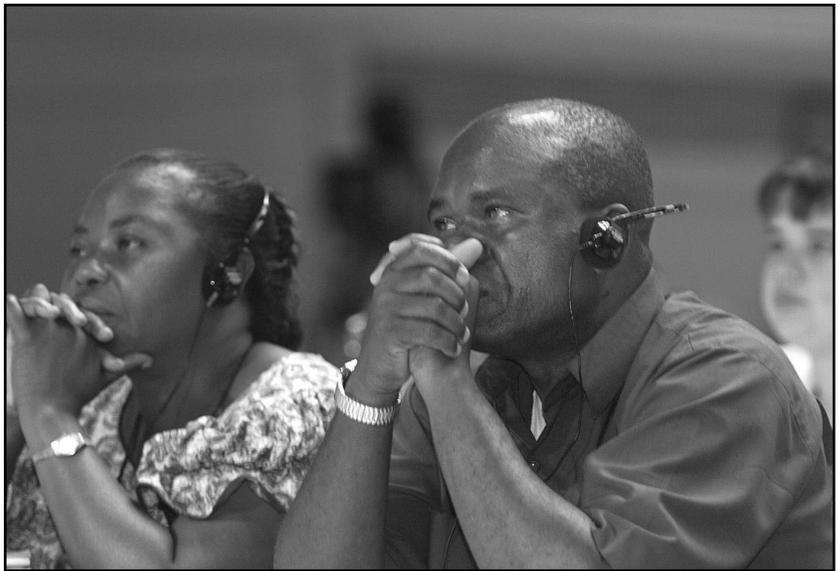
■ The Laity Address will be given by Gloria Holt of Trussville, Ala., at 11:15 a.m. Wednesday, April 28. Three women and three men, chosen to represent the denomination's diversity, delivered the first Laity Address at the 1980 General Conference. Since then, a competition has been held every four years for a layperson to make the speech.

■ A service of appreciation will be held at 9 a.m. Friday, April 30, for African Americans who remained with the denomination during the segregation era. The service will be conducted by the denomination's Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and Black Methodists for Church Renewal. The 2000 General Conference held an Act of Repentance for Reconciliation, giving special attention to African Americans who left the church because of racial indignities and formed their own Methodist denominations during the 1700s and 1800s. After the service, many United Methodists urged that a similar act be held for black members who stayed in the predominantly white denomination.

■ The local host committee is planning a special event for delegates at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 2, at Heinz Hall. Jazz singer Etta Cox and the River City Brass Band will perform.

CROSSING THE LANGUAGE BARRIERS

The United Methodist Church is a diverse denomination with congregations speaking a variety of languages. As in the past, simultaneous voice translation for delegates will be available in five languages other than English: French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Swahili. For the first time, the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* will be printed in Portuguese and French as well as in English.



THINGS TO REMEMBER

News reporters will be covering the conference in person or by telephone. Church communicators and delegates should help them (and all United Methodists) understand that recommendations by a legislative committee emerging the first week of the conference are just that—recommendations. No action is final until the entire General Conference approves it. Most final actions are taken during the second week of the conference. Only the General Conference speaks officially for the denomination.

For background information on major issues facing the church in recent years, go to <http://umns.umc.org> and click on “Backgrounders.”

While secular reporters will be on hand, it is not their responsibility or intent to prepare an exhaustive report of the conference. They will be attending only portions of the conference and will be watching for the more emotional and compelling issues. As a result, it is critically important that United Methodist members know where to turn for in-depth reports from the conference. Refer them to the <http://www.umc.org> and <http://umns.umc.org> Web sites.

Annual conference communicators play important roles as they make contacts, provide background and suggest interview possibilities. Delegation heads are often asked to talk to the media in their home areas in order to localize a national story.

This guide will be updated in the months before General Conference. You may wish to print out copies for their local religion reporters. A limited number of hard copies will be available for secular press at the conference site. Specific information about the newsroom, such as telephone numbers, will be added when available.

A WORD ABOUT SCHEDULES

Because of the fluid nature of General Conference, it is impossible to tell an inquiring reporter exactly when delegates will discuss a particular issue. For United Methodist communicators, this uncertainty sometimes creates a media relations challenge.

Some reporters expect an organization to know well in advance the precise day and time a particular issue will be discussed. That is not possible with the General Conference. Even when an item is scheduled, it can be delayed if other issues have taken more time than expected. Items can also be added at the last minute if more time is available than expected. Reporters and others who are not acquainted with the procedures of the General Conference often find this frustrating.

Late each night, a committee meets to plan the agenda for the next day. This proposed agenda appears in the early-morning *Daily Christian Advocate*. Even then, there is no guarantee that the schedule will be followed. Occasionally, the delegates schedule an order of the day to discuss a particular subject in plenary sessions. At the previous General Conference, this was done with all petitions related to the issue of homosexuality.



TRACKING LEGISLATION

Following legislation through the General Conference maze will be one of your greatest challenges.

Issues come before the delegates most often in the form of petitions sent by individuals, groups, annual (regional) conferences and governing boards of general agencies. You will find these in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate*.

You will be able to track the progress of petitions online through the General Conference Web site, www.gc2004.org. For 2004, the process will be much easier than in years past, with an expanded search capability and more frequent updates on the status of petitions.

All petitions from individuals, local churches, annual conferences and general agencies are given numbers and assigned to one of 11 legislative committees. Each delegate serves on a committee. A committee can modify or create a petition for consideration by the entire delegation in plenary sessions the second week.

Each valid petition receives a number and title. Each legislative committee deals with petitions related to series of paragraphs from the *Book of Discipline*. Petitions related to the *Book of Resolutions* are sorted by subject. A legislative committee can recommend to the full delegation concurrence or nonconcurrence with the language as submitted, or the committee may

change the language and then recommend concurrence. Legislative committees can also submit majority and minority recommendations.

Delegates can change anything in the *Book of Discipline* except the church's Constitution. Any recommended changes in the Constitution must be ratified by the annual conferences.

The 2004 assembly will have 11 legislative committees — one more than in 2000: church and society; conferences; discipleship; faith and order; financial administration; general administration; global ministries; higher education and ministry; independent commissions; judicial administration; and local church.

A week after the Nov. 29 deadline, Petitions Secretary Gary Graves of Beaver Dam, Ky., gave a rough estimate of the number and subjects of petitions. In his first estimate, Graves reported petitions relating to about 180 new or existing paragraphs or sub-paragraphs in the denomination's *Book of Discipline*. He anticipated the number would increase as the sorting process continued. About 70 new resolutions are proposed, and approximately 15 existing resolutions have amendments, he said. This information will be updated when available.

Graves received more than 500 e-mail submissions and more than 200 fax submissions. A definite total of petitions was not possible in his early count because many people submitted their petitions by fax, e-mail and regular mail. "With so many duplicates, we are trying to match up the copies so that we do not highly overestimate the number of petitions," he said.

For future conferences, the Commission on the General Conference is proposing to limit petitions by allowing only annual conferences and official churchwide agencies to submit them. Currently, any individual or group in the church can submit petitions. The proposal is made, according to the commission, to save time and money and to ensure that each petition is considered by a larger group of people before the conference deals with it.

ISSUES

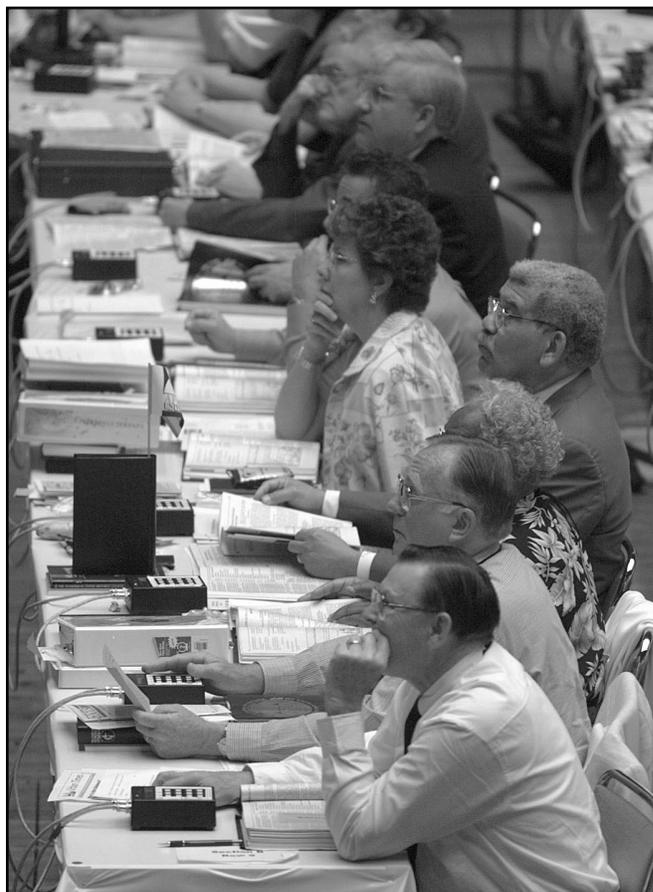
Detailed background on some of the major issues such as homosexuality may be found among the “Backgrounders” at <http://umns.umc.org>. Full texts of the recommendations and petitions will be provided in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* and at general agency Web sites through <http://www.umc.org>. The following section primarily provides information on general agency petitions; other petitions on the same topics will be available when the *Advance DCA* is distributed in February.

A list of annual conference petitions, compiled by the General Council on Ministries, shows a wide variety of topics. The Rev. Gary Graves, petitions secretary, identified several major issues following a preliminary survey of petitions right after the fall deadline. Those issues include support for and accountability of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries; the Council on Ministries’ “Living Into the Future” proposal for creating a Connectional Table; support for Africa University and ethnic minority initiatives; the pension program for clergy and church employees; and the church’s public position on current national and world issues, abortion, homosexuality, and marriage. When the secretary has had more time to refine these statistics, this section of the guide will be updated.

Major issues facing the delegates will include:

————— War —————

Since the conference meets in the same year as a U.S. presidential election, delegates are certain to debate war in general and the war in Iraq in particular. What form the discussion will take is unclear. The media will be particularly interested since President George Bush is a member of the United Methodist Church. (President Bush and Laura Bush, both United Methodists, have been invited to address the delegates. No acting U.S. president has addressed a United Methodist General Conference. In 1996, then-first lady



Hillary Clinton, a United Methodist, addressed the General Conference in Denver.)

The Board of Church and Society is asking the delegates to adopt a statement on terrorism that concludes: “In an ‘age of terror’ the church needs – more than ever – to respond prophetically and pastorally to this critical issue of our time.” The statement supports broad-ranging international cooperation to combat terrorist groups and adds, “...unilateral actions of nations including the ‘doctrine of pre-emption’ and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, are disproportionate, deeply disturbing and counter-productive, as they undermine the international cooperation that is key to preventing further terrorist attacks.” Full text of this and other resolutions can be found in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* or on the board’s Web site, http://www.umc-gbcs.org/about/general_conf.php.

Revised resolutions on “Ratification of U.N. Treaties” and “Humanitarian Intervention” also address issues related to war. See the full texts at the above Web site.

The board is proposing a change in the Social Principles section on military service (164G) that

would say “many,” not “most,” Christians believe that when peaceful alternatives have failed, the force of arms may “regretfully” be preferable to unchecked aggression, tyranny and genocide.

———— Sexuality ————

Homosexuality has been a highly controversial issue for every General Conference since 1972 and will likely prompt major debate in 2004. Two widely publicized events have highlighted this issue in recent months: the election of an openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church and a United Methodist Judicial Council decision regarding an openly gay clergywoman in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference.

The Episcopal Church is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion from which Methodism emerged in the 18th century.

The Judicial Council sent a sharp reminder about the authority of denominational law in its October ruling regarding a lesbian pastor in Washington state. The council affirmed the church’s *Book of Discipline*, which forbids the ordination and appointment of “self-avowed practicing homosexuals.” The court sent the case back to two lower-ranking judicial bodies, one of which decided Jan. 12 that the clergywoman, the Rev. Karen Dammann, should undergo a church trial for disclosing that she is living in a “covenanted homosexual relationship.” Arrangements are under way for a trial. Guilty verdicts in such trials carry a range of penalties, including possible loss of clergy credentials.

Governing members of the Board of Church and Society are proposing to change the anti-homosexuality language in the church’s Social Principles to a more moderate stance, recognizing the differences that exist in the denomination. The recommendation calls for eliminating the clause, “Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice to be incompatible with Christian teaching...” In its place, the board recommends adding: “Although faithful Christians disagree on the compatibility of homosexual practice with

Christian teaching...” The rest of the original sentence would remain: “...we affirm that God’s grace is available to all.”

The board is also asking delegates to amend a statement in the *Book of Resolutions* on the “Rights of All Persons,” which asks United Methodists to push for initiatives that would prohibit job and housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and “gender identity.” By adopting the resolution, the delegates would be directing the board to “develop education tools designed to provide for open and healthy dialogue and the understanding of sexuality in the world with the specific goal of protecting the human and civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons.”

———— Bioethics ————

Delegates will receive a report and recommendations from a Bioethics Task Force that addresses in vitro fertilization and other pregnancy technologies. This report generated major debate among governing members of the Board of Church and Society. The report contrasts the global setting, where there are millions of needy and starving children, with the United States, where some parents go to great medical lengths to produce their own biological children. For more information, go to http://www.umc-gbcs.org/about/general_conf.php and click on “bioethics.”

Another resolution deals with bioethics technology on genetically modified organisms.

— Science and Theology —

A task force mandated by the 2000 General Conference is taking a resolution to the 2004 delegates asking that the denomination develop a theological statement concerning the relationship of science and theology. It also recommends the creation of resources for youth and adults and a variety of forums to improve the dialogue between science and the Christian faith. See <http://www.gbod.org/scienceandtheology>.

— Church and State —

In a time when the water between church and government is a bit muddied, governing members of the Board of Church and Society are proposing an independent new paragraph to the Social Principles dealing with church and state. It would read:

“The United Methodist Church has for many years supported the separation of Church and State. In some parts of the world, this separation has guaranteed the diversity of religious expressions and the freedom to worship God according to each person’s conscience. Separation of church and state means no organic union of the two, but it does permit interaction. The state should not use its authority to promote particular religious beliefs (including atheism), nor should it require prayer or worship in the public schools, but it should leave students free to practice their own religious convictions. We believe that the state should not attempt to control the church, nor should the church seek to dominate the state. The rightful and vital separation of church and state, which has served the cause of religious liberty, should not be misconstrued as the abolition of all religious expression from public life.”

— Death Penalty —

The Board of Church and Society is recommending a new paragraph on the death penalty for the church’s Social Principles. It says, in part: “We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings. ... We believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that the possibility of reconciliation with Christ comes through repentance. This gift of reconciliation is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness. For this reason, we oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes.”

— General Agency Location —

A joint committee of the General Council on Ministries and General Council on Finance and

Administration is recommending that “... the location of the headquarters buildings and staff of the general agencies ... (except for possible consolidation of the GCFA headquarters in Nashville, Tenn.) remain at their current locations for another four years. This recommendation is hedged by knowledge that the proposed reorganization being presented to the General Conference by the GCOM can and probably will affect agency headquarters locations if accepted by the General Conference. It is further recommended that the GCFA continue the examination of the benefits of consolidation in the next quadrennium unless other actions taken by the General Conference would make this action improper.” The complete text of the report may be found at <http://www.gcfa.org/ReportsWithOtherAgencies04.pdf>.

Regarding the consolidation of the GCFA offices in Nashville, the report says the agency “would not be in a position to actually effect the move until after General Conference in 2004, and therefore does not plan to take any actions before that time that would have adverse financial effects on the church if for some reason the planned consolidation cannot be carried out.”

— Connectional Table —

The 2000 General Conference asked the General Council on Ministries to “determine the most effective design for the work of the general agencies and ... provide enabling legislation to the 2004 General Conference.”

The Council on Ministries is proposing the creation of a “Connectional Table” that would seek to discern and articulate a vision for the church and the stewardship of the mission, ministries and resources of the church as determined by the General Conference and in consultation with the Council of Bishops.

The Connectional Table would “integrate and synthesize” the work of the Council on Ministries and the General Council on Finance and Administration. The other general agencies would remain as they are described in the *2000 Book of Discipline*.



The proposed table would be constituted with voting members as follows: a representative from each of the 64 U.S. annual conferences and three representatives from each of the seven central conferences, 12 at-large members for diversity reasons, and up to 14 bishops. The bishops would include the president of the Council of Bishops; three bishops named at the discretion of the Council of Bishops to ensure a minimum of three bishops from the central conferences; the bishops elected as presidents of agencies; plus the general secretaries and presidents of agencies that would be accountable to the Connectional Table.

The general secretaries and presidents of the United Methodist Publishing House and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits would have voice without privilege of vote. For more details see <http://www.gcom-umc.org>.

———— Finances ————

Budget

The total proposed churchwide budget for the next four-year period, or quadrennium, will be published in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* and can be found on the last page of the “reports” section on the

General Council on Finance and Administration Web site, <http://www.gcfa.org/SummaryAppGenFunds05-08.pdf>.

The total budget of all the general funds recommended for the new quadrennium is \$585.7 million. If the recommendation is adopted as proposed, it will reflect a 7.3 percent increase over the \$545.7 million of the 2001-04 period. General Conference actions requiring new funds could also add to the budget. The budget proposal does not include continued funding for Igniting Ministry (see below) and other initiatives that have not previously been approved by General Conference for financial support through the general apportioned funds beyond 2004.

— Reducing Number of U.S. Bishops —

As a cost-saving measure, the General Council on Finance and Administration is recommending changes in Paragraph 405 of the *Book of Discipline* that would reduce the number of bishops in the United States. The new formula would reduce by one the number of bishops each of the five U.S. jurisdictions is eligible to elect. If enacted as written, the change would become effective at the end of General Conference, reducing the number of bishops elected in July. Each jurisdiction would still elect one or more bishops to fill vacancies created by retirements. The number of Central Conference bishops would be fixed at the current level. The proposal is posted at <http://www.gcfa.org/Par405.pdf>.

The denomination has 50 active bishops in the United States and 18 in other countries.

———— Funding Missions ————

Delegates will be challenged to continue witnessing to their faith throughout the world. The General Board of Global Ministries has done so through missionaries, international Persons in Mission, and the development of at least 11 new mission initiatives. The board is encouraging delegates to assure adequate funding for mission through all channels of giving, including World Service, the Advance for Christ and His Church, and United Methodist Women’s Pledge to Mission.



— Igniting Ministry —

The General Commission on Communication is requesting funds for the 2005-08 period to continue the Igniting Ministry campaign, the church's unprecedented evangelistic effort highlighted by network television advertising across the United States. During its first four years, Igniting Ministry has raised awareness about the church and increased attendance in United Methodist congregations.

During the next four-year period, the General Commission on Communication proposes continuing Igniting Ministry and expanding it to reach greater numbers of "unchurched" people. The program will include a sustained multimedia campaign built around three established annual series of television commercials and strengthened by 18 weeks of additional spots targeted on broadcast and cable news networks.

In addition, the commission proposes a "youth expression" designed to reach out and invite youth into discipleship. This effort involves resources for regional advertising and training local youth leaders, rather than a national television advertising effort.

The commission's proposed quadrennial budget includes \$33.5 million to continue the core min-

istry and \$5.4 million for the youth expression. The \$33.5 will be used to produce and place advertising and increasing matching grants. The \$5.4 million will be spent to develop local church resources, advertising materials, grants and start-up costs.

— Africa University —

The Board of Higher Education and Ministry is not asking for an increase in the 2005-08 period for Africa University, the Ministerial Education Fund or the Black College Fund. The board is asking delegates to encourage 100 percent payment of apportionments for these funds.

— Central Conference Communications —

The General Commission on Communications is requesting that \$2.3 million be committed through apportionments to "provide financial support for a central conference communications initiative." The initiative would lay the foundation for a global network to assist the central conferences—regional units of the church in Europe, Africa and Asia—to develop communications infrastructure, receive training and, ultimately, tell their own stories through access to media. As part of the initiative, the agency would build partnerships with United Methodists around the world and collaborate with central conference bishops, communicators and other leaders.

— Global Education Fund —

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry is proposing a \$10 million Global Education Fund for the new quadrennium aimed at leadership development of clergy and laity for the church and broader society. The fund would help United Methodist and Methodist educational institutions around the world, particularly those in Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia, improve, strengthen and advance their quality and viability through technical assistance with well-qualified educators and moderate funding.

— Young People —

Recognizing that ministry with youth and young adults needed to be a stronger priority within the United Methodist Church, the 1996 General Conference formed the Shared Mission Focus on Young People. In 2000, General Conference asked this initiative to create a strategy for the entire denomination to be in more effective ministry with young people. A new Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship is being proposed by the Shared Mission Focus in partnership with the United Methodist Youth Organization of the Board of Discipleship.

The new division would seek to shape priorities for ministries with youth, young adults and workers with young people; strengthen the ministries of youth by resourcing and equipping local congregations; create networks for young adults and workers with young people; and bring together members of different ages from the jurisdictions and central conferences to focus on bettering the lives of young people in the world and equipping young people in disciple-making ministry. See <http://www.idreamachurch.com>.

— Ethnic Ministries —

The conference will be asked to continue supporting efforts to reach the growing ethnic populations within the United States. The church's initiatives include the Asian American Language Ministries, Hispanic/Latino, Korean American and Native American plans and Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century.

The General Commission on Religion and Race is introducing resolutions on topics such as racial profiling, the elimination of racism and respecting the legacy and tradition of Native Americans. See <http://www.umc.org>.

— Holy Communion Study —

The General Board of Discipleship proposed to the 2000 General Conference that the assembly mandate a study of Holy Communion and that the board bring to the 2004 conference a comprehen-

sive paper on the United Methodist theology and practice of the Lord's Supper. The need for the study grew out of research done by the board in 1998-99. The 2000 conference mandated the study, and the board created a 19-member representative committee that included leadership from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and the Council of Bishops. The committee met six times over three years and held "listening posts" in each of the five U.S. jurisdictions and the Philippines, Congo, Zimbabwe, Sweden and Germany.

The study's most significant results include a commitment to a table that is open to all who would partake and an emphasis on the importance of pastors ensuring that those who come are clearly invited to a life of discipleship. The paper asserts the denomination's continuity with early Methodist belief in the real presence of Christ available in Eucharist. Further, the committee reached early and unanimous agreement that communion is to be celebrated in its fullness and ideally on a weekly basis. The study strongly affirms that it is the whole congregation that celebrates the Eucharist, and it underscores the importance of the active participation of all of the people along with the leadership of the presiding minister.

The report vigorously affirms the use of United Methodist ritual for all celebrations of the sacrament, noting that the ritual itself allows for appropriate flexibility and "contextualization." Matters of hygiene, the role of deacons and laity, hospitality, Eucharist and evangelism, Eucharist and social concern, and Eucharist and ecumenical relations are also covered.

Potentially controversial issues include the urgency of a balance of the open table practice of the church with faithful invitation, and the strong encouragement to use United Methodist ritual. If adopted by the General Conference, the paper would be an official teaching resource for United Methodists, and the enabling petition requests that church agencies and the Council of Bishops use the study to help pastors and lay people better understand communion.

— Women in Mission —

In its report to the conference, the General Board of Global Ministries will acknowledge 135 years of participating in God's mission through United Methodist Women and its predecessor bodies. "We anticipate their continuing vibrant mission in the empowerment of women and the ministries to women and children in the United States through the many mission institutions. Through Schools of Christian Mission, spiritual formation and social concerns, the Women's Division and the network of United Methodist Women provide a living link in what John Wesley called 'social holiness and vital piety'."

— Services for Ordering of Ministry —

The General Board of Discipleship, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the Council of Bishops, seeks to create liturgical texts for the ordination and the commissioning of those in the probationary relationship. The board is proposing the adoption of "Services for the Ordering of Ministry in the United Methodist Church" as the official texts to be used by the bishops and annual conferences during the 2005-08 quadrennium. See <http://www.gbod.org>.

— Town and Country —

The General Board of Global Ministries is proposing the creation of a National Comprehensive Plan for Town and Country Ministries. Eight years in the making, the plan affirms the rural church and projects strategies for strengthening town and country congregations, which account for one-third of the United Methodist membership in the United States.

— Special Programs for 2005-08 —

The General Council on Ministries is recommending to the delegates approval of two special programs for the next four years. A special program is defined by *The Book of Discipline* as a "quadrennial emphasis initiated by a general program-related agency ... designed in response to a distinct opportunity or need in God's world that is evidenced by research or other supporting data and (with) achievable goals within the quadrennium." (See Paragraph 703.10)

The proposed special programs, funded by the participating agencies through their quadrennial budgets, are:

1. Holistic Strategy on Africa, coordinated by the General Board of Global Ministries in collaboration with several agencies, \$35 million.
2. Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean, coordinated by the General Board of Global Ministries in collaboration with several agencies, \$8 million.

— Pensions —

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is proposing a new core pension benefit for clergy and general agency employees. The new program is designed to provide security with choice, according to the agency. It has two components. The first is a defined benefit component that provides the same benefit for all clergy across the denomination. This component is based on a formula of 1.25 percent of the Denominational Average Compensation times years of credited service. Second, the design has a defined contribution component of 3 percent of actual compensation, which allows participants to accumulate cash in a self-directed individual account. Both components are funded by the annual conference and would become effective Jan. 1, 2007. In addition, the general board proposes a pension for church lay workers of 3 percent of compensation, effective Jan. 1, 2006. Information on the legislation is available at <http://www.gbophb.org/news/features/gc2004/index.html>.

— Men and the Church —

The Commission on United Methodist Men is asking the General Conference to direct the commission, in cooperation with the Council on Ministries' Office of Research and Planning, to create a committee for the next four years to undertake a study of men in the denomination. The study is needed, according to the commission, "in order to develop effective resources, respond to current needs, challenge long-held assumptions, develop effective strategies for reaching men in the 21st century and effectively understand male spiritual formation issues." The commission is also proposing that local churches observe a Men's Ministry Sunday each year.

The United Methodist Church was formed in



HISTORY

1968 with the union of the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist Church.

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

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

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

Meanwhile, the Methodist movement had begun in England in the early 1700s, under Anglican clergyman John Wesley and his follow-

ers. Wesley did not officially organize a new church but sparked a renewal movement within the Church of England. Nonetheless, Methodism spread from England to Ireland and the colonial United States.

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

With rapid growth, philosophical differences and division were inevitable. In 1828, a group, largely moved by an insistence on lay representation, separated and became the Methodist Protestant Church. Three historically black denominations split from the parent church because of acts of exclusion or discrimination by white Methodists in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are known today as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion.

In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church split again over the issue of slavery. The offspring denomination was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The north and south factions reunited in 1939, compromising on the race issue by creating a segregated system. The Methodist Protestant Church also was part of the merger. Alongside the five geographic jurisdictions, an overlapping Central Jurisdiction was formed for African Americans. It was dissolved in 1968 with the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches.

THINGS TO SEE

Plan some time while in Pittsburgh to see some of the sites. A good resource on things to do and see downtown Pittsburgh is <http://www.downtownpittsburgh.com>.

Pittsburgh is where East meets Midwest. It's the city where Lena Horne and Lewis & Clark got started, and it's the birthplace of the Ferris wheel, American broadcasting and french fries on sandwiches.

Western Pennsylvania Conference Communications Director Mark Rehn suggests the following possibilities for your free time in Pittsburgh:

■ National Aviary, on the North Side, near Heinz Field. The only national aviary, it is dedicated to exotic and local birds in a beautiful old facility with plants and supporting fauna.

■ Carnegie Science Center and other Carnegie Museums, on the North Side Near Heinz Field. These offer exhibits on all aspects of science, and include the Omnimax theater, which shows many movies, and the Requin, a World War II submarine.

■ University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning. Within a couple of miles of downtown, the cathedral boasts more than 30 Nationality Rooms off the Great Hall. Each room is decorated and represents a culture of immigrants who settled in the Pittsburgh region.

■ Heinz History Center. Named it after the late U.S. Sen. John Heinz, is next to the David Lawrence Convention Center. It provides a display of history throughout the region. The bishops' reception will be held there on the eve of General Conference.

■ Station Square, on the Southside and across the historic Smithfield Street Bridge, offers shops, hotel

rooms and restaurants (including the Hard Rock Café). The buildings are restored train depot/storage buildings. The old train station is home to the Grand Concourse Restaurant, which serves a champagne brunch each Sunday. The Southside is an eclectic group of shops and restaurants along East Carson Street.

■ The Strip, adjacent to the Convention Center, is a neighborhood growing out of the old railroad yards of Pittsburgh. Restaurants, retail and discount stores dot this neighborhood. While there, don't miss the original location of the world-famous Primanti Bros. Restaurant.

■ Catch a Pirates game at the 3-year-old PNC Park on the North side. This is a wonderfully designed ballpark worth the visit, even if the hometown team is losing. The Pirates will be home for part of the General Conference.

■ Frick House is the old mansion of a coal baron, about 5 miles from downtown. It is available for tours for a small fee.

■ Hartwood Acres, is an Allegheny County-owned estate with a lovely, old mansion. The estate's acres are used for summer concerts at an outdoor pavilion that attracts thousands. The mansion captures the feel of wealthy family life in the 1900s. The furnishings are largely original.

■ Johnstown Flood Site and Museums, about 80 miles away, is a national park on the site of a dam break, which resulted in the 1889 Johnstown Flood that killed more than 2,000. Several of the original "cabins" belonging to rich Pittsburghers, including the Carnegies and Mellons, can be seen. The displays provide amazing details and recreate the largest of three deadly floods that hit the town. Downtown, J-town offers a wonderful flood museum in the old Carnegie Library.

■ Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling

Waters is a beautiful summer home escape in the mountains, built by the Kaufmann family, owners of retail department stores in the region. Located in Fayette County, near Connellsville, this is an amazing architectural wonder built by Wright above a waterfall and considered one of his greatest achievements.

■ Inclines near Station Square and downtown provide views of the area. Public transports carry people in historic, old rail cars up the side of a mountain. Another incline in Johnstown was built as an escape route for downtown flooding after the 1889 Johnstown Flood.

Here are some additional restaurants. Others can be found on the Pittsburgh Web site.

- Max & Erma's, 630 Stanwix St.
- Mandarin Gourmet, 305 Wood St.
- Tambellini's, 139 7th St.
- Seventh Street Grille, 130 Seventh St.
- Original Fish Market, 1001 Liberty Ave., Liberty Center

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