

Proceedings of the 2004 General Conference of The United Methodist Church

The Committee on Journal

The Committee on Journal hereby certifies as accurate the proceedings as printed in the *Daily Christian Advocate* for Tuesday, May 4

P. 1946, column 2, third full paragraph (beginning with KENT MIL-LARD), through p. 1947, column 3, fifth full paragraph, is duplicated material.

P. 1977, column 3

The last eight lines should be deleted.

P. 1978, column 1, second full paragraph

YEMBA KASONGO (Central Congo) is actually FURAHA KACIKO (East Congo).

P. 1979, column 1 through the end of p. 1980 should be deleted.

Reported by Lin Doyle
Chair, Committee on Journal
(D4, Seat 10)

Tuesday Morning, May 4, 2004

(continued from page 1980)

EDDIE H. FOX (Holston): I served on the legislative committee of Church and Society. We discussed this matter very much and when the issue was in front of us, as a legislative committee, about the deleting of this sentence "that we recognize that Christians disagree on the compatibility—on the incompatibility of homosexual practice with Christian teaching," 48 people voted to delete that, 49 people voted to keep it in the statement. The church is in desperate need of clarity. This is a crucial

matter to us, especially in our faithful global witness. You have heard that plea from people in this conference, on this floor, at this time.

I have traveled this church for more than 25 years. I have served in the general agencies of The United Methodist Church and now with an ecumenical organization, The World Methodist Council, and I have been in ministry with our people and our church in more than 75 countries around the world. I am personally knowledgeable and have experience with a national church in another country which has its roots in Methodism and of the action which that church took that resulted in great division and chaos. In 1998 that church approved a statement, basically this way, that says that we are not of a common mind. We agree to disagree.

Five years later, on that slippery slope, the church elevated this, which was an opinion, to make it the official position of the church, and it has resulted in great division, loss of direction, loss of mission, ministry, and resources. Leaders in our own church have testified that we are so ambiguous in our statements that we do not have a stand on the practice of homosexuality as incompatible with Christian teaching. It makes no sense to insert the phrase "Christians disagree." There are other places where we simply say, we clearly declare ...

BISHOP BRUCE P. BLAKE (Oklahoma Area): Please conclude.

FOX: ... those that are incompatible with Christian teaching and we do not insert such a sentence. We cannot afford a confusing message in our Social Principles. Like a compass, these principles point clearly the way for our church. The teachings of Jesus are, indeed, an essential in the church. The minority report is clear.

BISHOP BLAKE: Will you please conclude.

FOX: With compassion, we affirm that God's grace is for all and we seek to live in Christian community. I urge that you vote yes in support of the minority report. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: We will receive now the statement of the presenter of the majority report.

MARGARET MALLORY (West Ohio): Like my esteemed colleague, I am not a long timer in The United Methodist Church. I'm a convert. But since being here, I have grown more in the Christian faith than all the years before. I learned about a God that loved me in spite of all the things that I had done in my past. This God loved and forgave me. I learned about a God who is ever dynamic. "See I am about to do a new thing. Don't you perceive it." I learned about a God that creates, recreates, that gives us gifts and asks us to use those gifts for the building of God's kingdom.

We are the church, but we are of two opinions. That is the truth of the matter. The discomfort that we are experiencing is discomfort because we are trying to live something that we aren't. We are trying to live as people who are unanimous in our belief about homosexuality and that is not true. We do not become "less than" because we admit we disagree. As a matter of fact, we become "more than" because we admit we tell the truth, and we live truth. I implore you to please defeat this minority report.

BISHOP BLAKE: Let us be in a time of prayer.

(prayer)

Your vote is whether or not you will make the substitute motion, the minority report, the main motion. If you favor the substitute to become the main motion, you will vote yes. If you do not favor the substitute to become the main motion, you will vote no. I am simply waiting for translation. You are ready

to vote. Please vote now. [*Yes, 527; No, 423, Abstain, 4*]

(*pause*)

The substitute as a minority report has become the main motion and the minority report is now before us as the main motion.

Yes, I recognize no. 3. No. 2, I'm sorry, I misspoke the microphones. That is my mistake. Thank you.

Debate on Paragraph 161G

JANET ELLINGER (Wisconsin): Janet Ellinger, from Wisconsin.

I rise to speak against this as the main motion. It seems almost daily we are reminded to be warned and aware of identify theft. It occurs to me that The United Methodist Church has perpetuated that over the centuries against persons because of the beautiful color of their skin or the gift of their gender but it couldn't be done, but our church since 1972 has tried to steal the identity of homosexual persons. We do it as boldly now as we have done with others in the past.

Earlier in this conference, we were invited to take our head out of the sand and put it in the gospel. The people this church excludes are the people who try our cases in court, who teach our children, who work for affordable housing in our communities, who fill our prescriptions, who rotate our tires, who compose our music, who fix our food, plow our snow, administer our chemotherapy, they are Senators, plumbers, therapists, nurses, steel workers, day care providers, and more. And, yes, they baptize our babies and our grandbabies.

They sit with our loved ones in nursing homes. They visit those we love who are in prison. They sit in this room, at all levels, within and beyond the bar of this conference. They are beloved children of God, each one. So if you can hear my voice, I proclaim to you that this church shall never legislate away your identity. That is not up for a vote. I look to the day when we will truly be Christ bearers in this

world, not for our own sake but for the sake of the gospel and the sake of our children.

(*song*)

The Lord is my rock and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. So you tell me, of whom shall I be afraid?

BISHOP BLAKE: This is a statement against the main motion. I recognize a person here, please. Mic, mic 1, move over, yes, right here. You're holding up the card. OK, mic 2. OK, nope, she's going back to No. 1. Are you speaking for or against the main motion?

JOY E. NYE (West Ohio): I'm speaking for. My name is ...

BISHOP BLAKE: You're in order. Go ahead.

Taking a Stand

NYE: My name is Joy Nye, from the West Ohio Conference. This is very difficult for me; but, dear friends, I've been a United Methodist all my life like many of you setting here. I hold in my hands, messages that would probably account for hundreds of individuals that come from churches, ad councils, and individuals, and in not any annual conference saying that we must do something at this time.

Probably every one of us setting here realizes that it is important that we do something. I can't let you know that it isn't, that we do not love people. We love everyone that is here. And I thank God for those people from Africa that have spoken, but we do have to stand for something.

This is a day, a time in our lives that we have to stand and be counted. I would just pray that we do take a stand. This sin is no different than other sins. And every one of us are sinners. But Christ died for our sins. And we can be redeemed. And dear friends, I would ask that every one of you—you know, this whole aspect takes more than just one paragraph—I would ask you to look, open to p. 1073 in your Advance DCA, that's Volume 2. And this comes

from the Board of Global Ministries. As I was doing my studies, I came to this particular paragraph and I wrote it down, and I put an "amen" beside it. It is the page that has all the statistics of HIV/AIDS. It says, "The United Methodist churches, districts, and conferences."

BISHOP BLAKE: You need to conclude soon.

NYE: One thing it says in the very last sentence "in addition the church can provide grounding in Christian values," something that cannot be done in public schools or in governmental publications.

BISHOP BLAKE: Please conclude.

NYE: I just pray that we pray, that we vote for this. Thank you for your time.

BISHOP BLAKE: See, here please indicate whether speaking for or against, that one statement for, one against, mic 2.

WARREN C. BLACK (Mississippi): Hello, Warren Black, clergy delegate, Mississippi. Actually, if you look at the language in the sections, we've actually strengthened the declaratory nature of the—our stand on homosexuality is actually stronger. But what I ask this body, and I'd like to say two things, one is the statement from many of our retired bishops and clergy. Many of you received that, who state in their statement to us that faithful Christians do disagree about this and that a statement should be included. I'll read their statement.

"We call upon the 2004 General Conference to honestly reflect in the Social Principles that we're not of one opinion on this deeply controversial issue. Further debate in the legislative session will not be productive."

But let me speak, let me speak as a pastor. I pastor a university church in Oxford, Mississippi, and I'd just like to share with you as, as I have a deep pastoral concern about our being able to speak truth. I have young people who come in and share with me, from their heart.

I'd just like to share this statistic with you. A 1989 U.S. Dept. of Education study revealed that 30 percent of teen suicides are by gay and lesbian youth, and that gay and lesbian teens are three times more likely to attempt suicide than other youth. I don't think we have any choice. We have a strong declaratory statement in the church about where we stand. But I think, as a pastor, we have to speak truth that there're others out there that we need to hear, and they need to have a handle on a church that's big enough, and graceful enough and loving enough to acknowledge that they are part of our community.

I lost a sister to suicide; she was not gay. But I'm certain there are many families in this body today who've lost family members to suicide. One delegate, a young reserve delegate from Iowa, she had four of her homosexual friends had committed suicide because they felt like they didn't have a place to be understood. So, I plead with you as a church, let's have a strong declaratory statement on where we are, but let's acknowledge the truth, that as faithful Christians we can disagree. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: There's a statement for. I recognize mic 4 over here. Are you speaking for or against?

Regarding Biblical Interpretation

JEFFREY KUAN (California-Nevada): Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, clergy delegate from California-Nevada Conference. This has been a long journey for me to arrive at the position that I take. Part of it has to do with my training as a biblical scholar. And I continue to be dismayed and troubled by the kind of selective biblical interpretation that our church has continued to affirm and the hypocrisy that has resulted from such biblical interpretation.

We are, on the one hand, claiming, and indeed making, declaratory statements, resting at best on meager biblical evidence that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. While on the other hand, implicitly claiming the compatibility of divorce

and remarriage with Christian teaching; of which, Jesus himself explicitly prohibits in the New Testament, in Mark, in Matthew, and in Luke. For Jesus, remarrying a divorced person constitutes adultery, a serious sin which the entire Bible has much to say about.

When will we as a church begin to look at ourselves and acknowledge our inconsistencies and hypocrisy? When will we begin to acknowledge that we have made a statement implicitly about divorce and remarriage and not speak against that, while on the other hand, speaking so forcefully against homosexuality and equating homosexuality with sin, while no longer willing to equate divorce and remarriage with sin? When will we begin to acknowledge our hypocrisy?

BISHOP BLAKE: We've had two speeches for, two speeches against. We are going to request that the next person called to the microphone state clearly whether or not you are speaking for or against after you introduce yourself. I'm going to recognize mic 5, please.

EWING WERLEIN JR. (Texas): Ewing Werlein, Texas Conference. Bishop, my point of order is that I believe there have now been three speeches against the substitute motion that is now before the body as the main motion. First was the delegate who added a song to her speech, and then there was the second speaker against and you referred to that as a speech for when it was really a speech against the main motion, and then the delegate who has just spoken. I believe there have been three speeches now against the main motion.

BISHOP BLAKE: I was, must simply take the word of the person who made the statement and he identified what his speech was, and therefore I think we must simply accept the word of the person in terms of the intent of his statement, and we'll proceed. We've had... What's your point of order? Chip.

MELVIN R. BOWDEN JR. (Kentucky): Mel Bowden, from

Kentucky Conference. My point of order, Bishop, based upon my history with you—I suggest you ask the brother from Mississippi which side he spoke on, against or for.

BISHOP BLAKE: I would be most happy. Would you go to the mic No. 2 and indicate what you stated to the body.

BLACK: I was speaking in favor of the original motion from the committee on Church and Society, of which I served—against the main motion now.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, then you've had three speeches against, one for. Thank you. We'll go clear to back, back corner. You can only speak if you're for the minority report that has now become the main motion. Are you speaking for the minority report?

FORBES MATONGA (West Zimbabwe): Yes, Bishop.

BISHOP BLAKE: You may speak.

An African Perspective

MATONGA: I am Forbes Matonga from the West Zimbabwe Annual Conference. I'm speaking for the minority report.

First, let me speak from an African perspective. Our understanding of Christians and Christianity is that it values that which it must aspire to accomplish. When missionaries came to Africa, it was Africans who were deep in polygamist marriages, and they told us the ideal marriage is monogamous. Over the centuries we have been striving to get to the—that ideal. I don't think we change (*unintelligible*) values to fit our human weaknesses. I think it is the other way around. So, my position will be that we are not talking about individuals; we are talking about the practice.

When we are saying “no” to homosexuality, we are not hating the persons. In as much as we say to all kinds of things, like prostitution and everything else, it is not about a person it is about a practice. We are not against any individuals, but we are against a practice. So, it is not about a person's iden-

tity. It is about a person's practice. That is what we are looking at. So I don't see where one can claim that by this decision we are condoning to hating individuals. That is not the case. We are talking about a practice, Bishop.

BISHOP BLAKE: We have three speeches against, two for. I recognize the person right back in the middle, mic. 7. Are you speaking for—mic. 7 in the center section—are you speaking for? This will end the debate and then the maker of the main motion will have the right to the concluding statement.

SAMUEL J. QUIRE JR. (Liberia): Yes, Bishop. I am speaking for. Samuel J. Quire from Liberia. I'm speaking for the minority report in that in my own mind I don't think that The United Methodist Church can license people to go to hell. And I believe that it just cannot let the people go to hell. And I strongly believe that the church must not condone the practice of homosexuality. Ever since—it is a sin that leads to hell. And the church must always speak against every kind of sin. So I believe that we as United Methodists must not license people to go to hell. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: We have had three speeches for and three speeches against the main motion. Now we will turn to the committee to make a final statement.

FOX: Thank you, Bishop. The church is in desperate need of clarity. These are the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. They do not belong only to us in this room, they belong to our whole church on the continents of the world. It is a clear statement, and it is a clear statement of compassion. Hear it. "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all, and we will seek to live together in Christian community."

It is a clear statement. It is a statement of compassion, and I urge you for the sake of this church and for our movement to vote "yes" for this report.

BISHOP BLAKE: Will you pray with me?

(pause)

BISHOP BLAKE: Amen. The substitute has become the main motion by your action. You are now voting on the substitute to be the action of the annual conference. If you support the minority report as the main motion and the action of the conference, you will vote yes. If you do not, you will vote no. Just waiting for the translation. Please vote now.

(pause)

BISHOP BLAKE: It is sustained. As the main motion of—and your action approved the minority report as the main motion and the main motion was approved. [Yes, 579; No, 376; Abstain, 4]

BISHOP BLAKE: I want to hold steady for a moment for two reasons: No. 1, to facilitate the work of the conference, and, No. 2, for us to conclude our time together this morning. There are 22 petitions, I believe, that were unanimously voted non-concurrence by the committee in favor of dealing with the issue in this paragraph in the *Discipline* for the action that you have taken. If there is no objection from the body we will act on all these that were unanimous in their non-concurrence, because they felt it could best be done in favor of the petition that we have already acted on. If there is objection, at the beginning of the afternoon you will deal with these one by one—you know the consequence of that legislatively with the timing and all.

It is the request of the committee that because they dealt with the issue with the petition that you have dealt with that it would facilitate the work of the conference for these calendar items simply to be noted and that there be one motion of non-concurrence with these calendar items that deal with the same paragraph in the *Discipline*.

Is there objection to handle these petitions in this way? They are numbered 470 to 490 and Calendar Item

1024. The 470 to 490 are on p. 638 and 1639. 1024 is on p. 1747. Is there objection dealing with these in one motion?

I hear no objection. There is objection? Then there is objection, and therefore this will be the agenda as we return this afternoon. Mic. 2. Mic. 2, please.

MARK A. MILLER (Greater New Jersey): Point of order, Bishop. Mark Miller, Greater New Jersey Conference. I don't rise to say that I'm against this, but I think our chair would recognize when you said we voted unanimously in our non-concurrence that's incorrect. We voted—the vote was not unanimous.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK. There has been objection; therefore, we will deal with this matter as you reconvene at 2:30. We have a report of the committee on the Committee on Presiding Officers and announcements. Let's deal with the announcements first before the committee chair comes to the microphone. Jessica, we will deal with your report this afternoon. Announcements, please.

Announcements

CAROLYN MARSHALL: It has come to our attention that there is a North Carolina car with the lights on. If you are driving a car from North Carolina with plates SNH 6563, you may want to take care of it.

Also, this is a message which has come, and perhaps the bishop who will be closing us for our—in prayer for our morning session will want to incorporate this into his time, his or her time, of prayer. But Victor Perez who is the clergy delegate from Puerto Rico has returned to Puerto Rico because of the death of his mother-in-law, and the delegation has asked for prayer.

BISHOP BLAKE: That concludes the announcements. Let's turn to Paul.

PAUL EXTRUM-FERNANDEZ (California-Nevada): Bishop, members of the General Conference, this afternoon's Presiding Officer will be Bishop Blake. And then in the evening

we will be receiving Bishop William Oden from the Dallas area.

BISHOP BLAKE: As we conclude our morning together, we have experienced what it means to confer with one another that involves disagreement. May we be reminded that the first and great commandment was not that disciples are called to agree, but that disciples are called to love God, each other, as we love ourselves. Thank you for this morning in which I personally have experienced your love. May we continue in that spirit as we do the work of God's church. We will reconvene at 2:30. Amen.

(prayer)

Tuesday Afternoon, May 4, 2004

BISHOP BRUCE P. BLAKE (Oklahoma Area): We begin our afternoon together. We will turn to the legislative committee of Church and Society. I want to explain that I misstated a fact, when I stated that the petitions referred to in sequence were nearly unanimous by the committee. The chairperson will explain what vote in the committee was 75 to 1. It was not on the individual petitions. I heard the reference and mis-spoke it this morning and so she will, Jessica will explain to you how the committee desires to bring these for our action. So, I'll turn to Jessica as chairperson of Church and Society.

JESSICA F. MOFFAT (Oklahoma): And good afternoon. We as a legislative committee considered whether or not to present these petitions together to you as a unit. We even took a vote as to whether or not to present them together. It passed. That vote to present them together was voted 75 in favor of presenting them together and 1 against. These all come to the plenary with a recommendation of non-concurrence. We feel that these petitions have been handled because we have already dealt with petition 1022 and the General Conference has already acted on Paragraph 161G. Therefore, Bishop, I move

that we vote on the following petitions as a unit. And I'm going to ask Tom Junk, who has been our subcommittee chair for Paragraph 161G to come and list them for you.

BISHOP BLAKE: This is still a part of the motion.

Items Related to Paragraph 161G

TOM M. JUNK (Oklahoma): Petitions are found beginning on p. 1638 of your *DCA*. There are 22 items in all, beginning with Calendar Item No. 470. Bishop, would you like for me to read the petition number also? Alright. *DCA* p. 1638, Calendar Item 470, Petition No. 41507, p. 1638; Calendar Item 471, Petition No. 41520. There are several on p. 1638, so I'm just going to continue to read the calendar item.

The next one is 472, Petition No. 41516; Calendar Item 473, Petition No. 41515; Calendar Item 474, Petition No. 41514; Calendar Item 475, Petition No. 41513; Calendar Item 476, Petition No. 41512; Calendar Item 477, Petition No. 41511; Calendar Item 478, Petition No. 41510; Calendar Item 479, Petition No. 41500; Calendar Item 480, Petition No. 41499; Calendar Item 481, Petition No. 41498; Calendar Item 482, Petition No. 41497; Calendar Item 483, Petition No. 41496; Calendar Item 484, Petition No. 41495; Calendar Item 485, Petition No. 41494; Calendar Item 486, Petition No. 41386; Calendar Item 487, Petition No. 40523; Petition No. 488, I'm sorry that's Calendar no. 488, Petition 40078, Calendar Item 489, Petition No. 40011, Calendar Item 490, Petition No. 41541, and now on page in your *DCA* 1747, p. 1747, Calendar Item 1024, Petition No. 40425.

BISHOP BLAKE: This is a motion and a since both officers of the committee are here, and been moved and seconded, that this be a procedural motion, dealing with these non-concurrent recommendations of the committee in one vote. It is before you. Yes, mic 3; mic 3.

JEFFREY R. SPELMAN (Greater New Jersey): Good afternoon my name

is Jeff Spelman from the Greater New Jersey Conference. I would like to amend that motion to remove Calendar Item 476 on *DCA* p. 1638, Petition No. 41512 in the Advance *DCA* on p. 156. Again that's Calendar 476, p. 1638, Advance *DCA*, p. 156, Petition 41512.

BISHOP BLAKE: That is a motion to amend. Is there a second? It is seconded. You may make your case for your amendment.

SPELMAN: Thank you. Immediately after this morning's proceeding, as we went into lunch break, a large crowd gathered at the front of this very room for a Communion service. It was a large gathering. Many of the people who were at the gathering were wearing these rainbow stoles. These rainbow stoles were made by members of the Parents Reconciling Network group. Parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons who are here fighting for the very lives of their children. Many gathered around the Communion table were the very people who were deemed incompatible with Christian teaching by the group this morning.

Despite the incredible pain of those persons and what had happened to them or happened in this room this morning, these people, we, chose to stay in this room and share in Communion. If you look closely at the Communion table, you'll see the remains of a shattered Communion chalice that was broken during that service as a symbol of the brokenness of our church. I think our church has not been honest in where we are as a denomination. We are not of one mind on the subject of homosexuality. If we cannot be honest where we are on this issue, how can we expect anyone else? How can we expect our youths to expect us to be honest with anything else? Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK. This is a statement in favor of deleting Calendar Item 476 from the procedural motion to take several calendar items under one vote. The amendment is before you. The committee has arrived for the last statement.

MOFFAT: We believe that the General Conference has already spoken to Paragraph 161G, and therefore would urge you to speak against this amendment.

BISHOP BLAKE: The amendment is before you. Just waiting for translation. You're voting on the amendment to delete Calendar Item 476 from the procedural motion. You're ready to vote. Please vote now.

(pause)

The motion to delete does not prevail. We're back to the main motion. Think you're ready to vote. You're voting on the main procedural motion to vote on these as a unit. You're not voting on them yet, but you're voting on them, on the procedural motion to handle them as a unit. If you want to handle them all together, you will vote yes, if you do not want to handle them all together, you will vote no. Please vote now. You have sustained the motion to vote on them as a unit. Now we have the main motion before us, if the committee will make the motion of non-concurrence for all the petitions listed in the procedural motion. [*Yes, 713; No, 205; Abstain, 6*]

JUNK: Bishop the recommendation of the committee is for non-concurrence.

BISHOP BLAKE: I believe you are ready to vote. Those of you who would support the committee's recommendation of non-concurrence on these petitions listed, you will vote yes, if you do not agree with committee, you will vote no. Please vote now. [*Yes, 679; No, 249; Abstain, 8*]

The committee's recommendation of non-concurrence is sustained. I believe Church and Society has two more petitions related to this subject.

JUNK: Yes, Bishop. In your *DCA* p. 1639, Calendar Item 491, Petition No. 40454. It's found on p. 166 in your *Advance DCA*. The recommendation of the committee is for non-concurrence.

BISHOP BLAKE: Could we, according to the requests yesterday, have a very brief description of the

petition. We know your recommendation is non-concurrence.

JUNK: This particular petition speaks to civil marriages.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK. This calendar item is before you. If you're ready to vote. Voting on Calendar Item 491, the committee's recommendation— Yes, no. 3?

VICKI L. WOODS (New England): Vicki Woods, New England Annual Conference. I want to speak against the non-concurrence. Earlier this morning we talked about how much we have to be clear in our *Book of Discipline*. We are very clear when it comes to the civil rights of persons that we are not trying to legislate the civil rights of people, although we have felt it very important to talk about the religious rights. We have in our *Discipline* that we do indeed support, doing all that we can for the civil rights of people in order to speak clarity like we ask again and not to have confusing statements in our *Discipline*. I would encourage you not to confuse this and to vote against the non-concurrence.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK. This is a vote against the motion of the committee. Any other statement? Believe you're ready to vote, but the committee has a right to make a final statement, if you so choose.

JUNK: The committee supports non-concurrence because the *Discipline* already supports the concept of civil rights. We fear that the addition of this language would contradict the position of the church on civil unions and the nature of marriage. And in the interest of clarity on the nature of marriage, we urge non-concurrence.

BISHOP BLAKE: This item is before you. Calendar Item 491. The committee's recommendation is non-concurrence. Please vote now. You have sustained the committee's recommendation of non-concurrence. [*Yes, 633; No, 296; Abstain, 4*]

*Equal Rights Regardless
of Sexual Orientation*

JUNK: Our final item today is found on *DCA* p. 1639. It is Calendar Item

492. Petition No. 40576, p. 166 in your *Advance DCA*. The recommendation of the committee is for non-concurrence.

BISHOP BLAKE: I want to make a brief description of the petition.

JUNK: This petition attempts to expand some definitions for equal rights.

BISHOP BLAKE: The motion is before you, non-concurrence. Believe you're ready to vote. Calendar Item 492. OK, over here no. 4, the person in the blue or who— well— it would be very helpful just to have the individual wave the card instead a group unless you think I'm not seeing an individual card, but 30 or 40 cards are usually not helpful, but no. 4.

TOM B. WILSON (Pacific Northwest): Thank you bishop. My name is Tom Wilson. I'm a lay delegate from the Pacific Northwest Conference and I rise to speak against the committees' recommendation.

This is my first experience with General Conference. I sought the position of delegate last year because I wanted to represent those persons in my annual conference who struggle like I do with the whole issue of homosexuality.

I live in a small agricultural community in central Washington. Prior to becoming the executive director of our conference foundation, I worked as an investment banker. And in case you wonder, I am married; my wife and I have three beautiful children. I stand before you and my Lord today as a person of undeserved privilege, a recipient of untold blessings with unlimited opportunity who should be secure, confident, and comfortable. But I'm neither secure, I'm not confident, and I certainly am not comfortable.

I guess to be totally honest with you what I have to say is that today, I'm afraid. I'm afraid that the actions that we are about to take will leave us with the same legacy as those highly committed Christians who stood in the way of religious freedoms for our Black

brothers and sisters. Like those God fearing persons who argued against giving women a vote or a voice in the pulpit, or those who sincerely thought the children, and I mean youth and young adults, should be seen but not heard. My fear is that someday my epitaph would say he helped silence the voice of gay and lesbian people because he couldn't understand the way they expressed their love.

I stand today to honor those gentle, loving, faithful United Methodists who have sat in the gallery to my left for the last seven days. For years they have waited patiently for their church to find value in their lives and the lives of their gay and lesbian family members and friends. How much longer will we continue to slam the front doors of our churches on them because of who they love? I stand to honor those who prayed in silence for the forgiveness of my sin as I entered this building. I need these people to share their stories with me, in my household and in my church. We need these people to share their stories in our homes, our churches, and yes, our pulpits. I have found that sometimes that when we open our minds and open our doors we take the risk of meeting persons whose love for life and for the Lord cause us to open our hearts. It is in the honor of these persons, of those persons right up there, that I ask you to vote against this recommendation.

BISHOP BLAKE: This statement against the committee's recommendation. I believe you're ready to vote. The committee— no, I see a card number, looks like no. 3. Yes. Right over here. I guess no. 7 is closer; mic 7.

HEATHER M. ELKINS (West Virginia): Heather Mary Elkins, West Virginia. I would urge the body to consider doing what was described to expand the civil rights that are named in this paragraph. I believe with our action this morning we have declared our self to be a church of the law, and so I would urge we take that next step to in fact extend the protection of the law to our brothers and sisters who

will, I think, face some of the retribution of what it means that this church has publicly named them as being sinners who have been consigned to hell. We have clearly witnessed in our history what happens when the church names others as being undeserving of the protections that normal human beings created in God's image have given to them. We have only to think of our own history here in this place to know that we need to under gird civil law until such a time as church law moves to grace.

BISHOP BLAKE: It's a statement against committee's recommendation. I recognize mic 5. Please state whether or not you're for or against, coming to the microphone.

JAMES L. BANKSTON (Texas): I'm against the recommendation of the committee.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, just hold right there. Is there anyone who wants to speak for? I'll recognize mic 4 speaking for the committee's recommendations, then I will return to you, sir. We have two speeches against so far, and this is the speech for the committee's recommendation; mic 4.

MANDE MUTOMBO (North Katanga): Thank you bishop, Raymond Mande Mutombo, North Kantanga Conference. Bishop, I don't think I—I'm wondering myself by what mechanism what the church considered yesterday to this, a sin, how can it turn today and it becomes a God blessed practice. We are here as a church we love everybody, and God loves everybody, but the practice itself can't stand.

I support the committee. Some people have even said that they have children; can anyone here say that through the practice they can have children? The Bible says that a union of man and woman brings procreation that's the continuation of humanity, that the continuation of mankind. But the practice. Suppose that everybody came on side with the practice we banish marriage, man-woman. Isn't that threat to human existence.

I don't think we can continue to sup-

port. The church should take definitely its responsibility to stop coming again and again on this issue. If sin is sin, it has to stay sin as such and be removed once for all on the calendar of the church through the years. God loves everybody. The theme of the conference is clear: "Water Washed, Spirit Born." So this is a door which is open for people to be water washed, to come to God, and to be born anew. To belong to the family of God, we are all children of God, but we live outside the sin area. This is sin. We will not continue as a church to support what we think is not correct. I stand in favor of the recommendation by the committee.

BISHOP BLAKE: Recognize mic 5; I recognized before. This will be the last statement against, and then you've had three— this will be three speeches against. Go ahead sir on mic no. 5.

About Expanding Terminology

BANKSTON: Yes, Jim Bankston I'm from Texas. I simply wanted to remind the conference that we are looking at a paragraph that is already a part of our *Book of Discipline* and that we simply are debating whether or not we should update language that seems more appropriate, at least. What is that the question is not whether we support the basic human and civil rights of all peoples, that's already affirmed in our *Discipline* and in this petition. The language of this petition simply removes the word "homosexual" and adds the words "all persons whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity." The chair of our subcommittee there expressed it very well. It expands the rights of people to a greater extent, but the basic support of basic human civil rights is already in place. The language, I believe, commits us to a more inclusive and appropriate recognition of where those rights are extended.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, now we have— we can allow two speeches for, I recognize this person right here in the middle. If you're speaking for in favor of the committees of non-concurrence. Mic 3.

Disciplinary Inquiry

CHARLES J. SCHUSTER (Rocky Mountain): Bishop my name is Charles Schuster, I'm a delegate from the Rocky Mountain Conference. And this is a question, it's not a speech. My question is for some clarification. Are the central conference churches and delegates bound by our *Book of Discipline*?

BISHOP BLAKE: The *Discipline* provides for Central Conferences to make adjustments in the *Book of Discipline* and I will need to take just a moment to find that reference in the *Book of Discipline*.

SCHUSTER: Sir, I found it.

BISHOP BLAKE: What?

SCHUSTER: It's Paragraph 537.

BISHOP BLAKE: Thank you for doing my homework for me. That's helpful.

SCHUSTER: Yes, sir. Glad to.

BISHOP BLAKE: Since you've examined it, would you like to please indicate what number in the *Discipline* you want to refer to for information of the body.

SCHUSTER: Yes sir. It's 537.9, p. 313 in the *Book of Discipline*.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, and your point concerning this is?

SCHUSTER: It's not a point. It's a question. It's not an argument. We've heard a number of Central Conference delegates speak to this particular issue as if our decisions bound them, and as I read the *Discipline* and this is a point of clarification, I don't see that it does since that it appears that they can make changes and adaptations to fit their special conditions.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK. That's a point of clarification for the body. If you have your *Book of Discipline* its 537.9, a speech for the committee's recommendation of... I'll recognize mic. 1.

DAVID T. GROUT (Kentucky): Bishop, David Grout, Kentucky. I would want to just draw attention to the body that there is yet another line in

this petition. There was a line of confusion to us mainly as we looked at it and many of us realizing that there was a term in that line on p. 167. The term "heterosexism" was a term that most of us had to confess that was the first time we'd ever even seen that line; and it came to our attention that perhaps heterosexism, which I interpreted to be those who are heterosexual using their power against those who are homosexual or who are not heterosexual—I interpreted it as a door opener to our statement of marriage being a man and a woman—could possibly be misused to become a heterosexist statement. And so, we as a committee—I was there—voted for the concurrence or non-concurrence. Part of what our argument was, we would be making a statement that could later be used against marriage being of one man and one woman, which is always considered a heterosexual relationship.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, you've had 3 speeches for, 3 speeches against so turn to the committee for final a statement concerning Calendar Item 492.

JUNK: The committee felt that the amendment does not improve what our current understand of human rights and it introduces a new category that caused many of us confusion and we felt to the general church may obscure what we really are trying to say as a church. Therefore, the committee recommends non-concurrence with this petition.

BISHOP BLAKE: Before we vote, we've had a note to remind the delegates that you can only vote on one keypad. The marshals have observed persons casting vote for delegation members who are missing. That is not according to the procedure of General Conference. Every seated delegate has access to a keypad. Let's honor the integrity of our community of faith and our covenant community by voting only on the keypad at your place of seating.

Is this a parliamentary inquiry over there on no. 8? The debate is closed on this issue. The debate is closed. We're

going to vote on Calendar Item 492. The committee has recommended non-concurrence.

DIANA FACEMYER (Northern Illinois): Dian—Cannot I not try...

BISHOP BLAKE: Ok, mic. 8. What is your inquiry?

FACEMYER: May I try an amendment?

BISHOP BLAKE: What? I'm sorry, mic. 8, please.

FACEMYER: I'd like—Bishop, I'd like to try an amendment, if ...

BISHOP BLAKE: Well, we've closed debate. And as we in our parliamentary procedure we have opportunity to deal with the issue. I will allow it because the previous question has not been called for. Make your amendment.

Remove Statement on Heterosexism

FACEMYER: Thank you, Bishop. In the last couple of speeches we've heard that the line on page 167 of the *DCA* on the top that reads, "in addition we oppose heterosexism in all its form" is causing some confusion. For the sake of the rest of the petition, I would request that we remove that statement and vote on the rest of the petition as it's before us.

BISHOP BLAKE: Would you restate your amendment as it would read if your amendment ...

FACEMYER: The amendment would be simply to delete the statement on the top of p. 167, which reads, "in addition, we oppose heterosexism in all its forms."

BISHOP BLAKE: Is there a second? Is there a second? It is moved and seconded. OK. This amendment has been made to the petition and the committee's recommendation has been non-concurrence. Now we dealt with this in the same way a couple of days ago. As a petition comes before the body, the body has the same access to it in terms of the committee's recommendations, So you do have access to the petition and this is an amendment for deletion of the petition of the sentence referred

to. That motion needs to get to the secretary. Is there debate on the amendment? Back at mic. 5. Yes.

RUTH PALMER (Texas): I move the previous question on all that's before us.

BISHOP BLAKE: You're moving the previous question on the amendment and the main motion. Is that correct?

PALMER: That is correct.

Questions on Rules

BISHOP BLAKE: Is there a second? This is a motion to cut off debate. It is not debatable. It requires two-thirds. I'm waiting for translation. The vote now is on to close debate on the amendment and the main motion. What's your point of order?

BEVERLY L. WILKES (Illinois Great Rivers): Bishop, Beverly Wilkes on Great Rivers Conference. There's been an amendment placed on the floor that has not been a debate. Our General Conference rules allows for debate, and I think it allows us either two to three for and against. So my point of order is I think that our General Conference rules allows for at least three speeches for and three against.

BISHOP BLAKE: What is the rule that you are referring to?

WILKES: I don't know. I don't have my book in front of me but I think it's around 15. If someone would remind me. If you would check in your Advance *DCA*. One of our conference parliamentarians could tell us.

BISHOP BLAKE: It would be helpful if you raise a point of order if you would raise what point of order do you have. Would you identify your point of order in terms of the rule?

WILKES: It may actually be General Conference Rule 15. I'm not sure. But I know our General Conference rules allows us to have three votes for, I mean three speeches—what is it, its Rule 15. (*unintelligible*) ...for the speakers, the number of speeches. I believe its 15.3 or 15.20. I'm not sure.

BISHOP BLAKE: I'll grant the point

of order. You've had one statement in favor of the Amendment. No. 3?

WILLIAM C. SMALLWOOD (Mississippi): Bill Smallwood from Mississippi. This is a point of order. Immediately after this, it says no secondary motion can come before the group.

(*pause*)

BISHOP BLAKE: Would you state your point of order again, sir.

SMALLWOOD: Yes, sir. There's been three speeches for and three speeches against. And I believe after that no secondary amendment can be made.

BISHOP BLAKE: And what page and what rule are you referring to?

SMALLWOOD: Hold on just a minute I have to find it. Alright, sir, it's Rule 8.2. "After three speeches for and three speeches against and provided"—no, that's not it. But it's here. I believe it's in here but I can't find it, right now, Bishop. If I do may I come back and make the point of order?

BISHOP BLAKE: I think if we go ahead and deal with the amendment and deal with the statements we can proceed in taking care of the amendment and the main motion. The amendment is before you. Yes? Mic 4.

JACKIE M. BLAIR (Northwest Texas): Bishop, Jackie Blair from Northwest Texas Conference. In our—on p. 105 under our parliamentary procedures, it does say, "to end debate and amendments, that you call for the previous question," which is what the lady did, I believe, back here when she asked that we call for the question.

BISHOP BLAKE: We have not had two speeches for, two speeches against the amendment. I am going to rule that the amendment is in order and if we would simply take care of this matter before us, I think we can proceed. Over here? Mic 4. The amendment is before you. The maker of the motion has made the statement.

TAKA ISHII (New York): Taka Ishii, New York Conference. I would like to support the amendment.

BISHOP BLAKE: Go ahead.

ISHII: I was born in Japan though I came from New York Annual Conference. I came from Japan and unlike the African brothers and sisters, my missionary taught me otherwise. My missionary taught me that we love God, we love our neighbors, and we are committed to justice. In spite of the fact we discussed this matter this morning, I have been reflecting personally this morning on the incredible blessings and grace given to us by God through the work of Jesus Christ in suffering and death and resurrection. I could not separate my reflection on the grace from my concern for the ways the church should live gracefully toward others as we struggle the issue of homosexuality and the church.

The Council of Bishops spoke on the Dammann case and many bishops expressed their opinions through their pastoral letters, and they certainly do have differences in their opinions. The Judicial Council made its ruling and members of the Judicial Council also disagreed with each other, and our General Conference delegates disagreed with each other as we witnessed in this morning's debate.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, let us accept the fact that we are not of one mind on this issue and that we disagree with each other in this United Methodist family. Please, do not silence the discussion of differences of opinion concerning the issue of homosexuality and the church, nor the differences in biblical interpretation.

One third of my congregations are gay and lesbian members, and I have been in this congregation for the last 17 years and I love them and I have to work with them. I was very moved by Bishop Kammerer's sermon the other day as she talked about the sins of racism. As I was listening her sermon, I was wondering how long, how long we have to wait for the church to include lesbian and gay United Methodists fully in the United Methodist family. This is what I was thinking when Bishop Kammerer was speaking in her sermon to us the other day. For all those faith-

ful and courageous gay Methodists who stay in an inhospitable homophobic...

BISHOP BLAKE: Please conclude your statement.

ISHII: ...church, we say, thanks be to God for you. And those of us in heterosexual majority confess that we have sinned against you and against God who made us in all in one family.

BISHOP BLAKE: Please conclude your statement.

ISHII: Please support this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: Recognize—we've had a statement for; is this a statement against? Is it a statement against? Mic 2.

Statements Against Amendment

BRADLEY LAURVICK (Rocky Mountain): Good afternoon. My name is Brad Laurvick and I am a young person from the Rocky Mountain Conference. The fact that—this will be a speech against the amendment. If this body is representative of the American population, 90 percent of the people in this room are heterosexual. So, the fact that 90 percent of the people in this room have never had to learn what heterosexism is and have never experienced heterosexism, is heterosexism. I understand this may not change the fact that you want it removed. However, we need to learn what heterosexism is so we can be aware of it and, in the future, care enough about it to make a statement regarding it.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, the amendment is before you. That was a statement against the amendment. You've had two statements for, one against. Is there a statement against the amendment? Against the amendment? Over here. Is this against the amendment?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

BISHOP BLAKE: Over here? Against the amendment?

KAREN OLIVETO (California-Nevada): Karen Oliveto, Cal-Nevada Annual Conference. I am against the amendment. Heterosexism is power and privilege used over those who are

not heterosexual. Heterosexism has caused gay men and lesbians to lose their jobs, hide in stifling closets, be battered and abused in the church and out. One speaker feared that this statement would challenge The United Methodist Church stances on homosexuality. If we believe that our stances are not based on heterosexism, but on scripture, tradition, experience, and reason, then we should have nothing to fear. I urge that we reject this amendment.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, you have had two and two. Mic 1. You have had two speeches for, two speeches against.

Regardless of Sexual Orientation

WILKES: Beverly Wilkes, Illinois Great Rivers Conference. I speak for the amendment and the reason I speak for the amendment is because this petition is not about unions, holy unions. This petition is about equal rights, regardless of sexual orientation, whether that be for heterosexuals or homosexuals.

The other thing I would point out to the body, The United Methodist Church does not determine the equal rights of the land. The petition is calling for The United Methodist Church to protect the equal rights of persons regardless of their sexual orientation, but the government determines what those equal rights are. So this really is not a question about deeming homosexual persons invisible by eliminating them from the *Book of Discipline*. This is a question that we assert as United Methodists. We call for the protection of equal rights of Muslims. We call for the equal protections of the rights of people in Iraq. We call for the protection of equal rights of people all around the world. So please do not be confused; do not be intimidated.

The federal government determines, and some states and some cities, what equal rights will be. The petition asks, if you accept this amendment which deletes *heterosexism*, then all this petition will say is that we as United Methodists, we encourage that peo-

ple's equal rights, not determined by us, but determined by the law of the land, that their equal rights be protected. So you are not in conflict with yourself or your soul if you do not promote homosexual lifestyle. This is about equal rights under the law that our United Methodist Church supports for everyone, whether migrant workers, homosexual persons, Islamic, or what have you. So please do not allow the spirit of confusion to keep you from doing what United Methodists have ascertained that we will always do, call for equal protection of person's equal rights determined by the government, not by The United Methodist Church.

BISHOP BLAKE: You have had all the statements for, you've had two statements against. Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment? OK, we will come back over to no. 1. No, I see somebody over at no. 4. I am trying to move back and forth. Now the person that is standing up is speaking against the amendment. This will—then we will turn to the committee for a statement. We'll vote on the amendment.

RAUL GARCIA (Mexico): [*simultaneous interpretation*] Raul Garcia from Mexico. I wish to speak in Spanish.

As my colleague who just spoke before me said, "we are not establishing what a person's civil rights are, that's decided by the government." But I can also see that here among us, here in the plenary of this conference there is certain confusion regardless of the terms and concepts included in this petition, and that's very dangerous. *The Book of Discipline* supports equal rights.

BISHOP BLAKE: The committee has a right to the last statement before we vote on the amendment.

JUNK: We have no statement on the amendment.

BISHOP BLAKE: No statement on the amendment made by the committee. Will the secretary read the motion of amendment by deletion?

CAROLYN M. MARSHALL: We move that the sentence on p. 167 of the *DCA*, which reads, "In addition, we oppose heterosexism in all its forms," and that the rest of the petition be retained.

BISHOP BLAKE: That is the amendment. Waiting for the translation. You are voting only on the amendment. Please vote now. [*Yes, 417; No, 499; Abstain, 11*]

The amendment is not sustained. You voted no on the amendment.

Now you have the main motion. You've had the three speeches for; three speeches against. The committee, I believe, made it's—did you make the final statement? Please make a final statement.

JUNK: Our *Discipline* currently affirms our church's position, which is "equal rights for all persons." For that reason the committee recommends non-concurrence with this petition.

BISHOP BLAKE: You are voting on Calendar Item 492. The committee's recommendation is non-concurrence. Please vote now. [*Yes, 630; No, 311; Abstain, 4*]

The committee's recommendation of non-concurrence is sustained.

I believe this completes this section of the work of Church and Society.

JUNK: It does. Thank you very much.

BISHOP BLAKE: We are now moving to... We are going to have a break in a few minutes, but we are now moving to the Faith and Order Legislative Committee. The goal of the calendar and agenda item was to deal with the issues related to the subject matter we've been dealing with, homosexuality. You need—I think it's helpful for you to know where we are. Faith and Order will have a series of about 10 or 11 petitions on this matter and then there are miscellaneous petitions from Discipleship, Financial Administration, Higher Education, and Judicial Administration. So there are about 16 additional calendar items on this subject. We will begin with Faith and

Order, and as I say, there will be a break in a few minutes.

Faith and Order on Homosexuality

PATRICIA FARRIS (California-Pacific): Thank you, Bishop Blake. Patricia Miller, California-Pacific Conference and chair of this legislative committee. Bishop, bishops, members of the General Conference, and guests, as I move into this legislation now coming from the Faith and Order Legislative Committee, having lifted up most of our leadership last night, I would like to now additionally express appreciation to one of our sub-subcommittee co-chairs, Joyce Waldon Bright from the Florida Conference. And, also, to express thanks to our recording secretary, to our pages, marshals, and translators; to the many visitors who by their presence and service assisted and supported our work; and to the great cloud of witnesses so powerfully present in our committee workroom.

Above all I wish to commend the faithful members of the committee who worked hard and faithfully together at times in song and prayer and silence, as well as in dialogue and debate. We shared, as we have in the body, these small, blue glass beads which remind us of our common baptism. And, so, as many have experienced, things happen when we spend time together in smaller groups in holy conferencing.

By the power of the Holy Spirit moving among us, as one of our visitors observed, despite our differing viewpoints, our deliberations were marked by fairness. It was evident, this person said, that among us patience was a virtue and respect was both given and received as we sought together to learn how to be of one heart. And we sincerely desire to carry that spirit now into today's deliberations.

As Bishop Blake mentioned we do have 11 items that we bring before the body this afternoon. These 11 items were not considered in subcommittee but in the committee of the whole; and, so, as chair of the legislative committee

I will be presenting them to you this afternoon.

Items Related to Paragraph 304.3

We begin with items related to Paragraph 304.3. We move now from the Social Principles to this language in 304.3 which pertains specifically to ordination. The first item that we bring is in the *DCA*, p. 1751; Item 1055, Petition 40457. It is found on the *ADCA* on p. 807. To repeat it is found in the *DCA*, p. 1751. It is Item 1055; Petition 40457, found on the *ADCA* on p. 807. The committee moves concurrence as amended by a vote of 48 to 36.

The committee's action to amend restores the language stricken in the original petition. Further, in order to clearly express the current position of the church, the wording in the second sentence is amended by deleting the word "since" and starting a new sentence with the word "therefore." These two sentences would thus read, "The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church." The action and the discussion of this committee of—on this petition was to make this paragraph clear and consistent, and to state very clearly the position of the church at this time. For your information it was adopted before hearing the recent Judicial Council ruling. It is before us now as language for the body to consider as a way to make the position of the church clear. A minority report has also been submitted.

Majority Report

BISHOP BLAKE: We will now have the presentation of the minority report.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL (New England): Scott Campbell, clergy member of the New England Conference. Bishop, delegates, friends, we bring this minority report to you today because we believe at this moment in history it offers hope—hope for healing a church deeply divided, as

we have seen over these last hours, over the matter of homosexuality.

For more than 30 years we have sought to find a common position that we can all embrace. We have failed. What we have found instead is strife, discord, and sorrow. The tragedy is that while we have been locked in conflict with one another our example has left the world unconvinced of the power of the Gospel. In the words of the Preamble to our Constitution we read, "The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world, and its very dividedness is a hindrance to its mission in the world." We believe that for the sake of that mission, it is time to explore new possibilities. We are persuaded that the best possibility for moving ahead is already contained in our founding document. Article 2 of our Constitution explicitly states that the annual conference shall have reserved for it the right to vote on "all matters relating to the character and conference relations of clergy members."

The time has come for the General Conference to stop trying to develop "one size fits all" legislation to deal with our deep differences. Our proposal calls for each annual or central conference to develop its own guidelines for dealing with the matter of homosexuality as it relates to "character and conference relations of its clergy members" using the wisdom already imbedded in our Constitution. Now some may fear that this would further divide our connection. We respectfully disagree. Instead we see it as the path toward healing.

BISHOP BLAKE: Move to conclusion, please.

CAMPBELL: We have established jurisdictions to recognize regional differences. We have ruled out in 1968 prohibitions against—a list of prohibitions about those coming into ministry. Finally, this is time for us to reclaim the wisdom of our heritage, to lift ourselves from division and discord, and to invest our time, energy, and passion in our mission to the world.

BISHOP BLAKE: Just for clarification to the body, thank you. I want to

ask the chairperson of the committee. The names are not published. I don't believe our rules require that they be published. But were the sufficient number of names submitted to you for the minority report? OK, just for clarification of the body, the minority report is properly before you according to the chairperson of the committee. Now, we will move to perfecting of the majority report. Is there anyone who desires to perfect the majority report? I see mic no. 8.

STEPHEN P. TAYLOR (South Carolina): Bishop, Stephen Taylor, South Carolina, clergy. Actually, I have a question about a point of order. Rule 27.3 doesn't say anything about a speech when a minority report is presented and with two minority reports presented, we've had extensive speeches. And I was wondering if that is our procedure that we will follow? Thank you.

(pause)

BISHOP BLAKE: It's common practice that in majority and minority reports in a substitute motion that, for the body to be able to perfect, it needs to hear the presentation and rationale for the motions. So this is the reason why the, the speech for both are given so the body has access to the understanding of both divisions of the committee who brings the recommendation for it to us. The perfecting of the majority report is before you. I see no one wishing the floor. Now, the perfection of the minority report is before you. Perfection of the minority report, mic 4.

JAEWON KIM (New York): Bishop, my name is JaeWon Kim from New York Annual Conference, lay. I came to USA as an exchange physician in 1970 as a Korean immigrant. Four years later I was given chance to pick up American medical license exam. When I was in medical school in 1968 ...

BISHOP BLAKE: Are you making a motion?

KIM: ...homosexual was not allowed, but in USA, 1974, I was told

check homosexual in psychiatric exam, that's normal practice. So we are homosexually ...

BISHOP BLAKE: Excuse me; are you making a motion for perfection? Or are you speaking to the motion?

KIM: I'm talking about, I'm supporting minority report because homosexual ...

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, that will come later in the debate.

KIM: ... is a normal category in psychiatry.

BISHOP BLAKE: I will recognize you, that will come later in the debate when the motion for the substitute motion is made, but right now we're just perfecting the minority report. Is this a perfection motion, on the minority report, perfecting the minority report.

*Replace "Annual"
with "Jurisdictional"*

LONNIE D. BROOKS (Alaska Missionary): Lonnie Brooks, lay, Alaska. I move to amend the minority report in the fourth to the last line where it says, "each annual or central conference" to replace the word "annual" with "jurisdictional," and if there's a second, I wish to speak to that.

BISHOP BLAKE: Is there a second?

BROOKS: There is no parallel.

BISHOP BLAKE: Is there a second?

BROOKS: I'm sorry.

BISHOP BLAKE: Yes, I hear one. OK, go ahead.

BROOKS: There is no parallelism, Bishop, between annual and central conferences; the parallel is jurisdictional and central because central conferences also have annual. And that would, in my judgment, make this a better minority report, which I support.

BISHOP BLAKE: This is a motion to amend by striking "annual" and substituting the word "jurisdictional." Is there debate on this amendment? Would the presenter of the minority report want to make a statement concerning this?

CAMPBELL: Simply to say, Bishop, that we recognize that annual conferences do constitute the central conferences but it may be the case that some central conferences would want to define this for themselves, so this legislation is permissive for any annual conference and/or central conference to make these decisions.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, you have the amendment before you and a statement by the minority report chair. What you're voting on is the amendment by deleting "annual" and replacing it with "jurisdictional." Simply waiting for the translation. You're ready to vote. Please vote now on the amendment. Does not prevail. [*Yes, 232; No, 659; Abstain, 13*]

We're on the perfection of the minority report. Now we need, there's no more perfection; we need the motion that the minority report be substituted for the majority report as a substitute motion.

CAMPBELL: Scott Campbell, New England, I so move.

BISHOP BLAKE: It has been moved and seconded that the substitute motion become the main motion and now it is open for debate. And we are debating the matter between the minority and majority report. The floor is open for debate. I see no. 8, over here. Please state whether or not you are speaking for or against the minority report.

On Ordination of Gays and Lesbians

THOMAS A. CLEWOW (Wyoming): Thank you, thank you, Bishop, I am speaking on behalf of the minority report. My name is Thomas Clewov; I'm a clergy delegate from the Wyoming Annual Conference. I'm born and bred in this denomination. I'm the child of its Sunday Schools; I am the product of one of its finest theological schools. I have served in variety of capacities for 40 years in the ministry of this church.

You taught me to think; you taught me to do biblical exegesis; you taught me to reflect theologically; and I have done so. And I am in disagreement with the—has the microphone stopped—I

am in disagreement with the majority opinion reflected thus far in this and previous General Conferences.

I now serve a congregation that has a 175 year history. Within the last 20 years that congregation has become affiliated with a reconciling ministry network. It, too, has thought, and reflected, and done its biblical exegesis, and brought its theological reflection to bear on these issues. On the 18th of January we participated in the Shower of Stoles project. It was my thought when we agreed to do that, that when the stoles arrived I would preach a sermon on that Sunday that periodically would be punctuated by persons rising from their pews and standing in place wearing those stoles.

I was somewhat astounded to learn when they arrived that they were not to be worn by any person. And so, on Friday afternoon our team hung those stoles around that gothic cathedral until it lined its walls and its chancel, lay across its altar and on its pulpit and its lectern. And as I stood there silently witnessing those limp stoles hanging along those surfaces, it was a more powerful witness than any other could have been—of the loss of the leadership, the inspiration, the courage, and the dedication which just now is sitting outside the bars of this space because of the positions this General Conference has adopted. It is our shame, but more importantly, in the spirit of St. Paul, it is an offense to the body of Christ.

BISHOP BLAKE: Please conclude.

CLEWOW: All of the gifts of the whole community need to be called forth and affirmed for our community to be whole and the body to be complete. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: This is a statement for the minority report. Is there a statement against the minority report? Turn over here to mic 1. Please clarify that you are against the minority report.

On Common Standards

WILEY B. STEPHENS (North Georgia): Bishop, I rise to speak against.

I'm Wiley Stephens, clergy member of the North Georgia Conference and a member of the Faith and Order Committee. I rise to speak against the minority for this reason: the issue in the minority report is not homosexuality. That's a debate that we've had and will have again. At the heart of the minority strikes at our unity as a denomination. It's important for elders and deacons as they move across conference lines to have met a standard that we all agree upon, in education and other ways. If we become each annual conference setting its own standards, we would in effect have 60 some odd denominations operating within our country. Let's stay united. If we need to change, if we can come to an agreement; let's at least be one as we go forward as United Methodists.

BISHOP BLAKE: We've had one argument for, one argument against. I'll go to this section, no. 7, mic no. 7. Yes. OK, he's coming this way. Yes, go ahead and go—No.2. That's fine. Please state whether or not you're speaking for or against the minority report.

CHARLES SCHUSTER (Rocky Mountain): My name is Charles Shuster, and I am speaking for the minority report.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK.

SCHUSTER: It's an interesting argument that this minority report strikes at the heart of our unity. Twenty minutes ago, I cited Paragraph 537 and how it is that the central conferences in Paragraph 537.9 shall have power to make such changes and adaptations in the *Book of Discipline* as the special condition and mission of the church in the area require. That doesn't strike at the heart of our unity. There are certain conditions in particular areas that require particular responses, and that's what this minority report is asking us to allow; and I hope we vote in favor of it. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: You've had two for, one against. Statement against? Go back, go back to which would be mic. 8, I believe, yes. Sorry it's a person

clear—yes, moving toward mic 8 with a sign in his right hand there. Yes.

WILLIAM T. MCCLENDON (South Carolina): Thank you, Bishop. Tim McClendon, South Carolina.

BISHOP BLAKE: Are you speaking for or against?

MCCLENDON: I'm speaking against the minority report. Like Dr. Stephens from North Georgia and also in response to the last speech in favor of the minority report, I am concerned about this minority report because our polity is connectional not congregational, regardless of the issue. In Judicial Council Decision 886 that was given to us in May of 2000—if I remember correctly—it was stated, and I'm going to quote from it, "The *Discipline* is the law of the church which regulates every phase of the life and work of the church. As such, annual conferences, may not legally negate, ignore, or violate provisions of the *Discipline* with which they disagree, even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections to those provisions."

Therefore, with this decision from the Judicial Council, and the majority will of this body already expressed, I would encourage, and even urge, to save our denomination, to save our polity, that we vote against this minority report. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: Now you've had the required number of speeches for and against. You've had two for, two against. I will turn here to mic 2, the woman that raised her hand. You are correct. I appreciate you coming to the microphone, because I did say I would recognize you. I apologize. Thank you for reminding me, and mic 4.

JAEWON KIM (New York): Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: Are you speaking for or against the minority report?

KIM: Minority report, for. My name is JaeWon Kim, lay from New York Annual Conference. I came to USA as an exchange physician in 1970 as a Korean immigrant. Four years later, I

was given chance to take American medical license exam; and then I had to check the differences. I grade in the medical school back home. And I was told in psychiatric exam that you must check homosexual as normal. If you say abnormal, you're not going to get the school. So based on that, heterosexual being majority? Homosexual being minority? Once upon a time why was majority, if it was minority? Man was majority, female was minority. This history repeat—majority oppress minority. Is that Jesus Christ's teaching? Let's pray about it.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, you've had three for, two against. I call on this person here. Were you speaking for or against? For. There's room for one speech against. I'll recognize this person over here, mic 4. The person back there, sir. Thank you. He's moving to the mic.

GARCIA [*simultaneous interpretation*]: We are not of one opinion or two, but rather many. How many would we have to include in the *Book of Discipline* if we had to include all of them? If we support this minority report, we would be supporting a document that contains a contradiction within itself. Because on the one hand, we are saying that homosexuality is not compatible with Christian teachings, but then we say that some Christians are in disagreement. Logically, that says that some are against the Christian teachings.

Within this conference, we are seeking living together peacefully. Our agreement and our disagreements may contradict what is stated in the Bible. You can change the *Discipline* but not the Bible. When it was decided that the decision should be by annual conferences separately, we're initiating the legal separation of The United Methodist Church; and that would separate The Methodist Church of Mexico from The United Methodist Church.

Finally, I would like to say that once the conference has voted over any given subject, we should all accept the decision that was made. We can no longer

say, "I believe" but rather, "We believe." We cannot say, "some believe," rather "we believe." Thank you.

Closing Questions

BISHOP BLAKE: You've had your three speeches for, three speeches against. So there's no more debate on the matter. We will turn to the final statements. You have an inquiry? Go to mic 2 for a question. Do you have a question back there? OK, remember we are moving to the final statements by the minority and the majority presenters.

ROBERT L. LOCKABY JR. (Holston): Bob Lockaby, Holston. The minority report is not introduced in the *DCA* by language that explains what the language of the minority report is intended to do. I believe it's obvious, but I want to make sure that it's clear that the language of the minority report is proposed to replace all of Paragraph 304.3. Is that the intent of the report?

BISHOP BLAKE: Yes, I see the presenter nodding his head yes. That is the intent—to replace that language. Question on mic 8, and then we're going to move to the committee chairs.

LONNIE CHAFIN (Northern Illinois): Thank you. Thank you, Bishop. Lonnie Chafin, North Illinois Conference. Two quick questions. One, is The Methodist Church of Mexico an independent body and therefore not governed by the *Discipline*?

BISHOP BLAKE: I think there are persons here from that church, and they should answer that question.

GARCIA [*simultaneous interpretation*]: That's right, senator. [*unintelligible*] governed by the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church. We're governed by the *Book of Discipline* of the Mexican Methodist Church.

CHAFIN: My second question, Bishop, is for the Board of Higher Education and Ministry. I am interested in the states' rights part of the minority report, and I see in the Constitution that The United Methodist Church assigns to annual conferences "all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members."

My question for the Board of Higher Ed and Ministry is, is this minority report even a possibility? I mean, we shouldn't consider it if it's something that is not consistent with what we can do as a denomination.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, that is a question of the board and the board is not a party to this dialogue and debate. I would interpret that as an argument rather than an inquiry. Let's go the presenter of the minority report and then the majority vote, and then we will vote and break.

Closing Statements

CAMPBELL: Thank you, Bishop. First of all, this is not a motion that negates any action that this annual conference—or this General Conference—has already taken. Up until now, we have been dealing with the Social Principles, which we have determined are instructive and advisory as we make such decisions. All annual conferences would certainly be encouraged to consider what guidance the Social Principles give as they formulate their own positions around this matter.

We are about to make a decision this week about spending some \$30 to \$35 million to tell the world out there who we are through Igniting Ministries. As long as we allow this debate to fracture us and dominate our discussions, we might as well be throwing that money down a hole because the world is only going to see us as the denomination that fights about homosexuality. We have a historic opportunity before us today to move beyond division and discord in a manner that is entirely consistent with our history and our polity. I urge you to vote in favor of the minority report.

BISHOP BLAKE: Now we will hear the presenter of the majority report.

PATRICIA FARRIS (California-Pacific): The discussions in the committee focused around the language of 304.3 and the strongly held and deeply felt conviction of the minority of the majority of the committee members that the current language of the *Discipline* is an important affirmation

and articulation of the current position of the church. Moreover, through the amendment offered through the majority that this position is made more clearer through the amended language offered. Therefore, I support the majority position.

BISHOP BLAKE: The motion is to make the minority report to substitute the minority for the majority. So if you support the minority report you will vote yes, if you do not support the minority report you will vote no. I'm waiting for the translation. Please vote now. [*Yes, 303; No, 638; Abstain, 3*]

(pause)

The minority report is not sustained. Now the majority report is the main motion. We are ready to vote. If you will support the majority report on the recommendation of the committee, you will vote yes, if you do not you will vote no. Please vote now. [*Yes, 674; No, 262; Abstain, 15*]

(pause)

It is sustained. I want to apologize to the party because my order did not have that we were going to deal with this item first and therefore delayed the break. I know it is late in the afternoon, but I also know you also need a break. We will begin again with legislation in fifteen minutes.

(break)

BISHOP BLAKE: Thank you and let's be seated and we will begin, we will begin, so on your way to your seats, let's not visit with one another. We've got about 30 minutes of calendar item business yet to work on. We're going to try to utilize this time. Move to our seats. As you're moving to the seats, I'm going to call on the chair of Faith and Order for the introduction of the next calendar item so we can get those, that material at least on the screen as most persons have taken their seat. Let's go right ahead.

Disagreeing on Ordination

PATRICIA FARRIS (California-Pacific): Thank you, bishop. The next

item which comes to the body from the Faith and Order Committee is found on the *DCA* p. 1751. It is Item 1056, Petition 40701. It is found in the *ADCA* on p. 807. To repeat, it is in the *DCA* on p. 1751, it is Item 1056, Petition No. 40701 in the *ADCA* p. 807.

On this item, the committee recommends concurrence as amended by a vote of 43 to 37. Let me explain the amendment. The amendment adds the words by adding to the first line in the petition so that it now reads, "amend 304.3 by adding," but then deletes all the additional language of the original petition and inserts this sentence, "as this difficult judgment is made, it is acknowledged that faithful Christians hold differing positions on this matter."

Again, the committee recommends concurrence as amended. In fact, the committee's own deliberations clearly reflected that differing views are held by faithful Christians. This amendment now before you would acknowledge this present reality in the language of the *Discipline*.

BISHOP BLAKE: 1056 is before you, and the committee is recommending concurrence. Amended as follows, look over here at mic. 1, please. As you come to the mic, indicating whether you are speaking for or against the recommendation of the committee.

WOLFGANG RUHNOW (Germany East): Wolfgang Ruhnow, East German Conference. I try to speak English and I speak in favor to this commitment, and let me make just a general remark.

I feel more and more strangulated in our, this church is making their ways and looking for its way in an invigoristic way. Prior to this, I have lived in the east part of Germany in the communist system, this political system, it break down, not only by economic pressures, it will break down for the reason that the idolatry and the reality lent more and more power from one another, and I wouldn't like that this happened in my church. And therefore, I hold this amendment, or this sentence bring it to a point. Thanks.

BISHOP BLAKE: It's a statement

for. Is there a statement against the committee's recommendation? I'll turn to mic 3.

HOLLY GRANT (East Ohio): Holly Grant from East Ohio. I don't have a statement against at this point, but I was wondering if we could get a clarification, because there are some things marked out on this petition, and I just want to be sure we're all working from the same language.

BISHOP BLAKE: Chair of the committee, speak to this.

FARRIS: I'm not sure if I'm understanding your question, but let me try. The amendment adds the words, "by adding" in the first line, then deletes all the additional language of the original petition and inserts the sentence that is printed in the *DCA*.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, that was a question for a clarification, not a speech. Is there a speech against the committee? Another question here, and then I'll go over here. Another question here. Mic. 3 is on.

WILLIAM C. SMALLWOOD (Mississippi): This is Bill Smallwood from Mississippi. I want to make it clear if we accept this, we will be accepting removing the part about, says "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Self-avowed, practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates." Are we removing that? You said we were.

FARRIS: No.

SMALLWOOD: Read the whole thing the way you would have it.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, let's ask the question and then...

SMALLWOOD: OK.

BISHOP BLAKE: Let's get the answer. The committee chair will clarify.

FARRIS: I could read it if it would help you. This particular item is an additional amendment to the language just adopted by the body, which was to retain the language of 304.3 with the amendments in the sentence, "the practice of homosexuality."

I'll try reading it. "The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, self-avowed, practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church." That language along with all the existing language of 304.3 is retained. And the sentence in this amendment would be then added to that paragraph.

Relationship to Fast Actions

SMALLWOOD: Well, it seems like we're dealing again here with what we dealt with this morning in Eddie Fox's minority report then that we'd be adding back what we defeated this morning in his minority report. Is not, is that not the fact of what we would be doing?

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, that is a statement against the motion. We've had a argument for and against. We want to go over here to mic 1; please come forward to mic 1, right here, and let's deal with mic 1. I recognized him first.

ROBERT E. HAYES JR. (Texas): Bishop, I am Bob Hayes. I'm from the Texas Annual Conference. I rise in opposition to this petition simply because as a member of this legislative committee, this Petition 40701 was brought to our attention after the adoption of 40457 in which we established very clearly the language that we have just voted on.

Now, we come back and it's quite obvious to me that the language of this petition, or the intent of this petition, strikes at the very language which we have just established. And in essence what we have done is to create a petition which, which major intent was to remove the language which we have just covered. I have tried to make the legislative committee aware of this on several occasions but since they were engaged one at a time, this is the problem that we're going to encounter when each petition is brought to the floor that seeks to strike at the heart of the language that we have just estab-

lished. So, I rise in opposition to this petition.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, you've had one statement for and two against. Is there a statement for the committee's recommendation? I'll go clear to the back, in the center section.

MATTHEW T. SINK (Western North Carolina): Matt Sink, Western North Carolina Conference, lay. I have a point of question. If the maker of this amendment to the amendment in the Advance *DCA* could read the whole thing starting with what's been amended. Because there are many of us who are confused because you have not read the whole thing yet; you've just said we are adding this and subtracting that and so if it could just be read so that we could all understand what we're dealing with here. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: I think it would be helpful because we're working off the *Discipline* rather than technically the petition that's in the *DCA*. If we could work off the *Discipline*, and then have it read as the committee is recommending, that would be most clear for the body. Would that be possible for the committee to do that, and read it in its entirety so that the body can be clear concerning what the proposal of the committee is concerning this paragraph?

FARRIS: Bishop, it is, I will read it; it is my understanding that we're working from the *Discipline* as amended by the previous action just adopted by the body.

BISHOP BLAKE: That is correct.

FARRIS: OK, then Paragraph 304.3 would read: "While persons set apart by the church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, self-avowed, practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church." Then the sentence

in this amendment would be, would follow: “As this difficult judgment is made, it is acknowledged that faithful Christians hold differing positions on this matter.”

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, that will be the paragraph that is recommended in its entirety if this motion is passed. We’ve had two arguments against, one for. Go back, is your argument for? On mic 6?

SHARON L. BASSETT (North Central New York): Thank you, Bishop, Sharon Bassett, North Central New York Conference, speaking for the amendment. I just want to say to this body that as a fairly new Christian working with individuals to bring and make disciples for Christ, I haven’t really heard in all the arguments how with our current language we are going to be honest in trying to make disciples for Christ—whether that is with youth or older individuals seeking to know about Christ. And I believe that we need to be honest about where we are as a denomination. And therefore I move that you vote for this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, you’ve had the required number of two and two. I think, clear back by no. 8, clear back in the corner, someone was raising. Yes, stand up, you’re the person.

DEBBIE FISHER (Northern Illinois): Debbie Fisher, Northern Illinois Conference. I serve a large suburban congregation.

BISHOP BLAKE: Are you speaking for or against?

FISHER: I’m speaking for the amendment. I serve a large suburban congregation and our differences of opinion in that church are as vast as they are within this body. But we acknowledge our differences; we love and respect each other; and our church thrives because of it. I strongly support this amendment so that we as a General Conference can acknowledge our differences and love and respect each other in spite of them.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, one state-

ment against. Here at the front of this section, yes, standing up, mic 1.

JAMES B. MOONEYHAN (North Georgia): Mooneyhan, North Georgia, clergy. Understanding the struggles people have personally with this, and I think we all understand that, but it just seems to me that it’s incompatible to make the statement in the first 2 sentences and then come along and say the church is divided or has a divided mind. It just doesn’t make sense and it just seems that you can’t have one and the other. You’ve got to have, I mean those are two different statements. It’s like saying this card is yellow and this card is pink. So, I say that we should vote against it. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, we’ve had three votes, three statements for, three-against. We’ll turn to the committee for the last statement before you take action. The debate is closed. The debate is closed. We’ll turn to the committee chair.

FARRIS: This amendment clearly reflects the experience of the committee itself as we shared differing views as faithful Christians. This amendment would acknowledge this present reality within the language of this paragraph.

BISHOP BLAKE: OK, just waiting for translation. We’re voting on Calendar Item 1056. The language has been read in its entirety. The committee is recommending concurrence. Please vote now on Calendar Item 1056. [*Yes, 436; No, 466, Abstain, 6*]

The committee is not sustained. You have non-concurred with the item.

Turn now to the next calendar item.

Candidates for Ministry

FARRIS: The next item is in the *DCA*, p. 1751, Item 1061, Petition 40018. It is in the *ADCA* on p. 806. *DCA*, p. 1751, Item 1061, Petition 40018, in the *ADCA*, p. 806. This is perhaps a relatively minor amendment on the same paragraph. It assumes the first action of the committee and the body. It retains the words “self-avowed” in both the paragraph and the footnote. In the next part of the sen-

tence, it deletes the word “accepted” and replaces it with the word “certified” to reflect the terminology of our existing ordination process, so that the phrase would now include this language “are not to be certified as candidates.” The committee recommends concurrence as amended.

BISHOP BLAKE: This item is before you. Yes, I see, over here, mic 5. Please state whether or not you are speaking for or against.

D. GIB WALTON (Texas): I am speaking against.

BISHOP BLAKE: Go ahead, sir.

WALTON: Gib Walton, Texas Conference, lay. I served on the Faith and Order Committee. It’s my understanding, and I know there are others here that have much more expertise in this than I do, but, by, if we were to adopt this language and change from “accepted” to “certification” or “certified,” we are moving the process further along the line that the accepted language would put the process in the determination at the beginning of the line.

I would also say that this was an area as Dr. Bob Hayes has already indicated that there was much debate and, and much discussion in our committee, as to whether once we had already established the language of Paragraph 304.3 as it had been established, whether or not we should even be going back in to this language time and time again. And I think there are several more petitions that are also in the *DCA* that would fall under that category that, I believe, should be handled in the same way we handled all of those petitions with the Social Principles and should all be non-concurred in one vote. This is another one of those. So, I voice my opinion that we should vote against this.

I think it changes the process to an earlier process. I think this decision needs to be made up front for both the candidate’s fairness and for the fairness and what’s best for our denomination. Thank you.

BISHOP BLAKE: Statement against

the committee's recommendation. I'll go back to mic 8. Yes. Right there. Thank you. Are you speaking for or against?

YOUNG-HO CHUN (Kansas East): For the amendment. Young-Ho Chun, Kansas East. The process took this way, the chair ruled that each petition is going to be treated as independently from each other, and in that, however, acknowledging previous action, this small amendment was inserted in order to reflect our theology of forgiveness and acceptance is much broader than polity driven statement. And this is a statement dealing with the ordination process and acceptance with, as it is accepted, in the original language, acceptance will probably debar all the people from the process. The certification language will deal with due process of the ordination process. Therefore, I urge you to vote in favor of the amendment.

BISHOP BLAKE: We have had one statement for, one statement against. I think you are ready to vote. I don't see anyone. The committee has the right to make the last statement and we would turn to the committee for this statement. No statement is going to be made. So now you will vote on the recommendation of the committee, Calendar Item 1061. It is, the committee is recommending concurrence as amended. I am waiting a moment for the translation. Calendar Item 1061. Please vote now. [*Yes, 484; No, 434, Abstain, 11*]

You have sustained the recommendation of concurrence by the committee.

I am going to stop on the calendar items now. We will pick these up again under Bishop Oden this evening. Let me make an inquiry of the body. We have received word that a—the Judicial Council decision has been received by the secretary. I would suggest that you are all interested in this and that we extend the time, only for the reading of the Judicial Council decision and announcements. That is all the extension of the time that would be. I, if there is, is there any objection to

extending the time to hear the reading of the Judicial Council decision, announcements and closing prayer? If not, we will proceed and we will turn to Carolyn Marshall for the reading, first, of the Judicial Council decision and then we will have announcements and the closing prayer.

Judicial Council Decision

CAROLYN MARSHALL: Decision No. 985. Request for Declaratory Decision from the General Conference regarding the application of the *Discipline* to Actions of an Annual Conference in a Church Trial and the Meaning, Application, or Effect of ¶ 304.3 of the *Discipline* to the Findings of the Trial Court.

Digest: The Judicial Council does not have authority to review the findings of the trial court in the Rev. Karen T. Dammann case. A bishop may not appoint one who has been found by a trial court to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual.

Statement of Facts: On a motion from a delegate, the 2004 General Conference requested a declaratory decision of the Judicial Council on the following questions: (1) In light of Judicial Council Decision 886 and the one just handed down, 984, what is the application of the *Book of Discipline* to the ruling of the trial court in its verdict in the case of Rev. Karen Dammann? (2) In light of the finding of the trial court that the Rev. Karen Dammann is a self-avowed practicing homosexual, and in light of Judicial Council Decision 886 and the decision just handed down, 984, what is the meaning, application, and effect of ¶304.3 of the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church which states that self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church, regarding whether a bishop may or may not appoint someone found by a trial court to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual.

Jurisdiction: The Judicial Council

has jurisdiction under ¶ 2610 of the 2000 *Discipline*.

Analysis and Rationale:

Question 1: As relates to the findings of the trial court in the case of the Rev. Karen T. Dammann, the Judicial Council has no authority to review the findings of that trial court. Paragraph 2715.10 states, "The church shall have no right of appeal from findings of the trial court."

Question 2: The following comments in the analysis and rationale do not address the case of the Rev. Karen T. Dammann. This decision shall be applied only prospectively. The Judicial Council rendered a declaratory decision as to the meaning, application, and effect of ¶ 304.3 of the 2000 *Discipline* in Decision 984. That decision is now incorporated into this decision by reference.

A bishop may not appoint a clergy person who has been found by a trial court to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual. It is, however, up to a trial court to make that determination.

Paragraph 31 of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church states in part: "The annual conference is the basic body in the church and, as such, shall have reserved to it, the right to vote on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution."

Under the provisions of ¶ 328.1 of the 2000 *Discipline*, all elders in full connection and in good standing in the annual conference are entitled to an appointment. A bishop does not have the authority to refuse to appoint any elder in full connection who is in good standing in the annual conference.

Decision: The Judicial Council does not have authority to review the findings of the trial court of the Reverend Karen T. Dammann case. A bishop may not appoint one who has been found by a trial court to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual.

May 4, 2004. John G. Corry, President. Sally Curtis Askew, Secretary.

Dissenting and Concurring Opinion

Dissenting and Concurring Opinion, Decision 985. We dissent from the Judicial Council's ruling that it does not have jurisdiction to respond to question one of the request for declaratory decision from the General Conference. The Judicial Council has properly stated that it has no authority to review the findings of the trial court in the case of the Reverend Karen T. Dammann, but that it does not—but that is not the question asked in the request for a declaratory decision. The first question asked by the General Conference requests a declaratory decision on the application of the *Book of Discipline* to the ruling of the trial court in its verdict in the case of Rev. Karen T. Dammann in light of Decisions 886 and 984. The Judicial Council has jurisdiction over this request under ¶ 2610 of the 2000 *Discipline*. Where a trial court jury negates or ignores the *Discipline* the only vehicle for the church to hold the trial court jury accountable for such action is through the vehicle of a declaratory decision request. As ¶ 2610 provides, the Judicial Council shall have jurisdiction to make a ruling in the nature of a declaratory decision as to the application of the *Discipline*. We believe that the actions of the trial court jury in the trial of Rev. Karen T. Dammann raise serious questions that go to the core of the application of the *Discipline*.

The *Discipline* is “the only official and authoritative book of law of The Methodist Church, in paren, (United Methodist Church)” Decision 96. The *Discipline* “regulates every phase of the life and work of the church, Decision 886. All entities of the church are bound by the provisions of the *Discipline* and no entity or individual member of the church has a right to negate or ignore the *Discipline* . . . To do so, would leave the church without any enforceable law which would lead to chaos in the church,” Decision 886.

The Judicial Council is charged with interpreting church law and deciding questions that involve the constitutionality, meaning, application or effect of the *Discipline* or any portion thereof. ¶ 54.5 in the Constitution; ¶ 2610.1 in the 2000 *Book of Discipline*, Decision 463. Paragraph 55 of the Constitution says the decisions of the Judicial Council are final.

A church trial on charges brought against a clergy member of an annual conference must be conducted in accordance with church law enunciated in the *Discipline* and an annual conference through its trial court may not negate, ignore or violate church law set forth in the *Discipline*. In like manner, a trial jury is not free to disregard the interpretation that the Judicial Council has given to church law. When an annual conference, or an entity of an annual conference, negates, ignores or violates provisions of the *Discipline*, its action in doing so is null, void and of no affect. See Decisions 876, 878, 900, 983. An annual conference trial court is an entity of the Church.

The trial court in the trial of the Reverend Karen T. Dammann negated, ignored and violated the *Discipline*, specifically ¶ 304.3 of the *Discipline*. The trial court sustained the specification that the Reverend Karen T. Dammann is a self-avowed practicing homosexual, but refused to sustain the charge that she had engaged in practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teaching. The law of the Church is that “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching,” ¶ 304.3 in the 2000 *Discipline*, Decisions 980 and 984. In Decision 980 the Judicial Council said, “The practice of homosexuality is declared by the *Discipline* to be incompatible with Christian teaching.” This was the law of the Church when the charges were brought and the trial held. The application of this provision of Church law to the findings of the trial court is not an *ex post facto* application. The trial court in the trial of the Reverend Karen T. Dammann negated,

ignored and violated provisions of the *Discipline*. Therefore, its ruling in failing to sustain the charge that the Rev. Karen T. Dammann has engaged in practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teaching is null, void and of no affect.

We concur with the Judicial Council's response to the second question asked by the General Conference that a bishop may not appoint one who has been found by a trial court to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual. Paragraph 304.3 of the *Discipline* provides, in relevant part: “Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.”

In Decision 920, the Judicial Council held that the prohibition of appointment contained in ¶ 304.3 must be exercised in compliance with the rights of all persons who are in full membership. Paragraph 304.3 establishes one minimum standard for the ordained ministry of the church, not only with respect to ordination, but also for good standing in appointment. As stated in Decision 920, “[W]hile the annual conference makes any determination which would effect a change in ministerial standing and conference relations, it is the General Conference which establishes the minimum standards for the ordained ministry of the church. The Constitution, ¶ 15, gives the General Conference the power to fix the basic requirements for ministry. Paragraph 304.3 of the *Discipline* was enacted by the General Conference pursuant to the power invested in it by the Constitution.”

The constitutionality of ¶ 304.3 was affirmed in Decision 544. Decision 544 states, “[o]rdination in The United Methodist Church is not local, not provincial, but worldwide. While each Annual Conference is a door through which one may enter the ministry of the entire church, the Annual Conference

cannot reduce nor avoid stipulations established by the General Conference which must be met by the church's ministry everywhere." This principal has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Judicial Council. See Decisions 313, 318, 325, 612, 823, 862. Decision 920 declares that ¶ 304.3 "is such a minimum standard, not only for ordination, but also for good standing and appointment." See also Decision 844.

Decision 920, as modified by Memorandum 930, outlined a procedure which has to be followed to insure that fair process is accorded a clergy member of an annual conference whose eligibility for appointment is questioned under ¶ 304.3. Where the process outlined in Decision 920 culminates with a trial, and where the trial court sustains a specification that the clergy member is a self-avowed practicing homosexual, the clergy member is no longer in good standing under ¶ 325.1 and cannot be appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church as provided in ¶ 304.3. No such clergy member could then be listed on the roll of clergy who are in good standing in the annual conference. The presiding bishop of the annual conference has both the authority and the responsibility to rule out of order any motion which would have the affect of listing such a person on the roll of clergy members who are in good standing. See Decision 690.

Fair process has been accorded Rev. Karen T. Dammann, and the result is she is found to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual. The application of the *Discipline* to the finding of the trial court means Rev. Karen T. Dammann is not in good standing and cannot be appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

Signed: Mary A. Daffin, Rudolfo C. Beltran, Keith D. Boyette, James Holsinger.

Concurrence and Dissent

Concurring in part and dissenting in part, Decision 985.

We concur with the majority in say-

ing that the Judicial Council does not have jurisdiction in Question 1. Additionally, we believe the Judicial Council does not have jurisdiction to consider the request in Question 2. This is simply an attempt to find a way to overturn the trial court decision in the case of the Rev. Karen T. Dammann. Paragraph 275.10 of the 2000 *Discipline* is very clear in its statement that the decision of the trial court is final and that the church has no appeal from that decision. Further, this attempt is in direct contravention of ¶ 31 of the Constitution, which gives only the annual conference the right to vote on matters of conference relations of clergy members. The General Conference may not erode those rights by continually adding requirements which take that right away from the annual conferences. The prevailing opinion erodes those rights of the annual conference even further than the General Conference has already done.

Signed: Sally Curtis Askew, Sally Brown Geis, and Larry Pickens.

This concludes the reading of the decision.

Announcements

BISHOP BLAKE: You will now turn to announcements. And the announcements are coming out as Bishop John Innis from Liberia is to come for our closing prayer. Let's listen for announcements. Let's hold our place. It will be helpful for a person to hear.

MARSHALL: Just a request, that anyone who has the minority report for Petition 40994, please get it to Brent Salsgiver, Section I, Row 1, as soon as possible.

These two appear to be conflicting announcements. I guess youth and young adults can figure out which one they want to use. One is that the youth and young adults please come to the youth and young adult hospitality room immediately following our recess for dinner—for a gathering and dinner. And the other one is, the bishops are providing for a pizza dinner for the young people who are delegates. I'd

like to commend the bishops and invite both them and the youth and young adult delegates to Room 335 for dinner as soon as we recess. I think that's what that one says.

And then this one is of another nature, and perhaps could also be included in our prayer time—in addition to the one we had this morning—as far as the delegates from Puerto Rico who had to go back because of the death in the family.

Members of the Central Texas delegation invite the conference to join in remembering Karen Greenwaldt in our prayers this week. Karen's treatment for cancer has prohibited her attendance this week, and we pray that God will bless her with strength and healing.

BISHOP BLAKE: As Bishop Innis comes to close our time with prayer, I simply want to say thank you for your grace and your discernment this day as we've worked together.

(prayer)

Tuesday Evening, May 4, 2004

BISHOP WILLIAM ODEN (Dallas Area): Take your seats, if you please, that we might begin the evening session.

(pause)

During the dinner break, I came in to an empty hall and as I sat here I sensed something different about this General Conference—in the reverence of communication even in the intensive debates. And as I wrestled with it, it dawned on me the entire General Conference is surrounded by the Communion table. I'm sure that this was intentional, but I hadn't seen it from this vantage point, with the delegates and the bleachers all the way around the bishop's spouses, the bishops, the presiding officers, the choirs—all of us, all of us are at the Communion table. And I was reminded of Paul's struggle with the Corinthians, the Ephesians, about what it meant to

be around the table and the unity of Jesus Christ. And I think that the Communion table is a powerful symbol because we talk over it, we talk around it, and it's right in our midst.

There are a number of petitions that we have to deal with as we continue our work on homosexuality. We have piles to go before we sleep. And we will be turning to several of the committees to continue the journey that we've been on all day, well led, and a journey that all of us have participated in with reverence and sensitivity. Let us begin with prayer.

(prayer)

We will open our session tonight by turning to Faith and Order and chair, Patricia Farris.

Faith and Order Items Continue

PATRICIA E. FARRIS (California-Pacific): Bishop Oden and members of the General Conference, we continue with the items coming from the Faith and Order Legislative Committee, having acted on the three items that as we did this afternoon. The eight items remaining all come to you with a recommendation of non-concurrence from the committee. The first four relate to Paragraph 304.3. I will list them separately for you. The first is in the *DCA* p. 1751, Item 1058; it is Petition 40012, found in the *ADCA* on pp. 805 and 806. Again, *DCA* p. 1751, Item 1058, Petition 40012, in the *ADCA* on pp. 805 and 6. This comes to you with a recommendation from the committee of non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Calendar Item 1058 is before us with the recommendation of non-concurrence. Is there discussion? If not, I believe we're ready to vote. The committee's recommendation is non-concurrence. If you're ready to vote on Calendar Item 1058, please vote now. [*Yes, 641; No, 155; Abstain 10*]

You have sustained the committee by your vote.

FARRIS: The second, the second item is printed.

BISHOP ODEN: The mic on the chair, please.

FARRIS: The second item is printed in—am I on?

BISHOP ODEN: We need a microphone on the podium of the chair.

FARRIS: The second item is printed in today's *DCA*, and therefore, I move to suspend the rules in order to consider Calendar Item 813 at this time.

BISHOP ODEN: Calendar Item 813 is in the *DCA*, p. 1843, so being in today's *DCA*, it will require a two-thirds vote to suspend the rules that it might be acted upon. Are you ready to vote on the chair's recommendation to suspend the rules? Please vote now. [*Yes, 762; No, 73; Abstain, 6*]

You have sustained the committee in allowing this calendar item to come before us.

FARRIS: Thank you. It is found in the *DCA*, p. 1843, Calendar Item 813. It is Petition 41154 found in the *ADCA* on p. 808. Calendar Item 813: the committee moves non-concurrence, in light of our previous actions.

BISHOP ODEN: The motion is before us. Is there discussion? I see none. We're ready to vote. If you favor Calendar Item... I'm sorry. Mic. 2, please.

SUSANNE L. BURWELL (Wisconsin): Sue Burwell, Wisconsin. Point of order.

BISHOP ODEN: Yes?

BURWELL: It seems that the calendar item no. does not line up with what we have on that page. In other words, what Patricia told us is was not what we were reading under that calendar item number.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, would the chair clarify.

FARRIS: Right, let me clarify. I apologize to you. This is incorrect in my notes. It is the *DCA* p. 1843, 1843. It is Calendar Item 813 dealing with petition 40304, 40304 and it is found in the *ADCA* p.806.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright it is properly before us. Appreciate that clarification.

tion. Is there any further discussion? If not, would you sustain the committee's recommendation for non-concurrence? Please vote now. [*Yes, 788; No, 74; Abstain, 6*]

You have sustained the committee's vote of non-concurrence. Patricia?

FARRIS: Thank you. The next item is found in the *DCA* p. 1057. It is Item 1057. I'm sorry. I apologize. Let me start over. It is found in the *DCA* on p. 1751. It is Item 1057, Petition No. 41154, found in the *ADCA*, p. 808. *DCA*, p. 1751, Item 1057. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: The committee's recommendation is before us. Is there any discussion on this Calendar Item 1057? I see none. Are we ready to vote? If so, please vote now. [*Yes, 724; No, 165; Abstain, 6*]

You have sustained the committee's vote of non-concurrence. Patricia?

FARRIS: The next item is found in the *DCA*, p. 1752. It is Item 1062, Petition 41296, and is found in the *ADCA*, p. 808. This item is found in the *DCA*, p. 1752, Item 1062, Petition 41296. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: The committee's recommendation of non-concurrence is before us. Is there any discussion? If not, are we ready to vote on Calendar Item 1062? Please vote now. [*Yes, 733; No, 156; Abstain, 4*].

(pause)

You have sustained the committee's report of non-concurrence.

What's the next item?

FARRIS: The next two items are related to Paragraph 304.2. The first item is found in the *DCA*, p. 1751; Item 1059; Petition 40455; found in the *ADCA*, p. 804. *DCA*, p. 1751, Item 1059, Petition 40455. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: The recommendation is before us. Does anyone wish to speak on this calendar item? I see no hands; therefore, if you are ready to vote on Calendar Item 1059, please

vote now. [*Yes, 731; No, 165; Abstain, 3*]

Non-concurrence has been sustained.

FARRIS: The next item is in the *DCA*, same p. 1751; Item 1060, Petition 40997; found in the *ADCA*, p. 805. *DCA*, p. 1751; Item 1060; Petition 40997. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: The recommendation is before us. I see no cards wishing to speak; therefore, if you are ready to vote on Calendar Item 1060, please vote now. [*Yes, 763; No, 129; Abstain 5*]

The committee has been sustained. Patricia?

FARRIS: The next item relates to Paragraph 138. It is found in the *DCA*, p. 1752. It is Item 1064; Petition No. 40569; found in the *ADCA* on p. 802. *DCA*, p. 1752; Item 1064; Petition 40569. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Non-concurrence is recommended by the committee. Are you ready to vote on 1064? If so, please vote now. [*Yes, 680; No, 217; Abstain, 5*]

The committee has been sustained.

FARRIS: A final item is found in the *DCA*, p. 106—no...

(pause)

The page you are on, p. 1752. It is Item 1063; Petition 41091; found in the *ADCA* on pp. 812 and 13. *DCA*, p. 1752; Item 1063; Petition 41091. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: The recommendation of the committee on Faith and Order is before us. Anyone wishing to speak to it? If not, are we ready to vote on 1063? If so, please vote now. [*Yes, 746; No, 143; Abstain 8*]

You have voted to sustain the committee.

FARRIS: Thank you, Bishop. This completes most of the work of the Faith and Order Legislative Committee. In the spirit of our work

together in that committee, though we may not be of one mind, we pray that we may yet learn to be of one heart. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, Patricia.

(applause)

JEFFREY E. GREENWAY (Western Pennsylvania): Bishop Oden and delegates to the General Conference, Jeff Greenway, Discipleship Legislative Committee Chair.

BISHOP ODEN: Jeff, one moment, please. We have a policy, a motion passed, that we have prayer before the beginning of each committee report. Before that, I see a card. Mic. 4.

Centering Presider's Table

DON J. CUNNINGHAM (California-Nevada): Thank you, Bishop. Don Cunningham, California-Nevada. I was baptized over 70 years ago. No, no. That's the wrong speech. I move that the presiding officer's table be moved to the position of the speaker's podium and vice versa, no later than tomorrow morning, Bishop.

BISHOP ODEN: I think that motion was seconded, and if I could see you, I would agree with you.

(applause)

CUNNINGHAM: OK, that's... that's exactly my point. I've watched the bishops at that table now for, what, 7 days or so, and I think it is very difficult for you to see this side of the house. The table is not in the center of the house, and so, I think it is important for this action to be taken.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. I think we can act on it pending technical realities. And the motion is before us. I think you have heard the motion. Is there anyone that needs it repeated?

Then we are ready to act on the motion to move the presiding officer's table to the center of the room and replace the—to reverse the podium with the presiding officer's table. I believe we have it... Mic 1 or 5? We haven't had the vote yet.

EWING WERLEIN JR. (Texas): Bishop, Ewing Werlein, Texas Conference. I'm sure that every member of the conference wants to be in a position where, of course, that delegate can be seen by the presiding bishop. And that certainly is something that we would want to see done. The idea of reversing—if, indeed, the bishop cannot see persons on one side because of where the podium is—to reverse simply works to the disadvantage of the other side of the house. I would move that this simply be referred to the appropriate committee of the conference that has undertaken—if I could have the courtesy of all to hear because I take the motion as one that was a serious one, and my response is a serious one. I would simply move to refer this to the appropriate committee of the conference that has made these arrangements and ask that they undertake to do whatever might be done to accommodate all the delegates without prejudicing any.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. A motion of reference is non-debatable, and the motion is to refer to the proper committee. We'll have to figure that out, but I'm sure we can. So, if you would favor the Werlein motion of reference to... of what is before us, would you please vote now? [*Yes, 474; No, 422; Abstain, 15*]

It is referred. Now we are ready for the committee, and before the Committee on Discipleship reports, let's pause for a word of prayer.

(prayer)

(applause)

BISHOP ODEN: I believe I must go to a point of order. Mic. 4?

FRED BREWINGTON (New York): Bishop, thank you. My name is Fred Brewington from New York Annual Conference. I believe that a matter referral is a matter that does require debate under our rules, but it went immediately to a vote, without allowing speeches. So, therefore, I would ask you to rule yourself out of order and at this point allow us to have debate on the referral motion.

BISHOP ODEN: Sir, you're absolutely right, and I will take full responsibility for that... and realized it, but wasn't sure what to do with it unless the house called my attention to it, which you did, and I thank you, sir, for that. And I think what that means is we're going to have to go back to the judge's motion of reference, and it is open for debate and discussion. It was. Was it seconded?

BREWINGTON: Yes, it was.

BISHOP ODEN: And we've had one speech for, which was the judge's speech. We're now ready for a speech against. Center mic. 2.

WILLIAM D. SCOTT (Mississippi): William Scott, Mississippi Conference, lay delegate. I move to speak against the amendment to refer and simply suggest to the accomplished staff that if they will adjust that bank of lights on this catwalk, then those who are on the podium trying to see the audience could actually see. The problem is not where he's positioned, but how those lights are positioned; and he absolutely cannot see because of those lights up there. And I think that's what needs to be done.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you. A speech against. We've had one for and one against. Mic 6. Far right, mic 8.

(*applause*)

MARK O. FENSTERMACHER (North Indiana): Mark Fenstermacher, North Indiana. This seems silly that we're even debating this.

BISHOP ODEN: Are you speaking for or against, sir?

FENSTERMACHER: I am for—I am against the motion to refer. And I've watched people here on this side wait and wait and wait to be called upon. It seems like a simple request. You should be in the center of the room, in the front where you have the best chance seeing all of us. So I hope we will not refer this—vote it down and let's just let the staff get this done.

BISHOP ODEN: So we have two speeches against and one for. We'll

now take a speech for referral. Point of information, mic 4.

ANN CRAIG (New York): Thank you very much. My name is Ann Craig from the New York Annual Conference, and given that I was standing here for quite a while waiting, I think that makes one strong point. But my question is, is the desire—was the original motion—to move it to the center or to switch it over to the left? Because I think that there was—I heard that it was the concern for referral was that it was to switch sides and I heard their actual, original motion to move it to the center. So clarify that for me please, thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: I think that could easily be clarified. Let's ask the maker of the original motion. Would you please come to the microphone?

CUNNINGHAM: Don Cunningham, Cal-Nevada. I just want it to be in the center of the room.

(*applause*)

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you very much. Before we continue, I just have had word from the technical staff. Without any further parliamentary process, they have met together. They can move it to the center. They will move it to the center.

(*applause*)

If the house will so allow, we will consider that accomplished and go directly to the Discipleship Committee.

(*applause*)

*Ministry for and With
Homosexual Persons*

GREENWAY: I'm just making sure. Jeff Greenway, Discipleship Legislative Committee Chair. We have one item for your consideration this evening, and it will be found on p. 1639 of your *DCA*. We have a majority report that will be presented by Ida Easley, clergyperson, South Indiana Conference; and we have a minority report, which will be presented by Steve McDonald, a clergyperson from the Mississippi Conference.

BISHOP ODEN: Yes. We will now here the report of the majority.

IDA E. EASLEY (South Indiana): Last week, I spent one of our long breaks in the prayer room and there was a station there called "brokenness." And you are invited to break a piece of pottery. And there are several issues printed on these pieces of pottery. I chose the one that said "Racism, Sexism, Exclusion." I prayed. As I prepared to break this piece of pottery—as you can tell I am not a wimpy person—there's a mallet there that you use to break it. And then you are invited to place the broken pieces in a jar, so that you would be giving that brokenness to Jesus. I took the mallet, and I hit the piece of pottery, and it would not break. And so I took both hands, and I hit the pottery—and it would not break. And so I beat that pottery until it finally broke. I say that as a prelude to our report.

Our subcommittee and our committee addressed this issue of promoting ministry for, and with homo-sexuals, because it's a language issue. It's an issue around hospitality and not hostility. We felt that this petition was more about projection than prevenient grace. We felt it was not hospitable—no welcoming. And we, as all of you I am sure, have an intention that... that which goes into our *Discipline* and our *Book of Resolutions* has integrity; and, therefore, we voted non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you very much. So the majority report has a—a case has been made. And now we're ready for the minority report.

Minority Report

STEVEN C. MCDONALD (Mississippi): Bishop and members of the conference; the action of the majority of the legislative committee regarding Petition 40737 was for non-concurrence. As you heard, the stated reasons included concerns about the inflammatory language used in the petition, concerns that the petition was driven by a one-sided agenda. There were a number of attempts made at amending the

petition, but they proved insufficient regarding these objections in the mind of the majority.

There are several legitimate issues that are raised by the original petition, which we feel were not adequately considered, either by the subcommittee or by the legislative committee as a whole. Our church is not morally relativistic; in other words, a church where any behavior is morally equal to any other behavior. We are not neutral on issues regarding sexual expression. The United Methodist Church has longstanding official positions on human sexuality, marriage, and homosexuality. But included in these statements are languages that talk about the commitment of the church, and of individuals within the church, to minister with and for all people.

I listened with a great deal of sympathy to the young man earlier in the debate today who talked about the experience of sharing with his parents, a parsonage family, that he was gay. And I was proud that his parents' response, first, was "We love you." Yet the practical assistance to make this kind of response possible in the form of information and resources for our ministry that's consistent with our denomination's positions has not been developed or provided by the church. We believe a need exists for the general church to help provide information and resources to assist three groups of people in the church: 1) individuals who themselves are dealing with homosexuality; 2) families and friends of individuals dealing with homosexuality, and 3) pastors, churches, and others who are seeking to minister to, and with, persons dealing with homosexuality.

As an alternative to the majority action of non-concurrence, we offer an alternative petition. It is printed in part on p. 1639, No. 493. I'd like to read aloud to you the entire petition because it's not all included in the *Daily Christian Advocate*. "Where as *The Book of Discipline* states that homosexual persons, no less than hetero-

sexual persons are individuals of sacred worth, all persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. We affirm that God's grace is available to all; we commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

"Whereas, the general church agencies have not adequately provided or promoted resources that enable the ministry to which we have committed ourselves;

"Therefore be it resolved, the 2004 General Conference assign responsibility to the General Board of Discipleship to provide and promote program resources for United Methodist ministry for and with homosexual persons in keeping with our denominational policy. These resources should include," and at this point we pick up with the printed *Daily Christian Advocate* on p. 1639, numbers one through four in bold print: "A clear and graceful presentation of the United Methodist positions on human sexuality and homosexuality. An understanding of the issues and struggles of persons dealing with homosexuality. An understanding of the issues and struggles of persons who have family members or friends dealing with homosexuality. Support and information for churches, pastors and counselors helping those dealing with homosexuality."

We believe this proposal avoids the stated complaints that formed the basis for the majority action in the legislative committee, as well as achieving a number of worthwhile objectives. No. 1, it follows through on our church's beliefs and commitments as they're embodied in the church's official positions. No. 2, it begins to provide assistance in both understanding and ministry resources for individuals, families, pastors, and churches who seek to minister in love and integrity with homosexuals. No. 3, it is consistent with all of the relevant

United Methodist understandings: a) that sexuality is a good gift of God, b) that our expression of sexuality can only clearly be affirmed within the exclusive covenant of male, female marriage, c) that every individual, regardless, is a child of sacred worth to God and a person of infinite value to each one of us in the church, and d) that an exploration of faithful and responsible living for those dealing with homosexuality is possible, and could include considerations such as celibacy in singleness or leaving homosexual practice.

We believe compassion, reconciliation and ministry are most likely to take place and be effective in local churches rather than General Conferences, in one-on-one, family, and small group relationships, rather than in denominational gatherings. It's our hope that providing resources consistent with our church's official understandings we will assist, all of us, to truly be in ministry with and for all people.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, you have heard the case both for the majority and the minority and now we're ready to perfect both, beginning with the majority. Would the presenter of the majority please come forward, and I have a question. How can we call for the perfection of the majority report? It's not in the *DCA* p. 1639. It would have to be in the Advance *DCA*. Could you tell us again where that is found?

EASLEY: The Advance *DCA* is page 500. It's Petition No. 40737...

BISHOP ODEN: Would you repeat that please.

EASLEY: Petition No. 40737 on p. 500 in the Advance *DCA*.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, it's on p. 500, Advance *DCA*, and we're now ready to receive any motions to perfect the majority report. Point of order? Yes sir, mic 2.

MARK A. MILLER (Greater New Jersey): Bishop, Mark Miller, Greater New Jersey Conference.

BISHOP ODEN: Mark.

MILLER: I believe the chair said the petition was voted non-concurrent, I don't see what we have to perfect. If I'm mistaken, tell me but is...

EASLEY: It is non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, that's a good point. If the petition is non-concurrence and there is nothing to perfect. You're absolutely right, sir.

(pause)

I think we're about to have a conference, if you'll wait just a moment, we have a problem related to the printing itself.

(pause)

We have a motion related to the entire matter from the committee chair.

JEFFREY E. GREENWAY (Western Pennsylvania): Thank you, Bishop. On behalf of the committee, we'd like to withdraw this for your consideration at this time. The reason being the entirety of the minority report as signed off on by the people who agreed to bring this forward was not included in the *DCA*. There is some confusion in the body. We'll try to have that printed and put into a *DCA* so that you consider it at a later time.

BISHOP ODEN: All right, I don't think that requires action with the committee withdrawing the petition. Discipleship, does that conclude your report?

GREENWAY: That concludes our work for this evening. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: All right, thank you. We're ready now to move to higher education. And again, before Higher Education begins its report; by action of the house, let's pause for a moment silent prayer. Let us pray.

(prayer)

Amen. OK. Higher Education.

Higher Education and Ministry Items

DAVID BECKLEY (Mississippi): Thank you, Bishop. We have six items for presentation this evening, Bishop, on this subject and I'll be assisted by

Judy Sands, the sub-committee chair, and Rebekah Miles, the vice-chair of our committee in presenting our six items.

JUDITHA. SANDS (Central Texas): The first item appears on p. 1753 in the *DCA*, 1753. The calendar item is 1082, 1082. That can be found in the Advance *DCA* on p. 1154. The petition number is 40013. The committee recommends non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Calendar Item 1082 is before us with a recommendation of non-concurrence. Does anyone wish to speak to it? If not, are you ready to vote? Please vote now. [*Yes*, 806; *No*, 95; *Abstain*, 7]

You have sustained the committee. Next.

REBEKAH L. MILES (Arkansas): Rebekah Miles, Arkansas Conference. I will be presenting five petitions, all relating to Paragraph 332.6 of our current *Discipline*. This paragraph states in our current 2000 *Discipline*, "ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in the churches." Each of the five petitions under discussion recommends a different change to Paragraph 332.6. Our legislative committee voted non-concurrence on each of these five petitions. All are found on p. 1755 of the *DCA*. I begin with Calendar Item 1101, p. 1755 of the *DCA*, p. 1174 of the Advance *DCA*, Petition No. 41298. The committee recommended non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Non-concurrence has been recommended for Calendar Item 1101. Any discussion? If not, please vote now. You have sustained the committee. [*Yes*, 756; *No*, 159; *Abstain*, 3]

MILES: The second petition is again on p. 1755, Calendar Item 1105, Petition No. 41156. That's p. 1175 of the Advance *DCA*. Again, the committee voted non-concurrence because the committee members preferred keeping the present language.

BISHOP ODEN: Calendar Item 1105 is before us. Is there any discus-

sion? If not, please vote now. The committee's recommendation of non-concurrence has been sustained. Next item. [*Yes*, 745; *No*, 163; *Abstain*, 4]

MILES: Next item, again, 1755 of the *DCA*, Calendar Item 1106, Petition 41082, in the Advance *DCA*, that's p. 1175. Again, the committee voted non-concurrence because the committee members judged that the current disciplinary language was better.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright, Calendar Item 1106 is before us with the committee's recommendation of non-concurrence. I believe we're ready to vote. Please vote now. [*Yes*, 739; *No*, 172; *Abstain*, 5]

You have sustained the committee. Next item.

MILES: Calendar Item 1107 on the same page, 1755 of the *DCA*, Petition No. 40014, in the Advance *DCA*, p. 1175. Again, the committee voted non-concurrence, preferring to retain the present language.

BISHOP ODEN: The committee's recommendation is before us. I believe we're ready to vote. Please vote now. [*Yes*, 732; *No*, 183; *Abstain*, 3]

The committee has been sustained in its recommendation of non-concurrence. Next item.

MILES: Finally, again on p. 1755 of the *DCA*, Calendar Item 1108, Petition No. 40017. In the Advance *DCA* that's 1175. Again, the committee voted non-concurrence, saying that they preferred to keep the current language.

BISHOP ODEN: The recommendation of non-concurrence on 1108 is before us. I see no requests for discussion. If you're ready to vote, please vote now. [*Yes*, 768; *No*, 155; *Abstain*, 2]

You have sustained the committee. Thank you, Bekah.

BECKLEY: Bishop, this completes our report for this evening.

BISHOP ODEN: Higher Education report completed, we thank you very much for your work.

(applause)

I call on Judicial Administration, and before you begin, at the request of the house, let us pause for prayer.

(prayer)

*Use of Funds Regarding
Homosexuality*

TRACY R. MERRICK (Western Pennsylvania): Tracy Merrick, Western Pennsylvania, chair of the Financial Administration committee. Penney Schwab, the vice-chair, will present the one item we have dealing with this topic.

PENNEY SCHWAB (Kansas West): Bishop Oden and delegates; the petition is found in the *DCA* p. 1749, Calendar Item 1040, in the Advance *DCA* p. 604, Petition 40255. To repeat, *DCA*, 1749, Calendar Item 1040, *ADCA* p. 604, Petition No. 40255. The committee recommends concurrence with this petition. The rationale is that it brings the annual conference boards, agencies, and commission in line with the same requirements that are found in Paragraph 806.9 for general boards and agencies.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, the recommendation is concurrence, is that correct?

SCHWAB: That is correct.

BISHOP ODEN: So, paragraph 10—Calendar Item 1040, p. 1749 is before us with a recommendation from—for concurrence. Anyone wish to speak to this? I see a card. Go to mic. 4, I believe.

ANN CRAIG (New York): Thank you, bishop. This is Ann Craig, from the New York Annual Conference. One concern I would have is that The United Methodist Church is on record in being in support of civil rights for gay and lesbian people. Would a stand in support of civil rights for gay and lesbian people be interpreted as promoting the acceptance of homosexuality? And I believe it would be, I—our church as it is today, and therefore I would speak against the committee's recommendation.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, we had a

speech against the committee's recommendation for concurrence. We're now ready for a speech for. Would anyone like to speak for the recommendation of the committee? Mic 7.

JAY K. BRIM (Southwest Texas): Bishop, Jay Brim, lay delegate from Southwest Texas. I'm also a member of GCFA. I would rise to request from the chair whether there has been any consideration to the financial implications of this petition if we ask the council to review actions of all conferences. And I would request if it has not been so designated that this petition needs to be reviewed by GCFA for cost.

BISHOP ODEN: Would the chair respond?

SCHWAB: We did not believe or nor consider the financial implications. We simply considered bringing the language into agreement across the church. And it is at the conference level. There is no provision in this for review that we know of. It's already in the General Church legislation. This is to bring it the conference level.

BISHOP ODEN: So it had no implications for GCFA?

SCHWAB: No.

BISHOP ODEN: That was a question. Does that answer your question, sir? Alright, we're now ready for a speech for. We've had one speech against. Yes, mic 5, I believe.

EWING WERLEIN JR. (Texas): Ewing Werlein, Texas Conference. I do support the committee's action. In response to the last question, this is—this would go into Paragraph 611 of the Discipline. This does deal with the Conference Council on Finance Administration. I was a member of the committee and the committee felt that this is important to do for consistency. In a sense it's an ecclesiastical issue that the same policy that applies to the general church level would also apply at the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

Second, it's stewardship; a good stewardship proposition. That as we go to our people in the churches and ask

for offerings, tithes, gifts, they need to have the confidence that the money that they're giving in their church offerings is not going to go into causes or to caucuses or groups that are promoting homosexual practice, contrary to the principles and standards of our church and our understanding of the Christian practice in this respect.

And third, of course, it's a question of accountability. That accountability be placed somewhere as a part of our conference's undertaking responsibly to deal with our resources. On all of these points, fellow delegates, I would urge us to support the committee's position and vote "yes."

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. We have had one speech for, and one against. We're ready for a speech against. Yes, mic 3.

How to Ensure?

JAMES EHRMAN (East Ohio): James Ehrman, East Ohio, also a member of the committee, the part of the committee that voted in the minority of 36 where we lost to 37. This is not an easy issue; and no matter where anyone is on the homosexuality issue. My concerns about this particular proposal have to do with the burden that's placed on the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, particularly, "to ensure." If I'm the chair of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, have I "ensured" if I rely on the annual audit; or am I supposed to be checking what happens to each check? And if I don't act quickly enough, have I therefore violated the instruction "to ensure"?

We have very practical problems with language like this in our incredibly litigious society and our incredibly litigious church now. This is simply not something that we, as volunteers at the conference level, have time "to ensure," and we certainly don't have the money in East Ohio to hire a police force. I've done enough in my prior life as the chair of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration to irritate lots of people, *(laughter)* and I

certainly don't want to have to take the time to answer a charge that I haven't "ensured" that money didn't go to promote homosexuality.

BISHOP ODEN: All right. We are now ready for a speech for. Mic 1.

JOE W. KILPATRICK (North Georgia): Bishop, my name is Joe Kilpatrick, North Georgia Conference. In response to the previous speech, I just wanted to say that the Paragraph 806 and Paragraph 611 are now conformed in so far as asking the annual conference as well as the General Council on Finance and Administration to ensure that there are no funds expended to—for the purpose of the use of alcoholic beverages. So we, we have conforming language on a different subject. This is (*unintelligible*) conforming language on the homosexuality issue. Just as it is administered currently, I think it can continue to be administered on this issue also. So I support the committee. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. Two speeches for, two against. We can vote unless there is one more speech on each side. I believe that's mic 1.

DARREN R. CUSHMAN-WOOD (South Indiana): Bishop, Darren Cushman-Wood from South Indiana. Point of information from the committee: Did they consider or get any information about this actually being a problem in the annual conferences? That will determine how I vote. If this has been kind of a widespread recurrence, then to me it seems like we need to have integrity and conform what we're doing. But if there's no examples of this being grounded in reality, then that would influence me in another way. So did the committee consider or hear examples of this actually being a problem?

BISHOP ODEN: All right. That is an inquiry.

SCHWAB: Bishop, during the committee discussion, the full committee discussion, there was no discussion of that, nor were there examples raised.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. We still

can have one speech for and one against. Seven, I believe, mic 7. I'm sorry. Let's try 8 in the back of the room.

FRANK E. TROTTER JR. (Baltimore-Washington): Thank you, Bishop. Frank Trotter from the Baltimore-Washington Conference. I would urge non-concurrence. In the United States in the 1830s and the 1840s, the Methodist Episcopal Church became embroiled over the issue of slavery—so much so that those opposed to slavery and those in favor of slavery found that they could no longer bridge their differences. In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church divided and remained divided for 95 years until they finally learned how to talk to each other again in 1939.

How a majority hears a minority may indicate a great deal about the future health of a body. I wonder if the painful votes today will lead to greater unity among us or greater disunity. I particularly want to speak to those of us who voted with majorities today. When the dust is settled, will we have flexed our muscle, or will we have reached a hand across a vast chasm? And I speak to those of us in the minority today. When the dust has settled, will we have withdrawn into despair and frustration, or will we have tried to reach a hand, too, across a vast chasm?

In the balance of power, Scripture tells us that those who have the greater power have the greater responsibility for the health of the body. Today, there needs to be some signs of grace and healing. I urge the body, especially as we look to the next four years, when this dialogue will surely continue, that we make a gesture of grace tonight and defeat this proposed legislation. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. We have three speeches against, and we're ready for a final speech for. Mic 5.

SCOTT SELMAN (North Alabama): Bishop and fellow delegates, Scott Selman, North Alabama Conference. Implementation of this petition will primarily fall to our annual conference

treasurers. For that reason, I don't feel it would pose an undue burden on volunteer chairs of Council and Finance. I also feel that it's important that our denomination be consistent in its policies. Implementing this policy would make the annual conference, as it has been said, consistent with the General Council on Finance. I think that it's up for the Council on Finances in each of our annual conferences to take steps to ensure that the interpretation of this policy is reasonable; and I think in good faith we can expect that that will happen. I vote concurrent with the committee.

BISHOP ODEN: All right. We have had three speeches for and three speeches against. Now we turn to the committee chair for a final word before we vote.

SCHWAB: I believe that the relevant points on both sides have been adequately expressed, Bishop.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. I believe we're ready to vote. If you would vote concurrence, vote yes; if you would not vote concurrence, vote no. We're ready for Calendar Item 1040. If you're ready to vote, please vote now. [*Yes, 497; No, 418; Abstain, 5*]

You have sustained the committee by a vote of 497 to 418.

SCHWAB: Thank you. That concludes our work this evening.

(*applause*)

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you. We've done good work. We've moved a table, and I think we deserve a break. Come back in 20 minutes.

(*break*)

Will the house be in order? We're ready to begin.

(*pause*)

We're now ready to begin the second part of Tuesday evening's agenda. We still have a number of items before us, still related to issues around homosexuality. And I would like to begin by calling on the delegate from the British Methodist Church for a special privi-

leged statement. Is the delegate back in the room? Mic 2. Alright. At the podium. Peter, welcome.

British Methodist Recognition

PETER C. SULSTON (Great Britain): Thank you, Bishop. Members of General Conference, it was announced from No. 10 Downing Street over this last weekend that the Reverend Dr. Leslie Griffiths, who is the past president of the British Methodist Conference and currently superintendent minister of Wesley's Chapel in City Road, London, is to be made a Working Peer, or a Life Peer—that's to say a member of the House of Lords, the second chamber of the British Parliament.

(applause)

There he will join the Reverend Baroness Kathleen Richardson, another past president of the British Conference, who's been in the House of Lords since 1998. The only other Methodist minister to have been accorded this honor was the Reverend Dr. Donald Soper.

Dr. Griffiths will be known to a number of members of General Conference. He served for most of the 1970s as a minister in Haiti; in Britain he is a distinguished preacher, public speaker, writer, and broadcaster who has already made his mark in public life as well as in the church. He is a warm-hearted human being, a passionate advocate for truth and justice, and an eloquent witness for the Christian gospel. A native of Wales, he's a Methodist by deep conviction who has always been eager to serve the present age. There will be speculation, I guess, in Britain at the moment as to whether he'll be known as Lord Griffiths of Perry Port, the small Welsh coastal town where he was brought up or perhaps as Lord Griffiths of City Road in the City of London. I am sure the conference will support me if I move that you would wish to send warm congratulations to him from this General Conference and wish him well in this new sphere of ministry.

(applause)

I apologize for confessing the courtesy of saying to members of the General Conference my name. I am Peter Sulston from the British Methodist Church.

BISHOP ODEN: Peter, thank you and the applause means that we accept and will follow through on that. Welcome and thank you.

Now we're ready to turn to Judicial Administration. Judge Jon Gray. And let us pause for a word of prayer. Let us center ourselves.

(prayer)

JON R. GRAY (Missouri): Bishop Oden, members of the General Conference, I greet you once again as we bring you calendar items coming from the legislative committee on Judicial Administration. Consistent with the request of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar, we are bringing two items related to the topic of the day. Subsequent to those two items, I believe the chair will permit the committee to return to the point at which we were in calendar items when we adjourned on last evening.

I mention to you on last evening that our time together within the Judicial Administration Legislative Committee was a time of holy conferencing. We had a wide array of talent that devoted themselves to the tasks that were laid before us. Consistent with that, and as I promised on last evening, a number of the members of our subcommittee providing subcommittee leadership will participate in the presentation of calendar items this evening. I would first like to present and introduce John Schol of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, who will present the first calendar item for this evening.

JOHN SCHOL (Eastern Pennsylvania): Thank you. Bishop Oden. Sisters and brothers of the General Conference, I invite you to turn in your *DCA* to page no. 1756, page no. 1756; Calendar Item 1118, Calendar Item 1118; Petition No. 40570; p. 1756, Calendar Item 1118, Petition No.

40570, found in your Advance *DCA* 1341, p. 1341; Petition No. 40570. Bishop Oden, the committee's recommendation is non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. The report of the committee is before us on Calendar Item 1118. And committee's recommendation is non-concurrence. Is there anyone who wishes to speak to this calendar item? If not, be prepared to vote. Are you ready to vote on 1118? If so, please vote now. [*Yes, 645; No, 143; Abstain, 11*]

I'm sorry. I had already called for the vote. You sustain the committee in its recommendation of non-concurrence.

BISHOP ODEN: Judge Gray.

Chargeable Offenses

GRAY: Thank you Bishop and delegates. The next item will be Calendar Item No. 1487 found on p. 1851 of the *DCA*, p. 1851 of the *DCA*; Calendar Item No. 1487. Because this item was just published in the *DCA* today, I am moving the chair that the body suspend the rules in order that we may consider this calendar item at this time.

BISHOP ODEN: The chair is moved that the rules be suspended in order to bring before us Calendar Item 1487; this requires a two-thirds vote. If you would so order, please vote now. [*Yes, 770; No, 76; Abstain, 5*]

BISHOP ODEN: You have suspended the rules and the petition is now before us.

GRAY: Thank you, Bishop and members of the General Conference. Before I begin I need to dispel some information. The petition relates to chargeable offenses. The committee recommendation will be concurrence as amended. There is a minority report. As chair of the committee, I will give the majority report; Jon Schol will give the minority report.

The misinformation: On my desk yesterday I found a document purporting to be a substitution for this petition. Although it makes reference to the Judicial Administration Committee, it is not a product of the committee's dis-

ussions. I hope that the person or persons who will seek consideration of the so-called substitution, will at some point feel the obligation to at least identify themselves.

What is before you is the committee's recommendation of concurrence as amended and the minority report, both of which appear on p. 1851 of the *DCA*. The committee was concerned and felt the need to insert specifying language into paragraph 2702 relating to chargeable offenses and the statute of limitations. The committee voted concurrence as amended and felt that the enumeration of expanded language was necessary to give fair and specific notice of additional acts that would or could be considered as a chargeable offense. The committee felt that it was most appropriate to place this language in this particular paragraph. The placement of it within the list of charges is, in the committee's view, far less significant than the specificity of the language within the charges. It was the collective wisdom of the majority of the community, of the committee rather, that the placement was correct.

That's my report, Bishop.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright, you have heard the case from the majority. Now, we're prepared to hear from the minority report.

JOHN SCHOL (Eastern Pennsylvania): Thank you, Bishop. As you look at the minority report, I would just like to clarify that the inserted information for the minority report was not bolded and so I'd like to help you by inviting you to underline certain words because these are the words that are being inserted into the minority report.

About halfway down the minority report, you see the letter A. It says "immorality." Following that word, these words are inserted: "including, but not limited to, failure to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world." And then the additional new inserted material is the last two lines beginning with "as defined by *The Book of Discipline* and the Judicial Council." Those are the words that are

inserted by the minority report. We're asking you—in the minority report—to strike the bolded words in the majority report and add the words that I've just shared with you.

In Paragraph 2702.1 of the *Discipline* it lists chargeable offenses for clergy. It includes things like crime, immorality, dereliction of duties, dissemination of false doctrines. We believe that for four reasons this language in the, in the, the language in the majority report is not necessary. The first reason is that there is already included in the *Discipline* information about these items, particularly the issue of homosexuality. We find them in Paragraph 304.3; 306.4f; 161G; 332.6.

Secondly, the Judicial Council has already ruled on this matter and demonstrated that it is not necessary to list additional information in the charges.

Thirdly, we'll begin to set a precedent that we need to define each of these categories in each of these areas. First of all we will identify additional immoral acts and then we'll begin to look at crime and dissemination of false doctrines and dereliction of duties. These areas are reported in this way to provide broad sense so that we can work with them.

And fourthly, it seems to raise these acts of immorality above all other acts and focuses the immorality section on sexual acts...

BISHOP ODEN: You need to wrap up, sir.

SCHOL: OK, I'll finish up... on sexual acts when there are many other acts of immorality. Why we invite you to support the minority report? It claims our commitment to hold clergy to the highest moral standards, and it holds all charges in the highest standards. Thank you.

Perfecting Majority Report

BISHOP ODEN: Alright, you've heard the report from the majority and the minority. And now, we move to perfecting these two documents. First, the majority report. We'll ask the presenter

of the majority to come forward, back to the podium. And we'll see if there's anyone who wishes to add to or delete anything from the majority report. I see a hand, mic 3. Let's try 3, 2.

SARAH H. HAYNES (Missouri): Sally Haynes from Missouri. I have a couple of questions and depending on those, an amendment to suggest for the majority report. My question has to deal with the intent of the committee. We've seen from precedent that the intent of this body does have effect in future actions. The part that I'm questioning is under Section B where you list three—three specific things—that are chargeable offenses. The middle one, "conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions."

My question to the intent is your, a question of timing. If, in my congregation—for example, as we did a few weeks ago—we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of a same-sex couple. We did celebrate their same-sex union. The intent of this committee is not that I would be brought up on charges for that, is that correct?

GRAY: I'm sorry.

HAYNES: The intent of this committee is that our, our congregational celebration of a couple that had celebrated 20 years of same-sex union—and we celebrated during our worship service—you do not intend for that to be a chargeable offense?

GRAY: No. Obviously, the committee had no knowledge of your specific circumstance.

(laughter)

HAYNES: If it is....

GRAY: So, I can, I can assure you this was not done with you in mind.

HAYNES: Well, can I change my name if it is?

GRAY: The committee, the committee did believe that this is consistent with the spirit of the disciplinary prohibitions that are already in the *Discipline*, but that definition was necessary in order to afford full and fair notice.

Celebrate Unions v. Unite Couple

HAYNES: If we're going to define like that, then I ask that we define more clearly. And what I'd like to suggest as an amendment to this middle part is this: That for, instead of, "conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions," which is difficult to understand the intent, instead say "perform ceremonies which unite a same-sex couple."

BISHOP ODEN: Would you repeat that please?

HAYNES: Yes, I'd like to remove "conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions" and replace it with "perform ceremonies which unite a same-sex couple." And I'd like to speak to that.

BISHOP ODEN: Is there a second to the amendment? It is sustained. You may speak. This'll be the first speech for the amendment.

HAYNES: I think that it's helpful because it's very specific, which apparently is the intent of the committee and that we can say that the point of this is to celebrate the initial uniting of a same-sex couple. It's similar to the language in 331.1i, which talks about the duties of the pastor in terms of marriage, and it helps give us some clarity on what exactly we mean by homosexual unions.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. That's a speech for the amendment. Is there a speech against the amendment? Yes, I believe this will also be mic 2. Is this a speech for or against?

WILLIAM D. SCOTT (Mississippi): Against the amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: You're in order.

SCOTT: William Scott, Mississippi Conference, lay delegate. I think if you look at the semicolon and the conjunction "or" as inserted, this amendment would create redundancy in what's already there. We'll say the same thing twice.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. We've had one speech for, one speech against. Does anyone else wish to speak to this amendment? Mic 2, again. And are you speaking for or against?

ROBERT L. LOCKABY JR. (Holston): My name is Bob Lockaby, Holston. I speak against. It seems to me that the language of this petition, or the recommendation of the committee, should remain the same because it needs to match 331... I'm sorry, Paragraph 332.6 of the *Discipline*, which reads "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches." The language needs to match.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you. We now need a speech for the amendment, a speech for the amendment. Mic 3.

JOANN Y. FUKUMOTO (California-Pacific): Bishop, JoAnn Fukumoto from Cal-Pac. I have a friendly amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, is this an amendment to the amendment?

FUKUMOTO: A friendly amendment, yes.

BISHOP ODEN: Well, we'll see if it's friendly.

FUKUMOTO: OK, where it says "same-sex," I believe the amendment kept that same language of same-sex. I would it to be changed to "same gender." I'm from Hawaii and the language there is "same gender." And we've tried to pass, you know, the law. And we feel that same gender is more, is more correct.

BISHOP ODEN: Well, I thank you. I believe the maker of the amendment needs to decide whether or not that is a friendly amendment.

HAYNES: Yes.

BISHOP ODEN: Yes. Well, let's see if the house objects then. It is a friendly amendment. And we, in the amendment, replaced "sex" with "gender." I'm not sure quite how to...that would be a speech for. We're now ready for a speech against. I see no hands, which means we've had two for and two against, and we're ready to vote. The amendment is before you. I'm going to ask the secretary to read it if she would, that we might be clear about the language.

(pause)

Secretary doesn't have the amendment; hasn't been brought up. I should have asked. Would the... Thank you. We...I hesitate to call for a vote without the amendment being read because this is a significant amendment to the motion. And this is a good time to remind you, all amendments should be immediately brought to the page and brought up to the Secretary.

CAROLYN M. MARHSALL: Replace "conducting ceremonies which celebrate same sex unions" with "perform ceremonies which unite a same gender couple."

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. We are now ready to vote the amendment.

RAY: Bishop, Bishop.

BISHOP ODEN: We'll ask the chair to have a final word before we vote.

GRAY: If I were to repeat the point that the brother made just now about consistency of language, I would just be repeating what the brother here just said. I would urge you to vote against the amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, we are ready to vote. If you would vote on the amendment, please vote now. [*Yes, 306; No, 596; Abstain, 15*]

The amendment to the majority is not sustained.

BISHOP ODEN: We are still perfecting the majority report. Is there further discussion? I see the brother at mic 2.

VICKI MILLER BRENDLER (Greater New Jersey): Bishop?

BISHOP ODEN: Yes, ma'am.

*Supporting War as
Chargeable Offense*

BRENDLER: I would like to propose an amendment...

BISHOP ODEN: Yes, it is in order.

BRENDLER: ...to insert—I'm sorry. Vickie Miller Brendler, Greater New Jersey—To insert the words "or failing to reject war as a usual instrument of national foreign policy." After the—I'm sorry.

*Supporting War as
Chargeable Offense*

BISHOP ODEN: Yes, ma'am.

BRENDLER: After the section where it says—I'm sorry, I lost my place. In the majority report where it...

BISHOP ODEN: Wait, wait, wait. We are dealing with the majority report.

BRENDLER: Yes, I know. After Section A, where it is speaking—excuse me, B where it says “practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to, being a self-avowed practicing homosexual, or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions, or performing same sex wedding ceremonies,” I would then like to insert the words “or failing to reject war as a usual instrument of national foreign policy.”

BISHOP ODEN: Would you repeat that please slowly?

BRENDLER: I'm sorry. I would like to insert the words, at the end of B, “or failing to reject war as a usual instrument of national foreign policy.”

BISHOP ODEN: Alright, is there as second to that amendment? Alright. The amendment is sustained. Would you please see that the amendment gets to the secretary immediately?

BRENDLER: In paragraph—may I speak with it, to it?

BISHOP ODEN: You may speak.

BRENDLER: In Paragraph 165, in Section C, it says “we believe that war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We, therefore, reject war as a usual instrument of national foreign policy and insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them.” In keeping with those things that are incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ, I would insert this amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright, you have had a speech for the amendment. Is there a speech against the amendment? Mic 1.

JOHN W. EDGAR (West Ohio): John Edgar, West Ohio. I want to speak in favor of the amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: Hold that. I'll get back to you. We have had a speech in favor. Let's see if we have a speech against. Our rules ask for there to be alternate speeches for and against. Mic 3.

STEVEN C. MCDONALD (Mississippi): Steve McDonald, clergy, Mississippi Conference. It appears to me that there is a distinction between these two provisions in the *Discipline* that are being considered. One relates to individual conduct, the other relates to national policy and it raises a very interesting question. If adopted, what do we do with all of our military chaplains?

BISHOP ODEN: OK, this is a speech against the amendment. Now let's go back to the person who was wanting to speak on my far left.

Perfecting and Weaknesses

EDGAR: John Edgar, West Ohio. If I understand where we are in the parliamentary process, we are trying to perfect the main motion and that is the reason, I have a lot of problems with the main motion, but I think this amendment is incredibly helpful to improve the main motion and also to reveal, quite frankly, its weaknesses.

There is always a danger when you start listing things that don't need to be in a laundry list to begin with, and once you start listing them, if you don't list them all, then you got something that was worse than when you started which I think is the whole point of the minority report. Our job is to try to make the majority report the best we can. And therefore, I think it is appropriate, important, in fact, that we would get as much in the list as is relevant and, as has already been pointed out, our Social Principles are clear. They tell us that war is incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ; and so, if we are going to start listing all the things that are incompatible with Christian teaching, and I am pretty sure that the teach-

ings of Jesus Christ are part of Christian teaching, then we've got to get them all in; and, you know, the fact that I really like the speech that came right before mine. You know the fact that it might be inconvenient to some folks, I don't think is the issue. It is true if we start listing these, we got a problem with perhaps a lot of military chaplains and a bunch of other pastors; but as it is, we got a problem with a bunch of faithful folks who are being told they don't fit in.

What I want to suggest is that there comes a time when enough is enough and to perfect this majority report, we need to list everything. But I think we'd be a lot better off if we didn't list anything at all and we would agree that we have beat this issue enough. Let's stop. But if we are going to do it, let's put it in.

BISHOP ODEN: We are now ready for a speech against the amendment. Mic 5.

D. GIB WALTON (Texas): Gib Walton, lay, Texas Conference. I speak against the amendment because the amendment is referring back to the various lists of things in the Social Principles. I think what the majority, I did not serve on the Judicial Administration committee. But, as best I can tell, what they have done with their majority recommendation, is they have gone back to section, or Paragraph 304, which we did deal with in Faith and Order, the committee that I served on. And it looks to me like they have very faithfully taken the various disqualifications for ordination and have put them into the chargeable offense section to increase clarity. And I think that is very important and I think that's their purpose and it looks to me like they have faithfully done that.

So the amendment really makes no sense going back to the Social Principles. What is being dealt with here are the requirements to be ordained as a minister in the Methodist church, the subject that we have been dealing with all day.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright.

WALTON: Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: We have had two speeches for, two speeches against. Far right in the back, maybe mic, perhaps 8—3.

Incompatibility

LINDA CAMPBELL-MARSHALL (New England): Linda Campbell-Marshall, New England Conference. I want to speak in favor of the amendment. Incompatible is incompatible. If we are going to take that word as seriously as today's business has indicated that we plan to take it, I believe it is important for every issue that uses that word to be clearly indicated in terms of what it is you plan to do about it. I also would want to have it there for the sake of safety. As the church, as the church, historically has moved toward periods that we have referred to as inquisition, it has been very important for the inquisitors to have a clear definition of what it is persons are to be charged with. I would like to have this added to our inquisitorial list. On the other hand, I might feel even better if we had mission in place of inquisition. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, we have had three speeches for and we need one more speech against, if anyone would like to speak.

LELAND MCKEOWN (Florida): Bishop, Leland McKeown, lay delegate from the Florida Conference. I had the privilege of serving on this committee, and we discussed this at length in the committee about what to do about it. It's been said here tonight that we don't need to keep putting this in, but this is the policy of the church. This is the law of the church, and we made a decision that it should go in this area because it is the law; and we've still got people that seem to not find the law when they go to make their decision. That's the reason we've had so much discussion here today. This is consistent with the *Discipline*, and I urge you not to adopt this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: All right. We've had three speeches for and three

against, and we now turn to the chair for a final word before we vote on the amendment.

GRAY: Thank you, Bishop and delegates. The section relates to chargeable, chargeable offense—

BISHOP ODEN: I'm sorry? Point of order? And would you state your point of order? Mic 4. OK, I believe the delegate has a question for clarification. That's in order.

DALE M. WEATHERSPOON (California-Nevada): Question from Dale Weatherspoon, California-Nevada Annual Conference. As I'm reading through these charges, I'm curious. On No. (d), it says, "For failure to perform the work of ministry," and I'm wondering—'cause it frightens me—does this mean if parishioners are complaining because a pastor isn't coming to do visitations, would this be a chargeable offense?

BISHOP ODEN: Sir, I—

WEATHERSPOON: If, if our task is to make disciples, and we're hearing that a majority of our churches aren't bringing in at least one professing member, is this a chargeable offense?

BISHOP ODEN: I'm sorry. I'm gonna have to declare that out of order. It's really a speech, and it's a rhetorical question. There's no answer to that.

WEATHERSPOON: This is chargeable—these are—we're talking about pastors being charged, and these are categories. And so I'm wondering what are we really gonna be charging our pastors with. I know we're focusing on sex; and, you know, we've been talking about sex all day, and I, and I'm tired. Sex makes you tired. But I also—(laughter) but I wanna talk about ministry and what things that we can, pastors can, get charged about in not doing ministry.

BISHOP ODEN: I believe—

WEATHERSPOON: We've heard—

BISHOP ODEN: I believe you've made your point very well. The chair does not have a way to respond to that, and we're gonna have to stay with the amendment and move to Judge Gray

for a final word.

GRAY: Thank you, Bishop. The proposal relates to chargeable offenses; and in terms of the rejection of wars—a tool of national policy—obviously chargeable offenses have to do with those things that are within the conduct and control of the respondent rather than some—some national government. So therefore I would suggest that the amendment as suggested is really not germane to this proposal. I would request the body to reject the amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, we're now ready to vote on the amendment to the majority report of 1487. If you're ready to vote, please vote now. [Yes, 373; No, 537; Abstain, 9]

You have rejected the amendment, and we will continue to perfect the majority report. Far back middle. Please go to mic 6.

Delete "Including, But Not Limited..."

JAMES L. BRANSCOME (Virginia): Jim Branscome, Virginia, lay delegate. I know it's late, but this is such an obvious amendment I felt I had to bring it up. I move that we delete the lines, the bolded lines, "including, but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not in faithful in a heterosexual marriage." I'd like to speak to that if it's seconded.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright.

BRANSCOME: My reason for making—

BISHOP ODEN: This is an amendment for deletion. Is there a second? It is seconded.

BRANSCOME: My reason for making this amendment is that if you read the entire paragraph of 2702, Item K, covers sexual misconduct. It seems to me like what we're listing under A is sexual misconduct. I don't think we need any additional language other than what it says there, "sexual misconduct."

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. Thank you. Be sure and see that the words of deletion get to the secretary. That was a

speech for. We're now ready for a speech against. Far left. Mic 5.

STEPHEN P. WENDE (Texas): Steve Wendé, Texas Annual Conference. I'm sorry, it's late. I probably have lost touch with what's going on; but if I understand the motion, it is to delete the part of this that makes it as specific for heterosexual sinners as it is for homosexual sinners. And I'm sorry, I understand we've got a problem in the church we've got to deal with it; we've got to be clear, and I've been voting with the majority. But we all know we got more heterosexual sin than any other kind in the church.

I speak in favor of the original motion. I speak in favor of this language. I think it's good to be clear, and I think it's good to be very clear with the pastors if we expect them to be clear with our people.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. We're now ready for a speech for the amendment. We've had one and one. Are we ready to vote? If you would—

GRAY: May I?

BISHOP ODEN: Let's see. Let's make sure about this. Let's ask that the secretary read the amendment—doesn't have it yet. We're gonna vote.

GRAY: Bishop, may I have the—

BISHOP ODEN: Yes.

GRAY:—opportunity to make a statement. I would urge the body to reject this amendment. The point that the brother just made is a very salient point that this particular proposal holds everyone in the pastoral ministry, holds everyone to the highest standard, not only celibacy and singleness, but also faithfulness in marriage.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, Judge Gray. We're now ready to vote. If you would vote on the amendment, if you favor the amendment, vote yes. If you're opposed to the amendment, vote no. Please vote now. [*Yes, 231; No, 672; Abstain, 13*]

The amendment is not sustained. Is there any further word you'd like to share on the majority report? Far right. Mic 4.

TIMOTHY J. RISS (New York): Tim Riss from New York.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright.

RISS: I would like to amend immediately after Section—immediately after letter A—“immorality.” I would like to insert “racism.”

Add “Racism”

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. The amendment is to insert “racism” after “immorality.” Is it seconded? Would some—would you like to speak for your amendment, sir?

RISS: Yes. Yes, Bishop. Some in this assembly seem to believe that persistent homosexual behavior is about the most immoral act that we can commit. I believe racism is more persistent, more pernicious, and more pertinent to our church. If any immorality needs to be named, I think it is racism.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. That's a speech for the amendment. Is there a speech against? Mic 5.

BILL WALKER (Florida): Bishop, in fact, my speech is a motion to table all that is before the General Conference on the issues of homosexuality—indefinitely. If permitted, if there's a second, I'll speak to it. (*pause*) Is this motion in order?

BISHOP ODEN: I'm trying to decide that. Would that—the only thing that is before us is Calendar Item 1487. I think that's the only thing that the motion could pertain to. So if you are making a motion to table 1487 in its entirety—the majority and minority report—that would be in order.

WALKER: Then I would so move.

BISHOP ODEN: That's not debatable. I want to make sure that is your motion.

WALKER: That's my motion.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. Was it seconded?

WALKER: I heard a second to my right. My name is Bill Walker. I'm a layman from Florida Conference.

BISHOP ODEN: Is it seconded? It is seconded. This is non-debatable. It is a

motion to table indefinitely, and it refers to paragraph—Calendar Item 1487. If you favor the motion to table indefinitely this Calendar Item, please vote now. [*Yes, 354; No, 560; Abstain, 4*]

The motion to table is not sustained. We're back on the amendment asking that “racism” follow the word “immorality.” And we've had one speech for and one against. Far back center. I'm sorry, one for, none against.

MATTHEW T. SINK (Western North Carolina): Matt Sink, Western North Carolina Conference, lay. On my reading of Paragraph 2702 of the *Discipline*, and...

BISHOP ODEN: Are you speak for or against, sir?

SINK: Against.

BISHOP ODEN: Against?

SINK: Yes. Letter H, says “includes racial harassment,” and so therefore, it would be redundant to repeat it later on in the paragraph.

BISHOP: OK, so you're speaking against the amendment. We have one each. Does someone wish to speak for the amendment? Far right, mic 4.

DON J. CUNNINGHAM (California-Nevada): Bishop, Don Cunningham, California- Nevada. I speak in favor of the amendment—only because I want to say some other things—before it.

BISHOP ODEN: This is a speech against the amendment, correct?

CUNNINGHAM: No, it's for the amendment.

BISHOP ODEN: I'm sorry. For the amendment.

CUNNINGHAM: I want to speak to the house, to my brothers and sisters. It's a speech I almost made earlier. I never thought I would have to say all this, and there's a lot I'd like to say, but I can't. I was baptized 71 years ago, April 16th, in a Methodist Church. I've been a Methodist all those years. I've never been more sad for my church than I am today.

Racism is a deep and pernicious sin

and immorality. And if we're gonna do this, then I think we ought to do this. But we are becoming increasingly legalistic, moralistic, and it chills me to the bone. We are sinking to deep, deep levels. You know we're playing games, here, one against the other, trying to figure out the ways to get it so that we will tighten up or not tighten up this church. I hope you will vote for this amendment and then I hope you vote down the whole thing.

BISHOP ODEN: OK. Is there a speech against the amendment? My left, halfway back the hall, mic 5.

DAN G. JOHNSON (Florida): Bishop, Dan Johnson, clergy, Florida. I call the question on all that's been before us.

BISHOP ODEN: I believe our rules state before that can be called, we have to have at least two speeches for and two speeches against.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What do you need?

BISHOP ODEN: Yes, mic 1.

MELVIN R. BOWDAN JR. (Kentucky): Bishop, Mel Bowdan, Kentucky Annual Conference. I move to suspend the rules and vote on all that is before us.

BISHOP ODEN: That is in order.

I'm sorry. I'm—I'm, in consultation with two very good colleagues backing me up, as well as others. We can't do that, because we haven't yet heard the minority report. We've been on the majority report, dealing with one amendment after the other; we're in the middle of an amendment, and we've had one speech for—two for and one against. And I believe the only thing that's in order is a speech on the amendment—against. Yes.

PAUL E. BLACK (Illinois Great Rivers): Paul Black, Illinois Great Rivers Conference, lay delegate. Bishop, I believe if the question, if all that is before us is the majority report, the effect of my brother's motion would be to move to the minority report, because all that is before us is the majority side of the report.

BISHOP ODEN: My colleagues are not of one mind on this.

And it's getting near adjournment time. The question is—what is before us? And, it may be that—one colleague feels that only the majority report is before us, because we have not yet perfected the minority report and that's all that's before us, and we can vote. Another suggests it's the calendar item, and I'm sure that the Council of Bishops behind me will be debating this all night long. I'm going to rule that the motion to suspend the rules and vote on what is before us, which is the majority report for Calendar 1487, is in order, and must pass by two-thirds vote, is not debatable. And if you're ready to vote, please vote now. [*Yes, 683; No, 191; Abstain 9*]

(pause)

You did vote to suspend the rules, and now we're, we have suspended the rules; and we're ready to vote on what is before us.

GRAY: Do I get the opportunity to make my...

BISHOP ODEN: Yes.

GRAY: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP ODEN: The amendment on racism is before us, and we're ready to vote on all that is before us. I'm not sure that debate is permissible. Would you tell me what you have in mind?

GRAY: Debate.

BISHOP ODEN: I believe we're going to have to go to the vote. That's what we have decided to suspend the rules to do. So we're going to call for the vote now, I'm sorry, on the amendment which is before us. If you're ready to vote on the amendment, please vote now. [*Yes, 415; No, 492; Abstain, 8*]

You have voted no on the amendment, 492 to 415, and so the majority report is now before us.

Perfecting Minority Report

Now, we must go to the minority report before we can move further. So, the minority report is before us for

amendments. We have reached the time of adjournment, and I'm going to ask the house if they will hold steady for a little bit longer that we might complete this report. Would you extend the time? I hear yes, and I'm going to assume that we will extend the time until we get this calendar item finished. Minority report.

BISHOP ODEN: Are there any amendments? I hear none. Far right. Mic 4.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are speeches for or against in order, or just amendments at the moment?

BISHOP ODEN: I'm sorry?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are speeches for or against in order, or just amendments?

BISHOP ODEN: We're just perfecting the report, speeches are not in order.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: OK.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, I hear no further amendments being called for. We have perfected the minority report, we've perfected the majority report, and sir, if you would—yes, mic 4.

ADAM M. WEBB (Iowa): Adam Webb, Iowa laity. I'd like to speak in favor of the minority report. Is that in order?

BISHOP ODEN: You'll have that opportunity. Would the minority, would you move the minority report?

FARRIS: Bishop Oden, I move the minority report.

BISHOP ODEN: OK, the minority report is before us and we now can debate it. We have opportunity for three speeches for and against, and then we will vote on the minority report. Now, a speech is in order.

WEBB: Thank you, Bishop. Adam Webb, laity, Iowa. My first point is, is to speak a little bit on the redundancy, which has been spoken to quit a bit here tonight. I don't really see a need to, to add this on the list. It just isn't appropriate to single out sexuality in this list of chargeable offenses. My second point is that this seems just to be

pretty much a slap in the face to those who are already excluded by our actions here today. This is an unnecessary addition to the *Book of Discipline*. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: OK. Thank you, sir. We've had one speech for the minority report. Is there a speech against? Yes, far left, mic 1.

JAMIE JENKINS (North Georgia): Jamie Jenkins from North Georgia. I'm seldom called on the far left.

I was a member of the Judicial Administration Committee and I would like to speak against the minority report. The point has been made that the language that we're using is a repetitive instrument and not necessary. However, in our committee and in other instances, on numerous occasions when we wanted to define inclusiveness and diversity, we added a lot of words—racial, gender, regional, geographic—and so on. We also heard yesterday at one of the dissenting opinions on the Judicial Council declaratory statement, one of the reasons why one of the members of the council dissented was that the language was in one place in the *Discipline* and not in another place in the *Discipline*, therefore not clear.

It would seem to me that since the language of the majority report is consistent with the *Discipline* as it is already, and the need to be specific in terms of naming the elephant in the room, the language that is there seems to be appropriate and much more appropriate than the generic language of living to the highest standards of holy living or whatever that was. I would urge the defeat of the minority report and support the majority report.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. We've had one speech for and one speech against the majority report. Far right, mic 4?

ROBERT HOSHIBATA (Pacific Northwest): Which one, Bishop?

"Bad Law" and Taking it Home

BISHOP ODEN: The one at the mike.

Thank you, Bishop. Bob Hoshibata, Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. Bishop and members of the General Conference, I am not a legal expert. That's the work my brother does. I'm not an attorney or a legal expert, but I have been a pastor for 20 years and a district superintendent now for 6. And in that time I have had the experience of dealing with numerous complaints that have to do with complaints under this section of the *Discipline*.

I am not an attorney, but I do know that the proposed minority report is better legislation than the majority report. And it is so because of the reasons that have already been mentioned. But I want to share another concern with you today and that has already been alluded to by some of the brothers and sisters who have spoken. This is bad law.

The majority report is bad law because it strikes at the heart of your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ who are sitting next to you. It strikes at the heart of your brothers and sisters who are in your churches, in your communities, wherever you are because it says once and for all we do not care for you, we do not love you, we're going to legislate you out of our lives. We are family together, we are family together, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, and is this how we treat our family? To tell them over and over again that they are not welcome?

I want to leave this General Conference with a sense that we have been a graceful community. Some of you have spoken eloquently about your need to go home showing that you proved to the world that we will not let homosexuals be ordained clergy. Well, that is done. That is accomplished. And I want to be able to go home and say that we were a family together and that although we have said something strong against clergy who are homosexual, we have also said that there is grace in what we do, and we do not need to legislate over and over again to say that we do not love these our brothers and sisters, some of them

sitting right next to you.

I want to go home with grace in my heart even though we have said this message to those in our churches who are gay and lesbian. This legislation of the minority report keeps our complaint section open; it is not specific.

BISHOP ODEN: You need to conclude.

HOSHIBATA: It's not going to lead to a long list of things that are chargeable. It is open; it is grace. I urge you. I urge you. Let's go home with grace in our hearts. Will you please adopt the minority report.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, sir. We've had two speeches for and two speeches against—one speech against the minority report. A speech against is now in order. Mic 5.

BRENT SALSGIVER (Central Pennsylvania): Brent Salsgiver, young adult, Central Pennsylvania Conference. I make a motion that we suspend the rules and vote on all that is before us.

BISHOP ODEN: I'm sorry. That is not in order. We have only one speech against and we have two for. Until we have one more speech against that will not be in order. Yes. Mic 4.

KARL BAUMGARDNER (Northwest Texas): Karl Baumgardner, Northwest Texas Conference. I am an attorney and the language contained in the minority report as I read it would probably be unenforceable. It's too vague; it would be very difficult to define what is the highest standards of living in the world, holy living in the world. I daresay that you could go to a whole laundry list of things that might fit within that category. And so I would stand against the amendment because it's unenforceable.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you. Now let me just share briefly where we are. We are at the point where we can vote because we have had two speeches for and two speeches against. We can take 1 more speech for and one speech against before we vote.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Bishop..

BISHOP ODEN: A question. What is the question, sir?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Bishop..

BISHOP ODEN: Are you calling the question? I didn't understand. Are you calling the question? You were not recognized. I heard a general voice. I see a, someone waving a placard. Mic 2.

NICHOLAS MCGEEHON (Illinois Great Rivers): Nick McGeehon, Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference. Young person. I call the question on all that is before us.

BISHOP ODEN: OK. Question has been called. It is in order. The vote must be by two-thirds, and it's a question to vote. It's calling the question to vote. If you favor voting on this report, Calendar Item 1487, please vote now.

BISHOP ODEN: You voted. It is by two-thirds. [*Yes, 801; No, 95; Abstain, 4*]

The question has been called; we're ready to vote. And now we're ready to hear from the minority report chair.

Closing Remarks

JOHN SCHOL (Eastern Pennsylvania): Thank you, bishop. You've heard many good arguments why you should adopt the minority report. I encourage you to hear those. There's one more I'd like to add. In Paragraph 2702.3, these same charges are listed for laity. If you adopt this report, if you do not adopt this report, we have now defined morality. And those—that charge of morality will also apply to all the laity, which will mean that we will need to charge all laity who commit adultery and all gay and lesbian persons in our congregations. We would need to charge them with chargeable offenses.

The language is not necessary. The Judicial Council has already ruled and told us that. There are paragraphs in other places in the *Discipline* that particularly pertain to clergy and behavior. When we move this to a chargeable offense, and particularly in this area of morality, it will apply to clergy and laity because 207, or 2702.3 also includes the laity. Thank you.

BISHOP ODEN: Alright. Now the bishop, committee chair, will get the final word.

GRAY: Thank you, Bishop, members of the conference. I believe I've mentioned twice to the body now that the Judicial Administration Legislative Committee had a wonderful experience in holy conferencing. And as a committee chair, I had the wonderful opportunity to hear various sub-committees as they debated various issues. and what I learned from the subcommittee about this particular proposal is the feeling that the language of the majority speaks to needs of our church at this time, and I would urge you to support the majority opinion.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you. We now must move immediately to the voting. The floor is closed to any further action. We will vote on the minority report, and if it prevails it becomes the majority; if not, then we will move immediately to the majority report. We are now ready to vote on Calendar Item 1487, the minority report. If you favor it, vote "yes," if not, vote "no." Please vote now. [*Yes, 427; No, 484; Abstain, 2*]

You have not sustained the minority report, which brings us immediately to the majority report, which is the motion before us at this time. We're now ready to vote. If you favor the majority report, please vote now. [*Yes, 456; No, 445; Abstain, 3*]

You have favored the majority report by a vote of 456 to 445, with 3 abstentions. That concludes the business of the evening. You have "hung in." You have worked hard. There is—the floor is not open except for announcements or questions. Far back.

MARY BROOKE CASAD (North Texas): about a point of personal privilege.

BISHOP ODEN: Point of personal privilege, yes. Yes, ma'am.

CASAD: Mary Brooke Casad, lay delegate, North Texas. The North Texas delegation would like to express our appreciation to both Bishop Oden....

BISHOP ODEN: No, I'm sorry that's not in order. We're not allowing those kinds of comments, but I sure do appreciate your trying. We're now going to move to the calendar. Are we ready for the calendar report? Do we need that? Presiding officer report next.

PAUL EXTRUM-FERNANDEZ (California-Nevada): Bishop and members of the General Conference, tomorrow morning's plenary session will be presided over by Bishop Joe Pennel from the Richmond Area and then in the afternoon from the West Virginia Area, Bishop Clifton Ives, and then for the evening session, from the Charlotte Area, Bishop Charlene Kammerer.

(applause)

BISHOP ODEN: Alright, now the calendar.

MARY ALICE MASSEY (Florida): Bishop Oden, we have a full day planned for tomorrow. We will start off with our usual music and worship, plenary call, and we will have the University Senate elections, election of the General Conference commission, election of the secretary of the General Conference. Then we'll go ahead and take other business that we hope to get into the Igniting Ministry report. In the afternoon, if we get through that, we hope to get into "Living Into the Future." Come back and we're going to be busy.

BISHOP ODEN: Thank you, Mary Alice. Are there any announcements?

CAROLYN M. MARSHALL: There are a couple of announcements. One has to do with an individual who lost a black purse during the break time. If someone happens to have found it, just bring it up here to the stage and we'll see that it is returned to the person who lost it.

And then these are two who—which are brought to you as a matter of information and one for our concern and prayers. The first one is that Jane Towns, mother of Mary Lynn Holley, director of InfoServ, The United Methodist Church's telephone information service, died unexpectedly May 4,