

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE 4

DISCIPLESHIP

Renewal and Reform Coalition (RRC)
Priority petitions in bold italics

FAIR REPRESENTATION

As the membership makeup of the denomination changes, it is important that different regions are fairly represented on general agencies as well as other denominational gatherings. Representation of the U.S. jurisdictions and central conferences is not always reflective of the proportional membership of each region. These imbalances unfairly privilege certain regions of the church while diminishing the voice of others.

<i>Pet 60100</i>	<i>Page 566</i>	<i>Jurisdictional Young People's Ministries</i>	<i>AMEND</i>
<i>Pet 60579</i>	<i>Page 572</i>	<i>Global Young People's Convocation</i>	<i>Support</i>

These petitions address young people's ministries and convocations. Petition 60579 gives specific provisions to ensure fair representation of the various parts of the global church. Petition 60100 needs to be amended to be consistent with those same fair representation provisions.

HOMOSEXUALITY

The church's balanced, compassionate, and biblically faithful position on the practice of homosexuality has been reaffirmed by ten General Conferences over 40 years. Despite vociferous disagreement by some parts of the church, it still represents the majority opinion of the grass roots church membership worldwide. Changing the church's position to allow same-sex weddings and/or the ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals would separate our church from 2,000 years of the church's consensus teaching and from 95 percent of world Christians today. It would also provoke separation of The United Methodist Church, forcing those who could not in good conscience live with the progressive position to leave the church. We oppose any efforts to remove or weaken the teachings and requirements of our church around marriage and sexuality.

<i>Pet 60894</i>	<i>Page 585</i>	<i>Teen Sexual Identity and Suicide Risk</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
<i>Pet 60896</i>	<i>Page 586</i>	<i>Teen Sexual Identity and Suicide Risk</i>	<i>Support</i>

These two petitions aim to revise Resolution 2121 on Teen Suicide related to teen sexual identity. Aside from disliking the term "sexual identity" (our identity is in Christ, not in our sexuality), there is much to like about Petition 60896. It broadens the scope of the resolution to address global needs and issues. Its recommendations are congruent with the current stance of the UM Church on homosexuality. On the other hand, Petition 60894 is narrowly U.S.-centric. It incorporates the term "gender identity," which implies that a person's gender is based on one's own feelings, rather than biological reality, and that gender can be changed (which we disagree with). We much prefer 60896.

<i>Pet 60797</i>	<i>Page 582</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Support</i>
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This petition instructs the Board of Discipleship "to develop and share on its website a list of books and other recommended resources that clearly affirm our Church's moral standards for sexual behavior." These resources are needed by clergy and laity in local churches to effectively guide young people in understanding their developing sexuality, as well as to inform adults'

moral decisions regarding sexuality. The resources are designed to promote compassionate ministry with same-sex-attracted-persons, teens at risk for suicide and others. This is one of the primary roles of the Board of Discipleship—identifying resources that can help the people in local churches engage in more effective ministry. We would encourage that these resources include some available in other languages, especially the official languages of the UM Church.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is the main building block of a healthy family, which then builds a healthy society. It is imperative that the church work to strengthen marriages according to God’s design. Christian marriage takes on the added significance of showcasing the image of God through complementary genders (Genesis 2) and symbolizing the union of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5).

Pet 60800 Page 569 BOD Responsibilities Support

This petition requires the Board of Discipleship to prioritize resources that strengthen marriage and families in line with United Methodist teaching about marriage. This needed emphasis will be of great practical help to local churches in their efforts to support and strengthen marriages and families in their congregations and communities.

Pet 60782 Page 581 Global Study of Marriage No Position

This petition would form a task force to study marriage. We favor the idea of developing a comprehensive theology of marriage, along with practical recommendations to strengthen the ministry of the church with regard to marriages. However, we would not want to see this study group used to promote a revision in United Methodist teaching on marriage that would advocate same-sex marriage or other forms of marriage contrary to biblical teaching. Therefore, we have not taken a position on this petition. Perhaps it could be amended to mandate that the study would make its recommendations in line with UM teaching and doctrine on marriage.

CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Pet 60092 Page 594 Readopt Resolution Support

This petition readopts Resolution 8015, Guidelines: The United Methodist Church and the Charismatic Movement. This resource helps charismatics and non-charismatics understand each other and work together better in the church. This is a very helpful document.

CHRYSALIS

Pet 60080 Page 585 Readopt Resolution Support

This petition readopts Resolution 2101, Support Chrysalis at All Levels of the Church. Chrysalis is a spiritual growth and enrichment program similar to Walk to Emmaus for young people. It has been very effective.

MORMONISM

Pet 60087 Page 592 Readopt Resolution Support

This petition readopts Resolution 3147, Guidelines for Ministering to Mormons Who Seek to Become United Methodists. The resolution contains a robust theology of baptism and effectively illustrates the differences between Mormonism and Christianity. This is a very helpful resource.

WALK TO EMMAUS

Pet 60081 Page 585 Readopt Resolution Support

This petition readopts Resolution 2102, Support the Walk to Emmaus at All Levels of the Church. The Emmaus Walk is an effective program of spiritual renewal for adults that has helped revitalize many congregations. We should encourage its use.

BLACK CHURCH

Pet 60109 Page 576 Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century Support
 This petition revises and adopts the plan for strengthening the black church.

Pet 60310 Page 588 Resourcing Black Churches in Urban Communities Support
 This petition revises and adopts Resolution 3063, encouraging resourcing and training for black church leaders.

NATIVE AMERICAN PLAN

Pet 60107 Page 575 Native American Comprehensive Plan Support
 This petition revises and adopts the plan for Native American ministry within the UM Church.

Pet 60849 Page 594 Native People and the UMC Support
 This petition consolidates 17 existing resolutions about Native People into one resolution. It gives an historical and theological overview of ministry with Native Americans. This is a very helpful resource for the church.

NEW HYMNAL

Pet 60106 Page 573 Hymnal Committees No Position
 This petition establishes two committees: one to prepare and present to the 2020 General Conference a new hymnal and a second committee to be a standing committee to continually revise and upgrade the resources available. The hymnal is envisioned to contain a core of materials that all churches would use, supplemented by a large reservoir of additional resources that congregations could purchase and tailor to their situation. The hymnal would be available in various print formats, as well as online versions. Once the hymnal was “published,” it would be continually revised and updated with new resources, keeping it more in tune with changing needs of the church. The biggest question is who will be on the committees and what criteria will they use to approve the resources made available through this project. We hope that the committees will be sensitive to the needs, desires, and tastes of the broad grassroots of the church. (A recent test of this process was not encouraging, as over half of the top 100 contemporary worship songs was not approved for use by United Methodists.)

SERVICES OF ORDINATION

Pet 60108 Page 576 Services for the Ordering of Ministry No Position
 This petition adopts the revised services for the ordination and consecration of clergy and bishops. We believe the services are in line with United Methodist doctrine and worship. We will rely on the expertise of committee members to verify the fidelity of the services.

Further information on these and other issues facing the 2016 General Conference may be found on the RRC website: www.methodistcrossroads.org