



UMAction

BRIEFING

Summer 2004

A newsletter for United Methodists working for Scripture-based reform in our denomination. Circulation: 350,000

EDITOR AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mark Tooley

CHAIRMAN
David M. Stanley

VICE CHAIRMAN
John Stumbo

STEERING COMMITTEE
Gerald Anderson
Karl Baumgardner
William Bonner
Janice Crouse
John Dowlin
Ira Gallaway
Thomas Oden
Robert Parrott
Edmund Robb, III
Faye Short
William Smallwood
Glen Spann
Jean Leu Stanley
Helen Rhea Stumbo

ADVISORY BOARD
George Anderson
Riley Case
Ellsworth Kalas
J. Robert Ladd
H.T. Maclin
Joy Moore
Quentin Nesbitt
Edmund Robb, Jr.
T. Terrell Sessums
Donald Wildmon

IRD PRESIDENT
Diane Knippers

UMAction STAFF
Jerald Walz
John Lomperis

UNITED METHODISTS UPHOLD CHRISTIAN SEXUAL MORALITY

The United Methodist Church strengthened its stand for God's Scriptural plan for man, woman, marriage, and family at its General Conference in Pittsburgh, April 27 – May 7, 2004.

The General Conference added to the UM Social Principles strong language supporting "laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman" and affirming "the importance of both fathers and mothers for all children." These two additions were proposed by UMAction and adopted by 77% and 88% votes.

The General Conference upheld and strengthened the UM Scriptural stand rejecting homosexual behavior while affirming that God's grace is available to all. (We all are sinners who need the transforming power of Jesus Christ.)

Comparing multiple votes in 2004 and 2000, the margins against any acceptance of homosexual practice were in most cases slightly larger this year than in 2000. Here are the key votes:

Affirmation in *Social Principles* that The United Methodist Church does not condone homosexual practice and it is incompatible with Christian teaching:

- 2000 – 65%
- 2004 – 60% (with stronger language in 2004)

Prohibition of practicing homosexual clergy

- 2000 – 67%
- 2004 – 72% (with stronger language in 2004)

Prohibition of same-sex unions in UM churches or by UM clergy:

- 2000 – 69%
- 2004 – 80%

Requirement of fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness:

- 2000 – 80%
- 2004 – 85%

continued on page 2...



Bishops Judith Craig and Susan Morrison (left & center) joined pro-homosexuality demonstrators during the General Conference. But a majority of delegates voted in favor of Scriptural beliefs. (UMNS)

*Upholding Christian Morality...
...continued from page 1*

Prohibition against general church agencies using funds to promote acceptance of homosexuality:

- 2000 – 70 percent
- 2004 – 99 percent

The General Conference again rejected clever attempts to “compromise” by saying that Christians disagree on homosexuality. Although the homosexual lobby’s pressure was intense, “compromise” language was defeated by 54% in 2000 and 55% in 2004.

The “incompatibility” language in the Social Principles was the one issue on which the margin for the Scriptural position declined – from 65% in 2000 to 60% in 2004. This may be due to the General Conference’s deference to its Legislative Committees. In 2004, this issue went through the more liberal Church and Society Committee, which wanted to weaken the language. In 2000, the Faith and Order Committee handled this issue and supported the unaltered “incompatibility” standard.

The 2004 General Conference

also took two strong new steps: The prohibition against using church funds to promote acceptance of homosexuality was expanded to include the Annual Conferences (54%). The list of chargeable offenses by clergy was strengthened (51%) by adding: not being celibate in singleness; not being faithful in marriage; being a self-avowed, practicing homosexual; or conducting same-sex ceremonies.

The United Methodist Church continues its firm stand for Christian sexual morality – reaffirmed in 2000 and strengthened in 2004, by larger margins.

This Scriptural stand appears to be gaining strength. Future General Conferences will have more delegates from the growing, faithful areas of our denomination, especially Africa and the U.S. South. Revisionist areas continue to lose members and will have fewer delegates.

ACTION: Check out www.ird-renew.org for more reporting on what happened at General Conference.

DEMONSTRATORS ALLOWED TO INVADe CONFERENCE

Our church has made its firm decision on Christian sexual standards. Most United Methodists want to focus on Christian ministry and mission, and stop arguing about sex.

But pro-homosexuality lobby activists constantly disrupt and distract

the church from its mission. Some Bishops aid and abet them.

After losing all the major votes on sexual morality, hundreds of pro-homosexuality demonstrators marched onto the General Conference floor.

They entered the area reserved

for delegates and walked in a circle for 35 minutes, carrying banners and singing.

Demonstrators were allowed to place a three-foot rainbow candle on the General Conference altar.

Presiding Bishop Janice Huie of Arkansas allowed this disruption and delay, calling the invaders “guests” who “come in peace as a witness among us.”

The delegates were not allowed to decide whether to permit this invasion of their time and reserved space.

Several hundred delegates, and about two dozen Bishops, stood in support of the demonstrators.

No demonstrators for any other cause were permitted on the floor of the General Conference.

Bishop Janice Huie allowed pro-homosexuality demonstrators to invade the space reserved for General Conference delegates. (UMNS)



JUDICIAL COUNCIL UPHOLDS CHURCH LAW ON SEX

The United Methodist “supreme court” has ruled that the *Discipline* statement that “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching” is a church law.

In two decisions during General Conference, the Judicial Council applied that law to UM clergy.

Both decisions responded to a Pacific Northwest Conference church trial court jury that refused to take action against openly homosexual minister Karen Dammann.

By a 6-3 majority, the Judicial Council ruled that the practice of homosexuality is a chargeable offense under par. 2702.1(b) of the 2000 *Discipline*. This decision rejected the church jury’s claim that the prohibition was only advisory.

The same 6-3 majority ruled that

a Bishop cannot appoint a UM clergy person who has been found by a UM trial court jury to be a self-avowed, practicing homosexual. Dammann’s jury did make that specific finding.

Dammann has since taken a leave of absence, which postponed any decision-making by her Bishop.

The Council decided by 5-4 vote that it did not have authority to review or change the Dammann jury acquittal.

But four Judicial Council members said the verdict should be ruled “null, void, and of no effect” because the church jury had “negated, ignored and violated provisions of the *Discipline*.”

These four Judicial Council members were Mary A. Daffin from Texas, Rodolfo C. Beltran from the Philippines, Keith D. Boyette from Virginia, and James Holsinger from

Kentucky.

The five who declined to overturn the Dammann verdict have rotated off the Council. At least two (and perhaps three) of their replacements appear likely to vote with the above four in future cases.

A future Judicial Council decision to overturn a jury acquittal could be a key step to uphold the *Discipline* in the revisionist-dominated Western Jurisdiction, where many officials refuse to enforce church law on homosexuality.

ACTION: Contact UM Judicial Council President James Holsinger to offer him your thanks and assure him of your continued prayers: 4705 Waterside Court, Lexington, KY 40513.

CHURCH LOBBY CHIEF LASHES OUT

Speaking in Pittsburgh, United Methodist Board of Church and Society General Secretary Jim Winkler lashed out against the U.S. military action in Iraq and against critics of his agency.

Winkler said he opposed military actions in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Winkler also asserted that “lies, attacks, and hate” are aimed at his agency.

“They are trying to persuade you that we are doing bad things,” Winkler said. “Consider their claims with a critical eye and read between the lines.”

Winkler attacked “powerful interests that profit from human misery” around the world. He insisted that his agency opposes the “powers and principalities” that perpetuate war, debt, and other global human suffering.

“I believe fundamentally that war is wrong,” Winkler continued. “I’m concerned that this General Conference may not speak clearly against war and against the war in Iraq.”

If the U.S. and its coalition allies had followed Winkler’s advice, the Taliban would still be oppressing the women of Afghanistan, and Saddam Hussein would still filling mass graves.

The United Methodist Church, unlike Winkler, recognizes that war sometimes may regretfully be necessary. See report on page 6.

Winkler’s pacifist belief apparently includes the war on terror. Rather than striking directly at terrorist groups, Winkler urged fighting poverty around the world.

Winkler said that “abrupt climate change” might be a greater threat than terrorism.

GENERAL CONFERENCE WEAK ON ABORTION BUT PRO-ADOPTION

By 58% vote, delegates supported continuing membership of United Methodist agencies in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, which supports legalized abortion in all circumstances.

This is inconsistent with par. 161J of the Social Principles, which opposes partial-birth abortion and abortion for birth control or gender selection.

However, this language was added to par. 161J: “We particularly encourage the church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption.”

New language also encourages ministry for “those who regret a past abortion” and persons seeking help with “post-abortion stress.”

Resolutions opposing assisted suicide and euthanasia were approved. The destruction of human embryos for research purposes was opposed.

ACTION: Do you want to know more about the far-left and very political Board of Church and Society, which is funded by your church’s apportionments? Check out the Board’s website at <http://www.umc-gbcs.org>.

FAITHFUL AFRICANS REFUTE PERMISSIVE AMERICANS

At the 2004 General Conference in Pittsburgh, U.S. advocates of accepting homosexual behavior debated traditional United Methodists from Africa.

Almost 20% of the delegates were from outside the U.S. Over two-thirds of them were from Africa.

Thanks to the General Conference's acceptance of the Ivory Coast Methodist Church and its one million members into our denomination, 30% of The United Methodist Church is now outside the U.S.

United Methodism in Africa is growing dramatically. The U.S. church continues to decline overall with many faithful churches growing, but huge member losses in the most revisionist and sexually permissive areas such as the Western U.S.

"We have received teaching from our missionaries on marriage," said Tshibang Kasap 'Owan from the Congo, who recalled African polygamy. "And the Christian

teaching that we received taught that there should be marriage between one man and one woman.... We Africans, we accepted this teaching, and we became Christians."

Tshibang regretted, "Now we are hearing another message in this General Conference, speaking of homosexuality."

But Mark Miller from New Jersey said Christian teachings on marriage and sex are not essential doctrines.

Yema Kasongo from the Congo saw it differently. "The church needs to speak with a clear voice" and not be "ambiguous," he said. "The church is not here to follow the will of every... person. It is [up] to the individual to follow God's will through the church's voice."

Bob Edgar from Ohio insisted there could be Christian disagreement about homosexuality. "People of good faith see this in more than one way."

But Muland Aying Kambol from the Congo warned against

compromising the church's sexual standards. "If The United Methodist Church today is passing through a time of confusion, our children will live through a time of destruction in the church." He questioned whether it was "permissible to us to waste so much time speaking about sin."

Janet Ellinger of Wisconsin compared disapproval of homosexual practice to racism and claimed "Our church since 1972 has tried to steal the identity of homosexual persons."

Forbes Matonga of Zimbabwe responded: "When we are saying 'no' to homosexuality, we are not hating the persons.... Like prostitution and everything else, it is not a person. It is about a practice."

Jeffrey Kuan from California claimed opposition to homosexuality is based on "meager Biblical evidence."

But Samuel Quire from Liberia replied, "I don't think The United Methodist Church can license people to go to hell.... It is a sin that leads to hell."

BISHOPS CHARGE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT WITH "RACISM"

Several United Methodist Bishops accused the U.S. State Department of racism because some African and Filipino delegates to the General Conference were unable to get visas.

Retired Bishop Marshall Meadors called U.S. immigration policies "racist and unjust" at a press conference in Pittsburgh.

Of 189 international General Conference delegates, 25 from Africa and the Philippines were not present because of visa problems. Seventeen others who could not obtain visas were replaced by alternate delegates who could obtain visas.

A U.S. State Department spokesman denied the charge. Stewart Patt of the Bureau of Consular Affairs said, "The fact that these are people of color is absolutely, completely irrelevant, but the question of their economic means may not be irrelevant."

U.S. policy requires that people

seeking non-immigrant visas must prove strong ties to their native country, such as jobs or property, to indicate they do not plan to remain in the U.S. after their scheduled visit.

The Bishops did not mention the concern of some delegates that UM officials in the U.S. may not have given international delegates enough information before their visa interviews at U.S. embassies.

African and Filipino UM churches now have more delegates because of their membership growth.

The Council of Bishops did approve a statement thanking Senator Richard Lugar (R, Indiana) for his help on the visa

problem. They also thanked the State Department's Office of Religious Liberty.

Bishop Marshall Meadors leads other bishops in denouncing the U.S. State Department for "racism." (UMNS)



BISHOP CARDER PUSHES SOCIAL GOSPEL

Retiring Bishop Kenneth Carder of Mississippi, delivering the episcopal address to the UM General Conference, gave an old-style social gospel message, emphasizing political reform of social institutions above the spiritual conversion of individuals to faith in Jesus Christ.

Carder condemned the “widening gap between the rich and the poor” and “the pervasiveness of market forces dominated by the wealthiest of nations.”

Carder criticized the war against terrorism: “The reliance on violence and military solutions to conflicts destroys life and compounds terror in the name of resisting terror.” He complained about the “current mood of political imperialism.”

The episcopal address at General Conference is usually given by a retiring bishop. But the text is reviewed

and edited by the whole Council of Bishops and is considered a statement from the Council, as Carder emphasized at a later press conference.

Although Carder spoke of both “personal salvation and social transformation,” he focused on the latter and said little about the former.

The church’s witness to the Gospel is seen in “those who support social and economic policies that make the earth’s resources accessible to all of God’s beloved children,” he said.

Carder spoke with great certitude about what the government must do to create “economic justice,” but he was vague about the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the church on sexual morality.



Bishop Kenneth Carder delivers a social gospel sermon. (UMNS)

ACTION: Ask your Bishop what he or she thought about Bishop Carder’s speech. You can find names and addresses by going to www.umc.org or phoning UM Infoserve at 1-800-251-8140.

UMC WILL SPEND MORE MONEY

The General Conference adopted a \$612 million apportionments budget for UMC churchwide programs and bureaucracy for 4 years 2005-2008.

This is a 12.2% increase over the 2001-2004 budget. An attempt to limit that increase to 10% was temporarily approved but later defeated.

This budget is 35% higher than actual apportionments collected during the last 4 years (2000-2003).

This significant increase is imposed on the UMC in the U.S., which is now in its 40th consecutive year of membership decline.

ACTION: Discuss these numbers with your church’s Finance Committee.

CALDWELL LIKENS FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS TO SEGREGATIONISTS

Addressing a Methodist Federation for Social Action luncheon at General Conference, the Rev. Gil Caldwell likened those who follow the Scriptural position on homosexuality to racial segregationists.

Referring to the General Conference’s many votes affirming Christian sexual morality, Caldwell asserted: “What I saw was what

I saw black children receive after the Brown vs. the Board of Education [desegregation] decision... the hate, the resistance, the contortions, the popping veins, I saw those in the faces of those at this Conference.”

He claimed that delegates who disagreed with him were like angry white segregationists demonstrating against black school children.

ACTION: Large numbers of U.S. black church leaders support Biblical teachings on marriage and sex. Some of them are leaders of the Alliance for Marriage. Get more information at www.allianceformarriage.org.

CHURCH BOARD HOSTS PARTISAN POLITICAL ATTACK

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society hosted a banquet with the Rev. Joseph Lowery as featured speaker during General Conference in Pittsburgh.

With the rainbow-colored stoles of the pro-homosexuality faction

abounding throughout the room, Lowery attacked U.S. economic and foreign policies and criticized the UM stand on marriage and sex.

Lowery condemned America's economic system, U.S. trade policy, "this war on the poor," and the Iraq war. He called inadequate

health care a "weapon of mass destruction."

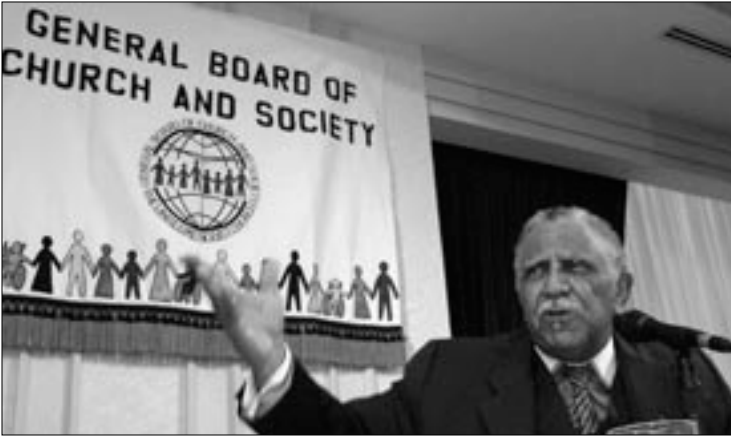
He alleged that "judges appointed by

Reagan and Bush" have caused "re-segregation" of America.

After sarcastically asking if President Bush is a United Methodist, Lowery responded to the loud disapproval from the audience: "Don't blame me; I didn't let him in!"

Lowery juxtaposed Bush with George Wallace, former segregationist Governor of Alabama.

(UMAction believes the church must avoid partisan politics. No political faction – Republican, Democrat, Socialist, or any other – should be allowed to use the church.)



Rev. Joseph Lowery makes partisan political attack at Board of Church and Society banquet in Pittsburgh. (UMNS)

ACTION: Why does a church agency such as Church and Society pick such a biased, politicized speaker? Ask Church and Society General Secretary Jim Winkler at 100 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 200002; e-mail: jwinkler@umc-gbcs.org.

UM JUST WAR TEACHING REAFFIRMED

The General Conference reaffirmed the United Methodist Social Principles statement recognizing that war may sometimes be just and necessary.

Indeed, this stand was reinforced. Par. 165C of the Social Principles was amended to say that war, though "incompatible with the teachings" of Christ, could be employed as a "last resort in the prevention of such evils as genocide, brutal suppression of human rights, and unprovoked international aggression."

The 2000 General Conference added to par. 164G a statement that "most Christians regretfully realize that, when peaceful alternatives have failed, the force of arms may be preferable to unchecked

aggression, tyranny and genocide."

The 2004 General Conference changed "most" to "many" and added: "As Christians we are aware that neither the way of military action, nor the way of inaction, is always righteous before God."

Surprisingly, the General Conference said little about the Iraq war, even though UM agencies and Bishops have criticized it.

The far-left Methodist Federation for Social Action called this reticence "a major disappointment."

Delegates supported investigating abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

The UM Council of Bishops issued a statement denouncing "the continued warfare by the U.S. and coalition forces." They did not condemn Iraqi terrorist groups.

UM STAND ON DIVORCE IS STRENGTHENED

Previously, the United Methodist Social Principles said little about the church's responsibility to help maintain strong marriages. Par. 161D merely called divorce a "regrettable alternative in the midst of brokenness."

But this General Conference added strong new language, in part proposed by UMAction, declaring that "God's plan is for lifelong faithful marriage" and urging the church to be in the "forefront of pre-marital and post-marital counseling in order to create and preserve strong marriages." It also says: "We grieve over the devastating emotional, spiritual and economic consequences of divorce for all involved and are concerned about high divorce rates."

MORE POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

UMAction believes the UMC needs a responsible, Biblical social witness. The church must take a stand on important issues where most Christians agree there is a clear Scriptural mandate.

Instead, a far-left faction is using the church as its political party.

As our church loses more members, it adds more resolutions.

The *UM Book of Resolutions* contains more than 800 pages (!) of resolutions, mostly on issues where there is no clear Scriptural position and about which Christians honestly disagree.

The 2004 General Conference adopted many more resolutions – usually without debate. Most (even highly controversial issues) were rushed through in big batches on “consent calendars.”

One adopted resolution conflicts

with the strong UM stand on sexual morality. This resolution calls for laws to prohibit any “sexual orientation” discrimination by any employer or property owner. This could compel a church to hire as a youth leader a person openly involved in adulterous, promiscuous, homosexual, or other harmful sexual behavior.

Here are a few more of the many resolutions adopted this year, which some of you may agree and others disagree:

- Opposed all U.S. “unilateral first-strike” military actions without United Nations collaboration.
- Endorsed the Kyoto Protocol, a “global warming” treaty that would restrict U.S. use of fossil fuels.
- Condemned the Israeli presence in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.
- Opposed “detrimental” privatization of resources around the world; supported control by governments.
- Supported study of U.S. reparations for descendants of African slaves.
- Opposed the U.S. Patriot Act, which Congress passed after 9-11 to help protect against terrorists.
- Opposed U.S. arms sales to all countries.
- Supported removal of U.S. military forces from Okinawa, Japan.
- Supported removing sanctions against the North Korea communist regime.
- Opposed all sanctions against Fidel Castro’s regime.
- Unusually, it also endorsed freedom for political dissidents imprisoned by Fidel Castro’s regime in Cuba.
- Endorsed a boycott of Taco Bell because of alleged mistreatment of migrant workers by suppliers.
- Endorsed a boycott against the Mount Olive Pickle company in North Carolina for not forcing farmers to unionize their workers.

ACTION: Ask your Sunday school class and your United Methodist Women or United Methodist Men group to set aside a session for discussion of the political positions of The United Methodist Church. Contact UMAction for help: umaction@ird-renew.org.

CHURCH LOBBY’S TRUST VIOLATION CONTINUES

The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) continues to misuse the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill and millions of dollars of other assets for far-left politics, in violation of the 1965 Trust Agreement that restricts all these assets for “work in the areas of temperance and alcohol problems.”

The 2004 General Conference was not allowed to consider a proposal requiring GBCS to comply with the Trust Agreement. Bishop Ernest Lyght, as presiding officer, ruled out of order all attempts to debate it.

Bill Smallwood of Mississippi asked that copies of the 1965 Trust Agreement be distributed to delegates. “We’ve been told that it’s been complied with, and I simply do not believe that’s the truth,” he said. Bishop Lyght referred Smallwood to GBCS for further information.

One proposal at General Conference would have partially honored the Trust

Agreement by creating a new Commission on Alcohol and Drugs whose income would have come from the United Methodist Building.

Jared Thomas, a college student from Ohio, asked, “If our United Methodist universities condone underage drinking in their own freshman dorms, how much more does our world need to hear and be ministered to in light of the terrible evils of addiction?”

Thomas noted that alcoholism is also a serious problem in Africa, addictions cross cultural boundaries, and the church is not responding sufficiently.

Thomas reported that in 1960, 70

denominations were using materials produced by the former Methodist Board of Temperance. But today the GBCS does not even have a budget line item for alcohol concerns.

“If it is argued out that they (GBCS) will be losing money for other projects, it will only be because they were not following their moral obligation to follow the Trust in the first place,” he said.

General Conference delegates voted, 66% to 34%, to refer the proposal for study by the GBCS!

(UMAction comment: The fox will now study whether the fox should remain in charge of the chicken coop.)

ACTION: Go to www.ird-renew.org to see the Spring 2004 UMAction Briefing and the 1965 Trust Agreement that the General Board of Church and Society is violating. Tell your Bishop what you think about this violation of both the Trust and the donors’ restrictions.

**Don't Leave Our Church!
Stay and Work for Reform!**

We tell you the painful truth about what has gone wrong with The United Methodist Church: unfaithfulness and far-left partisan politics by too many high church officials. We don't enjoy bringing you bad news, but we must tell the truth.

The good news is the growing movement to restore Scriptural faithfulness in our church. More and more United Methodists are working together for reform and renewal.

Don't leave! Our great Methodist heritage is too valuable to be abandoned. Join with us to help The United Methodist Church return to its Wesleyan roots as a growing, evangelical, Christian church living Christ's Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

UMAction

BRIEFING

Summer 2004

The Institute on Religion & Democracy
1110 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1180
Washington, DC 20005-3593

202-969-8430
www.ird-renew.org/umaction
umaction@ird-renew.org

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 52761
PERMIT NO. 338

Help Us Reach A Million Homes!

Yes, I (we) want to help UMAction inform one million United Methodists and their families about the urgent need for church reform and faithfulness. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

\$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$_____

Please send UMAction Briefing to the United Methodists on the enclosed list of names and addresses.

Please send UMAction Briefing to the names I have marked in the enclosed church directory or member list.

My Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Clip and mail to: UMAction c/o IRD
1110 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 1180
Washington, DC 20005

If you are receiving duplicates of UMAction Briefing, please send us your address labels.

YOUR OPINION, PLEASE!

1. Should our church require clergy to abide by Christian sexual morality?

YES NO

2. Should the UM Board of Church and Society obey the Trust Agreement and donor restrictions that require most of the Board's funds be used for work on temperance and alcohol problems (instead of political lobbying)?

YES NO

3. Should the General Conference adopt resolutions on issues only when most Christians would agree there is a clear Scriptural position?

YES NO