

2008 Annual Conference Legislation

The year Annual Conference meets after a General Conference session tends to be a light year legislatively—and this year was no exception. That doesn't mean that significant decisions were not made, however.

This year's Conference members had 11 Action Requests and nine Standing Resolutions to consider. The Conference was in a positive mood this year, as all but one of the actions passed. Some were revised before being passed.

Each Action Request and Standing Resolution will appear in its final form in the 2008 Conference Journal. You may also read them below.

Action Requests

The Action Request which **failed** was H-17, which called for the impeachment of President Bush and Vice President Cheney.

Action Requests which **passed** are as follows:

- H-5 Allowing for the appointment of an Associate Conference Lay Leader
- H-7 Calling for support of U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 241 on reduction of the debt of Haiti
- H-9 Calls for the establishment of a driver's license for immigrants which does not require legal citizenship and allows them to drive in Oregon, but would not serve as identification for airline travel and similar purposes
- H-11 Continues the call for Inclusive General Agency Nominations so that a good representation of backgrounds and viewpoints can be present in the work of the agencies of the UMC
- H-13 Supports upholding the current Oregon Domestic Partnership Law
- H-15 Calls for a Truth and Accountability Commission to be established by the U.S. Congress to examine the work of the Bush Administration
- H-19 Established a procedure for written ballots for episcopal nominees (nomination of persons for bishop), beginning with this year's session
- H-21 Continued a list of Conference Advance Specials, ministries of congregations and agencies of our Annual Conference who are authorized to solicit funding without limit from Annual Conference churches
- H-23 Established a policy for Safe Sanctuaries for Conference and District Events
- H-25 Establishes Minimum Safe Sanctuaries Standards for local ministry settings

Standing Resolutions

Standing Resolutions are positions taken by the Annual Conference on various social issues. These positions must be consistent with our *Social Principles* and *The Book of Resolutions*, as established by General Conference. Standing Resolutions require a 2/3 vote of those voting during a session of Annual Conference. They are not binding on local congregations and individual members, but should serve as guidelines for prayerful consideration and action on the issues.

- I-5 A new Standing Resolution calling for a resolution to the crisis in Haiti and fair treatment of Haitians. Local congregations are urged to learn about this issue and advocate for it with Congress.
- I-7 Calls for all United Methodists to study the *Social Principles* of the United Methodist Church (a new resolution)
- I-9 Rejects war as an instrument of foreign policy (a new resolution)
- I-11 Continues support of health action campaigns in Oregon and Idaho
- I-13 Continues support of Consumer Rights in Health Care
- I-15 Continues a call for individuals and congregations to take personal steps and political action to reduce global warming and its effects
- I-17 Continues opposition to the death penalty dating back to 1980
- I-19 Continues our Conference's Statement of Welcome to All Sexual Minorities, originally adopted in 1999
- I-21 A new Resolution calling for a ban on the use of torture by the U.S. government and its entities

Submitted by Steve Mitchell,

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

1 **Capital Punishment (1980, 1982, Revised 1986, 1989, 1990,**
2 **1993, Revised 1996, 1999, 2002, Revised 2005, 2008)**
3

4 The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference, continuing its witness since 1980 and in harmony
5 with the historic position of our United Methodist Church, reaffirms its opposition to the
6 death penalty and urges all members of the Conference to actively oppose capital
7 punishment in the states of Oregon and Idaho.

8
9 Our position is based on our understanding of justice in the teachings of Jesus, and
10 supported by studies indicating that the death penalty is not a deterrent to murder and that
11 the penalty is imposed almost entirely on those unable to pay for an adequate defense.

12
13 We regard the deliberate taking of life as profoundly incompatible with the Gospel's core
14 teachings for love, mercy and forgiveness. As United Methodists who have long
15 preached and practiced a social gospel, we are deeply troubled by the fact that the death
16 penalty is imposed disproportionately often on the poor and on members of minority
17 groups.

18
19 We also believe the unacceptably high error rates in death penalty cases demonstrate that
20 these states are making God-like decisions without God-like powers. Our faith persuades
21 us that there is that God in every one, that each of us is better than the worst thing we
22 have ever done, and that repentance and rehabilitation are always possible.

23
24 We encourage action for alternatives to the death penalty, such as those proposed in
25 Oregon by "Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty." PO Box 361, Portland,
26 OR 97207-0361 (www.oadp.org). In Idaho, information can be obtained from
27 www.deathpenaltyinfo.org.

28
29 **Responsibility Assigned to ...**

30 Witness Ministry Team to provide background information, resource materials. Pastors
31 and church leaders to offer classes or opportunities for dialogue. United Methodists to
32 speak out for justice on this issue.

33
34 **Estimated Cost....**

35 None anticipated

OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM

1 **Global Warming (2005, Revised 2008)**

2
3 We resolve to take positive action to curb emissions that may contribute to global
4 warming. As stewards of God's creation we acknowledge our way of living, principally
5 our use of energy, creates emissions that warm the planet and threaten all life.

6
7 We urge local ministry settings and members to be better stewards of the resources by
8 conserving energy. Resources are available from the United Methodist General Board of
9 Church and Society, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, the National Council of Churches,
10 and Oregon PeaceWorks to assist us in conversation and provide us with information for
11 action.

12
13 We also encourage members to take simple steps to reduce greenhouse gas emission by
14 driving "smart and less," by using fuel-efficient vehicles or alternate methods of
15 transportation and by investigating the use of additional and all energy resources.

16
17 We can take action by contacting elected officials and urging them to address the global
18 climate changes, and by creating a task force of energy professionals and activists to
19 create an energy audit template and to suggest a conference wide strategy to enact an
20 energy efficiency and conservation program.

21
22 **Responsibility Assigned to ...**

23 The Conference Witness Team to provide study and other informational resources.
24 Individual United Methodists to take advantage of these ways of becoming better
25 informed.

26
27 **Estimated Cost....**

28 Any cost of materials to be covered by the Witness Ministry Team budget.

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

1 **CONSUMER RIGHTS IN HEALTH CARE (1996, Revised 1999,**
2 **2002, Revised 2005)**
3

4 WHEREAS, the health care system in our country and in our states is undergoing massive
5 changes which include the shift away from non-profit health insurance plans and hospitals
6 and increasing competition and cost cutting efforts among insurers; and,
7

8 WHEREAS, those changes include increasing insurance company control over decisions that
9 should be made by practitioners in consultation with their patients and with the health
10 interests of the patients in mind; and,
11

12 WHEREAS, people without insurance coverage pay the highest price for their hospital bills,
13 medical debt is the primary reason for bankruptcy, and people with insurance are the fastest
14 growing portion of those filing bankruptcy as a result of medical debt,
15

16 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference work at state
17 and national levels in coalition with organizations such as Families USA, Universal Health
18 Care Action Network, Idaho Citizens Network and the Oregon Health Action Campaign in
19 efforts toward establishing, implementing, and ensuring enforcement of patient rights for; a)
20 self-pay and under-insured patients at risk of losing homes, retirement and education assets to
21 unaffordable charges billed by hospitals and providers; and b) consumer access and quality in
22 all insurance plans.
23
24

25 For information on the above agencies, log onto the following URL's
26 Families USA: www.familiesusa.org
27 Universal Health Care Action Network: www.uhcan.org
28 Oregon Health Action Network: www.ohac.org
29

30 **Responsibility Assigned to ...** The Conference Witness Team to provide study and other
31 information resources. Individual United Methodists to take advantage of this way of
32 becoming better informed.
33

34 **Estimated Cost....**

35 Any cost of materials to be covered by the Witness Ministry Team budget.

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

1 **HEALTH ACTION CAMPAIGNS (1989, Revised 1990, 1993,**
2 **1996, 1999, 2002, Revised 2005, Revised 2008)**
3
4

5 We endorse the Oregon Health Action Campaign and Idaho Citizens Network. By authority
6 of this action, the organizations will be entitled to list our Annual Conference as a supporting
7 body. The Oregon Health Action Campaign and the Idaho Citizens Network are grass roots
8 organizations dedicated to mobilizing multi-organizational and individual efforts for the
9 development of health policy that ensures access to comprehensive, quality, affordable health
10 care for all Oregonians and Idahoans.

11
12 It is estimated that two thirds of the nation's and region's uninsured children are eligible for
13 but not enrolled in existing publicly supported health programs; in keeping with the policy of
14 our denomination concerning health care issues, the *Social Principles of the United*
15 *Methodist Church: Right of Health Care* clearly states: "Healthcare is a basic human right."
16 We urge the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference to continue to endorse the Oregon Health
17 Action Campaign and the Idaho Citizens Network.

18
19 We also challenge our communities of faith to seek their role in making "Health Care For
20 All" a reality by participating in such activities as the observance of a Health Care Sabbath,
21 the distribution of information about publicly supported health programs for children and
22 families, and the opportunities for congregational advocacy.

23
24 **Responsibility Assigned to ...** The members of the Oregon-Idaho Conference assisted by
25 the Conference Witness team, local churches, clergy, laity and peace advocates of the United
26 Methodist Church. The Witness Team will keep updated on legislative issues and action
27 alerts linked to the General Board of Church and Society including the Peace with Justice
28 Network.

29
30 **Estimated Cost....** Membership dues not to exceed \$200.00 per year to come out of the
31 Witness Team funds.

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

1 **REJECTION OF WAR AS FOREIGN POLICY (2005, revised 2008)**

2 **MAIN MOTION: I/We propose that the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference...**

3
4 Renew and revise Standing Resolution 21 as follows:

5
6 WHEREAS, the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (§165c) declare, “We
7 believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject
8 war as an instrument of foreign policy, to be employed only as a last resort in the prevention
9 of such evils as genocide, brutal suppression of human rights and unprovoked international
10 aggression. We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to resolve by peaceful means
11 every dispute that arises among them...”

12
13 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United
14 Methodist Church affirms its commitment to § 165c of the Social Principles of the United
15 Methodist Church, declaring the policy of using the military might of the United States as an
16 instrument of foreign policy to be incompatible with the Social Principles, calling on the
17 current administration to cease and to desist from this policy, to exercise restraint in its
18 disputes with other nations and “to seek to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that
19 arises...”

20
21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the laity and clergy of the Oregon-Idaho
22 Annual Conference to be actively involved in efforts for peace through the local church and
23 in the connectional life of the United Methodist Church, by being in touch with their
24 Representatives and Senators, through public venues such as newspapers, periodicals and the
25 venues offered by the internet, by praying daily for peace in our world, and through other
26 opportunities as they arise.

27
28 **Responsibility Assigned to ...**

29 The members of the Oregon-Idaho Conference assisted by the Conference Witness team,
30 local churches, clergy, laity and peace advocates of the United Methodist Church. The
31 Witness Team will keep updated on legislative issues and action alerts linked to the General
32 Board of Church and Society including the Peace with Justice Network.

33
34 **Estimated Cost....** The cost of materials to be covered by the Witness Ministry Team
35 budget.

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

1 **STUDY ON THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES**

2
3 new Standing Resolution:

4
5 We urge the local churches of the annual conference to encourage the members of their
6 congregations to become educated about the Social Principles of the United Methodist
7 Church through such means as:

- 8 - Adult study groups
- 9 - Confirmation training
- 10 - New member training classes
- 11 - Worship services that include the Social Creed in music, litany or responsive
- 12 reading, and in which the pastor makes the connection between the Social
- 13 Principles and their scriptural basis
- 14 - Church newsletter articles
- 15 - United Methodist Women's Schools of Christian Mission

16
17 **Responsibility Assigned to ...**

18 The Conference Witness Team, the Conference Nurture Team, and Conference United
19 Methodist Women to provide study and other informational resources. Pastors and local
20 church education and social action leaders to provide opportunities for studies and growth on
21 the part of their members.

22
23 Individual United Methodists to take advantage of these ways of becoming better informed.

24
25 **Estimated Cost....**

26 Minimal. No additional funds. The cost of materials to be covered by current budgets of the
27 responsible Connectional Ministries Table groups (Witness Team, Nurture Team, United
28 Methodist Women).

OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM

RESOLVE THE CRISIS AND FAIR TREATMENT OF HAITIANS

new Standing Resolution:

WHEREAS, Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and Haiti is the lowest-ranked country outside of Africa according to the United Nations Human Development Index - Haiti, #153; Cuba, #52; Mexico, #53; Colombia, #69; Nicaragua, #112; Guatemala, #117; Norway, #1; Iceland, #2 & US, #10; and,

WHEREAS, The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) commanded by the Brazilian military sent to Haiti to suppress the continued unrest since the removal of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the authorization to use force and the documentation by the Haiti Information Project (HIP) of the indiscriminate killing of unarmed civilians, including women and children (Dec, '06); and other abuses documented by the Center for the Study for Human Rights, University of Miami Law School, Miami FL, 2004; and,

WHEREAS, Haitians are seeking an equal chance to escape the dire economic conditions in their country and to seek better lives in the USA just as others from Cuba, Mexico and other South American countries; and,

WHEREAS, The Executive Order signed by President Bush on July 3, '02 that provides for the "expedited naturalization for aliens and noncitizen nationals serving in active duty status in the Armed Forces of the USA during a period of war against terrorist of global reach;" and,

WHEREAS, Under this EO, individuals in the military can apply for expedited citizenship on their first day of active duty; and,

WHEREAS, Many of these noncitizens can apply for expedited citizenship under the NDAA, and continue to impose an unfair advantage to the people of Haiti; and,

WHEREAS, President George W. Bush acknowledged in Nov, '02 that, "Cubans are the only exception to the country's immigration laws because of Cuba's communist regime." And, a 2002 government resolution states that Haitians who manage to reach US land must remain in custody while their asylum petitions are reviewed; and,

WHEREAS, The "wet-foot-dry-foot" policy allows Cubans who reach U.S. soil to be processed and released pending their asylum hearings; and,

WHEREAS, The USA and Mexico share contiguous borders which extends to the rest of South American countries also affords the nationals of these countries greater chances of entering the USA because of our porous borders with Mexico; now,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference call for the repeal of unjust laws; promote this resolution; and educate churches, and encourage our local, state and national leaders to address the plight of the Haitian people.

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

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Responsibility Assigned to ... Conference Witness Team

Estimated cost..... No anticipated cost

**OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008 SESSION
ACTION REQUEST FORM**

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Ban On Torture

New Standing Resolution as follows:

We support a ban on torture in any form by the U.S. government, its agencies, agents, military or the use of non-U.S. government entities to torture on its behalf.

Responsibility Assigned to ... Conference Witness and Cabinet who shall insure notice of this Action is delivered to the U.S. Congressional leadership as well as Oregon and Idaho congressional delegations.

Estimated Cost.... Less than \$20.00 for paper, printing and postage.