
The UMConnector

Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference
Special Issue 652 -- Apr. 26, 2008

*Deadline for the UMConnector is Wednesday of each week at 10 a.m.
Send items to Linda@umoi.org.*

2008 GENERAL CONFERENCE

There are several ways you can stay up to date with what's happening at 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, and how our delegation sees things.

[Oregon-Idaho Delegation Blog](#) (Read what various people write)

[The Bishop's Blog](#) (Read Bishop Hoshibata's impressions)

[Official 2008 General Conference website](#)

[Today at General Conference](#)

[Daily newsletter and news briefs](#)

[Streaming video podcast](#)

[Streaming audio podcast](#)

[Legislation Tracking](#)

[\(Laura Jaquith Bartlett will be keeping track of Conference legislation.\)](#)

[RSS feed](#)

[General Conference photos](#)

Third Day (April 25)

Legislative committees were the main course on the "menu" for the third day of General Conference. There were also worship, committee reports and plenary sessions.

A brief wrap up of the day: [Read the entire wrap-up.](#)

UMC receives grant to fight malaria

The UMC will receive a \$5 million grant to fight malaria and other diseases of poverty thanks to a grant from the United Nations Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Morning worship

The day began with a sermon by Bishop João Somane Machado of the Mozambique Annual Conference. Machado told the story of a pastor sent to a new appointment at a church with the reputation of looking inward, not "out at the world." The pastor's opening sermon was very well received, but in the following weeks he delivered the same message. "Why are you repeating the same sermon?" asked the church's administrative council. "Until you show me that you can put into action the words I am preaching, I'm not going to change my sermon," the preacher responded.

Legislative committees

Delegates will amend the *Book of Discipline*, the UM book of law, and the *Book of*

Resolutions, a book of statements on social justice issues. That process begins in legislative committees. The 1,500 petitions sent to General Conference are divided by disciplinary paragraph or subject area and assigned to one of 13 legislative committees.

The committees elected officers April 24, and most of the groups divided into subcommittees to tackle specific proposals from individuals, churches, annual conferences, agencies and caucuses. Subcommittee recommendations will be considered by the full legislative committee before they are brought to the 992-member General Conference for action. If a proposal that has no financial implications and does not seek a change in the constitution receives fewer than 10 negative votes, it is placed on a "consent calendar." That item may be removed from the consent calendar by 20 delegates. If it is not removed, it is voted on together with other non-controversial items as a timesaving mechanism.

Immigration press conference

The UM Task Force on Immigration sponsored a press conference at which the Rev. David Farley, pastor of Echo Park (Los Angeles) UMC, said the plight of immigrants is a "humanitarian crisis, a moral outrage and an affront to God." He told some 175 people at the conference that more than 800,000 people are displaced annually. The task force is supporting two resolutions before General Conference. Bishop Felton May, interim top executive of the Board of Global Ministries, wondered if anyone would step forward during this General Conference session and confront the issue. "What would it look like if United Methodists said to Bushy, 'Tear down this wall?'" he asked.

Other events

In other news:

- The Judicial Council announced that six petitions that would require places for ethnic minority persons, young people, young adults or central conference representatives on general agencies or as delegates to General Conference would be declared unconstitutional if they were passed by the legislative body. The assembly can recommend such representation, but it cannot require it.
- Outside the plenary sessions, delegates and church officials reacted to word that a coalition of groups that believe the UMC has strayed too far from its roots, had provided free cell phones to more than 150 African and Filipino delegates to use during General Conference. Some expressed concern that the coalition was trying to sway the votes of the delegates. A letter from the coalition announced the cell phone give-away as a service that might be helpful to overseas delegates, while also suggesting the delegates consider a particular slate of members for Judicial Council. A coalition member said the phones were provided to give the delegates the same access to communications and materials as U.S. delegates.
- Delegates, bishops, general agency staffers and visitors helped load 40,000 pounds of sweet potatoes into trucks and other vehicles for distribution to area social service agencies that feed the hungry. The "potato drop" was sponsored by the Society of St. Andrew, a national hunger-relief agency based in Virginia, and the Task Force on Hunger of the Central Texas Conference of the UMC. The potatoes were provided by Texas Sweet Potato Distributing Inc., a division of W. E. Bailey Produce of North Carolina. *(Linda Sullivan 4-26)*

[Read Bishop Hoshibata's Blog](#)

[\(Don't forget you can send Bishop Hoshibata comments via his blog.\)](#)

From Oregon-Idaho Delegates Blog

[\(Don't forget you can send delegation members your comments via their blog.\)](#)

And remember, you can also read messages other people are sending our delegates under "Comments" just below each post.

[We've Got Pictures!](#)

April 26, 2008 by Greg Nelson

We finally have been able to get some pictures online for you. Of course there are many good pictures on the official UMC website, but here are some of our delegation and our view of the conference. Go to the [PICTURE GALLERY](#) link on the right side bar of the blog. We'll add more as we can.

[We are yet alive!](#)

April 26, 2008 by Laura Jaquith Bartlett

Colorful banners, butterflies, and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ paraded through the plenary space this morning in a celebration of the life-transforming ministry that happens throughout the denomination in town and country churches. Our own Karen Nelson participated in the parade as the pastor of Halsey and Shedd UMCs in Oregon's Willamette Valley; also joining the procession was Carol Thompson, an Oregon-Idaho clergy member, who is the director of Town and Country Ministry for the denomination.

Thanks to overly energetic air-conditioning today, many of us are shivering, but our hearts are burning warmly after this morning's opening worship. We participated in a moving affirmation of baptism, and there was yet another inspiring sermon. Bishop William Hutchison teased and prodded this huge gathering of proper UMs to loosen up enough to allow the Holy Spirit to move us into action.

As I type this, we are listening to Liberia's Bishop John Innis, who is known to many OR-ID folks through our covenant relationship with the Liberia Annual Conference. Bishop Innis is helping the General Conference understand the urgent need to provide the clergy of central conferences with an opportunity for "retirement with dignity." After 30 or 40 years of ministry, many retired central conference clergy have barely enough to put food on the table, if they're lucky. The UMC is working to address this injustice.

Your delegation is weary, but yet alive! Most legislative committees worked in sub-committees yesterday. My subcommittee will work through lunch in order to be ready for the reconvening of the entire Ministry and Higher Education legislative committee at 2:30. We have all been given a deadline of finishing our committee work by 4:30 on Sunday. I'm guessing that our common desire for more sleep may motivate us to work quickly!

Last night we gathered all the OR-ID folks who were available and shared a meal together at a Fort Worth restaurant. The food was excellent and the fellowship was even better. At the last minute, a schedule conflict prevented Bob and Greta Hoshibata from joining us; we missed them but we know their hearts were with us. We know that your hearts are with us too, and that knowledge helps sustain us.

After the dinner break, we headed off to our evening's work feeling renewed and nurtured by our shared identity as Idaho and Oregon United Methodists on fire with Christ's love!

The legislative process

April 25, 2008 by Greg Nelson

In 1898 Otto Von Bismark said, "Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made." The same may be true of the UM *Book of Discipline*. Here's a little of how my legislative committee has gone.

Yesterday we organized ourselves and elected officers. I was nominated for both chair and vice-chair of my committee (Independent Commissions), but was not elected. Last night we did a small amount of business, but did not tackle anything major. Today we started again at 10:30 a.m.

The committee struggled through processing a few petitions. Petitions with financial impact have to be done first so they can go to the Council on Finance and Administration for review.

To try to do our best work we would invite guests to speak, and also make statements for and against motions, or amend them. Each time we speak we walk up front to a microphone, say our name and conference, and share our question or statement. We have translators in the room assisting people from Nigeria and Angola. So everything is translated into French and Portuguese. Several times we've gotten stuck in the quicksand of parliamentary procedure.

After dinner we tried to pick up the pace and divided into subcommittees. I was elected as a subcommittee chair and am now steering a group of 12 people though 15 petitions related to ecumenical relations and Pan-Methodist connection. We will try to perfect the measures and pass them on to our full committee. Because the subcommittee has already reviewed them, they should (maybe) go through the full committee more quickly.

Is this confusing yet? After committee action, they will go to the full Conference, either on a consent calendar or for more debate and perfection on the floor of the conference!

Okay, it's midnight and the alarm is set for 5:30. We start with caucus meetings at 7 a.m. Good night.

From United Methodist News Service

HUTCHINSON SAYS BE MOVED BY "WATER AND THE SPIRIT"

Claim the rebirth and power of baptism, urges Bishop William W. Hutchinson.

PENSION INITIATIVE NEEDS MILLIONS TO HELP RETIRED PASTORS

Response to pension initiative beginning to meet the need of retirees in central conferences.

\$5 MILLION GRANT BOOSTS GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

The grant will help the UMC fight malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

BISHOP MACHADO: DEEDS, NOT WORDS, NEEDED TO MAKE TRUE DISCIPLES

True disciples will use deeds to transform the world.

CHURCH LEADERS SUPPORT SANCTUARY FOR IMMIGRANTS

Pastor calls immigrants' plight an "affront to God."

DOUBTS ARISE FOLLOWING GIFTS OF CELL PHONES

Gifts of cell phones to 150 African and Filipino delegates, accompanied by a letter encouraging votes for selected candidates for Judicial Council, raise questions for some delegates and church officials.

LANGUAGE ON BOARD MEMBERSHIP IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL, JUDICIAL COUNCIL SAYS

Ruling applies to petitions that would mandate some types of board members and delegates.

POTATO DROP YIELDS 20 TONS OF FOOD FOR AREA HUNGRY

Sweet potatoes will feed people, such as the 13-year-old who ate grass, "because it was like eating salad."