

Total Number of Pages: 11

Suggested Title: **General Commission on Elimination of Violence – Missional Priority**

Discipline Chapter Five, Administrative Order

General Church Budget Implications: Yes

Global Implications: Yes

Amend Chapter Five, Administrative Order by insertion of a new section XVIII, and

¶ 2402:

Section XVIII, ¶ 2402 – General Commission on Elimination of Violence

The United Methodist Church shall develop, establish and implement a General Commission on Elimination of Violence, in collaboration and consultation from the appropriate boards, agencies, and local churches, which include, but is not limited to the: General Board of Church and Society; General Board of Discipleship; General Board of Global Ministries; General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; General Commission of Religion and Race; General Commission on Status and Role of Women; United Methodist Communications; and The Connectional Table. This Commission shall be established as a Missional Priority.

The Mission of this Commission shall be:

- To implement, execute and monitor the foregoing established recommendations from the listed violence-related Resolutions, and all other Resolutions and statements of the United Methodist Church related to violence;

- to develop resources, curriculum, and advocacy strategies that will seek to provide creative avenues to address the elimination of conflict and violence in all of our communities;
- to call upon the church to affirm its faith through vigorous efforts to curb and eliminate all forms of violence;
- to urge and support the denomination to use legislative and non-legislative means at federal and state levels to reduce violence in our society, especially among the young, and to teach our young people conflict resolution strategies as an alternative to violence;
- to illuminate causes of injustice and inter-group tension, engage in advocacy for peace and justice, provide training for conflict resolution, and become instruments of peace;
- to seek and assess root causes of domestic strife, interpersonal violence and abuse, civil conflict, ethnic and racial clashes...– all of which prevent us from achieving God's shalom;
- to call upon boards and agencies to incorporate violence eliminating initiatives into their regular programs and budgets;
- to develop, publish, and distribute Christian education material on the biblical basis of violence and restorative justice, and ways in which children, youth, and adults can be peacemakers and seekers of justice; and to publish devotional material for peacemakers, and those who are both victims and responders to violence;
- to serve as public policy advocate for actions that promote peace and oppose war, to provide resources on peacemaking and violence support to annual conferences

and local congregations, and to facilitate training for nonviolence that applies Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount;

- to work with United Methodist seminaries and Africa University for encouragement of research, teaching, and publications on the theology of peace and methods of peacemaking and peace building with justice.
- to teach the theology of peace to students, clergy and laity and provide training for peacemaking and responses to violent activity;

The United Methodist Church shall establish a committed, passionate, proactive, and accountable commission to target the elimination of violence in our communities.

Membership on the Commission shall include representatives from the following groups without budget support requirements: The Connectional Table; Communities of Shalom; Restorative Justice Ministries Committees; United Methodist Men; United Methodist Women; The Council of Bishops; Representative member(s) from each of the racial ethnic caucuses as elected by the Connectional Table upon nomination from: Black Methodists for Church Renewal; Methodists Associated to Represent Hispanic Americans; Native American International Caucus; National Federation of Asian American United Methodists; Pacific Islanders National Caucus United Methodists.

WHEREAS, The biblical foundation for this Petition begins with the Genesis scripture on the Creation of humankind, (Genesis 1:26-28); and

WHEREAS, Genesis 4:3-12 outlines one of man's first encounters with violence, so we begin to see the consequence to humankind from sin, anger and the lack of compassion, and our lack of understanding about being "***our brother's keeper***";

WHEREAS, God became angry with humankind because of violence and sent the Flood to destroy all flesh that had become violent (Genesis 6: 5-13);

WHEREAS, In Malachi 2:16 God declares His hate for violence and commands His people to remain faithful;

WHEREAS, God through the prophets exhorts His people to repent from violence... and to do what is just and right (Jeremiah 22:1-5; Ezekiel 45:9);

WHEREAS, We are called as servants of God to model and teach a nonviolent approach and response to violence (Isaiah 53:9; 1 Peter 2:23-25; James 5:6)

WHEREAS, John Benjamin Wesley experienced several aspects of violence in his ministry in Georgia and other American cities, including violent beatings, bullying, attacks with weapons, and even intimate partner violence;

WHEREAS, **The World Health Organization (WHO)** defines violence as:

“...the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation...”;

WHEREAS, in the Book of Resolutions #3421, Adopted 2008, we as a church acknowledge and describe violence and its effects on God’s created world;

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has a long history of concern for social justice, and The Social Principles are a call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 3421 *Grieving and Repenting From Acts of Hate and Violence* calls the Church to continue to educate children, youth, seminary students, clergy and all person in the United Methodist Church about the sins of hatred and bigotry; and

WHEREAS, in the Book of Resolutions #3421, we acknowledge and describe violence and its effects on God's created world;

WHEREAS, Resolution 3421 also calls for the leadership of the General Board of Church and Society to advocate for:

- law-enforcement personnel to maintain records on hate crimes and to bring to justice the perpetrators of such violence and intimidation;
- hearings on hate crimes, particularly in those states where statistics reveal an increase in the activity of the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups;
- hate crimes prevention legislation that includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons.

WHEREAS, in Resolution #3422 *Resisting Hate, Fear, and Scapegoating; and Transforming the Context of Hate in the United States*, the church commits itself to redouble its efforts to speak out against hate crimes and work to transform the context of fear and hate that gives permission to these acts, naming and challenging the culture that perpetuates it; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution #3422 The United Methodist Church calls on annual conferences to

- report on their work on the culture of hate and hate crimes at their annual conference meeting;
- to include hate crimes in their conference report to the General Commission on Religion and Race; and

- to work with the General Board of Church and Society,
the General Board of Global Ministries, and
United Methodist Women on this concern.

WHEREAS, Resolution #3423 *Violence against Women and Children*, acknowledges:

It is the silence, the unwillingness to acknowledge the horror, which leaves victims isolated, protects perpetrators, and thwarts healing; [and] we [the church] are commanded to break the silence, to give credence to the stories, to be agents of wholeness and justice.

WHEREAS, Resolution #3423 declares that:

The church must reexamine the theological messages it communicates in light of the experiences of victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

We must treat with extreme care the important, but often-misused, concepts of suffering, forgiveness, and the nature of marriage and the family. Situations of violence and abuse exist in families in virtually every congregation; tragically, no church or community is exempt.

WHEREAS, in Resolution #3423, The church is challenged to listen to the stories of victims and survivors and to seek information and guidance that will lead to wiser and more effective ways to minister with persons who experience domestic violence and sexual abuse; [the church as] the people of faith should take the lead in calling for a just response by the community in the face of domestic violence and sexual abuse;

WHEREAS, Resolution #3423 called for General Conference to make requests of

- the General Board of Church and Society
- the General Board of Global Ministries, and

- the General Board of Discipleship

to develop resources, curriculum, and advocacy strategies that will seek to provide creative avenues to address conflict and violence in our society.

WHEREAS, in Resolution #3424 *Violent Video Games*, The United Methodist Church advocates at state and federal levels for the elimination of violent games that specifically target children and youth, specifically those games that glorify death, show killing, and depict all acts of violence;

WHEREAS, Resolution #3425 *Prohibition of Bullying* defines bullying as:

a behavioral expression of aggressiveness that attempts to yield power over another person(s) or people(s), that may be expressed by physical or psychological means; can result in the death of the victim; and there are persons today who suffer and die because another person(s) seek(s) to overwhelm them by aggressive behavior; and

WHEREAS, in Resolution #3426 on *Gun Violence*, the church declares that violence and, more particularly, **violence to children and youth** is a primary concern for United Methodists; that we recognize and deplore violence which kills and injures children and youth;

WHEREAS, In the name of Christ, Resolution #3426 calls upon the church to affirm its faith through vigorous efforts to curb and eliminate gun violence; and

WHEREAS, The killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York sparked a national outcry to end the epidemic killings of black men and has given rise to grassroots and social media campaigns such as **#BlackLivesMatter**;

WHEREAS, **#BlackLivesMatter** has infiltrated America's modern vocabulary and has become a rallying cry for a movement that began getting a lot of national attention after the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri;

WHEREAS, **#BlackLivesMatter** has inspired important in-person gatherings and conversations around race, prejudice and police brutality across the country;

WHEREAS, **#BlackLivesMatter** is changing the landscape of the modern black civil rights movement in America, and it has brought people together who have traditionally been hard to get on the same page;

WHEREAS, Alicia Garza, a longtime social activist, co-creator of **#BlackLivesMatter** declared:

"Love is what sustains us through all the hardships that come with this work. Even love for people who disagree, ... Love is what will ultimately get us to a place where we can change the world we live in."

WHEREAS, Black Methodist for Church Renewal (BMCR) was founded after the dissolution of the racially segregated (Methodist Episcopal Church) Central Jurisdiction, and continues to be a necessary force for change and accountability in the United Methodist Church; and this change and accountability spills over and benefits the church's global body

WHEREAS, BMCR purposes to:

- encourage and involve Black Methodists and others in the struggle for economic and social justice;
- expose latent and overt forms of racism in all local, regional, and agencies and institutions of The United Methodist Church;

- act as an agitating conscience on all boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church in order to keep them sensitive to the needs and expressions of a “genuinely” inclusive and relevant Church;
- work to liberate all people from racism and injustice everywhere with a renewed
- commitment to inclusiveness and justice;

WHEREAS, North Georgia Black Methodist for Church Renewal (NGBMCR) petitioned the North Georgia Annual Conference during June 16-19, 2015 to adopt this Resolution to create a Quadrennial Missional priority to target the elimination of violence in our communities for submission to the 2016 General Conference; and

WHEREAS, the shooting of the nine parishioners at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was revealed on June 17, 2015 as this petition was being presented at the North Georgia Annual Conference sessions;

WHEREAS, this Petition is *“a response to a critical need in God’s world that calls The United Methodist Church to a massive and sustained effort through primary attention and ordering or reordering of program and budget at every level of the Church, as adopted by the General Conference or in accord with ¶ 906.1.”*

WHEREAS, *this need is evidenced by research or other supporting data, and the required response is beyond the capacity of any single general agency or annual conference.*

Date: July 18, 2015



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APPENDIX

Anticipated Financials for A Commission on Elimination of Violence

The anticipated financials (*i.e.*, a Proposed Budget) for the establishment of the Commission on Elimination of Violence will require a .025% resource funding amount from the World Service budget for each of the General Boards, and Program Agencies in the matrix below. This budget is predicated on the presumption that the Resolutions cited in this Petition (#3421, #3422, #3423, #3424, #3425, #3426) provided the initial authority for each of these boards and agencies to provide resources and to accomplish the tasks of each Resolution.

Commission on The Elimination of Violence		
General Board/Agencies	<u>2016 Budget</u>	Petition Budget Funding at .025%
General Board of Church and Society	\$2,794,678.00	\$69,866.95
General Board of Discipleship	\$8,874,347.00	\$221,858.68
General Board of Global Ministries	\$28,025,146.00	\$700,628.65
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry	\$6,878,177.00	\$171,954.43
General Commission on Religion and Race	\$1,750,000.00	\$43,750.00
General Commission on Status and Role of Women	\$996,152.00	\$24,903.80
United Methodist Communications	\$18,035,373.00	\$450,884.33

Contingency Reserve	\$116,000.00	\$2,900.00
	\$67,469,873.00	\$1,686,746.83