

June 9, 2009

To: Members and Friends of *Methodist Laity Reform Movement*
From: Dave Stanley, Co-Chair

Good News from Iowa Annual Conference!

This report is my personal opinion; I believe it is shared by many others.

The 2009 Iowa Annual Conference (IAC) of The United Methodist Church was the most positive and encouraging IAC in many years:

- Much more a Christian celebration and much less like a political party convention.
- This IAC often heard, sang, and shouted the name of Jesus.
- Bishop Trimble's FIT Challenge is positive and uniting. Presiding over his first IAC, he demonstrated fairness and a good sense of humor.
- This IAC significantly helped to kill the harmful proposed Amendments to the United Methodist Church Constitution.
- *Methodist Laity Reform Movement* was thanked by many for our *Care for Our Constitution* report, telling the truth about the Constitutional Amendments.
- Our *MLRM* Annual Renewal Dinner was the best-attended ever – over 160 – with strong support and enthusiasm.

Worldwide Update: Great Results on Constitutional Amendments

The most important votes in the 2009 IAC were on the proposed Amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church.

A total of 32 Amendments were proposed by the 2008 UMC General Conference, but the Annual Conferences decide. To ratify any UMC Constitutional Amendment, it must receive **two-thirds** of the **combined total votes** in the **135 UMC Annual Conferences** around the world.

Fifteen Annual Conferences, including Iowa, have now reported their votes. The results are even better than we had hoped for:

- **Amendment #1 (Trojan Horse) received only 51% Yes votes in those 15 Annual Conferences, far short of the required 66.67%.** This is the most dangerous Amendment. It would remove all

standards for Church membership, overrule our UMC *Book of Discipline* and our UMC stand on sexual morality, divide our Church, and endanger children and youth.

- **The 23 World Church Structure Amendments received only 36% to 38% Yes votes** in those 15 Annual Conferences. We call them the **Segregation Amendments**. They would create a new layer of Regional Conference structures, dividing our global Church and partially separating USA and African United Methodists.
- **Amendment #19, giving voting rights to Local Pastors, received 80% Yes votes** in those 15 Annual Conferences. This Amendment is simple justice. It will allow most Local Pastors, provisional clergy members, and associate clergy members to vote in Annual Conference elections of clergy delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences. (Now they can't vote for either clergy or lay delegates.)

The harmful Amendments are losing hugely in the U.S. South and are not getting the votes they need in the U.S. North, even in some of the most liberal Annual Conferences. In the first 15 Annual Conferences, only 3 gave a 2/3 Yes vote to Amendment #1 (Trojan Horse) and only 2 gave a 2/3 Yes vote to any of the Segregation Amendments. The African Annual Conferences have not yet voted. African United Methodists strongly believe in the Bible and traditional Christian values, and their churches are growing. We believe they will firmly reject the harmful Amendments.

United Methodists around the world are standing up to be counted for traditional Christian beliefs, the authority of Scripture, Christian sexual morality, and a united global Church. We believe God is moving His Church!

Let's continue to pray for all the Annual Conferences now meeting or that will meet in June and July. The news is great, but it isn't over until it's over!

Iowa Is Helping Greatly!

The Iowa Annual Conference has often been dominated by a far-left faction and has usually had a liberal majority on sexual morality issues. The supporters of the harmful Amendments must have expected, and they surely needed, to get at least 2/3 Yes votes in Iowa. They did not.

The Iowa Annual Conference votes were a happy surprise:

- Amendment #1 (Trojan Horse): **53% Yes**
- Segregation Amendments: **31% to 41% Yes**
- Amendment #19 (Local Pastors' voting rights): **89% Yes**

We thank all who spoke on these Amendments – calmly but firmly, with warm spirit – and all who quietly worked and voted to defend our Church.

The harmful Amendments are deceptive; they look benign until the unintended consequences are examined. Many good people supported those Amendments, believing they would not hurt the Church.

Our *Care for Our Constitution* report was mailed to the Iowa Annual Conference members, clergy and laity, and MLRM volunteers handed it out to friends and at entrance doors. Many eyes were opened.

Another happy surprise: *MLRM* recommended voting YES on 7 of the 32 proposed Amendments -- #19 (Local Pastors) and 6 others that were less important but appeared helpful. Those 7 Amendments all received more than 2/3 Yes votes in the IAC. *MLRM* recommended voting NO on the other 25 Amendments, and none of them received 2/3 Yes votes in the IAC.

Comments We Have Received

These are a few of many comments received from Iowa United Methodists. Names are omitted.

- “This is the first time in years that I have left AC feeling positive about the future of the UMC. Maybe we’ve turned an important corner and while the battle is not done (I don’t think it ever will be), I’m praising God for the victory won last weekend. I also want to say a word of appreciation to the MLRM for all the work you all did in getting the word out about the destructiveness of many of the amendments. I’m praying that you will not grow weary in doing good.”
- “I met with several pastors at a luncheon last Sunday and they wanted me to pass on to ... the entire MLRM board what an excellent job you did in getting good & helpful information out to the delegates of the IAC. The success in the voting is testament to your hard work and diligence. God is using you in a mighty and powerful way. Thank you for accepting and answering His call. You all are a great blessing in strengthening the church of Jesus Christ.”
- Dear _____ and the leadership of Iowa United Laity Reform Movement, I just want to express my deepest appreciation for your prayer, hard and excellent ministry and your faithfulness, especially during Iowa Ann. Conference. What a witness you (we) made! I thank God for you all and I praise Him for your ministry!

To God be the glory!