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Motion for Consideration by the 2019 Virginia Annual Conference

Balancing Lay and Clergy Membership of the Annual Conference

PETITION TO AMEND ¶32, Article 1 (and the same sentence in ¶602.4): “If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members in attendance of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize, as far as possible, lay and clergy membership in attendance of the annual conference.”

RATIONALE FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE: The intent of ppg. 32, Article I. of the Constitution of the Book of Discipline, and of ppg.602.4, is to ensure equal representation of laity and clergy at sessions of the annual conference. With the current wording, this is not being achieved in actual practice as well as it could be. The reason is that many retired clergy, clergy serving extension ministries, and clergy on incapacity leave are not able to attend annual conference sessions, due to infirmity, illness, or distant location. There are no alternate clergy members prepared to attend in their absence, as there are for lay members of annual conference. Electing lay persons to balance out such absent clergy requires the expenditure of considerable funds, increases the size of the annual conference session unnecessarily, and does not effectively fulfill the intent of the constitution to provide equal lay and clergy representation.

Effects on the Virginia Annual Conference:

Each year, there are approximately 200 more lay members attending the Virginia Annual Conference session than clergy members. In 2018, there were 1,116 clergy members in attendance. There were 1,306 lay members in attendance. A per diem is paid for the expenses of each at large District member of Annual Conference. This amount is \$200/ day (approximately: each district decides this amount), for 2 days, for 190 lay members attending more than clergy members attending. If this legislation would pass, it would save approximately \$76,000 in apportionments to local churches each year.

I move that the Virginia Annual Conference supports this “Petition to Amend” and its “Rationale” and directs the Secretary of the Annual Conference to forward this petition (excluding the “Effects on the Virginia Annual Conference”) to the 2020 General Conference.

Kirk Nave, Elder, Braddock Street United Methodist Church, Winchester District

Motion to Delay

I move that we, the Virginia Annual Conference, encourage Bishop Weaver and Bishop Lewis, and other members of the Conference Leadership team to, as an act of grace, delay any inquiry of the official conduct of clergy members (§604.4) related to chargeable offenses outlined in the Discipline (§2702.1.a-b) related to LGBTQIA+ clergy, LGBTQIA+ clergy candidates, and same-gender weddings until after the General Conference 2020.

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Joshua Blakely

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Total Number of Pages: 1

Suggested Title: Removal Incompatibility Language

Book of Discipline paragraph or Book of Resolutions number: Discipline para. (¶)161 G

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: Yes

I move that the Virginia AC call upon the 2020 General Conference to delete the following language from paragraph 161. G “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Rationale:

The United Methodist Church implores “families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends,” declaring ourselves a Church open to all, but current language in the Book of Discipline undercuts our claim and hinders our ability to love and be in ministry with all people.

Date: June 5, 2019

Printed Name of the Petitioner: Sara Porter Keeling

Signature of the Petitioner: Sara Porter Keeling

Identification of the Petitioner: Clergy, Lead Pastor of Good Shepherd UMC, Alexandria District
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Total Number of Pages: 1

Suggested Title: Removal of Incompatibility Language for Ministry

Book of Discipline paragraph or Book of Resolutions number: Discipline para. (¶)304.3

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: Yes

I move that the Virginia AC call upon the 2020 General Conference to delete the following language from paragraph 304.3 “The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.”

Rationale:

Our identity as Christians flows from our baptismal vows. A life of ministry is a natural consequence of those vows and to declare a called person “incompatible” is to deny the will of God. We affirm our theological understandings and our unrestrained love for all of God’s children.

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Total Number of Pages: 1

Suggested Title: Removal of Incompatibility Language for Chargeable Offenses

Book of Discipline paragraph or Book of Resolutions number: Discipline para. (¶)2702.B

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: Yes

I move that the Virginia AC call upon the 2020 General Conference to delete the following language from paragraph 2702.1.b “practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies”

Rationale:

God’s gift of sexuality is indelible and intrinsic to who we are – not a choice or a lifestyle, but part of the way that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. No person is “incompatible with Christian teaching” in their very being.

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AMICABLE SEPARATION AND THE MULTIPLICATION OF MINISTRIES

Therefore, be it resolved the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church requests the General Conference 2020 to accept a plan for amicable separation and multiplication of ministries that is acceptable and fair to progressive, centrist, and traditional perspectives. The plan should allow for the pursuit of ministry and mission according to the different biblical views, moral beliefs and practices. Let us cease from fighting and stop wounding the people for whom we care. Let us love one another and wish each other well. We instruct the Conference Secretary to send this resolution electronically to the Secretary of the General Conference and to the heads of delegations for all the annual conferences worldwide. This resolution is meant to inform the work of the 2020 General Conference.

Date: June 21, 2019

Name: Howe Octavius 'Tom' Thomas

Signature: *Tom*

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Call to Commit to be an Inclusive Church

Be it resolved, that the Virginia Conference is committed to work for the full civil rights and privileges of all persons, including LGBTQIA+ persons, and declares its concern for continued positions related to the participation of LGBTQIA+ persons in the United Methodist Church; and **Be it further resolved**, that the Virginia Conference commits to working together to build a fully inclusive church that is in ministry with all people, regardless of their economic status, race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, or immigration status.

Rev. C. Alan Layman
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Motion to the Virginia Annual Conference

I move that:

“The Virginia Annual Conference repents of the harm it has done to LGBTQIA+ persons over the past few decades, and commits itself to becoming a fully inclusive church that welcomes and affirms all people, regardless of economic status, race, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability, or immigration status.”

Submitted by

Mark Elder
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VA UMC 2019 Conference Motion for Delegate Term Limits
Motion to set term limits for Delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference and/or to the General Conference.

Beginning January 01, 2020:

That no elected Delegate shall attend more than three consecutive terms, either Jurisdictional or General Conference, during a six-year consecutive time frame.

If the elected Delegate has completed serving within that time frame, then they cannot submit their application within the next four years. After that time frame, they can then submit and, if elected, attend up to three consecutive terms, within a six-year time frame. They must be elected during each session.

Martha Dodd-Slippy
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