

C. CORPORATE RESOLUTIONS AND PETITIONS

CORPORATE PETITIONS

PETITION 2009-1, REVALIDATE HIV ANTIBODY TESTS

WHEREAS, Potentially curable illnesses become incurable AIDS when combined with a positive result on HIV antibody tests; and

WHEREAS, The official validation of the HIV antibody tests in 1984 and 1985 was based on work that claimed to find HIV in only 26 of 72 AIDS patients; and

WHEREAS, The author of that work, and HIV co-discoverer, stated that the work was insufficient for proof; and

WHEREAS, No subsequent validation has been done; and

WHEREAS, Patients deserve certainty regarding such a life-shattering diagnosis as patients said to have HIV or AIDS experience;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church respectfully urge the President of the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to require a revalidation of the HIV antibody tests.

More explanation of these, and other, concerns can be found at www.aidspetition.org/WhyReexamine.htm.

Submitted by:

The United Methodist Church of Red Hook, by vote of the Church Council,
8 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, 1 absent
on February 12, 2009, Red Hook, New York

A legal quorum was assembled.

Address: Church and West Market Street, Red Hook, NY 12571

Signed: Lois Chenkus, Chairperson, Church Council, United Methodist Church of Red Hook

PETITION 2009-2: NEW YORK STATE MARRIAGE EQUALITY LAW

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut has signed into law a marriage equality bill, making it legal for same-gendered persons to enter into a contract of marriage, and

WHEREAS, the New York Annual Conference encompasses portions of both the State of Connecticut and the State of New York, and

WHEREAS, an unnatural split currently exists between the laws of the two states that are members of the NY Annual Conference, and

WHEREAS, equal rights is a principle of social justice set forth in the Social Principles of the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 162J) of the United Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS, these equal rights are being violated by New York State's lack of recognition of the status of legal marriage for same-gendered couples,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the New York Annual Conference will advocate for and work towards the marriage equality principle to become law in the State of New York, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the secretary of the New York Annual Conference will send a letter to the New York State Senate/Assembly urging the passage of a marriage equality law, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the members of the New York Annual Conference are urged to send letters to their respective Senator/Assemblyperson to express their approval and desire for passage of such a law in the State of New York.

Signatories: Virginia Hoch, Ariel Ferrari, Fred Jackson, Ed Horne, Taka Ishii, Barbara Wells, Judy Stevens, Sara Thompson Tweedy, Lucy Jones, Robert Lukey, Vicky Fleming, Phyllis J. Leopold, Yuri Ando, Joyce Palevitz, Elizabeth Braddon, Dr. Dorothee Benz, Rev. Hector Laporta, Helen Andrew, Charlotte Patton, Jayson Dobney, Jorge Lockward

PETITION 2009-3: SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO DISSENT FROM DISCIPLINE

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church currently prevents the ordination of homosexual persons and further prevents clergy from conducting marriage ceremonies for same-gender couples, and

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church advocates in its social principles (Para. 162J) for basic human rights and civil liberties for all persons, yet does not allow "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" the rights of ordination, marriage, or recognition of orientation as a legitimate creation, and

WHEREAS, while affirming all persons as “individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God,” the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church goes on to deny this very worth by expressing that the church “does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider(s) this practice incompatible with Christian teaching,” making it truly impossible for a person of sacred worth to express his/her sexuality in a positive, morally acceptable, committed relationship, either to the ministry of Christ in the sacred act of ordination, or to another person in the sacred act of marriage, and

WHEREAS, a person of sacred worth, created in the image of God, cannot also be by their very bio-chemical makeup both an image of God and an aberration of the image of God, and

WHEREAS, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a Gospel of liberation from the bondage of human limitations,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the New York Annual Conference regards the limitations of the Book of Discipline as counter to the theological implications of the teachings of Jesus, called the Christ., and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the New York Annual Conference recognizes that the Book of Discipline is internally inconsistent, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the New York Annual Conference shall be on record as advocating for the full inclusion of persons of all sexual orientations in the life of the church, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the New York Annual Conference will support those who in good conscience cannot subscribe to the current proscriptions against persons of homosexual orientation, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the New York Annual Conference will continue to support legislation that changes the Book of Discipline to promote inclusion of all persons at all levels of church and society.

Signatories: Virginia Hoch, Ariel Ferrari, Fred Jackson, Ed Horne, Taka Ishii, Barbara Wells, Judy Stevens, Sara Thompson Tweedy, Lucy Jones. Robert Lukey, Vicky Fleming. Phyllis J. Leopold, Yuri Ando, Joyce Palevitz, Elizabeth Braddon, Dr. Dorothee Benz, Rev. Hector Laporta, Helen Andrew, Charlotte Patton, Jayson Dobney

PETITION 2009-4: ON ASSURING FULL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN LOCAL CHURCHES

WHEREAS, the New York Annual Conference has expressed its desire to have open hearts, open minds and open doors, which includes those with physical, mental and emotional disabilities, and,

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church claims concern for all persons, and

WHEREAS, persons with disabilities are represented in all racial ethnic and economic groups and

WHEREAS, according to the US Census Bureau there are more than 3.6 million individuals over the age of five, living with a disability, in New York State, and over 409 thousand such individuals in Connecticut, and,

WHEREAS, very few of our churches are fully accessible.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New York Annual Conference require all churches within its boundaries to do an accessibility audit and report the results of this audit to the charge conference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the local church trustees will be required to submit a plan to the charge conference allowing for full participation of individuals with disabilities in the life of the church.

Submitted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action

Rev. Joe Agne, Rev. John Collins, Rev. Hermon Darden, Jim Harvey, Rachel Harvey, Rev. Lucy Jones, Rev. Luisa Martinez, Rev. Evelyn R. McDonald, Home Missioner Kevin M. Nelson, Rev. Richard S. Parker, Rev. Tim Riss, Rev. Chick Straut, Rev. James Veatch

PETITION 2009-5: ON ASSURING FULL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ON COMMITTEES

WHEREAS, the New York Annual Conference has expressed its desire to have open hearts, open minds and open doors, which includes those with physical, mental and emotional disabilities, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church proclaims concern for all persons, and

WHEREAS, persons with disabilities are represented in all racial ethnic and economic groups, and

WHEREAS, according to the US Census Bureau there are more than 3.6 million individuals over the age of five, living with a disability in New York State, and over 409 thousand such individuals in Connecticut.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Committee on Nominations will ensure that all conference and district agencies include, whenever possible, persons with a disability.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Committee on Nominations shall re-constitute a Committee on Accessibility and Handicapping Conditions, which shall monitor Annual Conference and district programs and events for effective inclusion of persons with disabilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that conference and district agencies shall seek consultation with the Committee on Accessibility and Handicapping Conditions, or persons with disabilities, to ensure they afford opportunity for full inclusion of people with handicapping conditions at all conference and district programs and events.

Submitted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

Rev. Joe Agne, Rev. John Collins, Rev. Hermon Darden, Jim Harvey, Rachel Harvey, Rev. Lucy Jones, Rev. Luisa Martinez, Rev. Evy McDonald, Home Missioner Kevin M. Nelson, Rev. Richard S. Parker, Rev. Tim Riss, Laura Veatch, and Rev. Jeff Wells

PETITION 2009-6: ON EFFICIENT USE OF ENERGY

WHEREAS, in ¶160 of the Social Principle in the *2008 Book of Discipline* we declare, “All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it,” and,

WHEREAS, in ¶160B of the Social Principles, in the statement on energy resources utilization, we declare, “Affirming the inherent value of nonhuman creation, we support and encourage social policies that are directed toward rational and restrained transformation of parts of the nonhuman world into energy for human usage and that de-emphasize or eliminate energy-producing technologies that endanger the health, the safety, and even the existence of the present and future human and nonhuman creation. Further, we urge wholehearted support of the conservation of energy and responsible development of all energy resources, with special concern for the development of renewable energy sources, that the goodness of the earth may be affirmed.” and

WHEREAS, in 2007, the New York Annual Conference adopted a resolution on global warming that in part expressed our concern about energy use and requested recommendations for ways to more efficiently use energy, and

WHEREAS, the 2008 General Conference amended and adopted our long-standing energy policy statement, which in part calls for all United Methodists, including churches and annual conferences, to be models for energy conservation by doing such things as: installing dampers in furnaces, insulating adequately all church properties, heating and lighting only rooms that are in use, using air circulation, purchasing energy efficient appliances, and exploring alternative energy sources such as solar energy. Local churches, camps, and agencies are urged to become involved in programs such as the Energy Stewardship Congregation and Interfaith Power and Light programs, thereby witnessing our shared values of justice and sustainability. and

WHEREAS, We strongly encourage The United Methodist Church at all levels to engage in a serious study of these energy issues in the context of Christian faith, especially the values of justice and sustainability. and,

WHEREAS, according to a report released by the National Council of Churches, an average congregation can save \$8,000 to \$17,500 per year by employing energy efficient products, and,

WHEREAS, the Eco-Justice Program Office of the National Council of Churches USA has developed a resource that is intended to help churches get “started using environmentally friendly and sustainable building practices,” and this guide has numerous ideas for how churches can become more efficient in their use of energy. This guide is called, “Building a Firm Foundation: A Creation-Friendly Building Guide for Churches. and,

WHEREAS, this guide includes specific energy efficiency ideas around lighting; heating, ventilation, and cooling; hot water heaters; and green energy; as well as other ideas related to building sustainable church buildings, water usage, and sustainable practices outside the church building, such as on church grounds. and

WHEREAS, the Energy Star guide for congregations, “Putting Energy into Stewardship” is also very useful.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New York Annual Conference will encourage use of these principles and provide the NCC and Energy Star guides to all churches within the conference boundaries. Distribution will be the responsibility of the offices of the district superintendents, supported by the Conference Board of Church and Society, and will primarily be by electronic means. The NCC guide can be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/nccenergyguide> and the Energy Star guide can be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/cong-guide>.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NYAC will require all churches within its boundaries to conduct an energy audit, and the local church trustees will report the results of this audit to the charge conference.

Submitted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action

Rev. Joe Agne, Rev. John Collins, Rev. Hermon Darden, Rachel Harvey, Rev. Luisa Martinez, Rev. Evy McDonald, Home Missioner Kevin M. Nelson, Rev. Tim Riss, Rev. Chick Straut, and Rev. Jeff Wells

PETITION 2009-7 ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WHEREAS, the United Nations defines human trafficking as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Dept. of State estimates that each year between 18,000 and 20,000 victims are trafficked into the U.S., and,

WHEREAS, the International Labor Organization estimated that in 2005 more than 12 million people around the world have been forced to work against their will under threat of punishment, a form of slavery, and,

WHEREAS, Linda Bales, a staff person with the General Board of Church and Society informs us, "Many trafficked persons are women and children coercively brought into the sex industry and other kinds of labor," and,

WHEREAS, Ms. Bales further reports, "Many victims within the U.S. fail to speak or understand English. This places them in isolation, unable to communicate with law enforcement and others who might help. The victims experience rape, beatings and confinement. Others are threatened with death or the safety of their family back home, according to the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services," and,

WHEREAS, New York City the surrounding region is a significant portal for human trafficking into the United States, and,

WHEREAS, General Conference, as recorded in the *Book of Resolutions* of The United Methodist Church and the Social Principles in our *Book of Discipline*, exhorts us to work for the abolishment of slavery and human trafficking in all its forms, and,

WHEREAS, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference adopted a resolution in 2007 declaring itself to be an "Abolitionist Conference" opposed to all forms of slavery and committed to its elimination from the earth and called upon other conferences to do the same.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference Board of Church and Society shall research existing legislation in New York and Connecticut and work with state legislative bodies to work for the elimination of human trafficking.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVE that the Learning Center shall make available study materials on these issues that can be borrowed by local congregations as we all work together to seek the elimination of the grave injustice of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Submitted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action

Rev. Joe Agne, Rev. John Collins, Rev. Hermon Darden, Rev. Lorraine De Armitt, Jim Harvey, Rachel Harvey, Rev. Lucy Jones, Rev. Luisa Martinez, Rev. Evy McDonald, Home Missioner Kevin M. Nelson, Rev. Richard S. Parker, Rev. Tim Riss, Rev. Judy Stevens, Rev. Chick Straut, Laura Veatch, Rev. Jeff Wells

PETITION 2009-8 ON FAIR TRADE COFFEE

WHEREAS, the *Book of Resolutions* of The United Methodist Church and the Social Principles in our *Book of Discipline* exhort us to pursue economic justice, and

WHEREAS, Jesus announced his ministry by declaring good news to the poor, and

WHEREAS, the people of God were commanded from early times to care for widows and orphans and relieve the misery of the poor, and

WHEREAS, current practices in the processing and export of coffee depress the price coffee-growers can receive for their product, and

WHEREAS, coffee-growers are beginning to sell their product cooperatively, calling it "Fair Trade Coffee," and,

WHEREAS, General Conference encourages the use of Fair Trade Coffee.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that local churches in the NYAC are strongly encouraged to investigate the use of Fair Trade Coffee for fellowship hour and church suppers (see the United Methodist Committee on Relief's 100-Ton Fair Trade Challenge for resources <http://tinyurl.com/umcorchallenge>).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NYAC will set an example for local churches by purchasing only Fair Trade Coffee for use at the Conference Center and conference functions.

Submitted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action

Rev. Joe Agne, Rev. John A. Collins, Rev. Hermon Darden, Rev. Lorraine De Armitt,

Jim Harvey, Rachel Harvey, Rev. Lucy Jones, Rev. Luisa Martinez, Rev. Evy McDonald, Home Missioner Kevin M. Nelson, Rev. Richard S. Parker, Rev. Tim Riss, Rev. Chick Straut, Laura Veatch, Rev. Jeff Wells

PETITION 2009-9 U.S.-SPONSORED TORTURE: A CALL FOR A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

WHEREAS, one of our core principles as the people of faith called United Methodists is our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all persons; and

WHEREAS, torture violates the basic dignity of the human person, degrades everyone involved — from policy-makers to perpetrators to victims — and contradicts our nation’s most cherished values; and

WHEREAS, torture is inherently wrong and immoral, because it is designed to break the human soul and the human body; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 General Conference adopted resolutions expressing The United Methodist Church’s opposition to torture and calling for the abolition of torture and urging that...

United Methodists must seek to ensure the ratification by compliance of their governments with the provisions of the Convention against Torture and all internationally accepted norms and standards on the prevention of torture; fully support the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and honor their international obligations to prosecute alleged perpetrators of torture.

And,

WHEREAS, reliable evidence available to the public has shown that the United States has engaged in torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, including a report produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross and made known to the public in February of 2009 that concluded: “[T]he ill-treatment to which [detainees] were subjected while held in the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency of the United States] program, either singly or in combination, constituted torture.”; and

WHEREAS, this evidence is supported by the four Bush Administration memos relating to torture released in April in response to an American Civil Liberties Union request under the Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, these memos detail tactics such as waterboarding; sleep deprivation; nudity; slapping; keeping prisoners in dark, confined spaces that are small enough to restrict ability to move; and other tactics; and

WHEREAS the full story on the scope, breadth and depth of U.S. sponsored torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment has yet to be fully revealed; and

WHEREAS public awareness, acknowledgement, and understanding of what the United States has done with respect to the use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment are necessary in order to make sure that our nation never again engages in this conduct;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church endorses the following statement, drafted by the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT), "U.S.-sponsored Torture Now: A Call for a Commission of Inquiry":

The United States must never again engage in torture. Torture is immoral, illegal and counterproductive. It causes profound and lasting harm, especially to its victims but also to its perpetrators. It contradicts our nation's deepest values and corrupts the moral fabric of our society.

We call for an impartial, nonpartisan, and independent Commission of Inquiry. Its purpose should be to gather all the facts and make recommendations. It should ascertain the extent to which our interrogation practices have constituted torture and "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". Understanding the causes, nature and scope of U.S.-sponsored torture is essential for preventing it in the future and eliminating it from our system without loopholes. U.S. law will determine the extent of any criminal culpability.

As people of faith, we know that brokenness can be healed – both in individual lives and in the life of the nation. All religions believe that redemption is possible. Learning the truth can set us on a path toward national healing and renewal.

The United States must never again allow itself to be driven by blinding fears and bitter resentments in responding to national tragedy. The use of torture only serves to undermine our security in a dangerous world.

Nothing less than the soul of our nation is at stake in confronting U.S.-sponsored torture and completely renouncing its use. Let the U.S. reaffirm its values by establishing a Commission of Inquiry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the conference secretary of the NYAC will send a letter to NRCAT and the U.S. Attorney General expressing our endorsement of this statement upon conclusion of the 2009 New York Annual Conference session.

Submitted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action

Rev. John Collins, Jim Harvey, Rev. Evelyn R. McDonald, Home Missioner Kevin M. Nelson, Rev. Charles H. Straut, Rev. Jeff Wells