



Pulse is a new monthly publication from The Confessing Movement designed to keep you informed of the current state of our beloved church. Please continue to pray for renewal - particularly a renewed obedience to Scripture.

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## What Does It Take For an Annual Conference to Approve a Petition for Submission to General Conference?

Some Annual Conferences, like the Virginia Conference, require a simple majority to approve a petition with conference recommendation for submission to General Conference. For example, by a vote of 989 to 868 the VA conference agreed to petition the GC 2016 to remove from the *Book of Discipline* language stating "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching." The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, on the other hand, requires three-fourths of the delegates' votes in order to send a conference-endorsed petition to GC. Although several resolutions regarding a change of language in the *Discipline* regarding homosexuality and same sex marriage received a majority of votes, none received the required three-fourths at the Eastern Pennsylvania 2015 Annual Conference.

### Annual Conference Reports

Many Annual Conferences voted on petitions regarding the redefinition of marriage and changing the language in the *Discipline* that some find discriminatory against our LGBT brothers and sisters. According to the official Annual Conference Reports on [umc.org](http://umc.org) at least 7 Annual Conferences were unsuccessful in obtaining the necessary votes to have some or all of their petitions move on to General Conference with their Conference recommendation. These Conferences include Eastern Pennsylvania, East Ohio, Holston, North Georgia, South Carolina, Texas and Western North Carolina. 9 Annual Conferences passed such legislation. They include Baltimore-Washington, Cal-Nevada, Greater New Jersey, Great Plains, Minnesota, Northern Illinois, Upper New York, Virginia, and West Michigan.

The Alabama– West Florida, Mississippi, and Texas Annual Conferences passed legislation to petition the General Conference to uphold the church's position on matters of human sexuality standards.

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The Council of Bishops elected leadership who will take office in 2016. The new officers of the Council are:

President – Bishop Bruce R. Ough, Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area

President designate – Bishop Kenneth H. Carter Jr., Florida Episcopal Area

Secretary - Bishop Cynthia Harvey, Louisiana Episcopal Area (re-elected for two years)

Connectional Table chairperson - Bishop Christian Alsted, Nordic & Baltic Episcopal Area

Executive Secretary – Bishop Marcus Matthews, Washington Episcopal Area

Ecumenical officer – Bishop B. Michael Watson, North Georgia Episcopal area

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Most Annual Conferences in the United States have elected delegates for GC 2016 which will be held in Portland, Oregon. The total number of delegates is 864, with approximately 58% from the U.S. and the remaining 42% from Africa, the Philippines and Europe combined.

July 2015

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## The Connectional Table's "A Third Way": What it Would Really Mean for the Future of the UMC?

The Connectional Table is expected to present to the 2016 General Conference a plan called "A Third Way." Proponents of the plan suggest it is in the best interest of the connection to remove prohibitive language regarding homosexuality and marriage and refer to the current language in the *Discipline* as the church's "historical" position on these matters, implying that is no longer the case. During their May meeting The Connectional Table endorsed the legislation thusly:

*"In terms of same-sex marriage, this approach would allow the exercise of conscience amongst clergy. Given the current disciplinary warrant (cf. BOD ¶340.2a, 3a) for clergy to determine whom they perform weddings for, clergy who choose to could perform same-sex weddings. Clergy who do not choose to would not be required to perform same-sex weddings. Annual conferences, as is already their constitutional warrant (cf. ¶33 of the Constitution), would continue to determine matters of ordination, including whether or not to ordain LGBTQ persons. Bishops would determine where to appoint based on the existing consultative process outlined in the BOD. This option also would remove the practice of homosexuality or the performance of same-sex ceremonies from the categories of chargeable offenses."*

*Open Disobedience continues within the UMC. An openly gay pastor in WMI resigned when it was brought to his bishops attention that he had a partner. Admitting his relationship, he was given the choice to resign or be fired. After resigning he and his partner married with more than 30 UM pastors present, 9 of whom face disciplinary action for their participation.*

*Please join us and other United Methodists in praying The Lord's Prayer at 12:00 noon each day for the UMC and the 2016 General Conference.*



Some outcomes would be:

- The church body would not have a voice in whether or not their pastor performed same sex marriages.
- An annual conference and bishop would choose where to appoint self-avowed practicing homosexual clergy regardless of the will of the congregation.
- Laity would be stripped of their voice in these matters.
- The conflict that has plagued General Conference for decades would now be felt at the local level, especially in the more moderate congregations.

This plan values *"the exercise of conscience amongst clergy"* above Biblical teaching on matters of human sexuality. However, The CM believes the UMC must honor the authority of Scripture above unity for the sake of unity. Please pray for our beloved denomination!

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