



The United Methodist Rural Fellowship (Soon to be U. M. R. Advocates) Bulletin

Strong Rural Churches Build Strong Rural Communities!

Volume LXIII

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Please Consider These Values

by Ed Kail, past president, UMRF



In our first edition last Tuesday, we shared the different approach to legislative activity that we are utilizing this year. Often in past quadrennial we have had a “legislative agenda” comprised of petitions and resolutions that we have sponsored and submitted to promote various causes. This time, we have instead formulated a Statement of Values by which to assess any and all pieces of legislation to be considered.

We restate those values here so that you might be aware of them as the week of plenary sessions to handle calendared items begins. As you review the work that has come out of legislative committee, view it through the “lenses” and perspectives provided by the following statements:

1. The health, vitality, and sustainability of each local congregation should be held as the primary value of the denominational structure. **Healthy local churches make new disciples for Christ and the transformation of**

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Hospitality Center

Contact Info: 740-707-2901

Hours: 7 AM to 7 PM

(fellowship, light meals, snacks)

Office

Hours: 7 AM to 7 PM

(copies, computers)

Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel

200 North Ashley Drive

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Konica Minolta is pleased to provide the printing capabilities for the United Methodist Rural Fellowship at General Conference.

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Legislative advocates (l-r) Peggy Paige, Don Ford, Jodi Flessner, and Roger Grace (standing) confer in the observers' section of Higher Education and Ministry Committee.

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the world. Legislative changes should: first, do no harm. Second, do all the good possible for the local church.

2. The global nature of the church must be recognized and respected.

3. We affirm the value of rural communities as a context for mission, ministry, **and the making of new disciples for Christ.**

4. We hold in high value the welfare of rural people worldwide, including access to adequate food, shelter, medical care, clear water, education, spiritual care, economic development, and systems of justice.

5. We are called to be faithful stewards of creation; environment, ecologies, and resources.

6. God's call to ministry should be a foundational consideration for all Christians, lay and clergy.

7. Appropriate leadership and resources must be provided to rural congregations.

8. Congregations need a leader in a pastoral role. Regarding the pastoral role, we value:

- The accessibility of sacraments
- Training and equipping for context

(Continued on reverse)

- The mutuality of ministries, Lay and Clergy
- Varieties of pastoral ministry: Certified Lay Ministers, Licensed (full and part-time), Ordained Deacons and Elders, Associate Members, Church and Community Workers, missionaries, etc.
- Longer tenure for pastors in effective ministries
- Consistency across the connection regarding standards, assessment, and judicatory intervention into ministries and local congregations
- Partnerships across ecumenical boundaries

9. Assessments (metrics) applied to local churches and/or their leadership must consider the demographic and contextual realities of ministry in that community and be fair to both large and small membership churches.

10. Local Church vitality is to be measured by growth in **individual** discipleship, **its collective witness**, and its transformative **relationship to its** community.

11. We stand against the structured inequities of racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and similar forms of discrimination.

12. Money is not God! We call this session of General Conference to be aware that in seeking institutional security, we may be acting in ways that betray our idolatry of financial goals and worldly status.

13. We value partnerships with others of common cause, including the ecumenical community, in the work of making disciples for Jesus Christ.

14. We do not require agreement to work together, whether within denominational processes, or with the poor, or for the transformation of our communities. We value our partnership with people of differing opinions and of various faiths and with non-profits who do good and love justice.

We invite all who are in advocacy roles to examine prayerfully and carefully these values and consider utilizing them as guides for conversation and decision as the legislative process gets underway. If you have questions, look for the UMRF Legislative Advocates in the observers' section of your venue, or visit our GC headquarters at the Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel.

POVERTY SIMULATION TICKETS

Tickets for the Poverty Simulation experience Tuesday-Friday, May 1-4, at 9 am in Ballroom D are available from UMRF members. There are only 120 tickets for each day, but entry may be

Identify YOUR "Indicators". . . .

Indicators of Wealth:

I know how to enroll my children in a preferred private school.

I know how to host parties that important people attend.

I support/buy the work of a favorite artist.

I know how to read a corporate financial statement and analyze by own.

I serve on the board of my favorite charity.

Indicators of Middle Class:

I know how to set the table properly.

I know how to get my children into Little League, soccer, etc.

I know how to help my children with their homework, or who to call at the school for more info.

I know which stores carry the clothing brands my children want to wear.

I know how to use a credit card, checking account, savings account—and how to get the best interest rate on my new car loan.

I know how to get a library card.

Indicators of Poverty:

I know what problems to look for in a used car—and how to get by without one.

I know how to get someone out of jail.

I know how to move in half a day.

I know where the free medical clinics are.

I know which churches/sections of town have the best rummage sales—and which have bag sales.

I know which grocery stores' dumpsters can be accessed for discarded food.

Vicious Circle of Poverty

