Discipline Paragraph or Resolution Number: Preamble to the Social Principles (Part IV, page 98, 2008 Book of Discipline)

Suggested Title: Unity Amongst a Diversity of Opinion
Total Number of Pages: 5 (including signatures of petitioners)
General Church Budget Implications: None
Global Implications: Yes

Amend the Book of Discipline by addition to the Preamble to the Social Principles (Part IV, page 98, 2008 Book of Discipline) of the following paragraph:

We acknowledge that, because it is a living body of believers, gathered together by God from many diverse segments of the human community, unanimity of belief, opinion, practice has never been characteristic of the Church from the beginning to this day. From its earliest time, as evidenced in the accounts of the Acts of the Apostles, in the Letters of Paul and other apostles, and in the witness of the Gospels, diversity of understanding and controversy with regard to many matters has been the reality. Therefore, whenever significant differences of opinion among faithful Christians occur, some of which continue to divide the church deeply today, neither surprise nor dismay should be allowed to separate the members of the Body from one another; nor should those differences be covered over with false claims of consensus or unanimity. To the contrary, such conflict must be embraced with courage and perseverance as all together continue to seek to discern God’s will. In that understanding and commitment, we pledge ourselves to acknowledge and to embrace with courage, trust, and hope those controversies which arise among us, accepting them as evidence that God is not yet finished in sculpting us to be God’s people. We commit ourselves to stand united in declaring our faith that God’s grace is available to all, that neither belief nor practice can separate us from the love of God. In that confidence, we pledge to continue to be in respectful dialogue with those with whom we disagree, to explore the sources of our differences, to honor the sacred worth of all persons, and to tell the truth about our divisions as we continue to seek the mind of Christ and to do the will of God in all things.
Rationale:

This paragraph deals with “our unity amongst a diversity of opinion”, which we often experience in discussion of social issues. Our Judicial council (1021) has said “it is legal and legitimate to acknowledge officially our difference of opinion on vital matters”. Fundamentally, it is a matter of honesty and integrity.

We, the undersigned, respectfully submit this petition to Gary W. Graves, Petition Secretary, for consideration at United Methodist General Conference 2012

Date: August 26, 2011

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev James M Evans, Jr.

Identification of the Petitioner: Pastor, Crescent Avenue UMC, Fort Wayne, IN  
(i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: 260-424-4509

Fax Number: (if applicable) 260-424-4510

E-mail Address: (if applicable) pastor@caumc.net

Date: August 26, 2011

Signature of the Petitioner: Blair Barbour

Identification of the Petitioner: Member, Euclid UMC, Oak Park, IL  
(i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: 708-420-4366

Fax Number: (if applicable) 708-848-3031

E-mail Address: (if applicable): blairbarbour22@gmail.com
Date: **August 26, 2011**

**Signature of the Petitioner: Faith M Buss**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Member, Richfield UMC, Minneapolis, MN**
(i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: **612-825-2319**

Fax Number: (if applicable) **NA**

E-mail Address: (if applicable) **NA**

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Date: **August 26, 2011**

**Signature of the Petitioner: Helen F. Andrew**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Member, Memorial UMC, White Plains, NY**
(i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: **914-631-6530**

Fax Number: (if applicable) **NA**

E-mail Address: (if applicable) **Helen@ldandrew.com**

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Date: **August 26, 2011**

**Signature of the Petitioner: Joy T. Watts**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Member UMC of Uniontown, OH**
(i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: **330-699-4421**

Fax Number: (if applicable) **NA**

E-mail Address: (if applicable) **joytwatts@sbcglobal.net**
Date: **August 26, 2011**

Signature of the Petitioner: **Robert A Swing**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Lay member, Holston Annual Conference, First UMC, Oak Ridge, TN** (i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: **865-777-4668**

Fax Number: (if applicable) **NA**

E-mail Address: (if applicable) **rjswing@tds.net**

Date: **August 26, 2011**

Signature of the Petitioner: **Carolyn Pennington**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Member, Wesley UMC, Eugene, OR** (i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: **541-344-9328**

Fax Number: (if applicable) **NA**

E-mail Address: (if applicable) **gc_pennington@comcast.net**

Date: **August 26, 2011**

Signature of the Petitioner: **Carol Waymack**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Member, Woodland Park UMC, Seattle, WA** (i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: **206-276-9609**

Fax Number: (if applicable) **NA**

E-mail Address: (if applicable): **carolwaymack2@yahoo.com**

Date: **August 26, 2011**

Signature of the Petitioner: **Robert C. Dorr**

Identification of the Petitioner: **Member, First UMC, Omaha, NE** (i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)


Phone: 402-333-7064

Fax Number: (if applicable) NA

E-mail Address: (if applicable) bobcdorr@cox.net

Date: August 26, 2011

Signature of the Petitioner: Elizabeth M. Dorr

Identification of the Petitioner: Member, First UMC, Omaha, NE
(i.e. – “Member of Local Church”; “Secretary of Annual Conference”)

Phone: 402-333-7064

Fax Number: (if applicable) NA

E-mail Address: (if applicable): bobcdorr@cox.net