

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING GAMBLING IN ALABAMA

WHEREAS, the Biblical witness speaks to the danger of idolatry and covetousness regarding the acquisition of and the attitude towards money (Exodus 20:17, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Luke 16:13, 1 Timothy 6:10) and to the expectation of the Christian community to practice faithful stewardship with all spiritual, material, natural and human resources God has placed in its care (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Ephesians 4:8, 1 Timothy 5:18), and

WHEREAS, John Wesley, in the first of the General Rules for Methodists, which states that we are to “Do No Harm,” admonished that Methodists should not be involved in activities which do not give glory to God, and

WHEREAS, Paragraph 163.G of the United Methodist Book of Discipline states, “Gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, economic, and spiritual life, destructive of good government and good stewardship. . . . The Church’s prophetic call is to promote standards of justice and advocacy that would make it unnecessary and undesirable to resort to commercial gambling-including public lotteries, casinos, raffles, Internet gambling, gambling with an emerging wireless technology and other games of chance--as a recreation, as an escape, or as a means of producing public revenue or funds for support of charities or government,” and

WHEREAS, Article IV, Section 65 of the Alabama Constitution prohibits games of chance; and

WHEREAS, by Constitutional amendment eighteen counties have legalized limited charity bingo for the benefit of nonprofit charitable organizations and for no other purpose; and

WHEREAS, local governing bodies have used such amendments as a means of allowing pervasive and unlawful electronic bingo gambling to proliferate in these counties; and

WHEREAS, The Alabama Supreme Court recently ruled that the electronic bingo machines currently operating in Alabama do not meet the definition of the traditional game of bingo;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church calls on the Alabama Legislature to oppose any legislation that would permit or expand gambling of any type, including charity bingo, at any location in the State of Alabama; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to offices of the Governor of Alabama, the Alabama Attorney General, the Lieutenant Governor of Alabama, the Speaker of the Alabama State House and each Alabama Legislator.

Submitted by the Board of Church and Society of the Alabama-West Florida Conference

**A RESOLUTION CONCERNING GAMBLING
AMONG ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA UNITED METHODISTS**

WHEREAS, the Biblical witness speaks to the danger of idolatry and covetousness regarding the acquisition of and the attitude towards money (Exodus 20:17, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Luke 16:13, 1 Timothy 6:10) and to the expectation of the Christian community to practice faithful stewardship with all spiritual, material, natural and human resources God has placed in its care (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Ephesians 4:8, 1 Timothy 5:18), and

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church calls every Methodist of the Alabama-West Florida Conference to give a faithful witness to our faith by refraining from gambling in any form, and specifically as listed in Paragraph 163.G of the United Methodist Book of Discipline, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church calls every pastor and lay leader of the Alabama-West Florida Conference

- 1) to inform and educate each congregation on the United Methodist position on gambling and the potential spiritual, social and personal consequences it holds, and
- 2) to give an account of this activity in their Charge Conference report, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Alabama West Florida Conference Resource Center provide every pastor and lay leader in the Annual Conference with information on available materials regarding the United Methodist position on gambling, and assistance in meeting this resolution.

Submitted by the Board of Church and Society of the Alabama-West Florida Conference

**A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING
THE CONTINUED OBSERVANCE
OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**

Whereas, Scripture witnesses to and calls for prayers offered for nations and their leaders in all branches and at all levels of government (Psalm 85:1-7, Lamentations 5, Daniel 9:3-21, Romans 13, 1 Peter 2: 17, 1 Timothy 2:1-4); and,

Whereas, the Congress of the United States in 1952 established the National Day of prayer; and,

Whereas, the Congress of the United States in 1988 set the first Thursday in May as the day for presidents to issue proclamations asking Americans to pray; and,

Whereas, the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church has in years past participated in the National Day of Prayer by offering prayers for the President, Vice –President and various national, state and local political leaders of the United States; and,

Whereas, Paragraph 164 C of the 2008 *Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church states, “Separation of church and state means no organic union of the two, but it does permit interaction,” and,

Whereas, Paragraph 164 C of the 2008 *Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church also states, “We believe that the state should not attempt to control the church, nor should the church seek to dominate the state. The rightful and vital separation of church and state, which has served the cause of religious liberty, should not be misconstrued as the abolition of all religious expression from public life.”; and,

Whereas, on April 15, 2010, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb of Wisconsin ruled the National Day of Prayer as unconstitutional;

Be it therefore resolved that the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

1. advocates the continued observance of the National Day of Prayer by all its members, lay and clergy,
2. encourages participation of its local churches in the annual observances of the National Day of Prayer, and
3. commends both lay and clergy leadership given towards the observance thereof.

Sponsor: Marion United Methodist Church
Dr. Larry G. Teasley, Pastor
Preston Nichols, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference
Ann Berry, Lay Leader
John Anderson, Church Council Chair

A Resolution Concerning Tax Reform in Alabama

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states in the Social Principles that we “support efforts to revise tax structures and to eliminate governmental support programs that now benefit the wealthy at the expense of other persons;” and

WHEREAS, Alabama is one of only two states that offer no tax break on groceries, and

WHEREAS, Alabama imposes the nation’s highest income tax on a family of four at the poverty line (\$468 at the poverty line of \$21,947 in 2009); and

WHEREAS, Alabama is one of only three states that allow a full deduction for federal taxes paid, with more than half the savings from this deduction going to the top 3% of Alabama taxpayers (only 60,000 filers), while the other 2 million filers get less than half of the benefit, and

WHEREAS, United Methodists' concern for the poor is deeply rooted in scripture, where we are instructed not only to show concern for the poor, but also to provide proactive ministries which relieve both the suffering of poverty and its causes,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church joins our brothers and sisters in other faith communities in Alabama in calling for tax reform that promotes fairness, adequacy, transparency, and simplicity; and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor and the Governor-Elect of Alabama, the Lieutenant Governor of Alabama, the Speaker of the Alabama House, and every member of the Alabama Legislature.

Footnotes to the Resolution Concerning Tax Reform in Alabama

Information in paragraphs 2 and 3 can be verified at www.cbpp.org. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is an organization in Washington, D.C. that works at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

Information in paragraph 4 can be verified at www.untaxgroceries.org. Calculations are based on figures provided by the Alabama Legislative Fiscal Office. www.lfo.state.al.us.

Submitted by the Board of Church & Society of the Alabama-West Florida Conference