

What are the changes that the United Methodist Church wants to make?

The changes put to a vote before the United Methodist Church were:

- I. The first amendment proposed a new paragraph between current Paragraph 5 and Paragraph 6. This new paragraph would have focused on gender justice.
- II. The second amendment proposed changes to the wording in Paragraph 4 in "The Book of Discipline." If it were ratified, the proposed amendment would have added "gender," "ability," "age" and "marital status" to the protected membership groups.
- III. The third amendment dealt with the election of delegates to the General Conference as contained in Paragraph 34. As ratified, the amendment adds this sentence to Paragraph 34: "Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast."
- IV. The fourth amendment clarified the time of election of bishops in Central Conferences as contained in Paragraph 46. As ratified, the amendment adds the following words to Paragraph 46: "provided that episcopal elections in central conferences shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the central conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled."
- V. The fifth proposed amendment adds language to Paragraph 50 regarding how the Council of Bishops holds its individual members accountable for their work. As ratified, the amendment adds the following sentence to the end of Paragraph 50: "These provisions shall not preclude that adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas."¹

The sex of an individual is determined by God. In Genesis it is written: "Male and female he created them" (Ge 1:27). Jesus reminded men of this when he said, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female (Mt 19:4)." The UMC made no changes to their doctrine regarding this first amendment.

The Bible does not engage in identity politics. Men and women are *equally* accountable before God. The apostle Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." Men may break all of God's laws but one--the law of reaping and sowing. The UMC voted 'yes' to amend their language on this point.

God does not endorse a democracy (which some have called two wolves and a lamb deciding what's for dinner). He asked his followers to obey their government (Ro 13:1-7). Leaders will be held accountable before him (Pr 16:12, Mt 18:6, Jn 3:30, Ac 20:28). The third amendment overwhelmingly passed as did the fourth. Both were similar in scope.

The fifth amendment addressed accountability in the church and it was also passed.

¹ Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church. UMC.org. 28 Aug 18: <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/bishops-announce-results-of-five-constitutional-amendments-two-fail-to-get>

The new measures are now in effect in the United Methodist Church.