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It is important, in the interest of honesty, to say my views are personal.

Indeed, I hear the cries people are making. The voices are saying that The United Methodist Church is a good church for someone to be in. However, it seems to be experiencing some problems that I think are normal for a church that has reached a plateau.

People are disenchanted with doing things the same way. Structures are not being reviewed to check if we still need some of them. They are rigid. There is more money being spent on overhead than on real ministry. The local church is left with little money to carry out ministry, and it is at the local church where most ministry is done.

There is a need for a big shakeup to redefine our mission as a church. Focus is needed if we wish to remain viable. We seem to thrive on the momentum from the previous era, as if the current generation has no visionaries.

Key points supporting a shakeup:

- Expectations are high for the church. We need to focus on “manpower development” to take us through the twenty-first century. People are confused by the media, the computer (technology), the language of globalization, and why we are not looking at local communities. In a world full of poverty, people need education and teaching, including Bible study and devotional living. Secularization and secularism are eroding the moral base of religious life, and the church needs to help change the world in the area of ethics and values, or “people conduct.”
- It is a mark of segregation for the African central conferences to be required to meet after General Conference, and I fear the African block feels disillusioned and not a part of the general church, potentially triggering a breakaway. Submitting resolutions after four years have elapsed makes them outdated and makes the church in Africa lag behind in everything. Jurisdictional conferences in the United States do not operate like this. It creates the impression that the general church favors the U.S. churches, since most resolutions that are discussed come from the jurisdictional conferences. The operational space is congested with American issues. The result is the central conferences will not bring resolutions because they confuse the operational environment.
- *The Book of Discipline* contains issues that are American and should be transferred into the Jurisdictional Conference constitutions. The danger with leaving things unchanged is that the American churches’ organizational structure can be mistaken for a global structure. This has financial implications where global funds are being used to do national projects. Separation of the national and continental constitutions, such as the central conferences in Africa, should be done without delay if we wish to have a correct picture of the global church. Distinctions in terminology between the

central and jurisdictional conferences should be removed if we belong to the same body of Christ.