

## **A PLAN TO OVERCOME LANGUAGE BARRIERS AT GENERAL CONFERENCE**

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**ACTION:** We request that the Northern Illinois Conference, through its secretary, request the Commission on General Conference to ensure that all non-English-speaking delegates to the General Conference receive, at least one month before the General Conference, the pre-conference materials including the proposed legislation translated into a language which they speak, whether it be French, Portuguese, Spanish, German or yet another), with the responsibility for the translation lying in the hands of the annual conference from which the delegates come, thus requiring the Commission on General Conference to get the pre-conference materials to the areas outside the U.S.A. at least two months before the General Conference session to allow time for the translation process.

Further, we request that the Northern Illinois Conference, again through its secretary, request the Commission on General Conference to provide at the General Conference session, simultaneous translation of all that is being said into French, Portuguese, Spanish, German, or yet another language, according to the pre-ascertained need for the translation and that non-English-speaking delegates be encouraged to speak on the conference floor, utilizing the services of English-speaking translators.

**RATIONALE:** The English language is not the first language of a growing number of delegates to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, and it is essential that all delegates be able to participate in debate and understand the content of the proposals on which they are voting.