

Nebraska Annual Conference

Five Finger Vote

5 – Full Support

- I believe that God is in this. God is my strength and I trust God. My greatest hope is that more people get a relationship with Jesus.
- A larger pool of pastors and potential appointments. A better possibility of matching persons with unique abilities with churches that could grow with them.
- I am in favor of radical change. I have confidence in the good work of our Transition Team. My greatest hope is that we, as Christians, learn to work well for God's glory. I am in favor of uniting as one.
- Please encourage using the Common Table structure if there is a new conference. Trust in God's guidance. Pray and proceed. Thank you. Remember that connection is vital. Don't forget the small local church! Greatest hope o- that our open minds, open hearts and open doors will attract and touch the un-churched and lost, and remain vital to all members so we can grow in our walk with God.
- I am excited for the new possibilities and opportunities.
- The ministry and mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world has been in decline in the UMC in North America for over 4 decades. It is long past time for “deep” change. My greatest hope is a massive influx of people in the ages of 18-35 on to the roles of discipleship for Jesus Christ in the next few years as a result of the changes we make.
- I believe small churches can function even better within a well-run large structure and large churches will support each other. God's hope for our churches o- not a social gathering but a group of disciples reaching out . . .
- Great work! Always important to repeat the message as many ways as possible as many times as necessary until most people understand. My hope is that we will leapfrog Africa in terms of growth, then someone can surpass us so that we have another challenge. I would very much like to be on one of the Dream teams or to help in any other way.
- I trust the work of the Transition Team, the Technical Teams, and look forward to the ideas from the Dream Teams. May the process continue. My greatest hope (what does God hope for us) – that we do our very utmost to make and keep disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- I have been thinking and praying about my decision/opinion about a merger since I first heard about the proposal. It is a large, difficult task. I am excited about the prospect of more gifts and graces available. It seems when we have a job to do, more hands make better and quicker results. My hope -- our generation will go down in biblical history as the people who turned a negative time for the early 2000 Christians into a revival unlike ever before. Praise God!
- My concern is of district boundaries and the district superintendent's job. I feel that their jobs are already heavy laden. I would like to see a reduction in forms and reports on the local and district level. We “red tape” ourselves to death.

- Hope: Together we have a better chance of fulfilling our commitment to the mission of the rural area. Hope: A stronger men's ministry, if united. Some concern over the changed role of the bishop. More concern over changing role of district superintendent. Great concern that the people be allowed to name their own new conference. Feel it will increase ownership.
- I hope the “new conference” will keep focus on the youth. I hope the Bishop for the “new conference” will be “new” for both Nebraska and Kansas. I hope the “new conference” is not “top heavy” - that “conference staff” and “cabinet members” jobs are not “held onto” in all 3 existing conferences just to “make” a job for someone. My hope is that we grow bold and start telling more people our story so more people grow in their love for Jesus Christ. My hope is that “the church” stands up for God and the Bible and supports people in government who know God and the Bible.
- I'm a mission/justice, Board of Ordained Ministry and young adult ministry dreamer. Get the party started—our friends in the Oklahoma and Texas conferences made our decision for us a few years ago. Let's help Bishop Jones not be cranky! If we start now, think how much work we can get done...start identifying our strengths and sharing resource. We need to do this before Carol RB retires!! It's her destiny to organize us for a successful transition. We need a transition soundtrack. Greatest hope: the church as talent scout—and everyone is in it! Greatest hopes: People can articulate what they believe and demonstrate connection between faith and their actions.
- We are losing members. We need to change. By going to one conference, this can be the catalyst of change. New eyes on the problems, new hope for the future! I believe God wants us to include all people in our church family. I want us to be inclusive instead of exclusive. I believe there should not be a back cover on the Bible, that God is alive and speaks with us today. God expects us to grow.
- I answered a call to ministry to go and do what and where God sent me. I took a lot of courage to say “yes” and it takes a daily renewal of that trust that is needed. I believe God wants us to focus on God, loving God fully and neighbor and self as well. No one knows what the future holds—but God is my all and all, whom shall I fear? If we as clergy and lay leaders cannot put our trust in God, then how can we lead others to do this?
- “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” I'm willing to join with our brothers and sisters in Christ from Kansas to work for God to do Christ's ministry in this world. New ideas, new personalities, new ministries are always good to help stretch us. It doesn't hurt nobody to be challenged once in a while. Let's go for it!
- Thank you for the teams' good work! In systems thinking, homeostases is huge. Only a major dramatic change can make any ultimate difference.
- Trust! Dream big. Focus on spreading the word. Follow scriptures. Use practices to make disciples. Keep it simple!! Keep us connected (information) and make more connections. Reach out to all. How will one conference effect/help small local churches? Trust one Lord! Let's go together!
- I support this because: 1) it provides a realistic manner for a Bishop's workload and to be scheduled. I am physically maintained. 2) There is a natural historical connection of the Kansas/Nebraska Area known as Kansas Nebraska, Oct. of 1850. 3) Since then Kansas/Nebraska has only been divided by slavery and football!

- Let's get going. We can no longer do it alone! A lot of the details will be worked out later. Greatest hope: To learn to love God and follow God. Dream Team: rural churches.
- I cannot say I have no questions, fears or reservations. I have heard persons say that we need to trust the team or the process, and I really don't want to trust either one. But I do want to trust a God who calls forth prophetic voices in times of change, in seasons of travail. Although prophets have never had an easy road, and following them has never been less than challenging, faith must be our primary response.
- We have tried many programs, trainings, in order to make disciples for Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, we have failed very much to fulfill with this “great commission.” Maybe joining the three conferences we may be able to do it. With the joining of the three conferences, will that guarantee more full time positions for local pastors as well, or not?
- Have listened to team and think right decision.
- We must go forward. We must trust God and go forward future while we still have a future. Some concerns of mine and some I have heard is lack of the knowledge in small church. Some say they are too old to know how to use on-line and no computer skills, and my skills are limited, but we say our youth is our church so why not buddy up with our youth and use their knowledge in this field. Our youth want to help and be needed in our future. My desire is we can love in John. Jesus said, “love one another, as I loved you. Well are we really in love with other—Jesus did give his life for me. But am I really ready to die for you? Or will you die for me?
- We must do something to help us grow. Our focus needs to be on how best to serve God and others. My hope is that this change spark energy and refocus us to be servants.
- We will be erasing the Boundary Lines between our conferences and we will be returning to our history—the Methodist Church as Nebraska-Kansas in the 1800s. This is not just a merger of three conferences—it will be an entirely new conference. We will combine what is best from each and learn from each other. It will only be a success if we communicate with our church family and let God be our guide
- Let's move boldly. God's greatest hope is to be in our mission field.
- Need to seriously cut administrative costs. Hope it is more than just organizational change. Need to do more than just rearrange deck chairs on the Titanic. Need to find a reason for being other than survival. Transforming lives for Christ is way too vague. We need nothing less than spiritual and theological revitalization!
- Must go forward and do something!
- Given the statistics of the past 40 + years, i.e.,....loss in membership, churches closing, churches that are barely making it--I feel this is the only option! Just do it.
- I have confidence in the team to do the correct thing. Questions will always arise. The only organization that does not have questions or need of change is dead. We need to have faith first in God and second in our leadership to do what is good for our future. My hope is that the church will grow and grow until our mission is reached.
- Best idea to be offered ever. All speed ahead.
- We can only move forward. Many of the concerns seem to be minutea—things that will be decided in the months ahead. I'm looking forward to new possibilities for service to God. My

hope for the future: a church that sends mission teams to the corner of the world and also feeds the physical and spiritual needs of the local group.

- I am excited about the possibilities, especially matching pastors' gifts to church. Expecting God-sized blessings in the midst of God-sized decisions that lie ahead. Thank you for your work! I pray we take due diligence in making decisions, but that decisions are made and not talked to death. My greatest hope is a church that loves the hopeless, serve the needs of the people as Christ served, and builds a generation of young people on fire for Christ.
- I think this will be a good move for our church and our conference. My concern lies with the voice of the youth. In 2008 there were over 100 YAC students (grades 8-12). This year there are 99 between grades 6 and 12. The youth numbers from Nebraska are already dropping and my concern is that if the Annual Conference and Youth Annual Conference are being relocated annually to a destination even farther away than Lincoln, that the voice of the youth will eventually be stamped out completely.
- Don't forget to consider the needs of smaller rural congregations in the process. Also don't let this opportunity for growth and change slip away.
- I believe our present situation is unsustainable and have great confidence in the Transition Team. Great hope: I hope we can rethink church from the General Conference on down, so we can capture a genuinely new vision for United Methodism. If I can help with this conversation, let me know.
- If Bishop will be visionary, the district superintendent will need training in human relations and management. Great hope: To become a vital organization that will make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- I am excited about the potential ministry field this creates. We have many resources to share and great opportunity for serving God. I am concerned about Youth Annual Conference continuing to be a driving force for our Annual Conference business, and want to be assured that the youth will be adequately represented in all decision making. Greatest hope: God will create a new reality, and a wonderful new mission field!
- Hope: put more resources toward starting new congregation. Seems like the most reasonable way to go.
- I am in full support, but what will happen to the youth program? Will it flourish or fail?
- Let's get done! I really hope and dream that we once again be known as "the shoutin' Methodists" that the President of the US (Abe Lincoln) said – the Methodists of the
- Please solicit and listen to the concerns of the small churches. Where does the UMW fit in a new conference?
- Transition Team member: I am afraid we will not truly make change. I would move we cut conference staffing and remodel the entire structure. I do want us to have better stories, examples and illustrations for why a new conference. I want us to include all people, affirm all people and be more effective in exacting new leaders building dynamic communities
- The team is to be commended for all the work they have done.
- Together is better to accomplish our mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world.. Together we are better stewards of the resources. Together the way and the load should be easier. Together we are a strong conference. That is my hope!

- This is my hope: We need to move forward to the future. Change is always hard but we can do this with God's help. Please remember the small, isolated churches, especially in electronics and communications. Training in new technologies across all our new conference will keep us closer. Have joint meetings with our new Kansas brothers and sisters – we need to get to know each other.
- Hope for deep change and Nebraska is no longer an island – we truly connection. Looking forward to becoming a new conference and willing to help with the transition.
- I believe the positives outweigh the negatives. I think the efficiency of the bishop would be much better with one conference. I think the pool of ideas as well as pastors and other leaders would be increased and only good things will come forth in the work of the church. I think small churches can benefit from interaction with large churches. Therefore, I think we can benefit from the way of thinking in the “other part of the world.” My church has always benefited from ideas brought in by people who have moved into our community and have worshiped in churches all over the world (military moves). I have very few reservations about change and I think our transition team is doing a great job. We're being led to step out in faith, and I'm ready to do so!
- It's time for us to boldly move into the future. My only concern is that as the smallest entity, we might lose our voice in terms of conference involvement and leadership and as General Conference delegates. But I just have to trust that God will lead in that regard as well. God bless the Transition Team in their work. I find the language of a new conference used by the Transition Team to be very hopeful. My hope is for a transformed conference that will truly be focused on making disciples for Jesus Christ and not with survival.
- I love you, Jesus! I hope that the church can be known worldwide as a community that serves anyone in need. Oh, let the sun beat down upon my face.
- I vote this way with the knowledge that main obstacles will be financial and property issues that have yet to be addressed. But it is my full hope that these issues are worked out and the conferences merge.
- With appreciation for a team spending much time, thought, prayer, on different questions. God hope: that as we become an inclusive within an annual conference we become inclusive to all peoples and take God to them instead of waiting for the people to come to the church.
- I feel our bishop's time will be better spent and our churches better served if we unite as one. My hope is that we invest in youth – listen to them, affirm them and honor and respect them as valuable members of our congregations. Lift high the cross! It only takes a spark..
- We have a good team. We will continue to have a good team. We need to change. God will be there through the process. We need to be still, listen to his voice and walk forward in faith. My hope is for the word to spread throughout the world that God is love so we can find peace throughout the world and wars may cease.
- In full support, but as a child will shy away in anxiety from a cold tub, my hope is that all things can be explained clearly, to “warm the waters”, so as to relieve or calm any anxieties. God bless! (Fear: “rush too fast.”) “Greatest hope: strength by the power of the spirit to be a stronger body.
- Travel to conference? Number of people needed in each area. My greatest hope is to win more souls to Christ. Help us God, the holy spirit. Be on the Dream Team.

- Would like specifics on health and pension train wreck that is coming for Nebraska if no changes happen. Hope: A past POW once commented – when fighting the battle, the troops worked together. In the down time, the people squabbled. Can our vision be a process not just in words.
- Would love to have a dream team for young adult and young clergy ministry possibilities. My greatest hope is renewal and revival o- a spirit of unity as we live, work, pray and minister together in the name of Christ.
- I want to get the show on the road! If God be for us, of whom shall I fear? I hope God is strengthening us to be disciples of Jesus Christ—not members of a social club.
- Get busy dying or get busy living. If we don't it now, it would seem as if we will be doing this again in a couple more years. I believe this is a wondrous blessing of opportunity for doing more powerful things for Christ. Let's make the leap and get going. I don't believe it is going to affect the local church directly, good or bad. I hope this is what may more effectively enable us to empower the ministry of Christ as United Methodists.
- Hopefully, we will all bring our strength to the new body, which will produce a strength-driven conference!
- Let's be bold and move on this, the details will work themselves out in God's good grace.
- This is a statement of faith in God. I trust in the people who are going to be working on the details. I wouldn't mind being on a dream team.
- I'd love to be on a dream team that talks about youth. My hope is for better financial situations with no debt. Will small churches be able to afford to send delegates to a larger annual conference? In a more expensive city? Will we still have CAC/MAC/YAC?
- Let us continue to help pole through the process so we all can experience the insight and understanding that helped the transition team arrive at their conclusions. I hope we grow spiritually and have vitality oozing out of each and every church. I hope every church will bloom where it's planted.
- Opportunity for new and creative beginnings. The Bishop will have less meetings of parallel structures. We can have a Bishop help us focus on one missional purpose and set out core values. Greatest hope: to truly be “one church with mission outposts.
- I am afraid of our conference's ability to change in material ways. This will take a really good marketing campaign. What is my hope? That we become relevant by reflecting Jesus.
- Combined resources and be in one mission field. My hope is that we will make more disciples for Christ.
- It's time to be bold!
- I support new ideas that will stop decline! God will lead your team in the right direction. Hope: That we become strong.
- Good job by the Transition Team. Will be glad to get more details. Hope to make more disciples. Church will grow.
- One God over us as one body in Christ. My greatest hope is that we will learn to trust God through all things—in season and out of season—through to his joy and glory.

- I am in full support of the new conference. We are now living in a new day and we work together to make disciples of Christ. May the spirit of our Lord be with us all as this transition takes place.
- Best way to do our missions. Concern about benefits to clergy and staff.
- I'm trusting our choices of leadership to discern details for spiritual growth in our society, to help our youth to know Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the strength from believing in God. (Achieves Grace)
- What an exciting time to be a part of the ministry of the UMC in Kansas and Nebraska! The Transition Team has done an outstanding job in studying reality and making bold decision to recommend to us for our future. More minds bring more ideas and more possibilities. I feel like the three conferences are like strands that are braided together to form one strong rope. My greatest hope is that the new annual conference will be one that is held up as a standard of fantastic mission and ministry that blazes fearlessly forward with the Lord as our pillar of cloud/fire.
- We are asked to be bold and trust God. Not give in to our fears of the unknown. If we have faith and do this with God in our midst and leading the way, it will be awesome!
- Never waste a crisis. Please “rethink the Church” and do not get bogged down by technicalities and difficulties. We need to move toward a structure that encourages sharing the good news in ways that are effective, relevant and connecting to new generations. My greatest hope is that we in the UMC in Nebraska and Kansas be part of the new emerging Christianity that is beginning.
- Let's be bold! I trust the committee's recommendation.
- We need to do this to save our church! Yes, we do not know all the answers, but we do have faith in God and his will.
- Transition Team member: We need to give many clear examples of how one AC makes for more faithful and fruitful ministry. I have been and continue to be afraid and skeptical that irregardless of one or three conferences – we will not make the significant changes in structure and operation that will truly enable us to thrive. I also suspect the best thing could be completely starting over with conference staffing and job descriptions. Greatest hope: I want to see that having an annual conference actually empowers transformation ministry for local churches. My feeling now is that the AC does nothing for most churches- except appointing pastors. I want to see young and diverse churches.

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4 – supportive with questions

- Concerns: 1) the pastors, DS, and bishop's role; 2) bold, please bold, we need to change; 3) don't move too quickly. Greatest hope: That we will grow and be a church that will reach out to every community! I would be interested in serving on a team of transition.
- I am concerned about how the youth will be dealt with in regards to annual conference. Will there be a limited number of youth to attend YAC? I like the idea of creating 1 conference! Creating 1 conference would give us a chance to interact with more people and to learn better ways to do things.
- Thank you for all our work! I realize you have much work ahead of you. Will Annual Conference each year alternate between locations in Kansas and Nebraska and be more centrally located such as Kearney or Grand Island? Or held on a college campus to still have less traveling. So much communication can be done through technology to save on postage, etc.
- I am a pastor with a few questions, but I trust God's leading and many questions have been answered in our table discussions during this conference time. My hope is we will remember our brothers and sisters in Christ and reach out in love to one another.
- Questions that relate to specific already voiced at AC: pension, health care, small church concerns, loss of individuality in a big conference. As the analogy was made, we can't buy a car until we know what we're getting. My hope is to see the church reach those persons in our society that no longer see God as a necessary part of their life.
- Taking the first step is the most difficult. Be assured that God is with us. Travel, appointments, distance, time for each church, each person. These questions need to be answered. My hope is that Jesus Christ will wash each person in conference. Allow us to be his light.
- With one conference to make it easy for members to be represented, if we used video broadcast to say 3 or more locations across the state. Also how will this affect the local DS? I hope that this new path will increase the UMC by new ideas and understanding between the churches.
- Excitement! Interested in receiving ongoing information from the technical teams for clarity on a variety of questions. Increased pastoral base. Collaboration resulting from shared gifts and graces. Hope: We travel through the wilderness and reach the promised land and continue to journey as the people of God, just as we have throughout history.
- It needs to happen and the committee has done well. Concerns: 1) benefits of retirees. Need to be respected including maintaining prescription coverage. Best benefits might be extended to all retirees of 3 former conferences. 2) that higher costs of conference travel be considered for conference meetings. Hope: 1) that conference ministry will fade and the local church become the focus. 2) that God and his grace between in all we do in transition and as a conference.
- Ministerial pensions and health care. The role of DS. Building new cross-boundary fellowship.
- What would happen to the Hispanic ministries? Would there be one director for the 3

conferences? I think becoming one conference is good. We have started to build relations with the Hispanic ministries of the other 2 conferences and I think is great being together as one body and in one spirit! God bless you all in the hard work you are doing.

- I come to one bigger conference of Methodist Church of Mexico, and the distance is always a problem to develop a ministry, especially a small church or faith community.
- My secret hope is the church will become fully open to all people—equal opportunity, equal respect—and that this will unleash great energy for transformation and growth.
- Affirm a better fit of clergy/church. It's good to change. Hopefully emphasis will be from the bottom up. It is the local church where it (ministry) happens. The conference should be our resource. There is a lot of good energy that comes when large numbers of people get together. Concerns: How much will it take to work out the logistics and how will we function in the meantime? Let's not get bogged down in the minors and miss the opportunity to create something new. Apportionments, retirement, health insurance, moving (appointment) process. Our focus should not be on personal issues, but what's best for serving God. Not convinced one conference will lead to big change. Loss of face-to-face time with others – diminished participation.
- I believe we should act with courage and with boldness! I do have concerns as to how we maintain people-to-people contact (extreme distances for the far regions of Kansas and Nebraska might prevent this). I understand technology will help us bridge gaps/distances, but how will we meet face-to-face? I also have some concerns as to salaries and pensions for clergy (I don't want to lose what we have!). I personally don't understand the extreme levels of anxiety that I've heard expressed. Change can be a great thing! And God will not leave us orphaned as we seek to do God's work. Greatest hope: A church on fire that welcomes everyone. Everyone has a place at the table. I would love to be a part of a dream team dealing with rural ministry.
- I trust the members of the transition team are being led by the Lord to make appropriate choices and decisions for the good of the UMC. The youth are our future. Will the camps be sold? My greatest hope for the UMC is that there will be more Bible preaching pastors who concentrate more on the Bible than on the ways of the world. I believe one reason we are losing members to the Evangelical churches is the lack of Biblical emphasis. Thank you for asking this question.
- During a NE/KS annual conference, there may be at least twice as many delegates. I am concerned not about where we hold the conference, but is there a chance that there may be a breakdown in communication. People taking the floor to discuss a concern or comment or motion may be affected.
- There needs to be a representative from western Nebraska on the transition team. I hope people will grow closer to Jesus to invite others to come.
- How do we deal with small, rural churches? What about pensions? Lay delegates will spend more going to annual conference. Hope: revitalized local ministries.
- Clarify structure; Clergy pension concerns.
- I'm interested in the dream team. This is probably necessary and may make things better, but I'd like some concrete information on how it will work and how things will be better. I'm especially confused about how this will help us make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It seems to be more of a cost-saving move that mostly affects the

management of the church as an institution. I don't see how it will affect me or my church. My fear is that our small church will get an incompetent minister, but that happened once already. My hope is that there will be more resources for all of us when we join together.

- I am concerned about the theological diversity of the Kansas Conference in a state in which the public schools treat creationism rather than standard science curriculum. I am concerned about greater central/national power-money-discrimination and alleviation of important mission opportunities. I have concerns about change, but am becoming used to it. Greatest hope is to free up resource and dogmatic systems so that needs of people are served because they have need, not because of doctrine or _____. Open doors – scare neighbors.
- How will this affect youth representation? If we become one conference, can we at least rotate locations for meetings/AC among all three previous conferences? Stop talking and act! Please have “reunions” for old 3 Order of Elders as we become 1 Order. Hope for true sharing of resources amongst all levels and groups.
- I believe in the merger. But I hope the small rural church is not forgotten.
- I do think God is leading us to embrace our heritage in a new and vibrant way in the spirit John Wesley embraced. Pension. Insurance. Distance. Collate ministry opportunities. Structure of committees, ministry group, etc. Resources available from each conference and how we can utilize them. Are we really talking about deep change in the local church, or just in the conference administration? I would like to see some ideas for deep change in local churches. Help figure out ways to use the gifts of the small churches and large churches to share. Hispanic ministry opportunities- training Anglo and Hispanic/Latino pastors a way to minister with that population.
- I worry about the small churches getting lost and or left out in the process. I respect your opinions on these decisions and pray that God guides your decisions and fully supports your leadership and decisions. God bless you all.
- I am sure my questions will be properly answered in time. My concern is that the fear of “change” will keep us from moving forward. I think that the excessive use of the word “change” in all of our conversations is terrifying the assembled body. Maybe we can choose a different word or phrase. Maybe “moving in new direction” or just “our direction” could be used. Personally, I am not anxious but looking forward to regeneration of our spirit.
- I think this allows us to be proactive with this change rather than reactive. I do have concerns for our retired clergy. We need to be sure they are continued to be cared for with fair compensation in retirement and health and benefits. Using Tom's analogy we need to be prepared that this car might not look like we think it should—or maybe we need to be a 2-car family. We also need to be reminded that if we don't like the accessories for our “new” car, they can be changed. There is a process for this. My greatest hope is that young people (like my children 24-18) will want to be United Methodists in the future.
- All of the technical issues about pensions, health, etc. I am also concerned about specific practical ways that will be developed to use one conference to solve our basic problems.
- I am excited about the combined conferences, but have some concern. Will the districts in each state stay the same? Or will they change? Will each state keep their own Methodist Foundation or will they be put together? My hope: (no words)
- I believe we need to have a new bishop serve the new conference that has not served either

Nebraska or Kansas. In order to make the new _____ of the new conference we need a fresh leader, someone with new ideas and a fresh perspective. I am concerned for the future of the youth and young adult ministries of each of the conferences, I hope these things are also kept in mind as we move toward a new future. Greatest hope: New ideas, new vision, being freed to include new people in our churches.

- Concerns: that having present Kansas E/W bishop assigned to new area would not lend itself to a fresh-start feeling to the process. (but more like Nebraska was being added to a partnership already in existence.)
- How can the bishop preside over the Great Plains Conference? Is this going to help small churches or close them? Great concern about pastors being a greater distance from their family/grandchildren. This feels like a directive from the bishops, not from the 3 conferences. Will the new conference help with the decline in membership and participation in churches? Greatest hope: Our church may grow and there is better opportunity for mission.
- Concern for pension and health insurance for retirees. Are there ways of measuring status in “making disciples of Jesus Christ” besides numbers of members on church rolls? Hope that all conference leadership will be more creative, less administrative.
- Besides concerns about size, distance, etc., we're no doubt going to be using lots of technology – “we better” be better at it than we have been this week (streaming videos, acceptance of all phone usage, are just two I've noticed). A great hope would be the many thousands who are un-churched come to know Jesus Christ as Lord!
- Are we all (KS/NE) all on the same page theologically?
- I trust our leadership – if we don' do something different we will be no more in the future. Boldness is needed! I hope that God will continue to lead us in ways to find a vital, flourishing future for all – growing.
- My hope is for the church to be relevant in the lives of my children and other young adults. Be bold with the visioning.
- Do we have a plan to assure laity will have a strong representative voice? How will we find and encourage youth representatives? What will rethinking AC look like? I hope and trust that we will prayerfully become a raging fire of discipleship making disciples of Christ.
- My main concern is how are we going to be better able to do local ministry by being one conference? Our main problem in most small membership churches arises from making choices to do local ministry or pay conference askings. Our already too-oo-oo top-heavy bureaucracy has created a need for monies we cannot raise. My greatest hope is that our conference is trusting God and not thinking they can lead God with majority votes. Care for those who are in need to be heard and respected.
- How will you deal with distances and still keep us feel a part of one body? Technology - how can we be sure all areas including rural areas have fair access to internet and computers? Congrats on strong NE team. Affirmations: better use of resources; more opportunities for mission possibilities; larger pool for matching church with a pastor. Hope: young families become more involved and see Jesus Christ as the way to transform the world.
- 1) smaller rural churches cannot afford to send lay delegates - how will they be included if AC is in Kansas? 2) geography is so great – will the smaller membership churches be lost? Greatest hope: United we stand under God as disciples of Jesus Christ – for all to know him!

- What is going to happen with Hispanic ministries? Who will be the people, leaders or groups that will be making decisions and plans on Hispanic ministries? In becoming one conference, how will the Hispanic ministries receive financial and logistic resources?
- Will representatives on committees be geographically selected? The transition team is not represented past Kearney. Will this continue to be the case?
- God wants us to quit worrying about our “church” and start worrying about our relationship with him.
- The pension and insurance of retired pastors is a big concern for me, and knowing how the smaller local churches will be affected, and finally I wonder how a combination of 3 conferences will help us become better at making disciples for Jesus Christ. My hope is that these changes will bring glory and honor to our God.
- I would prefer to remain Nebraska with 1 bishop, but that is not the case. Two years ago I retired. I learned that change and new beginnings are good—exciting even. I am going to choose to believe that God is giving us new opportunities which can deeply enhance and enrich our lives. My concern is my fear of the unknown—as is so many others. Hopefully we can be kept informed and updated as the process moves forward. I know that God will be guiding us through that, so I trust that it will be good. My greatest hope for the church is that more people become believers in Christ and will live according to God's wishes.
- 1) how many votes do we get for a bishop if we go in with Kansas? 2) Need more info about the small church's role in all this. 3) What about salaries as a local pastor. Will it change? 4) What about the new conference office. Will there be 1 central office?
- Will our new bishop be a part of the transition team and have an active role in the recommendations brought before us at the 2012 annual conference? I bring this up because the new bishop won't officially take over until after the 2012 annual conference.
- I would hope that we do not transform too quickly. I am for 1 conference and I know it will take time to bring everything together. My congregation will want to know what will become of the Nebraska Foundation. I want or hope that we all become disciples for Christ and that the churches will grow.
- I am concerned for the small churches – where the local pastor can't vote on delegates, to me they are being excluded from representation. I agree we need to do something. The division between pastors is not good when I cry with someone, it makes no difference if I have the right papers.
- Will firm up opinion as data develops. Concerned that cost savings develop. Hope: unity/forever.
- I have technical questions regarding pensions, health insurance, the different conference foundations. I believe technology will resolve the distance questions. I hope we move to spending more money on missions than administration and help the smaller churches.
- Effect on health insurance. Effect on communication with the outer edges. Effect on projects such as the Wesley House. I hope that we as a church can change to make a better church and continue to improve till the end of time.
- 1) How will pastors be held accountable for generating the enthusiasm required to really make a difference? 2) Please do not let this become only a larger version of the status quo. 3) I preach

hope. Help me find the tools I need to not only see God at work, but actively engage my charges. I want to be part of the conversation. Tom Lucas

- How will it affect the small churches in rural areas? Will we make more disciples? Concern: The distance to the possible location of AC. Affirmation: We should follow the recommendation of the transition team and be “bold.” They will look at all the pros and cons. We need to prayerfully trust them. God hopes that we will get more young people involved in discipleship.
- Thank you, team, for all of the hours you have put in this far! May God bless this decision! Communicate, communicate. Where will main office be? Will AC be in Kansas! How will the \$s and property be combined? Will mission shares go down? My hope is Christian love, peace, and growth.
- Distance. Youth representation. Keeping everyone informed. Who made decision to eliminate Bishops? What is economic impact? Savings? Redistribution of resources? My hope is we reach more people in new ways to bring them to Christ.
- We appreciate the work that has been completed. You will continue to explore many avenues and let the people with God's help select the best course of action.
- Dream team – Goal #1: start one new church for every church that closes. Pay attention to the marriage analogy: 1) we're engaged right now. 2) next year is the wedding, so we need de-commissioning ceremonies, and we need a celebration for our new union. 3) we need a plan to have children, ie, start new churches. 4) we need to raise these children (new churches) ready to grow up in the 21st century.
- How will structure lend to change? Is what we are doing deep change? We have tried several different change ideas. Like parenting, have we given enough time and consistency to see if they work, ie, is re-think church, ARIDE, Common Table. I appreciate combining resources, having one set of policies. How will we encourage use of technology. Greatest hope: recapture our song and sing it boldly.
- How will small churches (less than 400 membership) be affected? i.e., pastor salary, apportionments, staff, building ownerships, support staff, communications, pastor benefits? Will they change? Retirement plans? What are the benefits to the church belonging to this conference? What is the downside of this conference merger?
- How far will I have to drive to attend annual conference? I worry pastors will have too great of distance to travel. My greatest hope: un-churched people at my town come to my church.
- Would this change our debt and/or our clergy's pay? What is the benefit for the youth lay persons/or youth in general? My hope is to get the youth more involved.
- Concerns: 1) Will the small rural church lose the little bit of voice we have left? 2) We can see what transition team is doing online, but can we give our personal input in a meaningful way? 3) What will this mean for the UMW organization? 4) Logistics of time and space? Where will AC be held? Affirmation: 1) I'm very impressed with the work of the transition team! Thank you! 2) Love the idea of dream teams and would love to serve (will email Carol). 3) new possibilities and opportunities to grow disciples for Christ! My dream: The UMC will become known for their love and service and our church will grow.
- Concerns: The transition team has outlined several concerns that I share. I think technology can help with them, but it will necessitate support and training. Affirmation: I'm excited! I

think of an analogy I heard years ago. “Our minds are like compost. If it just lies there (the status quo) it begins to stink. If you take a pitchfork and toss the compost to let in the air, it is better compost.” Perhaps the loss of a bishop was a gift because it gives us the pitchfork. It forces us to think of other possibilities, to let in the air. The status quo is not working, so it is time for change; deep change!

- My real concern comes out of fear from previous transitions that seem to only have gone half-way to their needed change. Partly because at the local level decisions felt forced on them instead of supported by them. I want to facilitate this conversation in the local level, and I would love to be part of the dream team as well. Greatest hope: God would like us to love God with everything and love our neighbors through service and friendship.
- Will apportionments go down if we become a new conference? How does becoming 1 conference affect church property-liability, etc.? Would pastors move across state lines? Greatest hope: That anxiety would be lessened. That our church continue to grow and be blessed by people of 1 conference.
- Thank you to the team for all your work. As facilitator of one of the groups, the concerns I heard were: of small churches being ignored or left behind; of not having needed information in such a large area; will the one conference benefit local churches; can we get along with Kansas East and West. My greatest hope is that we truly make the bold changes, the deep changes to make disciples for Jesus Christ, transforming the world one person at a time.
- Thank you for this being a “new” conference, not a “merger.” I second the youth's concern over a lack of youth input. They need to be heard. They are going to running this new conference in 20 years. Where will AC be held? Will there be only one meeting? As great as technology can be, I still prefer face-to-face communication as opposed to teleconferencing. My greatest hope is that this new conference will allow for fresh and new programming. I hope this will encourage a fresh outlook.
- I guess my question is: Will we keep the same wonderful committee through all of this? My hope is that we become one happy family.
- I would like a pamphlet that highlights the theological differences of the 3 conferences. When joining expansive distances, I think it would be a good idea to get help from local schools (they already have means of distance communication.) I would be willing to be on a committee to represent the Great West District.
- Concerns of cost for laity to attend Annual Conference, size of conference—too big? Greatest hope for us: One strong, stable conference with open communication.
- I am concerned on how we will be involved in decisions. Our small churches still need to be involved! We hope our retiring ministers will be always in our thoughts and prayers. What about the differences in Kansas apportionments and Nebraska? Of course, the distance involved to have 1 conference is obvious. Prayers for the right decisions go with! God bless. My greatest hope is that we can find a way to bring excitement back to our churches.
- Division of asset allocations. How will administrative committees be comprised?
- God wants us to move forward, make disciples for Jesus Christ and further his kingdom in our community and world. Concern for our UMW. We are a very vital important part of our Nebraska conference.
- How will the study teams be formed? Will there be laity from across the west of each state?

What will we do with the 3 camps? How much time will we have to live into the new relationship?

- Reaching as many people as possible and bringing them into the family of God. I am confident that the transition team has prayerfully sought God's guidance. I will pray for them as they continue this process.
- My hope is that by being in 1 conference with new people, they will help give insight and ideas to the issues we are currently unable to come to a conclusion with. I hope it will bring more peace to us and others, as well. What is going to happen to the voice of the youth if we become 1 conference? What benefits do the youth get by merging to 1 conference? We are barely heard in this conference as it is. By becoming one conference and adding more, what would change for us? This is our chance to test our faith and I think our conference is strong enough to do just that. By becoming one conference we would gain more opportunities to expand our mission work and reach out to other communities who could use our help. We would also gain more support and get help and more volunteers to walk with us as we do God's work.
- Make sure of good pensions. Hope to reach more people with priority over sports, gambling, _____.
- My concern is dealing with the “norms” of each conference as we seek to develop the new ways of doing and seeing ministry. Getting past the “me” and “mine” to the “us” and “ours.” Dealing with the emotions of everyone will be difficult.
- 1) The role of the local church. I don't see how this process will affect what happens at the local church level in the short run. 2) We must protect pensions and health benefits of our retired clergy at the highest level, not at the lowest common denominator. 3) What was the block when Kansas East and West tried to unite? Hope: that the United Methodist Church grows in its sense of mission.
- Go forward. Protect retired clergy insurance and benefits. Cut conference overhead (staff and buildings) to allow local churches to do ministry. Don't duplicate jobs in 3 conferences. Hope: We are currently 2 churches based on literal and critical interpretation of scripture. I hope we will name that. Stayed connection in mission and apart in polity.
- How will this affect us financially? I hope we can make more disciples for Christ!
- Hope that spirit of love and compassion spreads across the earth.
- Concerned how the people will get their agreements made to satisfy the large and the small churches. The hope is for more people in the church benches with a better vision of God and what God wants for us.
- Our denomination's decline in the United States has nothing to do with how we organize or operate. Our problem is spiritual. We no longer accept the Bible as our authority. We have decided in many churches to adopt the ways of our society rather than stand above it and set an example. Our division prevents us from doing God's work and receiving God's blessing. My hope is that we will become a God-centered denomination that is perceived as a bright light in a dark world. Praise God!
- I hope we can focus more on mission and purpose and less on structure. Great work transition team. Pastor retirement funding differences will be resolved? 1, 2 or 3 conference offices and staff? I hope much can be consolidated to 1, although may need satellite resource offices. In Nebraska better with addition _____ western location

- I believe in the concept, but feel the technical teams need to get answers to the many concerns that have been expressed. The concerns are a cause for many. The hope for the future is a growth of disciples among the young and the un-churched.
- I don't think ministry as local pastor will change much no matter what so will pray for leadership and their discernment. Distances to travel to AC, especially laity. Not fearful of change. Salary discrepancies – will local pastors decrease greatly? Greatest hope for future of UMC: spirit of missional revival from laity on up.
- I am from a super small rural church. The mission shares/apportionments have nearly buried us. I see Kansas has a different formula - will the new configuration require a new formula of mission shares/apportionments? If so, will the small church be considered differently than the large? Those of us in the small churches don't want to get lost in the shuffle of changes. I hope we don't fall thru the cracks. My hope and prayer for the UMC is to make ourselves known. We need to genuinely be making disciples of the Lord.
- My greatest hope for the church, what God hopes for us, is that we will deeply care about one another and the needs of others so that the world sees Christ in us. I hope it will begin to become the reality in the church I serve!
- Let us take whatever time it takes to make good decisions when configuring a new conference. My greatest hope for the church is that we can make church life a part of the families in the community.
- Question on pensions and retired clergy. Question about rural areas and communication and helping these small churches. Greatest hope is for churches to reach more people and with passion and excitement about God and salvation.
- Affirmation: Better use of resources. Financially and resources more efficient. Concerns: What will happen with present office and staff? Distance for people to travel to AC. Small churches get lost in the large-sized conference. My hope: ways to make more disciples.
- 1) Don't give the DSs more territory. 2) Remember the poor and the western regions who are without technology (or vehicles to get to libraries, nor the\$ for a library card). 3) Put retired clergy on health insurance and pensions committee. 4) Will the clergy have to move to distant places in Kansas and Kansas clergy into Nebraska? 5) Somehow get clergy to make much more use of film, computer streaming, conference speakers in the pulpits of their churches. Many of us never see a DS or a district or conference speaker. 6) the conference staff is afraid of losing jobs. Can you reassure or clarify anything for them?
- After all the discussion at our tables and in the sanctuary, I am relieved and excited. All of my questions were addressed, and for those whose answers are unknown right now, I believe we will have answers next year. Change is needed, and yet it should not happen overnight. I believe we will be a stronger conference once we are joined together and we work out our differences, expectations, and concerns. God is great! If he brings you to it, he will bring you through it! My biggest hope for this journey is that it will be one of open minds and open conversations.
- I appreciate the transition team's work! Anxiety is a fear of change and change is what is happening. May we be faithful. I am excited. I do hope people will embrace change and become more mission-minded and “open” to “God's leading and direction.
- The concerns that I have are the logistical questions that I am sure the transition team will be

fully investigating and reporting on, ie., benefits for current and retired clergy, mission share formulas, where will meetings be held, and how will conference staff and resources be used, and will technology be used effectively).

- Affirmations: larger pool to match gifts of clergy to gifts of congregations, ability to interact with even more of our Christian brothers and sisters. My hope is that members of all of the conferences will explore these issues with open minds and open hearts.
- My only concerns are that if we move to a larger conference, will the smaller churches be overlooked even more? And also, I know that the conference is sometimes required to send a pastor to a church, knowing that church will end up doing worse. And the conference won't want to send that pastor to a large congregation for obvious reasons, so will this further damage to smaller churches? And I know you send those pastors there for educational purposes, but I believe that the pastor should be the one improving the church, not the other way around.
- Cost of churches to send lay members to conference if further away. A concern that small churches won't be able to send lay members because of added expenses – concern about small churches being swallowed up by one big conference. Concern about clergy health and pension benefits. Still, I acknowledge our current structure is not working, so we need change! Hope for peace and hope to bring as many as we can to accept Jesus. I love all people! I want everyone to be with Jesus!
- Would be interested in a dream team, as I have experienced several reorganizations at work. This is a joyful time for God's people! We can't imagine the new possibilities! Consider as a priority as we move forward how to most effectively all people – staff, clergy & lay with emphasis on realistic roles and workload for DS. Be inclusive in all aspects - transition and technical teams - of all churches and their members, especially geographically, rural/urban, even those who are marginalized – poor, homeless, etc., or those who advocate for them.
- I am concerned about the absence of absolute assurances that pension benefits which have been earned by clergy will be fully honored. This includes full health coverage. I think God wants us to quit trying to impress him/her with our programs and gimmicks and stand still to see his/her salvation.
- I am wondering if there will be any funds to pay for at least part of mileage for lay people to attend meetings or get the technology for rural churches. Also, if a pastor does not want to move to western Kansas if they are really opposed to moving. What is my hope: That we become a strong, united body doing the Lord's work.
- I have faith in our leadership and faith in God. I know all critical concerns will be dealt with. With God as our leader and his work as our mission, we will not fail! My greatest hope is that we, as the UMC, allow God to drive. I hope that the people of the church are not limited by our lack of vision.
- Thank you for your hard work! I am an elder in full connection, but like many others, am not itinerant over a large geographical area—it seems that the vision of a broader pool is still constrained by family needs and clergy preferences. Many pastors and lay leaders will need “hands-on training” to participate fully in SKYPE meetings. What do I hope? What does God hope? Look specifically at what behavior is being rewarded by “the system.” If we are convinced that we are called to focus on mission, then carefully plan and support how the new structure will “reward” an external focus on mission (rather than an internal focus on keeping “us” happy.)

- Even if we do not become one conference, why should we not move forward in cross over ministries? Isn't that connectional? All three conferences currently have more elders than they do a growing number of reduced appointments. As more gifts will be shared to pull from, however, will many more clergy be asked to go to less-than-full-time? Members of transition teams are selected in our conference, however, they are elected in other conferences. Will the body have any vote on who represents Nebraska?
- It is difficult to discern with so much uncertainty. Yet we follow those in whom we place our trust. Some will always feel they have received the “short stick,” yet God gives us the tools and opportunities to continue to share the Gospel and help the oppressed. I would like the opportunity to be a part of the process.
- Please create a whole new conference. Get rid of all the bureaucracy. Let us put our mission statement into action. Don't forget about our small rural churches.
- I am supportive of becoming one AC, but am concerned that our concerns will fall upon deaf ears after we choose to move forward. I am concerned that our transition team can only make recommendations. This, to me, is about the worst form of representative democracy if it can even be considered a democracy. Who can I hold responsible if our concerns are not taken seriously? Who do I hold responsible if the minimum salary is too low? I'm not sure that 26K is considered a livable salary. If this is to be a new venture, then who do I complain to if this new conference does not get a new bishop? And what about our representation? What if the new bishop does not support a modified itineracy? What if the new size prohibits selling what is in the attic? I'm a relatively young pastor. What about BOOM? Three separate BOOMS? Or do I have to drive miles and miles? Thank you!
- My greatest hope is that our United Methodist Church will be vibrant and growing - a church where my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be excited to work to make disciples of Jesus Christ in a transformed world. Questions: 1) What will be the effect on small, rural churches? Will clergy be required to move across state lines? 3) What are ways we can get “past” the “us versus them” mentality?

Nebraska Annual Conference

Five Finger Vote

3 – supportive with questions

- This gives us a chance to do some deep change. Keep communicating! I don't know enough to ask relevant questions. I'm afraid that we're going to change our structure and continue doing ministry in ways that don't work.
- Where is the laity in this transition phase? I'd like to see more information geared to laity and a means to communicate what is going on. What about a laity transition team—we surely have as much to say as the clergy. Without the laity, there would be no need for clergy (or a conference, for that matter.) I'd like to know more about the “mission” that is constantly referred to. Will local churches be needing to change their focus—to change their mission statements (perhaps, maybe). I respect the transition team's work and realize that their work and involvement has formed itself into a small group (supportive and bonded). I would like to think that other small groups with the same intent could be formed to discuss this most important issue.
- Have to retain close personal people feelings in large group and distance separated. Do not ignore technically-challenged groups. Do not be afraid to go forth in faith.” We all come to the bargaining table with equal strength and power and love.
- I have particular concerns about health care for retirees and of pensions. I have concerns about small churches and how they might receive help for revitalization. Would the job of the DS change to accommodate question 2 or have more expertise coming from conference staff, other pastors, or consultants. To better match clergy and churches, maybe we need to go to year-round appointment making. How might we get better training for laity?
- Our retired and soon-to-be retired are concerned about pension, healthcare. I can see efficiency in cost and time for administration and the bishop. Wonder where bishop will office, whether conference staff in Lincoln will have jobs, whether current office will be used, where will annual conference be held? Do you realize rural people come in to Lincoln and stay with family and friends, many of small churches do not pay for conference expenses. These will be much greater if in Wichita or wherever in Kansas. Regardless of all I've noted, I do like change and we need to move forward with some type of change or we will continue to decline. My hope in these difficult times is that denominations might all come together, leave their difference behind and become one. WOW.
- My hope is that we find a new way to reach the un-churched, to heal the hurting, and to continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ. I would be interested in being on a small church dream team.
- How will this really be “different?” Won't it just be bigger? How many districts and district superintendents will there be? We need more facts and figures before us (well ahead of 2012 Annual Conference!) Regarding the details of pensions, health care, property, foundations, etc. and how each conference will be impacted by any changes. What if we get a bishop who doesn't stay very engaged with the conference work...but is gone much of the time?
- Concerned about UMW – about travel distance – about small churches falling through the cracks and not getting “good” pastors – about losing representation in jurisdiction and general

conferences. I planned to vote 1 finger before coming to annual conference.

- Communication utmost priority. Take care of retired clergy and pensions for them. Healthcare affordable for churches and clergy. Small churches need a voice.
- Concerns: Distance from families that pastors may be asked to move. Distance to travel for meetings and annual conference. Would conference be held ever other year in Nebraska? How do future generations feel about this? Who or how do we pay for technology if a lot is done in this way for meetings and how can it be made more effective. So often it doesn't work. There is an advantage for face to face meetings but distance is concern. How – concrete ideas – is this going to change or help the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ? Is bigger better? Not always! (Distance will cut down on western Nebraska part of involvement.
- For being a transition team for 1 ½ years already, we really have very little direction. I have been assigned to two very small churches starting in July. I don't feel I have much at all to tell them on how this will happen. As one conference where there were 3, I fear these 2 churches are going to get less support. I pray that is wrong. We really need a bit more information.
- My greatest hope is that we would be reaching outside the walls of my church to within those who need to know or be reconnected to Jesus. Up until 2 weeks prior to AC, the churches in my charge had not heard any info, comments, news about this process and were quite disturbed by this. Communication of what is happening needs to be priority-one so the people in our churches don't feel left out or feel that this is pushed on them or decided for them – the youth - the future of our churches also need a voice; if we want to know what direction we should go for the future. I can affirm the hard work of the transition team and their willingness to be transparent; however, the answers they give need to be of one accord. I received two different answers to the same question today.
- We have to remember we are dealing with individuals and souls. Will this new conference be as effective in claiming/retaining current and new disciples?
- I am concerned about the smaller churches and especially the ones in the western part of both states. I am also concerned about the retired persons and what they will have to go through. The expenses of having to travel longer distances when we attend annual conferences especially with gas prices and persons on fixed incomes.
- What does Kansas have for the governing body? We have the Common Table and will we be able to keep it?
- Affirm: Better use of resources; save money. Concerns: Nebraska-Kansas is a very large geographical area. What will the new conference do for the local church that's different from now? Too many unknowns at this time.
- Concern: “Specificity” regarding health insurance, pension benefits, location of annual conference session, Episcopal residence. When will we re-visit this topic? a) January Special Clergy Session; b) other designated time?
- Need to share the positive and negative experiences of other conferences who have merged, such as Rocky Mountain. Need a vision. An expanded pool of pastors but other benefits would there be to local churches? What technology assistance will be provided to local churches to help with communication in a larger district? Greatest hope: Every seat in every church filled with believers of the word of God.
- Retirement benefits – will they change for clergy? Where will new conference center be

located? Also bishop's home? Will properties be sold off?

- How do we develop a new identity with a new conference? How will we develop a new ethos for the conference? How can we be sure that our boldness will be matched under a new bishop? Small member churches need support and creative ways to thrive. This needs to be addressed as they already feel disenfranchised. The impression is that Kansas doesn't believe in science and it concerns church members. Nebraska 1/3 size of other conferences. Will we be left out? The numbers are important to clergy in terms of pension and salary, especially at minimum levels. We need new structures to support new ideas – how will this happen? How do we build trust between conference memes? Please don't rush this! Remember that when changes occur, people will “fall off of _____.”
- My hope is that we can find ways to be more deeply related to God and to God's vision of peace and justice for the world. I liked the vision raised for us – working with other denominations in Nebraska for mission and ministry. This would not preclude one UMC conference with Nebraska and Kansas East and West. I also think it's best to get questions answered regarding pensions, health insurance, etc. settled before we make decision to become one conference rather than after we make that decision.
- I wholeheartedly agree we need a new vision, a new way of being in mission, a new way of reaching out to all persons with the love of God. Is becoming one conference the best way to have/express that new vision? I have deep concerns about how UMW of Nebraska could be the most effective in our mission and witness if we were to try to be “one” with Kansas East and Kansas West. Concern about distances to be traveled to be part of committees, annual conference, pension plans, medial plans for clergy and retired clergy. Representation from all areas of Nebraska – rural, urban, suburban, small or/and large congregations. How do we reach out to younger persons and become more diverse?
- I am concerned about several things. What will this do to pastors, pay scales, pensions, health care, appointments and where clergy are separated from spouses even further distances. What does this mean for conference staff members. What will happen to conference properties? Does Kansas East or West have debt? Where will annual conference and offices be in the future? With all the technology problems can we do long distance meetings? There are places where you cannot get cell reception and high speed internet is not available yet.
- My hope is for congregations of joy and influence in their communities. I would like to hear from lay and clergy who are members of multi-state conferences. How do they deal with distance? What would they change? What makes their mission and ministry stronger? How are they structured? Give us some ideas of what a new innovative conference might look like.
- Remember, folks mostly can't tell you what they want you to propose/design, they can only tell you what they like/dislike in your proposal. Be prepared to take first initiative. Then be prepared to change. Have final proposal available for consideration well before vote date(s) in case tweaking is needed after feedback is received. Please use project management techniques such as published deliverables/requirements, milestone dates, regular progress updates, and a specified task ownership so we may be aware of progress, rather than waiting until “last moments” to communicate. Please avoid the term “future date” unless you are at least able to specify a target date. Such vague commitments cause anxiety. Be as clear as possible about areas that need harmonization in order to reduce anxiety about “hidden issues.” Prayer an best wishes!
- Do all you (as the transition team) can to answer the numerous questions so we can make an

intelligent choice. Communication is vitally important to the process! Through this situation or context God is pushing us out of our “comfort zone.” Thus, my hope is that we will experience new ways of connecting with others and new ways of thinking.

- Cost to benefit Ratio: 1) will cost (apportionments) decrease? 2) Will benefits for the small rural church increase? When the conference went from 8 districts to 6 districts, this same concern was answered with a positive answer. But that was not proven to be correct. The future of the Methodist Church is in God's hands! And this will be resolved by him.
- As the table facilitator for table 6, the following concerns were raised: Decrease in number of voices to conference; communication is rural areas/small church; financial status in all 3 current conferences; pension and benefit changes (if detrimental); maintain biblical basis; right roles and responsibilities to grow disciples in Jesus Christ; conference name (not current proposed); more bureaucracy from distance; right kind and level of leadership critical. This transition can and will be a vision of spiritual movement in our denomination to transform this world through making many more disciples for Christ. Hallelujah! I would be interested in being on a dream team and help with this transformation.
- I would volunteer to be on a dream team. I want to seat 600 in a church where I see and feel the holy spirit make the world a more just, kinder, and caring place. How do we “spend time” with each other over increased distance? Relationships are at the heart of our cooperative ministry as a connectional church, and not only for clergy. The district superintendent is a critical link between the greater church and our local church. How can we save time with him and he or she spend time with our churches? Distance travel is already a serious danger to their health. Retreats like the 5 Day Academy and Clergy Session increase cross fertilization and trust among the clergy? How might they be continued? Need opportunities to increase spiritual formation in collective groups.
- It bothers me about how the small rural church fits in?
- This will be a great challenge and wonderful if we have a sense of our core beliefs about the purpose of our annual conference. I love this adventure! Hoe: the church becomes grass-roots and spirit-led. Can we really expect deep change by using an old model (annual conference?) and can we get a model for being missional by having the usual suspects as the transition team? If we want to be missional, why not bring ”outsiders” to the table? Why are we expecting old model to give us something new?
- How does creating one conference affect youth and young adult representation at their jurisdictional and general church events/ (formerly JYMO and NYMO) Hope? That youth ministry will be strong again in Nebraska. I would be happy to serve on the youth ministry dream team.
- This should be totally about God! But in reality it will be costly to change. Technology is a good source of keeping in communication with the small church, but can you make it feel loved? This will be a domino effect with the UMW having to change its way of doing things, also.
- I am in favor of being bold and changing. It is good to shake things up. In theory it (one conference) would be easier for the bishop and I am in favor of simplicity of one conference and new possibilities. Using the car analogy, I don't usually buy a car until the old one dies. Even then, I look at “concept” options before deciding to buy new or repair the old one. I don't just decide to buy a new one and then look. I look first and then decide. I thought we had

decided last year to come up with “model” to help decide. I have trusted the transition team's sense of going to one conference since they voiced it. I have not seen a one-conference model presented to give feedback on.

- I'm concerned about the pension and health benefits for pastors—both active and retired. I'm concerned about the job of the DS, which I assume will be much more work than what it now entails. Will they perhaps be more available for questions and help? Perhaps they won't have time for trips to Panama. Perhaps they'll need an assistant? What will become of all the staff, who will be redundant? What will be done with the office and homes of the two bishops not needed under the one-conference plan? What will happen to the older people who aren't tech-savvy? I'm excited about all of the new possibilities of worshiping or doing things differently.
- Where are the team members for the additional technical teams coming from (transition team/current conference committee members/annual conference people at large)? What is the clergy structure going to look like? (bishop/DS/pastor or bishop/DS/presiding elder/pastor or something else? Is there a more middle ground with most conference staff being responsible to 3 conferences rather than 3 conference staffs? How are the technology issues going to be addressed in areas that have spotty or non-existent internet coverage? I think could have potential, if details are worked out and clearly presented to all members of our congregations within the 3 annual conferences.
- Many technical questions – the sooner answered the less anxiety. The floor questions and discussion was good. I hope this enlivens us to truly go out and make more disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Affirmations: It makes sense from an economic and ministry standpoint. Focus on leadership. Tools being developed for rural churches. I support this plan if it's indeed visionary. I hope we don't get lost in the little details and kill the overall concept. Differences in benefits between conferences. That we lost focus on our mission. That it is viewed as a _____. That technology limits _____. The name. Can't we call it “The Cornhusker Annual Conference? Greatest hope: Used to be survivor. Now, it is living out Re-think Church—that we will become a way of life, not a “___ we go” that touches the lives of everyone in every community in Kansas and Nebraska.
- I would really like to serve on the transition team/dream team/discernment team. By and large, I am in favor of following where our designated teams would lead us. They are the ones looking at the information. They are the best position to make recommendations and tell us which way to go. This goes not only for the transition team but our finance people, our board of ordained ministry, etc. That's why they are in place—to discern God's will for our forward movement. I say we trust them and follow where they think we should go. That being said, next June, 2012, should our 3 conferences decide they cannot or will not place nice together, are there contingency plans in place for following thru as a 3-conference/1 bishop plan as opposed to the proposed 1 conference/1 bishop plan you are proposing?
- Strong transition team. Concern for loss of identity.
- I agree merging into 1 conference presents an opportunity to revitalize our ministry. My concern is that local churches be provided the leadership training and support to identify relevant strategies for moving forward and help with the resources to implement those strategies. My hope: that the church is recognized as doing what churches are supposed to do.
- I pray and hope this change is in God's will. And in doing so we may grow as the church of

Jesus. I pray whatever the change, we do it without resistance. I would like to know more about wages, apportionments, and health insurance. Will it be kept the same or will there be added expense to churches and pastors? If a pastor is in one conference (state) now, will they be required to move out of state?

- Too many unknowns. What happens if health issues, pensions, apportionments, etc., aren't same in Kansas and Nebraska? Will location of conference be an issue (especially in western Nebraska)? I'd hope that all can be worked out and all 3 can become one conference.
- My hope is for the best decision to please God. Retirement and insurance for retirees? How will the districts be set? Where will the bishop live? Where will the offices be? Health insurance for pastors?
- Distance – between church locations and conference office; between home locations and annual conference meeting; for distance-type learning technology. Local church voice in expanded conference. Clergy appointments across state lines.
- As a certified lay speaker, will they still be “used?” Will there still be leadership training for adults? More importantly will there be leadership training for youth and children? Affirmation: More resources. I hope to see the United Methodist Church to catch fire and set our world on fire – evangelize on the street, bring people to the loving embrace of God.
- I am concerned about distance/having to depend on technology a lot, but my hope is that all of Kansas and Nebraska will be able to come together in prayer and fellowship and follow God's plan for us.
- The little church falling thru cracks. Insurance for pastor. How much work is going to be put on the DS to cover the work of one bishop. My hope is to see the little churches grow.
- Need more details.
- Greatest hope is that we grow into a vibrant, Christ-centered body on fire for spreading God's love to all willing to listen. Excited to see opportunity for bold, deep change. Trust that we will continue to evolve over time. Trust that we will be diligent in research and discernment. Encouraged by success known in neighboring Missouri conference changes. Accountability and involvement of all church body in accomplishing our mission.
- I have concerns for Nebraska's mission projects – those unique to Nebraska, ie., Epworth Village, Wesley House and our camps. I respect the work of the transition team. I question this is the “change” that will make disciples for Jesus Christ to transform the world. I trust that God will continue to lead us. I trust our clergy will be treated fairly.
- Let us be bold and move forward. The smaller churches will not be lost if open communication is continued. Remember not everyone has a church computer. Please continue to keep lines of communication open. Staff? What is the member count in Kansas and number of churches? Logistics – salaries, pension adjustments, health care advantage/disadvantage? Greatest hope o- Remember God will see us thru the valley, church-wise and personally, but only if we will let him.
- Could we hear from the Rocky Mountain Conference about how they handle the huge differences in geography? How about how some of the other new conferences have envisioned a new entity. How does one create a vision of something entirely new?
- I have questions and concerns in regard to health benefits compensation. My hope is we again

become a vibrant servant of God, making disciples of Jesus Christ who truly transform the world.

- I want to be on the dream team for small and rural churches. Impact on small rural churches. Distance – connectionalism – use of technology. How will we really become spirit-filled? It sounds good but examples, please. This conference has clarified something and provided a basis for my vote. I was a one or two before. Need to bring the people along with you – a leader first informs and builds support for a decision and doesn't just jump into the deep end and expect everyone to follow. Greatest hope: We will become a spirit-filled church. The church that Christ expects us to be.
- Will we keep all the local church members informed about the process? Will pastors have a say about moving very far distances? Concerned the local members will be very overwhelmed. Hope: to make more disciples.
- Concern for our retired insurance. Retirement for pastors and pay scale for active clergy. Will we the Nebraska Annual Conference have to mold to the ways of the 2 Kansas conferences? Will churches have to completely furnish the parsonages? Who will pay the expenses of travel to one annual conference of the joined conferences? More dollars for the local church to send pastor/laity. Will we really benefit from the union/ we can give and receive talents for growth as a co-op.
- Ideas/concerns were brought forward at table discussions and in conference session. God hopes for a harmonized world church.
- Can we get help with technological problems to help us stay connected? We need more information made available to help us understand the process. The smaller churches may need help setting up communication systems, as we don't have access to technology-skilled people. My hope is we can build a new conference that will better serve all members.
- Need to know the major mechanics and technical changes that would be involved with this change: pastors' salaries, pension plans, changes in ___ of apportionments for members of Nebraska churches that would be asked for.
- Differences between Kansas-Nebraska on salary benefits, retirement benefits, and insurance benefits. We are one people under God. Press on. My hope is that United Methodist really unit to do good work throughout our whole world.
- I'm not sure about the process, but I love and trust the people who are a part of it, and have faith that God's will will prevail.
- Small local churches are being left out. What about Nebraska Wesleyan and Lydia Patterson Institute and Epworth Village. Are we still going to be able to support them?
- My hope: that we may become bigger and better and gather more people. How will the 3 conferences real property be merged, used, or disbursed? Health insurance? And to make sure retired clergy and to be retired do not lose their “earned” pensions. A timeline of when the transitions are planning to take place...where annual conference will be held? The very “out” congregations have long ways to travel? God bless the transition team and Bishop Ann and Bishop from Kansas for all the hard work they have already done!
- Health insurance and retirement for our pastors- how will these things be addressed? How do you make them equal when Kansas doesn't necessarily have the same type of programs in place? Greatest hope: For our conference and people to serve God and do his will in

combining our 2 conferences and bringing our Lord's message to all and increase our membership.

- We need to keep our identities and feel that each church matters. People walking through our church doors need, more than ever, to feel welcome and wanted. It is a warmth that is not always present - no matter what size our church – but we can show God's love to each and every one by just doing that much. We do need to move ahead, hopefully, with the positives we already have!! Go with God.
- We cannot try to replicate our current conference over a large area. Deep change must include deep change in appointment process, leadership selection, program, conference meetings – including annual conference. Long standing programs and organizations like UMM, UMW, UMY must also have deep change in organization and practice. I worry about geographical tension as we work out this deep change. Triangles are difficult systems to be in.
- Questions: regarding health insurance, pension. Where will conference office be located? If we become one conference with Kansas, what will the cost of the necessary technology be? Will pastors from Nebraska be required to serve churches in Kansas or will they be given a choice?
- Nebraska is not a “plain.” It's 90% hills and 10% plain! Is this how the whole relationship will go? With the larger size of the conference, how can you say, “We will be able to match congregations and pastors?” (Seems to me that the cabinet will have more trouble knowing clergy - except the “politicians!) Where will AC be held? How will clergy health plans be affected (both active and retired)? + all the concerns on Resolution 8. I hope this will bring new life to our denomination.
- Concerns: Travel time and expense for churches in panhandle. It's already hard for small churches to pay expenses for their delegates to AC. Knowing the gifts/graces/theological leanings of clergy/lay delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences when there are so many people with whom we've had no interaction. Pension benefits for retired clergy and compensation packages for active clergy when the differences between the 3 conferences are so great. That we won't know the answers to these questions until after we've voted for whether to become one conference. Concern for the increased workload for district superintendents. Thanks to the team for all their hard work – past, present and future!
- What does God want for us? What is my hope? That the Holy Spirit would bring a revival into our conference that would transform us into a Biblically-sound body of Christ – beginning with the clergy and flowing into the entire conference/s. We need committed, on fire clergy and laity who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! We need many more details about the details! How will we equalize representation across all areas? How much time, energy, expense will be involved, because of the larger area, in meetings, boards, etc.?
- I have doubts that the grandiose outcomes promised can be realized by reorganizing as one conference. If the new conference can go to a tithe level of mission shares I will support it. I believe the language about the transition team believing this is God's direction cuts off debate and our discernment in the process. It is even manipulative.
- Concerned that if we restructure and do so with a desire for a visionary leader that we may receive a new bishop that is a great synthesizer but not a visionary, how will it change in such a way that we really are freed up to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. How will bishop and cabinet truly learn about the gifts/graces of each church/parish and

pastor? Mission shares are crippling, Nebraska's is the highest %, how will we recalculate for 3 conferences in a fair and equitable manner? We need a fine balance to be achieved between vision and detail, have you thought of enlisting a prayer team across all 3 conferences? Testimonies from “successfully” merged conference will help decrease the anxiety. Could we hear some of those testimonies?

- My greatest hope for our church is that we might be willing to die in order to be born again to new life! Yes, let's be bold! But I feel we've yet to have enough discussion or formulate answers to so many questions, anxieties, and fears. I deeply appreciate the work of the transition team and my prayer are with you as you work to respond to our discussions. Specific questions: How will this process affect small churches? Large churches? How will this process affect those in the process of candidacy/ordination?
- Could there be a United Methodist Woman (with leadership experience) on the transition team? Concern – United Methodist Women lose elected officers due to conference 3 to 1. From 33 elected to 11. At Jurisdiction, UMW loses from 18 votes to 6. Question: How huge in geography (miles) will districts be? When you say “frees bishop to do vision work,” what can we do to get a bishop who does good visioning? How are we going to get youth involved in the conversation or get their perspective?
- Hope: that we can use what resources we have to be the best church we can be for the folks around us and in the world. There are folks in all three conferences that have been through Bill Selby's series of retreats. It's be interesting to get all of us together (who speak the language of “systems”) What will happen with the Order of Elder?” Each of the 3 conferences may, or may not, be doing the same thing. Will this negatively affect my pension and health insurance? Will I be evaluated by someone who does not know me?
- I have chosen the 3 finger option despite the description assigned to it because I have so many questions I don't want to say “yes” or “no” at all. I affirm going forward with the process but view this situation as one where “the devil is in the details.” I also do not believe bigger is better—the burden of proof for me is just the opposite. My vision for the church is for each of us to answer the question “what does God expect of us?” Not what do we expect of the church.
- How will communication be carried out between the offices and the churches. How will the pension and health care be brought together? I hope that the church will be more Bible oriented than it is at this time.
- Many questions and concerns. I am not sure that change at the top will result in change at the bottom—if the churches do not change the way they do business the “slow death” will continue. How will being one large conference and in such change the vastness of the boundaries of this conference concerns me. Hope: That a new and cool wind will blow through our church which will replace all the stale hot air now circulating. I agree the “old ways” need to give way to change! Amen, amen, amen.
- Concerns about support for local pastors and access to district superintendents. Access for the DS to the Bishop. How will this population compare with other Episcopal areas throughout the connection in North America? Europe? Africa? The world? What kind of support will the bishop be able to access with confidentiality and accountability.
- Small churches sometimes feel now that we are forgotten by conference. I'm afraid some will be lost or forced to close—will we have our same district offices to connect with for help and information—what will become of the Nigeria-Nebraska partnership? Will UMW and/or

UMM remain viable as they are? My hope is that we will become better at making disciples for Jesus Christ and thus strengthen our churches!

- Eastern Kansas is a long way in distance and culture from the panhandle of Nebraska. Can we (Great West District) join Rocky Mountain Conference instead? In any case, we need a concrete answer to the technical questions (pension, apportionments, etc.) to make a well calculated decision.
- I know you send much info via email, website, etc. Please remember many areas of Nebraska have very poor or no cell coverage as well as poor reception and many older members have no computers. Please use the Messenger to keep people informed as well as other media outlets. Keep all churches updated as you work out the details. It is my hope that this one conference plan will bring many new lives to Christ and energize our Methodist churches.
- I am concerned about travel. Will less people come to annual conference? Cost for all those attending. Need more info on health and pension plans. Sometimes it seems like communication isn't the best. Will it get better? Will it cut back on the travel for clergy? My hope is to improve the excitement of our Lord Jesus Christ to improve the leadership of the church. People will want to be a leader.
- Would want the bishop to spend time in all of 3 former conferences; the process of joining needs to be given plenty of time (perhaps two to four years). Change is needed, but is this the best way? What about starting with Nebraska and Kansas West, if vote is negative? My greatest hope is that we can change enough to reach our society for Christ so they all can know love and joy. Would consider a dream team.
- Affirmations: 1) bishop work more focused; 2) hope for rejuvenated ministry as a “new conference.” Concerns: 1) We seriously need to pay attention to the differences of our 3 systems – it will help us understand the probable ways we will react/respond when faced by crisis. 2) Analogy of marriage or “relationship” is important—marriage is commitment. While in relationship, we can always back off. What kind of marriage are we committing to? 3) As a mega-conference, the local church will be in days of big lost alligator. 4) Need a third team to study the emotional systems of the conferences – in addition to the dream and technical teams.
- I'm wondering if we will lose the daily attendance at annual conference because of the travel difference if we become one conference. My hope is that we will have more resources to improve our membership and attendances in our small churches.
- Hope: That we can do a better and more effective job of making disciples, and building our church to the greater glory for God's glory. Concern over the retirement payments to our clergy. So many gray areas that I feel we need answers to before a knowledgeable vote can be held. Questions about conference staff, apportionments, how this will affect our small rural churches and also what will happen to our health benefits for clergy and laity. How will the fact that the Kansas Conferences were not able to become one conference several years ago...
- I have many questions. I trust the transition team and committee guided by the holy spirit to work these out for the best outcome for his church. My greatest hope is that each of us as members will be faithful witnesses to the blessings God has poured on our lives. We will all be respectful and see others thru Christ's eyes.
- Affirmation: I trust the transition team and am excited about the vision of trying to make this situation into a positive, and that we would have a clearer message of what we believe in order to truly represent Jesus and his word to the people of Nebraska. Concerns: But I am concerned

about the expenses and extra time off work that delegates to annual conference would have to take, the location of the conference headquarters, and the concerns of retired clergy.

- I have many questions. All those questions on the Memorandum of Concern are my questions. I have difficulty seeing how the local church will benefit from becoming one conference. I think there are many great possibilities for more effective ministry as a conference, but am not sure how the local church ministries will be improved. There are many details to be worked out and I appreciate what the transition team has already done.
- Concerns on how local churches will be enabled to ____ well service in their community and be effective. Concern about answers concerning retiree's support on pension and health. Concern that we will lose the personal touch. I hope for positive ministry and service.
- I am of the opinion that whatever we do, it must be a spiritual movement and individual interference must be over-ruled. Hope for “more” spiritual brotherhood!
- ??? More mission shares, insurance, pension
- Happy about the hope for the future, use of technology will force us to update what we have in our local churches as well as districts and conference office. Logistics – health insurance (for the whole family), retirement benefits, mission shares increase, the distance to travel to conference events is a concern. Greatest hope: Wake up the sleeping giant!
- Concerns: Effects on rural small churches, keeping laity involved over large distances, location of annual conference, taking care of our retirees. Affirmations – excited about what new and bold missions we can explore. Greatest hope is to bring us together.
- I have one major area of concern. It seems to me this is a corporate,/capitalistic approach to discipleship rather than a spirit-guided approach. I do not feel this proposal has been transparent. We seem to be getting many vague answers, which facilitates distrust. This plan is supposedly “bold” but it seems to be tinkering with machinery which cannot bring renewal. I am afraid this will further entrench the low self-esteem of many of our rural churches which will facilitate further decline. We must make sure this is God's will rather than someone or some committee or team or jurisdiction. To me this exhale-constricting of the lungs would bring John Wesley to tears because it does not seem to be spirit-led. My greatest hope for the future of the church is that we would be led by the spirit to breathe in the spirit into our churches so they grow as they should once again. Dream team suggestion: Prayer team.
- Thanks to the transition team for all their hard work and their recommendations. Biggest concern is more responsibilities for pastors, DSs and bishop, but evolution of 1 conference will take many years and that is good. Greatest hope for future UM Church is that we will make disciples of Jesus Christ. That I will see this happen.
- I am sold on one conference but based on the following questions: 1) that clergy would enjoy benefits of most liberal present conference; 2) that small churches are shown to have adequate votes; 3) that there will be a mechanism to hear voices; 4) we need flexibility of how things are done for different areas and situations. My hope: that we can demonstrate growth instead of decline.
- Taking risk implies the possibility of failure. Do I have permission to fail and learn? Can we have some assurance that as we may be willing to take the “deep dive” that our leadership will be diving with us. Does there need to be a major replace/turnover in leadership with a new conference? I am a resident of the state of Nebraska for a reason, although our state is also in

flux, but I do not have a desire to live in Kansas! My greatest hope for the church is that every member of every church is ministering everyday in every place at all times.

- I have similar questions to those addressed on the floor. I'm very concerned about the time, distance, and expense of attending annual conference. Many of our delegates are elderly and it would be difficult for them to travel that far for that long. We need to put forth a new shared identity and vision of ministry. What I think God wants for our churches - I think he'd want to see a group of vital Christians joyfully celebrating life in Christ.
- I trust the analysis of the transition team. I feel if we need to form a new conference this is the time to do it. It may be harder to initiate later. I am concerned that the only structures we can think of are similar to what we have. If our current structure is ineffective, why won't we end up with a large, ineffective structure? I am concerned that we will all end up even more removed from the conference leadership in a larger conference. My hope is that there will be some way to inspire our local membership for a transformed church and ministry.
- Concern on effect of small membership churches.
- How will the conferences share in the discernment process of creating a united vision? Will the current leadership structures (Connectional Table, etc.) be maintained (but shifted to include more representation) or will there be new, perhaps more creative structures of leadership?
- What difference will it make at the local church level? We need to see the recommendations and visions by next March to have time to have the conversations. Hope: That we have the courage to make changes at the local church level: both the local pastor and local church. Live long and prosper.
- Greatest hope: learning to take risks in faith, risking new relationships. We need to be bold and courageous. We need to step out in faith. How can we do God's will best? We need to address concerns of laity and clergy leadership but not have it be the main focus. Concern if the current bishop of Kansas would get assigned to the new conference since he would know Kansas but not Nebraska. We need to continue to have in-person relationships, not just through technology.
- Affirmation: Better care of our people and leaders of the church. Making disciples for Christ. How will this help us to "do church" better—transforming people to be disciples for Christ? I do not believe this will "save" us money. District superintendents will have greater responsibilities. We will need more superintendents/districts to guide the church (possibly). I am concerned about the health of our bishop, DSs, and pastors to be able to minister and care for the people of the UMC Church. Transparency.
- How will the size of the conference office staff compare to what it is now? I do not think this alone will affect the daily workings of the individual small church. How will AC be handled—will the "one" conference consist of smaller districts so the DS will be able to be more involved in each church? Will we still have say-so in whether we get to keep our pastor? My hope is to learn how to reach out to the under-40s in our church.
- This process needs to be completely transparent with all questions answered. Do not say "look at the big picture and the rest will work itself out." This is a time to be bold, think outside the box, but at the same time be a tune to what our members are concerned about. Change can be good if it is done prayerfully, not politically. My hope for the UMC is that we can find a common ground on homosexuality and abortion so that our energies can be "to make . . . world."

- How is this transition going to help our little church? What is the financial situation on a merging conference?
- I struggle with the idea that 1 conference will have a dramatic impact on church membership and vitality—I would like specific ways that we can help empower these areas by becoming 1 conference. It would seem to me that one conference would help with administration and labor, but I am skeptical. My hope for the church is revitalization and increased membership. Spread the word of Jesus Christ.
- Small rural churches will be further left behind. The DS can't get around to their churches now. Currently the Bishop doesn't understand the needs and concerns of the smaller churches so how can a larger geographical area and greater number of people to be served work out well for the smaller churches. We are all about coffee shops in Omaha and aren't meeting the needs of rural conservative communities. We claim we meet people where they are, but small conservative churches who are vital to our communities don't seem to matter now. How will this improve? Unfortunately all the platitudes about “possibilities” and “vision” sound like political promises (hot air). Sorry, but they do.
- What are the specific benefits of one conference to the local church? How specifically will this add to our resources? What is your definition of resources - pastors or ideas shared? Hope: to grow my church spiritually and membership (those attending).
- I pray that we will recover our Wesleyan ancestors zeal for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Saving souls and transforming communities into the loving, just community of Christ. I need to know how my pension and health insurance is affected before I affirm one conference. I need to know our structures will be affected o- UMW, UMM, UM Foundation, Common Table, teams, districts, clusters? Please give us a time table method of making these decisions, before Jan. 1, 2012. Please inform us earlier rather than later. We need answers way before May 2012.
- Will this cause more travel problems for folks that live so far away (west – east) parts of Kansas-Nebraska coming to AC? Where will meetings be held? Lincoln, Wichita, etc.?
- Concerned about getting lay representation for older congregations and small congregations in the larger conference. Concerned about pensions and health insurance for retired pastors. Questions about appointments.
- What do I hope for us? Peace, justice, enough. How does this change help us achieve these? Change isn't bad - change is needed. Is this the right change? Though have discussed for a year, still feels we don't have enough answers/details. Lofty thoughts of improvement through change, but how will that happen? How will local churches gain? Hard to even ask questions because don't have enough basic information. Conference offices - eliminate staff or shuffle chairs? Is there anything new under the sun?
- This feels like an arranged marriage. My church needs answers. We need to feel that we have a choice. Are we sure we aren't throwing out the baby with the bath water? Change for the sake of change is hollow – we need a better reason. I need to know that clergy pensions will be protected. Are we going to end up in Outer Mongolia, Kansas? We signed on to go anywhere we were sent in Nebraska. This feels like too drastic a step. My greatest hope for UMC Nebraska is an explosion of prayer, an abundance of professions of faith, and a rediscovery of the joy and hope we all once felt at annual conference.
- I have numerous questions on different subjects: What form will health care take? As a larger

base group, will the cost go down? Will we have any strength of position in conversation over benefits? How might small membership churches benefit concretely through this?

- If Kansas can't come together as one district, how will Nebraska and Kansas be able to come together? Are the retirement and health benefits being considered? What about the great distances between Nebraska and Kansas? How will we make sure our churches are given attention to fulfill the missions we believe should be carried out? Can we make sure our youth are represented and we listen to their ideas? I trust the transition team to use their judgment and to listen to God's direction regarding a change I feel this conference needs.
- Sweeping change? Remember, it's all about the local church. We receive little to no support from Lincoln that helps with "church" on Sunday. Shift your focus. It's all about helping us do ministry. Drastically reduce budget. We should offer no more than the tithe - 10% of our offering. Make due with far less as we are. Hope? Change.

Nebraska Annual Conference
Five Finger Vote
2 – opposed but not willing to halt process

- My church told me as a lay member to vote in favor. I have learned a lot about the transition here at conference and I think the biggest problem is fear of change and lack of knowledge. I personally am not against the concept but we must communicate more information to our congregations. I will personally work on doing this as the lay leader of our church as more information is available. I would try to serve on one of the Dream Teams if I can work it in my work schedule.
- Hope for church to be church it is supposed to be. “Doing the same things and expecting different results” will not go away with a newly-created conference. Conferences need to change to get different results and then talk about merging with the new changes.
- My hope is that whatever we decide, we will make more disciples for Jesus Christ. I am concerned about the distance to Annual Conference, the time and mileage it will take and the cost of hotels, etc. Concerned about overloading one bishop and members of the cabinet. I saw how tired Bishop Ann looked last night after just the Nebraska conference, let alone one bishop shepherding what was once three conferences.
- Hope: when we stand at the river, spies have been sent in and returned. I want to be faithful--with God as our guide and leader we can do powerful things.
- I give thanks for leadership team and our bishop. Walking into a new way is not easy—turning the corner is the hardest. You have brought us to the crossroads. I know God works in and through this conference. May all we do bring glory to God. Do we go into the greater pool when appointment comes? What about our retirement? Funds set aside?
- 1) How will UMW be organized if we have one conference? 2) What will we do about the distance that we'll have to deal with? 3) I hear we will use technology. What about the areas in the state that is very sparsely inhabited? 4) We will need to study all those conferences in order that one conference. 5) Much study is needed.
- My hope is that our churches will be relevant and meaningful to my grandchildren and great grandchildren, as they may be part/remain part of the Wesley tradition. There are too many unanswered questions and “hopes” about results rather than fact-based information. While all “i's” may not be dotted and “t's” not crossed before the 2012 vote, I am willing to let the team develop more details to put facts in place of hopes. Give us a clear picture of the resulting structure of one conference.
- My hope is that we can “holy conference” this issue and get as many involved as possible. I would encourage the team to go slow in this process. Be even more transparent than before, get information out, and answer peoples' questions. Normally I am an extreme optimist, but I have to be honest. I've worked before with clergy of both the east and west conferences, and I need to be honest: they, and not us, may be the hold-up in this process.
- Why can't our conference move forward with change by itself? If we do form one conference, what will happen to Nebraska camps? Will our vibrant pastors move to the larger populations of Kansas? We already have them pulled from smaller churches and placed in Omaha, Lincoln, etc. Who will control our endowments created in the annual conference of Nebraska? Whose

pay scale will our pastors be paid at? Some of the smaller church pastors or local pastors cannot afford further cuts. We already have division between eastern and western districts. How do we see that getting better by joining more difference of values?

- Although I see the financial saving and some leadership energy saving, I am concerned that this may lessen the personal aspect of ministry. I affirm that we need and can reach a working beneficial arrangement for Nebraska and Kansas.
- My greatest hope: that we rediscover the amazing, saving, forgiving grace of Jesus Christ to change our hearts. Unless we prayerfully seek to answer why we have lost half our membership since the early 70s, becoming a new conference will not matter. To the transition team, please keep the question of “why” before you in all your work. May we all seek to find God's answer.
- We need to determine the focus of the conference. Are we more concerned with what is most beneficial for the bishop or what is most beneficial for the local church? This “joining” seems more for pleasing the bishop (making it easier for him/her). The local congregants will be unable to participate as readily.
- Concern for the small churches of Nebraska. Also the vision and mission of the new conference.
- Thank you for all your diligent work. I will continue to pray for you as you meet. The transition team's Q&A sheets answer more questions with questions than answers! What will happen with UMW? UMM? Etc.? I apologize- I think we're all like the kids on the playground who had their fence taken away and huddled in the center because they didn't know what was beyond the fence. Our fears are rational. The more concrete answers you can give us, the more willing we might be to explore the new boundaries!
- I am concerned that it be seen that one conference is the only way to be visionary and bold—it doesn't have to be. We can be visionary and stay alive and growing and stay as the Nebraska Conference. There is no guarantee that just because we become one conference that our present ways of being church/doing church will be any different. If there is not vision, mission, purpose, change, we will only continue decline. My hope is that we be visionary and follow our visions.
- My hope: that we don't lose the good connection and genuine dialogue this process has pulled us into. Please look at the possibility of a new bold approach--”merging” with other denominations in Nebraska, people who know the culture and are close at hand. This would be deep change. It would force us to think outside our comfortable boxes of structure and theology. It would be a “Gil Rendle moment.” It would be a really new thing.
- The Nebraska reorganization took an extended time. Some ministries actually stopped until the Common Table too effect. We are beginning to function again after years of effort. I am afraid the re-organization will take six years to complete and the ministry will have to stop at mid-point. Do not repeat what happened in Nebraska.
- In re-marriage, the “parents” are happy” and the “children” are sad because to the children it is loss—how will this loss be addressed? Please keep equal focus on process and content—however process will determine the end result. I am supportive but have questions and need to begin seeing what it would look like. My hope: That we will be drawn closer to our leader Christ and become more like him in our daily lives. I would consider the dream team.

- We lose too much control and the gains we may get don't outweigh the risks/cost. Greatest hope: Disciples are made at the local church level, no matter how the annual conference is configured. My hope is that our local churches don't need annual conference directives to be effective.
- I believe western Nebraska will have even less representation because the number of churches in eastern Kansas and even western Kansas. I need a lot more information before we join with Kansas, ie, salaries, pension, mission shares, etc. I thought I was following this pretty close, but I have decided I don't really know that much as of today, I hope God leads us to be together.
- Greatest hope: What does God want for us? Youth in the church, that is, the next generations attending and being active in church. Longer distances yet for clergy and lay members to fulfill conference obligations and opportunities; simple rule of thumb: If travel time to meetings exceeds one full day of travel, you lose people's attendance and participation.
- I think God wants all of us to be his people and he doesn't care about denominations. He wants all of us saved and no one lost to hell. We all need to be bold enough to make disciples for Christ. I think we need more clarification as to what the real structure will be like. I am concerned about small rural churches and if this will help equip us to better make disciples of Christ. Will this bring about a closeness or cause more divisions when we have a much larger conference?
- As we consider "moving forward" may we always remember that God never promised us easy. He promised us a future with hope! There are many concerns/few affirmations. Are we that determined to keep doing what hasn't worked just so we can say we didn't quit? When in all reality we have to be quitters to keep from stunting our growth.
- From past experience, the future doesn't look good. When Nebraska made the Northwest District so big, we small churches don't like what is happening in the Great West. How will we feel in the Great Plains? Vision is smoke in the air. What are some of your concrete ideas?
- Big is not always better. I think that smaller churches will lose repetition.
- The transition team needed to give both sides of the issue, instead of shoving a solution forward. We feel that they have already made decisions. I did my doctoral thesis on distance learning in Nebraska. My first-hand knowledge is that many areas of Nebraska do not have internet. How can these folk find out data from your website when they do not have access?
- I am on the fence, but I feel that with more input I can make an informed decision. Willing to keep an open mind on the decision.
- My greatest hope: that we all have gains and no one experiences losses. My concerns were best expressed in Resolution 7, "Memorandum of Concern" (from ARMS); especially their points 4, 5, and 8.
- People (clergy and lay) are good people. Any vote is not against the people of Kansas. Too many unknown quantities and questions. Pension and health care when there are such differences. Bigger does not mean better. Less connection with each other. A conference 500 miles square is hard to conceive. I'm not opposed but there are more questions.
- We have an opportunity for change. Will it make a difference? Have faith in the transition team.
- Not enough information to make a decision at this time.

- There are too many unanswered questions. Only 2 representatives.
- Will this save any money for the local church?
- I have many concerns about the distance pastor would be appointed from current relatives, colleague and support systems, as well as concerns about whether bigger is necessarily better or more effective. However, I hope to fully engage in the change and transition and help shape the new conference if that is what we as a body decide.
- Too many unanswered questions. Not ready to vote on what we have been given. But, we need to do something to reach people who are lost in many ways.
- If this passes, be very conscious of the grieving process. Plan a way to terminate the old and give birth to the new. “Dream Team” is a good concept. Keep it. Wedding analogy: Over the next year, we need to 1) date and get acquainted, 2) become engaged in conversation, 3) pre-nuptial counseling to discuss what we each bring to the marriage, 4) consider the proposal to create a blended family. Clergy signed up to serve in Nebraska, not in Kansas. Best dream: We will grow the new conference so large that it has to be split in two!
- My greatest ope for the United Methodist Church is that we would recapture the Wesleyan tradition of accountable discipleship. This is the most effective way of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We need deeper change. Our conference lines should not be determined by outmoded state lines. Western Kansas and Western Nebraska should be one conference in the Western Jurisdiction. That is where their cultural affinity lies. They look to Denver, not Kansas City or Omaha, in a variety of ways. Paragraph 39 of the Book of Discipline provides guidelines for a change in jurisdictional lines.
- 1) How will proposal improve the local churches? 2) Will the districts be changed? 3) Great West District is already too large to address the needs of the local churches. 4) How will the distances be addressed? 5) Where will the annual conference be held? Being from western Nebraska, it is already a great distance. 6) How will it affect the apportionments of the individual churches?
- Hope: state-wide revival in the church. New passion for Christ. New commitment to Christ. Kansas does not support their local pastors as Nebraska does, ie, continuing education, etc. How will that change for Nebraska local pastors?
- My greatest hope is for us to allow God to move in our personal lives, our church families, our communities for revival. One conference is too big. It seems we will be a church family apart from the United Methodist Church.
- I feel pressure by the committee because of statements like “bold” or “timid”, using psychology instead of fact. Insanity I understand, but why can we not change with existing conference—not convinced of anything. Offer will improve making disciples for Jesus Christ. My hope is that people are Lord to Christ and desire to serve.
- How would one conference affect United Methodist Women? My hope for the church is that each local church will be a voice and serve the people in its community and reach out to those in need in the world.
- My hope is that we find a way to reach the young adults to bring them into the church. Concerned with the distance for annual conference, that many small churches will not be represented. Doesn't give any ideas on making the church grow, only for saving money.

- I do not think new conference is the answer to declining membership. I think—our local church is getting too liberal. The Methodists should get to be more fundamental. The young people who go to church are conservative and join fundamental churches. Liberal young people do not go to church. I mean this to be trends—for example, all liberal young people are not church goers.
- Greatest hope: That whatever we do, the most important outcome is that more people come to know Jesus Christ as Savior. Concern for the fact that because of the large area, the small far away churches will not be well represented because they will not be able to afford going to conference if it is far away.
- I cannot see how bigger is better, but I am willing to learn and to consider further information.
- My hope is for radically different thinking by people in our churches. How will this change the mentality of clergy and lay persons? A new environment is needed more than a new structure. Clergy made covenant with Nebraska. Can we force the new conference on them? How will this create more vital worship in small churches with limited resources? What about the specific ministries that apply to Nebraska—what will happen to them? Like witness at Nebraska Legislature?
- I don't know all the information I need to make a decision, but I don't want to stand in the way, either. God bless us all real good! Peace.
- Hope to entice others to belong to our churches. Great vision: is this God's will concerned about being swallowed up (small churches) as not able to have conferencing in small groups. How about grandfathering in the retirement and pensions? What about our UMW? Will our district be same? How will we determine who will be delegates?
- There needs to be more planning. A real blueprint of how it will look before we rush ahead.

Nebraska Annual Conference

Five Finger Vote

1 – Opposed

- Becoming a large geographic area does not mean a change of environment in our local churches. We need to remember that while we have one voice for Nebraska, we will be one of three voices with the change. The larger area will result in a greater financial burden as our way of funding for the conference was chosen specifically for Nebraska as the Kansas financial plan does not work for us and we will be following what works for the other two. My greatest hope is the growth of the mission field does come to fruition.
- I feel this is going to be harmful for the small churches. All the decisions are made for the larger more populated churches, which I understand, but shouldn't we have any concern for the small churches?
- I want more of the details about retirement benefits, health care, properties worked out before I vote.
- My greatest hope is that our society/culture will open its eyes and see that it's only way to truth and life is through Jesus Christ with the help of Christians. How will this increase membership, attendance and keep churches from closing? We need more concrete information as to what will be done exactly and how it will be carried out. We all agree change is needed, but is this truly the way/
- Worry about the distances traveled for meetings. How this will affect small churches – 40 in attendance. My hope: more membership numbers, more younger families involved in the church.
- Laity should not be allowed to change the covenant. Clergy entered into it at ordination. (See * below). We will never know the outcome of this week. You will respond whatever you want to tell us. We are still going to vote next year regardless of this vote, so this was a monumental waste of time and money. Transition team member said at my table, “This will never pass...it's been a wasted year and a half. *When ordained, clergy enter into a covenant with God and the AC. That covenant will be dissolved along with the AC if a new one is formed. Only the Board of Ordained Ministry/Clergy Executive Session can address issues of clergy relationship. Laity do not have the power to affect the covenants. If they are voting, they are affecting the covenant.
- What we say here doesn't matter. You've already told us the motion for next year will be one conference. And that the details are not your concern. Will we be told the actual numbers of this vote? That is how many votes total. How many 5s, 4s, etc. for each conference. If pastors can serve 3 churches in an appointment, the bishop can serve three conferences. Greatest hope: Bishop Ann's retirement. I don't want laity deciding my conference membership as clergy. Give me a detailed plan to vote up or down. Too many details not worked out (pension, health, UMW, trustees, etc.)
- I hope for the church is that dynamic that hears the word of God and has a vision of the resurrection. Not until we see the plan and timeline beyond “dreams” and “technical” exploration/solutions.
- Presented with too many generalizations which leaves too many unanswered questions. Need

specifics before I can move in the direction of support.

- Why can't Kansas become one conference first, and then join with Nebraska?
- We worked quite well with both conferences in Kansas from 1940 to 1948. A different bishop complicated things from 1948 to 1952, so I feel that a good bishop could handle all 3 conferences very adequately.
- My greatest hope for the UM Church is that it continue as the UM Church and not some washed out version envisioned by a “team.” I am opposed to becoming one conference no matter how it is presented. You hide behind what you say God wants for us. You are telling us what you want to do, you are going to do, what you want to do. You are going to ruin the church.
- The “plan” presented is not a plan—it says “become one conference”—trust us! However, many of us have had our trust in the conference violated in the past, so we do not just trust the details to the conference to work out. In 18 months, it is disappointing that no plan was developed. I see this as a failure of leadership. How will those same people develop a concrete plan in the next 6-9 months? The process seems both too drawn out and too rushed. We are told to make the “bold” choice—thrive, take risks! But no details are provided. The new conference is promised to be “better”—but how? In what ways? How will the new conference be different? Money talks—if changing would really be better, why is the 2012 budget essentially the same as the 2011 budget? We are promised that technology will bridge the differences, but such technology does not exist in affordable and viable forms yet. The technical issues are more mundane than having a shared vision. Yet such issues are vital to the life of the church and must be resolved equitably before a true plan to create a new conference can really be considered. I don't think enough voices were heard (youth, UMW, retired pastors laity). The transition team needs new leadership in order to actually create a true plan.
- I believe God wants us to make disciples of all, not just the easy—all. The mission field is not only in the jungle, it's also in the cornfields of Nebraska. Please don't wash your hands of those just because the numbers are not great. The vision is too abstract. I don't see concrete details on how this is going to impact change at the local level. I believe we need to see a clearer plan before I can support.
- I cannot commit to one annual conference with the information I have now.
- Because we will get only one bishop for the Nebraska-Kansas area I feel it is up to the new bishop to subtly lead us into becoming one conference without us even knowing it. I think that could absolutely happen. I think administration will have to be duplicated in some ways and will have to happen no matter what. Some consolidation of administration can happen, even if we stay 3 separate conferences.
- People in Nebraska cannot go to AC because they are working people, less well-to-do, limited in being able to attend because of great distances and the cost involved in getting to the conference. This limits their voice and, in fact, stops the voice of those who work or are less able to pay for such an opportunity. The representation at AC then becomes one which tips toward those closer, those supported by the larger churches, the well-to-do, the retired person. Please consider this. The voice of the people is so important. What will happen to the conference staff? Will they be downsized? If they will be, that could be a hardship on people who have been faithful in serving the conference.
- I don't like the never-ending off lowering our standards. I may become a Missouri Synod Lutheran. Too much mileage involved. The larger the group the more inefficiency.

- My hope is to see us grow and help more people touch more lives. I would like to be on the dream team. How is it going to save us money? It didn't save Missouri. What about youth conference? As I bring my kids down with me. Is the bishop going to spend as much time here as in Kansas? Are going to lose our small churches? Do we send our pastors to Kansas? We are short of pastors.
- My hope is that we keep in mind that our mission is to change hearts for Christ. If one conference is the way to do that, I pray our hearts and minds would be open to it. The only true benefit of becoming one conference I have heard is financial. If our ultimate goal is to increase membership and disciples for Christ how will merging help us with this? I believe there are many more individual minds and local church charges that need to be made first. Also, some systemic changes within our AC, i.e., civil rights of OLBT brothers and sisters, reaching the impoverished, etc.
- I think God wants us to know and care for all persons, whether large or small and not get caught up in finances, but care for mission to people. Don't forget about small rural churches just because their finances aren't great. Loss of delegates? How would we know the person we are asked to vote for? How will bishop be able to personally know all pastors and where seated to such a large area? Cost of travel to AC for delegates for churches older adults attend AC – travel a problem. Older adults don't all have computer or use them. Many older adults can't drive in large cities. Consider handicapped and visually handicapped.
- I hope that God wants us to be as people who know his word, being hearers and doers of his word! Lead by the Spirit. Show me the good that may come from this. To do good and no harm. Don't want to lose people over this. How do I pray? How do I help?
- How do you see re-educating our 80 and 90 year-olds to settle for teleconferencing? If ministry is going to be online and through technology, why not close church and watch TV at home? Where are the new, bold, innovative ideas coming from? If these ideas exist, why have they not been shared already? How can small churches be expected to stand the greater expenses of longer travel and more expensive accommodations, that will be innovative in conference meetings? I hope to see the church do ministry to people where they are – physically and emotionally.
- I believe bigger is not better. I do not believe that it will not change how we do things in our churches. Expenses of travel will be higher because of the distance to travel. We can have a dream team, but we have to have someone to carry it through. I would hope we would be more diligent in our relationship with Jesus. He should be #1 in our lives. I feel we should remain as we are.
- I realize this will eventually happen since the church has embraced the world's “bigger is better.” I'm not convinced this is true.
- My greatest hope is that we as individuals and as churches make love—unconditional love—the bottom line, and the ultimate goal. I personally resent—strongly--the use of “God talk” to try to manipulate my decision. We all want to know and to do God's will, which may mean an option not yet named. Why? How? Would one conference make a real difference in our willingness and ability o discern and do God's will?
- Answer to the question #31 is not convincing. This question should be the top most priority, otherwise we are just rearranging the furniture on the Titanic. We have gone from 9 to 8 to 6 districts and were promised great things, such as DS will have more time to provide great leadership. That has not happened on a larger scale, so it will not happen on a larger scale for a

bishop. How would a DS know other pastor's name and their talents? Sorry, but do not trust Kansas East to keep their word. I am sure we will be treated as third-class citizens being small. I do not think a bishop will have any time to provide leadership. He/she will be busy making appointments year around with that many churches and pastors and settling personnel matters

- Since we will be under one Episcopal area, the bishop can always appoint pastors across state line in consultation with the people involved. When districts were reduced we did not experience growth in the local churches even though we had the same promise. One conference is only convenient for bishop.
- Want to see a plan with some details before voting for on a concept.
- This appears to me to be a change similar to the change that was promised us when we elected our last president. The change that we have experienced has not been for the good of the people of the United States.
- I feel my small congregation wants much more information. Yes there is much anxiety and questions to be answered before this decision can be rightfully decided.
- I hope the church will recognize the wasteland we are living in and can give a hopeful vision of the promised land. Technical details are not clearly formulated. I am especially concerned about the HMEP guarantees to clergy. This proposal promises a lot, but I have head them before with mixed results, at best.
- This makes the bishop and cabinet further from the congregations and pastors There is no spiritual renewal plan or guarantee in this restructuring as it seems to claim.
- Greatest hope: Every church meets needs of all people of all generations and all backgrounds in finding meaning and joy in Christ's self-giving love. The current proposal seems to be more focused on taking care of future bishops than on the needs of local congregations. Nebraskans have always been very creative in deigning structure that meet their needs We can continue to do so and design change that meets Nebraska churches and their communities' needs.
- Kansas East and West should join together but not include Nebraska.
- I feel that there are too many unanswered questions and not proper representation and voice of the whole state.
- My hope for the future is that we get back to basics, that is, making the Bible our true guide. We have become way too liberal. We should not approve a sin just to satisfy a crowd of people. Can we truly have deep change with current leadership? No attempt at change has been made by them. Can we teach "old dogs" new tricks? Deep change really needs new leaders with a fresh perspective. People are people and do not easily change their ways.
- My hope: that we will seriously work at making disciples. Too many unknowns still to decide. No one has talked about whether pastors would have to move to the Kansas Area if they wanted to stay in Nebraska.
- I affirm the hard work of the committee and wish I had more vision to change. I know the future calls for change in order to live. I have too many questions on account allocations – pensions, health benefits, and distances for traveling to conference and meetings.
- 1) status of health care when retired. 2) appointment process of a combined conference – how that would work.
- The distance is too great. Small churches would be lost.

- I am concerned about the small churches – will we be run over and out? We already feel that we are a small part, such as big is better, and more counts more than small. Reaching more people is important, but I don't think this will do it.
- I/we need answer to the questions before I/we can support one conference. Help us be good stewards by giving us that information.
- Bigger doesn't mean better. We have been resistant to change in electing the same General Conference top delegates, year after year. Where is the deep change? Hope: we open our hearts, our minds, our doors to all of God's people.
- Suggest communicating to the members of the AC when information is posted on the webpage. I would hope for new ways to effectively bring people to Christ and strengthen those who believe already. At best, I would want to see a slow transition to work through issues. Should not become final until the second bishop follows the current bishop. Too many uncertainties. Too little concrete idea of how this is better. Too hard to go back if we decide to reverse the decision.
- Because you were thinking outside the box, I presume you had other ideas. I would have liked to hear them, then hear how you made this decision. Concern: When we went to the “Common Table,” many people were left out of planning and enthusiasm waned. I fear that there will be even less participation. Mission events dwindled. Native American ministries basically stopped. I fear that small membership churches, especially out-state, will give up interest in our connectional system.
- We need pastors who are in the business to help us grow spiritually and to help us to do church much better. I want us to somehow get better at reaching out in our communities and make disciples and grow our churches. I haven't heard anything in all this that will help us do that.
- Distance. How will enable the local pastor.
- The transition team has done their work well but we need more information. By becoming one large conference and using the technology to meet via webcast, we lose the camaraderie and interaction of members of boards and committees. I feel that we lose our connectedness thru technology. The answers to my concerns have not been answered.
- Hope: Not denominationally driven - but rather – one God. Informed decisions cannot be made without a lot more information – pension/insurance/distances/itinerary – understanding ways of doing local ethos/mind sets, whether in Kansas and Nebraska. I do believe this will work and will happen eventually. But needs to be “fleshed out.”
- I understand Kansas could not agree to one conference. Maybe they should combine first and then consider joining with us. I cannot see how being one big area will cause us to have more members. If one conference is to be so beneficial, I would think we should be able to do it all now. There are too many unknowns, too many factors that need to be considered.
- I appreciate the work and understand we need to make changes to deal with economic, demographic, and cultural realities, but I am not satisfied that enough consideration of the impact(s) of the change has been considered yet. Particularly with technical difficulties in certain locations in Nebraska and the status of the 3 conferences today, so I am opposed to becoming one conference as the plan is currently presented.
- Consider engaging all clergy and laity in a study and discussion of a single book within all 3 conferences. There is no plan - only a proposal. We need a strategic plan that gets us to an

envisioned future. We need a vision that inspires us for mission and ministry. Please improve the communications process and teaching so that information and transparency are realized. Provide opportunities for the people of the three conferences to build/empower something of the sense of community the transition team has experienced.

- The selection process for leadership lacks training for the mentors, does not allow weeding out candidates, and exiting elders without threat of lawsuits. The church has been its greatest when its heart was moved. The local church is where the discipleship happens. Focus on the local church and it will support all things. Transition team needs to do less pie-in-the-sky talk. It sounds like a used car salesman. If you use that approach you had better have a really good car for me. Presently I have not heard enough to convince me that a model is getting ready for me to accept. Money for fixed costs have always undermined the program ministry. Please show me how pensions, insurance, buildings and salaries aren't going to over power the focus on ministry.
- I feel we have too much emphasis on “structure” and have drifted away from “thus saith the Lord.” We need to preach Christ first, then what we need will follow.
- There isn't any plan to vote on! Consider alternating other than tinkering with the machinery!
- My greatest hope for the church is to live out Matthew 25! Jesus said to (act) on behalf of the least of these—forget dogma—serve others and see the face of Christ in those most in need. I don't think “consideration” is the answer for strengthening the mission of our church. Western Nebraska United Methodists already feel a disconnect with eastern Nebraska and the Nebraska conference so this will only get magnified if 3 conferences go to one. We need many more details of how a merger would look before we vote. Who will be at the decision-making tables after a merger? How will the marginalized have a voice?
- My hope is there will be more information to the churches thru DVD to show in this process. I'm concerned about the distance some would have to go to AC if there is only one conference. Sounds like we would have mega-conference as we have mega churches and small churches get left out.
- Worried that distance will hamper participation process. Worried that pastors will be appointed farther away. Don't see how it helps make disciples/transform lives.
- Having spent some time in Kansas, I feel their theological conservative attitude will be a struggle for thinking Nebraskans. They had a great deal of trouble with women clergy. Life was miserable for them. It is already ____ to think the distance between parishes. Where would the conference center be? I suggest Chester, NE. We should not be concerned about Africa. Maybe it's their turn! God wants them to have a chance also!
- Mostly concerned about what will it do to the small churches? Financially and all.
- My hope is that the UM Church stays alive and vibrant in the future. Too many unanswered questions.
- There are too many variables that need to be decided before the big decision can be made.
- Not enough involvement from groups in our congregations, such as UMW, youth, older members; need more open information.
- Geographic area involved. Pension plans – clergy. Clergy not appointed for Kansas Area. Short of information. Health insurance issues for clergy.

- Problems of financial conditions -sharing resources? What happens to the recently purchased building? What will happen to the Archives and History Commission?
- What happens to UMW? Ministers health care and insurance.
- I am voting no because I feel we don't have enough information to vote wisely. I've been in a situation where our schools merged. Only information they wanted out was brought before the public. Now, in after thought, we were sorry we voted yes, because now that it has happened, there has been a lot of mistakes made and things that should have been available that the public would not have happened. Mu other reason for voting no is I'm afraid if we do vote yes to one conference and then find out the details just won't work, do we have the option of re-voting to change it back to three? Or once we vote one conference, are we stuck with it?
- My hope is that I will be asked to complete my years of ministry and retire with dignity. Will we get a brand new bishop with no baggage from either conference? My spouse is already taking the brunt of the itineracy process and feels un-affirmed by the moves required. As clergy I do have _____ of being moved so far from my children and grandchildren that I am unable to visit or see them grow.
- As a retiree I am concerned about the threat to our health insurance and pension. The travel distance in the one conference. The description of conference organizations: UMW, UMM, CYM. How will going to one conference energize churches to become more creative?

Nebraska Annual Conference

Five Finger Vote

I did not vote – intentionally. That is not a mistake. Bigger is not better. I think the document is making promises this cannot fix. For example, since they are all three similar, how is it going to make it more diverse?

We need really bold moves for that. This seems more expedient and business model, than feels right, especially for small churches.

Greatest hope not in this plan – focus more on prayer, openness, re-think church, and being inclusive – including all GLBT members and clergy.