

Monthly Update

December 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I am so glad that He is on the throne and in ultimate control of our beloved Methodist Church, nation, and world.

This edition of the Monthly Update outlines support for military families Received during this past Veteran's Day season, the "Wish Me a Merry Christmas" list of companies provided by the American Family Association (AFA), and a report on the "Manhattan Declaration".

We are very happy to report that the votes on the amendments to our denominational constitution are all but over – and it looks as if a great victory has been won! We are especially gratified for the support from the conferences in Africa. As I had said on the e-mails we have received from people in some of those conferences in three different African countries, "Their English was hard for me to understand, but it is much better than my Swahili!" We praise God!

Each December, we make our annual request for contributions. It is especially difficult for us to do this because we know that many of you are having financial challenges yourselves at this very point in time. But ask we must.

As we have often said in past letters, ours is a 100% volunteer ministry in that we have no paid employees; we believe that we make the most efficient use of your giving dollar than does any other organization. During this period of financial challenge, one additional cost-cutting measure we have adopted was to not send out the other editions of *The Christian Methodist Newsletter* that we normally do because we did not want to incur additional financial obligations – and our coverage has expanded considerably. This increased circulation is a two-edged blessing – while we do reach more people with our information, the expense is greater and we often experience a shortfall in our income versus costs. With our all-out effort to fight the assaults against our orthodox Wesleyan faith during the first half of the year, we had incurred increased debt that could not be paid at that time. Winning the victory superseded being financially current this past spring. At present we have financial shortfalls from last year's efforts at General Conference in Ft. Worth plus this year's fight against the destructive "separation amendments" that would have ruptured our church. We are still \$7318.56 behind.

We simply request that you pray and seek the Lord's leading as to how you might support the ministry of Concerned Methodists at this difficult time and to come alongside us prayerfully and financially. We appreciate so much your faithfully standing with us in the mission that we believe the Lord has called us to. May we ask for your continued help?

In the spirit of the Christmas season we would also ask that – if you have not already made it a part of your family tradition – you read Luke, chapter 2, verses 1-20 in your Bible. This speaks most eloquently as to what this holiday season is all about – the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

From your brothers and sisters here in Concerned Methodists, we wish the very best to you during this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

December 2009 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

One man with courage makes a majority. – Andrew Jackson

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The Good Stuff

+ **Veteran's Day: Military Families Receive[d] Thank You From International Sports League**

Upward Sports Offer[ed] Scholarship Opportunities for Military Children Through 2,600 Church Partners Across the U.S. *SPARTANBURG, S.C., Nov. 9, 2009—This Veteran's Day (Nov. 11), Upward Sports [gave] a big "Thank You" to military families across the U.S. by offering sports scholarships to children whose mother or father is currently providing military service in a foreign country. In a struggling economy that is forcing many parents to cut out the extras—leaving kids without exercise, social activity and adult mentoring—Upward Sports [gave] military families a much-deserved break.*

"This scholarship from Upward Sports is definitely a blessing for my family," said Sharon H., whose two sons Sam and Max play Upward Flag Football. "It's an encouragement to know that Upward Sports recognizes the sacrifices that military kids make. Since deployment can create real financial burdens, this scholarship will enable many military kids to play sports this year—even if money is tight."

In 2007, Upward Sports started the scholarship program for military children after Founder and President Gaz McCashin visited the Pentagon memorial honoring those who gave their lives by serving our country on Sept. 11. Since then, Upward Sports has sponsored more than 685 military children in the U.S. with a deployed parent. This year, they are working to get the word out about this offer so even more people can take advantage of it. "In an effort to serve those who serve us, Upward Sports is offering sports scholarships to all children who have a parent serving in the military and are currently deployed overseas," said Gaz McCashin. "Offering such scholarships is just a small way for us to say thank you to those who serve our country."

The world's largest Christian sports league for children, Upward Sports offers one of the most competitive and fun environments in kids' sports today, teaching athletic skills for the sports arena and values for life. Upward Sports leagues equip churches to connect with families in their communities by providing sports programs—including basketball, flag football, soccer and cheerleading—for children K-5- sixth grade. Today, more than 1 million people from 46 states and four countries play, coach, referee or volunteer in Upward Sports leagues.

[Editorial note: For two years I had the opportunity to be an assistant coach for 3rd and 4th grade boys in the sport of basketball. I am so glad that I had a capable head coach who was experienced in this and knew what he was doing. For me, knowing how to coach football? Yes! Knowing how to coach? Not hardly! - AOM]

http://www.demosnews.com/upwardsports/news/veterans_day_military_families_receive_than_k_you_from_international_sports/

+ **Wish Me a "Merry Christmas" list of companies**

One would think that this holiday season would be characterized by the frequent greeting of "Merry Christmas" yet we all too frequently bump against those people and stores who strive to be "politically correct" and utter the sterile "Happy Holidays" - to the great chagrin of an ever-growing number of Christians. We - all of us - need to feel free to call it what it is "Christmas" for the One who came into this world to give us a better understanding of Who God is and what He expects of us. Most importantly, He came here to pay the price for our sins that we could not pay for ourselves and to die a painful, shameful death on a cross. His coming into the world as a baby paved the way for Him to shed his blood as a sacrifice in full payment for our sins. How can we do anything other than to use His name during the holiday that bears the imprint of His crucial intervention into our human world. Thinking people can't do other than to wish those they see a "Merry Christmas" in anticipation of this blessed holiday season.

The "Wish Me a Merry Christmas" list of companies below was provided by the American Family Association (AFA) and shows those who either support using the greeting of "Merry Christmas"; those who marginalize this; and those who don't use it. We are saddened by those who either marginalize don't use this all too appropriate greeting - but will not spend our dollars there during this season.

Companies FOR "Christmas (updated 11-18-09): Amazon.com, Bass Pro Shops, Bath & Body Works, Bed Bath & Beyond, Belk, Big Lots, Books-A-Million, Cabella's, Collective Brands, Costco, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, Dollar

General, H.E.B. Stores, Hallmark, Harris Teeter Stores, Hobby Lobby, Home Depot, JCPenney, Kmart, Lowe's, Macy's, Meijer, Menard's, Michael's Stores, Neiman Marcus, Petsmart, Pier One Imports, Publix, QFC, Rite Aid, Sears, Super D Drug Stores, Target, Toys R Us, Walgreens, Wal-Mart/Sam's Club.

AAAs spoken with a Publix representative and are happy to now list them as a Christmas-friendly company.

Companies marginalizing "Christmas" (updated 11-10-09): Best Buy, Hy-Vee Stores, Kohl's, Safeway

Companies against "Christmas" (updated 11-18-09): Advance Auto Parts, Aldi, Banana Republic, Barnes & Noble, CVS Pharmacy, Dick's Sporting Goods, Gap Stores, Home Shopping Network, Kroger, Limited Brands, Nordstrom, Office Depot, Old Navy, Radio Shack, Staples, SUPERVALU, Victoria's Secret.

Note: AAAs does not list local or regional companies. Only nationally-recognized companies are listed.

Following are some of the comments posted to their blog in response to the list:

11/13/2009 8:35:31 *AM-* "Thanks for keeping us advised of specific companies who refuse to respect our traditions and values. William O'Brien Falls Church, VA"

11/13/2009 8:32:32 *AM-* "Excellent, the stores "honoring" Christmas will get my holiday dollar."

11/13/2009 8:22:49 *AM-* "it is sad that a company i work for does NOT recognize Christmas. they recently had Christmas music playing on a muzac station. it was removed a few days later. I personally will be greeting EAAC customer with a very Merry Christmas!"

11/13/2009 8:10:43 *AM-* "I have another one for the Companies For Christmas [list]....It is Cabelas. I recently received several sales magazine[s] for Christmas advertizing and 'Christmas' is right in the name on the front of each. I was very pleased with that!"

Of Interest

+ [Editorial Note: Despite the fact that the following is a bit voluminous, this summary of the Manhattan Declaration provided by the Family Research Council is in normal print – because being presented we deem this issue to be of extreme importance. – AOM]

"Today at noon, I had the opportunity to join an impressive group of scholars, clergy, and ministry leaders at the National Press Club to release a historic document on the Christian conscience. Led by Chuck Colson, the Manhattan Declaration is a public commitment to promote a culture of life, the sanctity of marriage, and religious liberty--no matter what rogue judges or politicians might say or do. More than 150 leaders have signed the document as a bold signal that the church will not retreat from the public square." – Tony Perkins, The Family Research Council: 801 G Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. The Declaration follows:

MANHATTAN DECLARATION

A Summary

Christians, when they have lived up to the highest ideals of their faith, have defended the weak and vulnerable and worked tirelessly to protect and strengthen vital institutions of civil society, beginning with the family.

We are Orthodox, Catholic, and evangelical Christians who have united at this hour to reaffirm fundamental truths about justice and the common good, and to call upon our fellow citizens, believers and non-believers alike, to join us in defending them. These truths are (1) the sanctity of human life, (2) the dignity of marriage as the conjugal union of husband and wife, and (3) the rights of conscience and religious liberty. Inasmuch as these truths are foundational to human dignity and the well-being of society, they are inviolable and non-negotiable. Because they are increasingly under assault from powerful forces in our culture, we are compelled today to speak out forcefully in their defense, and to commit ourselves to honoring them fully no matter what pressures are brought upon us and our institutions to abandon or compromise them. We make this commitment not as partisans of any political group but as followers of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Human Life

The lives of the unborn, the disabled, and the elderly are ever more threatened. While public opinion has moved in a pro-life direction, powerful and determined forces are working to expand abortion, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. Although the protection of the weak and vulnerable is the first obligation of government, the power of

government is today often enlisted in the cause of promoting what Pope John Paul II called "the culture of death." We pledge to work unceasingly for the equal protection of every innocent human being at every stage of development and in every condition. We will refuse to permit ourselves or our institutions to be implicated in the taking of human life and we will support in every possible way those who, in conscience, take the same stand.

Marriage

The institution of marriage, already wounded by promiscuity, infidelity and divorce, is at risk of being redefined and thus subverted. Marriage is the original and most important institution for sustaining the health, education, and welfare of all. Where marriage erodes, social pathologies rise. The impulse to redefine marriage is a symptom, rather than the cause, of the erosion of the marriage culture. It reflects a loss of understanding of the meaning of marriage as embodied in our civil law as well as our religious traditions. Yet it is critical that the impulse be resisted, for yielding to it would mean abandoning the possibility of restoring a sound understanding of marriage and, with it, the hope of rebuilding a healthy marriage culture. It would lock into place the false and destructive belief that marriage is all about romance and other adult satisfactions, and not, in any intrinsic way, about the unique character and value of acts and relationships whose meaning is shaped by their aptness for the generation, promotion and protection of life. Marriage is not a "social construction," but is rather an objective reality "the covenantal union of husband and wife" that it is the duty of the law to recognize, honor, and protect.

Religious Liberty

Freedom of religion and the rights of conscience are gravely jeopardized. The threat to these fundamental principles of justice is evident in efforts to weaken or eliminate conscience protections for healthcare institutions and professionals, and in anti-discrimination statutes that are used as weapons to force religious institutions, charities, businesses, and service providers either to accept (and even facilitate) activities and relationships they judge to be immoral, or go out of business. Attacks on religious liberty are dire threats not only to individuals, but also to the institutions of civil society including families, charities, and religious communities. The health and well-being of such institutions provide an indispensable buffer against the overweening power of government and is essential to the flourishing of every other institution including government itself on which society depends.

Unjust Laws

As Christians, we believe in law and we respect the authority of earthly rulers. We count it as a special privilege to live in a democratic society where the moral claims of the law on us are even stronger in virtue of the rights of all citizens to participate in the political process. Yet even in a democratic regime, laws can be unjust. And from the beginning, our faith has taught that civil disobedience is required in the face of gravely unjust laws or laws that purport to require us to do what is unjust or otherwise immoral. Such laws lack the power to bind in conscience because they can claim no authority beyond that of sheer human will.

Therefore, let it be known that we will not comply with any edict that compels us or the institutions we lead to participate in or facilitate abortions, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide, euthanasia, or any other act that violates the principle of the profound, inherent, and equal dignity of every member of the human family.

Further, let it be known that we will not bend to any rule forcing us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality, marriage, and the family.

Further, let it be known that we will not be intimidated into silence or acquiescence or the violation of our consciences by any power on earth, be it cultural or political, regardless of the consequences to ourselves.

We will fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar's. But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God's.

Source: www.frc.org/manhattan-declaration.

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We emphasize again that this is not the full text but a summary. If you wish to read the Manhattan Declaration in its entirety, go to the following website: <http://manhattandecclaration.org/decdocs/ManhattanDeclaration.pdf>

We urge you to read, consider, and sign this important document. Please pass it on to family members and friends, too.

Just some of the signers of the Manhattan Declaration are:

Dr. Daniel Akin, President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Wake Forest, N.C.); Most Rev. Peter J. Akinola, Primate, Anglican Church of Nigeria (Abuja, Nigeria); Randy Allcorn, Founder and Director, Eternal Perspective Ministries (EPM) (Sandy, Ore.); Rt. Rev. David Anderson, President and CEO, American Anglican Council (Atlanta); Leith Anderson, President of National Association of Evangelicals (Washington, D.C.); Charlette K. Ardizzone, TV Show Host and Speaker, FNSP Television (Charlotte, N.C.); Kay Arthur, CEO and Co-founder, Precept Ministries International (Chattanooga, Tenn.); Dr. Mark L. Bailey, President, Dallas Theological Seminary (Dallas); Most Rev. Craig W. Bates, Archbishop, International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (Malverne, N.Y.); Gary Bauer, President, American Values; Chairman, Campaign for Working Families; His Grace, The Right Reverend Bishop Basil Essey, The Right Reverend Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America (Wichita, Kan.); Joel Belz, Founder, World Magazine (Asheville, N.C.); Rev. Michael L. Beresford, Managing Director of Church Relations, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (Charlotte, N.C.); Ken Boa, President, Reflections Ministries (Atlanta); Joseph Bottum, Editor of First Things (New York); Pastor Randy & Sarah Brannon, Senior Pastor, Grace Community Church (Madera, Calif.); Steve Brown, National Radio Broadcaster, Key Life (Maitland, Fla.); Dr. Robert C. Cannada, Jr., Chancellor and CEO, Reformed Theological Seminary (Orlando, Fla.); Galen Carey, Director of Government Affairs, National Association of Evangelicals (Washington, D.C.); Dr. Bryan Chapell, President, Covenant Theological Seminary (St. Louis); Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver; Timothy Chinton, President, American Association of Christian Counselors (Forest, Va.); Chuck Colson, Founder, The Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview (Lansdowne, Va.); Most Rev. Salvatore Joseph Cordileone, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland, Calif.; Dr. Gary Cuspepper, Associate Professor, Providence College (Providence, R.I.); Jim Daly, President and CEO, Focus on the Family (Colorado Springs, Colo.); Marjorie Dannenfelser, President, Susan B. Anthony List (Arlington, Va.); Rev. Daniel Delgado, Board of Directors, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; Pastor, Third Day Missions Church (Staten Island, N.Y.); Patrick J. Deneen, Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis Associate Professor and Director, The Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy, Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.); Dr. James Dobson, Founder, Focus on the Family (Colorado Springs, Colo.); Dr. David Dockery, President, Union University (Jackson, Tenn.); Most Rev. Timothy Dolan, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of New York, N.Y.; Dr. William Donohue, President, Catholic League (New York); Dr. James T. Draper, Jr., President Emeritus, LifeWay (Nashville, Tenn.); Dinesh D'Souza, Writer and Speaker (Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.); Most Rev. Robert Wm. Duncan, Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church in North America (Ambridge, Pa.); Dr. Michael Easley, President Emeritus, Moody Bible Institute (Chicago); Dr. William Edgar, Professor, Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia); Brett Elder, Executive Director, Stewardship Council (Grand Rapids, Mich.); Rev. Joel Elowsky, Drew University (Madison, N.J.); Stuart Epperson, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board, Salem Communications Corporation (Camarillo, Calif.); Rev. Jonathan Falwell, Senior Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church (Lynchburg, Va.); William J. Federer, President, Amerisearch, Inc. (St. Louis); Fr. Joseph D. Fessio, Founder and Editor, Ignatius Press (Ft. Collins, Colo.); Carmen Fowler, President and Executive Editor, Presbyterian Lay Committee (Lenoir, N.C.); Maggie Gallagher, President, National Organization for Marriage (Manassas, Va.); Dr. Jim Garlow, Senior Pastor, Skyline Church (La Mesa, Calif.); Steven Garofalo, Senior Consultant, Search and Assessment Services (Charlotte, N.C.); Dr. Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University (Princeton, N.J.); Dr. Timothy George, Dean and Professor of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School at Samford University (Birmingham, Ala.); Thomas Gilson, Director of Strategic Processes, Campus Crusade for Christ International (Norfolk, Va.); Dr. Jack Graham, Pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church (Piano, Texas); Dr. Wayne Grudem, Research Professor of Theological and Biblical Studies, Phoenix Seminary (Phoenix); Dr. Cornell "Corkie" Haan, National Facilitator of Spiritual Unity, The Mission America Coalition (Palm Desert, Calif.); Fr. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor, CEO and Archpriest, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (Yonkers, N.Y.); Dr. Dennis Hollinger, President and Professor of Christian Ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (South Hamilton, Mass.); Dr. Jeanette Hsieh, Executive Vice President and Provost, Trinity International University (Deerfield, Ill.); Dr. John A. Huffman, Senior Pastor, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (Newport Beach, Calif.); Chairman of the Board, Christianity Today International (Carol Stream, Ill.); Rev. Ken Hutcherson, Pastor, Antioch Bible Church (Kirkland, Wash.); Bishop Harry R. Jackson, Jr., Senior Pastor, Hope Christian Church (Beltsville, Md.); Fr. Johannes I. Jacobse, President, American Orthodox Institute; Editor, OrthodoxyToday.org (Naples, Fla.); Jerry Jenkins, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Moody Bible Institute (Black Forest, Colo.); Camille Kampouris, Editorial Board, Kairos Journal; Emmanuel A. Kampouris, Publisher, Kairos Journal; Rev. Tim Keller, Senior Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church (New York); Dr. Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy, Boston College (Mass.) and at the Kings College (N.Y.); Most Rev. Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky.; Jim

Kushiner, Editor, Touchstone (Chicago); Dr. Richard Land, President, The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC (Washington, D.C.); Jim Law, Senior Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church (Woodstock, Ga.); Dr. Matthew Levering, Associate Professor of Theology, Ave Maria University (Naples, Fla.); Dr. Peter Lillback, President, The Providence Forum (West Conshohocken, Pa.); Dr. Duane Litfin, President, Wheaton College (Wheaton, Ill.); Rev. Herb Lusk, Pastor, Greater Exodus Baptist Church (Philadelphia); His Eminence Adam Cardinal Maida, Archbishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Detroit; Most Rev. Richard J. Malone Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, Maine; Rev. Francis Martin, Professor of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Detroit); Dr. Joseph Mattera, Bishop and Senior Pastor, Resurrection Church (Brooklyn, N.Y.); Phil Maxwell, Pastor, Gateway Church (Bridgewater, N.J.); Josh McDowell, Founder, Josh McDowell Ministries (Plano, Texas); Alex McFarland, President, Southern Evangelical Seminary (Charlotte, N.C.); Most Rev. George Dallas McKinney, Bishop, Founder and Pastor, St. Stephen's Church of God in Christ (San Diego); Rt. Rev. Martyn Minns, Missionary Bishop, Convocation of Anglicans of North America (Herndon, Va.); Dr. C. Ben Mitchell, Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy, Union University (Jackson, Tenn.); Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, Ky.); Dr. Russell D. Moore, Senior Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of the School of Theology, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, Ky.); Most Rev. John J. Myers, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.; Most Rev. Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Kansas City, Kan.; David Neff, Editor-in-Chief, Christianity Today (Carol Stream, Ill.); Tom Nelson, Senior Pastor, Christ Community Evangelical Free Church (Leawood, Kan.); Niel Nielson, President, Covenant College (Lookout Mt., Ga.); Most Rev. John Nienstedt, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis; Dr. Tom Oden, Theologian, United Methodist Minister; Professor, Drew University [of the United Methodist Church] (Madison, N.J.); Marvin Olasky, Editor-in-Chief, World Magazine; Provost, The Kings College (New York); Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix; Rev. William Owens, Chairman, Coalition of African-American Pastors (Memphis, Tenn.); Dr. J.J. Packer, Board of Governors' Professor of Theology, Regent College (Canada); Metr. Jonah Paffhausen, Primate, Orthodox Church in America (Syosset, N.Y.); Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council (Washington, D.C.); Eric M. Pillmore, CEO, Pillmore Consulting LLC (Doylestown, Pa.); Dr. Everett Piper, President, Oklahoma Wesleyan University (Bartlesville, Okla.); Todd Pitner, President, Rev Increase; Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, President, Calvin Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids, Mich.); Dr. David Platt, Pastor, Church at Brook Hills (Birmingham, Ala.); Rev. Jim Pockock, Pastor, Trinitarian Congregational Church (Wayland, Mass.); Fred Potter, Executive Director and CEO, Christian Legal Society (Springfield, Va.); Dennis Rainey, President, CEO, and Co-Founder, FamilyLife (Little Rock, Ark.); Fr. Patrick Reardon, Pastor, All Saints' Antiochian Orthodox Church (Chicago); Bob Record, Founder, Total Life Impact, Inc. (Suwanee, Ga.); His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia; Frank Schubert, President, Schubert Flint Public Affairs (Sacramento, Calif.); David Schuringa, President, Crossroads Bible Institute (Grand Rapids, Mich.); Tricia Scribner, Author (Harrisburg, N.C.); Dr. Dave Seaford, Senior Pastor, Community Fellowship Church (Matthews, N.C.); Alan Sears, President, CEO, and General Counsel, Alliance Defense Fund (Scottsdale, Ariz.); Randy Setzer, Senior Pastor, Macedonia Baptist Church (Lincolnton, N.C.); Most Rev. Michael J. Sheridan, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs, Colo.; Dr. Ken Sider, Director, Evangelicals for Social Action (Wynnewood, Pa.); Fr. Robert Sirico, Founder, Acton Institute (Grand Rapids, Mich.); Dr. Robert Sloan, President, Houston Baptist University (Houston), Charles Stetson, Chairman of the Board, Bible Literacy Project (New York); Dr. David Stevens, CEO, Christian Medical and Dental Association (Bristol, Tenn.); John Stonestreet, Executive Director, Summit Ministries (Manitou Springs, Colo.); Dr. Joseph Stowell, President, Cornerstone University (Grand Rapids, Mich.); Dr. Sarah Sumner, Professor of Theology and Ministry, Azusa Pacific University (Azusa, Calif.); Dr. Glenn Sunshine, Chairman of the History Department, Central Connecticut State University (New Britain, Conn.); Joni Eareckson Tada, Founder and CEO, Joni and Friends International Disability Center (Agoura Hills, Calif.); Luiz Tellez, President, The Witherspoon Institute (Princeton, N.J.); Dr. Timothy C. Tennent, President, Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Ky.); Michael Timmis, Chairman, Prison Fellowship and Prison Fellowship International (Naples, Fla.); Mark Tooley, President, Institute for Religion and Democracy (Washington, D.C.); H. James Towey, President, St. Vincent College (Latrobe, Pa.); Juan Valdes, Middle and High School Chaplain, Florida Christian School (Miami, Fla.); Todd Wagner, Pastor, WaterMark Community Church (Dallas); Dr. Graham Walker, President, Patrick Henry College (Purcellville, Va.); Fr. Alexander F. C. Webster, Ph.D., Archpriest, Orthodox Church in America; Professorial Lecturer, The George Washington University (Ashburn, Va.); George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center (Washington, D.C.); David Welch, Houston Area Pastor Council Executive Director, US Pastors Council (Houston); Dr. James Emery White, Founding and Senior Pastor, Mecklenburg Community Church (Charlotte, N.C.); Dr. Hayes Wicker, Senior Pastor, First

Baptist Church (Naples, Fla.); Mark Williamson, Founder and President, Foundation Restoration Ministries/Federal Intercessors (Katy, Texas); Parker T. Williamson, Editor Emeritus and Senior Correspondent, Presbyterian Lay Committee; Dr. Craig Williford, President, Trinity International University (Deerfield, Ill.); Dr. John Woodbridge, Research Professor of Church History and the History of Christian Thought, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Ill.); Don M. Woodside, Performance Matters Associates (Matthews, N.C.); Dr. Frank Wright, President, National Religious Broadcasters (Manassas, Va.); Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.; Paul Young, COO and Executive Vice President, Christian Research Institute (Charlotte, N.C.); Dr. Michael Youssef, President, Leading the Way (Atlanta); Ravi Zacharias, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (Norcross, Ga.); Most Rev. David A. Zubik, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh; James R. Theobald, Ph.D., M.P.H., Professor, Bioethics and Social Ethics, Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, Ky.); and Allen O. Morris, M.B.A. President and Executive Director of Concerned Methodists (Fayetteville, North Carolina).

As of this date there are 85,541 signatures in support of the Manhattan Declaration – and the list is growing...

http://demossnews.com/manhattandeclaration/press_kit/manhattan_declaration_signers

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Following are some of the websites if you wish to get more information about the Manhattan Declaration.

The Text for the Manhattan Declaration

<http://manhattandeclaration.org/decdocs/ManhattanDeclaration.pdf>

The Manhattan Declaration and the List of Original Signers

http://demossnews.com/manhattandeclaration/press_kit/manhattan_declaration_signers

Link to the Facebook Page for the Manhattan Declaration

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Manhattan-Declaration-A-Call-of-Christian-Conscience/203211937268?ref=mf#/pages/Manhattan-Declaration-A-Call-of-Christian-Conscience/203211937268?v=wall&ref=mf>

Join the discussion on Twitter – Twitter hashtag #mdec

<http://twitter.com:80/search?q=%23mdec>

+ **Find new ways to say, 'Y'all come back now!'**

ROCK, Ark. – Would a homemade pecan pie be enough of an incentive to check out a new church on Sunday morning? Across Arkansas, United Methodist churches have embraced a variety of creative ways to make newcomers feel welcome and invite them into a deeper relationship with Christ. Some congregations "mug" their visitors, giving away coffee cups with the church's name on it. Others offer free DVDs that showcase the church's ministries. And many others do what hostesses have done for centuries: Make sure no guest goes away hungry. [Why not offer them the clear message of sin, forgiveness, and redemption through Jesus Christ? – AOM] – UMNS, September 18, 2009

+ **Hispanic caucus requests immigration reform** *Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans, or MARCHA* resolved Aug. 23rd to urge President Barack Obama and Congress to "expedite" immigration reform and asked that the Council of Bishops invite all UMC congregations to provide assistance to minors separated from their parents due to immigration raids. The group further called upon the UMC Board of Church and Society to promote hearings [of] testimonies of children separated from their parents due to immigration raids. – UMNS August 27, 2009

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Firearms Refresher Course

1. "Those who hammer their guns into plows will plow for those who do not." ~Thomas Jefferson
2. "Those who trade liberty for security have neither." ~John Adams
3. Free men do not ask permission to bear arms.
4. An armed man is a citizen. An unarmed man is a subject.
5. Only a government that is afraid of its citizens tries to control them.
6. Gun control is not about guns; it's about control.
7. You only have the rights you are willing to fight for.
8. Know guns, know peace, know safety. No guns, no peace, no safety.
9. You don't shoot to kill; you shoot to stay alive.

10. *Assault is a behavior, not a device.*
11. *64,999,987 firearms owners killed no one yesterday.*
12. *The United States Constitution (c) 1791. All Rights Reserved.*
13. *The Second Amendment is in place in case politicians ignore the others.*
14. *What part of "shall not be infringed" do you NOT understand?*
15. *Guns have only two enemies; rust and politicians.*
16. *When you remove the right to bear arms, you create slaves.*
17. *The American Revolution would never have happened with gun control.*

— E-mail received from Weeks Parker; Sept. 11, 2009.