

# Monthly Update

November 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This edition of our “Monthly Update” continues with information on the issues affecting our United Methodist Church and challenges we face at home and abroad – as a nation, denomination, and individuals. These are truly interesting times. We have also included data on public political activism from our denominational employees. They seem to be wedded to a far-left political agenda supporting government-sponsored health care, “immigration issues” (in actuality support for illegal immigration), and global warming. Regarding this last issue, from the reading I have done and as a physicist by education, I believe that human-caused global warming is not an established reality and results from “junk science” – used by those who want to receive government dollars for their cause.

A few weeks ago, I jokingly said to one of our associates in Mississippi that some of those women from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) are almost “pretty enough to make you want to become Mormon.” I also shared with him the fact that the young men whom the LDS church sends out as missionaries two-by-two on their bicycles are usually good-looking, clean cut and well-spoken. I think this results from being raised in a healthy family-oriented culture. That got me to thinking about my studies in the Bible when the Moabites had hired Balaam to curse the Israelites who had come into Moab and caused fear among the land’s inhabitants. Balaam had received instructions from God not to do so – and he didn’t. However, still wanting some of the riches they had offered him, Balaam gave them the idea of corrupting the Israelites by enticing their young men with beautiful Moabite women. This continued until, as you remember from your Bible, Phinehas took action to put a stop to it (Numbers 25:7, 11).

We need to be on our guard today to follow the true faith as we know it from the Bible and not be deceived by any of the false teachings that surround us, whether coming from a group that is not Christian, the public, or the entertainment areas, and regardless of how appealing they may appear. We need to “guard our hearts” during these uncertain times.

This November as we celebrated Thanksgiving, let us remember the original reasons for the holiday – to give thanks to the God who has formed us and provides for our every need. Indeed, today might be a good time to sit down and count our blessings and think of all the things that we still have for which to be grateful despite the uncertain times.

For sure, all of us here at Concerned Methodists give thanks for you and your faithfully standing with us. We pray that our loving God will give you special reason to be thankful during this season.

Finally, we do ask that you would continue to remember us in your prayers.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,  
Executive Director

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## November 2009 Update

### Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

*Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly.  
Leave the rest to God.*

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#### **The Good Stuff**

##### **+ *A Heartwarming Story About One Person Who Is Making A Difference***

Occasionally you come across a news item that makes you feel good. Nearly every morning for the past year, Bert Brady has gone to the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) to welcome home troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Brady, a 69-year-old veteran, is a member of the Welcome Home a Hero program at the DFW airport. He and others are there to make sure every soldier who comes through Dallas gets a special homecoming. Brady goes to make sure the soldiers feel appreciated for serving their country. He doesn't want them to be forgotten. "We are not going to forget them like a lot of Vietnam soldiers have been forgotten," Brady said. "We are not going to forget the soldiers of today."

#### **Church Activism over Health Care**

Note: In the following articles, note the increased news coverage and articles by the United Methodist News Service (UMNS) as attempts to persuade the membership of the United Methodist Church to support health care reform by political activism – despite the fact that we have the best health care in the world. It is true that there is room for improvement in the system, but is government-controlled socialized medicine the solution? If you read the increased news coverage, it would appear that our church officials believe it is. However, there are many rank-and-file UMs who believe individuals can make the best decisions for themselves – and think that this would open the door to abortion, euthanasia, and health care rationing. It seems that if we as a denomination would concentrate on the spiritual health of our members and people around the country, the other issues – such as health care – would be resolved. – AOM

##### **+ *Taking chance of a lifetime for health care***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — As U.S. political leaders tackle the issue of health care reform, UMNS has invited several church members, from a former surgeon general to doctors and nurses on the front lines, to offer their reflections. Each of them reminds us to look beyond ourselves to recognize the suffering of others under the current health care system. Their voices alone are not enough, however. The nation and the church also need to hear from you.

– *United Methodist News Service (UMNS), June 17, 2009*

##### **+ *U.S. must move from 'sick care' to 'health care'***

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – The United States has the best of everything when it comes to health care, yet it remains the only industrialized country that does not provide health care for all. Dr. Joycelyn Elders, a former U.S. surgeon general, argues that the nation with 25 percent of the world's wealth can do much more to provide cost-effective and equitable health care for its people.

– *UMNS, June 17, 2009*

##### **+ *Pray, work for universal health care***

CHICAGO, Ill. – Irma Clark, a registered nurse from Chicago, points out that millions of people are suffering while others debate how to make health care more available in the United States. The U.S. health care system must be affordable for those who need it most, she says. For example, "seniors are at a disadvantage when it comes to out-of-pocket costs. There is a lot of pressure when you have to decide whether you should buy a loaf of bread or fill your prescription for blood pressure medicine, and you need both."

– *UMNS, June 17, 2009*

##### **+ *Family physicians vital to health care reform***

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – Dr. Scott Morris, director of a faith-based clinic in Memphis, Tenn., has a clear picture of where health care in American has gone wrong. He says it is time to stop spending money on enhancing technology, to make patients an active partner in their own health care and to focus on prevention. "The difficult question is not whether there is enough money to pay for health care. Rather, is there enough political will to change the focus from one of fee-for-service to a community-central system that celebrates life?"

– *UMNS, June 17, 2009*

##### **+ *Time is now for health care reform***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Dr. Wayne J. Riley, president of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., says America's health care system is living through the best of times and the worst of times. Though significant progress has been made in medical research, about 46 million Americans lack health insurance. "We must share this resource called 'health care' with those who are the 'least of these' among us," he declares. – *UMNS, June 17, 2009*

**+ *Church welcomes free health clinic***

GLENDALE, Calif. – One Los Angeles-area church is not waiting for Congress to decide how to address the health care crisis. On Tuesday evenings, volunteers transform old classrooms at First United Methodist Church in Glendale, Calif., into a free clinic. Sylvia Lofftus, a former parish nurse, arrives early to coordinate the clinic's volunteers. "I've been to the Philippines on medical missions, but this is so much more rewarding because this is week after week, day after day, working with these patients," she says. – *UMNS, June 17, 2009*

**Of Interest**

**+ *Study guide explores faith and politics***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – In a new study guide, "Seeing Gray: Where Faith & Politics Meet," the Rev. Adam Hamilton takes a look at that gray area between the two sides even on lightning-rod issues such as health care, stem cell research and immigration. It is a companion to his book "Gray in a World of Black and White." Hamilton is pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan. – *UMNS, September 17, 2009*

**+ *Committee looking at denomination's future***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – A committee charged with looking at the future of the denomination is conducting research and gathering data to be presented to the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table in November. "We're looking at a number of critical areas, from the frequency and format of General Conference, to the size and number of boards and agencies, to creation of a global office, to development of leadership systems and addressing effectiveness of clergy," said Bishop Larry Goodpaster, project director. The Call to Action committee was formed in response to the call issued by the Council of Bishops in May. – *UMNS, October 8, 2009*

**+ *Islam. "In a generation or two, the US will ask itself: who lost Europe?"***

Following is a speech by Geert Wilders, chairman Party for Freedom, the Netherlands, at the Four Seasons, New York, on 28 Sep 08, announcing the Facing Jihad Conference in Jerusalem, sponsored by the Hudson Institute.

"Dear friends, thank you very much for inviting me...I come to America with a mission. All is not well in the old world. There is a tremendous danger looming, and it is very difficult to be optimistic. We might be in the final stages of the Islamization of Europe. This not only is a clear and present danger to the future of Europe itself, it is a threat to America and the sheer survival of the West. The danger I see looming is the scenario of America as the last man standing. The United States as the last bastion of Western civilization, facing an Islamic Europe. In a generation or two, the US will ask itself: who lost Europe? Patriots from around Europe risk their lives every day to prevent precisely this scenario from becoming a reality. My short lecture consists of 4 parts. First I will describe the situation on the ground in Europe. Then, I will say a few things about Islam. Thirdly, if you are still here, I will talk a little bit about the movie you just saw. To close I will tell you about a meeting in Jerusalem .

The Europe you know is changing. You have probably seen the landmarks. The Eiffel Tower and Trafalgar Square and Rome's ancient buildings and maybe the canals of Amsterdam. They are still there. And they still look very much the same as they did a hundred years ago.

But in all of these cities, sometimes a few blocks away from your tourist destination, there is another world, a world very few visitors see and one that does not appear in your tourist guidebook. It is the world of the parallel society created by Muslim mass-migration. All throughout Europe a new reality is rising: entire Muslim neighborhoods where very few indigenous people reside or are even seen. And if they are, they might regret it. This goes for the police as well. It's the world of head scarves, where women walk around in figureless tents, with baby strollers and a group of children. Their husbands, or slave holders if you prefer, walk three steps ahead. With mosques on many street corners. The shops have signs you and I cannot read. You will be hard-pressed to find any economic activity. These are Muslim ghettos controlled by religious fanatics. These are Muslim neighborhoods, and they are mushrooming in every city across Europe. These are the building-blocks for territorial control of increasingly larger portions of Europe, street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city.

There are now thousands of mosques throughout Europe. With larger congregations than there are in churches. And in every European city there are plans to build super-mosques that will dwarf every church in the region. Clearly, the signal is: "we rule."

Many European cities are already one-quarter Muslim: just take Amsterdam, Marseille and Malmo in Sweden. In many cities the majority of the under-18 population is Muslim. Paris is now surrounded by a ring of Muslim neighborhoods. Mohammed is the most popular name among boys in many cities. In some elementary schools in Amsterdam the farm can no longer be mentioned, because that would also mean mentioning the pig, and that would be an insult to Muslims. Many state schools in Belgium and Denmark only serve halal food to all pupils. In once-tolerant Amsterdam gays are beaten up almost exclusively by Muslims. Non-Muslim women routinely hear "whore, whore".

Satellite dishes are not pointed to local TV stations, but to stations in the country of origin. In France school teachers are advised to avoid authors deemed offensive to Muslims, including Voltaire and Diderot; the same is increasingly true of Darwin. The history of the Holocaust can in many cases no longer be taught because of Muslim sensitivity. In England sharia courts are now officially part of the British legal system. Many neighborhoods in France are no-go areas for women without head scarves. Last week a man almost died after being beaten up by Muslims in Brussels, because he was drinking during the Ramadan. Jews are fleeing France in record numbers, on the run for the worst wave of anti-Semitism since World War II. French is now commonly spoken on the streets of Tel Aviv and Netanya, Israel. I could go on forever with stories like this.

A total of fifty-four million Muslims now live in Europe. San Diego University recently calculated that a staggering 25 percent of the population in Europe will be Muslim just 12 years from now. Bernhard Lewis has predicted a Muslim majority by the end of this century. Now these are just numbers. And the numbers would not be threatening if the Muslim-immigrants had a strong desire to assimilate. But there are few signs of that.

The Pew Research Center reported that half of French Muslims see their loyalty to Islam as greater than their loyalty to France. One-third of French Muslims do not object to suicide attacks. The British Centre for Social Cohesion reported that one-third of British Muslim students are in favor of a worldwide caliphate. A Dutch study reported that half of Dutch Muslims admit they "understand" the 9/11 attacks. Muslims demand what they call 'respect'. And this is how we give them respect.

Our elites are willing to give in. To give up. In my own country we have gone from calls by one cabinet member to turn Muslim holidays into official state holidays, to statements by another cabinet member, that Islam is part of Dutch culture, to an affirmation by the Christian-Democratic attorney general that he is willing to accept sharia in the Netherlands if there is a Muslim majority. We have cabinet members with passports from Morocco and Turkey. Muslim demands are supported by unlawful behavior, ranging from petty crimes and random violence, for example against ambulance workers and bus drivers, to small-scale riots. Paris has seen its uprising in the low-income suburbs, the banlieus. Some prefer to see these as isolated incidents, but I call it a Muslim intifada. I call the perpetrators "settlers". Because that is what they are. They do not come to integrate into our societies, they come to integrate our society into their Dar-al-Islam.. Therefore, they are settlers.

Much of this street violence I mentioned is directed exclusively against non-Muslims, forcing many native people to leave their neighborhoods, their cities, their countries. Politicians shy away from taking a stand against this creeping sharia. They believe in the equality of all cultures. Moreover, on a mundane level, Muslims are now a swing vote not to be ignored.

Our many problems with Islam cannot be explained by poverty, repression or the European colonial past, as the Left claims. Nor does it have anything to do with Palestinians or American troops in Iraq. The problem is Islam itself. Allow me to give you a brief Islam 101. The first thing you need to know about Islam is the importance of the book of the Quran. The Quran is Allah's personal word, revealed by an angel to Mohammed, the prophet. This is where the trouble starts. Every word in the Quran is Allah's word and therefore not open to discussion or interpretation. It is valid for every Muslim and for all times. Therefore, there is no such a thing as moderate Islam. Sure, there are a lot of moderate Muslims. But a moderate Islam is non-existent.

The Quran calls for hatred, violence, submission, murder, and terrorism. The Quran calls for Muslims to kill non-Muslims, to terrorize non-Muslims and to fulfill their duty to wage war: violent jihad. Jihad is a duty for every Muslim, Islam is to rule the world by the sword. The Quran is clearly anti-Semitic, describing Jews as monkeys and pigs.

The second thing you need to know is the importance of Mohammed the prophet. His behavior is an example to all Muslims and cannot be criticized. Now, if Mohammed had been a man of peace, let us say like Ghandi and Mother Theresa wrapped in one, there would be no problem. But Mohammed was a warlord, a mass murderer, a pedophile, and had several marriages at the same time. Islamic tradition tells us how he fought in battles, how he had his enemies murdered and even had prisoners of war executed. Mohammed himself slaughtered the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza.

He advised on matters of slavery, but never advised to liberate slaves. Islam has no other morality than the advancement of Islam. If it is good for Islam, it is good. If it is bad for Islam, it is bad. There is no gray area or other side.

Quran as Allah's own word and Mohammed as the perfect man are the two most important facets of Islam. Let no one fool you about Islam being a religion. Sure, it has a god, and a here-after, and 72 virgins. But in its essence Islam is a political ideology. It is a system that lays down detailed rules for society and the life of every person. Islam wants to dictate every aspect of life. Islam means 'submission'. Islam is not compatible with freedom and democracy, because what it strives for is sharia. If you want to compare Islam to anything, compare it to communism or national-socialism, these are all totalitarian ideologies.

This is what you need to know about Islam, in order to understand what is going on in Europe. For millions of Muslims the Quran and the life of Mohammed are not 14 centuries old, but are an everyday reality, an ideal, that guide every aspect of their lives. Now you know why Winston Churchill called Islam "the most retrograde force in the world", and why he compared Mein Kampf to the Quran. Which brings me to my movie, Fitna.

I am a lawmaker, and not a movie maker. But I felt I had the moral duty to educate about Islam. The duty to make clear that the Quran stands at the heart of what some people call terrorism but is in reality jihad. I wanted to show that the problems of Islam are at the core of Islam, and do not belong to its fringes.

Now, from the day the plan for my movie was made public, it caused quite a stir, in the Netherlands and throughout Europe. First, there was a political storm, with government leaders, across the continent in sheer panic. The Netherlands was put under a heightened terror alert, because of possible attacks or a revolt by our Muslim population. The Dutch branch of the Islamic organization Hizb ut-Tahrir declared that the Netherlands was due for an attack. Internationally, there was a series of incidents. The Taliban threatened to organize additional attacks against Dutch troops in Afghanistan, and a website linked to Al Qaeda published the message that I ought to be killed, while various muftis in the Middle East stated that I would be responsible for all the bloodshed after the screening of the movie. In Afghanistan and Pakistan the Dutch flag was burned on several occasions. Dolls representing me were also burned. The Indonesian President announced that I will never be admitted into Indonesia again, while the UN Secretary General and the European Union issued cowardly statements in the same vein as those made by the Dutch Government. I could go on and on. It was an absolute disgrace, a sell-out. A plethora of legal troubles also followed, and have not ended yet. Currently the state of Jordan is litigating against me. Only last week there were renewed security agency reports about a heightened terror alert for the Netherlands because of Fitna.

Now, I would like to say a few things about Israel. Because, very soon, we will get together in its capital. The best way for a politician in Europe to lose votes is to say something positive about Israel. The public has wholeheartedly accepted the Palestinian narrative, and sees Israel as the aggressor. I, however, will continue to speak up for Israel. I see defending Israel as a matter of principle. I have lived in this country and visited it dozens of times. I support Israel. First, because it is the Jewish homeland after two thousand years of exile up to and including Auschwitz, second because it is a democracy, and third because Israel is our first line of defense.

Samuel Huntington writes it so aptly: "Islam has bloody borders". Israel is located precisely on that border. This tiny country is situated on the fault line of jihad, frustrating Islam's territorial advance. Israel is facing the front lines of jihad, like Kashmir, Kosovo, the Philippines, Southern Thailand, Darfur in Sudan, Lebanon, and Aceh in Indonesia. Israel is simply in the way. The same way West Berlin was during the Cold War.

The war against Israel is not a war against Israel. It is a war against the West. It is jihad. Israel is simply receiving the blows that are meant for all of us. If there would have been no Israel, Islamic imperialism would have found other venues to release its energy and its desire for conquest. Thanks to Israeli parents who send their children to the army and lay awake at night, parents in Europe and America can sleep well and dream, unaware of the dangers looming.

Many in Europe argue in favor of abandoning Israel in order to address the grievances of our Muslim minorities. But if Israel were, God forbid, to go down, it would not bring any solace to the West. It would not mean our Muslim minorities would all of a sudden change their behavior, and accept our values. On the contrary, the end of Israel would give enormous encouragement to the forces of Islam. They would, and rightly so, see the demise of Israel as proof that the West is weak, and doomed. The end of Israel would not mean the end of our problems with Islam, but only the beginning. It would mean the start of the final battle for world domination. If they can get Israel, they can get everything. Therefore, it is not that the West has a stake in Israel. It is Israel. It is very difficult to be an optimist in the face of the growing Islamization of Europe. All the tides are against us.

On all fronts we are losing. Demographically the momentum is with Islam. Muslim immigration is even a source of pride within ruling liberal parties. Academia, the arts, the media, trade unions, the churches, the business world, the entire political establishment have all converted to the suicidal theory of multiculturalism. So-called journalists volunteer to label any and all critics of Islamization as a 'right-wing extremists' or 'racists'. The entire establishment has sided with our enemy. Leftists, liberals and Christian-Democrats are now all in bed with Islam.

This is the most painful thing to see: the betrayal by our elites. At this moment in Europe's history, our elites are supposed to lead us. To stand up for centuries of civilization. To defend our heritage. To honor our eternal Judeo-Christian values that made Europe what it is today. But there are very few signs of hope to be seen at the governmental level. Sarkozy, Merkel, Brown, Berlusconi; in private, they probably know how grave the situation is. But when the little red light goes on, they stare into the camera and tell us that Islam is a religion of peace, and we should all try to get along nicely and sing Kumbaya. They willingly participate in what President Reagan so aptly called: "the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom." If there is hope in Europe, it comes from the people, not from the elites. Change can only come from a grass-roots level. It has to come from the citizens themselves. Yet these patriots will have to take on the entire political, legal and media establishment.

Over the past years there have been some small, but encouraging, signs of a rebirth of the original European spirit. Maybe the elites turn their backs on freedom, the public does not. In my country, the Netherlands, 60 percent of the population now sees the mass immigration of Muslims as the number one policy mistake since World War II. And another 60 percent sees Islam as the biggest threat to our national identity. I don't think the public opinion in Holland is very different from other European countries.

Patriotic parties that oppose jihad are growing, against all odds. My own party debuted two years ago, with five percent of the vote. Now it stands at ten percent in the polls. The same is true of all military-minded parties in Europe. They are fighting the liberal establishment, and are gaining footholds on the political arena, one voter at a time. Now, for the first time, these patriotic parties will come together and exchange experiences. It may be the start of something big. Something that might change the map of Europe for decades to come. It might also be Europe's last chance.

This December [2008] a conference [took] place in Jerusalem. Thanks to Professor Aryeh Eldad, a member of Knesset, we [watched] Fitna in the Knesset building and discuss[ed] the jihad. We are organizing this event in Israel to emphasize the fact that we are all in the same boat together, and that Israel is part of our common heritage. Those attending will be a select audience. No racist organizations will be allowed. And we will only admit parties that are solidly democratic. This conference will be the start of an Alliance of European patriots. This Alliance will serve as the backbone for all organizations and political parties that oppose jihad and Islamization. For this Alliance I seek your support.

This endeavor may be crucial to America and to the West. America may hold fast to the dream that, thanks to its location, it is safe from jihad and shaira. But seven years ago to the day, there was still smoke rising from ground zero, following the attacks that forever shattered that dream. Yet there is a danger even greater than terrorist attacks, the scenario of America as the last man standing. The lights may go out in Europe faster than you can imagine. An Islamic Europe means a Europe without freedom and democracy, an economic wasteland, an intellectual nightmare, and a loss of military might for America - as its allies will turn into enemies, enemies with atomic bombs. With an Islamic Europe, it would be up to America alone to preserve the heritage of Rome, Athens and Jerusalem.

Dear friends, liberty is the most precious of gifts. My generation never had to fight for this freedom, it was offered to us on a silver platter, by people who fought for it with their lives. All throughout Europe American cemeteries remind us of the young boys who never made it home, and whose memory we cherish. My generation does not own this freedom; we are merely its custodians. We can only hand over this hard won liberty to Europe's children in the same state in which it was offered to us. We cannot strike a deal with mullahs and imams. Future generations would never forgive us. We cannot squander our liberties. We simply do not have the right to do so.

This is not the first time our civilization is under threat. We have seen dangers before. We have been betrayed by our elites before. They have sided with our enemies before. And yet, then, freedom prevailed. These are not times in which to take lessons from appeasement, capitulation, giving away, giving up or giving in. These are not times in which to draw lessons from Mr. Chamberlain. These are times calling us to draw lessons from Mr. Churchill and the words he spoke in 1942: "Never give in, never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

– Geert Wilders. ~ E-mail received from Chaplain Klingenschmidt.

#### **+ *Speech [to]draw 50,000 Muslims to descend on Capitol***

Today (September 25, 2009) over 50,000 Muslims are expected to descend on Capitol Hill, to pray for an Islamic takeover of the White House, and Islamic conquest of America, the same way Muslims are already conquering Europe today (where 25% of the population is Muslim and growing). Their organizer declared today's rally in response to President Obama's inauguration speech. They may freely assemble and pray to a false god, if they choose. But we Christians have freedom of press and petition too.

– Received by e-mail

## **Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues.**

### **+ *Worldwide annual death toll from abortion: 41.6 million October 15, 2009***

A new report by the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute-- named after a president of Planned Parenthood-- has found that the worldwide number of abortions fell from 45.5 million in 1995 to 41.6 million in 2003, a decline of 8.6%. The report found that over one in five of the world's abortions-- 8.8 million in 2003-- occur in China. Observing that "China imposed an urban population policy of one child per family in the 1980s," the Guttmacher Institute did not condemn the one-child policy or reports of forced abortions, but instead praised the "high degree of safety" with which abortions are conducted in the Communist nation.

### **+ *Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Methodist Churches Ask Senate for Abortion Funds***

Washington, DC (LifeNews.com) -- A coalition of mainline Protestant churches have authored a letter to members of Congress asking them to make certain the health care bills they are considering contain taxpayer funding for abortions. The letter comes from a group of churches that have long advocated the pro-abortion position. Under the umbrella of the Religious Institute, the church denominations and more than 1,100 pastors and church staff from the denominations endorsed the letter. The letter calls abortion a "morally justifiable decision" and opposed any amendments to the House and Senate bills, which current contain massive abortion funding, to strike that taxpayer-financing. "Already, federal policy unfairly prevents low-income women and federal employees from receiving subsidized [abortions]," Rev. Debra W. Haffner, executive director of the Religious Institute complained. The letter added that she doesn't want more abortion funding bans in place and complained that additional "restrictions" on abortion funding constitute a "serious moral injustice."

The denominations endorsing the letter include the American Baptist Churches, Church of the Brethren, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church, and others. "We affirm women as moral agents who have the capacity, right and responsibility to make the decision as to whether or not abortion is justified in their specific circumstances," the letter says. The Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Unitarian Universalist Association, and United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism also endorsed the pro-abortion letter. The Religious Institute claims to represent 4,800 clergy and 40 Christian denominations.

Some of the signers to the letter include: Fr. Dr. Luis Barrios, Chair of Latin American and Latina/o Studies, John Jay College of Criminal Justice - CUNY; Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz, President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College; Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder, Bishop, The Fellowship; The Rev. Dr. Paula Gravelle, Chair, Clergy Action Board; and Rev. Dr. Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. They also include Rabbi Peter Knobel, Former President, Central Conference of American Rabbis; Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey, Dean, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary; Rev. Michael Livingston, Executive Director, International Council of Community Churches; Rev. Dr. Deborah Mullen, Director, Center for African American Ministry and Black Church Studies, McCormick Theological Seminary; Dr. Sylvia Rhue, Interim Executive Director, National Black Justice Coalition; and Rev. Dr. William Stayton, Professor of Sexuality and Religion, Morehouse School of Medicine

– By Steven Ertelt, LifeNews.com Editor; October 2, 2009. LifeNews website: <http://www.lifenews.com:80/nat5535.html>

### **+ *Pope Tells New Obama Vatican Ambassador to Uphold Pro-Life Position on Abortion***

The Vatican -- Pope Benedict XVI has a message for the pro-Obama political activist who the president appointed to become his new Vatican ambassador: uphold the pro-life position on abortion. Some pro-life Catholics have been concerned that Miguel Diaz won't faithfully uphold the pro-life teachings of the Catholic Church. Benedict has written a letter to Diaz, a former professor of theology at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, and St. John's University in Collegeville, both in Minnesota. The pope said he hoped the relationship between the Holy See and the United States would "continue to be marked by fruitful dialogue and cooperation in the promotion of human dignity, respect for fundamental human rights" and the "cultivation of the values of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'" "I think particularly of the need for a clear discernment with regard to issues touching the protection of human dignity and respect for the inalienable right to life from the moment of conception to natural death," he said. Benedict urged Diaz to promote "the protection of the right to conscientious objection on the part of health care workers, and indeed all citizens." "The Church insists on the unbreakable link between an ethics of life and every other aspect of social ethics," he reminded the Obama supporter.

– LifeNews website: <http://www.lifenews.com>

## **(UM) Bishops**

### **+ *Along with health concerns, ex-bishop faces complaint***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Less than two weeks after the Rev. Edward W. Paup resigned as top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, his bishop acknowledged that her office is investigating a complaint that he "had

violated the sacred trust of ordination.” Denver Area Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky disclosed the investigation in a letter posted on the Rocky Mountain Annual (regional) Conference’s Web site. She said it was clear there was a growing awareness of the allegations, and she wanted to share information about the process “rather than letting rumor and misinformation go unchecked.”  
– *UMNS, September 24, 2009*

+ ***Bishops roll back wages in sign of “sacrifice”***

BETHESDA, MD. United Methodist bishops are taking a pay cut. In a sign of solidarity with people and churches struggling in the global economic crisis, the 50 bishops from the United States voted to forgo a pay raise for 2010 and instead roll back their salaries to 2008 levels. Their annual pay would drop from \$125,658 salaries to \$120,942 beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>.  
– *UMNS, June 11, 2009*

+ ***United Methodist bishops support immigration reform***

[Note our comment above on political activism. “It would seem that if we as a denomination would concentrate on the spiritual health of its members and people around the country, the other issues...would be resolved. – AOM]

The United Methodist Council on Bishops expressed their commitment to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform and to stand in solidarity with “our immigrant neighbors” at the conclusion of their spring meeting. In a statement, the bishops said they were aware of the daily suffering of immigrants, including abuse in the work place, indiscriminate federal raids and indefinite detention and deportations which tear apart families. The statement will be sent to President Obama and congressional leaders. Among specific proposals, the bishops support comprehensive immigration reform that would provide a pathway to citizenship for immigrants, reunify immigrant families that have been separated by immigration itself or due to workplace raids, increase the number of visas for short-term workers and extend legal protection to all workers, including the right to bargain for higher wages, to protest against poor working conditions and to preserve their human rights. The bishops also oppose private-owned detention centers, which are not regulated by the federal or state governments.  
– *UMNS, June 13, 2009*

**(UM) General Board of Church and Society**

+ ***Church agency promotes anti-torture petition***

WASHINGTON – The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is soliciting signatures to send to President Obama and the U.S. Congress urging an independent commission of inquiry into allegations of torture by the U.S. government. The petition campaign is in response to Obama’s statement that prosecution of anyone involved in torture may not occur because of “very complicated issues.” The campaign also is taking on urgency in light of a recent survey that shows more than seven in 10 Americans continue to believe there are circumstances in which the torture of suspected terrorists is justified. The survey, “The Religious Dimensions of the Torture Debate,” released April 29 by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life, also found that the more often a person attends religious services, the more likely he or she is to say torture against suspected terrorists is sometimes justified. Pew said white evangelical Protestants are the most likely group to offer at least some support for torture, while those not affiliated with a religious denomination are the least likely to do so.  
– *UMNS, June 12, 2009*



+ ***Ethnic churches receive grants from agency***

LAKE JUNALUSKA, N.C. – The United Methodist Board of Church and Society awarded \$83,100 in grants to 11 ethnic local church programs during its fall meeting Sept. 23-27. Two programs shared \$32,200 for Human Relations Day grants. A program that provides mentors for youth whose parents are incarcerated was awarded \$7,200, and \$25,000 went to United Methodist conferences outside the United States to conduct seminars on restorative justice.

– *UMNS, October 5, 2009*

**(UM) General Board of Global Ministries. Global missions board looks to future**

NEW YORK (– Directors of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries approved a series of recommendations from their executive committee on April 29, affirming a restructuring “for more effective ministry.” The plan, to be finalized in October, will almost certainly include a re-grouping of staff and program areas and possible staff reductions and changes in governance. “No decisions have been made yet about which specific staff positions might be modified, consolidated or eliminated,” said West Ohio Bishop Bruce Ough, board president. In general, the work of the board is expected to be grouped into four areas. The United Methodist Committee on Relief, “a well-known and very respected brand,” would continue in its current structure and constitute one area. Two other area groupings would combine staff and programs related to finance and administration and those related to fund development and communications.

– *UMNS, April 30, 2009*

**(UM) General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Pension chief signs climate change appeal**

[Note above comments on political activism. In all of UM employees’ activities, where is authentic evangelism? Absent.]

EVANSTON, Ill. -- Barbara Boigegrain, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits, is one of 181 investors who signed a policy statement calling for “a strong and binding international treaty to reduce pollution and catalyze massive global investments in low-carbon technologies.” The statement emerged from a Sept. 16 International Investor Forum on Climate Change in New York. “As the largest faith-based investor in the U.S., the general board’s advocacy for responsible environmental, social and governance practices is an important element of our socially responsible investment philosophy,” Boigegrain said.

– *UMNS, September 24, 2009*

**Homosexuality. Mainline clergy divided on gay, lesbian issues**

WASHINGTON – A quarter of United Methodist clergy support same-sex marriages and less than a third back gay and lesbian clergy, a study has found. In a survey of clergy from seven mainline denominations, senior United Methodist clergy were among the strongest advocates of traditional church policies on marriage and ordination, ranking below only their colleagues from American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. The 2008 Mainline Protestant Clergy Voices Survey found substantial support for same-sex marriages and homosexual clergy in the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ, while the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are divided on gay and lesbian issues.

– *UMNS, June 29, 2009*

**(UM) Judicial Council. Council rejects resolutions on same-sex marriages**

DENVER – United Methodist clergy cannot perform same-sex marriages, even in states where such unions are legal or the ceremonies are endorsed by a regional church group. The Judicial Council, the denomination’s top court, ruled at its spring meeting that it is a chargeable offense for United Methodist clergy to perform ceremonies celebrating same-sex unions. The ruling overturned resolutions from two annual conferences supporting clergy who perform same-gender marriages. In the case of the California-Nevada Annual Conference, the council affirmed Bishop Beverly J. Shamana’s decision voiding a resolution passed by the regional group backing retired pastors who perform same-gender marriages. “An annual conference may not legally negate, ignore or violate provisions of the (Book of) Discipline with which they disagree, even when the disagreements are based on conscientious objections to the provisions,” the council ruled.

– *UMNS, April 27, 2009*

**(UM) Women/ Women’s Issues UMW seeks changes in relationships**

STAMFORD, Conn. – United Methodist Women are preparing to change the way they relate to the agency that has been their denominational home for the past four decades. Directors of UMW’s administrative arm, the Women’s Division, participated in planning sessions during their April 24-27 spring meeting before voting to accept, in principle, the “proposed strategic direction” offered by the cabinets of both the division and its parent agency, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. The idea behind the strategic planning, according to Harriett Jane Olson, the division’s chief executive, was to answer this question: “What impact should we be prepared to make by 2020?” A detailed plan will be

brought back to Women's Division directors for approval in October. While the expected changes will result in a different organizational chart and shifting partnerships for the Women's Division, the immediate financial picture is stable, Olson said.

– UMNS, April 28, 2009

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*If we ever forget that we're one nation under God,  
then we will be a nation gone under. – Ronald Reagan*

### **Global Outlook**

*Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.*

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#### **Ethiopia. Academic leader tapped to be African ambassador**

ATLANTA (UMNS) – Michael A. Battle Sr., president of the Interdenominational Theological Center, home to United Methodist-related Gammon Theological Seminary and five other theological schools, will leave that office after a six-year term to become the U.S. representative to the African Union with the rank of ambassador. The Addis Ababa, Ethiopia-based organization integrates the political interests of 53 African nations. The U.S. Senate confirmed the appointment on Aug. 7. The swearing-in ceremony is scheduled Aug. 21 in Washington.

– UMNS; August 10, 2009.

**Haiti.** Finding medical care in rural Haiti is not as simple as loading up the minivan and driving to a neighborhood clinic. Miles of bad roads or treacherous mountain paths often separate residents from clinics and hospitals. The nearest facility can be a 10-hour walk away. But with the help of U.S.-based Global Health Action, in partnership with The UMC, community workers are being trained to meet the country's urgent health care needs. "The good news is that properly trained local community health workers can prevent or treat 80 percent of the illnesses or diseases in their own communities without additional medical care," says Robin Davis, executive director of Global Health Action, located near Atlanta. More than 1,200 health workers have been trained in Haiti since the program began in 1982. Each provides year-round health care to about 100 families, or between 700 and 800 children and adults. Last year, 12 health care workers were trained and continuing education was provided for 101 others.

Besides preventing and treating diseases, health workers focus on nutrition, immunizations, safe drinking water and sanitation. The emphasis on nutrition is showing results, Davis says. "The rate and severity of malnutrition in children under five years of age has dropped significantly in areas where there is a concentration of practicing community health workers," she says. Each Haitian community health worker attends eight weeks of classes and follow-up courses and receives a health bag filled with supplies and medicine. The cost for training each worker is \$1,850. Global Health Action also sponsors the Haitian Goat Project. Local farmers who attend a training course receive a pregnant goat mated with the project's purebred stock. "The two projects work closely because we have a problem of the malnourished people," explains Franck Toussaint, training coordinator. The better breed of goats, Toussaint says, means more money for Haitian families to send their children to school and improve their homes. Jalouis, a health worker for 19 years, says the difficult job has its rewards. "I find my pleasure in this way," she says. "This kind of thing is very, very important for the children and the community."

– John Gordon, UMCOM

#### **World Council of Churches.**

##### **+ *World Council of Churches chooses Busan for 10th Assembly***

GENEVA (UMNS) -- The World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee will hold its 10th Assembly in Busan, South Korea, in 2013. The National Council of Churches in Korea had issued the invitation to Busan on behalf of its member churches, including the Korean Methodist Church. An assembly committee will be formed and begin working on planning and implementation.

– UMNS, September 4, 2009

##### **+ *WCC selects two candidates for general secretary***

GENEVA (ENI)—The World Council of Churches says it has identified two candidates – one a Korean Presbyterian and the other a Norwegian Lutheran – for the post of general secretary, which becomes vacant on Jan. 1. The candidates, announced after a search committee met June 23-26 in Amsterdam, are the Rev. Seong-won Park, a professor of theology at Youngnam Theological University and Seminary in Kyeongsan, South Korea, and the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, top executive of the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations. United Methodist Bishop Sally Dyck, Minneapolis, is a member of the search committee. The new leader, to succeed the Rev. Samuel Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya, will be elected in September.

– UMNS, June 29, 2009

**Zimbabwe. Ecumenical leader urges prayer for Zimbabwe**

**+ Church sends maize for Zimbabwe families**

NEW YORK – In response to the humanitarian crisis, the United Methodist Committee on Relief is providing medical treatment, implementing clean water programs to help prevent cholera, distributing food to the most vulnerable and offering educational incentives to reopen schools. In March, the agency distributed 408 metric tons of maize meal in 12 districts. Working with the denomination's Zimbabwe Annual Conference and district superintendents, the relief agency identified more than 30,000 vulnerable families to receive a bag of the milled grain. "UMCOR is committed to supporting our sisters and brothers in Zimbabwe," said the Rev. Sam Dixon, the agency's top executive. "We will continue to work with Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa to offer security and comfort in whatever ways we can." – *UMNS, June 5, 2009*

+ GENEVA – Zimbabwe needs the prayers and support of the world, said the Rev. Solomon Zwana, new leader of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. Zwana, speaking Sept. 1 at a World Council of Churches hearing on Zimbabwe, said his group is playing an active role as the nation attempts to heal the scars of recent turmoil and stabilize an economy that has had 10 years of runaway inflation and high unemployment. "One of the most important things is prayers from the ecumenical family," Zwana said. "With that accompaniment, we may never give up. We will feel inspired to have the determination to play our part." [Note: What is our responsibility here in supporting Robert Mugabe, an avowed Marxist, over Abel Muzorewa, a Methodist bishop, to head up this country? – AOM] – *UMNS, September 4, 2009*

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*"Socialism is the philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance and the gospel of envy.  
Its inherent virtue is the equal sharing of misery." – Winston Churchill*