

Monthly Update

October 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This Monthly Update contains two reports on the nature of the church and is of interest in that they show differing perspectives on what is undeniably a phenomenon of our society – the declining importance of overall religion in American society; and data on the overall nature of the church. The Concerned Methodists' exhibit at the "Values Voter Conference" in Washington, DC was well received and enabled us to interface with other like-minded people about our ministry: <http://www.valuesvotersummit.org/>

We are calling for "forty days of prayer and fasting" for our nation that is emphasized by several other ministries. It is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." There was a call from the recent Values Voter Conference to pray at 7:14 every morning and to enter into a period of "prayer and fasting" for our country.

It is hoped that thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people will engage in this prior to the upcoming November elections, which may very well be the most important in the history of our country. Let us pray for the election of Christian people to office in our country. Indeed, we need not only Christians in political office but a revival to sweep across our nation. My most earnest prayer is that the Holy Spirit would sweep across our country and give every single American a "Damascus Road" experience with the living Savior. Not only does every person need the salvation that only He can bring and the greater peace in individual lives, but our country needs the combined effects that spiritual regeneration can bring to our nation. Let us pray this will happen and result in an improved society, as well as greater moral clarity toward spirituality.

A publication put out over four years ago by the Presbyterian Lay Committee, the renewal group in the Presbyterian Church (USA) that is working for reform, was entitled "Can Two Faiths Embrace One Future?" It poses the question of whether or not two foundational beliefs can function in one institutional structure. The answer is a firm, "No." So it is with both the United States and our United Methodist Church.

We ask that you would keep us in your prayers as we earnestly "contend for the faith" of our church – and continue to partner and stand with us during these very important times to help us overcome our shortfall.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

October 2010 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

“If a word means everything, then it means nothing. Stretching words like ‘marriage’ and ‘family’ to include all sorts of things that they never meant before is reducing these words -- and the institutions they represent -- to nothing.”

--Thomas Sowell

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The Good Stuff. Among those areas covered at the Values Voter Conference in Washington, DC were: American Apocalypse--When Christians Do Nothing, Secularists Do Everything; The Case for Christian Activism, Indivisible: Social and Economic Foundations of American Liberty; Social Justice: Am I My Brother's Keeper?; The Falsehood of the Inevitability of Same-Sex "Marriage"; The Economic Impact of Illegal Immigration; How to Reach the Online Generation (Without Losing Your Soul); Against the Odds: Real Students Making Real Change; Establishing a Culture Impact Team In Your Church; and Why Christians Should Support Israel?

Of Interest

+ *UM Bishops Join Other Religious Leaders in Calling for Respect*

On the eve of September 11, a statement from Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster, President of the Council of Bishops, and Bishop Neil L. Irons, Executive Secretary of the Council of Bishops, called all UMs to join with those of other faiths in prayer, hope for peace and “resolving to do everything we can individually and collectively to live the way of Jesus. The statement referred to a meeting of religious leaders who denounced anti-Muslim bigotry and called for respect. The full text of that statement and list of attendees is available online. In a related story, amid news of protests in Tennessee, New York and other locations across the U.S. against new Islamic centers, The Commercial Appeal reports that the Heartsong Church in Cordova, near Memphis, has shown “love thy neighbor” hospitality and not only welcomed the local Islamic community but is sharing its space with them as they await the building of a new Memphis Islamic Center.

[Note: One would look far and wide before he could find any official of the UMC who would call for accountability for those who perpetrated this the most tragic attack in the history of our country. – AOM] – Newscope, Sept. 10, 2010

+ *I Like Jesus ... Not the Church*

Today's non-Christian 20- and 30-somethings are big fans of Jesus but are less thrilled with His followers and the churches where they worship. Pastor/author Dan Kimball reveals their six most common perceptions of Christians and the Church, what they wish church was like—and why you should be listening to these emerging voices. Every now and then, we experience an epiphany of some sort that drastically changes our life's course. For me, it's an extremely vivid memory of what happened when I took the time to step outside the busyness of ministry and listened to some college students from what was known to be one of the more anti-Christian campuses in California. It was these "pagan" students who gave me such incredible hope for the Church.

I was leading a young adults ministry we had recently started at the church I was on staff with at the time, and occasionally during worship gatherings, we showed man-on-the-street video interviews to set up the sermon. For an upcoming message series on evangelism, we decided to go to this college campus to interview students and hear firsthand their thoughts about Christianity. We asked two questions: "What do you think of when you hear the name 'Jesus'?" and "What do you think of when you hear the word 'Christian'?" When they answered the first question, the students smiled and their eyes lit up. We heard comments of admiration such as, "Jesus is beautiful," "He is a wise man, like a shaman or a guru," "He came to liberate women." One girl even said, "He was enlightened. I'm on my way to becoming Christian."

What an incredible experience! These students on the very campus I kept hearing was so "pagan" talked about Jesus with great passion. However, when we asked the second question, the mood shifted. We heard things like, "Christians and the Church have messed things up," and "The Church took the teachings of Jesus and turned them into dogmatic rules." One guy said, "Christians don't apply the message of love that Jesus gave," then jokingly added, "They all should be taken out back and shot."

Now, I realize you could quickly dismiss these comments—"They may like some things about Jesus, but they obviously don't know about His judgment and teaching on sin and repentance." That may be true, but what's important, and so haunting, is that these students were so open to Jesus. Yet, they didn't at all like what they have equated and understood to be "Church" and "Christianity." They definitely liked Jesus, but they did not like the Church.

Inside the Church Office Bubble

After those interviews, I did a lot of thinking about the polarity of the responses to the two questions. Something important to note is that only two of the 16 students interviewed even knew any Christians personally. So, most of those students had based their impressions of the Church on church leaders they saw in the media, or on the more aggressive street evangelists passing out tracts and holding up signs. They hadn't been in a friendship or relationship with a Christian to know any different.

As I thought about it even more, I had another pretty horrifying revelation. I looked at my own life and schedule and realized I, too, wasn't building friendships with those outside the church. My schedule had become consumed with church meetings, and when I wasn't in a meeting, I was in my office or at home preparing for the Sunday sermon. Even my social time was spent only with Christians, usually key leaders in the church. Yes, I had casual acquaintances with non-Christians, like the auto mechanic I saw on occasion. And yes, I was involved in local compassion projects our church did when we went out and fed the homeless. But those weren't actual friendships. I wasn't hanging out with them on a regular basis. I wasn't having them over for dinner or going to movies with them like I did in my friendships with Christians.

And as I talked with numerous other pastors and our church staff, as well as Christians who worked outside the church, I realized that we were all doing the same thing. We were all immersed in this strange Christian Bubble.

No wonder 14 of the 16 students we'd interviewed didn't know any Christians. All the Christians were too busy going to the myriad of church activities, meetings and Christian concerts that we as church leaders scheduled for them. We were so busy staying in Christian "community" that we had become isolated in our own subculture. It started making sense why those outside the Church got their impressions of Christians primarily from the media and aggressive street evangelists.

What They Think About the Church

When I realized that I had become part of this Christian Bubble and subculture, I knew I had to escape it. But to do so required me to make some significant decisions about my weekly schedule. I re-scheduled my various staff meetings for Mondays and Tuesdays in the church office. But on Wednesdays and Thursdays, I studied for sermons and held other meetings in a local coffeehouse (not Christian) instead of the church office.

Over time, as I built trust with the coffeehouse "regulars," and especially the baristas, I was able to engage in conversations with them and ask a lot of questions. Surprisingly, it wasn't difficult at all to discuss religion, Jesus and Church. They were actually very willing to talk about their views and beliefs—but it required me to listen instead of doing all the talking (like many of us are used to doing).

Now when I travel, I try to find a local coffeehouse where I can listen, observe and talk to people. Eventually, the conversation comes around to their thoughts on Jesus and the Church. I hear the same comments everywhere I go. No one ever says, "The Church is after your money," or "The sermons are irrelevant," as you might expect. Rather, the six most common perceptions of the Church among post-Christian 20- and 30-somethings include:

- 1) The Church is an organized religion with a political agenda.
- 2) The Church is judgmental and negative.
- 3) The Church is dominated by males and oppresses females.
- 4) The Church is homophobic.
- 5) The Church arrogantly claims all other religions are wrong.
- 6) The Church is full of fundamentalists who take the whole Bible literally.

While it's essential that we as church leaders thoroughly explore all six of these perceptions and listen to what these emerging voices identify as barriers to putting faith in Jesus and becoming part of a church community, I want to focus on three that seem to be especially prevalent in our current culture—and in my conversations with non-Christians.

Perception No. 1: The 'Organized Religion' Barrier

I can't count how many times I've heard "organized religion" used to describe the Church. But there are specific reasons why people see the Church as organized religion and feel they don't need it: I can relate to God without the structure. I rarely talk to anyone who's not seeking "God." But emerging generations don't see "church" as the place to explore who He is. Instead, they understand and strongly believe that they can pray to a caring and personal God without being in a church.

They also fear the church will try to control how they dress and act, and organize their faith the way the leaders think it should be patterned.

The Church is about hierarchy, power and control with a political agenda. Emerging generations have a strong sense that most churches are all right-winged fundamentalist and everyone in the church is expected to vote a certain way. While we may know that most churches don't have political agendas, the impression on the outside is that most do.

The Church is filled with leaders who function like CEOs and desire power and control. Think about the titles of your staff—senior pastor, associate pastor, executive pastor, executive assistant—all throwbacks to the '80s when churches began applying business principles to their infrastructure and using some of the business world's language and metaphors. To baby boomers, this made sense. But in our emerging culture, language like this can come across as very unlike Jesus.

Alicia, a 24-year-old that I talk with at the local coffeehouse, made this observation: Church leaders seem to focus more on acting like businessmen raising funds to build bigger buildings for their own organized religious corporations, than they do on taking the time to teach about social action for the poor and marginalized. I think Jesus would've cared more about raising money for the poor than building yet another mini-mall church. I fully understand and believe in the need for building new, well-equipped church buildings. But put yourself in an outsider's shoes who doesn't know the hearts of the pastors and church leaders and only sees elaborate buildings on large campuses. So those are three main reasons why "organized religion" is often a barrier to this group. And while you may be inclined to dismiss their reasons because they aren't actually accurate, remember this is how we are being perceived to those on the outside. I believe there are several things we can do to dispel the "organized religion" stereotype.

- Communicate how your church is organized and why you practice your faith in this way, its basis in Scripture, etc. Explain that a church is like a family and all healthy families do need "organization." Communicating this and not letting the "organization" strangle the life out of your church is key.
- Be aware of your biases. I'm convinced that emerging generations are open to hearing hard things that go against today's culture. We shouldn't be afraid to share how Jesus said some strong things about what sin is and the need for repentance. However, be careful how much your personal biases and opinions slip into your preaching. Avoid saying, "Jesus thinks this ... " when you really don't know what He thinks, subtly using God and Jesus to back your opinions about various social or political issues that aren't clear in Scripture.
- Evaluate your titles for church leaders and the number of hoops people have to jump through to meet with them. If you're using titles such as senior or executive pastor, have you ever paused to ask why and what that communicates?
- Listen to the younger voices. We need to not only make it easier for young people to be involved in our churches, we also need to show them that they're needed in all areas—not just isolated in youth and young adult ministries. They need to know that we respect their opinions on the direction of the entire church. Make sure your board has one or two younger elders, and set up a leadership training structure to include people of all ages.

Perception No. 2: Judgmental and Negative

Recently, I was in the airport when I spotted a young man in his 20s wearing a black T-shirt with the word "INTOLERANT" in large white letters across the front. Below the word, the shirt read, "Jesus says ... " My first thought was Uh-oh. Written across the back of the shirt in big, bold letters was: "Islam is a lie! Homosexuality is sin! Abortion is murder!" You could see people rolling their eyes, thinking, Those Christians ... they're pretty messed up and angry.

The whole experience reminded me of how essential it is to understand that even if we are expressing truth, how we express it is extremely critical. In my interviews and conversations with post-Christian 20- and 30-somethings, this kind of negative impression of the Church surfaced repeatedly. Besides T-shirts like the one I just described, this unflattering perception stems from a gamut of observations and experiences: Christians protesting with large signs telling people they're going to hell; seeing Christians on television crediting God for natural disasters to punish sinners; and being approached by Christians who put people on the defensive and invade their privacy.

Why is it that we in the Church focus on the negatives? Why do people on the outside know us only for what we stand against? Perhaps the main question we should be asking ourselves is, how do we address this misperception that's keeping thousands of people from the Church and from Christ?

- Teach how and when to talk about sin. I'm convinced that people in emerging generations actually want to be informed about Jesus and His teachings, even the ones that require repentance and change. But our approach makes all the difference. If we go around pointing out people's sins, the reaction will usually be negative. But if we share how we can become more loving and more like Jesus by changing in certain ways, then it's often accepted as a positive thing.

- Focus more on what we stand for. Those who like Jesus but not the Church see Him as one who stood up for the poor and oppressed. Scripture mandates that His churches follow Christ's instruction to care for "the least of these." By doing so, we also earn the respect of those outside the Church. They are also looking for a church that expresses love and "does not judge" as Jesus taught.

I am part of a team that planted Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, Calif., and over the past three years, I've noticed a pattern in people when they come to our church for the first few times. More often than not, they aren't asking about the specifics of our doctrinal statement or denominational distinction. Instead, they ask: What is your church doing for the poor? How are you responding to the AIDS pandemic? How is caring for each other and those in the community a real part of the life of your church? What's the attitude of the church leaders toward those who don't believe everything they do? Post-Christian emerging generations are watching to see if Jesus' Church is taking the care of the marginalized and being a loving versus negative community as seriously as Jesus did.

- Teach your church to break out of the Christian Bubble. As leaders, we can use preaching and the example of our own lives to teach people in our churches that their attitudes impact those outside the Church. Unless we're creating cultures in our church in which people see themselves as missionaries in their day-to-day worlds, unless we're challenging Christians to break out of the Christian Bubble and start listening to the hearts and cries of people around them, only the loudest, often-negative voices in the Church will be heard.

Perception No. 3: 'All Other Religions Are Wrong!'

It may sound hard to believe, but I've found that most people of different faiths and those who believe all paths lead to God are actually willing to open the Bible and engage in positive conversations about exclusive passages claiming Jesus is the only way to God. Yet before we can have those conversations, we have to build relationships and understand other faiths well enough to talk about them intelligently and compassionately.

So to be effective missionaries in our emerging culture, what do we need to understand about where people are coming from?

- Our culture is post-Christian. About a year ago, I watched an episode of a popular TV sitcom in which the family was arguing over which religion a new baby would be dedicated in. The father wanted the baby baptized, the mother wanted a Hindu ceremony and the grandparents wanted a Jewish bris. In the end, they compromised and did all three.

That episode represents where we are today. In my experience talking to people of other faiths, most aren't steadfastly committed to any one world religion. Instead, they appreciate all faiths and hold to a more mixed personal belief system. So I don't think emerging generations are all becoming hard-core Buddhists or Wiccans. Most don't study any one world religion too deeply, but they still have an overall pluralistic belief in God. They are aware of global faiths, and most think everyone should believe what they want to.

- We need to develop a basic understanding of world faiths. While we don't have to become experts, as leaders we should acquire at least a basic understanding, so that when we teach in our churches and meet people of other faiths or those who hold a pluralistic view, we can talk intelligently about other religions. A basic knowledge shows people of other faiths that we respect and are interested in their beliefs enough to do some homework. It also helps counter the impression that all Christians are dogmatic and close-minded.

- Train your church to understand world faiths. I know of one church that devoted five weeks in its main worship gathering to learning about world religions, even inviting individuals from various faiths to come and be interviewed. Whatever you do, whether it's a weeknight class or a focus in the worship gatherings, the important thing is to train and prepare your people to live with the right heart and attitudes in our pluralistic culture. More than just offering information about other faiths, how we respond to and talk about them in our churches is absolutely critical.

- Can your congregation explain why not all paths lead to God? People in emerging generations are open to discussing this truth. But they're looking for conversation, not a lecture, and facts, not rhetoric. Simply quoting a Bible verse and smugly saying, "Case closed," will only alienate them. Despite what you read and hear about our relativistic world, when you logically and gently lay out the facts before someone who's interested in your opinion, there is actually great response. Most people have never really thought about the implications of what it means when they say, "All paths lead to God."

Changing the Perceptions

The more I listen to those outside the Church, the more I realize that we in the Church need to be prepared to respond to these perceptions. Now, more than ever before, we should be thinking—and equipping others to think—deeper theologically because people outside the Church are asking questions that require it.

While the comments of the "pagan" students I mentioned at the beginning could be depressing, I think they're actually hopeful. These students are open to Jesus. Perhaps we live in times when we need to refocus our discussion with people on Jesus. But that requires us to break out of the cozy Christian Bubble—or church office—and be in relationship with them. It also requires us to create new understandings of the Church, so that we'll no longer be seen as a negative, judgmental, homophobic organized religion that oppresses women and thinks all other religions are wrong. Instead, we'll be perceived as a loving and welcoming family that's a positive agent of change, holds women in the highest respect and has a regard for other beliefs.

I firmly believe that as leaders responsible for teaching our congregants, we can begin to change these perceptions and show post-Christian 20- and 30-somethings that church is vital to their lives. What I think most people mean when they say, "I like Jesus but not the Church," is that they like Jesus, but they don't like what people have turned the Church into. We need to explain that if they truly like Jesus, then they cannot help but also like the Church because it's His Church and His bride. They need the Church because it's the expression of Jesus as His body.

May those who like Jesus but not the Church understand the Jesus of the Bible and the full, wonderful life that His life, death and resurrection bring. And may they move from liking Jesus to loving Him, and from not liking the Church to loving it.

– By Dan Kimball from Outreach magazine, March/April 2007. As it originally appeared in *Outreach* magazine.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/outreach/articles/ilikejesus.html>. As a speaker, author, blogger (dankimball.com) and pastor of Vintage Faith in Santa Cruz, Calif., Dan Kimball regularly engages with both church leaders and emerging generations. His new book, *They Like Jesus but Not the Church* (Zondervan) releases in March, and the forthcoming trade title, *I Like Jesus but Not the Church* (Zondervan), is slated to release this fall. He has also authored *The Emerging Church*, *Emerging Worship* and *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches* (all Zondervan). For more information about the upcoming titles, visit theylikejesus.com.

(UM) General Board of Church and Society

[Note: It is instructive to know how your giving dollar is spent. – AOM]

+ At its spring meeting, directors of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) awarded \$205,295 in Ethnic Local Church grants. The Ethnic Local Church Grants strengthen congregations through education, advocacy or leadership development for social justice engagement. Grants are awarded twice each year. The \$205,295 in Ethnic Local Church Grants was split among 11 programs in four U.S. jurisdictions and one African Central Conference. Two grants went to churchwide programs. The programs are spread among nine annual conferences, one national ethnic federation and a cooperative program between a general agency and general commission. Grants go to a wide variety of ministries: leadership development among Asian-American UMs, judicial reform in Liberia, counseling and community building among Latino women in North Carolina, and educational needs of recent immigrant and refugee youths in New York. GBCS directors also approved \$131,422 in Human Relations Day grants. The grants went to five programs: two in the South Central Jurisdiction, one in the Southeastern and two in Africa. Grant funding comes through Human Relations Day, one of the six Special Sundays with offerings of The UMC. Human Relations Day strengthens UM outreach to communities, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth. GBCS distributes 10 percent of the receipts for youth offender rehabilitation programs. The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) distributes the remaining funds for its Community Developers and UM Voluntary Services programs.

– Wayne Rhodes, *GBCS*, as reported in *Newscope*, April 7, 2010.

(UM) Judicial Council. Top UM Court Takes Up Membership Issues

The UM Judicial Council is being asked to revisit a decision allowing a pastor to bar a gay man from joining his congregation. When the denomination's top court meets Oct. 27-30 in New Orleans, seven of the 31 docket items relate to membership issues, including the right of pastors to decide who is worthy of membership. Judicial Council Decision No. 1032, from Oct. 29, 2005, related to the case of the Rev. Ed Johnson, who had been the senior pastor at South Hill (Va.)

UMC until the Virginia Annual Conference placed him on an involuntary leave of absence. Bishop Charlene Kammerer upheld the action. Johnson had refused to admit a self-avowed, practicing gay man into membership in the church. The pastor returned to his pulpit after the court's decisions, but the case's impact extended far beyond Virginia. Various annual conferences and other groups have protested the ruling, while others have supported it. On this fall's agenda, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference is asking Judicial Council to reconsider Decision 1032 and is requesting declaratory decisions on four other matters related to membership and sexual orientation, including an action by the 2008 General Conference. The Minnesota and Arkansas conferences also are requesting that Judicial Council reconsider Decision 1032. The new court voting in October about reconsideration of Decision 1032 still includes three members who dissented from the majority opinion in 2005. The Rev. Dennis Blackwell also was on the council at that time, but the other five members were elected in 2008. The court also is being asked to reconsider two decisions from its April 2010 meeting. If reconsideration is granted on either, the Judicial Council would place them on the April 2011 docket.

The complete docket for the October Judicial Council meeting will soon be available online:

<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=9412>><<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=9412>

– Linda Bloom, UMNS, as reported in Newscope, August 11, 2010

(UM) Women/Women's Issues

+ *Update on Girl Scout Meeting at CCUN from the RENEW Network*

RENEW sent out a news release concerning a C-FAM report about an inappropriate Planned Parenthood sex guide that was distributed at a "no adults allowed" meeting held at the Church Center for the United Nations held on March 1st. C-FAM is a Catholic, pro-family group that monitors the advocacy at the UN. Reaction to this report has been enormous and the Girl Scouts have flatly denied the sex guide was available at the conference. C-FAM stands by their story and provides further evidence supporting their report.

“You will not believe the contents of this 18 page resource--for example, telling young people how to prepare for safe sex (their choice and right) in case they are drunk or high (their choice and right); how to explore their bodies and maximize sexual pleasure (their choice and right); and how to find access to abortion (their choice and right).

RENEW will continue monitoring events taking place at the Church Center, the multi-storied building directly across the street from the United Nations which is owned and operated by the Women's Division, the leadership of United Methodist Women.

– Liza Kittle, President of the RENEW Network. News Release; March 17, 2010. Address: RENEW, P.O. Box 16055, Augusta, GA 30919. Tel.: 706-364-0166 Website: www.renewnetwork.org.

+ *Evidence Mounts that Girl Scouts Distributed Dangerous Planned Parenthood Sex Guide at UN Panel for Girls*

[Note: Following is a news release from C-FAM, the Catholic, pro-family group cited above.]

(NEW YORK – C-FAM) Late last week we reported in our weekly Friday Fax that the Girl Scouts allowed the distribution of an explicit and dangerous sex guide – produced by the International Planned Parenthood Federation – in a Girl Scout panel for adolescent girls at the UN. We have been inundated with responses from Girl Scout moms, Girl Scout leaders and others angered and confused that such a thing could happen.

Recall [that] the sex guide tells teenage girls, “Many people think sex is just about ... intercourse... But, there are lots of different ways to have sex and lots of different types of sex. There is no right or wrong way to have sex. Just have fun, explore and be yourself!” The sex guide goes on to tell girls, “Some people have sex when they have been drinking alcohol or using drugs. This is your choice.”

The Girl Scouts have flatly denied that the sex guide was available at their UN conference. We stand by our story and based on new evidence we go further. The sex guide was distributed with the full knowledge and consent of the Girl Scouts-USA.

Specific Responses to Girl Scout's Denial

1. The Girl Scouts imply another group left the literature prior to their panel.

Understand that the Girl Scout meeting was on opening day of the conference (March 1), which means the room was clean of all literature that morning. There were four other meetings in that room that day prior to the Girl Scouts meeting. At 10 am the NAACP had a meeting about climate change. At noon the UN had an orientation meeting for NGOs attending the conference. At 2 pm CORAID had a meeting about counterterrorism and women.

Very clearly, none of these meetings were on adolescent topics, which was the target audience of the sex guide.

2. The Girl Scouts say we were not in the room.

That is true. All non-Scout adults were thrown out prior the meeting; and no wonder given what was distributed there. However, even though our source was thrown out of the room, she stayed around and as the doors opened she went right in to see what was being distributed. It was there and then that she found the stack of dangerous sex brochures.

The source for our story and the woman who went into the room to monitor what the Girl Scouts were doing is mother of seven Sharon Slater who is also president of longtime UN pro-family group Family Watch International.

That the Girl Scouts would allow such a guide makes sense. The meeting was for adolescent girls. The brochure was made for adolescent girls and boys. In an awful way, the brochure was in context for the Girl Scout meeting.

More importantly, the Girl Scouts have a long time relationship with Planned Parenthood.

Here is Girl Scout CEO Kathy Cloninger from a 2004 interview on The Today Show:...we partner with many organizations. We have relationships with our church communities, with YWCAs, and with Planned Parenthood organizations across the country, to bring information-based sex education programs to girls.”

If the Girl Scouts do not approve of the sex guide that they made available at their conference, they should say so.

If they do not approve of the brochure and its message, they should say so.

The Girl Scouts have an obligation to their members, to the girls and their parents to disassociate themselves from this dangerous Planned Parenthood sex guide for teenagers.

– By Austin Ruse; C-FAM; March 16, 2010. C-FAM is a Catholic, pro-family group that monitors the advocacy at the UN. Tel. (202) 393-7002. Website: http://www.c-fam.org/publications/id.1592/pub_detail.asp

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“Every voter ought not merely to vote, but to vote under the inspiration of a high purpose to serve the nation. It has been calculated that in most elections only about half of them entitled to vote actually exercise their franchise. What is worse, a considerable part of those who neglect to vote do it because of a curious assumption of superiority to this elementary duty of the citizen. They presume to be rather too good, too exclusive, to soil their hands with the work of politics...”

Popular government is facing one of the difficult phases of the perpetual trial to which it always has been and always will be subjected. It needs the support of every element of patriotism, intelligence and capacity that can be summoned.”

~ Calvin Coolidge

Global Outlook

“If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honor of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the commonwealth; if men possessed of these other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation.”

~ Samuel Adams

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Uganda. Terrorist bombs in Uganda

Terrorist bombs killed and injured scores of people in Uganda watching the World Cup soccer final match, representatives of The Upper Room and other UM agencies rushed to support members of a UM mission group who were severely injured by the blast. Five adults and youth representing Christ Community Church in Selinsgrove, Pa., were hospitalized. The five Americans, and a sixth person who was not hospitalized, were part of 15-member mission group that had been working for several weeks with a sister congregation in Kampala, Uganda. The six, who had remained an extra week to complete a construction project, were scheduled to leave two days after the blast, which killed at 74 people and injured many more at an Ethiopian restaurant and a rugby club in Kampala, Uganda.

The Rev. Kathleen Kind, pastor of the 500-member Pennsylvania congregation, says three of the six missionaries are members of her church. Kind expressed appreciation for the calls and assistance the church had received from other UMs, including the Susquehanna Annual Conference, General Board of Global Ministries and UM Volunteers in Mission. “Thank God for the connection,” she said. “Our hearts and prayers go to the victims of this violent act,” said Harrisburg Area Bishop Jane Allen Middleton. “We keep the members of the work team organized by Christ Community UMC in Selinsgrove in our prayers, as well as their families and the people of Uganda. May all be held in God’s loving arms during this tragedy.”

– Tom Gillem, for GBOD; Linda Bloom, UMNS; *as reported in Newscope, July 21, 2010.*

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“He that is warm for truth, and fearless in its defense, performs one of the duties of a good man; he strengthens his own conviction, and guards others from delusion; but steadiness of belief, and boldness of profession, are yet only part of the form of godliness.”

~ Samuel Johnson