

Monthly Update

December 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This edition of the Monthly Update focuses on the recent political elections with an insightful commentary by Franklin Graham, on a decision by the Judicial Council because of the importance of one particular issue to the future of our United Methodist Church, and to other decisions and activities within the denomination.

We in Concerned Methodists continue with the struggle to preserve and strengthen our church's foundation in the orthodox Christian faith. Looking back over the past four years, we are amazed at how God has used us to help win some "David and Goliath" victories. The great ship of the United Methodist Church is slowly turning back onto course, but we still have more work to do. Even though the future looks very good against the effort for homosexual normalization in our church, the "other side" is not giving up easily. We have to be alert to other strategies. So, our work continues....

Each December, we make our annual request for contributions. We ask that each of you pray and seek the Lord's leading as to how you might support our ministry. We in Concerned Methodists are able to translate the maximum amount of donations into our ministry of informing people about what is happening within our United Methodist Church since none of us take a salary. In addition, I feel that it is important to share with you another of our "internal practices" in minimizing overhead in the operation of our ministry. When we travel to conferences in which we have a part, we pay for our own individual travel and personal expenses. Even though this is not done in any other ministries that I know of, we do so because, again, we want to translate the maximum amount of donations into our ministry of informing people of news in our church.

We are experiencing a financial slowdown as it gets toward the end of the year and people are turning their thoughts toward the holidays, as most assuredly they should. Thanksgiving and Christmas are two of the most-anticipated times of the year. At this time, we are \$10,765.31 in debt – chiefly because of the unusually high number of conferences we have had this year and our efforts at the UM General Conference in Tampa, Florida. We had this expense, in addition to the regular activities in which we engage and the much more highly visible "Values Voter Coalition" in Washington, DC.

We ask for any support that you can provide at this time. A gift now for the renewal ministry in which we are engaged will help us as we "contend for the faith" during this time in the life of our United Methodist Church. Can you help us at this time?

From all of us here at Concerned Methodists, we wish you the very best during this Christmas and throughout the year 2013.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris
Executive Director

December 2012 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

“Never was there a time when it was more necessary for all that fear God, both in England and in America, to stir up the gift of God that is in them and wrestle with God in mighty prayer.” – John Wesley

* * * * *

The Good Stuff

+ Especially instructive advice for all of us at this time is a quote attributed to John Wesley to Thomas Rankin in 1775 (quoted at the beginning of this December Update). As you remember from your history, this was the period to time when tensions were mounting between the “colonies” in America and their mother country England.

+ To Christians, the cross has always been a symbol of ultimate victory. But recently, a literal cross in the middle of the Mojave Desert in California became a symbol of protecting religious freedom in our culture. On Veterans Day, a World War I memorial cross that's been the subject of an 11-year legal battle was rededicated. In 2001, the ACLU filed a lawsuit that eventually made it all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing the cross needed to be taken down because it stood on federal land—and was an unconstitutional "endorsement" of the Christian faith. In an effort to eliminate the problem, Congress gave the one acre of federal land on which the cross stands to a local chapter of the VFW in exchange for five acres of private land. The ACLU continued to argue that the land swap was impermissible—but the Supreme Court disagreed, clearing the way for the eventual victory for religious freedom and the cross' rededication.

– Received by e-mail from Focus on the Family

+ ***So much of what "the Devil would do 47 years ago" has already happened.***

[Note: The following article is offered without comment. We in Concerned Methodists do not engage in political advocacy, but we do urge people to become politically active for candidates with biblical Christian values. – AOM]

A Franklin Graham Commentary: The Rev. Franklin Graham charged in an exclusive TV interview that America is in a deep economic quagmire because “we have turned our backs on God.”

“The more we turn our backs on God, the bigger our problem becomes,” Graham, the son of world-renowned evangelist Billy Graham, tells Newsmax in a wide-ranging interview. “I didn’t hear any of the candidates say that we needed to call our nation to prayer. I didn’t hear any of the candidates say that we needed to ask God for help.

“We still think that we can work our way out of this problem – and I don’t think we can,” Graham added. “I don’t have confidence in the Republican Party right now, and I don’t have confidence in the Democratic Party.

“I don’t believe there is leadership in Washington that can solve this problem. We just deal with it as issues for the day, and it kicks the can further and further down the road. We need God’s help to solve this problem – we can’t go without God.”

Last week’s election results, which sent President Barack Obama back to the White House for another four years, put the nation further along a “path of destruction,” Graham said. “There is no question that America has been a nation that has been blessed by almighty God. There is no other nation in the history of mankind that has done what his nation has done – and it’s because of God’s hand and his blessing.

“In the last four years, we have begun to turn our backs on God,” Graham reiterated. “We have taken God out of our education system. We have taken him out of government. You have lawyers that sue you every time you mention the name of Jesus Christ in any public forum. What has happened is we have allowed ourselves to take God out everything that we do – and I believe that God will judge our nation one day.”

And, “maybe God will have to bring our nation to our knees – to where that we just have a complete economic collapse” to do that, Graham said. “Maybe at that point, people will again call upon the name of almighty God.”

Graham is the president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The association’s tax-exempt status is under threat from a complaint filed with the Internal Revenue Service by the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The foundation, based in Madison, Wis., contends that the Graham association’s “vote biblical values” ad campaign during the election season violated IRS rules regarding religious groups and political campaigning, according to news reports.

“It’s ridiculous,” Graham charged. “The African-American churches do this all the time. Candidates go to their churches and stand in the pulpits and give political messages and sermons. Why can’t we do the same? “We didn’t tell anybody how to vote for a candidate. We told them how to choose candidates – and made that plural – who backed Biblical principles. There are a lot of Republicans, Tea Party people, Democrats that we focused these ads on.

“We wanted people to remember that, as they were going into the voting booth, that there were political decisions, no question, but there also were moral issues,” Graham added. “At every level, we need to think about who we are voting for and encourage Christians, especially, to vote for candidates who support biblical values.”

The move by the Wisconsin group, Graham said, reflected a broader push by the far left. “They want to shut the mouths of evangelicals. They want to shut the mouths of Christians.

“One hundred years ago, political leaders in every community were the pastors. They were the voices that were heard. They were the voices that had the influence. Politicians know that and the government knows that – and they are trying to shut the mouths of especially evangelicals.

“I’m going to continue to speak out,” Graham vowed. “I’m not afraid. I’m not worried.”

While the US has as many as 35 million evangelicals, Graham said, “It’s hard to pin down what it means to be an evangelical today. It’s been diluted quite a bit. It is a powerful voting bloc, no question, but they’re liberal as well as conservative – and they’re made of Latinos, blacks, whites.

“It is a unique group of people and, this time, many of them did not vote,” he added. “They stayed away from the polls. I don’t agree that they turned out in record number. I don’t think they did.”

And they did not vote because “There was not a candidate that they just got excited about,” Graham said. He called GOP candidate Mitt Romney “a very good man, and I like the man very much – but I don’t think he was exciting or charismatic enough. And, of course, the Mormon issue was an issue for many people. Not for me, but for many people that was, unfortunately.”

And, now that Obama has another term in the White House, “I would encourage everyone to pray for the president,” Graham said. “That’s our duty. God commands that we’re to pray for those in authority. The election is now over. The president is our president. We need to get behind him. We need to rally behind him. We need to bathe him in prayer.

“Not that we have to support positions that would be immoral positions or wrong positions,” Graham cautioned. “I’m not saying that you have to agree with the position, but you have to understand that he is our leader, he’s our president – and God commands that we are to pray.

“I would recommend everyone to pray for this man. He needs our prayers.”

In other comments in his exclusive Newsmax interview, Graham said: He hopes President Obama truly addresses Iran and its threat to Christianity in his next term. “In his speeches, he certainly has talked tough. But the Iranian people, they need to be free. They want to be free from these ayatollahs, from these fanatics. There are many wonderful Iranian people, but that country is being held prisoner by radical Islam.”

His father, the Rev. Billy Graham, turned 94 the day following the election. The elder Graham backed Romney. “He likes the president personally. But it’s the people around the president, and it’s the radical left that have taken over the White House. This is a concern to my father – and we just prayed that, again, that God, the Lord, will work in the president’s heart and will change his heart on some of these issues.”

+ Boston University has become the third UM-related institution to join the Association of American Universities, an elite organization of 61 leading research universities in the United States and Canada. Boston University was invited to become the 62nd member based on its research and academic programs. Duke University and Emory University are the two other UM-related schools in the association. – UMNewscope, November 21, 2012

+ The 2012 Values Voter Summit. For those who wish to access the video of any of the speakers at the Values Voter Summit 2012 that was held in Washington, DC in September, you may find the following website helpful. The Values Voter Summit was one of the events that we in Concerned Methodists attended and at which we had an exhibit. I believe that you would find the speakers stimulating and informative. Simply go to the Family Research Council website at: www.frcaction.org/VVS2012-Archive.

+ **Reconciling Ministries Network**. UM caucus, Reconciling Ministries Network, seeks an executive director. Tim Wolfred Consulting, a San Francisco Based executive search firm, will conduct the candidate search.

[Editorial note: This is seen as good news because this was another of the organizations that aggressively lobbied for legislation in the UMC to normalize homosexual practice. Their CEO has resigned. – AOM]

– UMNewscope, November 21, 2012

+ **The Methodist Federation for Social Action**. The Methodist Federation for Social Action, an unofficial progressive caucus, has announced that Jill A. Warren is stepping down as the group's executive director. The MFSA board has named Chett Pritchett, the group's development and communications associate, as interim executive director, starting Nov. 1.

[Editorial note: This also is seen as good news because this was one of the organizations that aggressively lobbied for legislation in the UMC to normalize homosexual practice. Their CEO has resigned. – AOM]

– UMNewscope, October 31, 2012

Of Interest

+ *WEBEX SAVES TIME, MONEY, EXPANDS REACH OF UM AGENCIES*

A joint project of three UM general agencies in Nashville is saving time, hundreds of thousands of dollars and giving more people to access important information for their churches and annual conferences. WebEx, a Web conferencing tool used since August 2011 by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), and the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) is replacing many costly on-site meetings. While exact savings are difficult to calculate, the Board of Ordained Ministry orientation for annual conference BOOM chairs, vice-chairs, registrars, and staff, is being replaced with a Webinar. That event, which cost about \$125,000 in 2008, provides critical information for BOOM officers to shepherd clergy candidates through the process to ordination. "That's a huge savings of money, as well as travel time for agency and annual conference staff," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, GBHEM's director of Candidacy, Mentoring, and Conference Relations. She adds that more than 144 people registered for that Webinar, and of those, 30 said they were logged in for a group. Several people can watch the Webinar with the person who registered. More than 500 people registered for a September Webinar on legislative changes related to candidacy and clergy. In addition to the savings, Lassiat said the use of WebEx allows more flexibility in planning a meeting time since people don't have to travel, and the presentations can be taped to have as resources.

The one-year contract signed by the three agencies cost \$28,000 (GBOD paid 40%, GBHEM and GCFA 30% each), said Shelly Stem, GBHEM's Internet and Technology team leader. "A cross-agency team was created to look at the various vendors in the market and request pricing for the three agencies as a group," Stem said. After selecting WebEx and trying it for a year, the three agencies just signed a new three-year contract at a cost of \$20,500.

– Vicki Brown, GBHEM, as reported in UMNewscope, October 10, 2012

+ **AFTE**. Gregory Jones has been appointed as the executive director of A Foundation for Theological Education (AFTE), effective Jan. 1, 2013. Jones will continue to serve as professor of theology at Duke Divinity School and senior strategist at Leadership Education at Duke Divinity.

Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues. This is a very real story

[Editorial note: This has a familiar note to it. I had an "adoptive uncle" Harold who was a decorated war hero in the Korean War. When he had terminal pulmonary fibrosis, he was in hospice. One night he was surrounded by members of his family laughing and joking with them. He was alert, but getting sleepy (without medication) since it was about 10:00 P.M. and his normal bedtime, when a "nurse" came in with a hypodermic needle to give him an unplanned injection. She said that it was to make him "rest better" and to put him to sleep. She gave the injection; Harold laughed, and said, "That's pretty good. They wake me up to give me a shot to put me to sleep." He slurred the word "sleep" – and within three hours, he was dead. Do I believe that what he was given by that injection was the cause? Can I prove it? Of course not. However, I am highly suspicious of some of these hospice care facilities. – AOM]

This story is not unique. It is happening thousands of times a year. Please be aware of what is happening in some U.S. hospitals, nursing homes and Hospice.

I believe my mother was killed while in hospice care this August. Mother had congestive heart failure, kidney issues and some Dementia. I had moved mother to a new facility which meant she had to have a change in hospice nurses. Up to the point of her move, her nurse and another staff nurse told me explicitly that my mother definitely did not need any Morphine, at least not at this point.

A couple hours later Mom was at the new facility, eating lunch in the dining room. An hour after the meal was done; I meet with Mom, the new nurse and a social worker in the Activity room. Mother was answering questions, smiling and eating an ice cream soda. Mom told us that she had no pain, yet the nurse told me she wanted to give her a little bit of morphine just for "comfort." This nurse ordered and scheduled, to begin that day, 5 mg. morphine, Xanax and Haldol gel (atavan, benadryl, haldol), to be administered through the day, not as needed but "scheduled". In the evening, in addition to these drugs, mother would get Seroquel, another anti-psychotic sedative and Restoral, a benzodiazepam for sleeping. I was completely duped. I was going on what the other nurse, just hours before had said. She was adamant that my mother was not at the point of needing any morphine. Mother was on Tylenol for pain until this new nurse and that was sufficient. I had never heard the term "terminal sedation," but that is exactly what this nurse did to my mother.

The nurse also ordered a special bed that "cradles" the patient so that they can't get out. I believe this was ordered in addition to all the drugs so mother wouldn't be able to get out of the bed to get a drink of water or whatever.

When they started these drugs they put mother into heavy sedation. They did not tell me a thing. I was called just hours before she passed. When I was there they escalated the doses of Morphine. They also gave her doses of Haldol gel and Xanax.

Mother died at 5:30 p.m.

Since August 19 my head is spinning because I feel it's my fault for not being aware of what they were doing to her. I had Power of Attorney and they had an obligation to be honest with me; instead, they tricked me and my mother. I would never have allowed

them to put her into terminal sedation, which clearly is euthanasia.

I brought my mother home for burial. It took time for me to understand what had happened. I want, at the very least, to use my voice against these people and institutions that do these terrible things to our elderly. I just don't know how or which way to turn.

Ron Panzer, LPN, Executive Director of Hospice Patients Alliance and member of the Pro-life Healthcare Alliance said,

This is very real. The 100% increase in dosage of the opioid medications is contrary to all standards of care for a patient with severe uncontrolled pain, where they would increase by 25-50% over a 24 hour period. This woman had little pain, took Tylenol and was ok with that. They intended her death and killed her outright... direct euthanasia, not terminal sedation.

– Received from an associate in the Right to Life Movement

(UM) Bishops

+ **Council of Bishops.** UM bishops from around the globe gathered Nov. 4-9 at Epworth-by-the-Sea on St. Simons Island, Ga., for a private retreat intended to establish a spiritual grounding for their work together during the next four years. The Council of Bishops organized new leadership teams that connect with the denomination's Four Areas of Focus. The bishops also considered how to implement the creation of an Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relations within the council. The office will replace the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

In the first presidential address of the quadrennium, Bishop Rosemarie Wenner (Germany Area) encouraged the bishops to lead so that “we may be one in ministry to all the world.” Bishop Wenner encouraged her fellow bishops to “become a team, offering collegial leadership to the church and to the world.

Wenner said that it's a time of new beginnings with newly elected bishops joining the Council. She urged her colleagues to find ways to direct resources toward helping congregations to be vital. She said that even though no significant structural changes were made during General Conference, “we can change the culture so that we can cooperate for the sake of helping one another in God's mission.

“I come from a country where it is common to ride a bicycle. Those of you who sometimes or frequently ride bicycles know from experience that it is impossible to sit on your bicycle and not to move forward. You will fall unless you continue to move. Christian unity in ministry to all the world is like riding a bicycle! We will fall unless we continue. We have to be on the move.” – Heather Hahn, UMNS, and Council of Bishops, as reported in UMNewscope, Nov. 14, 2012

+ **Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe.** The Dallas Area bishop who was involuntarily retired in July is to be “immediately reinstated to his rightful status as an active bishop of The UMC,” the denomination's top court has ruled. In its Nov. 10 decision (Decision #1230) the Judicial Council overturned the action of the South Central Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy and “the affirmation” of that action by the 2012 South Central Jurisdictional Conference regarding Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe. The council cited “numerous errors in violation of the principles of fair process” and “the inability to articulate” what the “best interests” of the church or of the bishop or of both would be. One council member submitted a written dissent from the majority position on the ruling and another offered a partial concurrence and partial dissent. The Rev. William Lawrence, Judicial Council president, also filed a concurrence.

Bledsoe, 62, a first-time bishop who had overseen the North Texas Annual Conference for the past four years, was forced to retire Aug. 31. His status had been in limbo pending the results of his appeal to Judicial Council, which was considered during a Nov. 9-10 special session in Phoenix.

In its ruling, the council said Bledsoe is entitled to an immediate episcopal assignment in the South Central Jurisdiction; to restoration of all status, salary and benefits and to compensation for costs “incurred by him in defense of this action.” Judicial Council will “monitor compliance with the terms of its decision,” ensuring action by the South Central Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy and the jurisdiction's executive body “in a prompt and timely manner.” The committee's chair, Don House, was directed to provide a report by Feb. 17, 2013.

House appeared before the council during a Nov. 9 oral hearing on the appeal. Bledsoe, who was present with his wife, Leslie, was represented by Jon Gray, an attorney, lay member of the Missouri Annual Conference, and Judicial Council member from 2004 to 2012.

The appeal was heard “under the directives” found in Paragraph 408.3(a) of the Book of Discipline. That paragraph, amended by the 2012 General Conference, provides some specific guidelines on placing a bishop in retirement involuntarily. Judicial Council, which had ruled in October that the paragraph “remains constitutional,” said in its decision that arguments “about whether the process was constitutional are now deemed to be irrelevant. We reviewed the process in light of fairness, equity, justice, legality and timeliness of the process.”

The council found “no specific criteria upon which a decision was made” in the material it received from the committee on episcopacy. Specific reasons for “the recommended action of involuntary retirement” of Bledsoe were not presented in writing, and the statement of the committee's action was not included in the formal minutes of the South Central Jurisdictional Conference.

– Linda Bloom, UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope, November 14, 2012

+ **Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe.** The Nov. 10 decision by The UMC's top court to reinstate Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe and reverse his involuntary retirement has church leaders still trying to determine what happens next. ¶406.1 in the Book of Discipline. The paragraph requires a jurisdictional committee on episcopacy, in consultation with the college of bishops, to recommend bishops' appointments "for final action by the jurisdictional conference."

"The circumstances before us are new ground," Huie said. "All of us in the college of bishops remain in prayer for Bishop Bledsoe and [his wife] Leslie, the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy and the South Central Jurisdictional Conference."

– Heather Hahn, UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope, November 21, 2012

(UM) Connectional Table.

+ *THE CALL TO ACTION TEAM ISSUES FINAL REPORT*

The Call to Action Interim Operations Team (IOT) named by the Council of Bishops (COB) and the Connectional Table (CT) in late 2010 was asked to identify issues and to develop a plan based on successful approaches used in other organizations that could be adapted and reapplied to the church. The aim was to identify strategies that would lead to significantly improved results in creating and sustaining more vital congregations.

The IOT made reports to both the Connectional Table and the COB in the fall of 2011. CT drafted legislation that included some and altered other elements of the IOT proposals, and the resulting legislation was further changed at General Conference where a new "Plan UMC" emerged that was adopted by nearly 60% of the delegates. However, that new plan was ruled unconstitutional by the Judicial Council late on the final day of the conference.

In its follow-up report the IOT says, "It was our consensus (in 2011), and remains our conviction now, that attention to specific aspects of UMC life could, in time and with competent execution, lead to reordering the life of the church for greater effectiveness and vitality in its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The United Methodist Church must be unfailingly focused on making and reinvigorating disciples of Jesus Christ and transforming the world with the local congregation as the primary venue for making disciples. We believe that there is an urgent need for redirecting significant leadership, time, and money toward working to increase and sustain the number of vital congregations.

"Our team repeatedly said that the Call to Action endeavor should not be equated with or bound by any one set of legislative proposals. We strongly believe that the most significant, needed, and consequential change will be in the ways we think, converse, live, and work together. . . . We are not overly concerned that any one piece of legislation did not make it through the legislative machinery and judicial review at General Conference. But we do caution that we not mistake the several but ultimately small measures of progress that emerged at and after General Conference as representing a sufficient degree of change in light of the challenges we face.

"What matters is that we have clarity in giving focus to shifting resources to increase the number of vital congregations, urgency in paying attention to measurable results, and intentionality in the development and recruitment of young people for leadership along with support and evaluation of all leaders based on very high expectations for fruitfulness. What matters is that we sustain an unrelenting emphasis on integration and alignment of work to replace the current celebration of diffused activities and self-interested independence that are rampant across the UMC.

"We repeat for emphasis and clarity that business as usual is unsustainable. Dramatically different and new behaviors, not incremental changes, are required. We have not yet seen the degree of shared sense of urgency or commitment to systemic adaptations with the redirection of leadership expectations and sufficient resources that our situation requires.

"What has been and remains most essential is that leaders in every part of the Connection demonstrate faithful love and obedience to God, courage, resilience, political will, active continuous learning, willingness to risk, and a transparent accountability for observable and planned results. We hope to join hands with all who seek to invest in that kind of leadership in the years to come."

The complete report is available at umccalltoaction.org <<http://umccalltoaction.org/>>.

– The Call to Action Interim Operations Team, as reported in UMNewscope, October 3, 2012

+ The CT announced the hiring of the Rev. Amy Valdez Barker as executive secretary, effective Jan. 1, 2013. She will provide administrative leadership for the CT as it coordinates the mission, ministries, and resources of The UMC.

– UMNewscope, November 14, 2012

(UM) General Board of Discipleship.

+ *The New General Board of Discipleship's Meets to Organize*

The General Board of Discipleship's (GBOD) smaller board, in its first organizational session, selected Bishop Elaine Stanovsky president and Rev. Eric Park, a district superintendent from Western Pennsylvania, as vice president for the coming quadrennium. The board, which was reduced to 23 members from 60 members by the 2012 General Conference,

also created a new working structure and meeting schedule during its initial session in Nashville in late September. "The Board members were in good spirit as they engaged in learning and conversation about their roles and responsibilities, which fall into three major categories-fiduciary, strategic and generative," said Karen Greenwaldt, GBOD's general secretary. Greenwaldt, during her annual address to the board, announced that she plans to retire, effective Dec. 31, 2013, after serving 13 years as General Secretary. Bishop Stanovsky said she will form a search committee in 2013 to find [a] new general secretary, with a goal to have a new leader by the beginning of 2014. Under an adopted quadrennial meeting plan, the new board will gather in session up to three times annually during the coming four years. In other actions, the board adopted a policies and procedures manual and received all mandated and referred legislation and resolutions from the 2012 General Conference. The board also approved ministry grants for Young People's Ministry projects, for Youth Service Fund grants and for scholarships for college students. – UMNewscope, October 10, 2012

+ The Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, general secretary of the General Board of Discipleship, announced that she will retire on Dec. 31, 2013.
– UMNewscope, October 3, 2012

(UM) Judicial Council. "Abolishing security of appointment" was ruled unconstitutional by UM Judicial Council

[Note: The one issue that was passed out of General Conference 2012 that we had opposed was this issue. Decision 1226 by the UM Judicial Council that had ruled this unconstitutional is one we whole heartedly approve. We see it as a blessing and one that makes us fully confident in what was accomplished at GC-2012. – AOM]

Here is the digest of Decision 1226 from the Judicial Council, which met in Elk Grove Village Ill. Oct. 24-27.

"Security of appointment has long been a part of the tradition of The United Methodist Church and its predecessor bodies. Abolishing security of appointment would destroy our historic plan for our itinerant superintendency. Fair process procedures, trials and appeals are integral parts of the privilege of our clergy of right to trial by a committee and of appeal and is an absolute right which cannot be eradicated by legislation. The amendments to ¶ 337, as contained in Calendar Item 355, are unconstitutional and violate the third and fourth Restrictive Rules of the Constitution. The original ¶ 337 of the Discipline is restored and maintained and the changes made thereto at 2012 General Conference are null, void and of no effect. The amendments to ¶ 321, as contained in Calendar Items 352, is also declared repugnant to the Constitution and hence, unconstitutional. The original ¶ 321 of the Discipline is restored and maintained, and the changes made thereto by the 2012 General Conference are null, void, and of no effect. Calendar Item 358, the new transitional leave ¶ 354, is declared unconstitutional, and Calendar Item 359, which removed the language of a transitional leave from ¶ 354 of the Discipline, is also declared unconstitutional. The current language for a transitional leave as provided for in ¶ 354 is restored and maintained."

The Council considered a variety of other issues at its fall meeting and delivered 17 decisions or referrals.

– UMNewscope, October 31, 2012

(UM) Women/Women's Issues. UMW Unveils Ad Countering Hate Speech

[Editorial note: If a religion has professed beliefs to kill all those who do not convert to its tenets, then to point out the reality of this is not "hate speech" and should be recognized as such. Islamists were behind the 9/11 attacks. Unfortunately, all too often, UM employees fail to recognize such harsh realities and attack the wrong side. – AOM]

During an interfaith press conference Sept. 25, UM Women (UMW) General Secretary Harriett J. Olson unveiled an ad countering the anti-Muslim hate speech of another ad posted in 10 New York City subway stations.

Organized by the Interfaith Center of New York, a coalition of community and faith-based organizations, including UM Women, gathered at the steps of New York's City Hall in Manhattan to denounce the "harmfully provocative and inherently divisive" ads, the group said. "We needed to be present with a counter voice, we need to stand for the work of peace, and to say that free speech should not be used recklessly or in an inflammatory way," said Olson.

The counter ad, sponsored by UM Women, states, "Hate speech is not civilized. Support peace in word and deed." They are scheduled to appear in the same 10 subway stations where the ad implying Muslims are "savages" appears.

"Religions of the world should invest in the work for peace," Olson said. "Peace comes because we work for it. Women know that the best." Other leaders of the interfaith coalition advocated for moral speech, while recognizing the right to free speech.

Speakers celebrated the diversity and tolerance New Yorkers have for one another, in community. "In this city, we're from many countries, but from one city where we value each other as human beings," said Councilman Robert Jackson. "We stand for peace and justice no matter what faith you come from."

Dr. Sayyid Syeed of the Islamic Society of North America added, "America's strength lies in building the most diverse society in the world. There will always be people trying to undermine the work of diversity, but every time, people of faith and no faith have raised voices against this immoral behavior."

– UMNewscope, October 10, 2012

* * * * *

"The legacy we leave behind for our children, grandchildren and this great nation is crucial. As I approach my 94th birthday, I realize this election could be my last. I believe it is vitally important that we cast our ballots for candidates who base their decisions on biblical principles and support the nation of Israel. I urge you to vote for those who protect the sanctity of life and support the biblical definition of marriage between a man and a woman. Vote for biblical values this November 6, and pray with me that America will remain one nation under God."

– Dr. Billy Graham