

Monthly Update

March 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The church has a duty, a mandate from Jesus, to “take the gospel to all the nations” which has never been rescinded. Yet, all too often we not only forget that is a sacred responsibility, but we also fail to speak out on behalf of Christian brothers and sisters in other countries who have become Christians – and as a result are being persecuted. We need to lift them up in prayer and in our voices of protest to our legislators. If we do not speak out for them when they are persecuted, the day will come when that will come to us.

Our United Methodist employees at the national level continue to be politically active while being paid with money given by faithful people in the pews. The political stance by the UM Women to oppose construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline not only blocks our country’s ability to become energy independent, it also hinders the formation of much-needed jobs for those who are out of work. This continued political activism needs to cease.

We believe that the 4% budget reduction recommended for bishops is a good start. As we had stated in the measure itself, along with this reduction should be the imposition of term limits on bishops of two four year terms after which they would return to local church – especially since one of the measures to eliminated guaranteed appointments for elders. More than any other group, the bishops have been responsible for the membership loss in our United Methodist Church over the past 42 years.

Leading up to General Conference the Call to Action Committee has readied its recommendations to be considered. It is recommending various restructuring proposals, some of which cause us concern. One chief area that we consider to be problematic is that of ending guaranteed appointments and allowing bishops to give an elder a less than full-time appointment. The proposed legislation would permit bishops and their cabinets, with the approval of their boards of ordained ministry and annual conference’s executive session, to put elders on unpaid transitional leave for up to 24 months. Over the years we have seen all too many cases of bishops using the power of the appointment to reward those who do what they wish and to punish those pastors with an evangelistic theology. We see this measure as giving virtual dictatorial powers to the bishops – who themselves have not exhibited the requisite leadership ability to stem our denomination’s decline. This is one of the measures that we will oppose to the fullest of our abilities.

We thank you for standing with us. May we ask that you continue to do so in the months ahead? Your support is so important at this crucial time.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

March 2012 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner "I stand for consensus"? – Margaret Thatcher

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Of Interest

+ ***Church AWOL on Its Call of Duty***

[Note: This is of interest when evaluating what we should be about versus what our church actions are. – AOM]

The church in the U.S. appears to be AWOL on its call of duty.

In contrast, video gamers reported front and center for the release of "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3." Sales for the new title in the U.S. and United Kingdom set a one-day record of \$400 million in November 2011. Prices ranged from about \$50 to \$60 dollars for a basic edition. That means an estimated 7 million gamers bought it the first day.

Are church members in the U.S. as excited about their call of duty as video gamers? In one day, church members could raise at least an additional \$6.1 billion to impact two key global challenges: reducing child deaths and sharing the Gospel with those who have not heard it.

Challenge 1: Reduce child deaths.

Many Christians point to Jesus' parable in Matthew 25:31–46 as a "call of duty." In those verses, Jesus says when the "least" are helped, Jesus is helped. Consider one need of the "least." An additional \$5.1 billion a year could reduce most of the global preventable deaths in children under age five.

Challenge 2: Make the Gospel Available as an Option to All People.

Many Christians also point to Matthew 28:18–20 as a "call of duty." Jesus says to take the Gospel to all nations. One source estimates that over 3,000 groups of people globally have never heard About God's love through Jesus. An estimate developed in the new book, *The State of Church Giving through 2009*, calculated a ballpark cost of \$1 billion a year to meet this need. The 21st edition in the series, the new book was released by empty tomb, inc. in October 2011.

One-Day Potential.

In *The State of Church Giving through 2009*, membership for a set of denominations was analyzed over time. In 2009, these denominations posted almost 111 million members in the U.S. If each member donated the cost of a video game, that is, \$55, these Christians would raise \$6.1 billion in one day. That would provide \$5.1 billion to apply to ending child deaths, and \$1 billion for global evangelization.

Can That Happen?

So far, church leaders have not presented a clear goal at the scale that would meet these two needs. Since the 1920s, many denominations embraced what is called a "unified budget." Church members are encouraged to donate the major portion of their giving to a general fund. Leaders then split up that fund between the congregation's operating needs and the larger mission of the church. Of the money sent to denominations, the regional and national leaders split up these funds among various departments, including operations and missions.

The unified budget approach was developed to help both local congregations and denominations overcome a problem. Pastors complained about the many different offerings being taken. With a unified budget approach, fundraising in the church became more organized. However, over time, leaders at the local and denominational levels became protective of the money needed for their own operations. The unified budget became the ceiling for fundraising, rather than a way to establish a firm base from which to impact the world in Jesus' name.

Although there are still special offering opportunities, these do not usually receive the same attention and promotion as the funds needed for the unified budget offerings. Perhaps as a result, church leaders have not developed a clear goal to solve rather than cope with global problems. Such a goal would have both a dollar cost and a clear timeframe.

The Results of the Current Approach.

Data in The State of Church Giving through 2009 suggests side effects of the present unified budget approach.

- Of every dollar donated to a congregation, an average of 14¢ went beyond local operations for the larger mission of the church in 2009. In 1968, the amount was 21¢.
- Of each dollar that was donated to a congregation in 2009, an average of 2¢ was spent on denominational overseas missions, meeting both spiritual and physical needs.
- Maybe as a result, church member giving to their congregations in 2009 was 2.38% of income. That was down from 3.11% in 1968.

It appears church members were less excited about their churches' activities in 2009 than they were in 1968.

Meanwhile, church membership declined as a percent of U.S. population as well.

The Potential.

The new report concludes, "The very revitalization of the church in the U.S. might depend on embracing Jesus by embracing the least." For example, The State of Church Giving through 2009 notes that in 2008 (the most recent year with available data), 16 nations were not making progress in reducing the number of deaths in children under five years of age, according to world organizations. Based on Matthew 25:31–46, the report suggests, church leaders have a particular "call of duty" to help stop child deaths. A focused campaign at a scale to impact this need, on top of unified budget giving, could help excite church members about what their churches are doing.

Of the 16 nations, an average of 84% of the populations of 10 of these nations self-identify as Christian in their religious preference. These 10 nations are: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The other six countries that also need special assistance are: Afghanistan, Chad, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mauritania, Somalia, and Sudan.

- Religion News Service, 529 14th Street NW, Suite 425, Washington, DC 20045; website: www.religionnews.com

+ ***Call to Action Ready for General Conference Consideration***

Conversations continue in response to the Call to Action report and proposals that appeal for amplified attention across the UMC to increasing the number of vital congregations.

The Council of Bishops (COB) and Connectional Table initiated the Call to Action process "to reorder the life of the church" two years ago mindful of the urgency of our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—and in the wake of four decades of declining U.S. membership alongside increasing constraints on finances for churches and annual conferences magnified by the 2008 global economic crisis.

The COB and Connectional Table have endorsed proposals to be considered by the General Conference including redirecting up to \$60 million in General Church spending in 2013–2016 for specific work needed to create and sustain vital congregations; combining nine of the current thirteen general agencies to achieve greater focus for impact, integration and economies; measures that provide for the COB to elect a full-time, four-year president to lead and work with other bishops; realigning the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns as an office of the COB; and support of recommendations from the Ministry Study Commission regarding the appointment of clergy and from the General Board of Global Ministries to make the Women's Division structurally separate.

The General Conference will consider the legislation to consolidate several of the general agencies into a new Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry. A 15-member board of directors would govern the Center and be accountable to the General Conference and a 45-member General Council for Strategy and Oversight (GCSO). The GCSO would replace the Connectional Table that currently works to help coordinate the denomination's ministries and resources.

The reorganization plan originated with the Interim Operations Team, eight laity and clergy working with denominational leaders to implement the Call to Action recommendations. The Connectional Table refined and endorsed the team's recommendations in July.

"The proposed changes are all focused on investing as much talent, time and money as possible on the essential work of creating and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations," says Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, Chair of the Interim Operations Team.

Expressions of support and of concern have been heard from various groups. The Iowa and Louisiana General Conference delegations have announced their support of the principles and directions in the Bishops' statement (see umccalltoaction.org). Some respondents affirm the idea of a full-time COB President; others do not. Leaders of five groups that advocate in behalf several racial/ethnic constituencies caution that the proposed restructuring "minimizes and will exclude the participation of racial/ethnic persons, and works against the principle of inclusiveness that we see as one of the important values our church has to offer." Members of the denomination's unofficial caucuses Good News and the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) have also weighed in.

A Study Guide for persons interested in considering and reflecting on the Call to Action is available in English, French and Portuguese. This and other information is available at umccalltoaction.org.

– UMNewScope, January 4, 2012

+ *Views on Restructuring Proposals*

One proposal that hovers near the top of the controversy list as The UMC approaches this spring's General Conference is the proposed restructure of the denomination, including consolidating nine of the church's 13 general agencies under a 15-member board. The 2012 General Conference will have final say on the proposed changes when it meets Apr. 24 –May 4 in Tampa, Fla. However, the proposals already are drawing interest from UM groups across the theological spectrum, and those groups will be out in force at General Conference to advocate their points of view.

Legislation to restructure the denomination originated with the Call to Action process, with the goal of addressing four decades of declining UM membership in the U.S.

Almost everyone agrees the denomination needs to change. Where views differ is how best to go about it. Leaders of some of the denomination's unofficial caucus groups have expressed concern that the recommended restructuring will lessen the church's commitment to ethnic diversity and minimize programs that foster church growth, particularly among people of color. Leaders of other unofficial caucus groups see the restructuring as a cost-saving measure that will put more focus on local congregations.

Progressives and evangelicals do share some concerns about the restructuring. Leaders of both Good News and Methodist Federation for Social Action criticized the Call to Action plan for not offering enough representation to church members in the central conferences—church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

– Heather Hahn, United Methodist News Service (UMNS); as reported in UMNewScope, January 18, 2012.

+ *Disparate Groups Voice Concerns about Guaranteed Appointment Legislation*

The Study of Ministry Commission has drafted legislation to alter "security of appointment" for elders—also known as guaranteed appointment—a move endorsed by Call to Action leaders. The Methodist Federation for Social Action and Good News join together in opposing the proposed legislation.

The Study of Ministry Commission, in its report, said the practice is not financially sustainable and "limits the ability of the church to respond to the primacy of missional needs." An earlier report estimated there are 784 more U.S. clergy than positions needed in the church.

The commission has submitted legislation that would allow bishops and cabinets to give an elder in good standing a less than full-time appointment. The legislation also would permit bishops and their cabinets, with the approval of their boards of ordained ministry and annual conference's executive session, to put elders on unpaid transitional leave for up to 24 months. Clergy on transitional leave would be able to participate in their conference health program through their own contributions.

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, vice president and general manager of the denomination-wide evangelical caucus Good News, said he fears the current legislation offers too few protections for clergy. "At Good News, over the years we've become aware of numerous stories of pastors who are either arbitrarily denied an appointment or appointed to a much lower position simply because the bishop or [district] superintendent didn't like their theology," he said.

The Rev. Steve Clunn, Methodist Federation for Social Action's coalition coordinator, voiced a slightly different concern. "For us, the big question has been: 'Why do we give more power to bishops in terms of appointment of clergy, when they are not using the power they have now?'" he said. "If there are clergy who are ineffective now, they have the right and responsibility to take that to the [conference] board of ordained ministry to work on to either help that clergy person become more effective or to help them find a new vocation."

– Heather Hahn, UMNS, as reported in UMNewScope, January 18, 2012

+ *Call to Action Comments and Reactions*

“We can have strong episcopal leadership while preserving our democratic decision-making if we pay attention to what is ahead of us,” says Jay Brim, lay leader of the Southwest Texas Annual Conference and chair of the Connectional Table’s Legislative Task Force. “We need our best and brightest clergy consecrated to leading the spiritual and temporal affairs of this denomination, and we need to make the job doable for those we choose for the position. We also need to consider whether we are giving them useful tools for the job while tying their hands with the many roadblocks to centralized authority we have erected over the years.”

- “The best [general] agencies have been adapting over the last several years and are doing much better at serving the mission of the church. I am convinced that the Call to Action legislation will accelerate those positive changes and open up new opportunities for fruitful and effective general agencies in the 21st century. It is no longer 1972. We need change.” – Bishop Scott Jones, Kansas Area

- “We want visionary leadership from our bishops and other leaders, but we don’t trust them with the power to better enable effective leadership. Some clergy aren’t certain they want laity who are strong in opinions and actions,” says Oklahoma Conference Lay Leader Judy Benson. “How do we get beyond wrongs suffered and think instead in terms of trust and cooperation?”

- “The first Methodists . . . accomplished amazing ministry in a very difficult socio-economic and religious context. I think this institutional memory is what pains so many of us who lead in twenty-first century American United Methodism. . . the Call to Action research put a crystal clear spotlight on our lack of vitality at the corner of Main and Church Street as well as our lack of institutional effectiveness at our judicatory headquarters. . . Could it be that in the United Methodist Church just as in the life of an individual follower of Jesus, change begins with confession and repentance?” – Jorge Acevedo, Lead Pastor of Grace Church (a multi-site UM congregation), Cape Coral, Fort Myers Shores and Fort Myers, FL

- “What will be the Church’s Damascus Road experience? The experience that changes us so that we press on toward a Spirit-filled church that captures the hearts and imaginations and baptizes the world with grace and hope? – Bishop John Schol, Baltimore–Washington Conference

– UMNesScope, January 4, 2012

(UM) Bishops 4% Budget Reduction Recommended for Bishops

[Note: We believe this is a good start. Along with this measure, we would support the imposition of term limits on bishops of two four year terms after which they would return to local church ministry or retire. In addition we support the further reduction of bishops to a proportionate level of the membership lost in the denomination over the past 42 years.]

General Conference will take up a recommended 2013–16 budget of more than \$90 million to support The UMC’s 157 active and retired bishops. The Episcopal Fund, paid for by congregational giving, supports the salaries, housing, travel and other expenses of active bishops as well as the salaries and benefits of some of their support staff. The fund also provides for retired bishops, surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops.

The proposed budget—which the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) set (with input from the bishops) at \$90,336,000—represents a decrease of nearly \$4 million, or about 4% percent, from the budget for 2009–12. The suggested cut is part of a number of budget reductions GCFA has proposed for general church operations.

The proposed cutbacks come after decades of declining membership in the U.S. GCFA also projects that total giving, exclusive of debt payments and local church benevolences, will flatten in the coming four years. The U.S. membership supports more than 95% of what the denomination budgets to support general church ministries around the world.

Meeting the bishops’ expenses will require drawing down \$6 million from the Episcopal Fund’s reserves, Los Angeles Area Bishop Mary Ann Swenson told the Council of Bishops at its fall meeting Nov. 4. Swenson is the chair of the finance committee of the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops has accumulated about \$12 million in reserves from cost savings over the past seven years.

The Episcopal Fund is one of The UMC’s seven apportioned funds that support general church operations; Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe; historically black UM-related colleges and universities in the U.S.; and ministerial education. GCFA has submitted to General Conference a total budget of \$603 million for all seven apportioned funds. Factors that go into budget projections include church membership, inflation, per-capita disposable income, “giving elasticity” (percent of giving from increased revenue), net spending and the U.S. gross domestic product.

The UMC now has 48 active bishops and 69 retired bishops in the U.S. In the central conferences of Africa, Europe and the Philippines, the denomination has 17 active and 23 retired bishops. At present, retired bishops are temporarily serving in two episcopal areas in the central conferences and one episcopal area in the U.S. The 2012 General Conference will

consider proposals to eliminate three episcopal areas – that is, three bishop positions – in the U.S. and add a new episcopal area in the rapidly growing Democratic Republic of Congo. But until General Conference votes on the decision, the Episcopal Fund budget does not reflect any of these changes, said Sharon Dean, GCFA spokesperson.

The full financial impact on the denomination from the proposals to eliminate episcopal areas is uncertain. Dean said that using today's costs as a measurement, the estimate over four years for a residential bishop's office in the United States is about \$1.25 million. Using the same numbers, the estimated cost for four years for a central conference residential bishop is about \$750,000.

– Heather Hahn, UMNS, as reported in UMNewScope, November 30, 2011

Homosexuality. 2,000-plus chaplains saying 'no' to Pentagon

[Note: Despite the fact that this came out in October of last year, it is related to the recent mandate to provide health care providers to make available birth control and medicine designed to induce abortion. These are encroachments on our religious freedoms. The following reflects the difficult decisions that active duty chaplains need to make. – AOM]

Despite a recent Pentagon directive, a coalition of chaplain endorsers that represents more than 2,000 military ministers has pledged not to perform same-sex "wedding" ceremonies under any circumstances.

Members the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty are concerned about the memorandum issued by the Pentagon September 30 that authorizes military chaplains to perform same-sex "marriage" ceremonies and military chapel facilities to be used for "any private ceremony."

Col. Ron Crews (USA-Ret.), who served as a chaplain for 28 years, is executive director of the Alliance. He says his coalition is joining the Catholic Archdiocese for Military Services to say "no" to the directive."They made a very strong statement saying that no Catholic chaplains serving in the military will participate in any same-sex ceremonies at any chapels. We appreciate that strong stand," he shares. "So we just wanted to let the Department of Defense know that it's not only the Catholic chaplains, but that some 2,000 chaplains who come from evangelical backgrounds are saying our chaplains will not participate in same-sex ceremonies in the military."

Crews says the Alliance is once again calling on Congress to enact a right of conscience clause in the revised code to ensure that no American service members are forced to deny what the Bible says about homosexuality.

Last week a spokesman for the Catholic Archdiocese for Military Services said "no Catholic chaplain is authorized to perform a same-sex wedding under any circumstances," and pointed out that the Pentagon's new policy "appears to ignore the Defense of Marriage Act, which was signed into law 15 years ago and remains in effect." There are approximately 300 Roman Catholic priests certified for active-duty military service.

– E-mail received October 12, 2011.

(UM) Women/Women's Issues UMs Join Tar Sands Action for Environmental Justice

[Note: This reflects how your dollars are being used. This is political activism that serves to stifle the creation of jobs and diminishes energy independence for our country during problematic times in the international sphere. – AOM]

UM Women's Green Team members, along with UMs from Maryland, converged on the White House on Sunday, Nov. 6, with over 10,000 others to press President Obama to block construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. The project, contracted by the company TransCanada, would transport crude oil 1,700 miles from the Tar Sands of Alberta, Canada, to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico. Those against it argue it would deface the natural landscapes of the Tar Sands and the Nebraska Sandhills, destroy indigenous Canadians' communities, and raise carbon dioxide levels to dangerous realms. If the pipeline leaks or is not secured properly, it could contaminate vast freshwater aquifers like the Ollagala in Nebraska, making it undrinkable. Participants rallied in Lafayette Square Park in Washington, D.C., before standing shoulder to shoulder around the White House, with enough people to encircle it five times.

The Tar Sands Action, organized by environmentalist and UM Bill McKibben, was a follow-up to a civil disobedience event for the same cause at which 1,252 people were arrested, including UM and Green Team member Pamela Sparr, who was also in attendance at Sunday's event. The action took place during the World Council of Churches' North American Hearing on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology, Nov. 5–11 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. In attendance was the Rev. Kathleen Stone, chaplain of the Church Center for the United Nations and a staff member of UM Women. She saw the Tar Sands firsthand and met with those affected by economic, health and ecological problems caused by the pipeline in Ft. McMurray, Alberta. After hearing from speakers, the participants split off into groups and peacefully marched and surrounded the White House, from the front of Pennsylvania Avenue to the bottom of the South Lawn. A group helped carry a giant

inflated tube reading “STOP THE PIPELINE,” symbolizing the actual tubes that would carry thousands of gallons of oil through the middle of the United States and Canada.

– Leigh Rogers, UM Women, as reported in UMNewScope, December 7, 2011
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The eternal stars shine out as soon as it is dark enough. – Thomas Carlyle

Global Outlook

A backbone is better than a wishbone. — Pat Ash, Maryland Heights, Missouri, as quoted in Guidepost
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Egypt. Bloody Sunday in Cairo

An October 12, 2011 attack on Coptic demonstrators left some 25 Christians dead and hundreds wounded. It also left foreign observers confused, as was reflected in a very disturbing White House statement. There were three separate scenes that took place in Cairo’s streets that, while related, must be analyzed separately if one wants to understand current Egyptian realities.

– The first is the Coptic march itself. Originating in the historic Coptic neighborhood of Shubra and motivated by the recent church burning in Aswan, the demonstration was organized by the recently formed Christian “Maspero Youth Union” (MYU). This is not their parents’ group: This youth group rejects the Dhimmite mentality perfected by their elders. Angered by continuous persecution because of religion, and primarily made up of poorer Copts, MYU is both well organized and proud of its Christianity, as can be seen in its symbols and slogans.

The event drew the occasional Muslim supporter, but the overall picture is that of a Christian-pride march. It is overwhelmingly and self-consciously Christian, with young people holding crosses raised to the sky and shouting “Raise your head up high, you are a Copt.” Passing through Muslim-majority neighborhoods, the demonstration’s bold display angered Muslim locals who might tolerate Copts as second-class citizens, but not Copts like these: proud and on the march. In the El Qolaly and close to the Abdeen neighborhood, the demonstrators were attacked by rocks. This was an almost exact replay of a March 9 protest in which the same Christian group had protested an earlier church burning. Should the Christian youth have known better and not marched? Maybe. But these are fearless young people. They took their chances and tested the limits of the “Arab Spring.”

– Scene two was at the TV headquarters, where the marchers arrived to find themselves face to face with the army. The army’s orders were clear: No one was to be allowed to occupy this area and the protesters would be dispersed. Was there an order to kill? No, it was unfortunately much worse than that: The officers lost control of their troops. As Andy points out, this is no professional army. Formed of conscripts, the lower ranks are a reflection of Egyptian society.

Two videos posted on YouTube help us understand what took place. The first is from a couple of days before, depicting an army crackdown on a smaller Christian protest. It shows a frightening scene in which a couple of soldiers beat a protester. Their officer, satisfied, attempts to stop them from continuing the beatings. For the next two minutes, the video shows the officer moving back and forth between the soldiers, stopping the one on the left, only to find the one on the right punching the poor kid. When he moves to stop the soldier on the right, the one on the left resumes the beating. New soldiers arrive on the scene and they join the party. Not only were the officer’s commands ignored, the soldiers continued the beating even after the officer slapped one of them.

The second video was shot after the Sunday massacre. That night, the soldiers were put on army buses back to their barracks. In the video, a soldier appears at a bus window and boasts to the gathered Muslim onlookers that he shot a protester in the chest. He is cheered and one bystander tells him, “By God you are a man.” The worst part of course is that most of the killing was not even by bullets, but by armored vehicles that... crushed Christians under their treads.

– The propaganda war after the massacre brought forth scene three. Egyptian state TV was in a state of frenzied advocacy, with one anchor calling on the good people of Egypt to turn out to defend their army from Christian attacks. The breaking-news headline claimed that at least three soldiers were killed by Copts; on the air, one interviewed soldier called the Copts “sons of dogs.” Most Egyptian channels and newspapers reported a fabricated statement attributed to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pledging to send American troops to protect the Christians.

Wahhabi or Salafi TV stations played their part, claiming that Christians had burned the Quran at Maspero. Naturally,

pious Muslims were encouraged to take to the streets; and they did. The attacks that took place after this were not conducted only by regular Muslims in the neighborhood, but by Islamist hardliners as well. Islamist slogans were chanted and a number of attacks on Christian bystanders were reported, as well as an attempt to storm the Coptic hospital where the dead and wounded were taken.

On Monday, the Christians' funerals took place, and as the procession left the cathedral for the cemetery, further sectarian clashes occurred. State TV retracted its claim of Sunday, saying that no soldiers were killed after all and the earlier report had been fabricated. Unfortunately, this correction seemed not to have reached the White House, which expressed President Obama's concern for the "tragic loss of life among demonstrators and security forces," adding that "now is a time for restraint on all sides."

Perhaps I ought to join the president in his concern and call for restraint: I call upon the security forces to refrain from killing Christians, and upon Christians to refrain from dying.

– By Samuel Tadros, posted on October 12, 2011. Samuel Tadros is a research fellow of the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom.

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Nelson Bell, Father-in-Law to Billy Graham, also was committed to working for renewal within his (Presbyterian) denomination. His daughter Ruth talked about the influence her father had over her husband, *"Over the years, Bill saw that to retreat is not a way to fight a battle. When things get difficult, you don't quit your church and join another. This is daddy's firm policy: you take a stand, you defend the faith, but you don't retreat."*