

# Monthly Update

March 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This edition of the “Monthly Update” continues with a disproportionate amount of focus on the recent decision by the Boy Scouts of America (now deferred until May) to change its policy on accepting openly homosexual members and scoutmasters. Other information which we have on events in Nigeria and the Philippines has been deferred to the April Update. We regret that a lack of space precluded our printing it in this issue.

I believe that you will find this informative and helpful in knowing the myriad of things happening in our United Methodist Church – and how our denominational employees affect events going on in the United States as a whole and other events around the world. Of especial concern is our support of those hostile to Israel; if we do not continue to support “God’s chosen people” and that country, we risk His judgment against us.

I am gratified by not only your prayers and financial support of our ministry, but also by the reassuring words you write to us. From one of our faithful supporters in Wilmington, North Carolina, “I read my newsletter as soon as I get it to see what is happening.” From Duluth, Minnesota, “I want to thank you for everything, especially your devotion and dedication. I pray every day that the Lord’s will will prevail...” From the Northern Illinois Conference, “Concerned Methodists helped to galvanize lay member action...” From Iowa, “I wonder...if you have fliers you could send me to give to my friends or something I could copy with your permission to distribute. Besides people in my own church, some of us meet with folks from other UM churches in our area who are concerned about our Iowa conference...I would like to give them information also.” Or as from Atlanta, Texas – along with her donation letter was a note with “God Bless!”

As I had previously written – this is in reality a spiritual battle for the heart and soul of our United Methodist Church. A Presbyterian elder Susan Cyr stated a fundamental truth when she wrote, “This is not a battle which is distracting the church from its *real* ministry. *The battle over truth and falsehood is the real ministry of the church.*” (The emphasis is hers) We are “contending for the faith” of God’s truth over and against Satan’s lies couched in attractive terms and the values that have seeped into our culture.

Again, I thank the Lord for your support. Please continue to partner with us both prayerfully and financially as we “contend for the faith” as the Lord has entrusted to our care. We must be faithful to Him who has called us.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,  
Executive Director

## March 2013 Update

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

“Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!” is the most joyful Easter thought

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#### The Good Stuff.

##### **+ Easter – *Ancient traditions still influence Easter***

Christians journeying through Holy Week may be surprised to learn how some Easter traditions have evolved over the centuries. How did Easter get its name? Why are baptisms often included in services that day? What is the significance of wearing new clothes on Easter Sunday? It was not until the eighth century A.D. that Christians started using the word “Easter” to describe a day set aside to celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection. The name originally had been used in reference to a festival honoring Eastre, the Teutonic goddess of light and spring – whose symbol, by the way, was an egg. “In the early period, and even still today, it could be argued that Easter was the most important day on the church calendar,” said the

Rev. Taylor Burton-Edwards, director of worship resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

And like modern times, Easter wasn’t just another day. “There was the celebration of the Resurrection, beginning with an all-night Great Vigil,” Burton-Edwards said. The vigil continued until the early-morning baptisms and culminated with a celebration of communion, with those newly baptized receiving first.

Easter baptisms common. Baptisms have been a part of Easter since at least the second century, he noted. Even today, Easter is the primary day for baptisms in the Christian year. At some point, it may have been the only day for them. “What we know from this early period,” Burton-Edwards said, “is that in some places, persons would have been baptized early in the morning, naked, and then clothed in a white robe — a parallel to the white-robed martyrs who appear in Revelation, and a sign of both purity and resurrection.” White is the color most associated with the Resurrection of Christ and the Sundays of Easter through Pentecost, he added.

“The association (of Easter) with baptism is ancient,” Burton-Edwards said, “and is deeply connected with the development of Lent as a full 40 days by the fourth century as a final period of special and more intense preparation of candidates for baptism. “Their overall candidacy period (called the ‘catechumenate’) would have typically lasted at least three years. Lent was the ‘homestretch’ of this time,” he continued.

New clothes. The Rev. Safiyah Fosua, who directs transformational preaching ministries at the Board of Discipleship, said the idea of wearing new clothes on Easter is an old practice that has lost its meaning. New converts, she noted, wore their white baptismal robes around town for a week to symbolize their new life in Christ. “In subsequent years, those converts would not put the white robe back on but would wear new clothes to symbolize their participation in new life in Christ.”

So why do many people think they must have new clothes every Easter? Burton-Edwards suspects our “Easter-industrial complex” is a product of contemporary advertising “to make us think we should buy such things for Easter.

“Easter is still a huge feast day for the church worldwide,” he said. However, he doesn’t believe that “not having a thing to wear” keeps people out of church on Easter or any other Sunday. “They’ll come (or not) because they want to or are invited to come. It seems to me that the business of feeling like one has to have special clothes or new clothes for the occasion or else not come may be more an artifact of certain regions or social groups.”

Welcoming most important. And, Burton-Edwards contends, welcoming people is most important. “I see almost no value in thinking that by dressing down or dressing as if Easter were just another Sunday, we’re doing much of anything in the way of either welcome or evangelism,” he said. “Welcome is far more about how we treat people than what we or they wear.” Fosua echoes that perspective. “Today, it might be more meaningful for a congregation to engage in some form of ministry that would demonstrate new life than to symbolize new life in clothing.” She suggests ministries of mercy on Easter Sunday – “distributing food or clothing to communities in need, or Easter celebrations in public places with the homeless or with those distant from the stained glass.”

– By Barbara Dunlap-Berg, *United Methodist News Service (UMNS)*, April 18, 2011.

##### **+ Easter – *Easter traditions create fond memories***

Do you have a favorite Easter memory or tradition? When that question was posed on Facebook, it evoked more than 200 nostalgic, mostly-happy memories. Not surprisingly, sunrise services, special music and shiny new clothes topped many lists. Naomi Craighead-Dekker remembered the potluck breakfast that followed the sunrise service in Bergen Park, Colo. “Each family would bring out the camping gear and make breakfast, usually cooked over an open fire. My dad had a waffle iron that could be used on a woodstove or over a campfire. ... We still have that waffle iron, and every time we use it, we tell the kids and grandkids the story.”

Tom Lutz, now of Newberg, Ore., remembered a “shocking awakening” on Easter 1951 when he was 10. “My semi-invalid grandmother lived with us. At 6 a.m., a small brass ensemble showed up in our driveway and played several traditional Easter hymns.”

Rick McGehee, a member of Grace United Methodist Church, Dallas, looked back two decades to his first sunrise service. “Our congregation had outgrown (its) little building and had broken ground for where the new building now stands. That Easter morning we had a sunrise service, just standing out there in ... a field, just praying, singing, praising and thanking God. I don't think I'll ever forget it!” In Pandacan, Manila, in the Philippines, church families in Sergei Collera's neighborhood “always go treasure hunting, and the eggs are the treasure. After that, we will have a service,” he explained.

Redlands United Methodist Church, Grand Junction, Colo., has a “breathtaking” Easter sunrise service on a Colorado National Monument overlook, said Kristy Russell Armour. Chicken wire covers a large wooden cross. “During the service, we go up to the altar and put fresh flowers into the chicken wire. It becomes a living cross, and it is beautiful.”

Bonnets and baptisms. As worshippers gather in church buildings later on Easter morning, many will find lilies adorning the sanctuary and many people wearing their “Sunday best.”

“I like seeing all the Easter bonnets on the little girls, even some adults,” wrote Angie Walts Groth, Concord Trinity United Methodist Church, St. Louis. “In my area of the country, no one wears hats to church anymore. Except at Easter!”

Jamie Lemke Barrand, Gobin Memorial United Methodist Church, Greencastle, Ind., remembers the dresses her mom sewed in 1974. “My mom made us — my twin sister Jodi and me — beautiful dresses one year. They were down to our ankles and had blue velvet sashes. We always got new dresses for Easter, but that one my mom made was always my favorite.”

Kevin E. Beard, East Lansing, Mich., told of “standing in front of the big blue spruce with my sisters for the obligatory Easter photo.” As a 10-year-old, Twila Burchette, now of Pelzer, S.C., chose Easter Sunday for her baptism at Marshville (N.C.) United Methodist Church, “because this is the day God gave each of us a new beginning.”

Easter births, marriages and deaths were also mentioned.

In 2007, Patricia Hooton stole the show at the Vanceboro (N.C.) United Methodist Church's Easter egg hunt. She went into labor with her third child — son David — now 4. “My dad, now deceased, was ... born on Easter Sunday in 1936,” said Amy Smith Costin, Kenansville, N.C. “So, Easter has always been my favorite holiday.”

The Rev. Helen K. Dukes, retired from the West Ohio Annual (regional) Conference, was married on Easter Sunday. “We were starting a new life and wanted it grounded in Christ,” she said.

Easter 2005 was bittersweet for Tinotenda Yvonne Chibudu, whose mother died that year on Good Friday.

From ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’ to Handel's ‘Messiah’ a fond memory for Ann Rosson Niver was singing in the children's choir at Ardmore, Tennessee United Methodist Church. “I remember getting up early for Easter sunrise service and donning our freshly starched and ironed white choir robes,” she said. “We would march into the sanctuary in front of the adult choir members. We felt so grown up and so special standing in front of the congregation singing the traditional Easter hymns as only children can sing them.”

“It is not Easter unless ‘Because He Lives’ is sung,” declared Gene E. LeGrand, Sevierville, Tennessee. Among other favorites are “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” and “Up from the Grave He Arose.”

Remembering her 1970s youth in Norman, Okla., Ashley Broce Hanna wrote about “shaking in our pinchy new shoes as St. Stephen's (United Methodist Church) blasted ‘Jesus Christ, Superstar's’ Crucifixion section.”

At Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Carrollton, Texas, anyone who wishes to do so sings the “Hallelujah Chorus” with the choir. “Extra sheet music is at the ready,” Amy Forbus said. “It's a wonderful experience.”

“Our choir always ends the service with Handel's ‘Hallelujah Chorus,’” said Sandra McPherson, Gilbert, Ariz. “It gives me goose bumps every time. I love it.”

Times to remember, give thanks.

Godfrey Kudzai Marange, now of Harare, Zimbabwe, loved Easter dramas at Hilltop United Methodist Church in Mutare. “The plays were masterpieces,” he said. Making Resurrection cookies with her children is a treat for Shannon Sattler Fromke of First United Methodist Church, Watertown, S.D.

Others mentioned Easter egg bread and lamb cake. While big family gatherings follow worship for many, others create different traditions. After her divorce, Rae Williams, Clearwater, Fla., made Easter baskets for her also-single friends. “On Easter, my daughter and I would go around and distribute them. I absolutely loved doing this, and it taught my daughter the value of giving.”

And for many, Easter is a time for prayer.

In Ankeny, Iowa, First United Methodist Church has a prayer vigil from Good Friday through Easter morning. “To know there is someone praying in the chapel that entire time (is) an awesome experience,” Dawn Green said.

Pilot Mutsamwira of Nyanga, Zimbabwe, wrote his prayer: “Oh, Lord, if you can help me this Easter to remember the less fortunate and pray and pray.”

“The Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire needs your prayer for the country,” said Eloi Frejus. Ceil McClellan, who attends Asbury United Methodist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas, creates memories for her granddaughter Maddi. Every Easter they go to the

church's prayer garden to release balloons with a card from Maddi to her dad who died when she was 9. she watches the balloons until they are out of sight.

For many who responded, proclaiming, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!" is the most joyful Easter memory. "That always catches my heart," said William Listwan of Drew United Methodist Church, Carmel, N.Y.

– By Barbara Dunlap-Berg, *United Methodist News Service* (UMNS), April 18, 2011.  
Dunlap-Berg is internal content editor for United Methodist Communications.

### **Of Interest.**

#### **+ *The Dawn of United Methodist Renewal* by Dr. Bill Bouknight**

As Bishop Lindsey Davis spoke at the 2013 Congress on Evangelism, one could discern the early flickering of light in the longed-for dawning of United Methodist renewal. Instead of the customary episcopal attention to the latest cultural fad or political correctness, Bishop Davis focused on biblical truth and Wesleyan orthodoxy. He noted the lack of evangelistic zeal in the church. He said, "We don't even call lost people 'lost' anymore." "We need deep change," he said. He noted that one key to a growing church is to plant new congregations. He cited the three growing annual conferences in the U.S. as all having "aggressively planted new faith communities." He noted that most of these new church plants are led by lay people or part-time local pastors. All of that is true and most helpful. – Confessing Movement newsletter, February 2013

#### **+ *Langford's Proposal on Apportionment Payment***

The Rev. Andy Langford of Concord, NC, has been a delegate to the last five General Conferences and currently serves on the General Church Connectional Table. He is proposing that local UM congregations no longer pay all apportionment items; instead, he suggests that they designate their payments to UM funds and agencies that are effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ. Langford calls this method of payment "Church-Directed Allocation." He notes that this method is allowed by the Book of Discipline. Paragraph 812 calls for "payment in full of these apportionments" but IT DOES NOT SAY THAT PAYMENT IN FULL OF EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM IS REQUIRED. [emphasis in the original. – AOM] Langford notes that UM congregations outside the U.S. are currently paying only to the Episcopal Fund and not to the other six general church funds.

Langford's congregation in 2014 will pay only the Episcopal and Jurisdictional Administration Fund apportionments in full, but will pay nothing toward the other six general church apportionments.

– Confessing Movement newsletter, February 2013

### **(UM) General Board of Church and Society (GBCS).**

#### **+ *United Methodist Agencies Back Homosexual Scoutmasters***

You probably have already read that the Boy Scouts, under pressure from corporate sponsors themselves pressured by liberal groups, are next week reconsidering their longtime ban on homosexual Scoutmasters. Sadly, both the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the Commission on United Methodist Men are backing this shift in Boy Scout policy. No surprise from the lobby office, but United Methodist Men previously defended the Boy Scout policy. These two church agencies issued recent news releases to ensure their views were widely known. The Associated Press accordingly reported that The United Methodist Church is backing homosexual Scoutmasters, even though only the General Conference speaks for our church, and General Conference has never endorsed homosexual Scoutmasters.

These United Methodist officials cite our church policies against "discrimination" without noting that our church also prohibits actively homosexual clergy and disapproves of homosexual behavior. Our church bureaucrats are often selective in the church teachings they choose to acknowledge. (In a later statement, United Methodist Men emphasized the new proposed Scout policy would let local sponsoring churches decide their own standard.)

United Methodist congregations are among the largest sponsors of Boy Scouts. If you disagree with how United Methodist agencies are representing our church on this issue, contact the Boy Scouts directly with your views: Wayne Brock, Chief Scout Executive, at 972-580-2004, 972-580-2000, or by email at Wayne.Brock@Scouting.org.

Some day United Methodism will have church officials in the U.S. who will publicly defend our church's biblical beliefs. Until then, let's pray and work for a more accountable church bureaucracy.

[Note: A more complete analysis of the action taken by the United Methodist Men is contained later in that section. I met with Gil Hanke personally to get more information and express my concern to him. He had been misreported. – AOM]

— The Institute on Religion and Democracy, February 20, 2013

### **+ Social Action Agency Welcomes Gun Violence Report**

The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) welcomed the findings released Feb. 7 by the U.S. House of Representatives' Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, which support Vice President Joe Biden's task force in proposing a strong plan to reduce gun violence in the United States. The agency urged Congress "to work on this issue immediately so that no more lives are lost to such unnecessary tragedies." [Note: It is not surprising the GBCS would take this position – one which leads toward bigger government and encroachment on our constitutional rights. – AOM]

— UMNS, as reported in the UMNewScope, February 20, 2013

### **Homosexuality.**

#### **+ Sign the petition to encourage Boy Scout leaders to stand strong with honor against bullying by corporate elites and activists.**

Character. Courage. Throughout the history of the Boy Scouts of America, character and courage have been two traits that could be counted on by the venerable organization. Pressed from any side, the Boy Scouts have kept their moral compass aligned as well as they have their magnetic ones. Recently, however, some within the organization have indicated that they are willing to abandon these values to advance a political agenda.

Protected by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2000, the Scouts completed an in-depth study and reiterated last year the wisdom of keeping their longstanding policy on homosexual Scout leaders and members. The study found that scouting parents overwhelmingly want the organization to respect their right to discuss these sexual topics with their children – and not bring this contentious issue into Scouting.

Even with this strong footing, some among the BSA board of directors -- pressured by corporate elites and homosexual activists - are seeking to turn the organization into a laboratory for social experimentation. The board's move to reverse tradition and abandon the policy on homosexuality within Scouting was stalled due to a public outcry from hundreds of thousands of Americans like you. Many parents asked the board, "Why should we change what has been taught to these boys for the last 103 years?" Unwilling to make a principled stand, the BSA board decided in February to put the decision to a vote of approximately 1400 National Council members in late May.

This is where you can help. Please join us [i.e., the Family Research Council] in signing our petition, which we will deliver to each of the roughly 290 Scout Councils across the nation. These Councils represent the heart of Scouting, and are people who will be most impacted by an abandonment of the BSA policy on homosexuality. These faithful workers need to know that the communities of America will stand with them.

Your voice can help the Scouts continue to show character and courage in the face of adversity.

Will you stand with them?

Sign the petition to encourage Boy Scout leaders to stand strong with honor against bullying by corporate elites and activists. [[Go the FRC website at frc.org](http://www.frc.org)]

— Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council; February 21, 2013; 801 G Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001.

#### **+ IRD Commends Southern Baptist, Catholic Support for Current Boy Scouts Policy**

"Most who are pressuring the Boy Scouts of America do not care about the organization.

It is just another casualty in their culture war." – Bart Gingerich, IRD

Washington, DC—Proposed changes to the Boy Scouts of America's existing policy barring homosexuals from Scout leadership positions have met with significantly differing responses from U.S. churches. Most Boy Scout troops in the U.S. are hosted by churches. The change faces opposition within the Scouting community and on the grassroots level. Families threaten to leave the program entirely. Churches, which support BSA through donations and their facilities, have weighed in as well. President and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee Frank Page has expressed dismay, asserting that the Boy Scouts of America is "wilting under pressure from some of their corporate sponsors..." The Assemblies of God said they were "saddened and disappointed" about the proposed changes. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting opposes the new proposed policy.

Sadly, officials of the United Methodist Church Board of Church and Society and United Methodist Men both offered support for the proposed new scout policy, which would allow local groups to determine their own stance on homosexuality. Neither church agency mentioned that the United Methodist Book of Discipline calls homosexual practice "incompatible with Christian teaching."

IRD Researcher and former Eagle Scout Bart Gingerich commented: “BSA policy forbidding openly gay leaders, volunteers, and scouts reflects the opinion of the vast majority of active parents and Scouting leadership. As an Eagle Scout I was shocked and saddened to hear the announcement that the Boy Scouts were considering a change to this longstanding standard. “The LGBT champions on corporate boards pressuring the Boy Scouts have no love for the organization. If the organization keeps its current standards, it loses major corporate donors. If the Scouts change their policy, then they are going to lose grassroots participation via facilities, membership, and funds from many families and churches. Either way the organization is hurt badly.

“For over a century now, the Boy Scouts have sacrificially given men and boys impressive skill sets, leadership training, outdoors experience, and fond memories. Almost every community in the United States has been blessed by service projects carried out by diligent Scouts. Now a new generation of iconoclasts seeks to destroy this heritage in their crusade against all things patriotic, faith-based and masculine. Most who are pressuring the Boy Scouts of America do not care about the organization. It is just another casualty in their culture war.”

— The Institute on Religion and Democracy

**(UM) Men** Following is the text of a summary I had sent out after I had arranged to meet with Mr. Gil Hanke, the president of the General Council on United Methodist Men (GCUMM), to express concerns over apparent support of changing the policy of the Boy Scouts of America toward homosexuality. – AOM

### **Meeting with Gil Hanke February 5, 2013**

I arranged to meet with Gil Hanke in his office at the General Council on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) in Nashville, Tennessee. I had asked for “five or at the most ten minutes” of his time; we met for forty minutes.

I introduced myself, told him that I was president of the Gateway District of the UMM [in the North Carolina Conference], and had informed our conference president Charlie Gray that I was planning to meet with him (i.e, Gil). I also told him that I was an Eagle Scout (Sam Houston Area Council in Houston, Texas). He knew that I was president of Concerned Methodists and commented that “he received and read our information.”

I expressed my concern of what I had learned of the GCUMM’s apparent position on the decision of the Boy Scouts of America regarding taking into membership and into leadership positions those who were “openly homosexual” and the deleterious effect it would have on the scouting movement if it were adopted. He then reassured me that what he had said had been misrepresented in the media. The scouting executive had met with him (Gil) in his office to tell him of the change they were considering. After hearing what he had to say, Gil told him that he affirmed him in his position and understood why he felt it necessary to have to make that decision.

Gil then printed two papers outlining what had happened and said that the group of 100 representatives of the BSA’s “Religious Relationship Task Force” (RRTF) at their meeting had unanimously voted to urge the BSA’s executive board to delay their decision and allow input from others. It is interesting that the RRTF is composed of representatives from those groups that host chapters of the scouts and includes faiths all the way from the LDS (Mormons – that host the most chapters), United Methodists (second largest number of chapters), Catholics, Southern Baptists to those from the Jewish and Muslim communities. These faith groups account for 70% of the BSA’s units and 63% of BSA’s membership. Excerpts from both papers Gil had given me are included below.

I gave Gil two of the books I had authored: *Misguided Shepherds* and *Spiritually Speaking*. I pointed out that the first book had a section on the practice of homosexuality while the second dealt with consequences of sexual immorality (as did *Misguided Shepherds*). I spoke about the position that Dr. Joe Harris took several years ago when the BSA was sued over their position on the homosexual issue – and it made it to the Supreme Court: the GCUMM had filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the Boy Scouts and against acquiescing to the homosexual lobby, while the UM’s General Board of Church and Society had filed a brief supporting the opposite side. I told Gil, “It is like the United Methodist Church is schizophrenic on this issue. I then reemphasized that the Bible from Genesis to Jude is negative or condemning of this practice – as discussed in my book *Misguided Shepherds* and that to compromise on this issue was to go against our orthodox Christian faith – that compromise strikes at the very heart of who we are as Christians.”

I further reiterated to Gil that, as a former Army officer, I found that in combat you will have a key battle that will determine the outcome of a war. In our battle for renewal in the United Methodist Church, even though the authority of Scripture and the Person and Work of Jesus Christ are fundamental, the key issue is that of homosexual normalization; if we ever lose that battle, we lose the United Methodist Church as far as its being a true Christian church and we will see

accelerated decline in the denomination.

In conclusion, I told Gil that when this issue was before the public before, I would sometimes make the point that from an experiential perspective, to allow homosexuals to serve as scout leaders where they would physically be attracted to other scouts would be similar to my serving as a trainer for the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders and ask to shower with and bunk in the same quarters as the ladies. This would make for a tremendous amount of discomfort and be detrimental to the Boy Scouts as a whole. He reiterated that his personal view on this issue was the same as mine, but that on the board of the GCUMM (and in the office there in Nashville), were people from the whole spectrum of belief.

Sensing that I had already taken forty minutes of his time, I told him that we must end the meeting since he had other pressing issues to address. At that time, the office had received a telephone call from a reporter asking to speak with him.

I thanked him for his time; he prayed for me; I prayed for him; then I left.

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Summary of both papers Gil had given me:

**Paper 1.**

E-mail sent to Gil from Dallas by Larry W. Coppock, National Director of Scouting Ministries, GCUMM, who was attending the BSA’s “Religious Relationship Task Force (RRTF)” meeting, 1:30-3:30, DFW Marriott North, Irving, Texas, February 4, 2013.

"Chip Turner, Ft. Worth, Texas, is chair of the RRTF. The meeting was highlighted by a presentation by the National Key 3 (Wayne Perry, Tico Perez, and Wayne Brock, chief scout executive).

"Each member of the Key 3 gave a presentation citing important and compelling reasons why BSA was considering proposing a shift in its membership policy. Wayne Perry began and preceded his comments by saying all three were conservative (socially and politically, I surmised) and this proposed change was contrary to their personal beliefs. Their collective arguments were based primarily on advice from attorneys, current social and cultural climate, second-hand-personal testimonies from parents and related information....

"...Members of the RRTF (including me [i.e., Larry]) were frustrated at what appeared to be a rush to act on this issue with minimum dialogue and discussion, as this issue was never discussed or brought to us at our last official meeting in October and no conference calls in between.

"...From my discussion with the two largest faith groups, the Roman Catholics and the LDS, it was apparent there was division among their ranks. We all felt that more thoughtful and prayerful consideration should be given such an important dynamic topic that has such drastic implications for the faith community and for BSA’s future.

"As a result, the RRTF unanimously passed a motion asking BSA’s executive board to delay a decision and allow input and participation from the RRTF given that collectively we account for 70% of the BSA’s charter organizations."

**[As we know from later news releases, the board did in fact delay their decision. – AOM]**

**Paper 2.** Press release by Heather Hahn, *United Methodist News Service*:

"UMM’s top leader said he has faced criticism, questions, and confusion since releasing a statement on Jan. 29 “affirming how changes proposed by the Boy Scouts of America would be implemented.....

"The Boy Scouts of America is considering ending the national membership standard that excludes gay scouts and leaders and leaving that particular question up to charter organizations. The furor that followed Hanke’s statement on the proposed changes by the Boy Scouts of America prompted him to make another public statement on Jan. 31 emphasizing two points:

1. United Methodist Men endorsed the implementation of the proposed model because it allows local churches to continue to make decisions and operate as they are.
2. United Methodist Men played no part in helping Boy Scouts of America formulate the proposed changes. The agency was only informed of the proposal."

[He also clarified that] that United Methodist Men leaders did not seek the proposed change to the Boy Scouts of America’s policy...[Gil reiterated that the idea that] the way some members read earlier statements that suggested the General Council on United Methodist Men has endorsed the Boy Scouts of America's proposed changes. That is not the case....

"What Hanke does endorse is moving the responsibility for selecting leaders and scouts to the local church level..."

"As of 2012, 6,700 United Methodist congregations served 363,876 young people through 10,868 Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews. The United Methodist Church hosts more Cub Scout packs than any other religious group.

In his statement, Gil had iterated, "My statements were designed to assure members of the UMC that if BSA makes this change it will not change the way scouting is conducted within our denomination...."

Gilbert C. Hanke"

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As I had told Charlie after I spoke with him following my meeting with Gil, I was reassured by what he had said and the course of our forty-minute discussion. What does leave me uneasy is the fact that the key issue of homosexual normalization strikes at the heart of our Christian faith – and in that area, we simply cannot compromise. It was Thomas

Jefferson who had said, “In matters of fashion, go with the current. In matters of principal, stand like a rock.”. This is what we must remember – and do.

I believe that to stand firm for Biblical truth is essential today – regardless of what social norms are being adopted. If we cannot stand on God’s truth, we will have lost our foundation of who we are as a Christian church, will decline, and will contribute to our country’s continued decline.

Allen O. Morris, President of the Gateway District of the United  
Methodist Men, February 10, 2013, Sent from Houston, Texas

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“The purpose of Life is a Life of Purpose.” – Robert Byrne