

Monthly Update

February 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This edition of the Monthly Update continues with issues in our United Methodist Church and across the world that a lack of space precluded our printing until now. Some stem from 2013 – but we deem them important enough to want to pass on to you the information. We also continue to address the subject of “life” since it, along with that of homosexual normalization, are key issues in our denomination and in our country. As we know, our country was founded on the “right to life” as being one of our freedoms. That of homosexuality is focal to our societal stability. This past month I had read a quote that pointed out that “no country has survived the destruction of the nuclear family headed up by marriage between a man and a woman.” We address that issue in the Update.

On the abortion issue, Brittany Farrell of the North Carolina Family Policy Council wrote an incisive piece entitled, “Remembering the Lost: 41 Years of Abortion”* for January 22, 2014:

Today, tens of thousands of Americans will brave wind and snow in our nation's capital to bring attention to the tragic murder of more than 54 million [now 56 million] children nationwide since 1973. January 22, 2014 marks the 41st anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion on demand in all 50 states. The last 41 years have been marked by unspeakable violence against society’s most innocent children, and against too many women in need of help and comfort.

In North Carolina, over 1.1 million abortions have been performed on state residents since 1973. According to the latest data from the State Center for Health Statistics, nearly 21,000 lives were ended in their mother’s wombs in 2012 alone! The vast majority of women who chose abortion were facing teen and/or single parenthood. More than 75 percent of North Carolina abortions were performed on unmarried women, while almost one-quarter of the 12,000 teen pregnancies that ended in abortion were “repeat teen pregnancies.” In order to effectively protect future generations, concerned citizens must reach out in love to the women who too often turn to abortion in times of fear, anxiety, or loneliness, or due to coercion. For ideas and examples of ways to serve abortion-minded women, tune into the North Carolina Family Policy Council's recent radio interview with Amber Lehman, CEO of First Choice Pregnancy Solutions in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Please join today with the North Carolina Family Policy Council...and pro-life citizens around the nation, as we remember the sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers who will never enter the doors of our homes, schools, churches, businesses, or government halls as family members, students, friends, ministers, doctors, employees, employers, or public servants, due to abortion. Let us also fervently pray for the day when our culture recognizes the inherent value of every human life and puts an end to this scourge on our society!

Something to think about! Please continue to partner with us as we strive to be faithful to what the Lord has called us to do.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

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March 2014 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can.

– John Wesley

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The Good Stuff. *General Douglas MacArthur*

“Nations subject to moral decay...passed into political and economic decline.”

– General Douglas MacArthur

Douglas MacArthur was born January 26, 1880. He commanded in France during World War I, was superintendent of West Point, 1919-20, and at age 30, he became the youngest Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. A four-star general, he retired in 1939, but returned in 1941 to defend the Philippines. When Japan invaded, President Roosevelt ordered him to Australia, but not before he promised “I shall return.” When General MacArthur heard of the 10,000 Filipino and American prisoners who died on the Bataan Death March, he stated, April 9, 1942: “To the weeping mothers of its dead, I can only say that the sacrifice and halo of Jesus of Nazareth has descended upon their sons, and that God will take them unto Himself.”

On October 20, 1944, General MacArthur returned with an American army and freed the Philippines, stating: “People of the Philippines: I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God our forces stand again on Philippine soil – soil consecrated in the blood of our two peoples. We have come, dedicated and committed to the task of destroying every vestige of enemy control...The hour of your redemption is here...Let the indomitable spirit of Bataan and Corregidor lead on...Let no heart be faint. Let every arm be steeled. The guidance of Divine God points the way. Follow in His name to the Holy Grail of righteous victory!”

In a radio speech broadcast from the invasion beach on returning to the Philippines, General MacArthur stated, October 20, 1944: “Strike at every favorable opportunity. For your homes and hearths, strike! For future generations of your sons and daughters, strike! In the name of your sacred dead, strike! Let no heart be faint. Let every arm be steeled. The guidance of Divine God points the way. Follow in His name to the Holy Grail of righteous victory!” General MacArthur also stated: “In war, when a commander becomes so bereft of reason and perspective that he fails to understand the dependence of arms on Divine guidance, he no longer deserves victory.”

Promoted to Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific, he received Japan’s surrender on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbor. After the World War II ended, he suggested that Youth for Christ representatives and other missionary groups go to Japan: “(In order to) provide the surest foundation for the firm establishment of democracy.”

Promoted to five-star general, he was Supreme U.N. Commander during the beginning of the Korean War, making a daring landing of troops deep behind enemy lines at Inchon and recapturing Seoul. He became at odds with President Truman who did not want to confront the Communists, so Truman made the unpopular decision to remove him. On April 19, 1951, following his tour of Korea, General MacArthur spoke to a Joint Session of Congress to announce his retirement: “I am closing my fifty-two years of military service. When I joined the Army, even before the turn of the century, it was the fulfillment of all my boyish hopes and dreams.

The world has turned over many times since I took the oath of the Plain at West Point, and the hopes and dreams have all since vanished, but I still remember the refrain of one of the most popular barracks ballads of that day, which proclaimed most proudly that old soldiers never die; they just fade away. And, like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away, an old soldier who has tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty. Good-by.”

On May 1962 Douglas MacArthur told West Point cadets: “The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training-sacrifice.

In battle and in the face of danger and death, he discloses those Divine attributes which his Maker gave when He created man in His own image.

No physical courage and no brute instinct can take the place of Divine help which alone can sustain him.

However horrible the incidents of war may be, the soldier who is called upon to offer and to give his life for his country is the noblest development of mankind.”

On January 18, 1955, a monument was dedicated to General Douglas MacArthur at the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, which had inscribed his statement: “Battles are not won by arms alone. There must exist above all else a spiritual impulse—a will to victory. In war there can be no substitute for victory.”

In 1942, he was named Father of the Year. He stated: “By profession I am a soldier and take pride in that fact. But I am prouder-ininitely prouder-to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father only builds, never destroys. The one has the potentiality of death; the other embodies creation and life. And while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle but in the home repeating with him our simple daily prayer, ‘Our Father Who Art in Heaven.’”

He also composed “A Father's Prayer” in the early days of World War II while in the Pacific:

“Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, brave enough to face himself when he

is afraid, one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory.

Build me a son whose wishes will not take the place of deeds; a son who will know Thee—and that to know himself is

the foundation stone of knowledge.

Lead him, I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here

let him learn to stand up in the storm; here let him learn compassion for those who fail...”

“Build me a son whose heart will be clear, whose goal will be high; a son who will master himself before he seeks to

master other men; one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of sense of humor, so that he may always be serious, yet never

take himself too seriously.

Give him humility, so that he may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom,

and the meekness of true strength.

Then, I, his father, will dare to whisper, ‘I have not lived in vain.’”

He warned in a speech to the Salvation Army, December 12, 1951, stating: “History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.”

– American Minute with Bill Federer; Prayers and Presidents-Inspiring Faith from Leaders of the Past; American Minute archives. AmericanMinute.com; vwww.AmericanMinute.com; Call: 314-487-4395. Also, you might wish

to visit a useful website: <http://www.biblegateway.com/> to access a treasure chest of information to include Bible reading plans such as:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/old-new-testament/today?version=NKJV>. See also the book, *Miracles in American History-32 Amazing Stories of Answered Prayer*. Permission granted by Bill Federer.

Of Interest. Change the Mascot Campaign

[Note: Jesus tells us in the Bible about "...straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel." This is one example as to how we in the United Methodist Church sometimes do just that. I was at the 2000 General Conference in Cleveland, Ohio when a petition was passed mandating that future General Conference assemblies will not be held in cities that hosted a sports team that depicted a mascot with names of Native Americans, deeming it "degrading". In selection for the site of the 2012 General Conference, Atlanta was originally chosen because of its excellent location, system of hotels, airport, and tourist facilities. It was deemed "unsuitable" because it was also the location of the Atlanta Braves sports club, and the meeting was changed to Tampa, Florida. This is home of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The term "Braves" was one that American Indians designated for themselves and is actually very complimentary; to be a Brave meant that you were unwavering in facing danger. Who is a buccaneer? It is a pirate, one who raided ships to steal its cargo and sometimes kill people. I shall leave it to you – which would have been the better location? With all of the troubles going on in our nation and in our world is this the thing that should occupy our attention? – AOM]

More than 60 DC-area clergy (including pastors from three UM churches in the DC area) have signed a letter to the NFL and Washington team owner Dan Snyder calling for DC's football team to change its name. The letter, highlighted in a radio ad from the Change the Mascot campaign, asserts that the faith leaders have a moral obligation to take a stand against "the offensive and inappropriate name of Washington's NFL team." The ad aired on Washington radio stations in the lead-up to a 2013 home game. "Faith leaders and organizations from a variety of faith backgrounds are increasingly voicing their disapproval of the team's name and making it clear that the time to change the name is now," said Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter. "These clergy leaders have sent a...message to the NFL that no group deserves to be treated as the target of a hurtful racial slur, and that Native Americans should be treated as what we are: Americans."

In the Change the Mascot ad, the narrator notes decades-long opposition to the team name given by former team owner and avowed segregationist George Preston Marshall: "This is not just a civil rights issue – it is a moral issue." The radio spot is the latest from the Oneida Indian Nation's Change the Mascot campaign, which has aired similar ads in Washington and all cities where the team has played road games throughout the NFL season.

– UMNS, as published in UMNewscope, January 8, 2014.

Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues.

+ ***Evangelicals Flock to Pro-Life Message.*** "This week's March for Life amplified how Evangelicals and Catholics with others are increasingly united in promoting a culture of life."

Washington, DC. When tens of thousands of pro-life activists gathered in the nation's capital on Wednesday, they did more than mark the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that swept away state laws restricting abortion. With a special emphasis on promoting adoption and the visible presence of new, young female leadership in the Pro-Life movement, the march began laying a foundation for wider appeal. Much credit goes to Jeanne Monahan, the new president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund who began leadership of the organization after its longtime founder passed away in 2012. New outreach to Evangelical groups offers the potential of expanding the march beyond its strong Roman Catholic base. IRD hosted a delegation of 11 Anglican bishops attending the march and also attended a pro-life service for United Methodists

featuring the United Methodist Bishop of Florida who extolled Roman Catholic teaching about the sanctity of all human life.

IRD President Mark Tooley commented: "This week's March for Life amplified how Evangelicals and Catholics with others are increasingly united in promoting a culture of life."

"Confronted by our current era that is often increasingly hostile to transcendent truths, Evangelicals and Catholics need each other now more than ever in defending the permanent, sacred things of human existence."

"Providence often responds to moments of destruction with greater exertions of redemption. Spiritual and political collaboration between Evangelicals and Catholics is a providential gift especially important in these times, for which we can all give thanks."

– Mark Tooley, IRD President, Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD); January 24, 2014.

+ ***Little Sisters of the Poor***. The Little Sisters of the Poor have won an injunction, issued by the Supreme Court, that temporarily bars the Obama administration from enforcing the HHS contraceptive mandate against them. . . .

– Trinity Communications, - P.O. Box 582, Manassas, VA 20108; www.CatholicCulture.org

+ ***The current status of abortion in the United States***

WASHINGTON – The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the federation of 50 state right-to-life affiliates and more than 3,000 local chapters, issued a new report, "The State of Abortion in America." The report summarizes key legislative developments at the state and federal levels, finds that the annual number of abortions continues to decline, and shows that a majority continue to oppose the vast majority of abortions allowed under the doctrine of *Roe v. Wade*.

"While the most recent data indicate a decrease in the annual number of abortions, tragically, more than 3,000 unborn children are still killed every day in the United States under the legal doctrine of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*," said National Right to Life President Carol Tobias. "As we observe the 41st anniversary of the twin decisions that legalized abortion in America, the pro-life movement remains committed to restoring legal protection to unborn children and providing help and support to their mothers."

As noted in the report, on the basis of the most recent reports from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and by the Guttmacher Institute (originally founded as a special research arm of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America), National Right to Life estimates that there have been more than 56 million abortions in America since 1973, the year that the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion on demand. The report also observes that after reaching an all-time high of over 1.6 million in 1990, the number of abortions performed annually in the U.S. appear to have dropped to around 1.1 million a year. This drop in the annual number of abortions can be traced to pro-life legislative efforts at the state and federal level that have raised awareness about the humanity of the unborn child. These laws not only encourage life-affirming alternatives to abortion, they seek to inform and empower women facing unexpected pregnancy. "Laws enacted at the federal and state levels have helped immensely in reversing the disturbing trend established by *Roe* and *Doe*," observed Tobias. "As just one example, it is estimated that the Hyde Amendment, which prevents the use of taxpayer dollars to fund abortions in the Medicaid program, has saved well over one million unborn children since it was first enacted in 1976."

The report also discusses National Right to Life's major legislative priority, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. The legislation breaks new ground in the fight to protect mothers and their unborn children by acknowledging the large body of scientific evidence showing that unborn children are capable of feeling excruciating pain by at least 20 weeks after fertilization and recognizing that states have compelling interest to protect these pain-capable unborn children. As discussed in the report, the NRLC model legislation has now been enacted in 10 states. In addition, a federal version of the bill has been introduced, and National Right to Life has declared it to be the organization's top legislative priority for the current Congress. "Abortion remains widely available. But after years of being told that abortion was 'the best choice' or 'their only choice,' women are learning that there are alternatives to abortion that affirm their lives and the lives of their children," added Tobias.

“The bottom line is simple: the right-to-life movement is succeeding because even after 41 years and more than 56 million abortions, the conscience of our nation knows that killing unborn children is wrong.”

– Tatiana Bergum; January 21, 2014, E: mediarelations@nrlc.org. The report itself is available from the National Right to Life Communications Department at: <http://www.nrlc.org/communications/stateofabortion> Founded in 1968, National Right to Life, the federation of 50 state right-to-life affiliates and more than 3,000 local chapters, is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots pro-life organization. Recognized as the flagship of the pro-life movement, NRLC works through legislation and education to protect innocent human life from abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide and euthanasia. Contact information: National Right to Life Committee, Inc., 512 10th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004-1401. Telephone: 202-626-8827, fax ~ 202-347-6121, website ~ www.nrlc.org.

+ *Legislative Advances*

WASHINGTON – As right-to-life activists gathered across the country to observe the 41st anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s twin decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* legalizing abortion in America, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the federation of 50 state right-to-life affiliates and more than 3,000 local chapters, noted the promise of further pro-life gains in 2014. “Recent legislative gains, coupled with increasingly pro-life public opinion and data suggesting the annual number of abortions continues to decline, gives the right-to-life movement hope for further success in 2014,” said National Right to Life President Carol Tobias. “Pro-lifers remain committed to restoring legal protection to unborn children and helping their mothers.”

A report issued by National Right to Life...“The State of Abortion in the United States” observed that on the basis of the most recent reports from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Guttmacher Institute (originally founded as a special research arm of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America), National Right to Life estimates that there have been more than 56 million abortions in America since 1973, the year that the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion on demand.

The report also discussed National Right to Life’s major legislative priority, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. The legislation breaks new ground in the fight to protect mothers and their unborn children by acknowledging the large body of scientific evidence showing that unborn children are capable of feeling excruciating pain by at least 20 weeks after fertilization and recognizing that states have compelling interest to protect these pain-capable unborn children. Ten states have enacted the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act and on June 28, 2013, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a federal version of the bill (H.R. 1797) by a 228-196 vote. Sen. Lindsey Graham introduced the bill in the Senate (S. 1670) in November. A nationwide poll of 1,003 registered voters in March 2013 conducted by The Polling Company found that 64% would support a law such as the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act prohibiting abortion after 20 weeks – when an unborn baby can feel pain – unless the life of the mother is in danger. Only 30% opposed such legislation. Women voters split 63%-31% in support of such a law; 63% of independent voters supported it.

“Pro-abortionists often say that limiting abortion would ‘take us backwards,’ but really, they are the ones who insist that society must remain locked in the Dark Ages of ignorance regarding the capacities of unborn children,” noted Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D., National Right to Life director of state legislation. “Our knowledge about the capacities of the unborn child has increased exponentially since *Roe v. Wade*, thanks in part of 4-D ultrasound and other sophisticated imaging techniques. The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act also reflects what medical science has learned about the capacity of unborn children to feel pain.”

– Tatiana Bergum; January 22, 2014, E: mediarelations@nrlc.org. Contact information: same as preceding news item.

+ *Girl Scouts USA's promotion and support for abortion advocates*

Dear Friend: This [past month] we somberly commemorated the 41 years since the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision. This is a time to remember the unborn, their mothers and fathers, and to pray for our country. It's also a time to take action.

As you may know, this time of year marks the beginning of Girl Scout cookie sales. Unfortunately, Girl Scouts USA's promotion and support for abortion advocates has only escalated over the last year – especially over the last few weeks. Girl Scouts USA continues to support women who publicly advocate for the very issues for which they claim no position. Unfortunately, GSUSA is aided in their support of women and organizations that advocate for abortion rights through the millions of dollars they collect from the licensing fees attached to every box of Girl Scout cookies produced.

Girl Scouts USA recently honored seven women who "made a difference in 2013" including Kathleen Sebelius, the controversial pro-abortion HHS Secretary who has been the public face of Obamacare. They claimed Sebelius showed "courage, confidence and character." Girl Scouts USA also promoted abortion advocate and Texas gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis as "incredible" and someone who should be considered for "Woman of the Year" for 2013.

Thousands of people have shared this information through social media and email. We are asking you to join them today as we launch an information campaign to inform the public about where the Girl Scout cookie money goes and what it supports. You can view supporting documentation at: <http://mygirlscoutcouncil.com/cookie-flier.html>.

Please consider joining the many others who have shared this information with their friends and family so they can know before they buy. Ask them to join our efforts by signing up at <http://MyGirlScoutCouncil.com>, liking our Facebook page at <http://Facebook.com/MyGirlScoutCouncil> and following us on Twitter @GirlScoutFacts.

We continue to be grateful for your great support and friendship. Thank you for everything you are doing to help spread the word.

– Sincerely,

Your Friends at MyGirlScoutCouncil; <http://MyGirlScoutCouncil.com>

Homosexuality.

+ *Same-sex Clergy Couple Marries in Seattle*

Two female UM pastors were married Dec. 7 in a ceremony at Tibbetts UMC in Seattle. The district superintendent for the two pastors officiated. The marriage marked what is a first in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference – and likely a first for the denomination. eather Hahn, UMNS, as published in UMNewscope, December 18, 2013

+ *Perspectives on Schaefer Case, Same-sex Debate*

The debate around same-gender weddings and human sexuality has heated up in The UMC following recent events that have included the defrocking of a pastor for performing the wedding of his gay son. Frank Schaefer was found guilty in a Nov. 18-19 clergy trial in the denomination's Eastern Pennsylvania Annual (regional) Conference for performing the 2007 same-sex wedding of his son. The conference board of ordained ministry met with Schaefer Dec. 19 and told him to surrender his clergy credentials. He has said he wants to remain in ministry and will appeal. Schaefer's clergy trial came a month after retired Bishop Melvin Talbert performed the wedding of two men in Alabama. The Council of Bishops, in its November meeting, directed that a complaint process be started against Talbert for violating the denomination's rules.

The recent events have sparked statements and blogs from individuals, congregations and groups around The UMC. The current and three previous presidents of The National Association of Korean UM Churches/National Caucus released a statement Dec. 15 "to express serious concerns regarding the recent developments surrounding the issue of homosexuality in the denomination." Korean-American churches, the statement says, "can no longer remain as a silent observer of the situation." The [far-left] Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA), in a Dec. 19 statement, declared that Frank Schaefer's defrocking "is a sad day in the life of The UMC." The organization has worked to change the UMC's policies on same-gender issues. In a video, Good News President Rob Renfroe and vice president Tom Lambrecht discuss recent developments in The UMC on

the sexuality issue. “We are facing a situation where we need to determine who we are as a church and what we stand for, and if we can even stay together,” Lambrecht states. The Good News group supports the denomination’s position on homosexuality. Bishop John Schol (Greater New Jersey Conference) issued a video statement Dec. 20 in response to the defrocking of Frank Schaefer and called for The UMC to stop using clergy trials as a way to resolve differences in the church.

Schaefer, formerly of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, has been invited to join the California-Pacific Annual Conference by Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño. The bishop noted that only a conference board of ordained ministry could reinstate his credentials. Schaefer and his family are now members of Foundry UMC in Washington, D.C., where he preached Dec. 22, and is considering the offer to move west.

– UMConnections.org , as published in UMNewscope, January 8, 2014

(UM) Men. UMs Seek to Expand Scouting Ministry

The number of Scout troops and other youth-serving agencies sponsored by UM congregations is likely to increase over the next 12 months. The General Commission on UM Men, meeting Sept. 6–7 in Nashville, learned that there are 363,876 youth meeting in 10,868 BSA units sponsored by 6,700 UM congregations, the second highest among all denominations. That number is likely to increase because of the presence of 234 scouting ministry specialists in 47 annual conferences and because Mississippi Area Bishop James Swanson, chair of the commission, has written a letter to other active bishops encouraging them to hold Bishops’ Dinners for Scouting. Efforts within the UMC are part of a New Unit Campaign by the BSA. Mark Wappel, an executive with the national BSA, told the 20-member commission that some churches dropped Scout units following the BSA decision to admit gay Scouts, but 80 percent of dropped troops have found new homes. Wappel expressed appreciation to UM congregations for inviting many of these troops to their congregations. Wappel also made it clear that the new policy states that any “sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual by youth of scouting age is contrary to the virtues of scouting.” If the behavior of any youth member becomes a distraction to the program by discussing sexual activity or advocating conduct inconsistent with the mission and beliefs of the BSA, that youth may be removed from the troop or crew. Larry Coppock, director of UM scouting ministries, told the commission that UM congregations presented PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) to 6,700 young people, the highest number of any Protestant denomination. These awards, formerly called “God and Country Awards,” provide religious instruction to young people in four age groups. Some churches use these studies and awards as part of their confirmation classes.

– Rich Peck, for GCUMM, as reported in UMNewScope, Vol. 41, Issue 38 / September 25, 2011

(UM) Women/Women’s Issues

+ *Number of Women Clergy Grows in U.S.*

Despite a slight decline in the number of UM clergy in the U.S., the percentage of women is growing, reports the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW). As of 2011, the most recent figures available, women were 25% of U.S. UM clergy. Some of the local percentages were much higher: in 10 of the 56 annual conferences studied, women were at least a third of all clergy, according to GCSRW.

– Susan Keaton, UMConnections.org, as published in UMNewscope, December 18, 2013

+ *2014 UMW Assembly*

The 2014 UMW Assembly will take place Apr. 25–27 at the Kentucky International Convention Center, Louisville, Ky.

– Linda Bloom, UMNS as published in UMNewscope, December 18, 2013

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People say, “God will find a way.” God can’t find a way if you’re in the way. [Something to think about.]

– Bill Cosby in his commencement speech at Hampton University in Virginia

Global Outlook

Your life today is a result of your thinking yesterday. Your life tomorrow will be determined by what you think today.

– John Maxwell, from his book *Think on These Things*

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Nigeria. Assaults by radical Muslims in Nigeria

While the assaults by radical Muslims in Nigeria have faded from the news, the attacks on Christians have continued to escalate. What would you do? Go to church knowing you could be attacked? Avoid sharing your faith? Or even deny your faith to save your earthly body? These are very hard questions and Christians in Nigeria (mostly the north) face this dilemma almost daily. In recent years, Boko Haram has become a predominant Muslim terrorist group. And their mission is to eradicate Christianity – and anything Western – from Nigeria. While burning churches and beheading Christians are common, another tactic is often used, that of severing a limb, usually a leg. In response to these attacks, The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) continues to enlarge its prosthetics clinic in northern Nigeria. With the help of technicians donating their time along with quality materials shipped from the U.S., we are able to assist our persecuted brothers and sisters with prosthetic limbs. “We have been able to provide 60 persecuted believers with custom-fitted prosthetic limbs in the last 12 months. We have identified 80 more Christians who need one,” said Cole Richards, Vice President of International Ministries. Tragically the victims have even been children, like Mary. She will now learn to walk again thanks to VOM's prosthetics clinic. When you donate to VOM's Families of Martyrs Fund, you are also helping those who are living martyrs, even children like Mary who choose to follow Christ no matter the cost.

– The Voice of the Martyrs website: <http://www.persecution.com/>

Church Center for the UN (CCUN). Speaking of Peace at 50th Anniversary of Church Center for UN.

[Note: The CCUN is a center of far-left political activism at the international level and very problematic. The Peggy Billings mentioned in the article below had authored the book *Fire beneath the Frost* that espoused a liberation theology view of the situation in Korea; it was my learning of this in the early 1980s that had alerted me to the depth of the problem in the UMC and started me on the road to activism in the renewal movement – and the subsequent formation of Concerned Methodists with three other men from two United Methodist Churches. The CCUN is, I believe, an extreme misuse of money from good-hearted United Methodist laypeople. – AOM]

At a celebration of a UM-owned building “dedicated to the things that make for peace,” it was fitting that the honored guests included a Nobel Peace Prize winner, an ambassador who has pioneered peace initiatives at the United Nations and those promoting women’s empowerment as a means to peace. For others who gathered Oct. 9 in the chapel of the Church Center for the United Nations, the 50th anniversary was a time to remember the building’s beginnings and the people – staff, volunteers and countless grassroots advocates from around the world – who have kept the CCUN humming. The hosts were Harriett Jane Olson, UM Methodist Women (UMW): Jim Winkler, General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), and Thomas Kemper, General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), whose agencies and their predecessor bodies have maintained a steady denominational presence directly across from the U.N. Dedicated on Sept. 23, 1963, the CCUN was designed as “a hub for the world’s peoples,” noted Olson, UMW’s top executive, and to provide faith groups and nongovernmental organizations with access to U.N. diplomats, staff and their governments. Peggy Billings, a UMW staff member who served as a missionary before she arrived at the CCUN in 1963, knew the work of the U.N. in post-war Korea but “was unprepared for the scope of what I saw when I got here,” she said. She and the Rev. Robert McClean, who served in the U.N. office for Church and Society for nearly 25 years, were among the staff who witnessed the development of the CCUN into a place where the voiceless could find a voice.

Cora Weiss, president of the Hague Appeal for Peace, now connected with Peace Boat U.S., has been a CCUN tenant for 41 years and appreciates the faith response by UMs. Women were as much the architects of the creation of the CCUN as men were, observed Lakshmi Puri, assistant secretary general of the U.N. and deputy executive director of U.N. Women, which is a relatively new organization itself. Roma Bhattacharjea, who works on gender issues for the U.N. Development Programme, recalled the good works of Isobel Thoburn, a Methodist missionary who founded a women's college in Lucknow, India, whose graduates include Bhattacharjea's mother.

– Linda Bloom, UMNS, as reported in UMNewScope, Vol. 41, Issue 41 / October 16, 2013

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The strongest reason for people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government. – Thomas Jefferson