

Monthly Update

November 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This edition of our “Monthly Update” continues with information on the issues affecting our United Methodist Church and challenges as we face societal opposition at home, not to mention those dangers that threaten our country from abroad. We examine problems we are facing in our country that threaten the core values in our church. We see increasingly the terms used “all God’s people” and “accepting” which are used to soften us to the message that homosexuals need to be absorbed fully into the church.

We must be on our guard to follow the truth found in the Bible and not be deceived by any of the false teachings that surround us, whether coming from a group within the church or from society. As the culture gets darker and draws away from our traditional Christian values, this gives us a chance to shine the light of truth that will grow ever brighter. We must be “salt and light” to a nation that was once a “light” to the world.

This November as we celebrated Thanksgiving, let us remember the original reasons for the holiday – that were formulated by the Pilgrims, then as a result of our fighting a brutal war during a time of great danger. We have this brief glimpse from our history:

“By the mid-17th century, the custom of autumnal Thanksgivings was established throughout New England. The observance of Thanks-giving Festivals spread to other colonies during the American Revolution, and the Continental Congresses, cognizant of the need for a warring country’s continuing grateful entreaties to God, proclaimed yearly Thanksgiving Days during the Revolutionary War, from 1777 to 1783. In 1789, among the first official acts of Congress was approving a motion for proclamation of a national day of thanksgiving – again acknowledging the importance of a day for citizens to gather together and give thanks to God for our nation’s blessings. On 3 October 1789, by way of proclamation, George Washington wrote: “It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favour... I do recommend and assign [this day of public Thanksgiving], to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country.”

From all of us here at Concerned Methodists we give thanks for you, your prayers, and for faithfully standing with us. As we hope that this will be a special Thanksgiving for you, we would also ask that you keep us in your prayers as you pray for our country and its leaders – that they would truly come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris
Executive Director

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November 2014 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

When a nation goes down...they forgot where they came from. – Carl Sandburg

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The Good Stuff

+ ... *a time to fight*...

Note: This is offered to raise awareness of our true American history, show clergy involvement in the fight for the independence of our country, and to show that there comes a time when citizens must stand up for principles. – AOM]

John Peter Muhlenberg

“There is a time for all things...a time to preach and a time to fight...” – John Peter Muhlenberg

He preached a message on Ecclesiastes 3:1: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." He closed his message by saying: "In the language of the Holy Writ, there is a time for all things. There is a time to preach and a time to fight. And now is the time to fight." This was John Peter Gabriel Muhlenburg, a 30 year old member of the Virginia House of Burgesses...and a pastor. At the end of his sermon, January 21, 1776, John Peter Muhlenburg threw off his clerical robes to reveal the uniform of an officer in the Continental Army. Drums began to roll, men kissed their wives, and they walked down the aisle to enlist. The next day, Pastor Muhlenberg led 300 men of his church to join General Washington's Continental Army as the 8th Virginia Regiment.

John Peter Muhlenberg was born October 1, 1746, and he died the same day sixty-one years later, October 1, 1807. As a youth, he lived with relatives in Germany from 1763-1767: first in the city of Halle (Saale) in the southern part of the German state Saxony-Anhalt; then in the northern German port city of Lübeck in Schleswig-Holstein. He served briefly in the German dragoons, then returned to America to finish his schooling at the Academy of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania). He visited England in 1772. He served in Lutheran congregations in Virginia, though the colony required him to be ordained as an Anglican minister in order to do so. In 1774, he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses and became a delegate to the First Virginia Convention.

Muhlenberg heard Patrick Henry's famous “Give me liberty or give me death” speech in 1775, and was inspired to enlist. General George Washington personally asked him to raise soldiers and serve as their Colonel.

John Peter’s brother, Fredrick Augustus Mullenberg, was a Lutheran minister in New York who opposed John Peter joining Washington’s army: “You have become too involved in matters which, as a preacher, you have nothing whatsoever to do...” After the British bombarded New York and burned Fredrick Muhlenberg’s church right in front of him, Fredrick decided to join the patriotic cause.

Muhlenberg and his men endured the freezing winter of Valley Forge and saw action at Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, and Stonypoint. He helped force British General Cornwallis to surrender at Yorktown. By the end of the war Muhlenberg was promoted to the rank of Major-General.

He was elected to Pennsylvania’s Supreme Executive Council in 1784, and in 1787 was elected Vice-President of Pennsylvania. In 1789, he was elected a Representative to the first U.S. Congress. In 1790, he was a member of the Pennsylvania's State Constitutional Convention and in 1793, was the first founder of the Democratic-Republican Societies. His John's father, Henry Muhlenberg, was a founder of the Lutheran Church in America. His brother, Fredrick Augustus Mullenberg, was elected to the Continental Congress, 1779, and was elected Speaker of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1780-1783. Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg presided over Pennsylvania’s Convention to Ratify the U.S. Constitution. He was elected to the U.S. Congress where he

was chosen as the first Speaker of the House of Representatives. Both John and Frederick Muhlenberg were ordained pastors and served in the first session of the U.S. Congress which passed the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights contained the First Amendment which was to make sure that the new Federal Government would not “prohibit the free exercise” of religion, nor take away the freedom of speech, press, the right of the people peaceably to assemble, or petition the Government for a redress of grievances. The First Amendment also insured that one Christian denomination would not be favored of over another, as Supreme Court Justice Joseph wrote in A Familiar Exposition of the Constitution of the United States, 1840: “The real object of the First Amendment was not to countenance, much less to advance Mohammedanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity, but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment which should give to a hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government.” Justice Samuel Chase wrote in Maryland Supreme Court case of Runkel v. Winemiller, 1799: “By our form of government, the Christian religion is the established religion; and all sects and denominations of Christians are placed upon the same equal footing, and are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty.”

John Peter Muhlenberg was elected a U.S. Senator in 1801. He served as a Trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, which honored him with a statue, which is in front of the Shenandoah County Courthouse. In Washington, D.C., at the corner of Connecticut Ave. and Ellicott St., there is a bronze memorial to John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, with the inscription:

JOHN PETER GABRIEL MUHLENBERG
1746-1807
SERVING
HIS CHURCH
HIS COUNTRY
HIS STATE

...THE “FIGHTING PARSON OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION”

In 1889, the State of Pennsylvania placed a statue of John Peter Muhlenberg in the U.S. Capitol’s Statuary Hall. He was memorialized in a poem by Thomas Buchanan Read, titled “The Rising,” published in William Holmes McGuffey’s Fifth Eclectic Reader (Cincinnati & New York: Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co., revised ed., 1879, Lesson LXXV, pp. 200-204):

...Within its shade of elm and oak the church of Berkley Manor stood:
There Sunday found the rural folk, and some esteemed of gentle blood.
In vain their feet with loitering tread passed ‘mid the graves where rank is naught:
All could not read the lesson taught in that republic of the dead.

The pastor rose: the prayer was strong; the psalm was warrior David’s song;
The text, a few short words of might, – “The Lord of Hosts shall arm the right!”
He spoke of wrongs too long endured, of sacred rights to be secured;
Then from his patriot tongue of flame the startling words for Freedom came.
The stirring sentences he spake compelled the heart to glow or quake,
And, rising on his theme’s broad wing, and grasping in his nervous hand
The imaginary battle-brand, in face of death he dared to fling
Defiance to a tyrant king.

Even as he spoke, his frame renewed in eloquence of attitude, rose, as it seemed, a shoulder higher;
Then swept his kindling glance of fire from startled pew to breathless choir;

When suddenly his mantle wide his hands impatient flung aside,
And, lo! He met their wondering eyes complete in all a warrior's guise.
A moment there was awful pause, – When Berkley cried, “Cease, traitor! Cease! God's temple is the house of
peace!”

The other shouted, "Nay, not so, when God is with our righteous cause:
His holiest places then are ours, his temples are our forts and towers
That frown upon the tyrant foe: In this the dawn of Freedom's day There is a time to fight and pray!"

And now before the open door – the warrior priest had ordered so –
The enlisting trumpet's sudden soar rang through the chapel, o'er and o'er, its long reverberating blow,

So loud and clear, it seemed the ear of dusty death must wake and hear.
And there the startling drum and fife fired the living with fiercer life;

While overhead with wild increase, forgetting its ancient toll of peace,
The great bell swung as ne'er before: it seemed as it would never cease;

And every word its ardor flung from off its jubilant iron tongue Was, “War! War! War!”
“Who dares” – this was the patriot's cry, as striding from the desk he came –
“Come out with me, in Freedom's name, for her to live, for her to die?”

A hundred hands flung up reply, A hundred voices answered "I!"

– American Minute with Bill Federer. Permission granted by Mr. Federer. www.AmericanMinute.com

Of Interest.

+ ***Natural Marriage in Idaho: Give It Arrest!*** If homosexuals get their way, Pastor Donald Knapp won't be behind the pulpit -- he'll be behind bars. That's the stunning development in (Coeur d'Alene) Idaho, where the day liberals promised would never come is already here. Two ministers -- a husband and wife team -- have been told by their city government that refusing to “marry” a same-sex couple will send them straight to jail. After 25 years of owning The Hitching Post wedding chapel, Donald and Evelyn are being faced with a situation neither of them thought possible: being imprisoned for their faith. Like the flood of state amendments steamrolled by activist judges, Idaho's fell earlier this month. And with it, religious liberty. Fearing the worst, the Knapps reached out to Alliance Defending Freedom, concerned that their chapel would be targeted. Less than a week later, the battle was at their front door.

For Donald and Evelyn, there was never any question what the duo would do. Unapologetically Christian, the husband-and-wife team is overtly religious, marrying couples with faith-driven vows, and even offering marriage sermons on CD to newlyweds. That doesn't matter to city officials, who had this marriage message for The Hitching Post: Conform or be punished. And not just any punishment, but 180 days in jail and up to \$1,000 in fines for every day the ministers refuse to perform the ceremony. “Right now,” said attorney Jeremy Tedesco, “they are at risk of being prosecuted. The threat of enforcement is more than just credible.” Unlike bakery owner Jack Phillips, who Colorado bullied with similar charges, the Knapps are both ministers. And while their chapel is considered a “religious corporation,” even it isn't safe from the same-sex “wedding” march that threatens to put the First Amendment asunder.

The Family Research Council warned this moment was coming, but even we didn't expect the government to move this quickly. “The other side insisted this would never happen -- that pastors would not have to perform same-sex marriages,” ADF's Tedesco told Fox News's Todd Starnes. “The reality is -- it's already happening.”

Government officials are making it clear that they'll use their power to punish anyone who opposes the agenda of homosexual activists. It's a scary turnaround for a nation founded on the same free exercise of religion, which is now punishable by six months in prison. When there are plenty of other options for homosexuals seeking a marriage license, why should they be able to use the power of government to force Christians to participate? Eugene Volokh, in today's Washington Post, tries to tackle this Left's conundrum and agrees that there's no way around the obvious: somebody's rights have to give. "Compelling ministers to speak words in ceremonies that they think are immoral is an unconstitutional speech compulsion. Given that the Free Speech Clause bars the government from requiring public school students to say the pledge of allegiance... the government can't require ministers -- or other private citizens -- to speak the words in a ceremony, on pain of either having to close their business or face fines and jail time."

– Family Research Council. E-mail received. Family Research Council: 801 G Street N.W. Washington, D.C.
20001 October 20, 2014.

+ ***City threatens to arrest ministers for refusing to marry gays*** in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The American Family Association gives the following "Action that can be taken": Coeur d'Alene Mayor Steve Widmyer is the chief executive officer for the city. [Send him an e-mail] Or, you can call Mayor Widmyer or post a comment to the city's Facebook page or Twitter. Urge Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter to get involved and defend Christian-based businesses in Idaho.

One thing is for sure. If we fail to speak out, more pastors and ministers will soon face the relentless anti-Christian wrath of homosexual activists.
– E-mail received from "AFA ActionAlert" actionalert@afasv.net; Monday, October 20, 2014.

+ ***Attack on Houston Pastors – A Duck Call to Action! Robertsons Join I Stand Sunday***. As far as Glenn Beck is concerned, the biggest threat facing Texas isn't Ebola. It's Houston's holy war against free speech. "This is more dangerous to the republic of Texas than any virus is. This is more dangerous than anything I've ever seen," the talk host warned. "This is not about equal rights... This is about shutting people down." And not all religious people -- but Christians. Like us, Glenn thinks one of the most stunning things about this Left's anti-faith crackdown is how selective it is. "God forbid you say, 'This mosque has radical Islamic imams preaching hatred,'" he said on his show. "You have a bag of bricks fall on your head, and they immediately shut down everyone from even saying, 'Wait a minute -- the bombers came from that mosque... The President immediately sends a team of delegates to apologize to that mosque, as it happened in Oklahoma.'" But in Texas, where a bully of a Mayor is intent on gagging local pastors, the President and his party are nowhere to be found. "We have become a very anti-religious group of people," Beck went on. "It was the Christians that were leading the way to man's freedom. And if the Christians don't do it this time, we'll never do it. We will lose it..." With nearly 52,000 signing our petition to the Houston Mayor, I'd say many are in agreement.

Fortunately, Glenn wasn't the only familiar face sounding the alarm on Houston. Chuck Norris had a message for the tyrants in Texas: nobody messes with religious liberty in his state and gets away with it. Angry that any elected leader would try to strip the power of the pulpit, Norris was blunt about the Mayor's legal demands. Instead of combing through pastors' personal emails and messages, Norris thinks Houston officials should try reading the Constitution instead. "If the city attorney and Mayor Annise Parker need a primer on the First Amendment, then let them know that America's founders drafted it even to protect the political speech of preachers!" And if it's "speeches" the Mayor is interested in, then she can expect plenty on November 2, when the Family Research Council and other organizations link arms with local churches and rallies Christians and churches from around the nation to stand for our Christian faith as we host I Stand Sunday. Like these local pastors, our speakers have a little experience sticking up for their values under pressure. Phil and Alan Robertson of "Duck Dynasty" have taken plenty of fire for standing by their biblical beliefs -- and they'll be at Grace Community Church with us to

encourage Houstonians to keep the faith. David and Jason Benham lost a national show on HGTV for their convictions -- and haven't regretted it a single minute.

Hear from them, as well as conservative heroes who are never tired of tackling the tough issues like Governor Mike Huckabee, Southern Baptist Convention President Dr. Ronnie Floyd, pastors of the targeted churches like Dr. Ed Young, Pastor Steve Riggle, and the man responsible for breaking his share of these outrageous stories, Fox News's Todd Starnes. "We have become a very anti-religious group of people," Beck warned. "And we better wake up right now." Help us rouse the nation by joining us November 2 at 6 p.m. (CT) for I Stand Sunday. If you can't participate in person, do the next best thing: encourage your church or small group to host the simulcast.

For details on both, <http://www.istandsunday.com/>

– Family Research Council. E-mail received. 801 G Street N.W. Wash., D.C. 20001. P: 202/393-2100 or 800/225-4008. Web: frc.org. Oct. 21, 2014.

+ ***Catholic Church NOT legalizing Sin after all*** (Thank God.). By Chaplain Klingenschmitt

The Pope is still Catholic. Last week an internal document within the Roman Catholic Church suggested "Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community. Are we capable of providing for these people, guaranteeing [...] them [...] a place of fellowship in our communities?" Pope Francis did not publicly endorse the behavior of homosexuals, despite media reports falsely claiming otherwise. He may or may not have asked leaders to welcome them.

Now it appears the Catholic bishops have voted overwhelmingly to reject homosexuality as sin, and agree with the deposit of Scripture. "Catholic bishops voted Saturday to water down a report earlier this week that advocated a significant shift in the church's approach to gays and divorced Catholics, reflecting a deep split within the church's leadership," reports *The Wall Street Journal*. In a vote Saturday evening, an assembly of nearly 200 bishops, who have been discussing issues concerning the family at a special meeting known as a synod, took their final vote." Controversial portions of the internal document that had suggested "openness" to divorce and sexual sin were removed from the original draft of the document.

[Dr. Chaps' comment: Today I talked to the leader of Priests for Life, Father Frank Pavone, and asked him to explain. He confirmed two things: 1) The Pope did not endorse sin, and 2) The church teaching against sin is not going to change, ever, because the Bible will not change. (Thank God.) Conservatives who believe the Bible won this debate. Let's petition the U.S. Congress to continue defending traditional marriage.]

– E-mail received from Chaplain Klingenschmitt. <chaps@prayinjesusname.org>

+ ***A Lesson on Racial Discrimination*** by Dr. Walter E. Williams. Donald Sterling, Los Angeles Clippers owner, was recorded by his mistress making some crude racist remarks. Since then, Sterling's racist comments have dominated the news, from talk radio to late-night shows. A few politicians have weighed in, with President Barack Obama congratulating the NBA for its sanctions against Sterling. There's little defense for Sterling, save his constitutional right to make racist remarks. But in a sea of self-righteous indignation, I think we're missing the most valuable lesson that we can learn from this affair -- a lesson that's particularly important for black Americans.

Though Sterling might be a racist, there's an important "so what?" Does he act in ways commonly attributed to racists? Let's look at his employment policy. This season, Sterling paid his top three players salaries totaling over \$46 million. His 20-person roster payroll totaled over \$73 million. Here are a couple of questions for you: What race are the players whom racist Sterling paid the highest salaries? What race dominated the 20-man roster? The fact of business is that Sterling's highest-paid players are black, and 85 percent of Clippers players are black. Down through the years, hundreds of U.S. corporations have faced charges of racism, and many have been subjects of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigations, but none of them had such a favorable employment and wage policy as Sterling. How does one explain this? People with limited thinking

ability might conclude that Sterling is a racist in his private life but a nice card-carrying liberal in his public life, manifested by his hiring so many blacks, not to mention paying Doc Rivers, the Clippers' black head coach, a healthy \$7 million a year. The likelier explanation is given no attention at all.

Let's use a bit of simple economics to analyze the contrast in Sterling's private and public behavior. First, professional basketball is featured by considerable market competition. There's an open opportunity in the acquisition of basketball playing skills. Youngsters just buy a basketball and shoot hoops. There's open competition in joining both high-school and college teams. You just sign up for tryouts in high school and get noticed by college scouts. Then there's considerable competition among the NBA teams in the acquisition of the best college players. Minorities and less preferred people always do better when there are open markets instead of regulated markets.

Recently deceased Nobel Prize-winning economist Gary Becker pointed this phenomenon out some years ago in his path-breaking study "The Economics of Discrimination." Many people think that it takes government to eliminate racial discrimination, but economic theory predicts the opposite. Market competition imposes inescapable profit penalties on for-profit enterprises when they make employment decisions on any basis other than worker productivity. Professor Becker's study of racial discrimination upended the view that discriminatory bias benefits those who discriminate. He demonstrated that racial discrimination is less likely in the most competitive industries, which need to hire the best workers. According to Forbes magazine, the Los Angeles Clippers would sell for \$575 million. Ask yourself what the Clippers would sell for if Sterling were a racist in his public life and hired only white players. All the evidence suggests that would be a grossly losing proposition on at least two counts. Percentagewise, blacks more so than whites excel in basketball. That's not to say that it is impossible to recruit a team of first-rate, excellent white players. However, because there is a smaller number of top-tier white players relative to black players, the recruitment costs would be prohibitive. In other words, a team of excellent white players would be far costlier to field than a team of excellent black players. It's simply a matter of supply and demand.

The takeaway from the Sterling affair is that we should mount not a moral crusade but an economic liberty crusade. In other words, eliminate union restrictions, wage controls, occupational and business licensure, and other anti-free market restrictions. Make opportunity depend on one's productivity.

– Dr. Walter E. Williams, George Mason University, 4400 University Dr., Fairfax, Virginia 22030. As an item of interest, Dr. Williams is black.

Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues.

+ 15 Reasons why Pro-Choicers Think Pro-Lifers are Crushing Them

"Why can't you accept that abortion is legal? It's the law now--we can't go back. Just deal with it." I'm sure we've all heard some variation of the above argument. But Roe vs. Wade was hardly the final word on abortion in America. Over 40 years after the famous ruling, we are still a country divided on whether or not abortion is morally wrong. Over 40 years later, hundreds of thousands of people gather in Washington DC on January 22nd to attend the annual March for Life. And over 40 years later, the pro-life crowd is actually winning--according to the pro-abortion crowd! Gleaned from a series of articles written by the opposition, they say there are many reasons that show that pro-lifers are winning.

– E-mail received from Anglicans For Life, 405 Frederick Avenue, Sewickley, PA 15143

+ Opposing Assisted Suicide: Remembering When My Terminally Ill Mom Told Me "We'll Get Through It"

Discussion is still on going about the Assisted Suicide Bill being debated in UK's Parliament. Famous names such as Andrew Lloyd Webber (against the bill) and Desmond Tutu (supporter of bill) have made their arguments. But a British classical pianist, Matthew Schellhorn, shared his personal story on why he's opposed to the bill. After his mother was diagnosed with late-stage cancer, Schellhorn, his mother, and his family all experienced the bittersweet feelings of his mother's sickness and passing. He states the Assisted Suicide Bill would not have only taken his mother's life but it would have taken the joy out of their last days together.

(UM) Men. General Commission on UM Men Meet. The General Commission on UM Men (GCUMM), which met Sept. 5–7, is seeking ways to reverse the loss of nearly 16,000 young people involved in Scouting. “Scouting is down because the church is losing its identity as a servant of the community,” said Bishop James Swanson (Mississippi Conference), president of the commission. “If we don’t see our role as serving the people of the community our numbers will continue to go down.” The bishop said efforts to increase the number of young people in churches must begin with children. He called for a new emphasis on Cub Scouts and Daisies from the Girl Scouts. “You can’t get youth without beginning with children,” he said. UMs lead all denominations with 212,503 Cub Scouts and is second with 129,503 Boy Scouts in 4,837 UM churches.

In other business, the commission celebrated the completion of a new storage area and the renovating of commission offices on famed Music Row in Nashville. It agreed to continue to provide 6,500 “Backpacking New Testaments” to Scouts attending Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, Northern Tier High Adventure bases in Minnesota and Canada, the Summit in Tennessee, and the Florida Sea Base; to cooperate with Strength for Service Inc., a non-denominational ministry launched by the commission that has published 485,000 copies of daily devotional books for members of the military and 30,000 copies for police officers, fire fighters and other first responders. The commission learned that the number of pounds of food gleaned by Society of Saint Andrew in 2014 is up 15% from 2013, but giving by UM Men is off by 8% in the first eight months of 2014. Last year UM men gave \$85,310 to the society’s Meals for Millions program.

Leaders also agreed to increase efforts to eliminate domestic violence. “Only men can stop domestic violence,” said Gilbert C. Hanke, GCUMM top staff executive. “UM Men and UM Women have an official opportunity to provide a dual witness,” said Swanson. “This will be a witness that the world and the church needs as we seek to bring healing and wholeness to women children and families that have suffered for far too long because the church has either ignored or refused to bring the full power that God has given us to bear upon this evil.” The commission has worked with UM Women to provide a discussion guide for “I Believe You,” a film about domestic violence and the faith community.

– Rich Peck, GCUMM, as reported in UMNewScope, Vol. 42, Issue 37 / September 17, 2014.

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Cast down your bucket where you are.... – Booker T. Washington

Global Outlook

You can’t go in the wrong direction and end up at the right place.

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Christians Call for Dialogue in Hong Kong Protests. As student-led demonstrations continue for a third week in Hong Kong, Christians are repeating their calls for dialogue between the government and the protesters. In its statement promoting dialogue, the Hong Kong Christian Council appealed “to all parties involved to try their best to engage in rational discussion on further implementation of constitutional reform under the framework of the Basic Law,” an agreement reached prior to the handover of Hong Kong from Great Britain to China in 1997. Christians, who make up 11.7% of the Hong Kong population, have been active in the protests, which began in late September as a demand for greater freedom in the election of the city’s chief executive in 2017. The Rev. Tin-YauYuen, head of the council and The Methodist Church, Hong Kong, and pastor of the Chinese Methodist Church, has taken the lead on this issue, said the Rev. G. Howard Mellor, pastor of the English-speaking Methodist International Church, Hong Kong. Both churches are in the Wan Chai district near Harcourt Road, a main area for demonstrations. In an Oct. 4 letter to the Methodist congregations of Hong Kong, Yuen said the Chinese Methodist Church had provided shelter and supplies since the protests began “not because we support ‘Occupy Central’ but because of our position as a church in Wan Chai.” The situation has provided an

opportunity to serve in the name of Christ, he wrote. "Because our church is located at a road crossing, with lots of protesters with different political views passing by, we welcome them all in to have a short rest here." A member of the World Methodist Council and World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches, The Methodist Church, Hong Kong retains ties with British Methodists and The UMC.

The Hong Kong Christian Council has urged the government to re-open the Civic Square and Tamar Park for peaceful protest. The council also asked the police to use careful judgment and restraint and appealed to the students and protesters "to negotiate with the related authorities so that the public can re-use the blocked roads." Mei Yan "Kennis" Lam, a missionary assigned to Japan by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) in partnership with the Methodist Church of Hong Kong, said she has followed the situation with concern. The solution, Lam believes, "is genuine conversation" between the government and those citizens. "I am proud of my faith and my church in such a critical moment," Lam said. "I think what we are doing shows the true meaning of the Gospel."

– Linda Bloom, United Methodist News Service, as reported in UMNewScope, Vol. 42, Issue 42 / October 22, 2014

Water for Tanzania. The Tanzania UMC in Dar es Salaam, now a provisional annual conference under the North Katanga Episcopal Area, recently purchased property in the suburban Mviti area, but there is no water. A grant from the UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to the church will provide the means to drill and identify a safe water source that will meet the daily needs of 1,215 individuals. The grant also will support hygiene education and water safety to help raise awareness and reduce the occurrences of cholera, worms, typhoid and diarrhea, which are all associated with poor drinking water. The new mission compound sought funding for the installation of wells to support the various ministry projects that will occur on the grounds, including a church, guesthouse for volunteers and missionaries, school, conference offices and a hospital. This water project will also benefit surrounding communities. Gifts to Water and Sanitation, Advance #3020600 will help meet the need for water and sanitation in this and other areas around the world.

– UMCOR UPDATES, as reported in UMNewScope, Vol. 42, Issue 42 / October 22, 2014

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We get too old too soon & smart too late. – Anonymous