

Monthly Update

March 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This Monthly Update contains information on issues that we as a denomination will face, depending on what happens at the General Conference (GC2020) that will be held this coming May. The Southeastern Jurisdictional leadership met to decide some of the “practical matters” that will be faced across our United Methodist Church – if there should be separation as envisioned by some in our denomination. In a similar vein, even though we oppose a split in our church and see the devastation it will bring for our United Methodist Church, we will do all that we can to bring about the best outcome right on up to the final closing time of GC2020 on May 15th regardless of criticism we receive. As stated before, we believe that we have a plan to maintain both our unity and doctrinal integrity. Those of us in Concerned Methodists will be steadfast. On a positive note, we cover the Asbury College Revival that swept the campus 50 years ago; I was at the “50 year reunion” remembering that event and met some of the people affected by it.

In addition we address an incident representative of the chronic political activism by church employees that has worked to harm our country; as we have observed more than once, when our church has been in an uninterrupted decline since 1968, it would be wise for church officials to focus on what it would take to put us back onto the road to growth. Simply put, our denominational officials have a poor record when it comes to political involvement; they would be better served by not venturing into that area, especially in that they are paid to lead the church, not be political gadflies.

The last three pages of this Update are reprints from a letter and fact sheet published by our ministry in 2013 that address the situation in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). [Note: We have not included this in the online edition of the March Update. – AOM] It is a “mixed bag” when we are able to say “I told you so” to something that we had predicted, but this is the case; we were proven accurate in our prediction. This information reflects when I had made a trip out to their Texas headquarters to meet with the Executive Vice President to present data to him that reflected statistics on the consequences of their contemplated actions. The second trip out there was to monitor their vote and to receive the press announcement after their decision. As one who has held every leadership in a BSA troop up to and including Assistant Scoutmaster, and who held the rank of Eagle Scout, I was grieved by the outcome to our prediction made almost seven years ago, but not surprised by their having to declare bankruptcy. Since our denomination hosts so many Boy Scout troops, this is an area of importance to us.

I ask that you continue to pray for GC2020 in Minneapolis starting May 5th – that the Lord would move in the hearts of the delegates.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris
Executive Director

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March 2020 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

Ours may become the first civilization destroyed, not by the power of our enemies, but by the ignorance of our teachers and the dangerous nonsense they are teaching our children. In an age of artificial intelligence, they are creating artificial stupidity. ~ Thomas Sowell

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The Good Stuff.

+ In the town of Haifa, Israel Rosa Meier, a 95 year old Jewish lady had a plumbing problem. The two men sent to her home to fix it were Arabs. At some point during their stay, they noticed that she was a Holocaust survivor. When they presented her with the bill for their services, it read, "\$250 for services. Holocaust survivor. No charge. May you live to be 120 years." Among the common people in Israel, Jews and Arabs get along well together. – January 23, 2020.

+ **Asbury College Revival.** On the campus of Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, during the college's regular chapel service, scheduled to last 50 minutes, a revival broke out that continued non-stop for 185 hours. It was initiated with fervent intercession by a small number of people who committed themselves daily to devotions, sharing with others about what God was showing them, meeting small groups, and holding "all-night" prayer meetings.

On Tuesday morning, February 3, 1970, at 10 a.m., with one thousand students present in the Hughes Auditorium, the chapel service started. The students who had made a high commitment to prayer were in attendance with great expectation that something was going to happen. They even mentioned to one another that they could sense the presence of God. Some of the students had even stated prophetically the night before that the revival was imminent. Asbury's academic dean, Custer Reynolds, was scheduled to speak that morning. When he came to the microphone he indicated that he did not feel led to speak, so he briefly gave his testimony, then gave an invitation for students to share about their own personal experiences in their relationship with God.

Several students gave inspiring testimonies about how God was working in their lives. One stood and said: "I'm not believing that I'm standing here telling you what God has done for me. I've wasted my time in college up to now, but Christ has met me and I'm different. Last night the Holy Spirit flooded in and filled my life. Now, for the first time ever, I am excited about being a Christian! I wouldn't want to go back to the emptiness of yesterday for anything."

Other students rose and confessed sins and gave similar testimonies. Dr. Clarence Hunter then opened the altar for anyone who wanted to come and pray. Immediately hundreds of students rushed to the front, kneeling at the altar four to five deep. Spontaneous singing broke out. The presence of the Lord was so real that all other interests seemed unimportant.

Revival Came. Throughout the auditorium, students knelt, not only at the altar, but at their seats, in the aisles, and anywhere they could, to confess their sins and get their hearts right with God. Several hundred students gave their lives to Christ that day. At the time the chapel service was to end, the bell sounded for students to go to their classes, but everyone ignored it. Academic Dean Custer Reynolds then approached the microphone and said that classes were cancelled. Some of the professors who were in class waiting for their students to show up wondered at their still-empty classrooms; they went to the chapel service and became immersed in the revival.

Many students were lined up, intending to testify of how God was working in their lives. Many were overcome by their emotions, and with tear-filled confessions, they acknowledged sins they had committed against others that were present, and they publicly asked for forgiveness. Reconciliation began to take place between those who previously had been at odds. On girl went to the microphone and confessed that she had been mean to her roommate; that girl made her way onto the stage and two hugged tearfully. Students continued to publicly pray, sing, and give testimonies, with some students even singing their testimony. Often students

would miss meals and go without sleep because they were more interested in being in the presence of God than they were in anything else.

Referring to the presence of God, students and faculty described it:

1. “The power of God was so present and so real, that time itself seemed to collapse. It was almost as if reality..., we were in a suspended state of reality, and people could sit, hour upon hour and it seemed like only minutes or seconds.”
2. The presence of God was “thick,” it was “heavy”.
3. “... a kind of an aura, kind of a glow about the chapel.”
4. It was like a “warmth around the heart.”
5. “There was a sense of the Divine presence that one doesn’t have often in this life, and when you do have it, you never quite get over it.”
6. Just coming onto the campus, some people indicated they were overcome with conviction power. There were bold displays of restitution coupled with a bold desire to tell others of what God had done in their lives. Emotions ranged from heart-wrenching contrition to otherworldly calm.

More Hearts are Stirred. Across the street, at the Asbury Seminary, the 450 students learned about what was taking place at the college, and desiring the same for themselves, conducted an all-night prayer meeting. On Thursday morning, during their regular chapel service, the exact same thing happened to them as what took place in Hughes Auditorium with the Asbury College students – conviction of sin followed by public repentance, spontaneous singing, testimonies, and prayer. Over the weekend the seminary phase of the revival merged with the college.

Many emphasized that there wasn’t a single person who was directly providing leadership to the flow of what was transpiring. Some also pointed out that even though there was no schedule of events and no one officially in charge, there was no disorder. Often phone calls or messages were received asking for prayer for loved ones who were in need of salvation, healing, or some other urgent needs. Someone would announce the prayer need, and everyone else would begin praying for that one person and their need. By evening, those off-campus came to see, with some reporting they were overcome with conviction of sin as they came on campus. During the daytime participation at the auditorium swelled to capacity; in the late night and early morning, the numbers shrank to about 200.

Major American newspapers and television crews, in addition to Christian news media, arrived to report on the revival. People from across America and other parts of the world were aware that revival had come to Asbury: The auditorium was often filled to capacity. The people of Wilmore, Kentucky, especially the teenagers, also took part in the revival. At times every seat in Hughes Auditorium was filled (1,550 seats), with others standing around the sides.

On Sunday night, February 8, several churches in Wilmore, Kentucky, moved their services to Hughes Auditorium and united with the students in the revival. With 1,600 people packed into the auditorium that night, one local pastor and his wife (David and Helen Seamands) made public confessions, which led to more than 100 people coming forward to kneel at the altar, confessing their sins to God and reconciling with anyone they had bitterness or hard feelings toward. One evangelical leader went to the microphone and confessed that at times he would be involved in lust – and asked his wife to forgive him; she made her way onto the stage and tearfully did so.

Public apologies were made and healing took place. Some received the call to go into missions. Always there was a long line of students waiting to confess that they were just born-again or to give a testimony of new meaning Christ had in their life. The faculty of the college was not exempt from the overwhelming conviction power that was manifested. One faculty member testified to being a hypocrite. Though he was teaching in the college, he acknowledged that his heart had grown cold and for many years he had lived far from God. He then shared that the revival opened his hardened heart and a new relationship with Christ had begun.

The Revival Spreads

Students prepare for weekend trips to spread the revival: As invitations came in from other college campuses, churches, and schools for Asbury students to come to their location and testify as to what was taking place, teams of students would make visits there and share about the revival—with the exact same thing taking place, just like what was experienced on the campus of Asbury College. Some of these teams even traveled as far away as South America. Every Saturday for the next several months hundreds of cars filled with Asbury students would travel to churches whose pastors asked them to share about the revival. The order of those services was set aside, and almost the exact thing happened in these churches as what happened at Hughes Auditorium on the campus of Asbury College. There were invitations from public school principals to speak at their school; at one, over 300 students accepted Jesus Christ as savior.

South Meridian Church of God: A remarkable revival broke out at the Anderson, Indiana, South Meridian Church of God following a visit from a team of students from Asbury. That revival was conducted every night for 50 consecutive days (Feb. 22-April 12, 1970). The church was not able to hold the 2,500 people that gathered each night, so the services were moved to a local high school.

By the end of May 1970, approximately 2,000 witnessing teams of students had gone out from Asbury College and Seminary. One half of the 1,000-member student body was a part of these witnessing teams. Thousands of conversions were experienced as a result of these team's witness. By the summer of 1970, there were 130 colleges, seminaries, and Bible schools that had been impacted by the Asbury students with their "revival outreach" trips.

Decades later, many students who were attending college during 1970 and experienced that revival report that the revival made a lasting impact on them and set a positive direction for the rest of their lives – some into the ministry with others into secular vocations to include as advisors to some of the Presidents of the United States.

– Multiple sources, to include my attendance at the "Revival Reunion" held this last month at Asbury University. AOM

(UM) Bishops.

+ *Southeastern Jurisdiction mulls number of bishops.* Amid discussions of possible church separation, the Southeastern Jurisdiction made plans to hold its regularly scheduled bishop elections in July. Five bishops in the jurisdiction are retiring. The 2020 Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Leadership Gathering was held in Montgomery, AL, January 7-9. SEJ Bishops, Directors of Connectional Ministries, Lay Leaders and the Committee on Episcopacy gathered from nine states and fourteen conferences to worship, collaborate in ministry, and discuss the current climate of the United Methodist Church. The meeting was organized by Bishop David Graves, SEJ College of Bishops President, and Claire Bowen, a layperson from North Georgia who has implemented the on-boarding process in this jurisdiction. The Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy plans to make its final recommendation for the number of bishops to be elected after the 2020 General Conference.

Plan of Intent Related to Episcopal Elections in the SEJ:

1. The Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy recommends that the Southeastern Jurisdiction hold elections at the regularly scheduled conference in July 2020 and elect up to 5 bishops. The Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy will make its final recommendation for the number of bishops to be elected following the 2020 General Conference and will consider information collected at the completion of each Annual Conference meeting. This recommendation will be presented to the delegates of the 2020 Jurisdictional Conference at its meeting on July 15, 2020. Criteria for the recommendation will include:

- a. The unique geographies and demographics of the Southeastern Jurisdiction
- b. The capacity to lead episcopal areas toward growth, mission and vitality
- c. The leadership needs of annual conferences
- d. The number of congregations & clergy, if there is a threshold of United Methodist churches per episcopal area.

2. At the 2020 Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference, the retirements of 5 bishops will be celebrated and episcopal assignments will be made. Any recommended adjustments to episcopal areas will be determined in consultation with the College of Bishops.

3. The Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy recommends a study committee be formed with joint membership from the Committee on the Episcopacy and College of Bishops to consider a potential recommendation for realignment of conference boundaries and Episcopal areas. The committee will also consider the need for a called jurisdictional conference if additional episcopal leaders are required beyond those elected at the 2020 jurisdictional conference. The committee will report to the College of Bishops and Committee on the Episcopacy no later than August 1, 2021 regarding the possibility of calling a special session of the jurisdictional conference.

– UMNS, as reported in the *UM News Weekly Digest*; Jan 22, 2020.

+ ***Bishop to Texas governor: Accept refugees.***

SAN ANTONIO – Bishop Robert Schnase and other top Rio Texas Conference officials have written Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, protesting his decision to exclude the state from the federal refugee resettlement program in 2020. Texas has “sufficient room, economic strength and non-profit commitment” to keep taking in refugees, the letter says.

[Note: This is in reality talking about “illegal aliens”; the thrust of this communiqué ignores the dangers posed by some of the people who smuggle drugs and people, who are potential enemies of our country. This exemplifies political activism by denominational employees contrary to the good of our country, and reflects poor judgment. – AOM]

– UMNS, as reported in the *UM News Weekly Digest*; Jan 22, 2020.

Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues.

+ ***Nearly Half a Million Pro-lifers March in Washington to Defend Life!*** An estimated 500,000 pro-lifers flooded the Mall and the surrounding area of the nation’s capital to protest the heinous sin of abortion and enthusiastically proclaim that innocent life must be protected. The TFP, joined the pro-lifers [to include Concerned Methodists, Fayetteville Right to Life, National Right to Life (NRTL), et. al.] by marching in defense of God’s law and the most basic moral value and human right, the right to life. Sister organizations of the American TFP also showed support by marching. Participating were the Instituto Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (Brazil), Irish Society for Christian Civilisation (Ireland), Droit de Naître (France), and Voglio Vivere (Italy). For the first time, the President of the United States spoke; he praised the efforts of pro-lifers to defend innocent life. “Every human life, born and unborn, is made in the holy image of Almighty God.” President Donald Trump pointed out that the pro-life movement is growing younger – and increasingly female, as well. And importantly, he noted that the pro-life movement is not motivated by hatred, but “by pure, unselfish love.”

– NRTL, The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), a lay Roman Catholic ministry.

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Emotions are terrible generals but excellent foot soldiers. ~ UM Abraham Hamilton III, American Family Association