

## The Christian Methodist Newsletter – 2008 - 2009

<b>Annual Conference</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Net Change</b>	<b>Jurisdiction*</b>
Alabama - West Florida	149,718 <sup>1</sup>	+1,253 <sup>1</sup>	SEJ
Alaska Missionary	3,928	- 142	W-J
Arkansas	138,729	+ 89	SCJ
Austria Annual Conf.	686 <sup>1</sup>	+ 27 <sup>1</sup>	Eurasia
Baltimore - Washington	196,847 <sup>1</sup>	- 1,984 <sup>1</sup>	NEJ
California - Nevada	84,504 <sup>1</sup>	- 1,421 <sup>1</sup>	W-J
California - Pacific	84,812 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,265 <sup>3</sup>	W-J
Central Pennsylvania	141,030	- 2,821	NEJ
Central Texas	162,511 <sup>3</sup>	+ 776	SCJ
Czech & Slovak Republics	1,529 <sup>1</sup>	+ 69 <sup>1</sup>	Eurasia
Dakotas	42,133 <sup>1</sup>	- 1,003 <sup>1</sup>	NCJ
Desert Southwest	41,414	- 1,034	W-J
Detroit	100,484 <sup>1</sup>	- 2,044 <sup>1</sup>	NCJ
East Ohio	173,950 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,853	NCJ
East Russia & Cent. Asia	78 <sup>1</sup>	First time report	Eurasia
Eastern Pennsylvania	123,360 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,014	NEJ
Florida	310,711	- 7,005	SEJ
Germany North	7,777 <sup>1</sup>	+ 3 <sup>1</sup>	Eurasia
Greater New Jersey	96,927 <sup>2</sup>	- 2,016	NEJ
Holston	166,987	+ 172	SEJ
Illinois Great Rivers	144,978 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,688	NCJ
Iowa	186,464 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,310	NCJ
Kansas East	72,061 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,634	SCJ
Kansas West	83,724	- 1,242	SCJ
Kentucky	152,459	+ 330 <sup>3</sup>	SEJ
Liberia	168,618 <sup>1</sup>	Repeated from last report	Africa
Louisiana	123,233 <sup>3</sup>	-2,404	SCJ
Memphis	85,594 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,016	SEJ
Minnesota	77,583 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,045	NCJ
Mississippi	184,453	- 1,755 <sup>3</sup>	SEJ
Missouri	169,386 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,045	SCJ
Nebraska	83,105 <sup>1</sup>	- 1,322 <sup>1</sup>	SCJ
New England	90,974 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,484 <sup>3</sup>	NEJ
New Mexico	38,447	- 442	SCJ
New York	120,404	- 2,352	NEJ
North Alabama	150,348	- 1,444	SEJ
North Carolina	237,159 <sup>3</sup>	+ 595	SEJ
North Central New York	74,483 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,866	NEJ
North Georgia	350,087	+ 3,657	SEJ
North Indiana	97,028 <sup>1</sup>	- 1,271 <sup>1</sup>	NCJ
North Texas	158,712	- 778	SCJ
Northern Illinois	103,025 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,250	NCJ
Northwest Texas	65,229 <sup>3</sup>	- 543	SCJ
Norwegian	13,087 <sup>1</sup>	- 103 <sup>1</sup>	Eurasia
Oklahoma	244,170	- 816	SCJ
Oklahoma Indian Missionary	6,223 <sup>3</sup>	- 2	SCJ
Oregon - Idaho	31,941 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,123	W-J
Pacific Northwest	56,377 <sup>1</sup>	- 1,117 <sup>1</sup>	W-J
Peninsula - Delaware	89,801	- 1,470	NEJ
The Polish Conference	2,528 <sup>1</sup>	+ 19 <sup>1</sup>	Eurasia
Red Bird Missionary	1,425 <sup>1</sup>	+ 19 <sup>1</sup>	SEJ
Rio Grande	14,256 <sup>1</sup>	-212 <sup>1</sup>	SCJ
Rocky Mountain	64,757 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,979	W-J
Sierra Leone	100,102 <sup>1</sup>	+ 5,588 <sup>1</sup>	Africa
South Carolina	239,750 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,445	SEJ
South Georgia	135,880	- 925	SEJ
South German	17,492 <sup>3</sup>	- 306 <sup>3</sup>	Eurasia

South Indiana	110,097	- 907	NCJ
Southwest Texas	119,781 <sup>1</sup>	+ 104 <sup>1</sup>	SCJ
Tennessee	117,350 <sup>1</sup>	+ 768 <sup>1</sup>	SEJ
Texas	285,652 <sup>1</sup>	+ 2,035 <sup>1</sup>	SCJ
Troy	47,518 <sup>3</sup>	- 5,687 <sup>3</sup>	NEJ
Ukraine & Moldova	480 <sup>1</sup>	First time report	Eurasia
Virginia	337,641 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,067	SEJ
West Michigan	67,734 <sup>1</sup>	- 197 <sup>1</sup>	NCJ
West Ohio	218,794	- 5,545	NCJ
West Virginia	103,905	- 900 <sup>3</sup>	NEJ
Western New York	55,659	- 320 <sup>3</sup>	NEJ
Western North Carolina	293,772 <sup>1</sup>	+ 683 <sup>1</sup>	NEJ
Western Pennsylvania	187,441 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,738 <sup>3</sup>	NEJ
Wisconsin	87,742 <sup>3</sup>	- 2,540	NCJ
Wyoming	61,534 <sup>3</sup>	- 1,379	NEJ
Yellowstone	15,754 <sup>1</sup>	- 366 <sup>1</sup>	W-J

### **Membership Change in the United Methodist Church**

We in Concerned Methodists are worried about the decline in our United Methodist Church over the past 40 years over 2,932,872 gone or an average of 73,321 people per year, 6,110 per month, 1,411 per week, or 201 per day, for every one of those years.

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Membership</u></b>	<b><u>Net Loss</u></b>
1969	10,789,624	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Tracked by CM
1970	10,671,774	117,850
1971	10,509,198	162,576
1972	10,334,521	174,677
1973	10,063,060	271,461
1974	9,957,710	105,350
1975	9,861,028	96,682
1976	9,785,534	75,494
1977	9,731,781	53,753
1978	9,653,711	78,070
1979	9,584,771	68,940
1980	9,519,407	65,364
1981	9,457,012	62,395
1982	9,405,164	51,848
1983	9,332,712	72,452
1984	9,266,853	65,859
1985	9,192,172	74,681
1986	9,124,575	67,597
1987	9,055,145	69,430
1988	8,979,139	76,006
1989	8,904,824	74,315
1990	8,849,538	55,286
1991	8,785,184	64,354
1992	8,723,034	62,150
1993	8,646,466	76,568
1994	8,584,199	62,267
1995	8,534,891	49,308
1996	8,499,744	35,147
1997	8,457,227	42,517
1998	8,405,746	51,481

1999	8,356,816	48,930
2000	8,334,204	22,612
2001	8,303,561	30,643
2002	8,257,495	48,646
2003	8,192,495	65,000 (est.)
2004	8,135,806	56,689
2005	7,995,429	84,822
2006	7,931,733	53,449
2007	7,856,733	74,981 (est.)
+	+	+

### **Which Way?**

The General Conference 2008 (GC2008) in Fort Worth is now history – except for the amendments that will be considered by the annual conferences this next year. In actuality, this may very well be a pivotal year in the life of the United Methodist Church. Will our church continue as a Christian denomination or sink into an accelerated decline and sever its worldwide connection? Which way will we as a denomination go?

#### General Conference 2008 was problematic in several ways:

- The marginalization of the African delegates – many of whom did not have their names listed in the *DCA Advance* to receive material for their study before GC2008.
- The bishops’ putting forth a slate of five candidates for the Judicial Council after that body had rebuffed one of their own in the Ed Johnson decision – and then that slate appearing on the desks of the delegates immediately before the election for the Judicial Council.
- The selection of an admitted practicing homosexual to help lead worship at GC2008.
- Bishop Laurence McClesky’s admitting a demonstration that disrupted the proceedings – giving little notice to the delegates.
- The using up of time on seemingly frivolous reports at the beginning of GC2008 – and then having long sessions, with some committee meetings lasting past midnight.
- The marginalization of the African delegates by giving them tickets which mandated their leaving GC2008 early and missing legislation that was voted the last day – much of which passed and is supportive of the radical homosexual agenda.
- The passing of radical legislation on the last day by rushing it through, forcing consideration with minimal time for each petition or amendment before bringing it to a vote – and, as mentioned, in the absence of African delegates through their mandated departure.

A great deal of importance rests on what is decided with the “Trojan Horse” amendments coming before the annual conferences this next year (see page 3 of this newsletter). If they pass and the United States becomes a “regional conference,” there will be a significant shift in the “balance of power” in favor of those who would normalize homosexual practice in our denomination – thus sealing the fate of the United Methodist Church.

You may ask, “How would that happen?” For the past six general conferences the African delegates have provided eloquent speakers and a stabilizing vote reaffirming our orthodox Christian tradition that sex is only between a man and woman within the context of marriage. If these “Trojan Horse” amendments were to pass making the United States a “regional conference” this would in turn:

- Separate the American church from the overseas church in the passing of petitions and other important legislation.
- Lead to the passing of petitions that would normalize homosexual practice in the American church.
- Align the American church against the Bible.
- Fracture the relationship between the American church and the overseas churches. They would break the communion because they recognize that homosexual practice is rebellion against God as far as Christian morality is concerned.
- Undermine the ministry of the overseas churches who have been winning people to Christianity – often out of paganism.
- Cause an accelerated decline within the American church.
- Elicit unprecedented turmoil in the local churches as they fight for their property and try to leave a denomination that has legitimized homosexual practice over and against the Bible.
- Lead individuals to believe this to be acceptable practice – causing many to enter that lifestyle and face God’s judgment for what the Bible calls sin.

Why would we want to do this? We will be losing the best part of our United Methodist connection in our overseas church – & the area of our United Methodist church growing the fastest.

We in the UMC in America seem to have lost our way. As we had said in a previous newsletter, sin separates us from God – it is like a wall that blocks our relationship with Him, or as an evangelical ministry depicts it, we are on one side of a chasm and God is on the other. We cannot get across other than by confession of our sins and relying on the shed blood of Jesus Christ to take away our sins. We can be involved in what we think is work for Him and His kingdom, but if have un- confessed

sin in our lives, we have a barrier that keeps us from having a relationship with Him, much less doing what He wants. In actuality, we are in rebellion against Him. Isaiah 59:2 says, “But your sins have separated you from God; your iniquities have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.” We are only kidding ourselves if we ignore this. When we repent of and confess our sins in earnest sincerity, it is an honest and open admission that we have done things wrong that are sinful and offensive to God and that we will try to not do them again. (Ro. 3:23; 6:23). We need to accept the remedy that God gave us – that Christ died on the cross for our sins; if we will accept that reality and Him as our savior we will have the assurance that our sins are forgiven. We have “wiped the slate clean” with God and are able to serve Him with integrity. What is key here is that we need to recognize sin as sin.

How can we truly follow our much-touted motto “make disciples for Jesus Christ” when our practice in the polity of the church does not follow basic standards of morality? Dr. J. Vernon McGee puts it, “My friend, you cannot just play around and get very far with God. That is the reason there is so much that is phony in Christian service today. I want to say it kindly but emphatically – you are not serving God unless you are letting Him cleanse and purify your life. We have forgotten this matter of holiness today. How we need it in our churches and in our own lives!” (*Thru the Bible*, Vol.1, p. 328)

Which way will we go? We truly are at a crossroads. I pray that we will make the right decision and once again become a vibrant, faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Please, don’t break our worldwide connection; preserve the United Methodist Church as a viable, orthodox Christian denomination. Examine this legislation carefully and vote against these “Trojan Horse” amendments in your next annual conference.

– Allen O. Morris

### **General Conference Marginalizes African UMs**

United Methodism continues to grow in Africa, where nearly 1/3 of UM members now live. The 2008 General Conference included an unprecedented 192 delegates (out of 992) from Africa, up from last time. There were 42 delegates from the Philippines and 42 from Europe. The large number of African delegates was crucial for key votes affirming Biblical teaching about sexuality. “We have feared this for years,” said a spokesman for the pro-homosexuality “Reconciling Ministries Network,” complaining that international delegates are ... “far more conservative than even the average American conservatives, on a wide range of social issues.”

Many U.S. liberals resented the growing African presence. Some African delegates reported receiving “intimidating notes and pictures” on their desks. One African delegate was angrily told by a liberal U.S. delegate: “Remember, the money for your conference in Africa comes from our conference here.” Some African delegates had been given plane tickets mandating their departure before the end of General Conference, and were not present for many important votes on the last day. African UMs, unlike the U.S., could not afford to send alternate delegates.

And unlike U.S. delegates, most African delegates only received General Conference legislation after arriving in Fort Worth. Official daily updates about legislation were published only in English, which about half the African delegates do not speak. Display screen instructions for delegates appeared only in English. During debate on major Constitutional amendments, the simultaneous French audio translation stopped completely. Some overseas delegates said translations were of poor quality or tainted by the translator’s biases.

Elections to the Judicial Council and University Senate resulted in no African representation.

**ACTION:** Contact the General Commission on the General Conference and urge serious planning now for fair treatment of the African and other overseas delegates in the 2012 General Conference. Commission chair is Gail Murphy-Geiss; email: gmurphygeiss@comcast.net.

– *UMAction Briefing, Summer 2008, p. 3. Published by The Institute on Religion and Democracy, 1023 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 601, Washington, DC 20005. Website: [www.TheIRD.org](http://www.TheIRD.org)*

### **The War on Terror**

In the Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> *Adult Bible Studies* student book, p. 25, Bishop Larry Goodpaster wrote, “...the so-called war on terror.” This is only one of several public expressions by some of our United Methodist leaders critical of our involvement in combat actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Others go so far as to attack President George Bush personally. This is extremely regrettable. We can only ask, “Do these people not remember that on September 11<sup>th</sup> our country was attacked? Do they not understand the nature of this conflict? Do they not understand the tremendously important value of establishing a viable Christian presence in that part of the world – in the very heart of Islam?” If they do, then why do they have such strong objections to the war on terror? Make not mistake about it – it is a very real war.

In addition, several other things must be pointed out: 1. There is absolutely no doubt that WMDs were present in Iraq, including some very lethal material of a chemical/biological nature; 2. President Bush acted on the best information available – and was backed up in his decision for troop deployment by Congress; 3. We are engaged in a conflict every bit as serious and potentially as deadly as World War II, and 4. The *Ft. Bragg Paraglide*: even in the midst of Ramadan, Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin reports that violence is continuing its downward trend in Iraq with significant progress. For those who want to find out the truth, a more complete analysis of Christianity & Islam – and the War on Terror is found on the Concerned Methodists’ website:

[http://cmpage.org/war\\_on\\_terror.html](http://cmpage.org/war_on_terror.html). I recommend that you ascertain the truth for yourselves. As for our church officials – to the extent that they lobby against the War on Terror, they encourage the enemies of our country’s freedom, put all of us in greater jeopardy, and increase the danger to our brave troops fighting for us overseas. They need to have credibility in this.

– Allen O. Morris, Editor

### **“Trojan Horse” Coming Soon**

Dangerous UMC Constitutional amendments were barely approved at General Conference – but won’t be adopted unless they are ratified by two-thirds of the total votes at the UMC Annual Conferences in 2009.

One would amend paragraph 4 of the UMC Constitution potentially mandating automatic church membership to all applicants, denying pastoral discretion. Potentially, judicial activists on the UM Judicial Council could exploit this amendment to overturn the UMC’s prohibition of homosexual ordination. This amendment originated with the pro-homosexuality Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN).

Also approved was a set of 23 Constitutional amendments on the global UMC, designed to create a new U.S.-only “regional conference” excluding overseas delegates. Liberals opposed to United Methodism’s Biblical stance on marriage strongly support these amendments, which would reduce or remove the influence of Biblically-minded Africans and other non-U.S. United Methodists. The pro-homosexuality RMN hailed these amendments as “a positive development.” Some opponents call them the “segregation amendments.”

**ACTION:** Urge your pastors and your church’s lay representatives at next year’s Annual Conference to study carefully these “Trojan Horse” amendments and their serious impact on our church and its teachings about marriage – and to vote “NO” in your 2009 Annual Conference.

– *UMAction Briefing, Summer 2008, p. 6.* [www.TheIRD.org](http://www.TheIRD.org)

### **Turnover in Church’s Top Court**

United Methodism’s Judicial Council has 5 new members, creating questions about this top court’s willingness to uphold the church’s standards on homosexual behavior. Over the last 8 years, the Judicial Council’s traditionalist majority has enforced the UMC’s stand on Biblical sexual ethics.

All 5 new members were nominated by the Council of Bishops and supported by liberal caucus groups during the General Conference. The bishops declined to nominate any of the incumbents. Although 30 percent of United Methodists live in Africa, no African now serves on the 9-member Council, which has 8 Americans and 1 Filipino.

The Judicial Council had to make [what some considered to be] a controversial decision in 2005, when it restored the Rev. Ed Johnson to his Virginia pulpit. Johnson had been removed from his ministry by Bishop Charlene Kammerer for declining to accept an active, unrepentant homosexual into membership. The Judicial Council did not address the issue of homosexuality and church membership. But it did affirm the pastor’s authority to decide when a person is ready for membership. Liberal critics assailed the Johnson decision as “exclusionary.” ...Over the next 4 years, the new Judicial Council will receive cases involving the UMC’s strong stand on homosexuality. How it will rule remains uncertain.

**ACTION:** Please pray for all members of the Judicial Council, that they will uphold the church’s *Book of Discipline* and ethical standards.

– *UMAction Briefing, Summer 2008, p. 3.*

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*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were [before repenting of your sins].*

– 1 Corinthians 6:9-11a

### **St. Paul Church is Rebuilding**

St. Paul Church is rebuilding its church on another piece of property in Fairbanks. You will remember that this is the small conservative Alaskan church that was:

- Conceived by laypeople focused on God and Jesus Christ,
- Paid and cared for by laypeople,
- Built by laypeople, at times working in weather with temperatures plunging to 20 degrees below zero,
- Targeted for closure with no viable recourse,; not given any plausible reason for its disaffiliation, and
- Had the contents of their church taken with no warning, and after they had been given assurance of cooperation.

Their story is told in the book *We’ve a Story to Tell ...* Get your copy for \$12.00 + \$2.00 shipping and handling (S+H).

If you wish to help these good people in their rebuilding, please send donations to:

St. Paul Church, P. O. Box 83725,

Fairbanks, Alaska 99708-3725.

Telephone: 907-479-7998

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### ***Stewardship Perspectives - 2007***

Containing 295 pages of information on church expenditures within the United Methodist Church, this book is available for: \$14.00 + \$2.00 for S+H. For both books, order from Concerned Methodists.

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**Correction:** In a previous issue of *The Christian Methodist Newsletter*, we had published a story entitled “The Tablecloth” about a series of “coincidences” that led to a man and a wife being reunited after being separated by World War II. Further research showed that it appeared in 1948 in *Readers’ Digest* and did not happen in the recent past. We do apologize if we left any other impression with you.

### **Communion**

I have received affirmations & questions as to my concerns about the sanitation used by those offering communion. On the positive side, there have been welcome assurances provided by pastors as to how they sanitize their hands and those of the laity assisting them in communion. Others have expressed skepticism about the need to do so. What I have personally seen are:

+ In a worship service as the acolytes went up to light candles on the altar one brushed a cloth napkin off the communion table onto the floor. Later after the associate preacher went up to pray for the offering, he picked up the napkin off the floor, and replaced it on the table. During the communion service itself that same napkin was used – with the side that had touched the floor turned in next to the bread.

+ During another communion I watched as a fly crawled over one of the loaves to be used in the service.

A recurring need for preachers to clean their hands is because they often greet people shaking their hands. According to one study, a percentage of men and women fail to wash their hands after using the restroom. As a minimum, preachers touch hymnbooks, papers, etc. that might have had dust and/or insects on them during the previous week. Having preachers clean their hands before serving communion is a small thing to ask to ensure sanitation.

On a procedural note, one preacher had objected to people pinching off the bread themselves telling them to “not dishonor the loaf” – which is so much nonsense. To go along with that would cast aspersion on the churches who do practice it in that way. What would be even more important is that all preachers and celebrants take the time to clean their hearts to be presentable before the Lord. This reflects Jesus’ advice in Matthew 23:25ff.

– Allen O. Morris

### **Your Help Needed**

At the end of each year, we make our annual request for contributions; we ask you pray and seek the Lord’s leading as to how you might support the Lord’s. We make the most efficient possible use of the money you entrust in our ministry. Since we have no paid employees and minimize overhead, we are able to translate the maximum amount of donations into our ministry of informing people about what is happening within our United Methodist Church. For those who do choose to provide financial assistance to us, we send our “Monthly Update” that contains even more news than does *The Christian Methodist Newsletter* on what’s happening across our denomination. In addition, for those who make a contribution of \$30 or more, we will send a copy of the book *Stewardship Perspectives–2007*. Finally, it should also be noted that all donor information is kept strictly confidential:

\* We do not share information with any outside organizations.

\* You will not be solicited through regular mailings or "telemarketing" calls.

\* You will continue to receive newsletters, informational mailings, and notices of issues pertaining to our United Methodist Church.

We would ask you to make a contribution to the ministry of Concerned Methodists to support publication of *The Christian Methodist Newsletter* if you have never previously done so. Please consider our request.

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*It is the habitual thought that frames itself into our life. It affects us even more than our intimate social relations do. Our confidential friends have not so much to do in shaping our lives as the thoughts which we harbor.*

– J.W. Teal