

THE GREATEST GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT OF OUR TIMES

by Professor Mary Ann Glendon

Receiving the 2009 Proudly Pro-Life Award from the National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund, Professor Mary Ann Glendon delivered the following address on October 6, 2009 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. (Editor)

When I received a letter from Dr. Wanda Franz [president of the National Right to Life Committee] telling me about the “Proudly Pro-Life Award,” I was, quite simply, overcome with emotion. There is no honor or award that could mean more to me than one from my fellow members of what my friend the late Richard John Neuhaus always called “the greatest grassroots movement of our times.” At the same time, I can’t help but be humbled at the thought of the great men and women to whom you have given this honor in the past.

And so I know you will understand when I say that I would like to accept this award not just for whatever I have been able to contribute to our common cause, but in memory of the many persons who have sustained me on what would otherwise have been at times a lonely journey.

Evenings like tonight evoke so many memories—of friends here and departed, of struggles won and lost. Evenings like this remind us that we are blessed to be surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses.”

After more than three decades of involvement in pro-life activities, I wish I could say that I thought the threats to respect for human life were diminishing. But one lesson we’ve learned is: Do not underestimate the power of the culture of death. We’ve learned that what was unimaginable one day can become reality the next. Today, pressures for euthanasia are building; developments in biomedicine are occurring with such speed that they have outpaced reflection on their moral implications; experiments on human embryos are fostering a mentality that treats the lives of the weak as means to the ends of the strong; and the freedoms of religion and conscience are coming under increasing threat.

Thirty years ago, who could have imagined such a thing as partial-birth abortion! When I ask myself why so many people have been slow to realize how easily today’s atrocity can become tomorrow’s routine, one answer I come up with is that it was due in part to a failure to realize something very important about choice, namely that choices last.

Each time we make policy on abortion, euthanasia, or embryonic experimentation, we are changing the moral ecology of our country. We are either helping to build the culture of life or cooperating with the culture of death. It hasn’t helped that the elite media, the powerful foundations, the sex industry, and the vast profit-making abortion industry have done their best to disguise the truth of what was happening.

But what makes the pro-life movement “the greatest grassroots movement of our times” is that it has steadily marched forward without support from the wealthy and powerful. It has moved ahead thanks to dedicated women and men—from all walks of life—who have never ceased to witness to the truth, day in and day out.

The recent Pew Foundation report that support for abortion is declining is one of many signs that our efforts are bearing fruit. We are winning the battle for hearts and minds—not as quickly as we would have wished—but we are winning. We will never give up, and we will prevail.

One of the main reasons for our slow but steady progress, I believe, is the success of the pro-life movement in demonstrating by word and deed that our position on protection of the unborn is inseparable from our dedication to compassion and assistance for women who are so often the second victims of abortion.

Unlike the movement that calls itself pro-choice, the pro-life movement has thought deeply about choice. We know that choices last: We know that individual choices make us into a certain kind of person; and we know that collective choices make us into a certain kind of society.

—*Prof. Glendon is the Learned Hand Professor at Harvard Law School. Her aforementioned address was first published at www.firstthings.com’s “On the Square” (10/14/09), and it appears here with permission.♥*

GENERAL CONFERENCE AND CHURCH & SOCIETY

Mr. Jim Winkler is the General Secretary of The United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society. He is a brother in Christ and a friend of this editor.

Mr. Winkler writes a weekly "Word from Winkler" that appears in "Faith in Action" at www.umc-gbcs.org. One of his weekly articles, "Congregational Malpractice" (September 28, 2009), contains this paragraph: "By mandate of The United Methodist Book of Discipline, it is the task of the General Board of Church and Society to seek the implementation of General Conference resolutions on social concerns and the Social Principles. It is not within our purview to set aside General Conference's actions. The statements of General Conference form the basis for our action and ministry. To paraphrase Bishop James Mathews, we must move from 'resolutionary' Christianity to revolutionary Christianity."

For the purposes of this brief article, the statement—"It is not within our purview to set aside General Conference's actions."—is crucial. In other words, General Conference sets—no, determines—the agenda for the General Board of Church and Society. That, no one would dispute, is the fact of the matter, and Mr. Winkler has well stated this fact.

However, a few questions come to mind. When the 2000 General Conference opposed partial-birth abortion for the first time—"We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life."

(Paragraph 161J)—how did the General Board of Church and Society's ministry and action express General Conference's opposition? Also, since the 2008 General Conference declared that "We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood."

(Paragraph 161J), how has the General Board of Church and Society acted on that General Conference mandate? Furthermore, since General Conference in 2008 stated "We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion" (Paragraph 161J), how has the General Board of Church and Society helped The United Methodist Church to affirm and encourage these life-saving ministries?

These are honest questions. And we would be more than happy to publish answers from Mr. Winkler or one of his staff. (Paul T. Stallsworth)♥

Please remember to pray and fast for the ministry of Lifewatch the first Tuesday of every month.

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND WITH A GROUP!

THE ANNUAL LIFEWATCH SERVICE OF WORSHIP (9:30 a.m.)

Preaching: Bishop Scott Jones
The Kansas Area of The United Methodist Church
and the

THE ANNUAL LIFEWATCH BOARD MEETING (11:30 a.m.)

Both Events on January 22, 2010 (Friday)
at The United Methodist Building
100 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC

Fill a van or bus from your church and community, and join us for these Gospel of Life events.

A WORD FROM JIM WINKLER

by Jim Winkler

This is Mr. Winkler's response to the prior article, "General Conference and Church & Society." (Editor)

The General Conference acts on hundreds of petitions, including those asking for changes or deletions in the Social Principles. The abortion paragraph is one of 67 statements in the Social Principles. Additionally, The Book of Resolutions, more than 1,000 pages in length, provides guidance to the 22-person staff of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS).

The elected directors of the GBCS set priorities for the ministry of the board in terms of issues and initiatives, and work with the staff in the implementation of the priorities. Education has been a key focus. For example, from 2000 through 2009, GBCS sponsored hundreds of seminars on issues related to social concerns—some of them focusing on human sexuality, including abortion. The abortion statement was shared with groups in those settings for their information and discussion.

The GBCS Women & Children's Network numbers approximately 6,300 United Methodists who received the new language in the abortion paragraph through the network newsletter.

In 2008, GBCS co-sponsored a dialogue session with the West Ohio Annual Conference Board of Church & Society, which brought together two dozen people to openly and honestly discuss the abortion issue and the changes made by the 2008 General Conference. It was an important event in the life of the annual conference, and we welcome future conversations on that issue with West Ohio and other annual conferences. [See Lifewatch (June 2009) for a report.]

Most recently, new language in the 2008 abortion Social Principle, encouraging parental, guardian, or trusted adult notification in cases of minors seeking abortions, resulted in GBCS revoking its support for a piece of legislation called the Freedom of Choice Act—a bill never voted on in Congress. This act would have overturned any local, state, or national legislation that erected any barriers to access to abortion. Because the new language calling for notification regarding minors

was added (a barrier to open access), GBCS could no longer support this bill.

Jesus' life is centered on bringing healing and wholeness to all God's people. Jesus called his disciples to "proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:2). As the advocacy agency of The United Methodist Church, GBCS takes that call seriously. Reducing abortions by preventing unplanned pregnancies is paramount for GBCS and its board, along with advocacy to keep abortion safe and legal. Our life-saving ministries focus on advocacy to increase family planning and human rights for women and girls around the globe, which result in decreased numbers of abortions, lowered maternal and child mortality and increased empowerment of women and girls. The United Methodist Church also commits itself to comprehensive sex education for schools and churches. GBCS believes this is another way of preventing unplanned pregnancies and helping young people achieve greater self-sufficiency and stability.

—*Again, Mr. Winkler is the General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, of The United Methodist Church, in Washington, DC.*♥

NO! TO HEALTH CARE REFORM FUNDING ABORTION

Almost everyone agrees that health care reform, in the United States, is needed. But not everyone agrees what that reform should be. Therefore, politics and process become necessary. That is to say, discussion and evaluation of the various reform options, their strong points and weak points, become necessary. And yet, discussion of the various health care reform bills is quite difficult—for the bills themselves are extraordinarily long and often in a state of flux (or amendment).

In the midst of the flood of commentary on health care reform in America, one question stands out in this editor's mind: Would the health care plan(s) advocated by the Obama Administration allow or disallow taxpayer-funded abortion? (It does seem odd that abortion, which involves the intentional taking of the life of a child, comes under the rubric of "health care." But it does. That happens by including abortion under "reproductive health care," which falls under the more general heading of "health care.")

Again, would the health care plan(s) advocated by the Obama Administration allow or disallow taxpayer-funded abortion? That is the question. The answer to that question will determine, or greatly help to determine, the position that many United Methodists—citizens, US Representatives, and US Senators—take on the health care plan(s) now being considered. And it should. For if a health care reform bill passes, that includes using federal dollars for abortion procedures or coverage, more abortions and more post-abortion damage to women will occur, courtesy of the US taxpayer.

THE STATUS QUO

What is the status quo regarding federal funding for abortion? Currently, "no dollar—federal or state—associated with Medicaid may pay for elective abortions," according to Charmaine Yoest, the CEO of Americans United for Life ("Tax Dollars Shouldn't Fund Abortion," online.wsj.com, 10/14/09). The Hyde Amendment, which is added each year to a spending bill, makes sure of that. Furthermore, "the federal government does not pay into health-care plans that cover elective abortions. What's more, no government health plans cover elective abortion, period. That includes Medicaid, the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and other programs." Obviously, there is a tall and thick wall that now separates federal dollars from abortion procedures.

The status quo on federal money and abortion would be maintained, say many Democrats, if the Capps Amendment (which is named after Rep. Lois Capps [D-CA]) is passed with a health care reform bill. That is false. (About this dispute, FactCheck.org concluded: "... we judge that the president goes too far when he calls the statements that government would be funding abortions 'fabrications.'" [www.firstthings.com, 09/14/09]) According to Yoest, if the Capps Amendment becomes law, it "would side step the Hyde Amendment and other [pro-life] provisions in federal law. [In addition,] it would make abortion coverage a part of the public option, funnel tax dollars to private health plans that cover abortion, and ensure that every area of the country will have at least one health insurance plan that covers elective abortion. If this should happen [that is, if the Capps Amendment should pass], for the first time in more than 30 years the federal government would be in the business of funding the destruction of unborn human life." (emphasis added)

If politicians are truly dedicated to maintaining the sturdy wall between federal funds and abortions in America, they should "add a provision modeled after the Hyde Amendment to any health care reform that becomes law." (Yoest)

POLITICIANS OF PRO-LIFE PRINCIPLE

During the unfolding debate over health care reform, several politicians of pro-life principle have stepped up. (Yes, I know. Such people are subject to walking away from the pro-life position. Such people can go "wobbly" on life. It is for that reason that Psalm 146:3 warns us to "put not your trust in princes.")

Representative Bart Stupak (D-PA) has been notably pro-life and forthright. Rep. Stupak has pushed for an amendment that would ban federal funding for abortion and has joined others in sending a letter for life to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The September 25, 2009 letter read:

"Dear Honorable Pelosi:

"As the debate on health care reform continues and legislation is produced, it is imperative that the issue of abortion not be overlooked. Plans to mandate coverage

for abortions, either directly or indirectly, are unacceptable.

“We believe in a culture that supports and respects the right to life and is dedicated to the protection and preservation of families. Therefore, we cannot support any health care reform proposal unless it explicitly excludes abortion from the scope of any government-defined, or subsidized, health insurance plan. We believe that a government-defined, or subsidized, health insurance plan should not be used to fund abortion.

“Furthermore, we want to ensure that the Health Benefits Advisory Committee cannot recommend abortion services be included under covered benefits or as part of a benefits package. Without an explicit exclusion, abortion could be included in a government subsidized health care plan under general health care. The health care reform package produced by Congress will be landmark, and with legislation as important as this, abortion must be addressed clearly in the bill text.

“Furthermore, funding restrictions save lives by reducing the number of abortions. The Gutmacher Policy Review, a leading pro-choice research [journal] noted ‘that about one-third of women who would have had an abortion if support were available carried their pregnancies to term when the abortion fund was unavailable.’

“Thank you for taking the time to consider our request. By ensuring that abortions are not funded through any health care reform package, we will take this controversial issue off the table so that Congress can focus on crafting a broadly supported health care reform bill.

“Respectfully yours...[19 Democratic US Congressmen signed]”

It is good to be reminded that there are so many pro-life US Representatives, and US Senators, who are Democrats. On the life issues, not all on the pro-life side are Republicans, and not all on the pro-choice side are Democrats. [On Nov. 7, the Stupak-Pitts Amendment did pass.]

ROME’S STEADY VOICE

Throughout the long, tiring health care debate, leading bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States have maintained a steady, solid voice for life. For example, Bishop William F. Murphy (Rockville Centre), Cardinal Justin Rigali (Philadelphia), and Bishop John Wester (Salt Lake City) —as officers of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops—wrote a letter on October 9, 2009 to the members of Congress. It included the following: “If final legislation does not meet our principles, we will have no choice but to oppose the bill. We remain committed to working with the Administration, Congressional leadership, and our allies to produce final health reform legislation that will reflect our principles.

“We continue to urge you to[:]

“1. Exclude mandated coverage for abortion, and incorporate longstanding policies against abortion funding and in favor of conscience rights. No one

“Without an explicit exclusion, abortion could be included in a government subsidized health care plan under general health care.”

should be required to pay for or participate in abortion. It is essential that the legislation clearly apply[,] to this new program[,] longstanding and widely supported federal restrictions on abortion funding and mandates, and protections for rights of conscience. No current bill meets this test...

“We sincerely hope that the legislation will not fall short of our criteria. However, we remain apprehensive when amendments protecting freedom of conscience and ensuring no taxpayer money for abortion are defeated in committee votes. If acceptable language in these areas cannot be found, we will have to oppose the health care bill vigorously. Catholic moral tradition teaches that health care is a basic human right, essential to protecting human life and dignity. Much needed reform of our health care system must be pursued in ways that serve the life and dignity of all, never in ways that undermine or violate these fundamental values. We will work tirelessly to remedy these central problems and help pass real reform that clearly protects the life, dignity, and health of all.”

Then, at the end of October, there was Cardinal Francis George, the Archbishop of the Chicago Diocese and the president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, who noted to the editorial board of the Wall Street Journal that “every one of the health care reform bills passed by congressional committees allow for taxpayer funding of abortion—and therefore are ‘unacceptable’ to Catholics.” Cardinal George “added that his understanding is that President Obama has promised federal funding will not go to any health plans that cover abortion. ‘The President has made promises, and the Democrats should keep them,’ said the cardinal.” (James Freeman, “Is ObamaCare Pro-Life?,” online.wsj.com, 10/27/09)

CONCLUSION

There are politicians who believe that the federal government should pay for abortions for some women. Some of these politicians are now also busy promoting health care reform. More likely than not, some politicians are trying to reform health care and increase government-funded abortions at the same time.

However, the joining together of health care reform and the pro-choice agenda is an unpopular political position. Pro-life people—and in 2009 there are more pro-life Americans (in absolute numbers and in percentages) than ever before—are opposed to abortion being funded with federal money through health care reform. Most Republicans are opposed to abortion being funded with federal money through health care reform. Some Democrats are opposed to abortion being funded with federal money through health care reform. And Roman Catholic leaders, who are otherwise in favor of health care reform, are opposed to abortion being funded

with federal money through health care reform.

If health care reformers are really serious about keeping federal dollars away from abortion procedures, they will write a prohibitive amendment, that would forbid federal dollars from paying for abortions and for abortion coverage, and attach that amendment to a health care reform bill that is headed toward passage. If reformers are unwilling to do that, they are willing to tolerate federal money paying for abortions and for abortion coverage.

As for this editor, I cannot and will not support any health care reform plan that allows federal money to fund abortions in America. And by telephone, I will let my US Representative and US Senators know my position. And I will let others know my position on this matter.

Be sure to encourage and persuade others—including your US Representative and US Senators—to say No! to the federal funding of abortion, promoted under the banner of health care reform, in our nation. (Paul T. Stallsworth)♥

IT COMES WITH A PRICE

A frightened young woman approaches the room,
While an unknowing baby lies calm in her womb.
For the doctors this simply is an everyday task.
But for her it caused sadness she just couldn't mask.

She laid on the table with tightly closed eyes,
While far back in her mind, she heard terrified cries.
The doctors assured her she'd made the right choice,
But all she could hear was her baby's scared voice.

It was too late, now, though. The damage was done.
There was nowhere to hide, and nowhere to run,
From this new emptiness she found deep in her heart,
Now that she and her baby had been torn apart.

There once was a day where our morals were strong,
When life was a gift, and when murder was wrong.
Now I wonder, how could we get so confused,
And how could our freedoms get this misused?

They'll try and convince us of well-thought-out ploys
That killing a child is a woman's own choice.
They'll say, "It is tissue. It just causes strife."
But God says, "That's my child. I have plans for his life."

—Emily Oborski was 15 when she wrote this poem at the Christian Life Campus in Erie, PA. This poem was recently found by a long-time friend of Lifewatch, who suggested that it be published again.♥

CHURCH FIRST

On November 9-10 the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church met at Lake Junaluska. The Study Committee heard presentations from various United Methodists. Lifewatch's editor, Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, offered one of the presentations. His address, in abbreviated form, follows.

"...It is important for you, the Study Committee, to step back, consider why the Annual Conferences voted [apparently against the twenty-three (23) constitutional amendments on church reorganization], gather additional information, and set out on a new course for denominational reorganization. In other words, this committee should not simply rewrite the constitutional amendments that were placed before the Annual Conferences in 2008. To simply edit the presumably rejected amendments, and return them to the 2012 General Conference and perhaps the Annual Conferences, would squander the attention, time, and money of The United Methodist Church. Something more faithful to God and the Gospel, more thoughtful, and more courageous is required of this Study Committee..."

A PROPOSAL

"This Study Committee should initiate a study of ecclesiology, the goal of which would be to write a brief statement on ecclesiology for The United Methodist Church, laity and clergy. (Ecclesiology has traditionally covered both the nature of the Church and the mission of the Church. This proposed statement would focus mainly on the nature of the Church.) To accomplish this task, the Study Committee would secure the services of a few of Methodism's world-class theologians, who would act as consultants to the project and perhaps drafters of the statement. The major portion of the final, ecclesiological statement would concentrate on the Nicene Creed's article on the Church: 'the one holy catholic and apostolic [C]hurch.' Only after this study is completed, published, and distributed would the Study Committee, informed and guided by the newly minted statement and by the theological consultants, draft new constitutional amendments that would bring constructive changes to the polity of The United Methodist Church. The theological consultants would be active, throughout the process of drafting the constitutional amendments..."

"[I]f your denominational-reorganizational plan does not begin in the soil of ecclesiology, you, the Study Committee, though busy with organizational change, will most certainly misunderstand the true identity of our church, treat our church as just another voluntary organization, and arrive at a reorganizational plan that is guided by organizational, political, and business-management theories, not by Christian truth about the Christian Church..."

WHAT IS LACKING

"Again, the troubling reality is this: substantive ecclesiology is in very short supply in The United Methodist Church today. Ecclesiology is nearly nonexistent in contemporary United Methodism because

of four (4) factors: (1) the nature of Protestantism, (2) the origins of Methodism, (3) the history of American Protestantism, and (4) the ways of ordering the church today.

“First, the doctrine of the Church is thin in United Methodism, in part, because of the basic nature of Protestantism. As Protestantism developed over time, some Protestants defined themselves primarily by proving themselves not Roman Catholic... Again, some of Protestantism, including some of Methodism, sought and seeks to be ‘non-ecclesiastical’—that is, without ecclesiology—in its faith, life, and work.

“Second, United Methodism is short on ecclesiology because of our denomination’s historical origins. Methodism began as a revivalistic movement within the Church of England... Methodism, especially in America, was so dedicated to revivalism—to making disciples of Jesus Christ, one by one—that insufficient attention was paid to the Church and its nature.

“Third, the history of American Protestantism is another reason for the deficit in ecclesiology in American Methodism. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, reporting in August 1939 on his second and last visit to the United States, wrote a fascinating essay entitled ‘Protestantism without Reformation.’ In his essay’s concluding paragraph, Bonhoeffer suggested much about American Methodism: ‘God has granted American Christianity no Reformation. He has given it strong revivalist preachers, churchmen and theologians, but no Reformation of the church of Jesus Christ by the Word of God...’

[emphases added].

“And fourth, contemporary Protestants, United Methodists included, act as if the Church is theirs to order, structure, and direct, however they please... Summarizing [Dr. Erik] Peterson [1890-1960], Dr. Michael J. Hollerich writes: ‘Modern Protestantism had evolved three different ways to compensate for the loss of [the public reality of the Church]... One of those was the substitution of ‘universal truths of reason’ for pure doctrine... [Today, consider rationalistic religion that seems to follow cultural elites in the West.] A second alternative was mysticism, by which Peterson meant inwardness or spirituality. In modern Protestantism it was manifested as pietist regeneration, existentialist earnestness, and secular equivalents... [Today, consider the multiple spiritualities available at the local Barnes & Noble.] The third alternative was church activism, which sanctioned projects such as foreign missions and social service... [Today, consider the well intended political lobbying for social justice.]’ (p. 327)...

“United Methodists in our day carry a weak understanding of the nature of the Church. However, this Study Committee can begin to remedy that problem by initiating a study, with invited theological consultants, on ecclesiology. Such a study might begin by examining The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement (WCC/ Geneva, Faith and Order Paper 198). A potentially rich point of departure for the study would be Paragraph 12

on the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church...”

THE CHALLENGE AT HAND

“For over forty years The United Methodist Church, particularly in the United States, has been in search of the way, the method, the answer, the solution that will stem the drift in our denomination. Evangelistic programs, church-growth methods, advertising campaigns, business-tested theories, and now leadership principles have enjoyed their brief acts on our denominational stage. Many of us have watched as these various acts have come and gone.

“I believe it is time—actually past time—for The United Methodist Church to remember, consider, and learn more deeply what it means to be the Church. That will not involve exciting programs or flashy ads. It will involve you, the Study Committee, learning anew what it means for the Church and The United Methodist Church to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. It will require of you, the Study Committee, to teach, to teach the Christian truth about the Christian Church. It will demand of you, the Study Committee, with the help of theological consultants, to write constitutional amendments that will increase The United Methodist Church’s unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. For this task, you will need wisdom, courage, and perseverance—all of which God can and will provide in abundance.

“I close with a word from Bonhoeffer in edited form: ‘[We should] protest against any form of the church which does not honour the question of truth above all things.’”♥

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT

- The Theology of the Body Seminar—which was sponsored by the New Bern District of The United Methodist Church, Transforming Congregations, and Lifewatch—has come and gone. Held last May, the seminar’s leader was Dr. Paul J. Griffiths, who holds the Warren Chair of Catholic Theology at Duke Divinity School.

Though the seminar has come and gone, the various results of the seminar are here to stay and are now available. For an excellent summary of Dr. Griffiths’ lectures, you can go to www.lifewatch.org and click on “View Study Text;” a PDF version of the summary will appear. Also, you can watch the entire event on your computer by going to www.lifewatch.org and clicking on “View Video Sessions;” each one of the three DVDs can be watched by clicking on 01, 02, and 03. Finally, if you would like your own set of the three DVDs of the seminar, send your request along with \$10.00 to Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/ Cottleville, MO 63338. The DVDs would be good for bringing the Theology of the Body Seminar and its Christian understandings of human sexuality to a church-school class or another group.

The United Methodist Church continues to struggle with issues related to human sexuality. United Methodists, clergy and laity, are discovering that moral rules are necessary, though not sufficient, for teaching the Christian truth about human sexuality. Therefore, John Paul II’s teaching about human sexuality, which is contained in the

Theology of the Body Seminar, can be a rich and helpful resource for United Methodists. Give it a try. You will be rewarded in many ways.

● On January 22, 2010, Bishop Scott Jones of The Kansas Area will deliver the sermon at the Lifewatch Service of Worship at The United Methodist Building (100 Maryland Avenue, NE, which is across the street from the United States Supreme Court) in Washington, DC. The worship service begins at 9:30 a.m. Please make every effort to attend.

Bp. Jones will become the third United Methodist bishop to deliver a Lifewatch Sermon. Bp. Timothy W. Whitaker preached the 2005 Lifewatch Sermon, and Bp. William H. Willimon the 2008 Lifewatch Sermon.

As you might expect, the full text of Bp. Jones' sermon will be carried in the March 2010 issue of Lifewatch.

Again, we hope to see you on January 22, 2010!

● On July 1, Rev. James V. Heidinger II retired as the publisher and president of Good News. To honor Jim's good life and faithful ministry, we were more than happy to provide the following paragraph to Good News for publication: "And now, at the beginning of his retirement, let us praise a faithful, ordained minister—James V. Heidinger II. Throughout The United Methodist Church, certain clergy are understood as 'statesmen of the church.' Too often, men and women so described simply look out for the statistical well-being of their own congregations, conferences, and denomination. Jim Heidinger is a real statesman of the church because he keeps evangelical faith in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for the salvation of the world, located in the more catholic context of the church. In part, because of God working through Jim's ministry,

United Methodism experiences no small amount of reform and renewal. In addition, because Jim's renewal ministry is dedicated to the renewal of The United Methodist Church, his ministry is always tied to the Church, her Word and Sacraments, her tradition and history, her doctrine and morals, her glory and failure, her faithfulness and faithlessness. Because of Jim's wise theological guidance, United Methodist renewal efforts do not often wander into the Jesus-and-me fever swamps, entrepreneurial side shows, or political overreaches that plague Evangelical Protestantism in America. Jim Heidinger is a brother in Christ and a fellow laborer in Christ's Church. Now, Jim, please, leave us your cell phone number, your email address, and your mailing address. You might be officially retired, but you still have much to offer Christ's Church." (July/August 2009)

Dave and Cindy Evans, and Marsha and Paul Stallworth, representing Lifewatch, were honored to attend the festive retirement dinner held at Asbury Theological Seminary, in Wilmore, KY, on August 6. What a grand evening it was! And it should have been!

Jim Heidinger has been, is, and always will be a faithful advocate of the Gospel of Life. From the very beginnings of Lifewatch, Jim has been a steady source of great encouragement for this ministry. Were it not for Jim, his Christ-like example and his wise counsel, Lifewatch would not be where it is today.

Thanks be to God for Jim Heidinger. And thank you, Jim.

● Pro-life Reflections for Every Day (Catholic Book Publishing Corp., NJ, 2009) by Father Frank Pavone has just been published. It can be ordered from www.amazon.com.

ORDER FORM: I wish to order: ___ copies of **THE RIGHT CHOICE: Pro-Life Sermons** (\$12.00/copy); ___ copies of **THE CHURCH AND ABORTION: In Search of New Ground for Response** (\$5.00/copy); ___ copies of **THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT ABORTION** (\$7.00/copy); ___ copies of **HOLY ABORTION?: A Theological Critique of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice** (\$8.00/copy); ___ copies of **THE JERICHO PLAN: Breaking Down the Walls Which Prevent Post-Abortion Healing** (\$8.00/copy); ___ copies of **A LOVE FOR LIFE: Christianity's Consistent Protection of the Unborn** (\$10.00/copy); ___ copies of **30 DAYS FOR LIFE: A Prayer Devotional** (\$2.00/copy); and ___ copies of **THEOLOGY OF THE BODY SEMINAR** (Dr. Paul J. Griffiths)(\$10.00/DVD set). Prices include shipping.

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Lifewatch is published by the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.



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United Methodists on
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P.O. Box 306, Cottleville MO 63338

12/01/09

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Fr. Pavone, you will recall, is the National Director of Priests for Life, the President of the National Pro-life Religious Council (to which Lifewatch belongs), and one of the most articulate of today's pro-life advocates in the United States. His new Pro-life Reflections for Every Day is a prayer book that carries a pro-life devotion for each day of the year; and each devotion includes a Scripture reading, a reflection, and a prayer.

In the book's Introduction, Fr. Pavone writes: "Jesus Christ is Life. To stand with Him is to stand with life and to stand against whatever destroys life. Being 'pro-life' in our convictions, words, and actions is not merely a 'personal belief' or a political ideology. Pro-life action is not merely a hobby or an 'extracurricular' activity.

"Pro-life is a spirituality, a way of relating to God, an integral dimension of the Christian Gospel. There is, in the end, only one Gospel. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the Gospel of Life...

"[This spirituality] is marked by a spirit of joy, a serene confidence, a deep compassion, a radical solidarity with the vulnerable, a strong courage, a constant readiness for public witness, and a passion for justice...

"The reflections, moreover, are not just to help us meditate but to inspire us to act. Prayer and action cannot be divorced, and therefore these reflections are as much of an action plan as a teaching, and as much of a commission as a prayer.

"And as you pray the Pro-life Reflections for Every Day with me through the course of the year, know that countless pro-life believers are doing the same. Let's pray for each other; let's work together to build a Culture of Life; and let's look forward to the victory!"

• The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) gathered its 2009 Churchwide Assembly, on August 17 through 25, in Minneapolis. The assembly voted to approve: "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," a new social statement; Resolution 1 (which allows local churches to "recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships"); Resolution 2 (which has the ELCA find

ways for same-gender people to be listed as rostered leaders); Resolution 3 (in which the ELCA vows to "respect the bound consciences of all"); and Resolution 4 (which outlines the ways that people in same-sex relationships can serve as rostered leaders). In other words, the 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA distanced the ELCA from historic Christian teaching on homosexual practice.

In a videotaped greeting from Atlanta, Archbishop Wilton Gregory, who heads the ecumenical office of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said: "This week the ELCA faces a set of decisions that may have weighty consequences for the unity of your own church and for the relationship with the Catholic Church... At stake are the teachings of scripture and tradition [with regard to] sexuality and marriage. Our prayer is that you remain open to the Holy Spirit who binds our consciences to truth, Biblical truth." (Forum Letter, October 2009) Thanks be to God for such faithfulness and clarity.

Needless to say, Archbp. Gregory's words were not quoted in the United Methodist press.♥

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