

JOHN E. JUERGENSMEYER, REST IN PEACE

For many years, Dr. John Juergensmeyer was an active member of the Lifewatch Advisory Board. But on the night of September 28, his life of more than 80 years ended suddenly and tragically. After visiting his brother in a nursing home in southern Illinois, he died in a plane crash as he was flying home.

Dr. Juergensmeyer was a distinguished lawyer in Elgin, IL, a professor of law and political science, an author, and a public servant. He was educationally well prepared for his vocations in law, politics, and public service: he earned a B.A. from the University of Illinois, M.A. and Ph.D. in politics from Princeton University, and J.D. from the University of Illinois.

A member of The United Methodist Church, John served as a lay speaker in the church. His Christian commitment to the dignity of every human life was indicated by his service as chairman of the TLC Pregnancy Services of Elgin and as a member of the Lifewatch Advisory Board.

Dr. Juergensmeyer was extraordinarily faithful. Most Januaries, he made the trip from Chicago to Washington, DC to participate in the Lifewatch Service of Worship, March for Life, and the Lifewatch Board Meeting. Also, he helped reinforce the Lifewatch witness at General Conferences. At those events, he contributed rare wisdom and good cheer.

Dr. John E. Juergensmeyer was a man of deep, mature Christian faith and of unflinching commitment to Christ's Church. He knew profoundly that the Gospel is the Gospel of Life; and, with his many talents fully engaged, he lived it. As he now enjoys the glory of the Church Triumphant, he will be missed by so many in the Church Militant -- including The United Methodist Church and the Lifewatch community. May he rest in God's perfect and eternal peace. (PTS)

RCRC'S PROBLEM AND THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S

It is no secret that two United Methodist institutions -- the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and the United Methodist Women (UMW) -- are members of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC). And it is common knowledge that RCRC is dedicated to keeping abortion -- all abortions, of all unborn children, for any reason or no reason -- legal in American society. In other words, RCRC never, ever speaks or lobbies or writes against abortion.

TWO OBSERVATIONS

Please consider two (2) preliminary observations, from this United Methodist pastor, on RCRC and its work.

First, The United Methodist Church officially assigns its response to abortion to the General Board of Church and Society. And it seems that the General Board of Church and Society then largely subcontracts its work on abortion to the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. That way, GBCS does not have to address abortion very often -- which is good for GBCS, because abortion is always a controversial topic in the church. (GBCS's infrequent engagement with abortion can be verified on its website. A recent search for "abortion," that covers GBCS material that goes back to at least 2005, yields only eleven [11] hits.) Therefore, like it or not, RCRC operates as the day-to-day, primary voice for The United Methodist Church on abortion.

Second, RCRC's language pertaining to abortion is always changing. Every so often, RCRC does a make-over of its language on abortion. When it began in 1973, the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR) was all about "abortion rights." In its 1993 make-over, RCAR became RCRC, and "reproductive choice" replaced "abortion rights" as the key phrase of the day. The next make-over introduced "reproductive rights" as the marketing strategy of the moment. The most recent make-over has RCRC using "reproductive justice" as a marketing mantra. Another such mantra -- "abortion care" -- might be on the horizon. RCRC gets public relations.

ON THE WASHINGTON POST'S STAGE

On September 29, 2014, the Washington Post, under its website's "PostEverything," published "Reverends like us should never oppose access to abortion or sex ed" (sic). Rev. Harry Knox and Dr. Alethea R. Smith-Withers are the

co-authors of the column. Rev. Knox is the President and CEO of RCRC, and Dr. Smith-Withers is the founding and present pastor of The Pavilion of God - a Baptist Church in Washington, DC, and she is the chair of RCRC's Board of Directors.

In their editorial, Rev. Knox and Dr. Smith-Withers offer a strong dose of rhetoric that paints a very unattractive picture of those of us who want to protect the unborn and their mothers from abortion. They make the following charges and claims. From those who are pro-life, "the shouting of a few strident voices" has ended calm conversation about life and abortion. Pro-life clergy "use Bible verses as political weapons." "[S]ome politicians...do not want abortion to be legal and use the mantle of religion to demand legislation" considered to be pro-life. Pro-life types support the "Hyde Amendment, which denies Medicaid coverage of abortion care...[and] discriminates against low-income women...[and] targets low-income people." The biggest problem, according to RCRC, "is when one particular religious viewpoint gets written into law, in direct violation of our national commitment to religious liberty." Finally, pro-life "politicians [should] get out of the business of playing doctor and preacher." Again, this presents a very unappealing picture of all who try to be protective of each human being, no matter how small or defenseless or afraid. Evidently, Rev. Knox and Dr. Smith-Withers are not much interested in dialogue with others.

CRITIQUE

Even so, in response to their editorial, this pastor will offer three (3) comments.

First, RCRC has a theology. And RCRC's theology has a theological anthropology (that is, a doctrine of humanity) and an ecclesiology (that is, a doctrine of the Church). RCRC's anthropology depicts the human person as primarily a decision maker or a consumer, who alone always knows what is best. RCRC's "autonomous individual" or "sovereign self" gets to call all the shots for himself or herself; and he or she should not be stopped (or be asked to stop) whatever he or she wants to do. Family, church, state, and everybody else simply needs to get out of the way, so each person can live however he or she wants to live, do whatever he or she wants to do.

Because of RCRC's powerfully individualistic anthropology, its ecclesiology is insipid. That is to say, as RCRC understands it, the Church does not teach -- except that each person should live however he or she wants to live. Nor, in RCRC's view, should the Church witness in the public arena -- except to declare that every person should get to do whatever he or she wants to do, without interference from anyone or anything. What counts, to RCRC, is that the Church get out of the way of The Individual, and that the Church ask everyone and everything to get out of the way of The Individual, so that The Individual can make his or her own way in the world.

To simplify, according to the truths of the Bible and the

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

Church's doctrine, RCRC's Individual is too large, and RCRC's Church is too small.

Second, there is a lot of talk about "justice" coming from RCRC these days. Reproductive justice. Healthcare justice. "Justice-work" (Dr. Smith-Withers).

With the word "justice" ringing in my mind, a word-picture comes to mind. The picture would feature the remains of an aborted unborn child. (This pastor has never been one to use such pictures, but they do represent reality in a powerful way. Such pictures demonstrate that abortion turns an unborn child into a horrifying, bloody, mangled mess.) Beneath this picture would be this simple caption: Justice? And the point of the picture and the caption is this: how could this kind of treatment of a tiny human being have anything to do with justice? Make 1,250,000 copies of that picture. That is what is happening in American society every year: 1.25 million abortions are occurring each year. And that is justice?

Along the same line, the article notes that the Hyde Amendment "targets low-income people." This pastor believes that were there no Hyde Amendment, many more thousands of little, unborn people would become "targets" of abortionists; and these abortions would be paid for by all of us, the taxpayers. That is justice?

And third, RCRC is deeply concerned, year after year, about a religious position being enacted into law. Again, as the Knox-Smith-Withers article puts it: "The problem is when one particular religious viewpoint gets written into law, in direct violation of our national commitment to religious liberty."

In response to RCRC's concern, this pastor would suggest the following. In the United States, United Methodist legislator are free to introduce and/or support legislation that is consistent with United Methodist teaching. Baptists are free to introduce and/or support legislation that is consistent with Baptist teaching. Roman Catholics are free to introduce and/or support legislation that is consistent with Roman Catholic teaching. Jews are free to introduce and/or support legislation that is consistent with Jewish teaching. And secularists are free to introduce and/or support legislation that is consistent with secularist teaching. It is the duty of legislative bodies (which are composed of legislators who have various religious commitments) to consider the merits of each piece of legislation, access how each legislative proposal would affect the common good, and vote for, or against, each bill. Only if the necessary votes support the legislation, and it is signed by the required executive officer (governor or president), then the proposal becomes law. Politically speaking, that is the way American politics works. If legislation is consistent with the teaching of a religious community, that in no way rules the legislation out of order on religious-liberty grounds. Actually, religious liberty in the United States means that religious and moral voices in American public life should not be ruled out of order by those desiring a more secularized "naked public square" (Richard John Neuhaus).

CONCLUSION

Again, because The United Methodist Church allows GBCS and UMW to belong to RCRC, and because RCRC is

led by Rev. Knox and Dr. Smith-Withers, and because Rev. Knox and Dr. Smith-Withers have written this aforementioned article for the Washington Post, United Methodism is officially standing with Rev. Knox, Dr. Smith-Withers, and their editorial. That is, The United Methodist Church stands with ideas that would totally eliminate the teaching authority of the Church, that call the destruction of the defenseless "justice," and that demand that the Church get out of the public arena. It makes no sense. None. (PTS) ♥

THE "COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM:" MORAL CLARITY ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

by Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker

The "council of Jerusalem" depicted in Acts 15:6-35 is a subject about which there is much scholarly dispute. There is dispute because of differences between the narrative in Acts 15 and the apostle Paul's discussion in Galatians 2:1-14 about a conference he and Barnabas had with Peter, John, and James (the brother of the Lord) and a later controversy he had with Peter in Antioch regarding the table-fellowship between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

However one reconstructs the events in the early Church, it appears that Acts portrays the "council" as only a local agreement between the church in Antioch and the church in Jerusalem. In it, the leaders of the Jewish Christians decided that Gentile Christians would be required to adhere to the law in the Torah only as Gentiles, but not as Jews -- that is, as "aliens" resident in Israel according to Leviticus 17:1-18:30.

The "council" was only a local agreement which vindicated the Antiochene mission to the Gentiles, in which Gentile males were not required to be circumcised. But it proved to be insufficient, because it did not anticipate the later problem of Jewish Christians' scruples regarding sharing a table with Gentile Christians (which would involve eating the Lord's Supper). Even so, the "council" has been influential in the tradition of the Church because of both its form and content.

The form of the "council" provides a model for the Church to address theological disputes by which Christians hold a conference to seek what seems "good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28). Accordingly, it is not surprising that many consider the "council" to be the model for addressing strong differences in The United Methodist Church regarding the Church's teaching on human sexuality.

It is curious how many who seek to revise church teaching regarding homosexual practice appeal to the form of the "council," but they ignore its content. While there is a scholarly dispute about how to explain the difference between the rules of the "council" reported in Acts and the later instruction of Paul regarding how Christians should view "kosher" rules (cf. Acts 15:20, 29; I Corinthians 8), it is clear that there was no dispute between Jewish Christian leaders and Paul regarding requiring all Christians to refrain from "fornication" (*porneia*), which many scholars consider a reference to Leviticus 18 (cf. Galatians 5:19). In appealing

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**9:30 a.m. LIFEWATCH SERVICE OF
WORSHIP
DR. EDGARDO COLON-EMERIC
Assistant Professor of Christian Theology
Duke University Divinity School
PREACHING**

3:00 p.m. LIFEWATCH BOARD MEETING

* * *

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to Leviticus 18, the early Church was not practicing a fundamentalist method of proof-texting; it was engaging in a theological and spiritual discernment of divine revelation in the law of the Torah. It discerned that, in the written law, there is divine revelation regarding sexual behavior which involves moral imperatives for all Christians, both Gentiles and Jews.

All Jews in the first century recognized that the law in the Torah was given through Moses to order the life of ancient Israel, but that ancient Israel no longer existed. Jews debated among themselves how the law should be appropriated as the basis of life for Jews in their time. Jesus Himself was engaged in this debate. In the early Church, there was a debate about whether or not the law itself had been supplanted by a new covenant instituted through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul taught that the Mosaic law had been only a temporary dispensation which was supplanted by the new covenant through Jesus Christ (Galatians 3; II Corinthians 3). James apparently taught that the Mosaic law remained the basis of common life for the Church, even following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and he believed that it should be appropriated by Jewish Christians and even by Gentle Christians, in that Gentile Christians were equivalent to the "aliens" who were resident in ancient Israel and were required to observe some of the law in order to live in community with the Israelites (cf. Acts 15:12-21, especially verse 21). Yet regarding "fornication," both Paul and James were of the same mind that the law in the Torah on sexual life represents divine revelation of God's design for human life -- just as Jesus Himself had taught.

Bp. Whitaker, who served the Florida Area of The United Methodist Church, now resides, enjoys congregational and family life, cycles, reads, studies, and writes on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. ♥

LIFEWATCH AND "A PLEA FOR UNITY"

When "A Plea for Unity in The United Methodist Church" appeared in the last issue of Lifewatch (September 1, 2014), your editor thought that it might spark a bit of opposition. It did. That is good. Over the years in pastoral ministry and in renewal ministry, I have come to believe that disagreement in reasoned argument, in the Church, is an uncommon achievement. Disagreement, in a reasonable way, is to be cherished. It is a sign that we Christians are theologically serious about what we believe and what we do. Too often, silence and the lack of controversy are signs of theological apathy or worse.

Foreseeing objections to "A Plea for Unity," I began to consider ways that the co-authored plea might be defended. Methinks the best way to defend the recent plea is to refer to the ministry of Lifewatch within The United Methodist Church.

In 1968, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined to form The United Methodist Church. Soon thereafter, some United Methodist leaders, who were committed to their new denomination's social and political witness, began lobbying General Conference(s) to adopt a social principle on life and abortion that was, to be frank about it, supportive of abortion. Also during those years, a few United Methodists participated in the formation of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR, which is now called the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice [or RCRC]), which was first located in The United Methodist Building in Washington, DC. When the dust of a couple of General Conferences had settled, The United Methodist Church had a social principle on life and abortion that could be politically described as "pro-choice." That social principle was embodied by our denominational ties to RCAR/RCRC. Therefore, The United Methodist Church was supporting abortion rights in American society. That was a problem. A serious problem. Our church was easily accommodating itself to a society which was fostering abortion on demand. Not surprisingly, annual abortion totals in American society skyrocketed. They passed 1,000,000. The situation cried out for reform of the society and the church.

Years passed. Then, in 1987, Lifewatch was formed to witness to the Gospel of Life within The United Methodist Church and beyond. And that is what we have attempted to do. We have published this newsletter each quarter. We have held the Lifewatch Service of Worship -- in The United Methodist Building in Washington, DC -- each January, on the day of the March for Life. We have submitted petitions for life at General Conferences and at Annual Conferences. We

have stood up, in various United Methodist venues, and made a witness for life. And we have held occasional workshops.

Our work has been far from perfect. At times, we have been zealous without reason. At times, we have been too academic. At times, we have avoided topics that should have been discussed. And at times, we have tackled issues that should have been left alone. Again, we have often missed the mark. But with God's help, we have tried and persevered.

For over 27 years, Lifewatch has attempted to witness for life within The United Methodist Church. Our witness has been offered, it should be emphasized, in a way that upholds the discipline, processes, and procedures of United Methodism. In attempting to reform The United Methodist Church's teaching on life and abortion, Lifewatch has never disrupted General

Conference. Lifewatch has never disrupted an Annual Conference. Lifewatch has never called for others to ignore or disobey the discipline of the church.

(Though for a brief time, this pastor did participate in the withholding [and redirecting] of congregational apportionments; but that was ended when reason, and faithfulness to The Baptismal Covenant, prevailed.)

While offering witness, we

respected our church's discipline and worked within it.

Why? While United Methodism continues its support of abortion rights, how can Lifewatch remain committed to witnessing for life within the established structures of The United Methodist Church? Because the Church is Christ's Church, not ours. We do not have the right, or the responsibility, to violate The United Methodist Church's discipline.

Remember that throughout history, the Church has never been a pure, entirely faithful community. The churches have always had "issues," as we say today. Abuses of power. War mongering. Greed. Heretics. Heretical teaching. Racism. Anti-semitism. Sexism. Slavery. Cultural accommodation. The churches have been tempted, and succumbed to temptation, all too often. But reforms, led by God and the Gospel, still occur. They often occur over the long haul -- by reformers respecting the structures of the churches and truthfully, faithfully witnessing to the Gospel. Not through disruption, name calling, tirades, and the like. Again, in God's good time, reform often occurs.

That is why "A Plea for Unity in The United Methodist Church" was written and proposed to the 2014 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference and to the larger denomination. According to "A Plea for Unity," while The United Methodist Church's teaching on human sexuality is taught and tested, the church's discipline should be upheld. That is the best way forward. Not another. (PTS) ♥

"While United Methodism continues its support of abortion rights, how can Lifewatch remain committed to witnessing for life within the established structures of The United Methodist Church?"

LETTERS TO LIFEWATCH

August 29, 2014 [email]

Dear Paul:

Greetings from Beeson! I have just read the current issue of Lifewatch and want to thank you for your faithful witness through this publication.

I also wanted you to be aware of Dr. David Mauldin, a graduate of Beeson Divinity School, who serves as pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Mobile. He has taken a strong and courageous stand on behalf of the sanctity of life within his denomination (PCUSA). He spoke at our recent faculty-staff retreat, and we were all moved to hear his testimony -- a story from the front lines, as it were. He has been involved in the work of Presbyterians for Life. Folks like you and David give me courage and hope.

Please convey my regards to the friends I met at your wonderful church in Whiteville.

All blessings in Christ,
Dr. Timothy George, Dean
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Samford University
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September 6, 2014

Dear Paul,

Read with interest "A Plea for Unity in The United Methodist Church." I am hopeful your co-authorship, with Rev. Laurie Hays Coffman, demonstrates the kind of unity you advocate: one who would vote for full inclusion of gays and lesbians, gay weddings, etc. (her), and one who would vote against that (you). But both staying true to the covenant.

As you no doubt intuit, "A Plea for Unity" will get no traction here in my Annual Conference, and (I think) no traction in The United Methodist Church. The language of the plea makes that self-evident to this reader. The kind of Discipline-flouting activism going on here by my crusader colleagues conveys that they have no desire to wait for more General Conferences, no desire to abide by the Discipline as they wait, and no desire to hang in there in their disagreements. Will our United Methodist Church split? My crusader colleagues say they do not want to split, and they are not pushing for it. Yet their actions say that on this issue, as it concerns the practice of ministry, the Discipline does not matter anymore. If Good News and The Confessing Movement continue to win the General Conference votes, my progressive colleagues will just continue to do what they are doing: officiate gay weddings, support practicing (that is, "out" in orientation and lifestyle) gay and lesbian ordained clergy to continue serving churches under appointment, and so on.

I am not in sync with why homosexuality has become the issue it has become in The United Methodist Church. I wish it had not. Though not an activist, I nevertheless desire full inclusion and believe it will come one day. I predict the

church will be led "where it does not want to go" (John 21:18), led by the State to do the right thing -- as I see it. That may seem cynical, but it is not without precedent. The church split of North and South, slavery, lynchings, Native Americans, the Sand Creek Massacre led by a Methodist local pastor, Japanese WWII internment camps, and many other historic touchstones say we can be very wrong; and then we can come up for air and be in a better place.

For my part, I will not disobey the Discipline. But from personal experience, I know I am not a leader in my Annual Conference. Even so, I am quietly supportive of change.

With the plea, I think you, Paul, are spitting into the wind. But I am not sorry you are doing it. Bravo. I think if you were in this conference, you would have many friends on both sides.

Have a great year in ministry.

All the best.

Your buddy,
A United Methodist Pastor
in the Pacific Northwest

September 9, 2014

Dear Rev. Stallsworth,

As I was reading the latest Lifewatch (September 1, 2014), I was struck with an historical parallel. I am referring to the anti-Semitism of German National Socialism in the 1930s and 1940s. Eric Metaxas, in his biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, tells of the Lutheran pastor's courageous struggle within a church that had succumbed to the prevalent and evil cultural norms.

Bonhoeffer felt led to start a "new church" called The Confessing Church based on the Barmen Declaration, which declared to the world that it was theologically and legally the only German Evangelical Church. The problem was that even those in The Confessing Church saw themselves as a second church, not supplanting the German Christians who had kowtowed to Hitler. Furthermore, Bonhoeffer's efforts to get ecumenical support from outside Germany, to acknowledge The Confessing Church as the real church in Germany, was met with delay and indecision. Such was his frustration.

Perhaps you can identify with Bonhoeffer, as you try to convince those within The United Methodist Church to abide by the Discipline and amend/emend it to make it stronger in the defense of the unborn. Your use of Roman Catholic teachers of Biblical doctrine on marriage and life could be likened to Bonhoeffer's use of ecumenical friends. You are in the middle, which is a good place to be.

The struggle against abortion has been compared to the Abolitionist Movement. I would like to suggest that the struggle against anti-Semitism is a better comparison, as all racism and hatred of life spring from that malady. The Jewish people themselves were judged by God for the sacrificing their own children.

May God reinvigorate your efforts, as you work within His will as outlined in His holy Word! (Galatians 6:9)

Brian (Phillip) Hanson
Waterloo, IA

September 11, 2014

Paul,

I regularly read, and find very fine, your quarterly issues.

I thought especially stunning, both as text and as an event, "A Plea for Unity in The United Methodist Church." I regret that I am no longer a member of the North Carolina Conference and so missed the drama.

Truly amazing must have been having you and Rev. Laurie Coffman, who represent poles on various issues, in such a dialogue. I presume that you both received wide-ranging commentary for such an effort to keep The United Methodist Church from fragmenting further, even dividing.

Hope all goes well.

--Russ [Dr. Russell E. Richey, Visiting Professor and Research Fellow/Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition/Duke Divinity School/Durham, NC; Dean Emeritus/Candler School of Theology/Atlanta, GA; and William B. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Church History Emeritus/Emory University/Atlanta, GA], rrichey@emory.edu

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT

• Thank you for reading the letter enclosed in this newsletter. We will be most grateful for your response.

• There are unborn children who are discovered, before birth, to have anomalies that are incompatible with life. These children -- 6,000-10,000 per year in the United States -- will die soon after they are born. The standard treatment for such children is abortion, for obvious reasons.

However, there is a merciful alternative. Lynn Smith, RN notes: "A well designed perinatal hospice program provides the kinder alternative of assisting the mother to carry her baby to term. It is kinder to the mother, in that she is not a proactive agent in the demise of her child, and it is kinder to the child, allowing [him/her] to live comfortably for the time [he/she] has within the womb... The patients [in a 2002 analysis] were all positive about hospice care and the opportunity to spend time with their infants, which, after delivery, lived from a few minutes to a few days." ("The Hard Cases," Carpe Diem for Life [from Anglicans for Life], August 2014, p. 6)

Hospice care for the unborn and the newborn is indeed a merciful alternative.

• Dr. Bernard N. Nathanson -- the pro-choice, medical doctor who converted and dedicated the last decades of his life to protecting unborn children -- said this about his early 1970s work in overturning New York's laws against abortion: "We would never have gotten away with what we did if the Church had been united, purposeful, and strong." (Undated letter from Anglicans for Life, inserted in Carpe Diem for Life, August 2014) It is a sad and sobering thought. And most certainly true.

• The idea that the Church is just another voluntary association is, most probably, a result of Enlightenment thinking. It was well expressed by John Locke (1632-1704), the influential English philosopher, who once wrote: "A church, then, I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining

themselves together of their own accord in order to the public worshipping of God in such manner as they judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls." (in David T. Koyzis's "The Death of the Parish," 10.22.14, "firstthoughts" blog at www.firstthings.com) As Mr. Koyzis suggests in his article, Locke's definition of the Church as a voluntary association is a long way from understanding the Church scripturally and traditionally as a community brought together by the Holy Spirit around Jesus Christ, and constituted for the long haul by The Baptismal Covenant.

• Back in the mid-1970s, I had the privilege of attending Duke Divinity School and studying theology under Dr. Frederick Herzog. On September 29, a public seminar -- entitled "Liberation Theology in the South: The Legacy of Theologian and Activist Frederick Herzog" -- was held at Duke. It was, as they say, very interesting. For good theological reasons, there were numerous references during the seminar to "the poor" -- that is, those living at the margins of mainstream life. However, not once were unborn children counted and mentioned among the most vulnerable. The oftentimes noted children of color were seen as victims mainly of racism (and I am certain that many are), when in fact children of color are victims of abortion at disproportionately high rates in American society. An unidentified ideology, such as liberal politics, really can drive theology and determine its outcomes. That is why diversity of perspective -- not just gender and race -- is so important in serious theological conversation.

• Imprint is a beautiful publication of the Sisters of Life. The Fall 2014 issue contains a wonderful remembrance of John Cardinal O'Connor, who was the Archbishop of New York from 1984 until his death in 2000. Cardinal O'Connor was a powerful witness for life in the Roman Catholic Church, in the Church universal, and in American society. What brought Cardinal O'Connor to his vocation for life?

Imprint answers: "Cardinal O'Connor would often reflect on a singular experience he had in 1975 before becoming the Chief of Navy Chaplains making him responsible for the needs of almost 2 million souls, 800 chaplains, and the religious programs on ships, submarines, and bases around the world. He knew he needed to make a retreat and thought of the many monasteries and convents around the world where he could pray and prepare for the tremendous task that lay ahead. Somehow none of these places seemed right. So he did something that might seem very strange. He flew off to Germany and made his way to the Nazi concentration camp, Dachau.

"What drew him to this place of the most infamous crimes against humanity? Whatever the motivation was, this decision and this retreat changed him in a dramatic way and in turn the lives of countless others. He described his experience as he walked through the concentration camp and came to the red brick crematoria where the bodies were burned, 'I placed my hand in the oven and felt the intermingled ashes of Jew and Christian, rabbi, priest, and minister.' Struck to the heart, he thought, 'Good God, how could human beings do this to other human beings?' He was pierced to the core of his being and vowed that he would do whatever he could, until his dying breath, to promote the

sacredness of every human life.

"Cardinal O'Connor would often speak of the effect of this experience, 'My life was changed radically, not modestly, not fractionally, but radically when I put my hand into the oven at Dachau for the first time...I knew that with all my studies and all my degrees up until that moment, I knew no real theology. I learned it at Dachau. And it radically changed my life.'

During my years of service with Rev. Richard John Neuhaus in New York City, our office was privileged to work, on occasion, with Cardinal O'Connor. Cardinal O'Connor was always friendly and pastorally engaged. He was steady, decisive, and compelling in public. Time and again, he stood up, faced the hostilities of the New York City media, and spoke the truth in love about life.

Thanks be to God for the life, the faith, the ministry, and now the good memory of John Cardinal O'Connor.

- Their clinics might not be located in the alleys of American towns and cities, but back-alley abortionists are out there. What else could Kermit Gosnell be called?

Mr. Bradley Mattes, the executive director of Life Issues Institute, described another back-alley abortionist: "In February, the New York Times published an article describing the career of abortionist Steven Brigham, who's as notorious for his self-proclaimed innocence as he is for the dangerous conditions of his facilities, charges of murder, clever skirting of the law, and the many times his facilities and his own license have been revoked. Moving from town to town and state to state, his American Women's Services chain has managed to continue operating eight facilities in New Jersey, two in Virginia, four in Maryland, and one in Florida. In August, a New Jersey administrative judge recommended permanent revocation of Brigham's license in that state. If the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners

upholds the recommendation, Brigham will not be allowed even to own abortion facilities in the state.

"Despite repeated violations, repeated charges of testimony from women damaged in his abortion mills, Steve Brigham continues to put women at risk in his personal back alley.

"How Long has Brigham been in business? Twenty years." ("The Latest...Pro-Life News and Education," [September 19, 2014])

Usually "The Latest..." email comes out on Friday, and it contains excellent information. To sign up for the weekly email, go to the Life Issues Institute, Inc. website. Under "Resources," click on "The Latest." Go to the bottom of the most recent edition of "The Latest..." click on "Click Here to Sign Up for Our Weekly Email," complete the form, and submit it. Each Friday you will be glad that you did.

- Mr. John Lomperis, a Lifewatch Advisory Board member, attended the General Board of Church and Society's semi-annual board of directors meeting last September. His September 25 report on the meeting, entitled "UMC Lobby Office Targets Human Embryos, Okay with 'New Eugenics'" (at the IRD blog, "Juicy Ecumenism") notes a disturbing trend: GBCS wants to walk back some resolutions in The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church (2012) that are protective of weak and defenseless human lives.

For example, Resolution 3184. Repentance for Support of Eugenics appears on pages 312-318. According to Lomperis, GBCS directors agreed to propose to General Conference 2016 an edited version of this resolution which deletes the section entitled "The New Eugenics." "The New Eugenics" section is a warning to church and society that scientific overreach can lead well meaning people to try to determine exactly the kinds of people who will be conceived

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and born. But that is what early 20th century eugenics, for which this resolution calls repentance, does. Evidently, according to the GBCS directors, the older eugenics is bad, while "the new eugenics" is acceptable. Puzzling.

Well, the older eugenics is still hanging around. It has contemporary advocates in high places. Please remember the comment by United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in an interview, "It makes no sense as a national policy to promote birth only among poor people."

Dr. David F. Watson, who teaches at United Theological Seminary, has written a word that challenges the eugenic mindset: "I have a son with Down Syndrome. His name is Sean. He is seven years old. He loves to jump on his trampoline, play Angry Birds, and watch Veggie Tales. He loves dogs. He doesn't always want to go to school. He idolizes his big brother and sometimes drives him crazy. In other words...he's a kid. He's just a kid, pretty much like any other kid, but with a set of challenges brought about by his having an extra chromosome. Sean, however, is no less valuable to this world than I am, or you are, or anyone else is. He's a person, created in the image of God. He matters. Kids like him matter. They matter just as much as any other kid.

"Many people don't see things in this way. More and more commonly, people are regarded from a utilitarian perspective. What can they produce? How smart are they? How good-looking are they? A particular understanding of utility determines the value of a person. Christians, however, cannot adopt this perspective. As Paul writes, 'From now on, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old

has passed away; see, everything has become new!' (II Corinthians 5:16-17). Is Paul specifically addressing what I'm calling a utilitarian perspective? No, but it is inescapable that, if you are part of God's new creation, your perspective changes. You no longer view others from a human point of view. God changes the way that you see." ("The Social Justice Issue the UMC Doesn't Want to Deal With" at www.ministrymatters.com)

Bottom line: General Conference 2016 should keep "The New Eugenics" in Resolution 3184. Repentance for Support of Eugenics.

- When you speak for life and for marriage in the most reasonable terms and loving tone, in The United Methodist Church today, there is a chance that you will be called a "hater" or accused of hate. Fear not. Be prepared for these kinds of attacks by living in a Christian way that would make the ad hominen claims utterly false. Such is the church and the society we now live in. Live for Christ, and live in Christ -- never live apart from Christ.

- Magna est veritas, et prevalebit. "Truth is most powerful, and will ultimately prevail." ♥

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