

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT FINANCES:

Thank you for your interest, engagement, prayers, and support. We are humbled and grateful. (PTS)

## TWO KINDS OF RESCUE

### RESCUED

I was rescued...by people who meant well.  
But they have no idea how it feels to go through hell.  
They'll never know the grief I felt,  
The bitter tears I cried.  
I was rescued...but my precious baby died.

I was rescued...from responsibility  
Of caring for that little one who lived inside me.  
That little child would be here now  
If I had been more strong,  
If my family had just told me  
They'd support me, right or wrong.

In those moments of confusion  
I just didn't think things through.  
At the time abortion seemed to be  
The best thing I could do.  
They said I had the right to choose, but now I realize  
It's better to be hurt by truth  
Than comforted by lies.

I was rescued...but I have to take the blame.  
I was rescued...and I'll never be the same.  
I might have kept my little one  
If only I had tried.  
I was rescued...but my precious baby died.  
*This poem is by Lynne Balzer of Spiro, OK.*

"What do you do? Face what you fear to be true and admit it to God, but admit it while being held in His kind embrace and unconditional, effectual love.

"I asked someone to kill my baby. My baby is dead."

"Admit it. Face it. Feel it. Now believe the Gospel: 'Come to me,' said the Lord Jesus, 'All you who are weighed down with a burden that you cannot bear, and too exhausted to handle it any more. I will give you relief. I will give you refreshing rest' (cf. Matthew 11:28-30).

"Believe it. It's the truth. Then ask the Lord Himself to tell your baby what you would say if you could—what you will one day tell your baby when you are reunited.

"Ask Him to tell your baby that you love her. Ask Him to tell her that you have always been haunted by it but that you were so confused and felt so hopeless. Ask Him to ask her to forgive you and to tell her that you accept full responsibility for doing what you did.

"Then believe the Gospel, and ask God to fill you with His presence, the precious Holy Spirit. Look yourself in the mirror, and confess: 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9)." *This is from "My Mother's Abortion" by Rev. Bob Vincent, who is the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, LA. Read the entire article at [www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/02/my-mothers-abortion](http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/02/my-mothers-abortion).♥*

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND ABORTION

by Rev. Gary Crum

When I arrived to study Public Health at Columbia University in 1972, the state of New York had gone through several tumultuous years wrestling with the emerging issue of liberalized abortion law.

In 1970, the state legislature had passed the most liberal abortion law in the nation. In 1972, the legislature voted to rescind the 1970 bill. Then, in short order, Governor Nelson Rockefeller vetoed the 1972 bill. Thus the legislature, which had belatedly recognized the grave error of its 1970 legislation, was stymied.

Just prior to those years, the groundwork for change had been set in motion by pro-choice medical and public health professionals working within the American

Medical Association (AMA), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and Planned Parenthood. As the New York Times noted: "The American Medical Association's decision to favor the liberalization of state abortion law not only reversed a 96-year-old policy, but clearly indicated the rapidly developing temper of the times. California, Colorado, and North Carolina have modified their statutes on the subject this year and nineteen other states are studying the matter." (June 25, 1967)

The APHA and Planned Parenthood took concerted, and even more aggressively, pro-choice steps in November of 1968. The Times editorialized: "Public sentiment for reforming the state's cruel and antiquated laws against abortion continues to grow. The American Public Health Association has just declared that 'safe legal abortion should be available to all women.' Only a day earlier Planned Parenthood-World Population urged that all criminal laws regarding abortion be abolished and the decision in each case be left to the woman and her physician." (November 18, 1968)

In 1972, as a student, I joined the APHA. APHA membership was virtually a requirement of Columbia's public health program, where I was doing a post-doctoral master's degree. As a member, I saw in the APHA extensive inter-relationships between the leaders of Planned Parenthood and the APHA. This eventually led me to start a pro-life organization within the APHA, Public Health Workers for Life.

One of my APHA foils at that time was Dr. Christopher Tietze, who served on the key committee advising the New York legislature in 1968. He received prestigious awards for his pro-choice work from both Planned Parenthood and the APHA in the 1970s.

Today the APHA is still a source of pro-choice sentiment, and most members with pro-life commitments have left it. I still belong, for the APHA as a professional organization admittedly does many good things in sanitary health and infectious-disease control, but I continue writing articles, like this one, about the APHA's pro-choice policy, which is the APHA's massive "fly in the ointment." ("Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." [Ecclesiastes 10:1, KJV]) To this day, the abortion commitment within professional public health circles continues.

As a side comment, in the 1960s and 1970s, a major argument set forth for unrestricted abortion was its usefulness in lessening the dangers of alleged "over-population." This debating point is now fading from use. The pro-choice establishment is suddenly anxious to

augment the American population for various political reasons.

#### ELITISM AND VIOLENCE

I am disturbed to see the public health establishment adopt an elitist view in the recognition of human rights. The APHA was not anti-embryonic life when it was established, but it has morphed into denying human rights, to the unborn, that it once protected. What has caused this change? A misguided over-commitment to the autonomy of the individual. In doing so, it has ignored the biology of humanity and the familiar "limitation" axiom ("your autonomy ends where another person's nose begins").

Abortion is not a victimless crime. From three weeks following fertilization, abortion involves a violent, bloody rending of a beating human heart. To take a class of human beings and deny them their autonomy and their most basic right of all, the right to live and have rights, is a cruelly elitist position. It is adopting violence in order to enhance autonomy for the privileged.

I am distraught by the trend in public health to ignore aggressively these truths. These truths are intuitive, except to those whose ideology is not based on true science and commonsense morality, but on willfully blind platitudes. There seems to be a growing international commitment of resources and talents to the short-sighted abandonment of freedom for inquiry.

Make no mistake about it. Abortion is still the political elephant in the room. It will remain so in the most gut-wrenching sense because it is based on such a violent and patently inhumane practice. It cannot stand the test of time, even though the New York Times, a national political party, and the public health establishment champion it and will fight hard to see it is more deeply entrenched.

Eventually, they will come to be labeled as detached elitists, as advocates for the deaths of millions of precious innocents. Their legacy, their place in history, no matter how many times they give themselves awards for their alleged achievements, will become as dust.

Do not believe for a moment that they do not see this risk to their legacies. They fear it deep within their bones and souls. While they are alive, this issue, like no other, will move them to desperate resource allocation, coalition building, and perhaps mean-spiritedness—all in an attempt to delay their inevitable disgrace by the one-two punch of simple biological truth and plain-even-to-a-child moral commonsense. That double combination always wins.

For a few more generations, like Macbeth's wife, they will wash their hands and reputations incessantly, futilely hoping for the indelible stain to someday—and by some impossible somehow—disappear. But history is watching. God is watching. And neither can be mocked forever.

Pray for the pro-choice establishment to find a renewed commitment to the sanctity of all human life. Most of all, pray for the tens of thousands of unborn

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

children all across this "land of the free" who are literally scheduled for death this month at abortion clinics.

*Rev. Crum is a licensed local pastor in the Holston Conference of The United Methodist Church. Previously, he was the Director of the Northern Kentucky Independent Health District, and the Director of the federal family planning program (Title X) at the Department of Health and Human Services during the Reagan Administration.♥*

## **BISHOPS, PLEASE INCLUDE THE UNBORN AND THEIR MOTHERS**

*The following letter was sent to two bishops of The United Methodist Church. It is offered for your information. As of May 12, no reply has been received.*

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr.  
President-Designate of the Council of Bishops  
Resident Bishop of The San Francisco Area  
The United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 908250  
West Sacramento, CA 95798-0250

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner  
President of the Council of Bishops  
Resident Bishop of The Germany Area  
The United Methodist Church  
Ludolfusstrasse 2-4,  
D-60487 Frankfurt,  
Germany  
21 March 2014

Dear Bp. Wenner and Bp. Brown:  
Lenten grace and peace to you and yours and the many people you serve.

These are challenging days for the Church universal and for The United Methodist Church in particular. As resident bishops of the church, and as members and leaders of the Council of Bishops, you carry an especially heavy burden during this time. That is why the Council of Bishops is often in my prayers.

As an elder in the North Carolina Conference of our denomination, and as the president of the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (Lifewatch), I write to you. For over 25 years, Lifewatch has attempted to witness in our church (and beyond) to historic Christianity's commitment to the dignity of each human life. If I am not mistaken, you should be receiving our newsletter ([Lifewatch](#)) each quarter. (It is also posted and archived on the Web at [www.lifewatch.org](http://www.lifewatch.org).)

At the 2014 Lifewatch Service of Worship in Washington, DC, Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, Jr. (The Florida Area) preached a most thoughtful sermon. Your brother bishop urged The United Methodist Church to include the unborn child and mother in our church's moral concern and missional outreach.

Bp. Wenner, you recently noted that one of the challenges facing our church is "how to live in covenant

with one another and model for the church, what it could mean to work together and live together even though there are disagreements." That is true.

Along the same covenantal line, last November, the Council of Bishops issued a statement which responded to Bishop Talbert's October 26, 2013 action. The statement included this recommendation: "We recommend that the Executive Committee initiate a task force to lead honest and respectful conversations regarding human sexuality, race and gender in a worldwide perspective in our shared commitment to clear theological understanding of the mission and polity of The United Methodist Church."

I support this recommendation. However, I also urge you, as members of the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops, to include concern for unborn children and their mothers in your planned conversations. This is why. Abortion routinely destroys millions of unborn children, and often severely harms their mothers, each year around the world. Also, it should be mentioned that children of color and girls—consistent with your focus on "race and gender"—are disproportionately targeted, by those more powerful, for abortion. This situation cries out for address in the recommended conversations to come.

Thank you, in advance, for honestly considering this request.

Continue faithful, to Christ and His Church, for the sake of the world.

In Christ,  
Rev. Paul T. Stallworth  
Pastor/Lifewatch President  
Whiteville United Methodist Church  
902 Pinckney Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472 ♥

## **FROM PRISON, GOSNELL SPEAKS**

You remember Kermit Gosnell. Last year he was tried and convicted on "three counts of murder, one count of involuntary manslaughter, and more than 200 counts of violating Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act." ("Exclusive: Kermit Gosnell Says He Is 'Spiritually Innocent'—and Sends Abortion-Inspired Poetry from Prison," by Admin, [www.phillymag.com/news/2013/09/23/convicted-abortion-doctor-kermit-gosnell-spiritually-innocent-ebook/](http://www.phillymag.com/news/2013/09/23/convicted-abortion-doctor-kermit-gosnell-spiritually-innocent-ebook/), accessed on 10/01/13) Even after the indictments, the trial, and the convictions, Mr. Gosnell "insists he is 'spiritually innocent.'"

According to [Philadelphia](#) magazine writer Steve Volk, who has authored the e-book [Gosnell's Babies: Inside the Mind of America's Most Notorious Abortion Doctor](#), "Gosnell—who was convicted in May of snipping the necks of babies born alive during abortion procedures in his West Philadelphia Clinic—believes he was serving the best interest of his community and the women who came to him. 'In an ideal world,' he said, 'we'd have no need for abortion. But bringing a child into the world

when it cannot be provided for, that there are not sufficient systems to support, is a greater sin. I considered myself to be in a war against poverty, and I feel comfortable with the things I did and the decisions I made.'

"Gosnell contends he is 'innocent' of the charges against him, laying out complicated—and not particularly credible—reasons he should have been found not guilty. When Volk asked him if he was actually referring to his own sense of 'spiritual innocence,' Gosnell responded, 'Yes.'"

Volk received letters, emails, telephone calls, and even poetry from Gosnell. Here is a sample of the poetry.

ABORTION PROVIDERS  
Are Labeled Killers!  
Horrendous, Exploitive  
Barbaric, Inhumane  
Not Physicians, Oathed To Heal  
Lest We Forget,  
What Chance Have Those?  
Those Without The Support  
Of Their Parents  
Their Families  
Their Communities  
Their Societies...  
So Many  
Without Sufficient Support  
Stumble Into Drugs  
Into Crime  
Into Mental Illness  
Into Institutions...And...  
Languish in Jails...

Every human being is fully capable of living in a self-constructed world of rightness and righteousness, yet being one who is actually corrupt and corrupting. (For centuries, the Church has called this the human predicament that results from original sin.) When the world that others share smashes the false world constructed by an isolated, autonomous self, that self naturally understands himself to be a victim. In the case of this "abortion provider," he did not consider the babies he destroyed victims. Nor did he consider the mothers he harmed, at times to the point of death, victims. Kermit Gosnell considers himself, as evidenced in his poem, to be the victim.

In his e-book on Kermit Gosnell, Mr. Volk notes: "As a narrator of his own life, Gosnell is both open and confounding, honest and unreliable. His manner is relaxed and even breezy, his tone more like that of a man with no serious cares than one incarcerated for life, his name now looming alongside the most infamous murderers in this city's history. 'I am committed to proving my innocence,' Gosnell wrote in an email to me, 'no matter how long it takes.'"

Let us pray that the truth—that is, Jesus Christ and all that is consistent with Christ—will come to this man. And let us pray that God's love, demonstrated most profoundly by the Son of God suffering and dying on that old, rugged Cross, will bring to this man forgiveness, of his sins, through repentance. Furthermore, let us pray that God's power, shown forth most gloriously in the resurrection of His Son from death, will transform this man to do the good that he was created to do. (PTS) ♥

## TESTIMONY OF A MED STUDENT [WARNING: WHAT FOLLOWS IS GRAPHIC]

"To begin, I must say that until yesterday, Friday, July 2, 2004, I was strongly pro-choice. I am a pre-medical student, and being very scientific, I understood that the mass of cells that forms the fetal body is not often capable of survival before 24 weeks in the womb. I am also somewhat liberal, and I believed that every woman should have the right to choose what she did with her body and one that could potentially be growing inside of her. This summer, I was accepted into a pre-medical program in NYC in which we are allowed to shadow doctors and see all sorts of medical procedures. When given the opportunity to see an abortion, I did not hesitate to accept the offer. It was something new, edgy, and exciting that I had never seen. When I entered the operating room, it felt like any other I had ever been in. On the table in front of me, I saw a woman, legs up as if delivering a child although she was asleep. Next to her was a tray of instruments for the abortion and a vacuum machine for suctioning the fetal tissues from the uterus. The doctors put on their gowns and masks, and the procedure began. The cervix was held open with a crude metal instrument, and a large transparent tube was stuck inside of the woman. Within a matter of seconds, the machine's motor was engaged; and blood, tissue, and tiny organs were pulled out of their environment into a filter. A minute later, the vacuum choked to a halt. The tube was removed, and stuck to the end was a small body and a head attached haphazardly to it; what was formed of the neck snapped. The ribs had formed with a thin skin covering them, the eyes had formed, and the inner organs had begun to function. The tiny heart of the fetus, obviously a little boy, had just stopped—forever. The vacuum filter was opened, and the tiny arms and legs that had been torn off of the fetus were accounted for. The fingers and toes had the beginnings of their nails on them. The doctors, proud of their work, reassembled the body to show me. Tears welled up in my eyes as they removed the baby boy from the table and shoved his body into a container for disposal. I have not been able to think of anything since yesterday

*"I have not been able to think of anything since yesterday at 10:30 besides what that baby boy might have been."*

at 10:30 besides what that baby boy might have been. I don't think that people realize what an abortion actually is until they see it happen. I have been tortured by these images—so real and so vivid—for two days now...and I was just a spectator. Never again will I be pro-choice, and never again will I support the murder of any human being, no matter their stage in life." (<http://clinicquotes.com/testimony-of-a-medical-student/>) ♥

### **WHAT POPE FRANCIS SAYS ABOUT LIFE, MARRIAGE, AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

There is a sense, which is pushed by some in the American media and churches, that Pope Francis wants to overturn or, at the very least, compromise the Roman Catholic Church's moral teachings which tend to offend modern hearts and minds—especially church teaching on life, marriage, and religious freedom. (These three topics, you will remember, are the issues of concern of The Manhattan Declaration, an ecumenical document signed by hundreds of thousands Americans. You are encouraged to Google the title, find the document on the Web, read it carefully, and consider signing it.) Just to help set the record straight in the Lifewatch community, this United Methodist pastor is compelled to offer the following paragraphs on life, marriage, and religious freedom from the Pope's 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, [The Joy of the Gospel](#) (Evangeliū Gaudium).

On life and abortion, the Pope notes: "Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church's effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist, and conservative. Yet this defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defense of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be.

Reason alone is sufficient to recognize the inviolable value of each single human life, but if we also look at the issue from the standpoint of faith, 'every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offense against the creator of the individual.'" (Paragraph 213)

On marriage, Pope Francis declares: "The family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, the weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the fundamental cell of society, where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children. Marriage now tends to be viewed as a form of mere emotional satisfaction that can be constructed in any way or modified at will. But the indispensable contribution of marriage to society transcends the feelings and momentary needs of the couple. As the French bishops have taught, it is not born 'of loving sentiment, ephemeral by definition, but from the depth of the obligation assumed by the spouses who accept to enter a total communion of life.'" (Paragraph 66)

And on religious freedom, Pope Francis states: "The Synod Fathers spoke of the importance of respect for religious freedom, viewed as a fundamental human right. This includes 'the freedom to choose the religion which one judges to be true and to manifest one's beliefs in public.' A healthy pluralism, one which genuinely respects differences and values them as such, does not entail privatizing religions in an attempt to reduce them to the quiet obscurity of the individual's conscience or to relegate them to the enclosed precincts of churches, synagogues, or mosques. This would represent, in effect, a new form of discrimination and authoritarianism. The respect due to the agnostic or non-believing minority should not be arbitrarily imposed in a way that silences the convictions of the believing majority or ignores the wealth of religious traditions. In the long run, this would feed resentment rather than tolerance and peace.

"When considering the effect of religion on public life, one must distinguish the different ways in which it is practiced. Intellectuals and serious journalists frequently descend to crude and superficial generalizations in speaking of the shortcomings of religion, and often prove incapable of realizing that not all believers—or religious leaders—are the same. Some politicians take advantage of this confusion to justify acts of discrimination. At other times, contempt is shown for writings which reflect religious convictions, overlooking the fact that religious classics can prove meaningful in every age; they have an enduring power to open new horizons, to stimulate thought, to expand the mind and the heart. This contempt is due to the myopia of a certain rationalism. Is it reasonable and enlightened to dismiss certain writings simply because they arose in a context of religious belief? These writings include principles which are profoundly

humanistic and, albeit tinged with religious symbols and teachings, they have a certain value for reason." (Paragraphs 255-256)

Let there be no doubt: Pope Francis is indeed a son of the Roman Catholic Church. He teaches, in his own way, what his church teaches. Thanks be to God. (PTS) ♥

*"In part because of the Sexual Revolution, and its politicization, the leading teachers of The United Methodist Church have been hesitant to offer Christian pedagogy, from the Bible and the Great Tradition, on human sexuality. Apparent fear has led to actual silence."*

## COMMENTS ON THE CHURCH AND HOMOSEXUALITY

*On April 2, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, of The Raleigh Area of The United Methodist Church, convened a forum on the Church and homosexuality. The forum involved around 100 clergy and laity gathered in Dixon Chapel, at The United Methodist Building in Garner, NC for: Holy Communion, two presentations (one by Rev. Laurie Hays Coffman and the other by yours truly), questions and comments in plenary, table talk in small groups, and lunch. If you would like to watch it, a video of the forum is available at the website of the North Carolina Conference. (To find the video and watch it, go to <http://nccumc.org/>, type the key phrase "Video Room" into the website's search, click on "Video Room - NCCUMC," click on "Vimeo" in red, click on "Bishop's Forum: Unity Dialogue," and finally click on the triangular play button.) A version of my comments appears below.*

1. Christ's peace be with you, Bishop Hope, Laurie, and all other brothers and sisters in Christ!

Thank you for participating in this demanding means of grace: Christian conferencing on the most contested matter in The United Methodist Church today.

This morning I will offer a response—of commendations and concerns—to "Resolution 3: Concerning the General Conference's Decision Regarding Homosexuality." You will remember that our 2013 Annual Conference debated, voted on, and passed Resolution 3 (<http://nccumc.org/secretary/files/2013-Resolutions-Report-2-Final.pdf>).

2. Resolution 3 should be commended, I think, for three (3) reasons.

\*First, Resolution 3 comes from our youth's Annual Conference Session (or ACS). It is good that our youth are being deeply engaged by Christ's Church.

\*Second, Resolution 3 takes seriously: General Conference, The Book of Discipline, the polity and processes and procedures of our denomination, Annual Conference, and thoughtful commentators.

\*Third, Resolution 3 encourages United Methodists, laity and clergy, in eastern North Carolina—especially us, here, today!—to think and dialogue, theologically and morally,

about a challenging matter of our day.

3. Resolution 3 also evokes concern, within this pastor, in four (4) ways.

\*First, the resolution does not engage the truth claims of The United Methodist Church's teaching on human sexuality. That teaching is based on our church's doctrine, which is based on Scripture.

In excruciating brevity, on human sexuality, The United Methodist Church teaches what is consistent with historic Christianity: "We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

"Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with [or within] the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage...." (Paragraph 161F, Human Sexuality, "The Social Principles" [The Book of Discipline, 2012])

Some of the Biblical foundation for this Christian teaching is provided by The Creation and The Fall. What God created—creation, including Adam and Eve created in the image of God—was good. And yet, what God created—creation—"fell," thanks to Adam and Eve. The Fall—for creation, for Adam and Eve, for history, and for us—is a "catastrophe" (David Bentley Hart). The Fall affected—that is, broke, polluted, distorted, corrupted—all aspects of creation. (Our daughter, Paige, died of cancer back in 2004, when she was 21. Her fatal illness [a natural evil], I believe, had its origins in The Fall.)

Our church's doctrine deepens our understanding on this point. The Articles of Religion take The Fall more seriously than we often do. Article VII, "Of Original or Birth Sin," declares: "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his nature inclined to evil, and that continually." (emphases added)

So, due to The Fall, our human nature (created in the image of God) is corrupted. Corrupted! Out of whack! That includes our desires—all the desires of the human heart. In his Standard Sermon entitled "Original Sin," John Wesley states: "Sensual appetites, even those of the lowest kind, have, more or less, the dominion over him (the person before justification). They lead him captive, they drag him to and fro, in spite of his boasted reason." (The Works of John Wesley, Volume 2/Sermons 34-70, p. 180). Again, as a result of The Fall, human desires are corrupted to one degree or another: those that deal with winning and losing, spending and saving, eating and fasting, sexuality and celibacy. Untutored desires of the human heart and

their resultant behaviors undermine human flourishing. As our prayer of confession has us pray: "We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts." (#891, The United Methodist Hymnal) But Wesley knows the cure for this corruption: Only "the great Physician of souls applies medicine to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties." (p. 184) In other words, only Jesus Christ—crucified and risen, as Head and Body, through Word and Sacrament—can free the human person from the bondage of desire and sin. With the Physician's grace-filled gifts of healing and forgiveness and freedom, all of us being healed and forgiven and freed can resist and rechannel, discipline and redirect, desires that do not lead to human flourishing.

\*Second, Resolution 3 demonstrates that our church's teaching on human sexuality has not been well taught or well practiced throughout the church.

In part because of the Sexual Revolution, and its politicization, the leading teachers of The United Methodist Church have been hesitant to offer Christian pedagogy, from the Bible and the Great Tradition, on human sexuality. Apparent fear has led to actual silence. This silence has made the church's clergy and laity vulnerable to the theological, moral, and sexual assumptions of fashionable culture, which are asserted continuously by countless institutions of our society.

\*Third, Resolution 3 states that our church's language or teaching on human sexuality is not agreed to by all laity and all clergy. Not surprising. That is usually the case. No Church teaching—even on the Trinity!—is unanimously accepted throughout our church. But in the face of disagreement and dissent, the church's leaders are still charged and challenged to teach the Church's faith as engagingly, persuasively, and wisely as possible.

\*Fourth, Resolution 3 hopes that our church will culturally accommodate its teachings on human sexuality. However, I believe our church would be well advised not to accommodate its teaching to strong cultural currents of our day. The example of the Church in Nazi Germany is overused. Still it stands as a warning to us. The political philosophy of the Third Reich, including anti-Semitism, was widely accepted by polite German society in the 1930s—particularly German universities. Most Christian leaders in Germany fell in line with exactly that philosophy, and they surrendered to its claims in their ministerial work. Only a minority, including Professor Karl Barth, resisted. He wrote in The Barmen Declaration: "We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church were permitted to abandon the form of its message and order to its own pleasure or to changes in prevailing ideological and political convictions." (Article 3)

4. I leave you with an honest question. Do you believe it is possible to teach in love, in a local church, our denomination's understanding of human sexuality?

5. Thank you for your attention. And may God be with us in our conferencing today.♥

## **THEOLOGICALLY SPEAKING, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FORWARD FOR THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH?**

Evangelical catholicism.

Before you say What?, and then skip down to the next article, please pause and consider the claims of this brief article.

Evangelical catholicism is a school of Christian thought that is evangelical by focusing on Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, and that is catholic by understanding Christ as active in the substance and structure, faith and life, of the Church (its preaching/teaching, doctrine, liturgy, sacraments, polity, discipline, and so on).

What does evangelical catholicism have to do with United Methodism? Plenty. For starters, Dr. Albert C. Outler (1908-1989, the late, great Methodist historical theologian who taught at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology) understood John Wesley's ministry as evangelical catholicism at work. Dr. Richard B. Hays, the Dean of Duke University's Divinity School, noted that most recent deans at Duke Divinity School have "directed the school to claim and maintain a distinctive Wesleyan theological posture that was simultaneously evangelical and catholic: grounded in Scripture, passionately hopeful about the transformative power of the gospel in human lives, and deeply committed to sympathetic engagement with the broad doctrinal and sacramental traditions of the church." ("The 2012 Dean's Report," p. 4) Even The Book of Discipline (2012) leans toward an evangelical catholicism in this statement about Biblical interpretation: "The Wesleyan heritage, reflecting its origins in the catholic and reformed ethos of English Christianity, directs us to a self-conscious use of these three sources [that is, Tradition, reason, and experience] in interpreting Scripture and in formulating faith statements based on the biblical witness." (Paragraph 103, p. 82) You get the idea: evangelical catholicism should not be foreign to United Methodists.

Which brings us to the recent book, Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church (Basic Books, 2013), by George Weigel. Mr. Weigel is a Roman Catholic lay theologian, and he writes for Roman Catholics. However, his vision of evangelical catholicism is helpful to those of us beyond the Roman Catholic community.

In an early chapter of his book, Weigel lists ten (10) "Characteristics of Evangelical Catholicism." Here they are, in slightly edited form for United Methodists, for your consideration.

1. Evangelical catholicism is friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Evangelical catholicism affirms divine revelation and embraces its authority, which continues through history in the teaching authority of the Church.
3. Evangelical catholicism celebrates the sacraments as divinely given means of sanctifying life.
4. Evangelical catholicism is a call to constant conversion of life, which involves both the rejection of evil, and active

participation in the works of service and charity.

5. Evangelical catholicism is a liturgically centered form of Christian life that embraces both the ancient traditions of worship and the authentic renewal of the liturgy.

6. Evangelical catholicism is a biblically centered form of Christian life that reads the Bible as the Word of God for the salvation of souls.

7. Evangelical catholicism is an ordered form of Christianity in which a variety of vocations, lay and clerical, is respected.

8. Evangelical catholicism is both culture-forming and counter cultural.

9. Evangelical catholicism enters the public square with the voice of reason, grounded in Gospel conviction.

10. Evangelical catholicism awaits with eager anticipation the coming of the Lord Jesus in glory, and until that time, evangelical catholicism is ordered to mission—to the proclamation of the Gospel for the world's salvation.

This pastor believes that evangelical catholicism provides a sturdy theological foundation—for the Church and for the Christian—for faithfulness to Jesus Christ. That foundation includes witnessing to the Lord of life, and opposing the threats to innocent life, in this world. It is my heartfelt hope that this will provide you, dear and patient reader, with some food for thought. (PTS)♥

## LETTERS TO LIFEWATCH

March 10, 2014

Paul,

I just finished the March Lifewatch. The article "Relating Doctrine to Discipline" sent me scrambling to my bookcase for my Book of Discipline. (That is not a bad thing, occasionally.)

I am once again reminded that I appreciate your constant, faithful watching and taking on the controversial issues in our church and society.

Be encouraged.

In Christ,

Julie G. Fulcher

Morehead City, NC

April 15, 2014

Paul,

Greetings from the New England Annual Conference.

I wanted to thank you and Lifewatch for Bishop Kenneth Carter's article from March of this year. I recently preached a sermon in defense of unborn human life. His theological grounding of the issue provided a very helpful resource...

Paul, I continue to look forward to Lifewatch, without which I would have neither the courage nor the clarity to address an issue we clergy should not ignore. Many thanks for your ministry, and my best wishes to you.

Rev. Stuart Tucker

Pastor of Visitation and Senior Ministries

Carter Memorial United Methodist Church

Needham, MA

April 6, 2014

Pastor Paul:

My name is Byron Fox. I was on the Tulare County Right to Life Board of Directors years ago. Now I am on the Care Pregnancy Center Board of Directors. I was a Methodist until 1978. In California, the Methodist denomination has become so ideologically liberal that a pastor would never dare to take a position in support of right to life for fear the bishop would "punish" him/her in the next appointment. My hat is off to you for taking the position that you have taken. I praise God that there are still a few Methodist pastors who seem to stick to the basic principles of John Wesley. I am so disappointed in most of the mainline churches today. Some of my friends think that the future of the true church in America will be the home church. I know of some such groups now. Hang in there, and proclaim Christ.

Byron Fox

byronfoxfarming@yahoo.com

## YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT

- Please remember to support Lifewatch regularly with your prayers and your gifts. A gift can be given in two ways. First, you can send a check to Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/Cottleville, MO 63338. And second, you can give stocks by first contacting Mrs. Cindy Evans in the Lifewatch office. Thank you, in advance, for all of your faithful and generous responses.

- About Abortion: 10 Things a New Generation of Christians Should Know, by our friend and long-time Good News executive Dr. James V. Heidinger II, has just been published in the book series entitled In All Things Charity by Seedbed. About Abortion, as all the brief books in the Seedbed series, lovingly witnesses to the truth (about abortion, in this case)—in the hope of stimulating thoughtful discourse throughout the churches. In no-nonsense, straight-forward prose, Dr. Heidinger retells the histories of the Church's witness for life through the ages, Roe v. Wade and its consequences in America, and the capitulation of The United Methodist Church to the pro-choice temptation; and it includes the stories of Mr. Kermit Gosnell and Dr. Bernard Nathanson. The book is also laced with helpful moral commentary and theological insight. Some of About Abortion was first presented as the 2011 Lifewatch Sermon (see the March 1, 2011 issue of Lifewatch), but here the material is deepened and widened. About Abortion is highly recommended. It would make an excellent text book for a Sunday School class or an evening study. Obtain your copy, for \$9.95, from [www.seedbed.com](http://www.seedbed.com).

- Human sex trafficking is all over the news—from the prestige media and from the church's press offices. "As we confront this issue, it cannot be overlooked that there's a connection between sex trafficking and abortion. It aids the perpetrator in further abusing the girl. And Planned Parenthood has been caught as a willing accomplice to the

sex industry. In an undercover investigation, LiveAction sent actors into seven facilities, posing as a prostitute and pimp to inquire about Planned Parenthood's services. During the conversation, they revealed that they were sex workers and even that they worked with girls as young as 14. According to the law, sex trafficking is considered a federal crime punishable by imprisonment of 10 years to life. But Planned Parenthood didn't comply with the law. Instead they offered support, secrecy and cover-up by saying: 'We see people from every walk of life. There's no judgment, no sharing of information here.' 'We want to know as little information as possible.' And in regard to abortions for 14-year-olds, 'There's ways, like judicial bypass, that we can get around that (parental consent), if you guys ever need it.'

"If the abortion industry truly cared about women's health and well being, they wouldn't tolerate this sexual abuse of girls. Now, the girls are doubly victimized—once by a pimp and again by an abortionist." (Brad Mattes, CEO of Life Issues Institute Inc., "The Crisis of Human Trafficking," February 28, 2014 email)

- During the week after Easter Day, a very attractive and engaging brochure from the Reconciling Ministries Network arrived in the mailbox here. It featured several comments, from different sources, by Rev. James Howell. Rev. Howell is the senior pastor at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, NC. For years, he has been theologically thoughtful, public in his ministry, and a friend. The purpose of the brochure is to advance the welcome of all people in The United Methodist Church. That is good. That is faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord for all. However, what was not mentioned in the brochure is the transformation that Christ brings to all the members of His Body. At the risk of repetition, I ask: Is it possible for a

United Methodist congregation to be welcoming and also to propose the Church's teaching on human sexuality? That teaching, this pastor believes, is transformative and demanding for all of us.

- In a recent email from Father Frank Pavone, the national director of Priests for Life, a surprising statistic was offered. It claimed that 40% of Roman Catholics, presumably in the United States, believe that abortion is "morally acceptable." Again, 40% of Catholics in America do not accept their church's teaching on abortion. ("Priests for Life Campaign to Convince Catholics to Vote like Catholics!," [priests\\_for\\_life@imcomoline.com](mailto:priests_for_life@imcomoline.com), April 15, 2014) Given that statistical reality, what is the task of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States? To teach, in love and wisdom, their church's faith with regard to life and abortion! Bishops, priests, and laity can and should teach, and teach faithfully. Likewise, in The United Methodist Church, it is the privilege and the challenge of bishops, clergy, and laity to teach, in love and wisdom, our church's faith with regard to human sexuality—even when there are those who stand opposed to the teaching. Also, it is the privilege and challenge of United Methodist bishops, clergy, and laity to teach, in love and wisdom, historic Christianity's faith with regard to life and abortion.

- It happens with increasing frequency. "I was pro-life until my unmarried daughter became pregnant. Then I started to identify with the pro-choice position." Or, "I used to be very traditional in my understanding of human sexuality. That is, until my son came out and explained, to my wife and me, that he is gay. Then I began to see things differently."

These are difficult circumstances, to be sure. However, this father and pastor firmly believes that it is precisely in these situations that God's Word, law, and love are most

**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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helpful. If followed, if trusted and obeyed, God's Word saves us from ourselves. God's Word saves us from taking a moral short cut that ends up harming the people we love. Certainly, it is a terrible challenge to follow God's Word in such tempting situations. But when that is done, good—good that we had not envisioned—results. That is true love, true Christian love.

- Mr. Jim Winkler has changed offices in The United Methodist Building in Washington, DC. After serving for years as the chief executive of the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church, Mr. Winkler is now the president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches. Though Mr. Winkler advanced positions on life, abortion, and human sexuality that often opposed Lifewatch's witness to the Gospel of Life, he was always a brother in Christ. We wish Mr. Winkler the best in his new position.

Lifewatch welcomes The Reverend Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe to her new ministry as the chief executive at the General Board of Church and Society. She has a distinguished record of education and ministry. Lifewatch vows to work with her where that is possible, and to challenge in constructive ways where that is necessary. Dr. Henry-Crowe, we wish you God's grace and guidance in your new position.

- Back on February 25, President Barack Obama addressed a meeting of Organizing for Action. Organizing for Action, a political action group of the President, works "to support the legislative agenda we voted on [in 2012], train the next generation of grassroots organizers and

leaders, and organize around local issues in our communities," according to its website. In his address, the President said, "The work you are doing is God's work." (Steven Ertelt, [LifeNews.com](http://LifeNews.com), 02/26/14, 11:11 a.m.) Since the President's agenda includes promoting a strongly pro-choice agenda, his statement is controversial, to say the least. For most Christians, his statement might be understood as an example of taking the Lord's name in vain.

- The 2013 Dean's Report of Duke Divinity School contains this comment on the graduates of the school's recently developed Th.D. program: "they have been formed to pursue their critical work and teaching from a stance of robust, unapologetic trust in the truth of the gospel." (p. 5) "[R]obust, unapologetic trust in the truth of the gospel." Key phrase: "truth of the gospel." Would that all clergy—and laity!—in the Church were so formed!

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

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