

## A STRONG, TRUTHFUL WORD

The Reverend Dr. Timothy Tennent is the president of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY. On June 18, he preached the sermon for the Service of Commissioning and Ordination at the 2011 Session of the North Carolina Annual Conference in Raleigh, NC. Entitled "Rebuilding the Pulpit," Dr. Tennent's sermon was based on Nehemiah 8:1-10.

The sermon displayed some humorous passages. For example: "If on the eighth day God had said, 'Let there be Zondervan,' just think of the books that could have been published. Moses could be a best-selling author of How to Pass through Your Red Sea. Moses' follow-up book could have been The Purpose-Driven Nation. Naturally, it would come with a study guide..."

Dr. Tennent's direct challenge to those commissioned and ordained was inspiring and powerful: "Do you understand the signs of our times? Globally the Church of Jesus Christ is growing and flourishing unlike any time in human history. At the same time, The United Methodist Church has been imploding for over four decades. You have a formidable challenge before you: to fall in love with the Church and be faithful to the Gospel. You must go forth from this service determined to do the one thing which must be done: rebuild the pulpit, remember the fundamentals, carefully instruct the people in the Word of God. The United Methodist Church must have men and women able to adapt to new situations, to be faithful in difficult challenges, and to live into the anointing of God when the Spirit is moving.

"You will experience pressures on every side. The post-Christendom culture will pressure you to abandon the Gospel and compromise the Word of God. You must be faithful. Every voice will cry out to you to measure your success by worldly standards. What is the size of your church? How much money do you get paid? How nice is your parsonage? What kind of pension plan do you have? Are you popular? Regard such questions as distracting arrows from the pit of hell. If the cross of Jesus Christ teaches us anything, it is that God sometimes does his greatest work under a cloak of failure.

"Some of you may be called by God to lead charges with responsibility over thousands of members. For others, faithfulness means feeding a small flock and defending a relatively remote outpost of the kingdom. But never forget that whatever act we faithfully do in God's name, the whole incarnation is present in seed form. When Jesus touched the leper, it was not a stepping stone to the cross. The whole cross was always in seed form in everything Jesus did. There are no stepping stones to the kingdom. There is no denominational ladder to climb. There is no career path stretching out in front of you. What we have before us is the call which beckons us to the cross.

"Go forth to inhabit the kind of robust, muscular, apostolic Christianity which is necessary to face the challenges of our day. Go forth from this place with a vibrant confidence in the Word of God, the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and the ongoing power of the Gospel!

"Do not confuse busyness with godliness. Do not confuse programmatic activity with authentic relationships. Do not confuse knowledge with holiness. ('Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' [I Corinthians 8:1, KJV]) Do not confuse title and position with faithfulness and calling. Instead, make it your daily ambition to die to self and be daily reborn in Christ. You are being called to defend some outpost of the New Creation in Adam's world. Do not get distracted. Keep your post. Defend the Gospel. Proclaim Christ. Amen."

Only when ordained clergy are committed to exactly this vision of ministry can and will they address such matters as life, abortion, and sexuality in the context of the Gospel and in the location of the congregation. Lacking this vision of ministry, ordained clergy will inevitably run to theological platitudes and hide in moral ambiguities.

Thanks be to God for The Reverend Dr. Timothy Tennent and for his inspiring word to the commissioned and the ordained. May his word echo in their hearts and minds, and in the hearts and minds of many of us who were ordained some time ago. Indeed, may his word echo throughout The United Methodist Church and beyond. (PTS) ♥

## MISSING WOMEN: 1,630,000,000 OF THEM

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church forcefully declare: "...we unconditionally reject it [abortion] as a means of gender selection." (The Book of Discipline [2008], Par. 161J, p. 105) In addition, The Book of Resolutions (2008) states: "While the members of our denomination are not of one mind over the precise conditions in which abortion can be supported, we cannot support abortion for such trivial reasons as not preferring the gender of the fetus." ("2027. Gender-Selective Abortion," pp. 121-123) These statements, from The United Methodist Church, have immediate relevance in our time, as they relate to the international scene.

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

Mara Hvistendahl is a correspondent with Science magazine and the author of Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys over Girls and the Consequences of a World Full of Men (PublicAffairs, 2011). While personally assuming a pro-choice position on abortion, Ms. Hvistendahl maintains an intellectual honesty that follows social-scientific, empirical evidence wherever it might lead. Hers is a wonderful intellectual honesty.

In his review of Unnatural Selection published by The Wall Street Journal ("The War Against Girls," June 18, 2011), Jonathan V. Last draws from the book under review to outline the disturbing problem at hand: "In nature, 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. This ratio is biologically ironclad. Between 104 and 106 is the normal range, and that's as far as the natural window goes. Any other number is the result of unnatural events.

"Yet today in India there are 112 boys born for every 100 girls. In China, the number is 121—though plenty of Chinese towns are over the 150 mark. China's and India's populations are mammoth enough that their outlying sex ratios have skewed the global average to a biologically impossible 107. But the imbalance is not only in Asia. Azerbaijan stands at 115, Georgia at 118 and Armenia at 120.

"What is causing the skewed ration: abortion. If the male number in the sex ratio is above 106, it means that couples are having abortions when they find out the mother is carrying a girl. By Ms. Hvistendahl's counting, there have been so many sex-selective abortions in the past three decades that 163 million girls, who by biological averages should have been born, are missing from the world. Moral horror aside, this is likely to be of very large consequence."

Mr. Last continues: "But oddly enough, Ms. Hvistendahl notes, it is usually a country's rich, not its poor, who lead the way in choosing against girls. 'Sex selection typically starts with the urban, well-educated stratum of society,' she writes. 'Elites are the first to gain access to a new technology, whether MRI scanners, smart phones—or ultrasound machines.' The behavior of elites then filters down until it becomes

part of the broader culture. Even more unexpectedly, the decision to abort baby girls is usually made by women—either by the mother or, sometimes, by the mother-in-law.

"If you peer hard enough at the data, you can actually see parents demanding boys. Take South Korea. In 1989, the sex ratio for the first births there was 104 boys for every 100 girls—perfectly normal. But couples who had a girl became increasingly desperate to acquire a boy. For second births, the male number climbed to 113; for third, to 185. Among fourth-born children, it was a mind-boggling 209."

In "Where Have all the Girls Gone" (Foreign Policy, [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com), June 27, 2011), Ms. Hvistendahl retells a common story that is a chilling account. In South Korea, for example, "by the 1970s, recalls gynecologist Cho Young-young, who was a medical student at the time, 'there were agents going around the countryside to small towns and bringing women into the [mobile] clinics. That counted toward their pay. They brought the women regardless of whether they were pregnant.' Non-pregnant women were sterilized. A pregnant woman met a worse fate, Cho says: 'The agent would have her abort and then undergo tubal ligation.' As Korea's abortion rate skyrocketed, Sung-bong Hong and Christopher Tietze detailed its rise in the Population Council journal Studies in Family Planning. By 1977, they determined, doctors in Seoul were performing 2.75 abortions for every birth—the highest documented abortion rate in human history. Were it not for this history, Korean sociologist Heeran Chun recently told me, 'I don't think sex-selective abortion would have become so popular.'"

### WESTERN SOURCES

For years, pro-life advocates had asserted that Western pro-choice activists were behind abortion aimed at controlling world population growth. Ms. Hvistendahl was resistant to this claim. "Then," she writes, "I looked into it, and discovered that what I thought were right-wing conspiracy theories about the nexus of Western feminism and population control actually had some, if very distant and entirely historical, basis in truth. As it turns out, Western advisors and researchers, and Western money, were among the forces that contributed to a serious reduction in the number of women and girls in the developing world. And today feminist and reproductive-rights groups are still reeling from that legacy." (Foreign Policy) In this quotation and in the evidence that follows, Ms. Hvistendahl's qualifying phrase—"if very distant and entirely historical"—seems hardly necessary.

Mr. Last's review picks up this theme: "She spends a devastating chapter talking with Paul Ehrlich, the man who mainstreamed overpopulation hysteria in 1968 with The Population Bomb—and who still seems to think that getting rid of girls is a capital idea (in part because it will keep families from having more and more children until they get a boy). In another chapter she speaks with Geert Jan Olsder, an obscure Dutch

mathematician who, by an accident of history, contributed to the formation of China's 'One Child' policy when he met a Chinese scientist in 1975...

"Ms. Hvistendahl also dredges up plenty of unpleasant documents from Western actors like the Ford Foundation, the United Nations, and Planned Parenthood, showing how they pushed sex-selective abortion as a means of controlling population growth. In 1976, for instance, the medical director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Malcom Potts, wrote that, when it came to developing nations, abortion was even better than birth control: 'Early abortion is safe, effective, cheap and potentially the easiest method to administer.'

"The following year another Planned Parenthood official celebrated China's coercive methods of family planning, noting that 'persuasion and motivation [are] very effective in a society in which social sanctions can be applied against those who fail to cooperate in the construction of the socialist state.' As early as 1969, the Population Council's Sheldon Segal was publicly proclaiming the benefits of sex-selective abortion as a means of combating the 'population bomb' in the East. Overall Ms. Hvistendahl paints a detailed picture of Western Malthusians pushing a set of terrible policy prescriptions in a effort to road-test solutions to a problem that never actually manifested itself."

#### CONSEQUENCES

What are the social consequences of sex-selection abortion eliminating girls by the millions?

First, the coarsening of society. Last quotes Hvistendahl: "Historically, societies in which men substantially outnumber women are not nice places to live. Often they are unstable. Sometimes they are violent." For example, during westward expansion in American history, the numbers of women on the frontier were limited. In 1870, some of the sex ratios were: 166 men to 100 women in California, 320 to 100 in Nevada, and 768 to 100 in western Kansas. According to Ms. Hvistendahl, this probably had much to do with the West being truly wild.

When a society has "surplus men," caused by too few women, those men tend to wind up in a lower socio-economic class, where violence is more prevalent. The chances are that such men will then add to the problems around them. So, in any given area, the sex ratio can become a reasonable driver of violent crimes.

Second, the demand for women. Men in societies with fewer women will shop for, and purchase, brides. Therefore, wealthier men are more likely to secure the women they desire, while men of more modest means are often left out. Not surprisingly, in societies with imbalanced sex ratios, prostitution and sex trafficking also increase.

And third, the lessening of medical care for women in the developing world. Ms. Hvistendahl notes: "...organizations like UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) have found themselves unable to

perform legitimate services in the developing world because of their historic connection to population control." (Foreign Policy) That is, Western population control groups spread the idea of sex-selection abortion throughout the developing world; this led to the sex-selection abortion of girls; this led pro-life organizations to raise questions about the work of the Western population control groups; this led to a decrease in the funding of such groups in the West; and this led to fewer medical services provided to women in the developing world.

These consequences indicate that, while sex-selection abortion is a moral horror, it leads to horrible dysfunctions in the larger society. Again, such abortion, taken alone, is bad enough. But it results in: unrest and violence in the larger society; women being used, bought, and sold; and women unable to secure needed healthcare.

#### PARTING THOUGHTS

For decades, many American feminists have been actively engaged in defending abortion rights and promoting abortion services at home and abroad. Internationally, such abortion rights and services have been employed to eliminate 163,000,000 girls around the world. So feminists have made it possible for millions and millions of their sisters around the world to be aborted. This is one of the greatest, and saddest, ironies of our time.

The church resolution noted above concludes with this sentence: "The General Board of Church and Society (BGCS) is encouraged to seek out and take advantage of opportunities to make this concern of our church known to national leaders of the United States and of other nations." Has BGCS taken this encouragement to heart and expressed the church's rejection of sex-selection abortion to national and international leaders?

Furthermore, the question cannot help but arise: Was The United Methodist Church, through its boards and agencies, involved, in any way, in the spread of the idea of sex-selection abortion for population-control reasons? Again, it is a question, not a charge. But it is a question that deserves a definitive answer from United Methodist officials. (Paul T. Stallworth)♥

#### FOUND GIRLS: 9 OF THEM

Last June the tiny bodies of nine aborted girls were found in a drain in India's Maharashtra state in the Beed district. Abortion is legal in India. However, the government has tried, though not very successfully, to limit sex-selection abortions. Many Indian clinics still determine the sex of the unborn child, if requested, and provide abortion, if desired. In India, there is a strong cultural preference for baby boys.

After learning about the discovery of the nine, Sara Garner wrote "Prayer for the Nine Dead Baby Girls..." which appeared on her blog at <http://riversidereflections.wordpress.com/2011/06/21/talitha-koum/>.

Father,  
I praise You for the gift of life.  
I thank You  
for the gift of motherhood,  
a unique and special sharing in the creation of a human  
life,  
nurturing life within our bodies.

For the startling joy of feeling life within us,  
for the exhausted joy of bringing forth the created  
child,  
for the satisfying joy of putting our beautiful child to  
our breasts.  
And the unique joy, and responsibility,  
given us to raise another beautiful life nurturer—a girl.

I sit here stunned at the shortsightedness of women  
who kill the  
life within them.  
I sit here amazed that women  
can toss the little daughters of their bodies,  
in the trash.  
Forgive me. I judge them, and it is not my desire to  
judge.

I pray instead for words  
to woo women towards the wonder of mothering a girl,  
to warn women away from killing a life  
*that brings forth life,*  
to express the horror of the exponential consequences  
harbored in  
this selfish sin.

I pray for women, trapped in horrific nations with  
horrific cultures,  
who are forced to abort their small girls;  
show these women a way out.  
I pray for women whose own self-worth is so abysmal  
that they see  
no value in bringing forth life to a daughter;  
show these women their true worth.  
I pray for mothers of sons who inflict pain on the  
mothers of daughters;  
show these women their foolish pride and short-sighted  
stupidity.

I cry unto you,  
O my God!,  
for justice,  
for the lives of the tiny girls all over Asia who have  
died, *only because they are girls.*  
For the lives of nine tiny girls in a drain in India.  
And the many millions more...

And Father, will you please hold those tiny little girls  
in Your righteous right hand?  
Will You please, Father, tell those girl-child souls,  
that You love them?

*Sara Garner is a United Methodist who lives in  
Virginia. She can be reached at [ssgarner@cox.net](mailto:ssgarner@cox.net).♥*

## AN ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPEECH

*On June 17, the 2011 Session of the North Carolina Annual Conference considered a resolution that would ask the 2012 General Conference to amend The Book of Discipline's paragraph on abortion (Paragraph 161J). The resolution proposed that one sentence—"We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures."—be deleted from Par. 161J. What follows is the three-minute speech for the resolution that this pastor offered on the floor of the Annual Conference. (Even though the resolution was not approved by the Annual Conference, it will be submitted, in different form, to the 2012 General Conference.) (PTS)*

"Paul Stallsworth, New Bern District.

"Thank you, Bishop Gwinn.

"I stand to speak in favor of Resolution 1.

"North Carolina Annual Conference, thank you! Since 1977, I have been privileged to be a part of this great and influential Annual Conference. Since 1977, during many Sessions of this Annual Conference, I have offered resolutions related to life and abortion. You have graciously received, carefully read, thoughtfully debated, and patiently voted on many resolutions from this pastor. Again, I thank you.

"In response to this resolutionary activity, you might well ask: Why have you been so committed to putting resolutions on life and abortion before this Annual Conference?

"Here is my answer. I believe the little one in the womb is a child, created by God in God's image. Furthermore, I believe God through Christ calls the Church to protect the least of these, including the unborn child and mother from abortion.

"However, since 1973, over 50 million abortions have been performed in the United States. Around 3,000/day.

"What has been the response of The United Methodist Church to abortion in America?

"FACT: United Methodist staff helped establish a religious coalition (RCAR, now RCRC) to politically lobby for abortion rights.

"FACT: The General Board of Church and Society and the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries have regularly spoken and acted for the right to eliminate the 50 million.

"FACT: The Council of Bishops has remained totally silent about the 50 million.

"FACT: For decades, individual bishops have promoted abortion rights used against the 50 million.

"To this day, The United Methodist Church continues this pro-choice activism. Why? Because of one, ambiguous sentence in Paragraph 161J of The Social Principles. That sentence seems moderate and reasonable. That sentence seems to intend to make

abortion available only in rare circumstances. However, that sentence is open to interpretation, and it has been interpreted by United Methodist agencies, boards, staff, and bishops to permit a pro-choice political agenda. Therefore, that sentence should be deleted. Resolution 1 asks General Conference 2012 to delete that sentence.

“If you vote to adopt Resolution 1, the North Carolina Annual Conference will give the 2012 General Conference an opportunity to remove The United Methodist Church from pro-choice politics.

“Thank you. Again!” ♥

## **“ABORTIONS ARE NOT OCCURRING HERE!” “REALLY?”**

*The 2011 National Right to Life Convention was held in Jacksonville, FL. National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC), to which Lifewatch belongs, presented its annual workshop, “We Are the Sheep... Where are the Shepherds?,” at the convention on June 24. What follows is the question to which this pastor was asked to respond and his response. (PTS)*

Question: 9. How do we help the pastor who doesn’t address abortion because he thinks abortions do not happen in his community or among his congregation?

Response: Most of today’s ordained clergy have taken at least one “pastoral psychology” class that would routinely analyze a verbatim (or a transcript) of a pastoral conversation. What follows is a verbatim of an imagined conversation—between The Reverend Dr. Denial, the pastor of a large church located in a wealthy suburb, and Ron Reality, the youth counselor at the same church.

Dr. Denial: “Hey, Ron. Thanks for completing the youth ministry paperwork.”

Ron Reality: “Here are the papers you requested.”

Dr. Denial: “Could you believe the political debate on TV last night? Once again the candidates’ positions on abortion distracted the nation. I sure am glad we do not have abortions happening in our church and in our community.”

Ron Reality: “What did you just say?”

Dr. Denial: “I’m glad we do not have abortions happening in our church and in our community.”

[Pause.]

Ron Reality: “Dr. Denial, may we have lunch and conversation later this week? How about Friday? Twelve noon at El Rodeo?”

Dr. Denial: “Sounds good.”

[Several days later at the restaurant...]

On Friday, Ron Reality, pushing aside his plate: “Dr. Denial, may I return to an issue you brought up earlier?”

Dr. Denial: “Sure. What issue are you talking about? I’ve been very busy since we last talked.”

Ron Reality: “Earlier in the week you said that abortions are not occurring in our church and in our community. I disagree. I think abortion is a bigger problem for us than you think.”

Dr. Denial: “I stand by my statement. Ron, our church is full of good people and good kids. And our community is the same. We have some issues, some serious issues. But abortion is not one of them.”

Ron Reality: “I would like to give you a two-part assignment. First, I want you to listen to some music on the radio for an hour or two. Listen carefully to the lyrics. Be sure to check out some rap, and hip-hop, songs. That’s what the local kids like. You will be shocked by their blatant sexual references. Then I want you to attend a movie that the kids like. Check out the movie listings in the local newspaper; choose one; and watch it. Again, you will be amazed by the blatant sexual immorality in the movie.”

Dr. Denial: “What does this pop-culture assignment have to do with abortion?”

Ron Reality: “The songs and the movie will show you what kind of cultural world our young people inhabit. Their world is filled with casual sex. And casual sex inevitably leads to abortions.”

Dr. Denial: “I see. Okay, I’ll do these things soon.”

Ron Reality: “I want you to do something else. I want you to check out the local health department statistics on abortion in our county. You will find the number of abortions performed recently to be much greater than zero.”

Dr. Denial: “I get it. Abortion is in our county, probably in our community, perhaps in our church. You’re also implying that I speak on this matter from the pulpit.”

Ron Reality: “Yeah. You might begin with what the Bible says, and what the Church catholic teaches, about abortion. Proclaim life as God’s gift, which commands the Church’s protection. Do not begin with the politics of abortion. Begin with the Church’s Scripture and moral teaching.”

Dr. Denial: “Good advice. Ron Reality, you have lived up to your name. It is time for me to stop living up to mine.”

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

## NATHANSON AND TRUTH

As noted in the June 1, 2011 issue of Lifewatch, Dr. Bernard Nathanson—who early on performed abortions, then experienced a conversion of sorts, and later witnessed for life—recently died.

To help many remember Dr. Nathanson well, Dr. Robert P. George wrote “Bernard Nathanson: A Life Transformed by Truth” (which appeared at www.thepublicdiscourse.com on February 27, 2011 and was later published in the Human Life Review [Winter/Spring 2011, p. 151-155]). Dr. George is the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, at Princeton University. Also, you might recall that he is one of the co-authors of The Manhattan Declaration.

Dr. George concluded his eloquent remembrance in this way: “There are many lessons in Bernard Nathanson’s life for those of us who recognize the worth and dignity of all human lives and who seek to win hearts and change laws. Two in particular stand out for me.

“First is the luminous power of truth. As I have written elsewhere, and as Nathanson’s own testimony confirms, the edifice of abortion is built on a foundation of lies. Nathanson told those lies; indeed, he helped to invent them. But others witnessed to truth. And when he was exposed to their bold, un-intimidated, self-sacrificial witness, the truth overcame the darkness in Nathanson’s heart and convicted him in the court of his own conscience.

“Bernie and I became friends in the early 1990s, shortly after my own pro-life writings came to his attention. Once during the question-and-answer session following a speech he gave at Princeton, I asked him: ‘When you were promoting abortion, you were willing to lie in what you regarded as a good cause. Now that you have been converted to the cause of life, would you be willing to lie to save babies? How do those who hear your speeches and read your books and articles know that you are not lying now?’ It was, I confess, an impertinently phrased question, but also, I believe, an important one. He seemed a bit stunned by it, and after a moment said, very quietly, ‘No, I wouldn’t lie, even to save babies.’ At the dinner he and I had with students afterward, he explained himself further: ‘You said that I was converted to the cause of life; and that’s true. But you must remember that I was converted to the cause of life only because I was converted to the cause of truth. That’s why I wouldn’t lie, even in a good cause.’

“The second lesson is this: We in the pro-life movement have no enemies to destroy. Our weapons are chaste weapons of the spirit: truth and love. Our task is less to defeat our opponents than to win them to the cause of life. To be sure, we must oppose the culture and politics of death resolutely and with a determination to win. But there is no one—no one

(emphases in the original text)—whose heart is so hard that he or she cannot be won over. Let us not lose faith in the power of our weapons to transform even the most resolute abortion advocates. The most dedicated abortion supporters are potential allies in the cause of life. It is the loving, prayerful, self-sacrificing witness of Joan Bell Andrews and so many other dedicated pro-life activists that softens the hearts and changes the lives of people like Dr. Bernard Nathanson.

“May he rest in peace.” Amen.♥

## EMAIL TO LIFEWATCH

June 18, 2011

Dear Brother Paul,

I just read the latest issue of Lifewatch (June 1, 2011), and am compelled to write my appreciation to you for both the newsletter itself and for your own writing within it. The parallel between The Barmen Declaration and our current situation is well stated and very much to the point. The tribute to Dr. Nathanson is very appropriate for a man who was willing to reverse the direction of his entire life and career when confronted within by his sin. And the comment about the failure of the bishops’ teaching of the church’s doctrine being one of the things that seems to have brought about the Call to Action Steering Team and its report is exactly on target.

As for the letter you have written to the bishops themselves, you have demonstrated a point of view that they need to hear and that is not of an incendiary nature in the debate that is going on. Without questioning their own personal Christianity, you are clearly questioning their activities in light of their listed duties under the covenant they have entered with the church itself.

Please accept my thanks for what you are doing! And my support in prayer for you and for Lifewatch. Blessings,  
Rev. Dick Bayard, retired pastor  
[rbayard@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rbayard@sbcglobal.net)

## YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT

- All gifts to the ministry of Lifewatch are deeply appreciated. Only because of your faithful support can Lifewatch witness to the Gospel of Life within The United Methodist Church and beyond.

If you want to give a gift to Lifewatch, you can do so in three ways: (1) send a check to Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/Cottleville, MO 63338; (2) donate online on our homepage at [www.lifewatch.org](http://www.lifewatch.org); and (3) give stocks by first contacting Mrs. Cindy Evans in the Lifewatch office. Thank you.

- Today the Church—the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church—is under great challenge in the United States. There are now tremendous pressures, exerted by voices within the Christian community and by forces outside the Christian community, for the Church to accommodate to some prevailing assumptions held dearly by the general society. In response to these pressures, a group of pastors and laity in Carteret County, NC, has written and

released "Pro Ecclesia (For the Church): An Ecumenical Confession." It is available at [www.stpetersumc.com](http://www.stpetersumc.com). Also, a copy can be obtained by calling (252)-726-2175, by emailing [stpeters@mail.clis.com](mailto:stpeters@mail.clis.com), or by writing St. Peter's United Methodist Church/111 Hodges Street/Morehead City, NC 28557.

For your information and for a sampling of the confession, the first article, "Father: Sovereign of the Church," follows:

"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give to your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves; because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Genesis 26:4-5)

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10)

"We believe that both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal God initiating a covenantal relationship with a people—first with Israel, continuing with the Church. God's relationship with the Church is based not on the merits of the people, but on the steadfast love and missional purpose of Almighty God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

"We reject the assumption that the church exists primarily to satisfy the perceived needs of needs-driven individuals. This assumption misunderstands the church to be merely a social organization, in competition with many other such organizations, rather

than a people called by Almighty God to covenant."

If the Church is to stand up for the Gospel of Life, the Church must know the truth of her origins, her nature, and her purpose. "Pro Ecclesia" attempts to help laity and clergy to confess exactly those truths about the Church.

It is hoped that "Pro Ecclesia" might form the basis for an engaging series, in a local church, of lessons for study or sermons for proclamation.

Get your copy, and see what you think.

- Beeson Divinity School, at Samford University in Birmingham, AL, recently conducted a series of chapel services entitled "To the Winds Thy Fears: Christian Witness and the Barmen Declaration." The Barmen Declaration, you will remember, protested theologically against the accommodation of the Church and her faith to the Nazi ideology of Germany's Third Reich. For your viewing, the sermons of the series are posted at: [www.beesondivinity.com/Default.aspx?p=74610#!swx/pp/media\\_archives/116700/channel/1867/series/2748](http://www.beesondivinity.com/Default.aspx?p=74610#!swx/pp/media_archives/116700/channel/1867/series/2748).

The topics, addressed by various preachers and speakers, are: "To the Winds Thy Fears," "The Road to Barmen," "What Hath Barmen to Do with Harlem? Barmen and the Problem of Racism," "Sophie Scholl and the Sanctity of Life," "Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy," "Barmen and Preaching: Telling the Truth in a Hard Time," "Relativizing the Regime: What Baptists Need to Learn from Barmen, and from a Rider on a White Horse," "Doing Theology as Though Nothing Had Happened," "Barmen and the Bible: Do We Still Need the Old Testament?," "Hitler's Cross: Lessons for the Church from Nazi Germany," "Barmen

**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.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose your check, payable to Lifewatch, and mail to: Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/Cottleville MO 63338.

### SEND LIFEWATCH TO A FRIEND!

Extend your outreach—and ours—with a free subscription to a friend. Simply provide the information requested below. Also, your contributions—however large or small—will help advance the ministry of Lifewatch by inspiring United Methodists to love both the unborn child and mother. Thank you for caring enough to act.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/Cottleville MO 63338.

[Lifewatch](http://www.lifewatch.org) is published by the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.



**Lifewatch**  
Taskforce of  
United Methodists on  
Abortion and Sexuality

P.O. Box 306, Cottleville MO 63338

09/01/11

- \* Missing Women
- \* An Annual Conference Speech
- \* Nathanson and Truth

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Lancaster PA  
Permit No. 507

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

and the Unfettered Word,” and “The Gospel Does Not Change.”

The churches in America are now tempted to accommodate to societal expectations and norms. Today, learning the history of The Barmen Declaration is essential to being a faithful church today.

Since the sermons of this series are available for purchase in CD and DVD formats, they could be viewed and discussed by a church school class or by a Sunday evening study group.

- Please endure just one more item on The Barmen Declaration.

The clergy and laity of the churches usually try to find middle ground in theological and moral disputes. “Midling Methodists” are famous for looking for the third way through various, polarized arguments. This attempt—often motivated by love or good will or the desire to keep everybody happy—is understandable.

During the 1930s there was a third-way or centrist group in Germany. According to Eberhard Busch in The Barmen Theses Then and Now (Eerdmans, 2010), “[t]his centrist group expressed itself, for example, along the lines of the Gustrow Confession of 1933. On the one hand, they averred, ‘We confess Jesus Christ as the perfect eternal Word of God....Therefore we reject the attempt to build the church of Jesus Christ upon another foundation than solely on the revelation of God as it is testified to in Holy Scripture.’ But then they stated in the same breath, ‘We confess that God has determined the fate of ethnicities, and we recognize God’s leading in the ethnocentric renewal of our fatherland’—referring to what was going on at that time! Thus, they continued, ‘We place ourselves in total love at the responsible service of the nation for which we are prepared to live and to die.’ With such an approach, the centrist church combined in its 1933 confessions a ‘joyful yes’ to the Nazi state in the political realm with the proclamation of grace in the

church’s realm.” (pp. 2-3)

Likewise, The United Methodist Church, in its teaching on life and abortion (Paragraph 161J, The Book of Discipline [2008]), speaks of “respect[ing] the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child” and yet “support[s] the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures.” That is, United Methodism attempts to join pro-life moral teaching with a pro-choice politics. So our church is striving for a centrist position.

But there are times—in Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, and in America during our time—when centrism in a church is not good enough.

[By the way, Eberhard Busch wrote the excellent book Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts (Fortress, 1976).]

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

**Lifewatch Advisory Board**

**Rev. Paul R. Crikelair**  
Pastor, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

**Mrs. Cindy Evans**  
Administrator/Outreach Coordinator  
Cottleville, Missouri

**Dr. Michael J. Gorman**  
Dean, Ecumenical Institute of  
Theology, Baltimore, Maryland

**Dr. Amy Laura Hall**  
Duke University

**Dr. Stanley Hauerwas**  
Duke University

**Ms. Myrna Howard**  
Alva, Florida

**Rev. Bill Hughes**  
Wesley Foundation  
University of Kentucky

**Dr. John E. Juergensmeyer**  
Attorney-at-Law  
Elgin, Illinois

**Rev. Harold Lewis**  
Pastor, Washington, D.C.

**Mr. John Lomperis**  
Somerville, Massachusetts

**Dr. Thomas C. Oden**  
Drew University

**Mr. Donald T. Sires**  
Treasurer  
O’Fallon, Missouri

**Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth**  
President, Lifewatch Editor  
Morehead City, North Carolina

**Don and Carla Thompson**  
Somerville, Tennessee

**Rev. Pat Tony**  
Pastor, Chatham, Virginia

**Mrs. Kim Turkington**  
Lexington, Kentucky

**Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright**  
Duke University

**Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker**  
Florida Episcopal Area

**Bishop William H. Willimon**  
Birmingham Episcopal Area

**Bishop William R. Cannon**  
(1916-1997)

**Dr. Albert C. Outler**  
(1908-1989)