

A NOTE TO THE LIFEWATCH COMMUNITY

Many, many thanks to you for your most recent financial support of the ministry of Lifewatch. Your generous giving, in response to our emergency request in September, is enabling Lifewatch to continue its witness for the Gospel of Life within The United Methodist Church. Your faithful response has renewed the resolve of Lifewatch to serve Christian truth in Christian love, with regard to abortion and life, within United Methodism. Again, our heartfelt thanks to you.

Lifewatch is also grateful for your responses to the 2010 Lifewatch Survey: Actions for Life by United Methodists. Of those who completed the survey, 42% knew that the 2008 General Conference had added, to The Book of Discipline's paragraph on abortion (Paragraph 161J), a statement which "encourage[s] the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion." Furthermore, 58% of the respondents reported that, as far as they knew, their local churches did nothing to communicate this information to their members. The survey revealed that most United Methodists, who participated in activities for life, did so individually rather than through a church program, group, or agency. (Lifewatch would still like to receive your completed survey. Simply go to www.lifewatch.org, and proceed.)

Please continue giving generously to the Lifewatch ministry. Our monthly expenses continue, and such expenses are especially heavy around the times that newsletters are written, printed, and mailed. Also, Lifewatch will need to be building a small reserve for participation in the 2012 General Conference, which will be here before we know it.

Lifewatch witnesses for life so that you can witness for life. Be encouraged, and be faithful!

In Christ,
Mrs. Cindy Evans, Administrator/Outreach
Coordinator
Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, President/Editor

WHY LIFEWATCH?

Every so often, every Christian ministry should pause for a bit of reflection on the nature and purpose of its work.

Lifewatch, as you probably know, has a mission statement. (That is not surprising. All Christian ministries in North America, it seems, have such statements.) Lifewatch's statement, in full, declares: "Out of obedience to Jesus Christ, the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (TUMAS [or Lifewatch]) will work to create in church and society esteem for human life at its most vulnerable, specifically for the unborn child and for the woman who contemplates abortion. Therefore, TUMAS's first goal is to win the hearts and minds of United Methodists to engage in abortion-prevention through theological, pastoral, and social emphases that support human life." To fulfill this mission, Lifewatch exists.

Lifewatch, of course, goes about its ministry in a particular institutional setting—generally in the Church, and specifically in The United Methodist Church.

Throughout the Church's history—from the apostolic era, to the present time, until the Kingdom comes in glory—the Church has a faith, a particular faith, to preserve, protect, and pass. Writing his final letter to Pastor Timothy, the Apostle Paul hints at this task: "Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit which dwells within us." (II Timothy 1:13-14, RSV, emphasis added)

The Church's faith, "the faith," is made up of two (2) components—dogma (or doctrine) and morals. These components are revealed in Scripture, confirmed by the Church's Tradition, reinforced by reason and experience, and preached and taught and practiced by the churches. The Church's nonnegotiable dogmas are located in the Bible and summarized by the creeds (The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed). The Church's nonnegotiable morals are located in Biblical material interpreted by the churches and their teachers through the ages.

Lifewatch believes, with the Church through the ages, in the God-given dignity of the human person,

including the unborn child. From the age of the apostles to modern and post-modern times, the dignity and humanity of the unborn child have been preached, taught, and protected by the Church. In other words, the dignity and humanity of the unborn child have been a part of the Church's faith—specifically, part of the Church's morals—from the beginning.

The United Methodist Church, of course, is gathered, called, and empowered by God to preserve, protect, and pass on this faith. On the doctrinal side of the faith, United Methodism has not only the Bible and the creeds, but also Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and his Sermons and The Articles of Religion and The Confession of Faith, to act as standards of the faith (The Book of Discipline [2008], Par. 102, p. 58). On the moral side of the faith, United Methodism has the General Rules and the Social Principles to act as guidelines for the faith.

But the Social Principles can be both a blessing and a problem. In the words of The Book of Discipline (2008), while the Social Principles are “not be to considered church law,” “[t]hey are a call to faithfulness and are intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit.” (Preface to the Social Principles, p. 97) The problem is that the Social Principles are written and edited by General Conference every four years, and therefore the Social Principles are quite open to the cultural currents of the times in which they are written.

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, the Sexual Revolution and the Women's Movement created great changes—some for the good and some not—in American society. Under the influence of the Sexual Revolution and the Women's Movement, Roe v. Wade was handed down by the United States Supreme Court. This US Supreme Court decision, of course, knocked down state abortion laws and established abortion on demand in American society. The pro-choice current, in certain elite quarters of American society, was so strong that The United Methodist Church also yielded to its force: the 1972 General Conference adopted a pro-choice Social Principle on abortion, and The United Methodist Church became a pro-choice church. Then and there, United Methodism surrendered or compromised or accommodated the Church's faith on the matter of abortion.

Hence, there was a need, a pressing need, for the ministry of Lifewatch. Lifewatch came into existence rather belatedly, in 1987, to witness to the humanity and dignity of the human person within The United Methodist Church. That was a witness that The United Methodist Church was failing to offer or was offering in a rather compromised fashion.

So from 1987 until now, Lifewatch has attempted to witness to the Gospel of Life within The United Methodist Church. All along the way, Lifewatch has sought to write and speak the truth, about the dignity of the human person, in love. Sometimes we have been faithful. Sometimes not. But that has been our mission.

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

Preaching: The Reverend Dr. Edwin King
Veteran Civil Rights Activist
Professor of Sociology and Medical Ethics
University of Mississippi Medical Center

THE ANNUAL LIFEWATCH BOARD MEETING (3:00 p.m.)

Both Events on January 24, 2011 (Monday) at
The United Methodist Building
100 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC

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

Lifewatch's mission is not to score points against pro-choice elements within The United Methodist Church. Lifewatch's goal is not to win in legislative or literary, or theological or moral, battles. (Though it should be humbly noted that, because of the grace of God, the Social Principle on abortion, now found at Paragraph 161J, has become much more pro-life since 1972.) Lifewatch's task is to help the faith of United Methodism become more complete, more faithful.

Thank you for being a part of the ongoing ministry and mission of Lifewatch—which involves doctrine and morals, and truth and love—within The United Methodist Church. Without you, Lifewatch and its witness would not be possible. With you, Lifewatch and its witness can persevere through it all. (Paul T. Stallsworth) ♥

WHY STAY?

Every year or so, this editor receives a provocative letter or email that asks, “How do you, a pastor committed to the dignity of the human person, remain in The United Methodist Church?” Or, “How do you keep up the good fight without changing denominations?”

However the question is phrased, it is worthy of consideration and response. Below is an attempted answer to this very good question. (Please forgive the excessive use of first-person pronouns.)

I am and remain a United Methodist, because God has given me the gracious gift of Holy Baptism through The United Methodist Church. God's gift of baptism was certainly not earned by my family or by me. It was a grand gift from God. But this great gift comes with the demanding task of my living out baptismal grace in the Church and in the world. To be more specific, the God-given gift of Holy Baptism generates my response of living according to the vows of The Baptismal Covenant.

(Note: Baptism, not ordination, is fundamental to the identity of the clergy of the Church. As Bishop Kenneth Carder has written, “Ordination does not

supersede baptism. Rather, it derives from baptism.” [“It All Begins with Baptism,” *Divinity*, Fall 2010, p. 7])

Entering The Baptismal Covenant and regularly reaffirming The Baptismal Covenant, I promise to:

- I. “renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of [my] sin;”
- II. “accept the freedom and power God gives [me] to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves;”
- III. “confess Jesus Christ as [my] Savior, put [my] whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as [my] Lord, in union with the [C]hurch which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races;”
- IV. “remain [a] faithful member of Christ’s holy [C]hurch and serve as Christ’s representative in the world;”
- V. “be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church, and do all in [my] power to strengthen its ministries;” and
- VI. “faithfully participate in [this congregation’s] ministries by [my] prayers, [my] presence, [my] gifts, [my] service, and [my] witness.” (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, pp. 34 and 38, edited)

Those are my promises, which are made before God and the People of God. Only with God’s help can I attempt to live out those promises in The United Methodist Church. Those same promises are made by every other member, and every other minister, in our denomination.

As history would have it, The United Methodist Church is not yet with the Church historic-catholic on the matter of abortion. In other words, United Methodism is officially pro-choice, while the Church historic-universal is emphatically pro-life. Does that give pro-life United Methodists a get-out-of-the-denomination-free card to leave the church? Does having to swim against the pro-choice stream in The United Methodist Church give those of us swimming in that direction permission to leave the church? The answer is No. Absolutely not. If pro-life United Methodists leave the church, because we encounter some neglect or opposition or argument, because of our commitment to the dignity of the human person, we are abandoning The United Methodist Church exactly when she needs us most.

Our duty, our privilege, is to stay in The United Methodist Church and be faithful in this church to The Baptismal Vows—and that includes offering witness to the Gospel of Life and contending against abortion. The baptismal vows challenge us—they charge us!—to advance the Gospel of Life, and to fight the Culture of Death, in The United Methodist Church.

In The Baptismal Covenant, we are together. Here we stand—for the dignity of the human person, and in The United Methodist Church. We can do no other. (Paul T. Stallsworth) ♥

THE MANHATTAN DECLARATION ON LIFE

The Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience is a 4,700-word statement on theological, moral, and political matters. It is written from the standpoint of the universal Church’s faith as transmitted through the ages, and its witness combines Biblical truths, Church-historical realities, and moral-political reasoning. The Manhattan Declaration is offered to all American Christians, and to all people of good will, for their consideration. It addresses three of the most controversial, contemporary topics in American public life—human life, traditional marriage, and religious liberty. Released on November 20, 2009 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, The Manhattan Declaration has been affirmed by over 500,000 signatories.

*The article that follows is a version of Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth’s speech at a public discussion of The Manhattan Declaration, which was sponsored by the Carteret County Ministerial Association and held at Carteret Community College, in Morehead City, NC, on May 27, 2010. This article appeared first in the *Carteret County News-Times* (July 18, 2010). You are invited and encouraged to read *The Manhattan Declaration* in full and to sign it; simply go to www.manhattandeclaration.org. (PTS)*

In American society today, human life is most degraded by the procedure known as abortion. And yet, when we mention abortion in public, we are afraid we will see some of our listeners roll their eyes, or shake their heads, in disapproval. We are also afraid we will hear this response: “We have already debated everything about abortion there is to debate.” Over the years, abortion has indeed been debated, in the media and in the political arena, quite often. But how often has it been discussed, in public, at the more local level? Not often, I would venture.

CONTEXT

The first contemporary matter addressed at length by The Manhattan Declaration is human life and abortion. The declaration puts this matter in historical, political, and legal context.

In the years leading up to 1973, American society had reached a basic consensus on abortion: state laws, more or less, restricted abortion. The states, just before 1973, were routinely turning back legislative attempts to legalize abortion; so the consensus held. But on January 22, 1973 this national consensus on abortion was shattered. On that day, the United States Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision knocked down all state abortion laws and made abortion available on demand throughout the 50 states of the United States.

In 1973, there was one institution in American public life that stood against *Roe v. Wade* and against abortion on demand: the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. All the other major institutions in our society—public education, colleges and universities,

the movie and music industries, prestige journalism, the mainline Protestant denominations, and so on—favored Roe. Even the Southern Baptist Convention backed abortion rights.

Since 1973 the abortion debate, much to the chagrin of The New York Times, has continued. Since 1973 the American people have become increasingly pro-life. Just over a year ago, opinion polls revealed that more Americans now identify themselves as “pro-life” than identify themselves as “pro-choice.”

THE DECLARATION ON LIFE

Today in American society, the federal government is the greatest ally and advocate of the pro-choice position. President Obama and his Administration, while speaking about reducing the need for abortion, are committed to keeping abortion legal and available. The US House of Representatives and the US Senate have, in their final version of the healthcare reform bill, refused to include legislative provisions that would have protected unborn children from federally funded abortion. The US Supreme Court has continued to understand elective abortion as a constitutional right, with few restrictions. Most Democrats and not a few Republicans, at the federal level, have collaborated in advancing a pro-choice agenda.

Those supporting the pro-choice position have helped to create what John Paul II called “the Culture of Death.” The Culture of Death renders some human beings—especially the weak, “imperfect, immature or inconvenient”—to be “discardable” (quoted words from The Manhattan Declaration or MD). Abortion is ground zero of the Culture of Death, but that culture now extends far beyond abortion. The “slippery slope,” which some feared would be created by abortion, has become a reality. Many human lives are now at risk. “[H]uman embryo-destructive research and its public funding are promoted in the name of science” (MD) and compassion. There is “an increasingly powerful movement to promote assisted suicide and ‘voluntary’ euthanasia...” (MD). Eugenics, advanced in Europe last century under the doctrine of *lebensunwertes Leben* (that is, “life unworthy of life”), is advanced in America now under the doctrines of “‘liberty,’ ‘autonomy,’ ... ‘choice’” (MD) and compassion.

In frontally challenging the moral truth of the dignity of the human person, abortion has opened wider the door to massive human indignities around the world. “Genocide,” “ethnic cleansing,” the disinterest in noncombatant victims of war, “the neglect and abuse of children, the exploitation of vulnerable laborers, the sexual trafficking of girls and young women, the abandonment of the aged, racial oppression and discrimination, the persecution of believers of all faiths, and the failure to take steps necessary to halt the spread of preventable diseases like AIDS” (MD) are made possible by a diminished sense of the dignity of the human person. This diminishment begins with abortion.

OUR TASK

So what are supporters of The Manhattan Declaration to do about this Culture of Death at home and abroad? We begin, at ground zero, with abortion. In the words of The Manhattan Declaration, “[w]e will be united and untiring in our efforts to roll back the license to kill that began with the abandonment of the unborn to abortion. We will work...to bring assistance, comfort, and care to pregnant women in need and to those who have been victimized by abortion... Our message is, and ever shall be, that the just, human, and truly Christian answer to problem pregnancies is for all of us to love and care for mother and child alike.”

At the same time, we will call on the government to exercise its first duty: “to protect the weak and the vulnerable...” (MD) The Bible, reinforced by reason, demands that the People of God defend those who have no defense and speak for those who have no voice. So we must defend and speak for the unborn child, the disabled girl, and the elderly man. The Manhattan Declaration boldly challenges: “We must be willing to defend, even at risk and cost to ourselves and our institutions, the lives of” (MD) the vulnerable, no matter what their ages, no matter what their circumstances.♥

WHY A PHYSICIAN BECAME AN ABORTIONIST

Dr. George Tiller, the notorious late-term abortionist, was murdered in a Wichita, KS church on May 31, 2009. On June 2 of that year, Lifewatch denounced the murder, and the murderer, of Dr. Tiller. Lifewatch still stands by that earlier statement.

The June 7 edition of The Kansas City Star carried a front-page, above-the-fold article entitled “The Complex Life of George Tiller.” Deep in the article is an explanation of why Dr. Tiller entered the abortion industry.

After graduating from college, medical school, and flight surgeon school, George Tiller experienced a horrible family tragedy. “In 1970, his father, mother, sister, and brother-in-law were killed in a plane crash while on their way to a convention in British Columbia. Tiller’s father was flying the turboprop when it crashed into a mountain slope east of Yellowstone National Park.

“[Soon thereafter George] Tiller received a humanitarian discharge from the Navy and returned to Wichita to take care of his ailing grandmother and his deceased sister’s 1-year-old son. He decided to close down his father’s [medical] clinic and begin a career as a dermatologist.

“But after he began seeing some of his father’s patients, he decided he was needed because there weren’t enough doctors in the area to absorb them all. So he made plans to instead phase out his father’s practice over three years [and not immediately].

“It was then that he learned his father had

performed illegal abortions, a decision prompted by guilt over the death of a woman he had refused to help.

“Dad had suggested that he had done some terminations of pregnancy back in the ‘50s and ‘60s,’ he [George Tiller] said. ‘Then when I got the practice... I began asking these women if my dad had done an abortion for them. And I find out that he did more than one or two or a few.’

“Tiller kept his father’s practice open. In 1973—not long after the US Supreme Court issued its Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion—he performed his first procedures at Wesley Medical Center [in Wichita]...

“He realized that he could perform abortions cheaper than the hospital’s \$1,000 fee, so he began offering private procedures at his clinic for \$250. By 1985, he had phased out much of his family practice to focus on abortion.

“When Tiller began performing more complicated late-term abortions in the mid-1980s, his clinic drew patients from across the country and abroad. Before long, he had gained a national reputation for performing elective abortions through the second trimester, up to about 26 weeks and four days into a 40-week pregnancy. He would perform them beyond that if the fetus had a severe abnormality—well past the point at which a fetus is considered capable of surviving outside the womb...

“According to Kansas Department of Health and Environment statistics, 323 abortions in the state were reported to have been performed at 22 weeks or later in 2008, most if not all of them at Tiller’s clinic. Of those, 192 were determined to be viable, and the reason for the abortion was listed as the woman’s health.”

(There are a couple of connections to United Methodism in all of this. Wesley Medical Center, before 1985, was a Methodist hospital. In addition, the funeral service for Dr. Tiller was held at College Hill United Methodist Church in Wichita, KS.)

Truly, this is an instance of the sins of a father being visited upon a son. May God have mercy on Dr. Tiller’s soul and on all of us. (Paul T. Stallsworth)♥

THE WAR AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS

“Maafa 21: Black Genocide in 21st Century America” is a powerful, informative, 138-minute documentary on the war waged against blacks in America over the generations. (The DVD is available from amazon.com for \$17.95.) Published by Life Dynamics Incorporated, this film covers the three main battles in the centuries-long war against African Americans: slavery, eugenics, and abortion. “Maafa 21” makes clear that slavery, eugenics, and abortion attacked, and attack, blacks in America.

This documentary film is ideal for showing and discussing in a local church. Last summer it was

played, over three Sunday evenings, at St. Peter’s United Methodist Church in Morehead City, NC. It generated compelling conversation. During one of the discussions, one participant protested aloud, “I cannot believe that my college nursing instructors did not teach us the whole story, the whole truth, about Margaret Sanger.” Sure, this documentary is not for everyone. Certainly, it covers many sordid, disgusting details. But it is well worth the cost and effort.

“Maafa 21” brings to mind that The United Methodist Church has adopted a resolution on eugenics. “Repentance for Support of Eugenics” (3185) appears in The Book of Resolutions (2008, pp. 340-346). That resolution and its claims are reviewed below.

Our church’s resolution begins: “Eugenics, the belief that certain ‘genetic’ traits are good and others bad, is associated in the public mind mostly with the extreme eugenics policies of Adolf Hitler, which ultimately led to the Holocaust. The study of eugenics did not begin with Hitler or his German scientists, but rather was first promoted by Sir Francis Galton, in England. Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, expanded on Darwin’s theories and applied them to the human population...”

The resolution continues: “Galton...described Africans and Native Americans in derogatory terms making it clear which group he thought was superior. Francis Galton, the founder of the Eugenics Society, spoke hopefully about persuading people with desirable genes to marry and have large families...”

“Built into the idea of natural selection is a competition between the strong and the weak, between the fit and the unfit. The eugenicists believed that this mechanism was thwarted in the human race by charity, by people and churches who fed the poor and the weak so that they survived, thrived, and reproduced.”

EUGENICS AND THE CHURCHES

The resolution goes on: “Ironically, as the Eugenics Movement came to the United States, the church, especially the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Episcopalians, embraced it.

“Methodist churches around the country promoted the American Eugenics Society ‘Fitter Family Contests’ wherein the fittest families were invariably fair skinned and well off. Methodist bishops endorsed one of the first books circulated to the US churches promoting eugenics.”

Interestingly, both progressive and conservative leaders in the church—including both a founder of the Methodist Federation for Social Service and a General Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals—supported eugenics.

“Methodists were active on the planning committees of the Race Betterment Conferences held in 1914 and 1915. In the 1910s, Methodist churches hosted forums in their churches to discuss eugenics. In

the 1920s many Methodist preachers submitted their eugenics sermons to contests hosted by the American Eugenics Society... The laity of the church also took up the cause of eugenics. In 1929, the Methodist Review published the sermon 'Eugenics: A Lay Sermon' by George Huntington Donaldson. In the sermon, Donaldson argues, 'the strongest and the best are selected for the task of propagating the likeness of God and carrying on his work of improving the race.'

"Both the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South promoted eugenics. Most of the time, church advocates of eugenics supported positive eugenics—essentially careful selection of mates. Nevertheless, sterilization became an acceptable kind of eugenics along with marriage laws limiting marriage between whites and nonwhites. Some annual conferences supported such laws, and a few opposed them...

"State-sponsored eugenics reach an abhorrent extreme in the Nazi extermination programs of the 1930s and 1940s. Initially directed at people with similar health or social problems as were targeted by the US sterilization laws, these were eventually expanded to cover entire populations—Jews, Gypsies, Poles—judged by the Nazi regime to represent 'worthless lives' (lebensunwerte Leben). While certain overt state policies such as the use of gas chambers have not been used recently, 'ethnic cleansing' has emerged in several countries—including Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and Sudan—and shows that eugenic horrors have not disappeared..."

TOWARD REPENTANCE

After covering the new, more biotechnological forms of eugenics (in which "[p]arents, not the state, are the new eugenicists"), the resolution states: "The overt racism of the eugenic campaigns of the last century is no longer acceptable in today's civic square or pulpits, but the impetus toward eugenics remains. Controlling the reproduction of the social body and individual bodies, controlling the quality and quantity of the next generation in order to form a more perfect union—these impulses remain part of culture. The church needs to remind its members that as Christians are called to stand apart from culture and rejoice that our identity comes from being 'adopted' by Christ and where we are all welcomed as children of God regardless of our genetic makeup. Matthew, in the opening of his Gospel (1:1-16) reminds us that in Jesus' earthly family were not just Jews, but also four Gentile women. As Christians, we are not called because of our genetic identity; we are not called to reengineer our bodies or those of our children, or destroy those different from us, but rather to follow Christ."

Then, the conclusion: "The United Methodist General Conference formally apologizes for Methodist leaders and Methodist bodies who in the past supported eugenics as sound science and sound theology. We lament the ways eugenics was used to justify the

sterilization of persons deemed less worthy. We lament that Methodist support of eugenics policies was used to keep persons of different races from marrying and forming legally recognized families. We are especially grieved that the politics of eugenics led to the extermination of millions of people by the Nazi government and continues today as 'ethnic cleansing' around the world."

"Ethnic cleansing" is occurring even in the United States today—through the horrendously high abortion rates in African American communities, thanks to so many Planned Parenthood clinics located in inner-city neighborhoods.

Interestingly, The United Methodist Church has repented for participation not only in racism and slavery but also in the eugenics movement. One day, under God's providence, our church will repent for its support of abortion rights and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice—both of which are taking a devastating toll on the African American community in America.

By obtaining and watching "Maafa 21," you can see and hear for yourself the history of the war against African Americans in America. It is a history you will never forget. (Paul T. Stallsworth)♥

LETTERS TO LIFEWATCH

11 September 2010

Paul, I am teaching an advanced preaching class for the Duke Course of Study. The topic is "Calendar and Crisis"—how to preach when sudden crisis hits a community or congregation, and how to preach on ongoing topics of social importance. May I have permission to reproduce the statement you proposed in the September [2010] issue of Lifewatch for an imaginary congregation ["Congregational Conflict over Abortion," p. 1]? I want to use it as an example of how one can show openness at the same time one is forthright. Thanks!

—The Reverend Dr. F. Belton Joyner, Jr./Bahama, NC

20 September 2010

Dear Paul,
Just a note to say how grateful I am for your work on the 09/01/10 issue of Lifewatch. It was filled with meaty, substantive writing and specific details for action, and I particularly enjoyed the letter from your congregation regarding the "pay[ment] in full and protest in public." This letter captures the utter frivolity of a church gone haywire. Thank you for publishing it. This letter goes hand in glove with the pro-life movement, as we all know that we battle a theological problem and a Christological identity crisis. The person, nature, and work of Jesus Christ, His Lordship, Kingship, and Headship over His Church is the center of the debate. Either the full revelation of God is found fully in Jesus,

and the canon is closed—or God is revealing new truth, and we are all perplexed in the discovery of it and not aware of who has the final authority to interpret it. I believe the former and know that true orthodoxy testifies to the flesh, blood, and Holy Spirit who hammered out our creeds.

In Jesus,
The Reverend Bill Hughes, Director/University of Kentucky Wesley Foundation/<billyhughes1@gmail.com>

21 September 2010

Dear Lifewatch:

I read with care your Lifewatch dated 9/1/10. Please list me, as a bishop of The United Methodist Church and as a lover of Jesus, on your side. I am now retired and heading toward my 99th year.

Quote me, if you desire. I believe every unborn child is a miracle of God's creativity and, like every other human being, is precious in the sight of God, and so in my sight.

All mothers have my prayerful support. I believe in the power of prayer.

Sincerely in Christ, my personal Savior,
Bishop Mack B. Stokes
13597 Perdido Kay Drive #16C
Pensacola, FL 32507

Bishop Stokes is very kind to write and express support for Lifewatch. His personal witness for life is elegant and powerful. Thanks be to God for bishops, such as Bp. Stokes, who are willing to step up and witness to Christian truth on life and abortion! (PTS)♥

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT

- Remember to check out the Lifewatch website at www.lifewatch.org. If you are interested in looking over back issues of Lifewatch—from September 1, 1997 to June 1, 2010—simply click on “Newsletters.” Thanks for looking into our website.
- On August 16, 2010, Dr. John M. Swomley, Jr.—a professor, and then professor emeritus, of Christian social ethics at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO—died. For decades, Dr. Swomley was a United Methodist minister active in the public square. He led the National Campaign against Universal Military Conscription. He was national secretary of the Fellowship for Reconciliation. He served as chair of the Church-State Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union. He marched in the Civil Rights Movement. He advanced “liberation ethics and liberation theology,” as the Kansas City Star (08/20/10) put it.

Wrote Mr. Thomas C. Fox in the National Catholic Reporter (08/22/10) about Dr. Swomley: “His actions on behalf of the weak, vulnerable and needy, calling for their rights as human beings, helping them in their causes on behalf of freedom of expression and action, were always timely and thoughtfully precise.” Except that Dr. Swomley favored the legal right of people to take the lives of defenseless, voiceless unborn children. Likewise, Dr. Swomley favored pacifism and peacemaking, while he remained silent about the “systematic violence” that is now practiced against millions of unborn children and their mothers in the United States and in the world. Similarly, Dr. Swomley proudly pushed a politics dedicated to furthering the welfare of the whole community, while he supported

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

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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.

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Lifewatch
Taskforce of
United Methodists on
Abortion and Sexuality

P.O. Box 306, Cottleville MO 63338

12/01/10

* Why a physician became an abortionist

* The war against African Americans

* Departed: Dr. John M. Swomley, Jr.

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the strong (with surgical instruments) assaulting the weak in the womb.

When it came to political matters related to abortion, Dr. Swomley was forever writing about a strict (and perhaps anti-Catholic) separation of Church and State. It is odd that John Swomley—as a United Methodist minister, a St. Paul School of Theology professor, and a Christian social ethicist—spoke in the public square. That is, John Swomley was a man of the church speaking in the public arena. But then he seemed forever trying to deny other church-connected people the same right to speak in public—especially if they happened to be Catholic, particularly if they happened to speak against abortion and for the dignity of the human person.

May God’s mercy be sufficient for John M. Swomley, Jr.— now and forever.

• The Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church adopted four (4) goals on which to work before its next meeting in March 2011. The first goal is entitled “The Covenant.” It reads: “We seek to write a covenant that would help both the General Conference and the whole church move toward becoming more fully a worldwide church. We envision this would include changes in attitude, in priorities, and in how we relate to one another. It would include a theological and missional rationale for our ecclesiology. It would help us bring the spirit of worship and prayer to any legislation that is proposed. It would celebrate the ministries of each region of the church in addition to the legislative work of the General Conference.” (emphasis added) As this United Methodist pastor noted to the Study Committee back in November 2009 (see “Church First” in Lifewatch [December 2009], the committee’s first task should be dealing with ecclesiology (i.e., doctrine of the Church). Therefore, Lifewatch encourages the

Study Committee and its chair (Bishop Scott Jones) to develop a good, strong covenant that is heavy with solid doctrine about the nature and mission of the Church.

• News & Ideas, which is maintained by Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School, posts a daily list of relevant articles on its Call & Response blog. On September 9, 2010, it headlined a linked article in this way: “Faith influences views on abortion more than it shapes attitudes on social justice.” This United Methodist pastor had always thought that abortion has to do with social justice—or social injustice.

• The only laws that can be considered just “are those laws that safeguard the sacredness of human life and reject the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and unrestrained genetic experiments (and) those laws that respect the dignity of marriage between one man and one woman.”

—Pope Benedict XVI, Weekly Audience, February 16, 2010

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

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