



# UMA Action

## BRIEFING

June 2002

A newsletter for United Methodists working for Scripture-based reform in our denomination. Circulation: 315,000

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## Two UM Bishops Undermine the Christian Faith They Are Pledged to Defend

An event called "Kairos CoMotion" attracted over 300 people, mostly United Methodists, to Madison, Wisconsin, in February 2002. Its stated objective was to combat "a growing exclusiveness in The United Methodist Church." Its special focus was to attack United Methodism's stand for Christian sexual morality and against homosexual practice.

Featured speakers included United Methodist Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader of Wisconsin, retired UM Bishop Judy Craig, and retired Episcopal Bishop Jack Spong. Other presenters included Larry Pickens, a member of the UM Judicial Council (the church's highest court); Susan Laurie, a self-

identified lesbian and staff member of the "Reconciling Ministries Network;" and Greg Dell, a Chicago UM pastor and prominent pro-homosexuality advocate.

*The Book of Discipline* requires all United Methodist Bishops "to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church" and "to guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically." UM doctrine includes the Articles of Religion, which strongly affirm the traditional Christian faith. The Book of Discipline affirms the sanc-

tity of the marriage covenant, requires "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness" for all UM clergy, declares that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching," and prohibits "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" from serving as UM clergy. See *The Book of Discipline*, pars. 45, 103, 161C, 161G, 304, 404, and 414.

However, Bishop Rader continued on page 2



Bishop Sharon Rader

UMNS photo by Tom McAnally

**Action:** Remind Bishop Sharon Rader, politely and graciously, that she pledged to uphold our church's Discipline and doctrine, including the historic Christian faith and the authority of Scripture. Address: 750 Windsor Street, Suite #303, Sun Prairie, WI 53590. Fax: 608-837-0281. E-mail: sZRader@aol.com. (If you contact Bishop Rader, please send a copy of your comments to UMAction as well at cregner@ird-renew.org. or fax 202-969-8429 Thank you! Before writing her or other United Methodist officials, please pray for guidance to communicate Christ's love for His church, and your love for our church, in a winsome and loving manner that will be faithful, effective, and persuasive.

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urged the audience to assert their own identities against all authorities, secular and religious. She complained, "We've been warned not to challenge our government or its unjust economy or its military policies....We've been warned not to talk openly about sexuality. We've been warned not to say that we believe *The Book of Discipline* is sometimes incompatible with Christian teaching. We've been warned not to say that we are gay or lesbian."


Imploring her hearers to defy these warnings, Bishop Rader quoted Jose Hobday, a New Age mystic and one-time teacher at the University of Creation Spirituality, to the effect that everyone must "take a step into yourself" and "take a step into mystery."

Bishop Craig implored the audience to live "a faith appropriate to our time," setting aside the ancient creeds. "Contending with heresy is what helps keep orthodoxy alive," she asserted. "We are saying of the tradition and orthodoxy that it is the heresy." Denying the Christian belief that God is permanent and unchanging, she said she prefers to live in "a tradition that is new every day."

Bishop Craig explained her personal creed: "I do believe Scripture reveals essential knowledge of the God of the universe, and I do believe the work of Jesus is critical to the work of my life. Now let's see, what particular words have I left out? Salvation, propitiation, atonement. I'm working on those words ... maybe someday. I didn't

talk about final authority...."

Attacking the authority of the traditional Christian faith was a common theme throughout Kairos CoMotion. During a workshop on homosexuality, retired United Methodist pastor John Kruse alluded to the irony that many leaders of this conference were on church payrolls: "The church is one of the only institutions that pays people to subvert it."

Although Kairos CoMotion was advertised as a non-denominational Christian event, much of the worship and some of the program material appeared to be a mixture of religions. The conference manual quoted widely from Eastern spirituality and offered blessings for food from the Zen, Chinook, and Christian traditions. 

## UM Lobby Agency Officials Attack Critics

The UM General Board of Church and Society's General Secretary, Jim Winkler, attacked the lobby agency's critics as "fundamentalists" in his speech to the agency's Directors at their March 2002 meeting near Washington, DC.

Winkler denounced the September 11 terrorism as "one of the most despicable and fanatical acts in American history," but then alleged that this terrorism was a direct result of a "heresy" which he called "fundamentalism."

Winkler denounced fundamentalism in "all its forms." He specifically applied his broad-brush "fundamentalist" label to the terrorists of September 11, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's policies toward the Palestinians, Hindu violence against Muslims in India, and the "continuing threat to mainline Protestantism here" from evangelical renewal movements.

Winkler's attack echoed the growing effort by some in the news media to label all orthodox Christians as "fundamentalists."

Winkler defended the Board's October 2001 statement opposing the war on terrorism. *UMAction* and other United Methodist reform groups criticized that statement, which ignored language in the UM Social Principles acknowledging that most Christians believe war is justified in some situations.

"We heard from many people" as a result of that statement, Winkler said. Though he said the response from the public had been both supportive and critical, the criticism was clearly in mind as he bemoaned the "threat" to mainline Protestantism.

The Board's President, Bishop Clifton Ives of West Virginia, also seemed to be responding to criticism of the Board's opposition to the war on terrorism. "Some will

seek to distort what we do," Ives complained. "It happened at the last Board meeting. Some waited eagerly to distort our efforts," he claimed.

Ives said, "Some have a hard time seeing us. Sometimes the Board feels unheard." He warned of "forces at work to throw Church and Society out of The United Methodist Church because we see things others don't see." He

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Jim Winkler is the General Secretary of the Board of Church and Society

UMNS photo by Yousef Allan

UMINS photo by Lamy Hollon



Bishop Ives is the president of the Board of Church and Society


was referring to UMAction's call to abolish the Board of Church and Society and create a new UM social witness reflecting the informed consciences of UMC members.

**Action:** Check out the UM Board of Church and Society's website to stay updated on its political lobbying activities: [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org). Ask your church's Administrative Council and your Annual Conference to support abolishing the Board of Church and Society and restoring a responsible United Methodist social witness.

Winkler and Ives proposed a renewed emphasis on the Social Principles of the denomination, which the Board often claims as the basis for its political pronouncements and lobbying. Winkler proposed a special church-wide commission to organize a commemoration of the church's social creed, whose 100th anniversary will be in 2008.

Winkler also listed some of the Board's political goals, including campaign finance reform, restoring U.S. funding for international

birth control services, opposing oil exploration in the Arctic, opposing increased U.S. defense spending, and increasing welfare programs for children.

The Board approved a \$5,000 grant to Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a small group of liberal UMs who oppose any U.S. anti-missile defense system. Another \$5,000 grant went to the Institute for Peace and Justice, another liberal organization that claims to confront the "realities of war, racism, and global economic injustice." 

## Help Us Reach A Million Homes!

Yes, I (we) want to help UMAction inform one million United Methodists and their families about the urgent need for church reform and faithfulness. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

\$50       \$75       \$100       Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send *UMAction Briefing* to the United Methodists on the enclosed list of names and addresses.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and Mail to: UMAction c/o IRD  
1110 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1180  
Washington, DC 20005

If you are receiving duplicates of *UMAction Briefing*, please send us your address labels.

BM0202

## United Methodists Disagree With Bishops On Missile Defense

**A**t a meeting of the Association for Church Renewal (ACR), the Chairman of United Methodist Action assured a White House official that most United Methodists do not agree with their Council of Bishops' opposition to a missile defense system for the United States.

David Stanley, who chairs the UMAction Committee of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, presented a stack of petitions to Tim Goeglein, Special Assistant to the President. The petitions, signed by UMAction supporters, assured President Bush that the Council of Bishops did not speak for them on missile defense.

The ACR is a coalition of evangelical renewal organizations within mainline Protestant churches. ACR executives meet twice a year to share information and ideas.

Last year the United Methodist Council of Bishops voted unanimously to oppose President

Bush's initiative to develop and deploy a system to defend the United States and other nations against missile attack.

As Stanley told Goeglein, the Bishops' vote was apparently conducted with little debate or discussion, and with little or no advice from persons knowledgeable about the issues involved in missile defense.

"It remains unclear how keeping the United States permanently defenseless against a missile attack, whether launched deliberately or accidentally, fits within the divine calling of a Christian Bishop," Stanley said.

"The events of September 11 reminded us even more dramatically of the divinely ordained responsibility of our government and all governments to defend their peoples in a fallen world," Stanley told Goeglein.

"Christians can and do disagree about the specifics of national defense," Stanley said. "But I believe the vast majority of United


Methodists disagree with our Council of Bishops when they declare in the name of our church that our nation should not be defended from a potentially disastrous attack that would exceed even the horror of September 11."

Stanley told Goeglein that UM Bishops and other officials will make political statements in the name of The United Methodist Church.

"You can be sure that when they do, they never speak for all United Methodists. And typically, they do not speak for the vast majority of United Methodists," Stanley assured him.

"We feel blessed that the President is a member of our denomination," Stanley concluded.

Goeglein met with the ACR leaders in Washington and listened to their concerns.

ACR members include the IRD, Good News (United Methodist), Confessing Movement (United Methodist), Presbyterian Layman, Presbyterians Pro-Life, American Anglican Council, Biblical Witness Fellowship (United Church of Christ), Disciple Renewal, American Baptist Evangelicals, and several Lutheran renewal organizations. 



David Stanley presents UMAction petitions to White House official Tim Goeglein.

**Action:** Join Christians from other ACR renewal groups at the CONFESSING THE FAITH Conference in Indianapolis on October 24-26, 2002. For more information, contact UMAction at 202-969-8430. Or you can also view a flyer about the conference at [www.ird-renew.org](http://www.ird-renew.org).

**Action:** If you would like to sign the petition expressing your disagreement with the United Methodist Bishops about missile defense, e-mail UMAction at [cregner@ird-renew.org](mailto:cregner@ird-renew.org) or phone 202-969-8430.

## Good News! UM Pro-life Group Defends Unborn Children

**L**ifewatch, United Methodism's unofficial pro-life network, held its annual worship service in Washington, DC on the 29th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade court decision that legalized abortion on demand.

Lifewatch leader Paul Stallsworth, a UM pastor, reminded United Methodists that we are "called to be saints together" by joining with the vast majority of Christian churches across two millennia who have defended the sanctity of all human life. Lifewatch is the short name of the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality.

The Lifewatch service was held in the chapel of the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill, across from the Supreme Court. The building is owned by and houses the UM Board of

Church and Society, which routinely defends abortion on demand – even though The United Methodist Church opposes partial-birth abortion and abortions for birth control and gender selection (The Book of Discipline, par. 161J).

Several Board of Church and Society staffers, including General Secretary Jim Winkler, attended the Lifewatch service. BCS employees have usually ignored the annual service, even though it is only an elevator ride away from their offices.

"Bishops, General Church executives, thousands of pastors, and millions of laity are quiet about abortion," Stallsworth said. "As millions of unborn children are lost to abortion and their mothers are damaged in countless ways, most United Methodists remain quiet about it."

Stallsworth likened The United Methodist Church to the ancient church at Corinth, as described in the Book of Acts. Some Corinthian Christians followed Paul, while others followed Peter or Apollos. They were treating the church "like a store," following their own "choice according to their own preferences."

Stallsworth said Saint Paul reminded the Corinthians that the church of Jesus Christ is not about exercising "choice" but being "consecrated together,...blameless together,...holy together."

"Through the ages, the Church, made up of those 'called to be saints together,' has always included respect and protection for the life of each human being," Stallsworth said. "For nearly 2,000 years, the Church has taught that the unborn child and mother are human beings created by God, in God's image."

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society, along with the United Methodist Women's Division, belongs to the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, which defends the legality of abortion under all circumstances. ☒

## SPECIAL ACTION

Help your local church elect a pro-reform Lay Member of your 2003 Annual Conference -- more than one, if your church elects more than one Lay Member. Help elect a pro-reform Alternate too. Please act now. Key points:

1. The 2003 Annual Conference will elect the delegates to the vitally important 2004 General Conference.
2. Talk with pro-reform friends. Select and work for a good candidate for each position. Consider and pray: are YOU willing and able to serve as a Lay Member?
3. Find out who is on your local church Nominations Committee, and get the date of your annual Charge Conference (usually in the Fall).
4. This Summer, talk with your Pastor and the Nominations Committee members and recommend your candidate. Plan for several pro-reform friends to do the same. Do not delay; Nominations Committees usually discuss nominations in the Summer or very early Fall, before the charge conference.
5. If the Nominations Committee does not nominate your candidate, consider going to the Charge Conference, nominate your candidate (you have the right to make nominations from the floor), and request a written ballot.

To return the UMC to Christian faithfulness and accountability, many more pro-reform Lay Members of each Annual Conference are urgently needed.

*UM Action Briefing is the quarterly newsletter of the United Methodist committee of the ecumenical **Institute on Religion and Democracy**. Mark Tooley, Editor. IRD was founded in 1981 to promote reform of America's mainline churches, with a special focus on their political activities. For more information call, write, or e-mail us. We are a 501 (c) (3) organization. Contributions to IRD and UMAAction are tax-deductible.*

# UMAction

## BRIEFING

June 2002

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Don't Leave Our Church!  
Stay and Work for Reform!

† We tell you the painful truth about what has gone wrong with The United Methodist Church: unfaithfulness and far-left partisan politics by too many high church officials. We don't enjoy bringing you bad news, but we must tell the truth.

† The good news is the growing movement to restore Scriptural faithfulness in our church. More and more United Methodists are working together for reform and renewal.

† Don't leave! Our great Methodist heritage is too valuable to be abandoned. Join with us to help The United Methodist Church return to its Wesleyan roots as a growing, evangelical, Christian church living Christ's Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Do You Agree?

Please express your support for the statement below by clipping your copy and signing it. Ask other United Methodists to sign; and send it to *UMAction, 1110 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1180, Washington, DC 20005.*

**W**e believe, as stated in Romans 13, that all governments have a divinely ordained responsibility to defend their people. We believe our United Methodist Church should affirm this Scriptural duty.

**S**ome United Methodist officials and agencies, including the Board of Church and Society, oppose the U.S. war against terrorism. We disagree with them, and they do not speak for us.

**W**e support our government's legitimate efforts to defeat terrorism around the world. We oppose any spending of United Methodist members' contributions for church agencies that oppose the war on terrorism.

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## Action:

Read and use the Institute on Religion and Democracy's "Straight Answers to Moral Confusion." Get it from our website at [www.ird-renew.org](http://www.ird-renew.org) or phone 202-969-8430. "Straight Answers" helps Christians approach the war against terrorism from a Scriptural perspective.

## Correction

The March 2002 *UMAction* Briefing reported on Rev. Bill Bouknight's speech to the Congress on Evangelism, in which he criticized the United Methodist confirmation resource called "Claim the Name." *UMAction* reported that "Claim the Name" does not mention Jesus' atonement, the cross, or Jesus' role as Savior. However, the booklet does briefly mention these subjects. Bouknight was specifically criticizing their absence in chapter 28 about the work and identity of Jesus. We regret the error.