



UMA Action

BRIEFING

Summer 2005

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LAKE JUNALUSKA CONFERENCE CENTER HOSTS PRO-HOMOSEXUALITY EVENT

Amid tremendous controversy, the United Methodist Lake Junaluska Conference Center hosted "Hearts on Fire," a rally during Labor Day weekend for more than 600 activists campaigning to overturn The United Methodist Church's strong stand for marriage and Christian sexual morality.

Lake Junaluska, in western North Carolina, is the official conference center for United Methodism's Southeast Jurisdiction. Seven Bishops spoke at "Hearts on Fire." Thirty-two additional active and retired Bishops sent letters of greeting.

The main sponsor of "Hearts on Fire" was the Reconciling Ministries Network lobby which constantly attacks the church's Scriptural teaching on homosexuality. It demands ordination of active homosexuals and church "weddings" for same-sex couples.

The United Methodist Church supports the Scriptural standard that sex is for marriage between man and woman and that homosexual behavior, like adultery and pre-marital sex, is "incompatible with Christian teaching." But some high church officials

aggressively undermine our church's stand.

Throughout the event, speakers compared Christian teachings about sexual morality to racism and even suggested that supporters of the church's beliefs want to prevent the church from reaching some people with the Gospel.

Bishop Minerva Carcaño of Phoenix,

continued on page 6...



Bishop Sally Dyck, of Minneapolis. (Courtesy Western North Carolina Conference/Dawn Hand)

ACTION: Please contact your Bishop now and share your thoughts about permitting pro-homosexuality promoters to rent the United Methodist Lake Junaluska conference center to lobby against United Methodist teachings on sexual morality. Also contact Executive Director Jimmy Carr: Lake Junaluska Conference Center, 759 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745. Fax: 828-456-4040. E-mail: info@sejacumc.org. Please be respectful, courteous, and Christ-like in what you say.

COSROW CHIEF TOUTS LIBERALISM

Garlinda Burton, General Secretary of the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW), preached on “The Importance of Being Liberal” to a Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) banquet at the Virginia Annual Conference.

MFSA is United Methodism’s oldest liberal caucus group, promotes far-left positions within the church, and opposes the church’s teachings on sexual morality.

In her June speech, Burton thanked MFSA for “holding up God’s light during what, for many, is a very dark time.” She equated “homophobia” with racism and denounced “warmongers” and gun owners who think gun ownership is a biblical right.

COSROW is based in Nashville and is scheduled to receive over \$3 million in apportionment funding from local churches during this quadrennium.

Burton hailed MFSA’s “ministry of truth-telling” and its “in-your-face-ness.”

“We need to do some evangelism in the White House,” Burton said to laughter. She added that George W. Bush would not be the only person at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue whom she would seek to convert. She also sarcastically accused Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas of “kicking down every case on racial discrimination” despite his own interracial marriage.

Burton implored her audience to reclaim the word “liberal.” “Say, ‘I’m liberal and proud,’” the COSROW executive urged.

“Jesus is the most liberal being ever to walk the earth,” she asserted.

Standing up to “oppressive, warmongering powers” is truly Wesleyan, Burton said. But too



Garlinda Burton. (UMNS)

many people say liberal as though they are saying “snot-nosed,” she complained, to laughter.

Burton concluded: “Liberal is a God thing. Liberal is a good thing.”

Before Burton spoke, the Rev. Robert Vaughn of MFSA’s Virginia chapter introduced two female audience members, both lay United Methodists in Virginia, who were scheduled to be “married” to each other in a United Church of Canada ceremony.



ACTION: Contact Garlinda Burton and respectfully encourage her agency to represent the whole United Methodist Church and not just liberals. Garlinda Burton, General Secretary, COSROW, 1200 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201. E-mail: gburton@gcfa.org.

WESLEY SEMINARY PROFESSOR DEFENDS WESLEYAN THEOLOGY

Wesley Seminary evangelism professor Scott Kisker proclaimed traditional Methodist beliefs at an April conference at Evangelical School of Theology in Myerstown, Pennsylvania. The Wesley Colloquium focused on salvation and evangelism in the Wesleyan tradition.

“I believe a recovery of the fullness of the Wesleyan model of salvation will reinvigorate our practice of evangelism in ways that are biblically

more faithful, theologically more sound, and practically more fruitful,” Kisker said.

Kisker declared: “We have lost our boldness because we do not know why we should be bold, and we have lost our purpose and definition of salvation because we have allowed others to define it.”

He drew on Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son to lift up a Wesleyan understanding of salvation.

The son in the parable believes that “happiness is found outside of the Father,” Kisker said. This son is “a sinner satisfied in his sins, content to remain in his fallen state, to live and die without the image of God.” He is “ignorant of his disease and the only remedy for it.”

Emphasizing the Wesleyan model of salvation, Kisker said that

continued on page 6...

SIX ANNUAL CONFERENCES APPROVE UMACTION RESOLUTIONS ON ABORTION

Six United Methodist Annual Conferences this summer adopted resolutions related to abortion, prepared by UMAction. The resolutions, in varying forms, encouraged ministry to persons suffering post-abortion stress and raised concerns about United Methodist membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) which supports unrestricted abortion.

The Florida Conference commended the addition by the 2004 General Conference of a new paragraph to the denomination's *Social Principles* dealing with post-abortion stress, and called on "congregations, pastors, and lay leaders to enter into dialogue with Christ-centered ministries that provide counseling for women—and men—who experience pain because of a past abortion and to prayerfully consider how we may serve such ministries with our moral, spiritual, and material support."

Florida Bishop Timothy Whitaker and Bishop William Willimon of North Alabama serve on the Advisory Board of Lifewatch, a pro-life group within United Methodism.

Similar resolutions were overwhelmingly adopted by the Annual Conferences of North Indiana, Illinois-Great Rivers, Arkansas, and North Georgia. The Illinois resolution was slightly amended to add concern for the suffering that results from miscarriages. The North Georgia resolution was amended to encourage premarital abstinence also.

The North Indiana resolution

required the Conference to send a copy of the Lifewatch-produced "Where Can I Go for Help and Healing?" brochure to all of its pastors. The Rev. Chris Roberts, who submitted the resolution, said he was encouraged that his fellow North Indiana pastors would learn from the brochure about the important ministry of Lifewatch, which "in the end will help the entire effort" to reform how the United Methodist Church addresses abortion.

The current United Methodist position supports the legal option of abortion but opposes partial-birth abortion and abortion for birth control or gender selection (*Book of Discipline*, par. 161J).


Louisiana Conference resolved to "reflect prayerfully on whether agencies of our Church should continue their membership in RCRC."

The North Georgia Conference also adopted UMAction's RCRC resolution. The Arkansas Conference adopted a shorter version that cited the diversity of United Methodist opinion on abortion as reason for church members to "prayerfully reflect" on continued UMC endorsement of RCRC.

The Rev. Dr. Allen Hunt submitted both resolutions in North Georgia and noted that they "met with enthusiastic support in North Georgia, and it was encouraging to see other Conferences around the country sharing

ACTION: Thank Dr. Hunt and his church for their work on behalf of women in crisis pregnancies: Mount Pisgah United Methodist Church, 9820 Nesbit Ferry Road, Alpharetta, GA 30022-9881. E-mail: info@mountpisgah.org. Also contact Lifewatch for information. Lifewatch, PO Box 306, Cottleville, MO 63338. E-mail: Lifewatch@charter.net.

The Louisiana Conference overwhelmingly passed a resolution stating serious concerns about the "Reproductive Choice" coalition, in which the United Methodist Women's Division and the Board of Church and Society are members. Responding to the inconsistency between United Methodist beliefs and RCRC's support for unrestricted abortion, the

our desire to offer healing and hope to the world." Hunt pastors the largest-attendance United Methodist congregation in the Conference, Mt. Pisgah near Atlanta, where 5,000 worship each Sunday. The church runs its own crisis pregnancy center to provide women with alternatives to abortion as well as abortion recovery counseling. 

For frequent news updates on the United Methodist Church, be sure to visit IRD's website:

WWW.IRD-RENEW.ORG

BISHOP HAYES URGES SOUND DOCTRINE AT CONFESSING MOVEMENT INSTITUTE

United Methodist Bishop Robert Hayes of Oklahoma lifted up the evangelical message of renewal and doctrinal fidelity at the Epworth Institute in July at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina.

Epworth is an annual educational opportunity for young United Methodist clergy sponsored by the Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church.

"The church is slowly stepping out of its denial of the last 40 years," Hayes declared, about United Methodism's recovery from liberal theology. Hayes also shared his own discovery of just how fractured the church has been on sexual issues.

At the 2000 General Conference, Hayes chaired the Faith and Order Committee that strongly reaffirmed United Methodist teachings against homosexual practice and in favor of traditional Christian sexual morality.

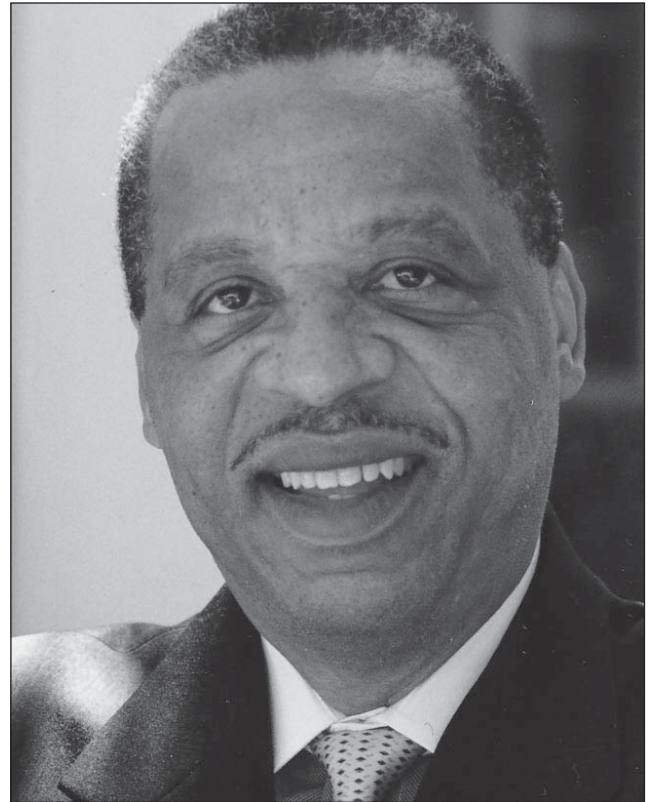
Hayes stressed that new leadership will lead the church into reawakening, declaring, "I yearn for episcopal leadership that is not detached from the Body of Christ." The Bishop said most of the new Bishops elected in 2004 "know the church cannot be run the same way as it was in the past."

in their worship, prayer, and devotion. He said he "never gets into the pulpit without starting out with Scripture."

Another important factor of renewal that the Bishop stressed was "asking candidates for the episcopacy in the United Methodist Church about their doctrinal beliefs."

When asked about claims that United Methodism is declining only because of demographic trends, Hayes responded, "People are tired of being dead in the pews, and renewal is not going to come from what we have been doing."

"Since 1968 we have been dealing with declining membership," Hayes observed. "We need to preach the word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ unashamedly without fear and restraint. The people who show up at our churches on Sunday are looking for help and hope. They are looking for comfort, reassurance, and a healing



Bishop Robert Hayes, of Oklahoma. (UMNS)

God whether they want to hear it or not." He also advised pastors never to preach a sermon without extending an invitation for a relationship with Christ.

The Bishop noted the immensity of the stakes involved in United Methodist renewal: "It's going to take radical discipleship to transform the church." He added: "The next 30 or 40 years is our time under God. If we don't walk through the Red Sea now, we will never get through."

A third-generation Methodist minister, Hayes received one of the first cross-racial appointments in Texas in 1986. He was the first Bishop elected at the South Central Jurisdictional Conference in 2004. At the conclusion of Hayes' address, the pastors at the Institute laid hands on the Bishop and prayed for renewal in the church.



ACTION: Thank Bishop Hayes for his strong Christian witness and assure him of your prayers: Bishop Robert Hayes, Oklahoma Conference, Box 60467, Oklahoma City, OK 73146-0467. E-mail: rhayes@okbishop.org.

"I do not see how we can be a leader in the church if we don't follow what's in the Bible," Hayes commented. He noted that when leaders "get away from Scripture, they get into all of this stuff that is irrelevant."

Hayes emphasized the importance of Bishops being authentic

word." Hayes asked, "How can they hear without somebody preaching to them?"

Hayes told the pastors, "If we are going to renew our church, you are going to have to stand in the pulpit and carve out the time in your services, and preach to them the Word of

METHODIST BUILDING ISSUE TO GO BEFORE D.C. ATTORNEY GENERAL

At its April 2005 meeting, the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) voted to seek affirmation of its controversial use of the Methodist Building Endowment Fund, by requesting a ruling from the Attorney General of Washington, DC.

Disregarding earlier legal advice, the Board insisted it would continue to spend all income from the Methodist Building Endowment for general expenses, including its controversial political lobbying. The GBCS lobbies for abortion rights, homosexual rights, socialized medicine, and a larger welfare state. The GBCS has also opposed virtually all U.S. military actions and much of U.S. foreign policy during recent decades.

The Methodist Building Endowment Fund Declaration of Trust (1965) firmly restricts the Trust Fund's entire principal and income, including all income from the Methodist Building in Washington, for "work in the areas of temperance and alcohol problems."

Many United Methodists, including *UMAction*, have charged that the GBCS has violated both the Trust and the intent of Methodist donors who restricted their gifts for work on alcohol issues. A complete GBCS public accounting for the Trust Fund has been requested but not provided.

At least a third of the board's \$5 million annual income comes from rental of space in the Methodist

Building on Capitol Hill. Another 10 percent or more of its income comes from investments, part of which originated with the Trust Fund. The 1965 Declaration of Trust listed Trust net assets with a 1964 value of \$2,603,019—approximately 40 percent in securities and 60 percent in real estate, primarily the Methodist Building. It is likely that an accounting would show a large increase in value during the last 40 years.

The Board in October 2004 decided to seek a "definitive legal opinion" that could be shared with the public to explain its use of the Trust Fund. But no written legal opinion was provided to the April meeting.

The Methodist Building Trustees reported in April 2005 that they had met with the Board's attorney, Milton Cerny, who "reaffirmed his opinion that we are in compliance with the provisions [of the Declaration of Trust] and he recommends we ask the Attorney General for the District of Columbia to review this and offer his objective opinion."

However, in an October 23, 2002 letter to the Board's chief financial officer, Cerny had written, "The language of the Declaration of Trust is



The Methodist Building in Washington, DC. (IRD)

quite specific [in restricting uses of the income]." He noted that a legal opinion from the 1970s had stretched the interpretation of the Trust to allow expenditures on not just "temperance and alcohol problems" but also "problems involving public morals, gambling, drug abuse and general welfare in these areas." Cerny warned, "We doubt the trust instrument's language could be interpreted any more broadly than has already been done."

The April 13 Trustees' meeting was chaired by Bishop James Swanson of the Holston Conference and included Bishop Deborah Kiesey of the Dakotas Area. Cerny's recommendation to seek advice from the D.C. Attorney General was accepted by the Trustees. Bishop Swanson urged the Board to report on the issue to the 2008 General Conference, "hoping this will enable us to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion." ✚

ACTION: Thank Bishop Swanson for his attention to this situation but encourage him to seek the Board's full compliance with the Declaration of Trust for the Methodist Building Endowment Fund, including a complete public accounting and restoration of money spent in violation of the Trust. Bishop James Swanson, Holston Conference, 9915 Kingston Pike, Suite C, Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930-2939. E-mail: bishop@holtston.org

*Lake Junaluska...
...continued from page 1*

using an old argument from pro-homosexuality advocates, claimed that the church's refusal to approve some people's "sexual orientation" is like excluding people because of their race.

Retired Bishop Richard Wilke likened disapproval of homosexual behavior to defense of slavery.

Retired Bishop Melvin Talbert asserted, "The position that our church has on this issue is wrong."

Bishop John Schol of Washington, D.C. said he was making sure that "gay and lesbian, transgendered and bisexual persons" are given leadership positions in his Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Bishop Sally Dyck of Minneapolis proudly said she had been outspoken about affirmation of homosexuality for "quite some time."

Bishop Susan Morrison of Albany lauded the "gifts of the Denver fifteen" Bishops who in 1996 publicly declared their opposition to the church's teachings about sexual ethics. She recalled, "One of the greatest events that I ever went to was Re-Imagining," the 1993 controversial women's conference where goddess worship and lesbianism were acclaimed.

Also speaking, in the interest of dialogue, was Bishop Scott Jones of

Wichita, who supports the church's position on homosexuality. He urged going back to John Wesley, the church's doctrines, and the Bible for guidance. His remarks were received politely.

Prominent violators of United Methodist law were also speakers at "Hearts on Fire."

"I'm aware that there are people in The United Methodist Church who think that I'm a Jezebel," said Beth Stroud, the Philadelphia pastor who publicly declared her active lesbianism two years ago. Her ordination status will be decided by the church's Judicial Council (highest court) this Fall. Stroud called her "coming out publicly" the "most faithful witness" she could offer.

Throughout this event there was a failure to recognize that The United Methodist Church welcomes all persons but does not condone sin. For example, Karen Oliveto, who presided over a string of San Francisco same-sex unions in defiance of the United Methodist Discipline, asked, "When will the exclusion of sexual minorities end?"


Like other speakers, Oliveto criticized traditional Christian teachings beyond just sexual ethics. Specifically, she criticized Jewish and Christian teachings about "chosenness," which she claimed led to racism, colonization, slavery, and

now discrimination against "gays and lesbians."

Oliveto criticized St. Paul's casting a demon out of a slave girl, as recorded in the Book of Acts. By depriving the girl of her fortune-telling, Paul did her "economic injury" and made her "damaged goods," Oliveto complained. She urged a "progressive theology" guided by "pluralism," "feminism," "liberationism," "post-colonialism" and "ecological and environmental responsibility."

"We know there is death in this pot called The United Methodist Church," opined James Preston, a Northern Illinois clergy and a Board member of Cokesbury Publishing.

The audience gave a standing ovation to Jimmy Carr, Executive Director of the Lake Junaluska Conference Center, who made the decision to rent the facility to the "Hearts on Fire" promoters—in violation of an announced policy to rent only to groups whose mission is compatible with the United Methodist *Discipline*.

Carr reported that "a lot of people" locally and in the Southeast Jurisdiction wanted the conference participants to be welcome there. "They understand that "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors" really does mean something!" he declared, referring to the denomination's advertising slogan. 

*Wesley Seminary...
...continued from page 2*

convincing or convicting grace leads the son to see his errors. "The Father embraces him and reveals his love incarnate... His salvation is not complete. We need to be healed of all infirmities. Wesleyan salvation is a complete restoration of what we were called to be. We become like the love that has embraced us."

Happiness can be found only in relationship with the Triune God,

Kisker concluded. The uniqueness and importance of "what we have to offer is a way and process of full salvation by grace which is revealed by God's love fully incarnate," he said.

Kisker holds the James C. Logan

Chair of Evangelism and Wesley Studies at United Methodist Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Evangelical students at that seminary say that they find great inspiration in his teaching.

ACTION: Thank Dr. Scott Kisker for his faithful witness to Wesleyan Christianity. Wesley Theological Seminary, 4500 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016. E-mail: skisker@wesleysem.edu.

MOVE FORWARD IN MISSION!

A statement adopted by unanimous vote of UMAction Steering Committee, October 5, 2004.

We rejoice in what God is doing with His United Methodist Church! The Church we love is returning to Scriptural faithfulness. The 2000 and 2004 General Conferences strongly reaffirmed Jesus Christ as Son of God, Savior, and Lord and reaffirmed essential Christian beliefs, including Christian sexual morality.

The United Methodist Church has made its decision on the issues of marriage and homosexuality. Our Church now stands firmly for God's Scriptural plan for man, woman, and family—supporting marriage as the union of one man and one woman and stating that all children need both a father and a mother. Our Church firmly upholds God's Scriptural standard that rejects homosexual behavior while affirming that God's grace is available to all. We all are sinners who need Jesus Christ and sanctifying grace.

Much more must be done: hold accountable the Bishops, Annual Conferences, UMC agencies, and Women's Division; protect oppressed pastors and congregations in rebellious Annual Conferences; reform the seminaries; cease allowing any faction to use the Church as its political party; and rebuild a responsible, Scriptural social witness.

UMAction now asks our Church and all United Methodists to **move forward in mission**—the UMC's mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ.” Cease and leave behind the homosexuality dispute that has been a distracting, divisive diversion from our holistic mission.

We call on those who attempted to change the UMC's Biblical stand on sexual morality to acknowledge the Church's consistent decision, and

to embrace God's standard of sexual purity. The General Conference affirmed this standard by large majorities in 2000 and even larger in 2004. This support is growing. Future General Conferences will have more delegates from the growing, faithful areas of the UMC (Africa, the U.S. South, and others) and fewer from the revisionist areas that are rapidly losing members.

History refutes the moral relativists' false claim that their triumph is inevitable. Humanity has not had a continuous descent into sexual license. Rather, history reveals a back-and-forth movement between stricter and laxer standards. And the Church does not always follow the culture. Both the early Christian Church and the early Methodist movement defended the sanctity of marriage during periods of high sexual immorality.

Let us cease dead-end dialogue on whether to change the UMC stand on homosexuality. Instead, we must increase United Methodist ministries for persons struggling with all kinds of sexual sin, including homosexual behavior—offering healing and **transformation** through Jesus Christ and reclaiming John Wesley's Biblical understanding of sanctifying grace. We encourage United Methodists to become familiar with and to support the Transforming Congregations and Exodus International ministries.

UMAction asks all faithful United Methodists to **stay in the UMC** and work with us for continuing renewal and reform. Do not leave this Church—especially now when the great UMC turn-around to Scriptural faithfulness is moving faster and we all can help it continue.


Christ calls us to **unity** in Him and His Father and in the truth of God's word “so that the world may believe” (John 17:11-23). But genuine unity is impossible with those

who reject the Church Universal's historic understanding of God's word or do not believe in Jesus as the resurrected and only Savior. They have broken the covenant. Therefore, we question the integrity of the “unity” resolution which the 2004 General Conference hastily adopted.

Irreconcilable differences on essentials are dividing the culture-conforming liberals—who want to rewrite the Bible, the traditional Christian faith, and God's plan for man, woman, and sex—from the faithful United Methodists who affirm the authority of Scripture and the essential Christian doctrines handed down to us from Jesus and the apostles.

The recent “amicable separation” discussion has helped United Methodists to see the irreconcilable differences and to recognize that some have **already separated themselves** by refusing to live within our *Discipline*.

We recommend allowing a **gracious exit** for those who cannot or will not accept the essential beliefs on which the UMC is founded. The UMC should adopt a fair plan to permit their voluntary, peaceful departure, taking with them their local church property (if the congregation votes to leave) and pension rights. Their beliefs are strong and sincere. They have a Constitutional right to believe and worship as they choose, but they do not have the right to divide a Christian Church by undermining its basic beliefs. Some of the unfaithful are now talking about leaving; the UMC should aid their departure.

The United Methodist Church is returning to its Wesleyan roots and can become again a growing, evangelical Christian church focused on Christ's Great Commission and Great Commandment. UMAction welcomes the growing renewal momentum. With God's help, we will work to keep it moving forward. 

**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)

UMAction

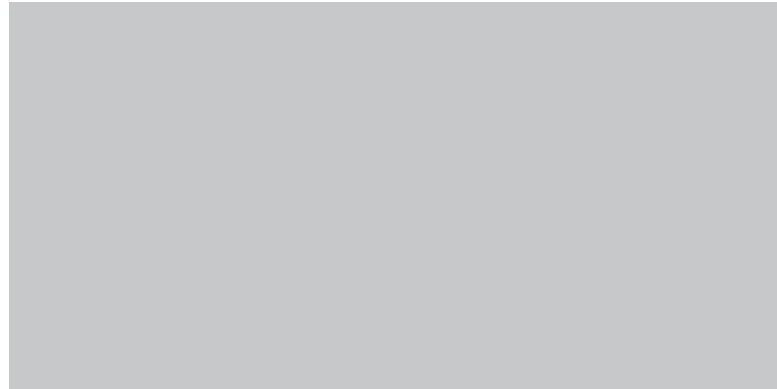
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YOUR OPINION, PLEASE!

Do you support the use of the United Methodist conference center at Lake Junaluska for a pro-homosexuality conference?

Yes

No

Not sure