

WE CONFESS

January—March
2014

Newsletter of The Confessing Movement
Within The United Methodist Church



How Did We Ever Get Here?

By Rev. Talbot Davis

A United Methodist pastor in suburban Philadelphia receives a 30-day suspension for performing a same-gender wedding involving his son and now that the penalty has concluded is challenging the denomination to restore his credentials so he can continue advocacy against its policies.

A retired United Methodist bishop from California performs a same-gender wedding in Alabama, defying the request from the resident bishop to refrain from doing so.

A same-gender clergy couple marries in Seattle, and their District Superintendent officiates at the ceremony. Say that out loud: SAME GENDER CLERGY COUPLE.

And people in the pews of the typical Methodist churches, in areas where Methodism has historically been the strongest (the South-Central and Southeastern Jurisdictions) are shaking their heads in bewilderment.

How in the world did so many among us travel so far left so quickly & so publicly?

From where does the resolve come to mutiny against the larger connection?

Actually, the answer to that question, in Methodist terms, is relatively easy.

We've been funding our own subversion for years.

You read that correctly. We, The United Methodist Church, have been underwriting our own insurrection ever since 20th Century Protestant Liberalism became the theological norm 100 years ago. We didn't do it deliberately. We did it because we are "nice," because we believe in academic freedom, because we typically choose grace over discipline. We did it because we've rarely been as protective of our doctrine as Jude is of his.

That's why we have had professors at United Methodist seminaries who did not believe in Jesus' bodily resurrection. Don't believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Come teach our pastors and we'll pay your salary with the tithes and offerings of church people! That's why pastors being examined for ordination can waffle on the Virgin Birth but can't call God "Father." Don't believe all of God was in Jesus? Come on and pastor our church and we'll pay your salary with the tithes and offerings of church people as long as your benediction says 'in the name of the Creator, Savior, and Spirit!'

So the Methodist news that too many of us has come with a shocking swiftness is really almost 100 years in the making. Because what you tolerate today will dominate you tomorrow. We've been pouring money into our own demise for a century now.

It's time to stop.♦

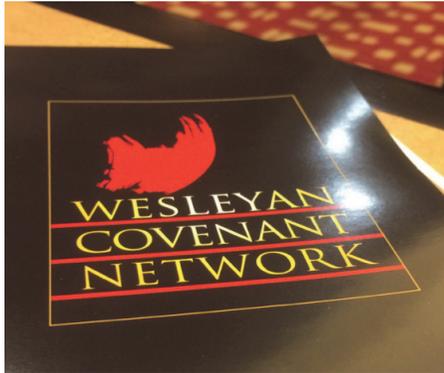
In This Issue:

How Did We Ever Get Here?	P 1
Wesleyan Covenant Network	P 2
The Key to Understanding the Gospels	P 3
2013 The Year of Open Disobedience	P 4
Religious Leaders Back Hobby Lobby	P 6
Bishop Coyner Got it Right	P 6
A Faith No One Would Die For	P 7
A Tribute to The Church	P 7

JOHN
WESLEY

"I therein build on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture. If this supports any doctrine, it will stand; if not, the sooner it falls the better."

Wesleyan Covenant Network Seeks Revival in the Midst of Dysfunction by Rev. Keith Boyette



The United Methodist Church is navigating stormy seas. Some bishops are in open-defiance against the Council of Bishops. An entire jurisdiction of the church has de-

clared that it will not abide by the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church. Clergy and churches in some regions of the United States have made public statements that they will not live in unity if they don't get their way. Yet, a fresh new wind of the Holy Spirit is moving in local churches bringing a hunger and passion for revival in the midst of our denominational dysfunction and disease.

On January 13-14, more than 120 clergy and laity from 45 churches in 14 states gathered in Atlanta, Georgia to learn what God is doing to bring revival to local United Methodist churches. The gathering occurred at the invitation of Dr. Maxie Dunnam who announced the formation of the Wesleyan Covenant Network. The Network exists to "advance the Kingdom of Christ through fostering of covenant relationships and practical networks among the Wesleyan theological family."

Dunnam said, "I came away from the 2012 General Conference less hopeful for the church than at any other time in my ministry," says Dr. Dunnam. As Dunnam sought the Lord, he came to the conviction that "we United Methodist have 'forgotten who we are.' We have lost our identity and we are struggling to find life again. Unfortunately, our efforts seem to be focused primarily on renewal through restructuring . . . almost everything focused on the 'institution,' coming close to making an idol of the 'connection.'"

In light of what he was discerning, Dunnam declared, "I believe we need revival not renewal of our structure. From my study of the Great Awakenings and the mighty

Wesleyan Revival that followed, I am convinced that the revitalization of doctrine and fervent prayer are two primary essentials of revival. And the locus of revival is the local church." The Wesleyan Covenant Network desires to contribute to making Methodism a Kingdom force once more.

The Network aims to advance its goals by establishing a covenant relationship amongst clergy and local churches grounded in prayer and a shared commitment to revitalizing Wesleyan theology to awaken and revive the church, providing mutual encouragement and accountability, and sharing best practices. The Network has established as a priority a sustained emphasis on Kingdom mission and evangelism, and a demonstration of commitment to the Church and to church unity through doctrine and mission, not institutional structures and apportionments.

The Network has developed three strategic partnerships to resource pastors and churches who become members of the Network. Through Seedbed (seedbed.com) and Wesleyan Accent (wesleyanaccent.com), the Network will provide resources to encourage the revitalization of doctrine and fervent prayer. Through the New Expression Network, quality coaching in discipleship, church planting strategy and partnership support will be provided for those with a vision for initiating church plants.

Clergy and local churches can become members of the Wesleyan Covenant Network by completing an application and paying an annual membership fee based upon the worship attendance of the local church. I completed my application and paid the membership fee on January 14 before leaving the Atlanta gathering and the church I pastor, Wilderness Community United Methodist Church in Spotsylvania, Virginia, took formal action through its Leadership Board to join the Network at its meeting on January 19.

The Wesleyan Covenant Network is providing a place for evangelicals to experience community, shared ministry and effective resources when our denominational institutions are failing us and even working at cross purposes

with that primary mission.

Through our membership in the Network, we are linked to a broad network of churches and pastors who share our priorities. We receive two Seedbed Resources annually. We also receive access to the Wesleyan Accent Website, a one-day leader development event, webinars focused on the emphases of church/site planting, leader development, theology and spiritual order, a connection platform for sharing resources and developing strategic relationships and the opportunity to be part of a covenant order relationship.

A summary video of the Atlanta gathering can be viewed on Vimeo at <http://vimeo.com/84641273>. More information about the Wesleyan Covenant Network can be obtained at

The Orchard, WCN, P. O. Box 3216, Tupelo, Ms. 38803.

The Network will have a presence on the web at www.wesleyan covenantnetwork.org soon.

Keith Boyette is pastor of Wilderness Community Church in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. He served as a member of the Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church from 2000-2008. He is also chairperson of the Board of Directors of Good News.



Rev. Keith Boyette

A NEW RESOURCE FOR EVANGELICAL METHODISTS

All United Methodist evangelicals should check out www.seedbed.com, a fascinating library of over 100 videos designed to nourish Sunday School classes and covenant groups. This resource is sponsored by Asbury Theological Seminary. Dr. J.D. Walt and Andy Miller are the technical support team for this site. Seedbed sows the whole gospel into the whole world by uniting voices around a shared vision and publishing resources that awaken the Wesleyan movement for the 21st century church.

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPELS

(From *ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS: Unexpected Answers to Life's Biggest Questions*, by Timothy J. Keller, Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, 2013.)

"The centrality of Jesus' death is a most important insight for understanding the Gospels. Another is the meaning and purpose of Jesus' death, namely substitution. By choosing the ceremonial jars (in his first miracle reported in John's gospel, chapter 2), Jesus was signaling something that the book of Hebrews expounds at great length: that Jesus fulfilled the whole Old Testament sacrificial system. The tabernacle and the temple, the veil, the inner chamber called the Holy of Holies---at the heart of that system was a blood sacrifice. Why? Because I'm a sinner and sin needs

to be punished. Something atones for my sin. Something dies in my place. The question over all those centuries when animals were being slaughtered could have been, how can a lamb take a man's place? Yet when John the Baptist sees Jesus for the first time, he says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." In other words, John realized, all those little lambs could not and did not take away our sins. But they were pointing to the truly innocent, unblemished One, Jesus, who does. Jesus Christ came to die in our place and to take our punishment."

THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF 2013 WERE FRAUGHT WITH OPEN ACTS OF DISOBEDIENCE FROM UNITED METHODIST CLERGY AND LEADERS. HERE IS A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE MOST DIVISIVE EVENTS:

Oct 26, 2013
Retired Bishop Melvin Talbert officiated the wedding of Joe Openshaw and Bobby Prince at the Covenant Community Church of Christ in Center Point, Alabama against the expressed disapproval of the North Alabama Conference bishop, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett.

October 2013

Nov 19, 2013
The group Love Prevails began a campaign for “the complete removal of all discriminatory language against LGBT people in the Book of Discipline” by interrupting the fall meeting of the Connectional Table with protests. They have vowed to “protest and disrupt local, national, and global events” of the UMC to demand a change in the church’s longstanding position on homosexuality.

November 2013

Nov 15, 2013
The Council of Bishops called for council president, Bishop Rosemarie Wenner and NAL Conference bishop, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, to file a complaint against Bishop Talbert for undermining the ministry of a colleague and conducting a same-gender marriage ceremony.

Dec 7, 2013
District Superintendent, Rev. Patricia Simpson, performed a same-gender wedding ceremony for United Methodist clergywomen, Revs. Joanne Carlson Brown and Christie Lagergren Brown. The ceremony took place at Tibbits UMC in Seattle where Rev. Joanne Carlson Brown serves as pastor.

Dec 21, 2013
Bishop Minerva Carcaño, with the support of Frank Schaefer's bishop, invited Schaefer to join the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

December 2013

Dec 19, 2013
Bishop John Schol of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference released a video in response to the Schaefer trial saying "I would like to see trials within The United Methodist Church stopped."

Dec 19, 2013
Rev. Frank Schaefer was defrocked by the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference for presiding at his son's same-gender wedding. The trial court gave Schaefer the opportunity to reaffirm his fidelity to the church's standards on marriage. He refused to both reaffirm and to give up his credentials. Some clergy and bishops have urged him to appeal the guilty verdict.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS BACK HOBBY LOBBY

In The News

A group of influential Christian theologians and pastors announced on January 29th their support of businesses like Hobby Lobby who are fighting against the Health and Human Services contraception mandate. In a 46-page amicus brief filed with the Supreme Court, they argued that the mandate violates the First Amendment rights of Christians who believe that all work is sacred.

The list of 38 signatories includes pastor Rick Warren, Bishop Harry Jackson, theologian Wayne Grudem, author Ravi Zacharias, and other Christian leaders. The convening organizations listed on the brief

include Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Coalition of African American Pastors, and Manhattan Declaration, a movement of conservative Christians fighting for “life, marriage, and religious liberty.”

The brief argues that Christian doctrine requires that faith govern every aspect of a believer’s life, including their God-ordained vocation. Because Christian doctrine prohibits “the enabling, authorizing, or aiding of another” in sinful activities, the document argues, Christian employers and employees should not be required to pay for or provide contraception that includes abortion-causing drugs.

BISHOP COYNER GOT IT RIGHT

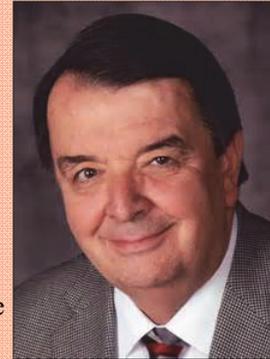
By Dr. Bill Bouknight

Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner was quoted recently in the press making a wise and faithful statement regarding marriage. He said, “I do not want the State of Indiana or any other governmental unit to define the meaning of marriage for those of us who are Christians and United Methodists.”

Bishop Coyner knows that Jesus affirmed the Old Testament definition of marriage when he declared in Matthew 19:4-6: “Haven’t you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

All United Methodists should pray that if the Justice Department or the Supreme Court or any state in the union attempts to re-define marriage, Bishop Coyner and all the other bishops will declare, “No, you cannot do that. The Bible has given the original and final definition of marriage, and we will defend it with all our energy, devotion, and sacred honor.”

One other question for Bishop Coyner: What if Indiana chooses to support the biblical definition of marriage? Wouldn’t you support any governmental entity that agrees with Jesus on this subject?



Bishop Michael Coyner

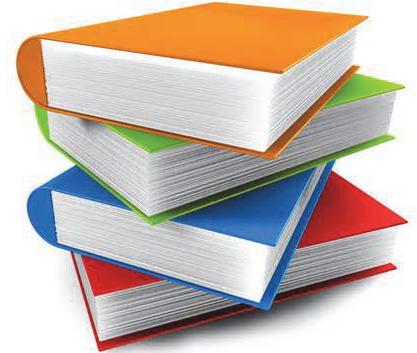
“The Gospel does not want our opinions; it does not want our judgments. It calls for our obedience to God who sent His only Son to be our Savior. It calls us to repent and believe this message.”
(Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

A FAITH THAT NO ONE WOULD DIE FOR

(This is the conclusion of a *WALL STREET JOURNAL* book review by Barton Swain of a new book entitled *JESUS* by Jay Parini.)

“But the real trouble with Mr. Parini’s stance isn’t so much its incoherence as its banality. It’s the same with all attempts to make religion palatable to the learned. Rather than accepting its authority or ditching it altogether, the urge is to weaken its demands and make its doctrines vague or optional. The result is usually an agreeable but boring philosophy that anyone can adopt and no one would die for. ‘The Way of Jesus...’ Mr. Parini writes, ‘involves self-denial, a sense of losing oneself in order to find oneself, moving through the inevitable pain of life with good cheer, accepting gracefully the burdens that fall on our shoulders and the tasks that lie before us. This is true discipleship.’

“If that’s all Jesus came here to tell us, it’s hard to see what all the fuss was about.”

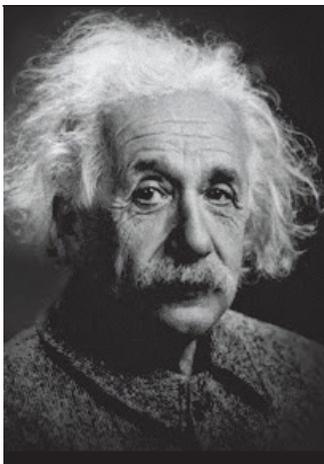


OUR ANONYMOUS SAINTS

When the history of United Methodist renewal is written one day, the unsung heroes will be the thousands of church members who prayed and contributed money to renew their beloved church. God knows who you are! Your help is critical, in terms of prayer and contributions. Some are skipping the Friday noon meal each week and using the time to pray for the UMC. Then they contribute their lunch money to The Confessing Movement. For directions on contributing, just call our office at 317-356-9729. Or, go to our website at www.confessingumc.org and click on “donate.” Thanks so much!!

A TRIBUTE TO THE CHURCH

(Dr. Albert Einstein was one of the great geniuses of the 20th century. He was not a Christian, but wrote the following high tribute to the church.)



“Being a lover of freedom, when the Nazi revolution came, I looked to the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but no, the universities were immediately silenced.

“Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers, whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom; but they, like the universities, were silenced in weeks.

“Only the church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any special interest in the church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration for it because the church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual and moral freedom. I am forced to confess that what I once despised, I now praise unreservedly.”

**The Confessing Movement
within The United Methodist Church**

7995 East 21st Street
Indianapolis, IN 46219
(317) 356-9729

Fax: (317) 356-9742

Web site: www.confessingumc.org

E-mail: cm@confessingumc.org

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 52761
PERMIT NO. 338

Purpose Statement

**Confessing Jesus Christ as Son, Savior, and Lord.
The Confessing Movement exists to enable
The United Methodist Church to retrieve its
classical doctrinal identity, and to live it out as
disciples of Jesus Christ.**

Officers

Honorary Co-Chairmen

Maxie Dunnam
Tom Oden

President

Judy Graham

Vice President

Charles Kyker

Secretary

Greg McGarvey

Asst. Secretary

Mickey Ellis

Asst. Treasurer

Joe Kilpatrick

Editor,

We Confess

Bill Bouknight

Board of Directors

Kristen Allen

Turner Arant

Larry Baird

James Buskirk

Bob Collins

Mary Daffin

Sam Daffin

Wendy Deichmann

Maxie Dunnam

Mickey Ellis

Ira Gallaway

June Parker Goldman

Judy Graham

David Jenkins

Joe Kilpatrick

Charles Kyker

John Ed Mathison

Gregory McGarvey

Dan Moore

Joy Moore

David Player

Kim Reisman

Donna Schlitt

David Stanley

Gregory Stover

Jeff Switzer

Phil Thraillkill

Stephen Wende

Steve Wood

Staff

Executive Director

Patricia L. Miller

Associate Directors

Bill Bouknight

Riley Case

Secretary

Heather Catlow

Bette Grubaugh

Colleen Simon

Bookkeeper

Bonnie Petrow

Advisory Council: William Abraham, Frank Alegria, Ryan Barnett, John Case, Buddy Cooper, Tom Dyer, Gail Harrelson, Godfrey Hubert, Tom Junk, Diane Komp, Evelyn Laycock, Liz Meyer, Randell Mickler, Elizabeth Moreau, J. D. Phillips, Jim Smith, Jeff Spiller, Budd Sprague, Harry Wood