

**The Resolutions adopted by the  
2013 North Carolina Annual Conference  
of  
The United Methodist Church**

## Resolution 1: Concerning Health Care

Whereas Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:31-46, that we will be judged by how we treat the least among us. And ...

Whereas Micah 6:8 asks us, *“and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God ?”* And ...

Whereas the Governor of North Carolina and the North Carolina General Assembly recently rejected Medicaid expansion, even though the federal government would have picked up the entire cost for the first three years and never below 90 percent of the cost thereafter.<sup>1</sup> And...

Whereas Medicaid expansion would have provided health coverage to nearly 500,000 low income North Carolinians.<sup>2</sup> And...

Whereas the state and local governments would have saved \$65.4 million over eight years by expanding Medicaid due to reductions in unpaid medical bills and emergency room visits.<sup>3</sup> And ...

Whereas the Medicaid expansion would have created 25,000 jobs by 2016 as a result of an increase of \$15 billion in federal funds<sup>4</sup> to a state that still has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. And...

Whereas the most vulnerable populations, people of color and children, are most affected by the lack of health insurance coverage. And...

Whereas the Social Principles in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2012), ¶ 162, V state, *“Providing the care needed to maintain health, prevent disease, and restore health after injury or illness is a responsibility each person owes others and government owes to all, a responsibility government ignores at its peril.”* And...

Therefore be it resolved that the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church calls upon Governor Pat McCrory and the North Carolina General Assembly to reconsider their action with regards to Medicaid expansion and work for the common good for all North Carolinians, particularly the least in our state. Copies of this resolution shall be sent by the Conference Secretary to the Governor and all members of the North Carolina General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> North Carolina Justice Center in “Expanding Medicaid in North Carolina: It is Critical and Fiscally Responsible,” a Factsheet accessible on the Internet at <http://www.ncjustice.org/?q=medicaidexpansion>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> NC Institute of Medicine, as reported by North Carolina Justice Center in “Expanding Medicaid in North Carolina.”

<sup>4</sup> Regional Economic Model, Inc., as reported by North Carolina Justice Center in “Expanding Medicaid in North Carolina.”

## Resolution 2: to Support Global Maternal Health

*Whereas*, Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10)

*Whereas*, maternal mortality claims the lives of more than 287,000 women each year, most of whom live in the developing world;<sup>1</sup>

*Whereas*, more than 4 million infants die within the first month of being born;<sup>2</sup>

*Whereas*, a woman is much more likely to have a healthy pregnancy and give birth to a healthy baby if she delays pregnancy at least two years after the birth of her previous child;<sup>3</sup>

*Whereas*, more than 222 million women worldwide would like to avoid a pregnancy but lack a family planning method,<sup>4</sup> resulting in more than 70 million unintended pregnancies each year;<sup>5</sup>

*Whereas*, the UMC Resolution 3203 "Maternal Health: The Church's Role" states: "Women, who are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families and communities, deserve access to services and care that empower their personal decision-making. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women's health and well-being."

*Therefore be it Resolved:*

-That the North Carolina Annual Conference endorses the "Healthy Families, Healthy Planet" initiative, a project of the General Board of Church & Society to educate and mobilize United Methodists on maternal health and the importance of international family planning;

-That the North Carolina Annual Conference Board of Church and Society, with the help of the General Board of Church and Society, provide leadership and coordination for this effort for the purposes of creating awareness, education, and advocacy for the well-being of women, infants, and children worldwide;

*Be it Further Resolved:* that we call upon United Methodist leaders, pastors, and laypersons in the North Carolina Conference to contact their members of Congress to urge them to increase funding for international family planning in U.S. foreign assistance in order to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, Maternal Mortality Factsheet, May 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Sunsheela Singh et al., *Adding It Up: The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Family Planning and Maternal and Newborn Health*, New York: Guttmacher Institute and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Rhonda Smith et al., *Family Planning Saves Lives*, 4th ed., Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Sunsheela Singh et al., *Family Planning Saves Lives*.

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *Unsafe Abortion: Global and Regional Estimates of the Incidence of Unsafe Abortion and Associated Mortality in 2008*, 5th ed., Geneva: WHO, 2011.

### **Resolution 3: Concerning the General Conference's Decision Regarding Homosexuality**

WHEREAS, according to *The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*, "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching" and,

WHEREAS, two "agree to disagree" proposals were soundly defeated during separate votes by the nearly 1,000 delegates gathered for the United Methodist Church's General Conference in Tampa, Fla, therefore keeping the previous language unchanged [1], and

WHEREAS, "One proposal would have changed the Book of Discipline to say that gays and lesbians are "people of sacred worth" and that church members differ about "whether homosexual practices (are) contrary to the will of God" [1] and,

WHEREAS, at least 15 regional Annual Conferences have already rejected the denomination's stance on homosexuality [2], and

WHEREAS, when asked by The Barna Group what words or phrases best describe Christianity, the top response among Americans ages 16-29 was "antihomosexual." For a staggering 91 percent of non-Christians, this was the first word that came to their mind when asked about the Christian faith. The same was true for 80 percent of young churchgoers [3], and

WHEREAS, "The gay issue has become the 'big one', the negative image most likely to be intertwined with Christianity's reputation. It is also the dimension that most clearly demonstrates the unChristian faith to young people today, surfacing in a spate of negative perceptions: judgmental, bigoted, sheltered, right-wingers, hypocritical, insincere, and uncaring. Outsiders say [Christian] hostility toward gays...has become virtually synonymous with the Christian faith" (Kinnaman, David, *unChristian*) and,

WHEREAS, "one of the top reasons 59 percent of young adults with a Christian background have left the church is because they perceive the church to be too exclusive, particularly regarding their LGBT friends" (Kinnaman, David, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith*)

WHEREAS the 61st Annual Conference Session of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, acknowledge that the church is divided on this issue but feel that such language is harmful not only to the groups that it attacks but to the future of the church, as such language is alienating to both present and future members.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we implore the General Conference to change the language used in *The Social Principles*, and to affirm the place of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) members within the church, lest they risk losing not only those members but any and all members with family or friends who are LGBT.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the General Board of Church and Society and the Council of Bishops.

[1]

([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/04/methodists-homosexual-act-incompatible\\_n\\_1476042.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/04/methodists-homosexual-act-incompatible_n_1476042.html))

[2]<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=lwL4KnN1LtH&b=8079049&ct=12013973&notoc=1>

[3] (<http://rachelheldevans.com/win-culture-war-lose-generation-amendment-one-north-carolina>)

## **Resolution 4: The Trial of Dr. Kermit Gosnell and the Response of the General Board of Church and Society**

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church's Preamble to its Social Principles states: "Grateful for God's forgiving love, in which we live and by which we are judged, and affirming our belief in the inestimable worth of each individual, we renew our commitment to become faithful witnesses to the gospel, not [only] to the ends of the earth, but also to the depths of our common life and work" [1];

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church, through the church's Social Principles, speaks to the matter of abortion in Paragraph 161J [2];

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church makes the following abortion-related claims in Paragraph 161J: (a) "we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child;" (b) "in ['tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion'] we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers;" and (c) "[w]e [United Methodists] mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates;"

WHEREAS, Dr. Kermit Gosnell provided abortion services, including late-term abortions, for years at the Women's Medical Society in Philadelphia, PA;

WHEREAS, the grand jury report on Dr. Gosnell and the Women's Medical Society states: "This case is about a doctor who killed babies and endangered women. What we mean is that he regularly and illegally delivered live, viable babies in the third trimester of pregnancy -- and then murdered these newborns by severing their spinal cords with scissors. The medical practice by which he carried out this business was a filthy fraud in which he overdosed his patients with dangerous drugs, spread venereal disease among them with infected instruments, perforated their wombs and bowels -- and, on at least two occasions, caused their deaths" [3];

WHEREAS, Dr. Gosnell was convicted of murder (of children and a 41 year old woman) and other crimes;

WHEREAS, The Book of Discipline (2012) states: "The prime responsibility of the board [i.e., General Board of Church and Society] is to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns" [4];

WHEREAS, the General Board of Church and Society fulfills its responsibility, in part, by regularly speaking in the public arena, from the Social Principles, to the issues of the day;

WHEREAS, the General Board of Church and Society has responded to these events on its website;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2013 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church acknowledges, with moral revulsion, the horrific injustices that that emerged from the trial of Dr. Kermit Gosnell; and we pray that Dr. Gosnell would have a change of heart; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the 2013 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church charges its Conference Secretary to write a letter to the General Board of Church and Society which: commends the General Board of Church and Society for its public statement on the Gosnell trial.

1. The Book of Discipline (2012), p. 104.

2. The Book of Discipline (2012), pp. 112-114.

3. Conor Friedersdorf, "Why Dr. Kermit Gosnell's Trial Should Be a Front-Page Story," The Atlantic, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/print/2013/04/why-dr-kermit-gosnells-trial-should-be-a-front-page-story/274944/>.

4. Paragraph 1004, p. 576.

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## **Resolution 5: Resolution to the Governor and Legislative Leadership of the State of North Carolina**

We, the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church are deeply disturbed by recent legislation introduced in the 2013 session of the N.C. General Assembly that undercut the social principles found in *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church 2012 which states:

### ¶ 164 B) Political Responsibility

The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust.

¶ 164 A) Basic Freedoms and Human Rights — We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal; to the right to privacy; and to the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care. The form and the leaders of all governments should be determined by exercise of the right to vote guaranteed to all adult citizens.

We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that suppresses voter participation by requiring government issued photo identification, by eliminating same day voter registration, reducing early voting days, and by requiring college students to vote in their home precinct or lose dependent exemption on parents' state income taxes.

¶ 164 E) Education — We believe that every person has the right to education. We also believe that the responsibility for education of the young rests with the family, faith communities, and the government. In society, this function can best be fulfilled through public policies that ensure access for all persons to free public elementary and secondary schools and to post-secondary schools of their choice.

We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that reduces the number of low income children eligible for subsidized pre-K programs.

We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that severely weakens public education by reducing school, college, and university appropriations, by increasing unregulated charter schools, by reducing the number of public school teachers and teacher assistants, by eliminating class size requirements, and by allowing tax payer funds to be used as vouchers for private and religious schools.

¶ 162 V) Right to Health Care — Health is a condition of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Health care is a basic human right. We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care.

We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that penalizes the poor by denying Medicaid health care insurance for 500,000 North Carolinians eligible for health care.

¶ 163 The Economic Community— We claim all economic systems to be under the judgment of God no less than other facets of the created order. Therefore, we recognize the responsibility of governments to develop and implement sound fiscal and monetary policies that provide for the economic life of individuals and corporate entities and that ensure full employment and adequate incomes with a minimum of inflation.

We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that detrimentally and disproportionately affects the poor and middle class by adding new or increased sales taxes on food and prescription drugs while reducing income taxes and eliminating estate taxes for the wealthy. We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that reduces unemployment benefits and eligibility for 170,000 laid off North Carolina workers and that phases out the Earned Income Tax Credit for 907,000 low income working families.

¶ 160 B) Energy Resources Utilization — The whole earth is God’s good creation and as such has inherent value. We are aware that the current utilization of energy resources threatens this creation at its very foundation. As members of The United Methodist Church we are committed to approaching creation, energy production, and especially creation’s resources in a responsible, careful and economic way. We strongly advocate for the priority of the development of renewable energies. The deposits of carbon, oil, and gas resources are limited and their continuous utilization accelerates global warming.

We urge the withdrawal or defeat of any legislation that weakens environmental regulations of our natural resources. We oppose exploitation of our earth and support renewable energy strategies that shift away from hydrocarbon based consumption. We are called to be stewards of this earth, protecting our air, surface water and groundwater for future generations.

We, therefore, respectfully and prayerfully, urge the legislature of the State of North Carolina to defeat or rescind, or the governor to veto, any laws or action that conflict with the social principles listed above. It is our belief that all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God.