

# MODEL RESOLUTIONS FOR YOUR 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Lifewatch asks you to consider writing a resolution (or two) for life for your 2011 Annual Conference. Pray for guidance from our Lord. And pray for obedience and courage from our Lord. If you do not step forward and assume this task, who from your Annual Conference will?*

*If you indeed decide to undertake the task of writing a resolution (or two) for life, you are encouraged to use one or both of the model resolutions that follow. Remember: these model resolutions are models—only models. Go to [www.lifewatch.org](http://www.lifewatch.org). Click on “Model Resolutions.” Download them. Edit them. Lengthen them. Or shorten them. Make them your own. Shape them for your particular Annual Conference.*

*Thank you for stepping up in the courage our Lord provides and for offering witness to the Gospel of Life in your Annual Conference. (Paul T. Stallsworth)*

## **MODEL RESOLUTION I:**

### **RESOLUTION: AMEND THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE’S PARAGRAPH ON ABORTION (161J)**

WHEREAS, the Church universal through the ages has consistently witnessed and ministered, within the Church and to society, to protect the mother and unborn child from abortion;

WHEREAS, the universal Church’s witness on life and abortion is represented by The United Methodist Church’s stated belief in “the sanctity of unborn human life” and “the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child” (The Book of Discipline [2008], Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS, Paragraph 161J, as presently written, has allowed the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/Women’s Division to support pro-choice law and politics. This clearly contradicts the teaching and practice of the universal Church and The United Methodist Church’s equal respect for “the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child” (The Book of Discipline [2008], Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS, Paragraph 161J is morally inconsistent because it speaks of “the unborn child” and yet supports laws that permit abortion, which takes the life of the unborn child;

WHEREAS, the 2008 Book of Discipline’s Paragraph 161J, as amended below, can lead The United Methodist Church to rejoin historic Christianity’s teaching on life and abortion in aspiring to protect the unborn child and mother;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2011 session of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby charges its Conference Secretary, using the rationale stated above, to petition, in a timely and appropriate manner, the 2012 General Conference to amend Paragraph 161J of The Book of Discipline to read:

“(J) *Abortion*—The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child.

~~We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures.~~ We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection.

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion.

The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See Paragraph 161L.) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel.” (The Book of Discipline [2008])

## **MODEL RESOLUTION II:**

### **RESOLUTION: WITHDRAW THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FROM THE RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

WHEREAS, “RCRC [Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, originally named the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights] was founded in 1973 to safeguard the newly won constitutional right to abortion” in the United States, according to The Reverend Carlton W. Veazey, RCRC president and CEO ([www.rcrc.org/about/index.cfm](http://www.rcrc.org/about/index.cfm));

WHEREAS, RCRC lobbies to defend and expand the absolute right to abortion—that is, the right to all abortions, whatever the circumstances, without exception—in American law;

WHEREAS, a RCRC publication describes aborting unborn children as “God’s work” or “holy work, service provided by God’s people on behalf of God’s people” (RCRC, [Prayerfully Pro-Choice](http://www.rcrc.org/pdf/Prayerfully.pdf), p. 101, [www.rcrc.org/pdf/Prayerfully.pdf](http://www.rcrc.org/pdf/Prayerfully.pdf)).

WHEREAS, RCRC, in its “Words of Choice: Countering Anti-Choice Rhetoric” ([www.rcrc.org/pdf/Words\\_of\\_Choice.pdf](http://www.rcrc.org/pdf/Words_of_Choice.pdf)), argues against the following words, phrases, and moral claims found in The United Methodist Church’s central teaching on abortion ([The Book of Discipline](#) [2008], Paragraph 161J): “abortion as...birth control,” “[abortion] as...gender selection,” “adoption,” “crisis pregnancy centers,” “mother,” “notification and consent,” “partial-birth abortion” opposition, “sacredness of...life,” “sanctity of... life,” and “unborn child;”

WHEREAS, RCRC works for abortion rights in any and all circumstances, while The United Methodist Church teaches that moral discernment, on matters related to abortion, is essential; because the church is “equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child,” “cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control,” and “unconditionally reject[s] [abortion] as a means of gender selection” ([The Book of Discipline](#) [2008], Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS, RCRC has consistently lobbied government for the preservation of partial-birth abortion rights, while The United Methodist Church has since 2000 “oppose[d] the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call[s] for the end of this practice” with rare exceptions (Paragraph 161J);

WHEREAS, RCRC supported the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA, which if adopted would overturn all federal, state, and local laws restricting abortion), while The United Methodist Church’s General Board of Church and Society withdrew its support of FOCA in 2008, because The United Methodist Church’s position on abortion (Paragraph 161J of [The Book of Discipline](#) [2008]) is inconsistent with FOCA (“Living in the Truth,” [Lifewatch](#) [03/01/09], p. 6, [www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch\\_newsletter\\_03-09.pdf](http://www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-09.pdf));

WHEREAS, RCRC’s president and CEO, during the national debate on health care reform, called for the taxpayer funding of abortion: “Reproductive health care, including abortion services, is an essential component of women’s health...” (Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, [www.streetprophets.com/story/2009/7/7/15472/95013](http://www.streetprophets.com/story/2009/7/7/15472/95013), 07/07/09);

WHEREAS, Bishop Scott Jones, of the Kansas Area of The United Methodist Church, represented the position of many United Methodists when he stated: “While we United Methodists believe that persons have the right to health care, abortion is not normally a health care issue. Rather, it is sinful behavior. Proposals in the recent health care debate to provide tax funding for abortions are very misguided. What you fund with tax dollars will increase.” (“The Once and Future Church,” [Lifewatch](#) [03/01/10], p. 4, [www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch\\_newsletter\\_03-10.pdf](http://www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-10.pdf))

WHEREAS, Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker, of the Florida Area of The United Methodist Church, has declared: “At the 2004 General Conference, the church endorsed our [United Methodist] agencies’ continued participation in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice without much of a debate about how participation in this coalition compromises our public witness against abortion” (“Do No Harm!,” [Lifewatch](#) [03/01/05], p. 3, [www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch\\_newsletter\\_03-05.pdf](http://www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-05.pdf));

WHEREAS, the 2008 General Conference narrowly voted, when many African delegates were not present at the conference, to continue participation in RCRC;

WHEREAS, the “members of our denomination are not of one mind over the precise conditions in which abortion can be supported” (#2027, [The Book of Resolutions](#) [2008], p. 123), and therefore agencies of The United Methodist Church should not be permitted to join a political lobby for abortion, such as RCRC; and

WHEREAS, other mainline denominations, with positions on abortion similar to that of The United Methodist Church, have either never chosen to be members of RCRC (e.g., the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Disciples of Christ) or severed past ties with RCRC (American Baptist Churches USA and the Northern Province of the Moravian Church).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2011 session of the \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church hereby charges its Conference Secretary to forward this resolution, in a timely and appropriate manner, to the 2012 General Conference to withdraw immediately the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries/Women’s Division from membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).