



Lifewatch

Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality

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Titles and affiliations are for identification purposes only. They do not necessarily suggest institutional involvement in the work of the Taskforce.

December 3, 2017

Dear Lifewatch Friend:

Advent grace and peace to you and yours. Cindy Evans and I wish for you a season of faithful preparation for the coming of Christ.

Your gifts to Lifewatch—prayers and dollars—help to sustain a witness, a testimony, a voice for unity and truth in The United Methodist Church.

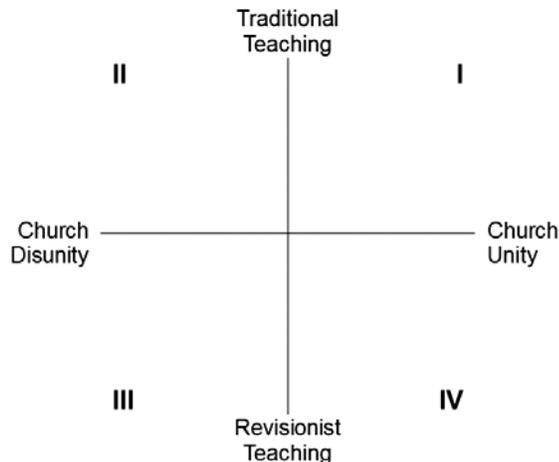
Since 1987, Lifewatch has attempted to testify to the truth of the Gospel while remaining dedicated to the unity of The United Methodist Church. Again, Lifewatch believes that truth and unity—or unity and truth—go together. Lifewatch is not committed to a unity, in the Church, that lacks truth; and Lifewatch is not committed to truth, in the Church, that is dismissive of unity. Lifewatch works for “unity and truth” in The United Methodist Church.

Again, for thirty years, Lifewatch has attempted to witness to the Gospel within The United Methodist Church. This Gospel began to spread during the Age of the Apostles. For 2,000 years, Christ’s Church has carried and transmitted, preached and taught, ministered and practiced the Gospel. This Gospel of life and love centers on Jesus Christ—whose life-giving love is sacrificial. Serving this Gospel for 2,000 years, the Church has protected unborn children and their mothers from abortion, and maintained marriage as the created context for sexual expression (in part, to protect unborn children and their mothers).

The United Methodist Church is led by some bishops and some executives who neither accept nor abide by this Gospel. They have their own gospel. Their gospel considers not only abortion but also sexual activity outside marriage as moral choices—even moral goods!

In exactly this challenging situation, Lifewatch has attempted to propose the truth in love—about the Gospel, life, and marriage—to United Methodists around the world. At times, this has made those of us standing with Lifewatch dissenters in United Methodism. Indeed, we have dissented, and will continue to dissent, from a culturally accommodated gospel, abortion acceptance, and sexual license. When dissent was called for, we have dissented, and we will dissent, by proposing the truth in love. But Lifewatch has never, ever disrupted The United Methodist Church and its conferences.

During our 30-year witness, Lifewatch has learned that truth unifies the Church and that falsehood divides the Church. Below is a graph to illustrate.



The four areas (or quadrants) of this graph suggest the following options for The United Methodist Church's future. (These options are, to a great extent, consistent with the "models" found in the Commission on a Way Forward's interim report to the Council of Bishops (November 9, 2017 press release, www.nccumc.org/bishop/bishops-uphold-values-mission-unity-space-contextuality-interim-report-way-forwards-work/, accessed on 11/10/17).

I: Unity and Tradition: Unity and Truth

General Conference 2019 maintains (and perhaps improves) The Book of Discipline's teaching on human sexuality and marriage, based on the Biblical witness and on historic Christianity's confirmation of that witness. As this teaching is proposed to the Church by the Council of Bishops and the resident bishops, the unity of the Church begins to emerge. Here, the Church opposes both division (schism is the harsher term) and false teaching (heresy is the 100-proof word). Here, respectful dissenters are welcome to remain in the Church, but disrupters must depart.

II: Disunity and Tradition: Status Quo Continued

General Conference 2019 retains traditional teaching, regarding human sexuality and marriage, in The Book of Discipline. However, the Council of Bishops and most resident bishops continue to refuse to propose this teaching to the Church. In addition, most bishops remain unwilling faithfully to uphold the discipline of the Church around these matters. This extends today's confusion in the Church into the future.

III: Disunity and Revision: Church of Choice

General Conference 2019 revises The Book of Discipline's teaching on human sexuality and marriage to please progressives. To attempt to eliminate ensuing conflict, the Church separates into an orthodox-evangelical wing and a progressive wing—so that each wing can teach, in peace, what it wants to teach. Ordination and marriage become matters of "conscience."

IV: Unity and Revision: Organization with Branches

General Conference 2019 establishes within The United Methodist Church various branches—perhaps the progressive, centrist, and evangelical-orthodox. These branches share in common some doctrine and some organizational structure (including the Council of Bishops); otherwise, they have their own distinctive teaching and practice. Clergy, laity, local churches, and annual conferences choose with which branch they would associate.

Thank you, in advance, for your gifts—your sacrificial gifts—that undergird the ministry of Lifewatch. Your response makes possible Lifewatch's witness for unity and truth within The United Methodist Church. That has been the case for 30 years.

In Christ,



(The Rev.) Paul T. Stallsworth
Pastor and Lifewatch President/Editor

YES... Continue to be a voice for unity, truth and protection of innocent human life, born and unborn, in the United Methodist Church!

Here is my gift to continue to champion within The United Methodist Church the God-given dignity of every human life:

- () One-time gift:
 - () Other: \$ _____ ()\$1000 ()\$500 ()\$250 ()\$ _____
- () Monthly gift:
 - () Other: \$ _____ ()\$100 ()\$75 ()\$50 ()\$ _____

Thank you for caring! Please mail this card as soon as possible. Make your check payable to "Lifewatch" and send it to: Lifewatch/P.O Box 306/Cottleville MO 63338.

(Although long-term support is needed, any pledge is for the period shown and is not binding. The Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality, the publisher of Lifewatch, is an unofficial movement of United Methodists founded in 1987 as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Receipts are mailed for your tax records.)

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