

# Newspirit

Special Annual Meeting Edition June 2014

## New Visions Exceeds Challenge

The New Visions campaign for church development and congregational vitality has exceeded its challenge goal. After the campaign reached its basic goal of \$300,000 during the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Conference, the Conference's Board of Directors extended the campaign and the goal in an effort to reach \$350,000. This goal has now been exceeded. The final total amount pledged to the campaign will be announced during the Conference's Annual Meeting to be held June 13-15 in Newark, DE.

The Rev. Dr. Michael C. Murphy, Senior Minister of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ and Chair of the Campaign, expressed his deep gratitude for the success of New Visions: "Every congregation and individual who has made a pledge, along with each donor of a grant to the campaign, deserves our sincerest appreciation for their support of this significant development in the life of the Conference."

Earlier this year, the Conference advertised a position for a part-time staff person in the field of new church development and congregational renewal. A search committee is currently reviewing applications for this new position. It is hoped that an individual will be named to the position within the next few months.

It is also anticipated that donors who have made pledges will honor them by the end of 2014 or very early in 2015.

Rev. Robert Peters  
New Visions Coordinator

## Annual Meeting Resolutions

The following resolutions will be considered for adoption by the Central Atlantic Conference at

its June 13-15 Annual Meeting at the University of Delaware. Please note that all three of these resolutions can be found on the Conference's

website under Annual Meeting Business Items, which can be accessed through the Annual Meeting link. Please note also that the first two of these have already received the endorsement of the Conference's Board of Directors. The third, accessed on the website under the heading Combined Resolution of Witness Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, is a joint resolution by the authors of two chronologically prior and separate resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that were also submitted for Annual Meeting and that can also be found on the website. Upon receipt of these two prior and separate resolutions, one of which is entitled Resolution of Witness Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the other Resolution of Witness and Peacemaking Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the Conference's Board of Directors recommended that the authors of the two resolutions work together to combine the distinctive strengths of their respective proposals into a unified resolution for consideration at Annual Meeting (that



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recommendation can also be found on the website). Following the Board's recommendation, the authors of the two original resolutions came together to produce such a unified resolution, which is the third and final resolution reproduced below.

***Resolution to Change the Racially  
Demeaning Name of the  
Washington National Football  
League Team***

WHEREAS, all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 27);

WHEREAS, Jesus calls us to love one another as he has loved us (John 15: 12-17);

WHEREAS, Paul admonishes us to work for peace and mutual upbuilding (Romans 14: 18-19);

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination;<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ adopted at General Synod 18 (1991) a resolution condemning negative stereotyping of Native Americans;<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS, the use of racist imagery is an affront to basic human rights, undermines basic

human dignity, and has a negative impact upon self image, self awareness, and self esteem;<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS, the use of racist language and stereotypes continues to exploit and degrade Native American culture;

WHEREAS, the abuse of Native American symbols, such as the headdress and sacred pipe, for entertainment and profit is insensitive, insulting, and an affront to Native American spirituality and is, therefore, unacceptable;

WHEREAS, not only many professional, semi-professional, amateur, collegiate, and high and grade school sports teams throughout the United States but also (and particularly egregiously) the highly visible professional football team located in our nation's capital still employs racially derogatory and demeaning symbols, mascots, and names;

WHEREAS, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "redskin" as a "usually offensive" term to describe American Indians, and this term, when used in reference to Native American cultures and people, has a history of use as a pejorative and insulting name;<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, the term "redskins" would not properly be used by a person when visiting the home of a Native American and should not be used to market a professional sports team;

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<sup>1</sup> United Church of Christ General Synod 18 Resolution, July 1991, "Negative Stereotyping of Native Americans."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>3</sup> "The Harmful Psychological Effects of the Washington Football Mascot," Michael A. Friedman, Ph.D., October 16, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> "Resolution on the Washington, D.C. Football Team Name," adopted December 12, 2013, by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (with UCC as signatory).

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WHEREAS, the use of the term “Redskins” for the team mascot and nickname of the Washington National Football League team is offensive and hurtful to many Native Americans and causes direct harmful effects to the public health and well being of the Native American population;<sup>5</sup> and

WHEREAS, every major Native American organization, along with hundreds of clergy, churches, civil rights organizations, media outlets, sports writers and journalists, authors, and elected officials (including the President of the United States), has voiced support for changing the team name;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Atlantic Conference calls upon the National Football League’s Washington franchise to change its team name and to refrain from the use of any images, mascots, or behaviors that are or could be deemed harmful or demeaning to Native American cultures or peoples;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Central Atlantic Conference will communicate in writing this resolution to the owner of the Washington National Football League team, Daniel Snyder, and to the NFL Commissioner, Roger Goodell;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Central Atlantic Conference will communicate this resolution to the clergy, churches, and members in its conference and will use other social media to publicize these concerns;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Central Atlantic Conference will communicate this

resolution to the national office of the United Church of Christ with the hope that it, in turn, will add its voice and inform the wider church;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that individual churches and members of the Central Atlantic Conference are urged to communicate their concerns regarding this matter to both the Washington National Football League team and the National Football League by writing to:

Daniel Snyder	Roger Goodell
Owner	Commissioner
Redsk*ns Park	NFL
21300 Redsk*ns Park Dr	280 Park Avenue 15 <sup>th</sup>
Ashburn, VA 20147-6100	Floor NY, NY 10017
703-726-7000	212-450-2000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that members and churches of the Central Atlantic Conference are urged to join a boycott of games played by the Washington National League Football team and not wear, display, or purchase any items with the Washington National League Football team logo until the name changes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Central Atlantic Conference supports the Oneida Indian Nation “Change the Mascot” campaign and will contact its staff to determine the best means of support and solidarity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Central Atlantic Conference calls upon other sports teams to eradicate the use of team names, images, mascots, and behaviors that are or could be deemed harmful or demeaning to Native American cultures or people.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael A. Friedman.

**Washington NFL Team con't****REFERENCES**

United Church of Christ General Synod 18 Resolution, July, 1991, "Negative Stereotyping of Native Americans"

"Negative Stereotyping As It Relates to the Native American Indian – A Position Paper for the United Church of Christ," developed and published by the Racial Justice Program of the UCC Board for Homeland Ministries, Juanita Helpfrey, Secretary for Racial Justice Programs, December 1, 1991

Position Paper of the United Church of Christ, "Negative Stereotypes, Logos and Imagery of 'Chief Wahoo/Cleveland Indians'," prepared for the Task Force to Strategize Legal Aspects, March 25, 1998

"No More Racist Sports Names!" by Juanita Helpfrey, November 2000, for *United Church of Christ News*

"The Harmful Psychological Effects of the Washington Football Mascot," by Michael A. Friedman, Ph.D., October 16, 2013

"Overture: Stereotyping Native American Names and Symbols," by the Presbyterian Church (USA), to be presented at its June 14-21, 2014, General Assembly (following on its 1999 GA resolution that called attention to the stereotyping of Native Americans in U.S. culture)

"Resolution on the Washington, D.C. Football Team Name," adopted December 12, 2013, by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (with the UCC as signatory)

"Resolution Calling on the National Football League to End the Use of the Washington D.C. Racially Offensive Slur Team Mascot Name," passed by the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) – [USET Resolution No. 2014:015 (October 31, 2013)]

ChangeTheMascot.org website of the Oneida Nation and related press releases

"Sacking the 'Redsk\*ns': Just Because Racism is 'Tradition' Doesn't Make it Right," by Peggy Flanagan, *Sojourners*, February, 2014, pp. 10-11

Encounter Gospel News: "DC Clergy Join Push to Change Redskins Name," by Erik Brady, *Religion News Service*, October 28, 2013

**This resolution has been endorsed by the Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors**

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### *Dismantling The New Jim Crow*

WHEREAS, Paul in Galatians 3:26 writes, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus," and in verse 28, he continues, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus";

WHEREAS, Paul in Galatians 5:1 declares to us that "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" and exhorts us to "Stand firm, then, and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery";

WHEREAS, the prophet Isaiah admonishes "those who make unjust laws, . . . who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed . . ." (Isaiah 10:1-2);

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WHEREAS, the acceptance of Black people of African descent, as children of God entitled to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," has been a problem for our country as manifested in the three-fifths clause of The Constitution Of The United States,<sup>1</sup> in the institution of slavery,<sup>2</sup> and in the brutal enforcement of Jim Crow laws;<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS, the will of the American people on this issue has been enunciated through the sacrifice of the Civil War, the abolition of slavery,<sup>4</sup> the amending of The Constitution,<sup>5</sup> and the overthrow of Jim Crow;<sup>6</sup>

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the manifestation of the will of the American people, the enforcement of the so-called War On Drugs has stripped and continues to deprive millions of African American men of basic rights guaranteed to other citizens of The United States;<sup>7</sup>

WHEREAS, millions of African American men are currently under control of the criminal justice system,<sup>8</sup> unable to vote or to serve on juries but able to be discriminated against legally in employment, housing, and federal assistance;<sup>9</sup>

WHEREAS, African Americans are prosecuted more often, receive longer sentences, and serve longer terms than White Americans for violations of laws prohibiting the use or distribution of drugs;<sup>10</sup>

WHEREAS, even though the rate of drug use among White and Black Americans is the same, men of color comprise sixty-six percent of people in prison for using drugs;<sup>11</sup>

WHEREAS, young African American men comprise fourteen percent of young men in The

United States, yet comprise forty percent of young men in its prisons;<sup>12</sup>

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of The United States has held that such glaring disparities are inadmissible as reasons to bring action to remedy such injustices,<sup>13</sup> even in states in which ninety percent of people imprisoned for violations of drug laws are African Americans;<sup>14</sup>

WHEREAS, General Synods of The United Church Of Christ have passed resolutions and pronouncements calling the Church to action to help find solutions to the resurgence of racism, the seemingly endless War on Drugs, the problem of mass incarceration and the growth of the prison-industrial complex, and the reality of racial and class bias in arrests and sentencing, as well as resolutions and pronouncements calling the Church to seek justice in policing, housing, and employment for people who have served felony sentences, to address inadequate legal representation for the indigent, to provide training and rehabilitation for prison inmates, and to restore voting rights for people who have served their sentences;<sup>15</sup>

WHEREAS, the War on Drugs continues, with the result that The United States, with only five percent of the world's population, incarcerates twenty-five percent of the world's prisoners, the highest percentage of incarceration in the world;

WHEREAS, in some of our largest cities, the high school dropout rate is over fifty percent;<sup>16</sup> in public schools across America, only ten percent of eighth grade Black males read at or above a proficient level;<sup>17</sup> and, in our national capital, it is predicted that **three** of every **four** young African American males can expect to serve time in prison;<sup>18</sup> and

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WHEREAS, more African American men are disenfranchised today than in 1870, the year the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified;<sup>19</sup>

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Atlantic Conference of The United Church Of Christ supports and reaffirms General Synod Resolutions and Pronouncements calling the Church to action to focus attention on, and to help find solutions for, eliminating racism in all its guises, ending the War on Drugs, stopping mass incarceration and the growth of the prison-industrial complex, ending racial and class bias in arrests and sentencing, implementing justice in policing, housing, and employment for people who have served felony sentences, addressing inadequate legal representation for the indigent, providing training and rehabilitation for prison inmates, and restoring voting rights for people who have served their sentences;<sup>20</sup>

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each association and congregation of the Central Atlantic Conference be encouraged to:

1. Educate its members how, under the New Jim Crow, African American men are being marginalized by being forced into a caste of second class citizens who have no right to vote or to serve on a jury and who are barred from receiving federal assistance or public housing;<sup>21</sup>
2. Take action to dismantle the institutional support and insidious effects of the New Jim Crow;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that new emphasis be placed on the implementation of the

Prudential Resolution, Sacred Conversations on Race, approved by General Synod 27;<sup>22</sup> and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution, if approved, be put in the proper form by the Board of Directors of The Central Atlantic Conference for submission to General Synod 30.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Const. art. 1, sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II*. (New York: Doubleday, 2008); John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. (New York: Knopf, 2008); and Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America*. (New York: Harper, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Const. amend. XIII.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Const. amend. XIV, XV.

<sup>6</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) and The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. 83-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964).

<sup>7</sup> Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. (New York: The New Press, 2010), 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Punishment and Prejudice: Racial Disparities in the War on Drugs." HRW Reports, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> The Sentencing Project – [sentencingproject.org/template/page.cfar?id=122](http://sentencingproject.org/template/page.cfar?id=122).

<sup>12</sup> The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, "Race, Ethnicity & Health Care." July, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> *McClesky v. Kemp*, 481 U.S. 279 (1989).

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch.

<sup>15</sup> "Prophetic Actions and Social Policy Statements, 1957-2011." Report to the Board of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, (March, 2012), 6,7

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Gerson, "The Overlooked Plight of Black Males." *The Washington Post*, December 13, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> US Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress.

<sup>18</sup> Michelle Alexander, 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>20</sup> "Prophetic Actions and Social Policy Statements, 1957-2011," 6.

<sup>21</sup> Michelle Alexander, 17.

<sup>22</sup> "Sacred Conversations on Race." General Synod 27, 2009.

**RESOURCES**

1. Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. 2010.
2. Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. Doubleday.
3. Gerson, Michael. "The Overlooked Plight of Black Males." *The Washington Post*, December 13, 2012.

4. "Incarceration in The United States", Wikipedia  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/incarceration\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/incarceration_in_the_United_States).
5. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. "Race, Ethnicity And Health Care." July, 2000.
6. Nagel, William G. *The New Red Barn: A Critical look at the Modern American Prison*. Walker & Co.
7. Rothman, David J. *The Discovery of the Asylum*. Google e-Book.
8. The Sentencing Project.org.
9. United Church Of Christ General Resolutions. (There are about 20)
10. United States Department of Education. "National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)."

**This resolution has been endorsed by the Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors**

## **RESOLUTION OF WITNESS REGARDING THE ISRAELI- PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

**Based on the resolution text presented by the United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network Steering Committee, modified at the request of the Central Atlantic Board to include calls for inter-religious dialogue**

The psalmist celebrates, "How good it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity." (Psalm 133) Yet today the Middle East is torn by disunity between Semitic brothers and sisters separated by "dividing walls of hostility." (Ephesians 2:14) We hear the call of the prophet Micah, "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8) As disciples of Jesus, we hear and seek to heed his call to be peacemakers:

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responding to violence with non-violence and extending love to all. In the words of the Kairos Palestine Document, "True Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples." (*Kairos-Palestine 2009: A Moment of Truth*)<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in the spirit of the ancient prophets and the ministry of Jesus, we offer this resolution:

WHEREAS, in 1985 the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ committed itself to be a Just Peace Church;<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS, historically the UCC has affirmed Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries (GS 16[1987]<sup>3</sup> and GS 18[1991]<sup>4</sup>) and asserted the rights of Palestinians to enjoy sovereignty in an independent, contiguous, and viable state of their own, within secure and recognized boundaries (GS 16 [1987], GS 17[1989],<sup>5</sup> and GS 18[1991];

WHEREAS, past General Synods have identified the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian land and its human rights abuses committed therein to be a major source of conflict and have called for the end of the construction and expansion of settlements (GS 18 [1991] and GS 21[1997]<sup>6</sup>);

WHEREAS, the UCC is deeply committed to interfaith relationships and General Synods have confessed to the sin of anti-Semitism and proclaimed its renunciation (GS 23 [2001]);<sup>7</sup> and have denounced actions against Islam or Muslims based on ignorance or fear (GS 28 [2011]);<sup>8</sup>

WHEREAS, as demonstrated through ongoing dialogue and partnerships, the UCC values and nurtures its relationships with Jewish groups in the US and Israel who seek justice, equality, and

freedom for both peoples, including groups with differing perspectives on the conflict;

WHEREAS, Palestinians in the West Bank have lived since 1967 under Israeli military occupation that subjects them to many human rights abuses, including: loss of their land for the purpose of building Israeli settlements; limited access to their land and to each other on account of the route of the Separation Wall on Occupied Palestinian Territory; systematic displacement into small, non-contiguous geographic enclaves separated by barriers and checkpoints; gross inequality in the amount of water allocated to them; severe and arbitrary travel restrictions; limited access to holy sites; segregated roads; demolition of their homes; destruction of their crops by settlers and the Israeli army; and arbitrary arrest, even of children;<sup>9</sup>

WHEREAS, the Israeli government has subjected Palestinians in Gaza to military attacks using deadly force beyond that necessary for Israel's acknowledged need for self-defense, has destroyed Gaza's infrastructure and economy, and has imposed: severe limits on personal entry and on the entry of products essential to Gazans' well-being; a six mile fishing limit in violation of international law and the Oslo accords; and strict control of electronic communications, as well as air and sea space;<sup>10</sup>

WHEREAS, Israel has annexed Palestinian East Jerusalem and separated it from the West Bank and Gaza and continues to appropriate Palestinian properties there for Jewish settlements and to deny building permits to Palestinians, as well as to revoke the residency rights of many of its Palestinian citizens there;<sup>11</sup>

WHEREAS, Israel refuses to end, but instead has sought to solidify, its occupation of territory conquered in the 1967 War, leading to numerous illegal actions and human rights abuses there by the Israeli government and military in defiance of United Nations



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resolutions,<sup>12</sup> and refuses to respect the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention as called for by the International Court of Justice in its opinion concerning the Separation Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;<sup>13</sup>

WHEREAS, our Palestinian Christian partners, seeking an alternative to violence born of hopelessness and despair, have authored *Kairos Palestine 2009-'A Moment of Truth': A Word of Faith, Hope, and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering* as a call and summons to their global partners to engage in non-violent measures that will pressure Israel to end its occupation;<sup>14</sup>

WHEREAS, the resolution "Concerning the Use of Economic Leverage in Promoting Peace in the Middle East," passed by the General Synod in 2005, calls upon "the Covenanted Ministries, Pension Boards, United Church Foundation, local churches and members to use economic leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of US foreign aid so that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained; making positive contributions to groups and partners committed to the non-violent resolution of the conflict; challenging the practices of corporations that gain from the continuation of the conflict; and divesting from those companies that refuse to change their practice of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the Occupation";<sup>15</sup>

WHEREAS, despite years of corporate engagement and the submission of shareholder resolutions from United Church Funds<sup>16</sup> and other religious and secular groups, few companies have withdrawn any of their operations that support the Occupation;

WHEREAS, Jewish groups in the US such as Jewish Voice for Peace<sup>17</sup> and American Jews for a Just Peace-Boston,<sup>18</sup> as well as Israeli groups such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions<sup>19</sup> and Coalition of Women for

Peace,<sup>20</sup> support using boycott and divestment strategies against the Israeli Occupation; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ's efforts to end the Occupation through economic leverage and advocacy for the protection of human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis are not aimed at isolating Israel or any other party but reflect the belief that engagement and communication among all affected by the current tragic situation in the Middle East are in the deepest interests of both Palestinians and Israelis;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ authorize the Board of Directors of the Conference to submit a resolution to the 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, which:

CALLS upon the churches and church members to study the *Kairos Palestine* document and take heed of its call for non-violent measures pressuring Israel to end its occupation, in solidarity with the Palestinian people;<sup>21</sup>

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board, United Church of Christ Pension Boards, United Church Funds, Conferences, local churches, members, and other related United Church of Christ entities to divest any holdings in companies that, after careful consideration, are found to profit from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel, including, but not limited to, Caterpillar Inc, Motorola Solutions, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP, G4S, and Veolia Environnement and its subsidiaries;<sup>22</sup>

CALLS upon all national entities of the church to boycott goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including, but not limited to, Ahava skin care products,<sup>23</sup> SodaStream products,<sup>24</sup> and Hadiklaim dates;<sup>25</sup>

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and upon church members to join boycotts of such goods in their local communities;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Collegium of Officers and church members to persist in the request to Congress, previously made by a number of religious leaders, to ensure that U.S. aid to Israel violates neither the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits assistance to any country that engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations, nor the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, which limits the use of U.S. weapons to “internal security” or “legitimate self-defense”;<sup>26</sup>

COMMENDS United Church of Christ leadership for continuing to dialogue with major Jewish organizations and calls for UCC-wide participation in a rigorous dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths at all levels - in particular between local congregations – in order to identify ways in which groups of congregations of different faiths can work in concert to promote sacred reconciliation among all people who are affected by the conflict in the Middle East and to influence public policies in ways that will promote peace and social justice for Palestinians and Israelis;

CALLS upon the United Church of Christ Board to monitor the implementation of this resolution by all UCC national entities and to ensure that those who manage the United Church Board’s own invested funds and who provide United Church Board employee health and pension benefits are in compliance with the resolution; and

ASKS the General Minister and President to provide an annual report to the whole church on the implementation of this resolution, including a summary of interfaith dialogue at various levels, along with examples of interfaith, congregation-to-congregation peace efforts.

IT IS UNDERSTOOD that with respect to any proposals for action contained in this resolution, the Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body; and that the funding for implementation will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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<http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> “General Synod pronouncement and proposal for action on the United Church of Christ as a ‘Just Peace Church,’”  
[//www.ucc.org/beliefs/theology/general-synod-pronouncement.html](http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/theology/general-synod-pronouncement.html)

<sup>3</sup> “The Israeli Palestinian Conflict,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1987-ip-resolution.html>

<sup>4</sup> “Consequences of the Persian Gulf War for a Just Peace Church,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1991-gulf-war-resolution.html>

<sup>5</sup> “The Middle East,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1989-mid-east-resolution.html>

<sup>6</sup> “Palestine/Israel,”  
<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/1997-palestine-israel-resol.html>

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Twenty-third General Synod, “Resolution: Anti-Semitism,” pp. 11-

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12,  
<http://www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/synod/g23.pdf>

8  
<http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/Resolution-On-Actions-of-Hostility-Against-Islam.pdf>  
 (2011)

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report, B'Tselem, "*Human Rights in the Occupied Territories 2011*,"  
[http://www.btselem.org/annual\\_report\\_2011](http://www.btselem.org/annual_report_2011)  
 and UN Human Rights Council Session 12,  
 "Human Rights in Palestine and Other  
 Occupied Arab Territories,"  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/>

<sup>11</sup> "Background on East Jerusalem,"  
 B'Tselem, [www.btselem.org/jerusalem](http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/study-israel-leads-in-ignoring-security-council-resolutions-1.31971> and

<http://www.ifamericansknew.org/stat/un.html>

<sup>13</sup> Advisory Opinion, International Court of Justice, 9 July 2004,  
 "*Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*," <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6>

<sup>14</sup>  
<http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

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<http://globalministries.org/mee/resolutions/ucc-resolutions-related-to-israelpalestine/2005-economic-leverage.html>

<sup>16</sup> United Church Funds, "*UCF Mideast Engagements*," <http://ucfunds.org/social-responsibility/corporate-engagement/economic-leverage/promoting-peace/united-church-funds-engagements/>

<sup>17</sup> [www.jvp.org](http://www.jvp.org)

<sup>18</sup> [www.ajpboston.org](http://www.ajpboston.org)

<sup>19</sup> <http://icahdusa.org/an-open-letter-from-jeff-halper/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/>

21

<http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [www.whoprofits.org](http://www.whoprofits.org) and  
<https://wedivest.org/>

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<http://www.codepink4peace.org/section.php?id=415>

<sup>24</sup> <http://sodastreamboycott.org>

<sup>25</sup> <http://whoprofits.org/company/hadiklaim-israel-date-growers-cooperative>.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from religious leaders asking Congress to condition Israel military aid on human rights compliance, dated October 2012.

<http://globalministries.org/news/mee/pdfs/Military-aid-to-Israel-Oct-1-Final.pdf>

## First Impressions

We are often told that first impressions are important. Whether or not I'm making a good first impression is up for debate among those with whom I regularly interact; however, I do know that the congregations and leaders of the Central Atlantic Conference have certainly left a good impression with me.

In my travels around Delaware and New Jersey with whose congregations I directly relate, I have found pastors of all stripes – both newer and more seasoned – to be creative, resourceful, and playful. For instance, one church is currently experimenting with men's and women's groups, while another is hosting a financial management seminar for young adults. Still another congregation is becoming a safe spot for LGBTQIA youth, while another is working out transformative youth mission trips.

The faithfulness of congregations and pastors to the vision of the gospel is inspiring and lifts my own sense of what ministry is about.

Another good first impression arises from the commitment of the Conference leadership to make its first priority the wellbeing of the congregations. Throughout Board of Director's meetings, staff meetings, and association meetings, the one common thread is service to the life and ministry of local congregations. The New Visions model calls for the local church to become the priority of the Conference staff. From what I can tell, this call is quickly informing the culture of the Conference leadership, as its questions and conversations are framed with a sense of how this or that adds value to the ministries of our pastors and our churches.

I am also duly impressed by the responsible handling of finances. Not by choice, but by assignment, I relate to the budget committee of the Board of Directors. The patience and depth of understanding that this group brings to bear on sound finances is something to which I have been unaccustomed – which tells you something about the budgets I've dealt with in the past. Here in the Central Atlantic Conference, there is an understanding of how budgets function in the service of ministry and a courage to align the Conference budget accordingly while employing sound principles and policies.

Finally, and I say this with all genuineness, it is a joy to work with the other Ministry Team members. I couldn't do my job half as well without the support of Beth Pugh, Administrative Assistant in the New Jersey office. I also appreciate the support of Angela Megna, Administrative Assistant, and Arnetta Jones, Executive Administration Assistant, both in the Baltimore office. Marie Bacchiocchi (the other "new" Associate Conference Minister) has been a wealth of insight and laughter. Kwame Osei Reed, Associate Conference Minister, and John Deckenback, Conference Minister, both bring a rich knowledge and understanding that keeps me grounded. The CAC certainly has a dedicated Ministry Team.

I had a friend who always ended his emails with these words – "Thank you for the privilege of serving you." This sentiment seems to me to be a wonderful way to summarize my first impressions of the CAC: what a privilege it is to be an Associate Conference Minister for you!

Rev. David K. Popham  
Associate Conference Minister

## A Brief History of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in America

The Evangelical and Reformed Church in the US really has two sides and spans three distinct periods in American history.

The “colonial” period applies to the German Reformed tradition. German Reformed immigrants came to America in the colonial era and settled in 1710 in the Carolinas, Maryland, Virginia, New York, and New Jersey; most of them were laborers, tradesmen, and farmers. Both the Lutheran and Reformed sides of the tradition displayed their common heritage by erecting common-use church facilities that served both congregations (many of these shared facilities exist to this day).

The German Reformed Church did not spread as easily in the colonies as other Protestant traditions, primarily on account of language barriers and the lack of an ordained clergy. As a result, family life – centered around biblical readings, prayer devotionals, and catechetical instruction – became the chief means of personal piety. Finally, with the help of the Dutch Reformed Church, ordained clergy were sent and the Church began to expand. In 1748, we see the first *Kirchenordnung*, which gave structure to the German Reformed people. In 1790, we see the rise of parish schools and the impact of an educated clergy, both facilitated by the assistance of English Congregationalists.

The “national” period soon followed that included both the established Reformed and the newly arrived Evangelicals, who comprised a “united” church including both Lutherans and Reformed. Again, growth was slower in comparison with other Protestant traditions on account of linguistic, cultural, and (clergy)

educational impediments. In 1825, however, a seminary was formed in Carlisle, PA, that later was moved to Mercersburg and finally to Lancaster.

During this period, coincident with the Second Great Awakening, personal, spiritual zeal was rampant in frontier America. As may be expected, the experience of a Church based in worship, sacraments, and catechism did not mesh well with the religious enthusiasm of the Awakening. One response to such enthusiasm was the Mercersburg Movement, an attempt to revive the church not through personal experience but through sacraments and worship.

Evangelicals, however, differed from their Reformed counterparts in their acceptance of personal faith experience and their suspicion of church structure and governance. Also, unlike the Reformed, they moved mainly to the western frontier (although some stayed near port cities).

1840 brought the *Kirchenverein des Westens* (the official start of the German Evangelical Church); 1850 saw the formation of Eden, the first Evangelical Seminary. One of the most significant accomplishments of the Evangelicals was the ministry of Louis Nollau, a pastor in St Louis, who began orphanages and hospitals modeled on the German *Diakonie* (the Deaconess movement).

The “union” period of E&R history encompasses the twentieth century. Union talks between these two great traditions, as well as the United Brethren and the Evangelical Association, began before World War I. Out of these talks, two mergers occurred: one officially in 1934 between the Evangelical Synod and the German Reformed Churches and the other between the

### E & R Churches in America con't

United Brethren and the Evangelical Association (the latter producing the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which later became the "United" in United Methodist). The union of the Evangelical Synod and the German Reformed Churches has gifted the UCC a legacy of personal witness and experience of a relationship with God in Jesus Christ (its Evangelical ideals) as expressed in and through an order of church life and a passion for evangelical catholicity (its Reformed ideals).

Rev. Dr. Rob Apgar-Taylor  
Pastor, Grace UCC, Frederick, MD &  
Veritas UCC, Hagerstown, MD

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## Conference Minister's Corner

### A Visit with our German Partners May 2014

#### The origins of our partnership

The United Church of Christ in the USA (UCC) and the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU) have enjoyed a special ecumenical partnership which dates back more than thirty years. (Indeed, at the partnership's inception, Germany was divided and the world was in the midst of the Cold War.) The UCC and the EKU incorporate in their unique mixes congregations (and regions) that are both Lutheran and Reformed in background.

In the late 1980s, the Board of Directors of the UCC's Central Atlantic Conference expressed a desire to develop a partnership with a region of the German church. Correspondence was initiated with the Evangelical Church of the Church Province of Saxony (*Evangelische Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen* or KPS) in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR or East Germany), which is about two hours

southwest of Berlin by car. Rev. Fred Wenner, former Conference Moderator and pastor of Evangelical Reformed UCC in Frederick, MD, and I (as the recently arrived Conference Minister) made an exploratory trip to Germany in 1993. We were warmly greeted by KPS' ecumenical officer Matthias Sens.

Over the years, there have been a number of exchange activities including:

- Youth work camps
- Vicar visits and residencies in the US
- Sabbaticals hosted in Wittenburg and Lancaster
- Choir visits
- Delegations to CAC Annual Meetings, KPS Synods, UCC General Synods, and *Kirchentags* (literally, "church day" festivals)
- Private family visits
- European church summits on environmental concerns (Associate Conference Minister Marie Bacchiocchi recently attended one such summit)
- Joint work camps (most recently, the Catocin trips to build homes in Honduras)

As the years have progressed, KPS has experienced many challenges and changes. German reunification is still an unfinished task in many of the villages. KPS, a united Lutheran and Reformed Synod, has merged with its Turingan neighbors, who are primarily Lutheran. The merger has resulted in a merged church administration in one city, while the Bishop of the renamed EKM (*Evangelische Kirche in Mitteldeutschland* or Evangelical Church in Central Germany) resides in another. Demographically, this region of the former GDR continues to lose population as many leave for employment and other opportunities elsewhere.

Within the larger German context, the EKU (Lutheran/Reformed) has merged with others,

## German Partners con't

including primarily Lutheran regions, to form the new EKD (*Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* or Evangelical Church in Germany). Additional mergers to create a larger, "united" church may be on the horizon. In short, the Protestant Church in Germany, with its numerous city and village congregations, continues to evolve.

Five years ago, I traveled to Magdeburg for the installation of Ilse Junkerman as Bishop of the newly forming EKM. Two years later, Bishop Junkerman and a delegation participated in the Central Atlantic Conference's Annual Meeting.



Bishop Junkerman in Turgina

After Fred Wenner's retirement, Ken Daniels and most recently Rob Apgar-Taylor have provided leadership for the CAC's portion of the partnership. Jens Lattke is the current EKM ecumenical officer and was my host for a full week of activities.

### **May 14 – 21, 2014 included:**

- Visiting Matthias Sens and his wife Regina at their retirement home in Magdeburg

- Enjoying a walking tour and an afternoon conversation in Wittenburg with local church leaders
- Participating in Frederick Scholermer's seventieth birthday party at the Evangelical Academy in Wittenburg (Scholermer is well known for his often barbed social/political/theological critiques)
- Dialoguing with the EKM - CAC Working Group regarding prospects for continued activities
- Accompanying Bishop Junkerman to the dedication of church and civic exhibits in Thuringa depicting the life and work of George Spalatin, who served as an intermediary between Martin Luther and various political powers at the time of the Reformation
- Exploring ways in which the UCC (especially the CAC) might participate in the 2017 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation celebrations in Germany with church leaders and the State of Saxony's Minister of Culture Stephan Dorgerloh (the former head of the Evangelical Academy in Wittenberg)



## German Partners con't

- Participating in the ordination of seventeen men and women as pastors of the EKM during Sunday morning worship.
- Visiting with church leaders and families impacted by the historic Elbe River floods a year ago.
- Riding to the top of an extended fire truck ladder under the supervision of EKM District Superintendent Michael Kleemann, a chaplain and volunteer firefighter (after 9/11, we gave his department a NYFD cap, which is on display at the Stendal firehouse)
- Visiting the home of, as well as some of the eleven village congregations being served by, Thomas Vesterling, now a pastor who - as a vicar - spent a year in the CAC
- Enjoying the music of Mozart and Hayden at three concerts, two of which were in church buildings (including St. Matthias, the church that hosted Detrick Bonhoeffer's ordination in 1934)



Jens Lattke, EKM District Superintendent, and Michael Kleeman

In Wittenburg, many of the historic buildings are being restored in anticipation of the 2017 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The historic *Schloskirche* (the castle church with its famous door) is currently surrounded by scaffolding, as is the equally historic *Stadtkirche* (city center church) a few blocks away.



The Castle Church is getting ready for company in 2017 . . .

Some of the specific proposals our German partners and I discussed included:

- Joint study trip(s) to Israel-Palestine
- An invitation to Bishop Junkerman to participate in the 2017 UCC General Synod in Baltimore



## German Partners con't



In the courtyard of an historic monastery

- A delegation (perhaps UCC as well as CAC) to the Reformation celebrations in 2016 or 2017
- Opportunities for residency at Lancaster Theological Seminary and/or Howard School of Divinity
- Continuation of the joint work groups to Honduras as well as other work camps in Germany and the US
- Collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Delaware and Maryland (the ELCA partnership with a Synod in Pennsylvania is not currently active)

A special bonus of the trip was the chance to see two former KPS Bishops, Frederick Dempke and Alex Noak. And, in a delightful surprise, retired Berlin Bishop Martin Huber was in attendance at the concert at St. Matthias.

The tremendous hospitality I experienced was topped off by two nights and a day with long-time ECU collaborators Helmut and Erika Reihlen at their home in Berlin. Helmut was President (*Presse*) of the Berlin-Brandenburg (West) Synod of the ECU during the period encompassing the fall of the Wall. A layperson and engineer professionally, he was head of the German Institute for Standards (DIN). More

recently, he served as Curator of the efforts to restore the Brandenburg Cathedral. Erika, a retired children's dentist, has engaged in a long string of church and civic activities, including participating in Protestant-Catholic dialogue and serving as head of the nation-wide *Kirchentag*.

### **Concluding reflections:**

As previously mentioned, the EKM is faced with declining demographics. It is also the caretaker of a rich legacy of village churches and chapels, many of which were not fully restored following World War II and the subsequent Cold War. The CAC also must deal with its own demographic challenges and caretaker responsibilities. On both sides of the Atlantic, we are faced with the question of what "being church" means in the context of a highly secularized society. What can we learn together?

Trips such as the one I have documented here are important for facilitating such mutual instruction. And the fruitfulness of my visit suggests that the relationship with our church partners in Germany continues to hold great promise for shared self-discovery and self-understanding.

Rev. Dr. John Deckenback  
Conference Minister

## **We have Not Forgotten: The CAC Continues to Minister to Victims of Hurricane Sandy**

Please click on the link below to read an article from NorthJersey.com about how the CAC in general and Rutherford Congregational Church in particular continues to serve those who are still recovering from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy.

<http://www.northjersey.com/community-news/rutherford-congregational-church-aids-sandy-volunteers-1.645922>



## **Transitions and Passages**

### **▣ Transitions ▣**

Rev. Robert Ridenour – Retired

Rev. James DeBoer, Pastor – The Federated Church of Livingston, Livingston, NJ

Rev. David Lindsey, Pastor – Little River UCC, Annandale, VA

Rev. Joel Walkley, Pastor – Grace UCC, Mt. Jackson, VA

### **▣ Passages ▣**

Mrs. Peggy Winters, wife of Rev. Richard Winters, March 20

Rev. John F. Fitzgerald, April 15

Mr. William (Bill) Federici Sr., father of Rev. Bill Federici, April 22

Rev. Charles Jenkins, April 24

Mr. Robert (Bob) Rhodes, husband of Rev. Barbara Rhodes, April 26

Rev. Elizabeth (Betty) Baggarly, May 4

Mr. Don Roberts, May 24