

WE CONFESS

Newsletter of the Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church



FINAL EDITION

A NEW SEASON BRINGS CHANGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Dear Supporter of the Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church,

The often-quoted words of Ecclesiastes remind us that in God's providence we experience many seasons of life. The Teacher writes, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, ... a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them (Eccl. 3:1)" The apostle Paul was deeply aware that his ministry was an "appointed season." Paul described this season by saying that God "brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior." (Titus 1:3)

God called forth the Confessing Movement for a season in the life of The United Methodist Church. That season was stormy. Doctrinal winds were blowing that were contrary to the fresh winds of the Holy Spirit. Disturbing rumblings were felt as foundational teachings of the historic Christian faith were questioned by those who challenged the authority of Scripture, the deity of Jesus Christ, the Trinity, the atonement and power of the cross, and even the truth of the empty tomb of Jesus.

In this season, the Confessing Movement stepped forward to boldly defend the "faith once delivered to the saints." For more than twenty-five years the Confessing Movement honored the purpose statement adopted at its inception:

"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."

The Board of Directors of the Confessing Movement celebrates the work accomplished at every level of The United Methodist Church to bring doctrinal renewal and spiritual vitality.

Now The United Methodist Church has entered a new season, a season of dividing. We are witnessing what one pastor calls "mitosis," division in to two new cells. The division of the United Methodist cell already has seen the birth of an exciting new expression of our Wesleyan/Methodist heritage through the Global Methodist Church. The Board of Directors of the Confessing Movement looks forward with hope and joy as we witness the ways God's Spirit is at work in the emerging Global Methodist Church.

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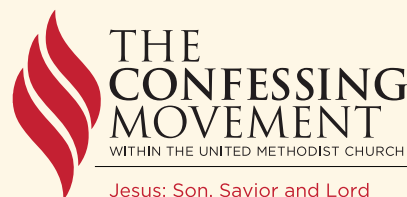
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At the same time, this new season brings other changes. Many who have been faithful supporters and encouragers of the Confessing Movement, both lay and clergy, are investing energy and resources to shape and encourage the growth of this new Methodism. This has had a financial impact on the Confessing Movement and other renewal efforts across the UMC.

Our new season with its accompanying realities has prompted the Board of the Confessing Movement to reflect on our own future as a renewal group. *After this reflection, the Board has determined that the season for our own work as a movement has ended. Effective December 31, 2022, the Confessing Movement will cease our structural operations, while continuing in prayer for the renewal of The United Methodist Church.*

The board acknowledges and celebrates the work of our founding visionaries; encourage our supporters to join us in celebrating our years of support of local congregations, pastors, and laity; express joy in the leadership we have received from Executive Director, Patricia Miller, and our dedicated staff; and commit to join and continue the work of others seeking denominational renewal.

Thank you to each of you for your faithful and generous support of the Confessing Movement over many years. Without your prayers, energy, encouraging words and financial support the Confessing Movement could not have had the impact across the UMC that God has permitted us to have.

Between now and the end of 2022 we will continue support of congregations and pastors, as well as engage the complex work of closing down operations. That includes closing our office, supporting staff as they find the next steps in their journey, making effective use of remaining inventory of resources and, importantly, transferring our records to the United Methodist Archives so our ministry together will be documented as a part of Methodist history.

Because there will be considerable “closing costs,” we are asking for one final contribution from each of you. We are challenging our contributors to join together to give \$25,000 to assist in continuing our support of vital ministries and complete the work of closure. All funds will be used for renewal ministries.

Our unending praise goes to our heavenly Father for empowering us to serve these many years for the renewal of the church. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to each of you for your partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that you may experience the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit each day. ■

Please Consider Making One Last Donation Today:

- Make checks payable to:
The Confessing Movement, 7995 E 21st St,
Indianapolis, IN 46219
- Online at www.confessingumc.org
- Call the office with a credit card at 317.356.9729.





Bishop William R. Cannon



Dr. Thomas C. Oden



Rev. William H. Hinson



Dr. John Ed Mathison



Dr. Ira Gallaway

JOY AND SADNESS ARE OFTEN COMPANIONS

BY DR. MAXIE DUNNAM

I'm grateful for my long life (88 years), and for 70 of those years in ministry. I can't imagine how my life and ministry could have been richer.

At my age, I believe most of us do a lot more reflecting than we have done through the years. That certainly is my case, and it doesn't help to excuse myself by claiming I've been too busy to reflect.

When I remember and reflect, I realize *joy and sadness are often companions*. The "winding down" of the Confessing Movement is an example of that. There is a deep sadness as I contemplate the fact that we are seeking to close our work as *The Confessing Movement Within The United Methodist Church*. But there is pronounced joy as I reflect on our ministry.

I remember how overwhelmed I was when I was invited by a group of Good News board members to discuss the theological crisis in the Church, and to explore the possibility of a different approach to renewal. My being overwhelmed was flavored with joy when they were specifically asking me to join Bishop William Cannon and Dr. Tom Oden in leading that effort. The Confessing Movement is the result.

What joy is mine when I reflect on those early months in 1993. Some of my pastor heroes, Bill Hinson, John Ed Mathison, and Ira Gallaway, joined Bishop Cannon, Dr. Oden and me in a "Consultation on the Future of the Church," a national meeting, in April, 1994. Out of that gathering came plans for an ongoing movement to advance doctrinal renewals, later named *The Confessing Movement Within The United Methodist Church*. The Movement was established to help retrieve and celebrate the Church's classic Biblical



Dr. Maxie Dunnam

and doctrinal identity, and to live it out together as followers of Jesus Christ.

It could be said that the new *Global Methodist Church* is a climactic expression of our work with other renewal groups, thus my joy. And my sadness? Though some of the persons instrumental in it all are rejoicing in heaven, I don't have them here to celebrate my "earthly" joy.

In a sense, I am coming full circle of joy and sadness: sharing in the establishment of the Confessing Movement, and now serving as President during our closing months. As we have provided leadership, theological reflection, sought denominational renewal and committed ourselves to proclaim Jesus Christ as Son, Savior, and Lord, we close singing, MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED! ■





IT HAS BEEN A GOOD RUN – REFLECTIONS ON 27 YEARS WITH THE CONFESSING MOVEMENT

BY DR. RILEY B. CASE



Dr. Riley B. Case



The United Methodist Church in the 1980s was facing a crisis. This crisis had numerous components. The Methodist-EUB merger (1968-1972) produced a top-heavy bureaucracy loaded with liberal staff and leadership, and with inadequate accountability. An unwieldy quota system produced over-sized boards.

UM seminaries were dominated by progressive faculty. Accountability systems for clergy and episcopal leaders were weak. But, for evangelicals the most critical difficulty, and the one at the root of many others, was identified as the weakened understanding of Scriptural authority and the abandonment of sound doctrine.

First Steps Toward a New Movement

One night Ira Gallaway, pastor of First Church, Peoria, Illinois, had a vision of the importance of affirming the historic faith of the church. He approached some friends who shared his concerns and vision: Bill Hinson of First Church Houston, John Ed Mathison of Frazer Memorial Church, Montgomery, Gerald Trigg of First Church, Colorado Springs, Maxie Dunnam of Christ Church Memphis, Ellsworth Kalas of Church of the Savior, Cleveland, and James Buskirk of First Church, Tulsa. These pastors agreed something should be done. In late 1987, with the 1988

General Conference on the horizon, they invited influential evangelicals and moderates to a gathering in Houston, Texas. Eighty-seven persons showed up and developed a document, authored primarily by Geoffrey Wainwright of Duke Divinity School. Known as the “Houston Declaration,” it affirmed the authority of Scripture and traditional Wesleyan doctrine. It was mailed to 55,000 clergy and lay leaders. Ninety-five hundred clergy and 7,000 lay leaders responded. Ninety-four percent were supportive. A paid ad in the *United Methodist Reporter*, generated another 58,000 responses, nearly all positive.

Interest in the Houston Declaration signaled a seismic shift in the Church, and revealed that sound doctrine was a concern not only for Good News and a small minority of United Methodists, but for many UMs. I remember that support for the Houston Declaration was the subject of a petition to my annual conference. The petition was approved by a large majority.



In January, 1992, the Houston group assembled again, this time in Memphis. A second statement, “The Memphis Declaration,” was released to be circulated in preparation for the 1992 General Conference. This statement was signed by nearly 200,000 pastors and lay persons. In addition to sound doctrine, the Memphis Declaration affirmed Biblical language and images, called for reducing General Agencies and abolishing the General Council on Ministries, moving the Board of Global Ministries from New York, upholding the Biblical understanding of Christian marriage, and maintaining the prohibition of homosexual practice. This time a number of moderates were less supportive because of the “political” agenda.

The Birth of The Confessing Movement

The core of the Houston group met again at a “Consultation on the Future of the Church” in Atlanta in April 1994. This time there were new faces, including some key Good News board

members and five bishops. It was at this gathering that the idea of a Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church was conceived.

A year later, in April 1995, an “Invitation to the Church” was issued for another gathering in Atlanta. Nine hundred persons assembled. With a resounding affirmation the Confessing Movement was launched! The body affirmed our Confessional Statement declaring Jesus Christ as Son, Savior and Lord. The first published pamphlet set the purpose for the new movement.

The Confessing Movement will contend for the apostolic faith within The United Methodist Church. The Confessing Movement will seek to proclaim and reaffirm the church’s ancient ecumenical faith in Wesleyan terms within United Methodism.

As one who attended most of these gatherings, I remember the excitement. Something good was happening to The United Methodist Church. Could it be that renewal was really on the way? The bold affirmations of faith were a sign as to how far the church had changed since thirty years earlier when the Good News movement was conceived. Sound doctrine would now be a matter for serious discussion in the church as traditional, orthodox United Methodists confronted the progressive drift so evident in UM seminaries, and embedded in boards and agencies of the church.

The Impact of The Confessing Movement

The Confessing Movement arrived on the scene at the right time and hit the ground running. The first full-time director was Senator Patricia Miller, a state senator from Indiana. The choice was a wise one for several reasons. Patricia Miller was a lay person in an

organization dominated by clergy; as a state senator she was skilled in politics; she was a woman in an organization dominated by men. Most of all she was a capable administrator focused on serving Christ and the church.

As the word got out about the Confessing Movement, individuals and churches began to sign on as supporters. By 2004 1,415 churches, 4,377 clergy and 643,000 laity had aligned themselves with the Confessing Movement. For a number of years the annual Confessing Movement Conferences drew over 1,000 each year. Pamphlets, booklets, and serious papers on doctrine were issued. Yet, across the years of ministry of the Confessing Movement, a charge was never made to the users of our printed resources. Those costs were covered by the generous support of contributors.

Annual Conference Confessing Movement Groups sprang up in many annual conferences across the United Methodist connection. Educational and training conferences for young pastors called the Epworth Institute were funded by Christ Church Memphis and led by the Confessing Movement.

The Confessing Movement has always had a concern for the health and strength of the UM Church around the globe. Out of this concern, grants and gifts were given to support the needs of United Methodist persons here and abroad including but not limited to ILI/Africa Initiative and educational scholarships.

As a partner in the Renewal and Reform Coalition in the UMC, the Confessing Movement had significant impact on the decisions of the General Conference. The work of this

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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THANK YOU ! THANK YOU ! THANK YOU !

There is no way I can adequately thank you for your years of prayers and support. Your notes, letters, emails, and phone calls with encouraging words as well as your generous financial support of The Confessing Movement have been the backbone of this ministry. The Confessing Movement has touched churches, clergy, and the lives of thousands of people with the truth of the Scriptures and the orthodox Christian faith recognized for over 2000 years.

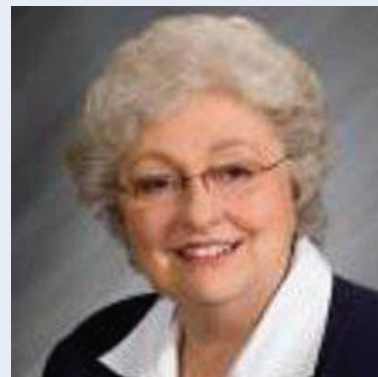
When I was hired as the Executive Director in 1997, I had no idea what was to follow. My life has been blessed beyond my imagination. You have been a part of blessing me. I have met and served with the great theologians and leaders of not only The United Methodist Church but the world. These men and women of faith will continue to teach and lead.

While my role with the Confessing Movement is ending, my experience with Methodism will not. I love the Wesleyan faith and the ministry of John Wesley. There are many new opportunities ahead for all of us. I encourage you to join me in the new Methodist movement.

My prayers will continue to lift up Jesus Christ as Son, Lord, and Savior.

May God bless you always,

Patricia L. Miller, Executive Director



Patricia L. Miller



**Confessing Movement Display
at General Conference**



**Epworth Institute Participants
at Lake Junaluska**

WESLEYAN COVENANT ASSOCIATION

In July of 2022, the WCA launched the **No Church Left Behind Fund**. This fund “will provide block grants to the WCA’s regional chapters to better empower them to ensure every church that wants to depart The UMC can do so.”

If your church is struggling with how to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church with the heavy financial burden being imposed, be sure to visit **www.wesleyancovenant.org** to find out how they may be able to assist.

It is our earnest prayer that these resources will help free churches to fulfill their true Biblical mission and purpose outside of The United Methodist Church.



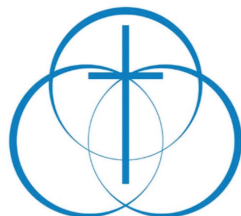
GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

I would encourage anyone planning to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church to prayerfully consider becoming part of the Global Methodist Church. As a member of the Transitional Leadership Council I am proud to be part of the body of believers whose vision is “to join God in a journey of bringing new life, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ to all people, and to helping each person reflect the character of Christ.”

For more detailed information visit the website at **www.globalmethodist.org**.

Executive Director, The
Confessing Movement within
The United Methodist Church

Member, Transitional
Leadership Council of the
Global Methodist Church



GLOBAL
METHODIST CHURCH

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coalition has been critical in giving witness to “the faith once delivered to the saints,” maintaining the traditional stance on human sexuality, electing evangelical persons to the Judicial Council, and calling for Scriptural accountability across the UMC. Patricia Miller participated in the Bishops’ Commission on a Way Forward. As the reality of the need for a separation in the UMC became clearer, she was invited to represent the Confessing Movement in the discussions called by the late Bishop Yambasu. The Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation, negotiated by this group, appeared for a time to offer a way of truly amicable separation and birth of a new Methodism. Unfortunately, a global pandemic and opposition from denominational leaders delayed the opportunity for General Conference to enact the needed legislation.

A Lasting Contribution

A new expression of Wesleyan theology and our Methodist heritage is in its formative stages. The journey has been filled with many challenges and turns in the road. Yet, at every step of the way, the Confessing Movement has been privileged to be called by God to join with other individuals and groups in giving witness to the strength and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most specifically the Spirit of God called the Confessing Movement to uphold and proclaim the sound doctrine handed down over the centuries by prophets, evangelists, apostles, pastors and teachers — both lay and clergy. Together with supporters from around the world, the Confessing Movement has faithfully proclaimed Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior, and Lord! I am grateful to God to have been on the journey. ■





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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.



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