



THE VOTE IS OVER AND OUR WORK CONTINUES

by Dr. Buddy Cooper

The Church is an anvil that has worn out many hammers, and we will wear this one out too! It has only been thirty-six years since the assault began in 1972 upon the United Methodist Church by those who would reshape her in the image of our culture. We are only getting our second wind! Split the church? We have just begun to find the ways God will use us to convert those lost in the sin of homosexuality. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."

Let us show the power of Godly love and truth! Truth will triumph. A lie can take you a long way in this world, but it won't take you home. It is time to "act as if..."

- As if God is the one true Judge

- As if we have been commanded to love our enemies, especially those within our own family!

- As if we believe that we know how the story ends...Our God reigns!

- As if the power of love is greater than the power of sin.

- As if the Church, most powerful under persecution, will rise to this challenge to Our Lord's authority

- As if the battle is the Lord's and ours is the ministry of and to sinners

- As if every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord

- As if our faithfulness and patient endurance will not lead to endless conflict, but to victory

- As if our struggle and society's focus upon us is a stage from which the hope of the world is proclaimed

As if we understand our own sinfulness and our need to abide in Christ Jesus daily

And it is time to stop "acting as if..."

- As if God shares our fears

- As if anything can split the Church of Jesus Christ

- As if discovering sin among us silences our witness

- As if a museum of saintly perfection ever drew the world to Jesus

- As if we might lose anything of God by embracing sinners and calling them to join us in sincere repentance

(Continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **A Word from Dr. Buddy Cooper**
- **Expressing Christian Love by Dr. Bill Bouknight**
- **Celebration Women's Ministry by Judy Graham**

GARRISON KEILLOR ON METHODISTS

Just For Fun!

"We make fun of Methodists for their blandness, their excessive calm, their fear of giving offense, their lack of speed, and also for their secret fondness for macaroni and cheese. But nobody sings like them. If you were

to ask an audience in New York City, a relatively Methodist-less place, to sing along on the chorus of 'Michael Row the Boat Ashore,' they will look daggers at you as if you had asked them to strip down to

their underwear. But if you do this among Methodists, they will smile and row that boat ashore and up on the beach!...and then down the road!"



“We must remember who we are, Whose we are, and what is expected of us.”

The Vote is Over, B. Cooper (continued from page 1)

- As if we cannot love those presently lost in their sins
- As if Paul were right in dropping John Mark
- As if Barnabas were wrong to pick him up As if we do not know how the story ends...our God reigns!

I wholeheartedly believe that we should continue to proclaim the Gospel that justifies sinners and that we should resist every attempt to be led into the justification of any sin. Our calling is twofold. It is to seek the lost and through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, bring them into the fellowship of His disciples and under the discipline of His Church, and to offer ministries that will confirm and retain those of us within His Church, who, having been converted and are now going on to perfection, by our continuing to abide in the community of Jesus Christ known as the United Methodist

Church. God’s will is that none be lost.

Our work is not near done in His world. General Omar Bradley was right, “We do not set our course by the light of every passing ship, but by the stars.” We must remember who we are, Whose we are, and what is expected of us. We love saying “yes” to our brothers and sisters, but we must never forget that sometimes saying “no” is a sign of a higher unity: the unity of sinners trying to help other sinners, so that none be lost. Do not despair. The Triune God who only is God reigns!

There is no sin in heaven and there is nothing to be against in His Kingdom fully come. Pray that we do not become, as Fred Craddock once said, “strangers in paradise, yearning for the fight, finding nothing to be against, and unable to rest in His Peaceable Kingdom.” All is not lost, but we can be, if we

give up speaking the truth in love. Prodigals are a part of every family on earth and by them our love is perfected. Unity only exists where the love for sinners overcomes the hatred of their sin, not where denial, silence, and making nice counterfeit unity’s genuine peace.

May the mind of Christ lead us into all truth and may His Spirit renew our resolve to never be the cause of any brother or sister stumbling in his or her Christian walk. Join me in praying that the Cross of Jesus Christ will be lifted up and draw the whole world to Him.

This is my prayer for us all. Amen. •

Rev. Buddy Cooper is the Senior Pastor at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Columbus, Georgia. He also serves on the board of The Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church.

EXPRESSING CHRISTIAN LOVE TOWARD A HOMOSEXUAL

Every person is priceless in the sight of God, and we Christians are under a mandate to love other persons even as we are loved by God. “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love...Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (I John 4:8, 21) God’s love for us did not stop because of our sin. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

All of us (heterosexuals, homosexuals, and bisexuals) are sinners. None of us is good enough to be saved without a Savior, and none of us is so bad as to be outside the reach of the Savior’s love.

Christian love (agape) is a decision, not an emotion. Agape is the effort of a Christian, equipped with a changed heart and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, to do what is wisest and best for another person.

When agape is directed toward a self-avowed, practicing homosexual, two attitudes should be eliminated immediately:

1. Treating the homosexual with contempt or disdain. After all, their expression of sin is no better or worse than mine, and I have been forgiven.
2. Distorting the biblical message in order to tell the homosexual what they may want to hear-- that homosexual conduct is acceptable by God. Genuine agape never distorts

Dr. Bill Bouknight
UM Pastor, retired
Memphis Annual
Conference



or disagrees with biblical truth. Only the most strained and tortured exegesis of Scripture can produce a biblical blessing for any context for sexual activity other than the marriage covenant of husband and wife. God does not bless things that he wants to transform.

How then should a Christian relate to a self-avowed, practicing homosexual? This question is urgent because most Christians know people who are homosexual. In my forty-one years of ministry, I have listened to their stories and experiences and have learned much about their living. First, if one wants to express agape love toward another person, one must build a friendship with that person. Because many homosexuals lead a lonely existence, the friendship of opposite-gender persons is especially important. So, from this point on I will refer to the object of our agape love as “friend.”

First, I offer this list of “Don’ts”:

1. Don’t beat your friend over the head with the Bible. Don’t be condescending. Remember, all of us are sinners.
2. Don’t assume that your friend will be offended by Scripture. Scripture affirms and convicts all persons, but even God’s convicting word points us toward the ultimate good news of salvation.
3. Don’t offer advice unless and until your friend asks for it.
4. Don’t ask unnecessary questions lest you violate your friend’s privacy.
5. Don’t assume that your friend will fit some cultural stereotype of a homosexual.
6. Don’t give up on your friend if he/she disagrees with you or even becomes angry with you. Real friendship includes patience and understanding.

Secondly, I offer this list of “Do’s”:

1. Protect confidences and confidential information.
2. Defend your friend if he/she is harassed or discriminated against.
3. Listen well.
4. Pray regularly for and with your friend.
5. Invite your friend to worship and attend Sunday School with you if he/she does not have a church home.
6. Once you have developed real friendship and trust, gently and prayerfully point out to your friend the Scriptural passages relating to sexuality. Real friends warn their friends of danger. Those Scriptural passages are the following: Genesis 1:27-28, 2:20b-25, 19:1-29; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Judges 19:22-26; Matthew 19:4-6, 11-12; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20; Romans 1:26-27; I Thessalonians 4:1-7; and Jude 1:7.
7. If your friend is willing to read about the church’s historic convictions concerning homosexuality/lesbianism, recommend “The Bible and Homosexual Practice,” by Robert A.J. Gagnon (Nashville: Abingdon) and “Staying the Course,” edited by Maxie D. Dunnam and H. Newton Malony (Nashville: Abingdon).

Your first responsibility to any friend (and the truest expression of agape love) is to help your friend know and serve Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Without being intrusive or judgmental, try to discern whether your friend is in a committed relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Once a person is in such a relationship, they are usually so grateful to God that they are eager to conform their worldview and behavior to Christian standards. Then if your friend expresses a desire to be liberated from same-sex attraction or unwanted homosexuality, you have permission to assist them. You can help connect your friend to a responsible, Christian therapy group. Exodus International has support groups, affiliated counselors and an association of biblically faithful churches all over the world. Their toll-free number is 888-264-0877. Another resource is Homosexuals Anonymous (<http://www.ha-fs.org/>) which is a 14-step, Christ-centered program that is similar in methodology to Alcoholics Anonymous.

If your friend simply wants your support in trying to live as a chaste single, you can and should provide such support.

As you walk alongside your friend, supporting and praying for him, you will be expressing agape love. •

“Your first responsibility to any friend (and the truest expression of agape love) is to help your friend know and serve Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.”

Please make note of our new email address. You can now contact The Confessing Movement at cm@confessingumc.org.



Celebrating 10 Years in Ministry!

Judy C. Graham,
is President and
Co-Founder of
Celebration
Women's
Ministry, Inc.



Celebration Women's Ministry is a woman to woman ministry birthed through prayer and has stood the test of time. Much like the purpose of the Confessing Movement, Celebration Women's Ministry equips women to do the work of the ministry for the edification of the body of Christ and to fulfill the Great Commission.

Celebration was approved as part of the Texas Conference in 1999 and we are spreading across the nation as the Lord

opens doors. We are like Queen Esther..."called for such a time as this" in the UMC.

Celebration is based on scripture Luke 4:18-19. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Celebration has a three part focus:

- Salvation
- Healing
- Equipping

We have seen God's anointing on this ministry as women have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and experience healing in their spirits, souls and bodies, and have grown in the knowledge of Jesus and His Word.

Celebration now has 37 chapters in Texas, South Carolina, New Mexico, and Wisconsin, along with 5 chapters in process. It is exciting to see women becoming all that God has created them to be.

Here are some testimonies of how Jesus is working in this ministry:

To me Celebration means a way to connect with other women by the power of the Holy Spirit. I remember the first National event I attended. I just felt the Holy Spirit in a big way. Celebration has also helped me in my relationship with Jesus Christ. I pray all the time now, and regularly read and study my Bible. I have quiet time with God every morning. Margie F.

I grew up in the Methodist church in a suburb south of Chicago, Illinois. My mom was schizophrenic and was murdered when I was fifteen years old. Our church was there to support my sister and two brothers. As an adult, I didn't realize the impact my childhood had on me until the Celebration's Spring Conference I attended three years ago. Joanna Weaver, our keynote speaker, asked us to forgive someone. "Life was good right? Who was I to forgive?" Then God showed me...I needed to forgive my mother's murderer 33 years ago. I needed to forgive my mom's killer for ruining my sister and brother's faith and ALMOST extinguishing mine! Well he didn't!!! I forgave the man who murdered my mother! Thanks be to God! And God has since then granted me peace and understanding; He has set my heart free! Karen B.

My husband died Sept. 12, 2005. He had cancer of the larynx and had surgery to remove his larynx in 2002. With the help of my family and my Christian family I was able to get through this time. God is amazing. He knows who to surround you with before tragedy occurs. Although for the most part I was better, I still experienced guilt. Every so often the whata, coulda, shouda's reared their ugly head. At the Celebration Luncheon, Karen Kingsbury shared a story that God used to set me free. It was as if God spoke to ME. He said you know that little boy did all he could and has no reason for guilt and neither do you, and the guilt was lifted from me. So besides knowing my husband is happy and healthy again in heaven and I know that God will walk with me always, he will also answer your questions when He feels the time is right. Linda S.

I found Celebration quite by accident when searching the web for a seminar on prayer. I found one sponsored by this group Celebration that I had never heard of before even though I have been a Methodist for over 20 years! Celebration had everything I was looking for. They are grounded in prayer and the Word. They encourage women to pray, to learn about God and to reach out to tell others about Jesus. Since beginning our chapter almost 5 years ago we regularly have 35-50 women at our events from our church as well as many other denominations and women not affiliated with a church. We have Bible studies which are attended by women from all denominations and many women with no church affiliation. It is a great outreach to women who don't know our Lord! It is a great way to celebrate Jesus and share Him with others. Pamela S.

Conference and Fall Luncheon speakers have included Karen Kingsbury, Liz Curtis Higgs, Donna Partow, Joanna Weaver, Bishop Linda Lee (Wisconsin), Beth Moore, and Jan Silvius. Worship and Prayer events, and Equipping Events are among the many opportunities for spiritual growth available to women of all ages (including teens).

For more information regarding this exciting ministry, visit our website, www.celebrationministries.org. Join us for our 2010 National Conference, April 9-11, 2010 in Houston, TX.

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE CONFESSING MOVEMENT

Your United Methodist Church is in a gradual reformation, moving in a very different direction than the Episcopalians, Lutherans, and some Presbyterians. The fact that the most dangerous Constitutional Amendments have apparently been defeated is a clear sign that most Methodists want a more biblical, orthodox church. That's what your Confessing Movement is working toward and we need your help. The Confessing Movement gets no support from official United Methodist sources. We depend on local churches and individuals who dream of and pray for a renewed, Bible-centered, growing, orthodox, evangelical, Wesleyan church.

Your gift can make a critical difference in the renewal of The United Methodist Church. There are several ways you can give. Go to The Confessing Movement website which is www.confessingumc.org In the top right corner click on "donate." Directions will be given. A second way is to phone The Confessing Movement office at 317-356-9729 and make a donation via your credit card. Finally, you can mail a check to The Confessing Movement office at 7995 E. 21st St., Indianapolis, IN 46219.

Thanks for investing today in a renewed church!

Blessings on you,
Bill Bouknight

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.