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Edited by
CHARLES D. WHITE, Secretary
The General Conference of The United Methodist Church

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"Be it further resolved that, where such schools are operating without the consent of the pastor in charge that said schools are in violation of paragraphs 350.4, and 1536 of the *Book of Discipline*. Further, such schools are contrary to paras. 107, 814(1), 1162.2, 1297, 1305.2, 1506, 1513, 858.14, and 1599.3 of the *Book of Discipline*."

"Be it further resolved, that the Episcopal leadership in the Areas where such schools have been established communicate immediately the action of this General Conference to the District Superintendents, Pastors, Chairmen of local Church Boards of Trustees and Chairmen of the Administrative Boards."

"Be it further resolved that where such private segregated schools continue that appropriate legal action be initiated immediately."

Respectfully submitted,
The Commission on Religion and Race
The United Methodist Church

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES STUDY COMMISSION

I. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the General Conference, the Commission, established by the General Conference in 1968, takes pleasure in presenting to you a report of its progress to date.

This report includes a summary of the historical context within which the United Methodist Church now faces its responsibility in social concerns, a resume of the work of the Commission thus far, and an outline of plans for completing its work and presenting a final report to the 1972 General Conference.

Each of the two denominations that formed the United Methodist Church came to union with a strong statement of social principles which guided its life and witness. As the two denominations planned for union, it was evident that the statements on social principles needed examination. The new church had two statements of social principles, similar in some details, but sufficiently different to raise penetrating questions about the theological and ethical foundations of belief. Furthermore, the united church faced a new world situation, both in the complexity of old social problems and the urgency of arising new ones.

The authorization given to the Commission by the General Conference of 1968 stated:

"There shall be a Social Principles Study Commission, appointed with authorization to study Part III of the Plan of Union and to bring to the General Conference of 1972 a recommendation concerning The United Methodist Church's statement of social principles."

The commission trusts that you will give it your suggestions to improve its work and to assure a document which will be intrinsically valid and consistent with the history of the two uniting churches and the responsibility for the future.

II. A SUMMARY STATEMENT ON THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND A FEW COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES

A. The Heritage in the United States—E.U.B.

The rich heritage undergirding the early fathers and later leaders of the Evangelical United Brethren Church included a deep social concern. The life and thought of the early movements that eventually became the Church of the

United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association gave evidence of that concern. Evangelicals followed very closely the Methodist *Discipline* of 1808, and brought into their statement of faith the Methodist article on "Good Works." The Evangelical *Discipline* of 1825 clearly affirmed that true Christian faith should find expression in earthly relations.

Similarly, the interaction of personal piety and practical social relations became part of the first norms established for membership in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Their *Discipline* called for members to "practice love toward friend and foe" and "to do good to the poor."

As in the early era of The Methodist Church, the Evangelicals and United Brethren also became involved in the anti-slavery movement, taking strong stands against ownership of slaves and helping to found and carry on Freedmen's Missions during the Civil War. Also they early became part of the opposition to alcoholic beverages, and they expressed concern over growing tensions between labor and management in the newly industrialized society.

As the Twentieth Century ushered in challenging new problems, these churches joined with many other denominations in a common quest for the best solutions to social issues. The chaos and aftermath of several wars and the drastic economic upheaval led to the conviction that something beyond general cooperation and federated action was necessary for effective Christian action. For small churches the most effective way seemed through such agencies as the Federal Council of Churches (1908), the World Council of Churches (1948) and the National Council of Churches (1950).

The growing impact of Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch gave the social implications of Jesus' teachings a new importance among American churchmen, including Evangelicals and United Brethren. United Brethren Bishop William M. Bell vigorously wrote and spoke about the relevance of Christ's gospel to contemporary life. He became chairman of the Federal Council of Churches' Committee of One Hundred, organized to plan a World's Social Progress Congress in 1915.

Parallel persuasions in the Evangelical Association led its General Conference of 1911 to direct the church's Commission on Evangelism to establish a Bureau of Social Service. As the two churches moved toward organic union, they had come to an increasingly unified approach to their responsibility in social action.

Basic Beliefs Regarding Social Issues

The first General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1946 gave considerable attention to Christian social action. "Basic Beliefs Regarding Social Issues," paralleling the Methodist Social Creed, set forth the church's traditional stance on social concern and action and affirmed a posture for the present and future. It declared: "The church is persuaded that in Jesus Christ alone are to be found the cures for industrial, economic, and social ills, and salvation from the sins that beset and curse society and block its progress."

The new denomination proclaimed that the church should "minister to the physical, intellectual, and social needs of the persons to whom it preaches the gospel" and "should guide them in an intelligent and faithful endeavor to improve human conditions."

To give more effective guidance to members, the new church established a Commission on Christian Social Action, though it could never afford more than a part-time executive for this effort. "Basic Beliefs" dealt with six major areas of social concern—(1) Church and Economic Life, (2) Community Life, (3) Family Life, (4) Moral and Social Conduct, (5) Racial and Cultural Relations, and (6) World Order—and served as the foundation on which the new Commission built its work.

The Christian Social Action Commission produced literature, set up workshops, and sought to foster integrated churches. While working at national problems, it also urged positive approaches to the solution of international problems and tensions. Quadrennial reports of the Commission at each General Conference between 1946-1966 reflected goals and an increased scope of work that would have required an enlarged staff to accomplish.

An appraisal of the social concerns of the Evangelical United Brethren Church exposes two evident truths: (1) a very early conviction that beyond the concern for personal piety, the gospel also encompasses the whole of life; (2) a belief that the church will not be renewed if it is not involved in the social arena with Christ.

Throughout the 20-year life of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, its members were constantly aware of the way in which the church's small size limited its social ministry. Entering the larger fellowship of The United Methodist Church, Evangelical United Brethren anticipated the expanded opportunity to move effectively in the Twentieth Century to promulgate both love of God and love of neighbor among all the world's people.

B. A Heritage From John Wesley—Methodist

John Wesley did not set out primarily to develop a social creed. However, he did envision a time when Christianity would "cover the earth" and wars would cease, hatreds and suspicions would disappear, injustice and poverty would be dispelled. A number of his sermons and notes dealt with individual moral problems and, in a few instances, he did speak about broader social issues.

Wesley proclaimed his message of sin, salvation, and redeeming grace to everyone, but his words appealed mainly to the dispossessed of society, the powerless, poor and uneducated. Usually the upper class viewed his venture as a disgusting threat to privilege and the status quo. Wesley, though, did not really confront the social evils of his day with the scorching incisiveness so characteristic of his gospel message. Still, the social activism, so evident in Methodism's later years, was inherent in his central message and in the social status of those with whom he worked.

The doctrines of *sin, redemption, perfection* and *good works* are pivotal to an understanding of the social view which characterized John Wesley's teaching and preaching. These doctrines provide the basis for developing an ethic for a social witness in the Methodist tradition.

Wesley was orthodox and biblical in his view of sin, stating that "all men are sinners," emphasizing the "all," believing in the basic perversion of human will by original sin. Personal redemption, a keystone to Wesley's theology, follows repentance. He believed without reservation in the radical experience of conversion of the soul and the total life. Conversion had two aspects: (1) instantaneous response to the love of God, and (2) gradual growth in grace.

Wesley, though, recognized that "no one on earth is perfect." This doctrine is important to the development of a social creed since it: (1) indicates the work of God's grace is in the responsive heart, (2) is the dynamic which compels men to strive for spiritual growth, (3) comprehends the power of sin in human experience, and (4) leads directly to the idea of love as the basis and expression of spiritual vitality. Finally, for Wesley, the faith which justifies leads to good works.

1. A Heritage in the United States

In its earliest years American Methodism articulated a Christian social ethic even less than did the Wesleyan movement in Great Britain. Methodists did show some interest in social service and welfare, but this mainly centered in direct and limited charity. With most other American denominations, Methodism evidenced little concern about

the rising industrialization in the Nineteenth Century. The church showed even less support for the labor movement. Temperance and slavery were the primary issues in this period.

Methodists confronted the issue of slavery both without and within their own halls. In North and South blacks were segregated into designated sections of the churches—a practice which led to black withdrawal and the formation of black denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816 and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1820.

Methodism's impasse over slavery led to much more division. In 1844, after years of condemnation of slavery by northern Methodist ministers, the Methodist Episcopal Church adopted a Plan of Separation, giving birth to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Methodist Protestant Church—formed in 1830 when an earlier separation occurred in the Methodist Episcopal Church caused by disagreement over exclusion of laymen from governing bodies and opposition to episcopal leadership—was also torn by the slavery question.

In this period other social issues received little attention. The churches' program was mainly one of rather narrowly conceived evangelism, some religious education, and a limited interest in foreign missions. About the turn of the century, however, certain Methodist leaders began to preach on, write about, and act upon the growing social ills in the United States.

These men saw startling aspects to the industrial life, aspects such as monopolies, oppressive working conditions, internal industrial warfare. They noted indications that this new industrial society—with great financial structures, plants producing tremendous quantities of goods, and an elaborate system of distribution—could not maintain a high level of economic activity without economic depressions and consequent unemployment.

Confronting these conditions, the church's spokesmen became part of the emerging social gospel movement. Those who advocated this position recognized that the problems were left mainly to secular organizations such as trade unions, farmers' organizations, or groups concerned about the care of immigrants. Besides voluntary and non-governmental organizations, the U. S. government began to develop legislation and programs in the Twentieth Century (some relatively early) to deal with the emerging issues. Legislation such as the Sherman Antitrust Act dealt with great combines of financial power, and the Pure Food and Drug Act aimed at curbing the exploitation of consumers.

These many converging forces brought American Methodists to the realization that they must become involved in the new forces and processes emerging in their country.

2. *The Social Creed—Its Early Years*

In December 1907 the Methodist Federation for Social Action was organized to articulate the social concerns of many Methodists. Bishop Herbert Welch, the Federation's first president, described the intention "to secure a cross-section of the people of some strength and standing, feeling that such a group could do more than a specialized group to represent, to influence, to educate and to unify our church."

With this kind of fermentation alive in the church, the historic document now called the Social Creed was adopted by the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1908, meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. The first Social Creed was concerned with only one issue—economics or the effect and potential of rapid industrialization—vividly indicating how that one massive problem confronted the nation.

Adoption of the Methodist Social Creed was intimately related to the formation of a new movement among U. S. churches. In December 1908 the Federal Council of Churches, only recently organized, adopted as its "Social Ideals" most of the essentials of the Methodist Social Creed. The other major segments of American Methodism also adopted the Social Creed in a few years—the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1914, and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1916.

Upheaval for the United States marked the years from the adoption of the Social Creed to and including those of the depression of 1930. Shaken by World War I, a short drastic depression in 1921, economic collapse in 1929 and the long depression of the 1930's, Methodists became thoroughly enmeshed in many organizations which attempted to deal with the era's deep seated problems.

Beginning in 1929-30, the United States was plunged into the throes of the "great depression" with its mammoth unemployment, financial collapse, and starvation. The serious faults in the economic structure of the nation became glaringly apparent. In addition, the nation began to realize that there were no adequate provisions supported by legislation to care for the needs of those who suffer at times of economic and social upheaval.

By 1932 discontent was at a peak. In that election year Franklin Delano Roosevelt was swept into the Presidency with his "New Deal"—a fundamentally new social stance for the country. This resulted in substantial and innovative

methods and social legislation to provide more adequate welfare, improve working conditions, and enhance economic and business relations.

3. *The Social Creed in the Present*

Significantly, much of the national legislation developed during the period of the Great Depression and the New Deal had been anticipated 25 years earlier in the Methodist Social Creed. The original Creed, for example, had called for protection against poverty and unemployment by legislation, such as unemployment insurance, and had supported the concept of providing old-age pensions and support for the aged. It also had anticipated the day when working hours would decrease and leisure time would increase and had emphasized collective bargaining as a right of both employers and employees. Thus the early document, which played so central a role in the life of American Methodism, stands as a prophetic instrument in the life of the church and society.

In 1939 the three branches of American Methodism reunited to form The Methodist Church. The Uniting Conference adopted the revised Social Creed, which became a steadfast guide to The Methodist Church. The thirty year old Creed was expanded and developed to include other problems of the era—international relations, family life, alcohol and drugs, race relations.

The Methodist Church, however, had its own built-in problem of race relations, for the Plan of Union included a provision for five geographical jurisdictions and one, the Central Jurisdiction, based on race. Before the church could honestly speak out and act on segregation in American society, it had to deal with its own segregated structure, which included some 300,000 Negro members, who had voted, through their delegates almost unanimously against the creation of a segregated Central Jurisdiction.

After years of discussion, the 1956 General Conference adopted a complicated procedure for movement of Central Jurisdiction churches and conferences into geographic jurisdictions. The 1964 General Conference encouraged speedy use of the procedure. Then the special General Conference, meeting jointly in 1966 with the Evangelical United Brethren General Conference in Chicago, agreed that "in The United Methodist Church there shall be no Jurisdictional or Central Conferences based on any ground other than geographical and regional division." A target date of 1972 was set for merger of all overlapping annual conferences.

In the years following World War II the Social Creed reflected still other emerging issues—the United Nations,

the civil rights movement, new aspects of alcohol and drug problems, political affairs, growing complexities of family life, conservation of natural resources and the population explosion. These years also saw the continued expansion of Methodist agencies designed to act on the Social Creed's pronouncements. The Department of Christian Social Relations of the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Board of Missions, led aggressive programs in race relations and international affairs.

Besides the women's efforts, Methodism's historical social concern was until 1960 officially represented in the work of three boards and the Interboard Commission on Christian Social Relations. The latter acted to coordinate the policies and activities of the Board of Temperance (1916), Board of World Peace (a successor to the Commission on World Peace of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1924), and the Board of Social and Economic Relations (1952), formed as an official successor to the unofficial Methodist Federation for Social Action. In 1960 the three boards became divisions of the Board of Christian Social Concerns, which has for the past decade led the social action efforts of The Methodist Church from strategic headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington. The Board's efforts have been based on the Social Creed.

The history of the Social Creed and the realization of its ideals have bequeathed an enormous responsibility to those in the Church now dealing specifically with social action. The Creed challenges the Church's leaders to be equally energetic, prophetic, and astute in their anticipation of the issues on which the church must speak and act in the remaining years of the Twentieth Century.

III. THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission commenced its work at an organizational meeting in Chicago, September 5, 1968, electing the following officers:

<i>Chairman:</i>	Bishop James S. Thomas
<i>Vice Chairman:</i>	Dr. C. Willard Fetter
<i>Secretary:</i>	Mrs. Ted F. Baun

An Executive Committee was elected. An Interim Work Committee, which has been responsible for much of the detail work of the Commission, has these members:

Dr. A. Dudley Ward—*chairman*
 Dr. C. Willard Fetter
 Dr. Wilmert H. Wolf
 The Rev. James M. Lawson
 Mrs. John Gridley
 Bishop James S. Thomas, *Ex Officio*

Since the initial meeting, the Commission has held four others, all in Chicago except a January 28-30, 1970 meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. In Atlanta the commission met jointly with the other special commissions of the General Conference—The Theological Study Commission on Doctrine and Doctrinal Standards, and the representatives from the Structure Study Commission. Summarizing, dates of Commission meetings were: September 5, 1968; December 5-6, 1968; April 16-17, 1969; October 14-15, 1969; and January 28-30, 1970.

The Commission has planned for six other meetings between this General Conference and that of 1972. Dates are: September 22-23, 1970; January 27-28, 1971; April 20-21, 1971; September 21-22, 1971; January 27-30, 1972; and March 15-16, 1972.

In addition to these full meetings of the Commission, committee meetings have been held and others will be scheduled to facilitate development of the final document.

IV. PLAN AND SCOPE OF THE WORK

Early in the Commission's work, it became apparent that dealing with the social principles of The United Methodist Church would require more than minor changes and adjustments. It was clear also that the General Conference had taken significant steps to augment and interpret the Social Principles, as the Book of Resolutions from 1968 clearly attests. Some actions taken in 1968 proved highly controversial and have been widely discussed since that time. At the root of such debate is the question: What is the basis of the church's positions on social issues? Such a question cannot be answered by simply adding to the Social Creed another section on theology or a general statement on a current social issue.

Therefore, the Commission decided that the General Conference expected a thorough study of the social principles of the two denominations and preparation of a completely new document by 1972. Such work would require collaboration with the Theological Study Commission on Doctrine and Doctrinal Standards.

A. STUDY DOCUMENTS

The Commission has used several methods to collect and study the data available. Among these were a series of position papers and reports by members of the Commission, such as one on Population by Dr. W. H. Ritchey, and another on Genetics, Abortion and Transplants by Dr. J. Russell Bright.

In addition, sixteen persons—with widely ranging inter-

ests, high competence, and diverse points of view—from both the United States and abroad, were invited to prepare papers. These, in a number of cases, were concise statements of social principles. The Commission carefully received and summarized these papers as to issues, method of presentation, and implications. Invited authors include:

Dr. Harold A. Bosley, Minister
Christ Methodist Church, New York City

Dr. Querubin D. Canlas, Chairman
Central Conference Board of Social Concerns
Philippines

Dr. Clair M. Cook
Professional writer and political analyst
Arlington, Virginia

The Rev. Kenneth G. Greet, Secretary
Department of Christian Citizenship
The Methodist Church
London, England

Richard Johnson, Student
Legislative Affairs Project Coordinator
United Methodist Council on Youth Ministry
(currently in Washington, D. C.)

Dr. Roger L. Shinn
Union Theological Seminary
New York, N. Y.

Miss Thelma Stevens
Retired Former Assistant General Secretary
Women's Division—Board of Missions
Leonia, New Jersey

The Rev. K. H. Voigt
Minister
Federal Republic of Germany

Dean Walter G. Muelder
Boston School of Theology
Boston, Massachusetts

Dr. Philip Wogaman
Wesley Theological Seminary
Washington, D. C.

Rev. Julio R. Sabanes
Central Methodist Church
Argentina

Mrs. Sarah B. Adams
Commission on Social Concerns
Monrovia, West Africa

The Rev. Leo D. Nieto
Field Staff—Service Unit of Special Ministries
National Division—Board of Missions
Austin, Texas

The Rev. John Porter
Christ United Methodist Church
Chicago, Illinois

Dr. George Crawford
Professor of Physics
Southern Methodist University
Dallas, Texas

Dr. C. Eric Lincoln
Union Theological Seminary
New York, N. Y.

B. HEARINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Recognizing the widely divergent opinions in the Church concerning social principles, the Commission concluded that it would be highly important to provide opportunities for as many voices as possible from all levels of the Church's life to be heard. Regional hearings were planned for early 1970, followed by discussions in local churches, primarily, during the Fall of 1970. The material for the discussions will be first provisional drafts—possibly five—of a statement of social principles.

The regional hearings have been concluded. The schedule was:

<i>North Central Jurisdiction</i>	<i>South Central Jurisdiction</i>
Des Moines, Iowa	Dallas, Texas
January 12-13, 1970	February 5-6, 1970
<i>Southeastern Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Northeastern Jurisdiction</i>
Atlanta, Georgia	Washington, D. C.
January 25-27, 1970	April 4-6, 1970
<i>Western Jurisdiction</i>	
San Francisco, California	
January 31 to February 2, 1970	

In all of these hearings recordings were made of the discussion. People were encouraged to present written papers, and many did. For example, in the hearing in North Central, thirty-three papers were submitted. To date about one hundred papers have been presented.

Total attendance at the hearings was about 580, ranging from sixty in Des Moines, Iowa to 250 in Dallas, Texas. Initial findings seem to indicate feelings that the final document should be shorter, stronger, broader, and more

usable than at present. Among the issues emerging at all hearings were: ecology (environmental stewardship), population, sexuality and family life, addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling, etc.), war and peace, human rights, government, economic and social welfare, and communication.

In addition the Commission has attempted to secure input from other sources, in and out of the church, by extending invitations to the bishops of the church, general agencies, other denominations, and ecumenical councils. Consolidation of all input led to the selection of five authors to prepare documents. They are:

Bishop James Armstrong Dakotas Area United Methodist Church	Dr. Roger L. Shinn Union Theological Seminary New York, N. Y.
Miss Thelma Stevens Leonia, New Jersey	Dr. Richard Tholin Evangelical Seminary Naperville, Illinois
Mr. Julius Lester New Uork, N. Y.	

These authors have been given all original papers and a comprehensive summary of the papers, and will also receive the summary of the hearings. They will meet with officers of the Commission for discussion of the process and content of their documents, which when completed in the Fall of 1970, will become the basis for the discussions in local churches.

C. THE FINAL DOCUMENT

One author will write the final document, but it will be reported as the work of the Commission. With this understanding the Commission will work to maintain the interests and prerogatives of the General Conference.

It seems apparent that the final document must contain a theological-biblical basis. This implies the joint involvement of this Commission and the Theological Study Commission on Doctrine and Doctrinal Standards.

The document will undoubtedly include statements of general principles. However, it must have sufficient range to comprehend persistent issues such as racism, peace, family and economic life, alcohol, or drugs as well as emerging new areas of social concern and responsibility, for example, environmental pollution and population problems. The document must show that The United Methodist Church is dedicated to dealing with those issues which have troubled mankind over its long history, and at the same time it must be highly sensitive to new issues, directions and responsibilities. The document should serve as a foundation for social

education and for resolutions on specific topics by bodies such as the General Conference, annual conferences, and general agencies.

One of the persistent suggestions designed to encourage wider use of the statement of social principles is that, in addition to the document for the *Book of Discipline*, there might be several other forms for worship and study. A number of persons have requested a form which would lend itself in part, or as a whole, to liturgical use and special celebration in the church.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Commission has planned its work to coincide with an early mailing to delegates of the 1972 General Conference, hoping that delegates will give consideration and evaluation to the document before attending the General Conference.

The Commission recognizes the wide range of social opinion in The United Methodist Church and believes that such diversity of opinion on complex social matters can be a strength, rather than a weakness. The Commission's work has again shown the need for clear, theological and ethical standards by which social principles must be guided. This pressing need is being met in part by the Commission's work, in part by the contributions made by people well qualified in the field, and also by the Theological Study Commission on Doctrine and Doctrinal Standards of the General Conference. The Commission intends to have, within the limits of time and resources, a sustained collaboration to assure viable conclusions on Christian ethical foundations.

Another persistent problem which must be dealt with carefully is a belief, held by many persons, that highly complex social problems are not really within the province of the Church. The Commission feels that this assumption is neither in line with the history and heritage of the two former denominations nor a responsible approach by the church to the modern world. Therefore, it will continue to dedicate itself to the task of producing a relevant document.

The Commission makes an earnest request of the members of this General Conference to share, to provide information, to engage in the local discussions, to submit written materials, and to participate in any way you can in the long process of producing a timely, authentic and prophetic document.

Respectfully submitted,
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES STUDY COMMISSION
James S. Thomas, *Chairman*
Alice (Mrs. Ted F.) Baun, *Secretary*