United Methodist Church General Correspondence

No reply has been forcoming as of 10/25/14.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                         June 16, 2014                                                                                                Edward H. Sebesta                                                                                                esebesta@tx.rr.com Rev. Rosemarie WennerPresident United Methodist ChurchUnited Methodist Building100 Maryland Ave NEWashington, DC 20002Dear Rev. Wenner: I am writing you about the United Methodist Church’s hosting of neo-Confederate groups, specifically the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). I am a subject matter expert on neo-Confederates. My resume is enclosed and is online at [www.templeofdemocracy.com/resume.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/resume.htm). I regret to say that despite my contacting the national leadership of the United Methodist Church, the ministers of Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, and Oklahoma Bishop Hoyt, the Boston Avenue United Methodist Church went ahead and hosted the UDC national convention service. I also didn’t get any response to any of my letters or emails other than that my letter to the national leadership had been forwarded to Bishop Hoyt of whom there was no response. Correspondence is online at <http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/bostonavenue.htm>. I enclose copies of EXCEL tables of churches that host national conventions of organizations from 1990 to 2014 along with a bar graph based on the EXCEL table of hosting churches by denomination. These tables and bar graphs are online at [www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm). The United Methodist Church is No. 2 for hosting the UDC, No. 3 for hosting the UDC’s organization for children, Children of the Confederacy, where the UDC indoctrinates children in admiring the Confederacy.  What is striking about the United Methodist Church is that its churches are frequently used for monthly meetings and various events of local chapters of the SCV and UDC. I enclose a table of churches that host local events and meetings. It is also online at [www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm). You can note even with a cursory check that the United Methodist Church is one of the leading denominations for hosting local events of the UDC and SCV. I wrote each United Methodist church to verify that the online records were accurate. I also enclose two bar graphs comparing Methodist denominations in America in their hosting of neo-Confederate groups. One is a bar graph of hosting of the UDC from 1990 to 2014 by the denominations United Methodist Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Christian Methodist Church. Another bar graph compares the denominations in hosting both the UDC and SCV from 1990 to 2014. Interesting enough these other denominations can’t be shown to have hosted any neo-Confederate organization at all. The United Daughters of the Confederacy is an organization with a long history of promoting racism. I have not yet published a write up on the UDC. However, for the historical record regarding the UDC and race I refer you to the website [www.confederatepastpresent.org](http://www.confederatepastpresent.org) and suggest you use the search term “daughters.” You will find in the UDC’s own writings their opposition to the mid-20th century civil rights movement, and earlier in the 20thcentury you will find in their writings and publications their support for the KKK and white supremacy. For documentation of the UDC’s racism in the 21st century, I enclose three articles from the *UDC Magazine*. The UDC currently runs a Red Shirt Shrine to glorify a violent white supremacist group that existed in 19thcentury South Carolina and of which they are proud of as documented in the June/July 2001 *UDC Magazine*article, pages 23, 24, and the cover of their magazine. In the Dec. 2012 *UDC Magazine*, pages 11-14, is an appalling racist article in which the infamous post-Civil War Black Codes of the former Confederate states are defended, African American men are represented have been potential rapists, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution is argued to be misguided, freed African Americans are asserted to have been incompetent to be citizens. The article asserts, “Newly liberated Negroes were not prepared for their freedom…”  In the Nov. 2007 *UDC Magazine* on page 15 is an article recommending that the reader purchase the book “Southern by the Grace of God,” by Michael Andrew Grissom. This white supremacist book praises the Ku Klux Klan of the 19th and 20th century as well as other violent white supremacist groups, praises a lynching in Oklahoma, recommends pro-Ku Klux Klan media such as the movie “Birth of a Nation” and the writings of Thomas Dixon. It recommends that the reader join the Council of Conservative Citizens ([www.cofcc.org](http://www.cofcc.org)).  The author of the article Retta D. Tindall, calls this book along with other books “treasures” and that “Mr. Grissom wrote this book for four reasons: to offer a firm understanding of our heritage, to instill pride in being Southern, to pursue the elements that characterize the South, and to rally Southerners to defend and preserve their unique heritage.” Grissom’s book makes it very clear that he feels that violent white supremacist groups like the KKK and others are part of Southern heritage, and Tindal recommends this book and others be given to the reader’s “child or a grandchild.” These are but three contemporary examples of the UDC’s racism. In 2013 *Black Commentator* published my expose of the racism and extremism of the SCV.  I enclose a copy of the paper which is also available online at the free guest link<http://www.blackcommentator.com/526/526_confederacy_sebesta_guest_share.html>. This guest link is also in my online resume. Finally the SCV and the UDC exist to glorify the Confederacy a government created to perpetuate slavery and white supremacy. This is in itself a reason to not enable them or lend them any resources. Nor are they secret about it, it is right in their names. I am concerned with how mainstream organizations enable neo-Confederate groups. Referencing the *Black Commentator* article about the SCV I was able to get major corporations to drop out of an affinity buying plan for the SCV and additionally the affinity group website dropped the SCV. It took about eight days from when the corporations received the letters I wrote  to the program to it being stopped. *Black Commentator* published the story of this campaign which is also available through a free guest link, which is also in my online resume, at<http://www.blackcommentator2.com/527_cover_scv_donation_loss_sebesta_guest.html>. After this initial success I decided to then ask American churches that enable neo-Confederate groups to stop doing so. Most American churches proclaim that they are anti-racist and express great concern about racism unlike corporations whose concern with racism is usually a paragraph in their personnel handbooks. I was optimistic and thought that this would be an easy task. I regret to say that so far the temples of Mammon were much more willing to give up neo-Confederacy than the churches of Christ. I have written the local United Methodist Bishops in Charleston, South Carolina; Richmond, Virginia; and Dallas, Texas regarding upcoming conventions in those cities of the SCV and UDC. The text of the letters are online organized by city at [www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm). I only got one response from Bishop Cho in Virginia dated 3/21/14. Bishop Cho explains that according to “our current Discipline” that the authority to allow outside groups to meet in a United Methodist church resides with the local churches and that the allowing of an outside group to meet in a United Methodist church is supposed to be consistent with the United Methodist Church’s social principles. The consistency of which is also determined by the local church. Bishop Cho confines my inquiry to a legal question of authority in the United Methodist Church. The question whether he could speak out against United Methodist Churches hosting neo-Confederate groups is avoided. Bishop Cho as well avoids whether United Methodist Church hosting of neo-Confederate groups could come up as a topic of discussion in the United Methodist Church or an advisory resolutions on the topic. In doing research on the United Methodist Church website ([www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)) I have noticed that the United Methodist Church is expressive of many opinions on many issues. Yet on hosting neo-Confederate groups the United Methodist Church is silent. As for Bishop Cho’s position that there is nothing that can be done regarding question of hosting neo-Confederate groups as explained in his letter, I note in contrast the vigor in which members of the United Methodist Church are prosecuted and denounced for supporting or conducting same-sex marriages. As the cliché goes, “Where there is a will there is a way.”  Allowing a neo-Confederate group the use of a historically or architecturally prominent church enables neo-Confederate groups by lending them the use of the building, the prestige of the building, as well as the prestige of the United Methodist Church. I ask you to initiate a discussion in the United Methodist Church about the practice of the United Methodist Church of hosting neo-Confederate groups and enabling them so that this leads a change within the United Methodist Church in which the practice of hosting neo-Confederate groups occurs less and hopefully comes to an end.                                                                                      Sincerely Yours,                                                                                      Edward H. Sebesta  Cc: President Designate Warner H. Brown Jr., Secretary Robert E. Hayes Jr., Executive Secretary Peter Weaver, Ecumenical Officer Mary Ann Swenson, Immediate Past President Larry M. Goodpaster. |