

October 14, 2015

To: Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor
Holston Conference, UMC
217 South Rankin Road,
Alcoa, TN, 37701 | P.O. Box 850, Alcoa, TN, 37701-0850
www.holston.org

Complainant: Joseph Carson, lay member, Concord United Methodist Church
www.concordumc.com

Respondent: Larry Trotter, Senior Pastor, Concord United Methodist Church

Subject: Written Complaint per 2012 UMC Book of Discipline alleging a chargeable offense per §2702(1)(b) and/or(d), made per §363.1

Dear Bishop Taylor, (for clarity I will refer to myself in third-person)

By the 2012 Book of Discipline, Mr. Carson understands it is a chargeable offense for a local pastor to engage in practices declared by the UMC to be incompatible with Christian teaching and/or to disobey the order and discipline of the UMC.

Mr. Carson's complaint against Pastor Trotter alleges that he apparently puts his professional standing and economic security above his duty to obey Christian teaching and the order and discipline of the UMC in his bystanding - instead of rebuking - an established record of government law-breaking against a member of his Church, the complainant, and in his bystanding - instead of advocating a lawful resolution - to well-evidenced claims of decades-long, compounded, continuing, federal agency law-breaking that puts God's creation on earth, more specifically our unprecedented global civilization - at unnecessarily increased risk of collapse - in the face of the unprecedented collective challenges it faces. Mr. Carson alleges his bystanding is incompatible with Christian teaching and/or in disobedience to the order and discipline of the UMC.

The complainant is well aware that Pastor Trotter is the rule, not the exception, in Christian religious professionals, who appear to shun opportunities to "suffer persecution for righteousness' sake" - when the risk is possible loss of professional standing and economic security - by bystanding, instead of rebuking in name of God, legally established records of corporate or government agency law-breaking, and by bystanding, instead of advocating, a lawful resolution, of well-evidenced claims of federal agency law-breaking.

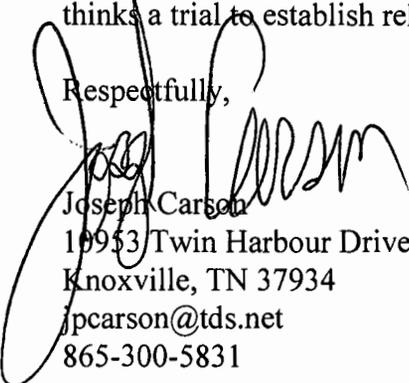
As complainant understands §363, "Complaint Procedures," both Pastor Trotter and he hold a "sacred trust" regarding their respective ordination and membership in the UMC.

I seek a "just resolution" of this complaint, one that advances the redemption of the world by improving our unprecedented global civilization's prospects of sustaining to year 2100 and

beyond despite the unprecedented challenges it faces. A collapsed civilization, in which billions die unnatural deaths in coming decades, is not consistent with “the redemption of the world.”

A “just resolution,” in complainant’s opinion, would be Pastor Trotter sending a letter, based on the attached draft, to Congressman Duncan. In the alternative a “just resolution” would be someone providing the complainant relevant UMC Judicial Council Decisions or General Conference Resolutions. Conferences that demonstrate his complaint against Pastor Trotter is not reasonably evidenced. If there is no such guiding precedent for this complaint, then Mr. Carson thinks a trial to establish relevant precedent would seem warranted.

Respectfully,



Joseph Carson
10953 Twin Harbour Drive
Knoxville, TN 37934
jpcarson@tds.net
865-300-5831

Attachments:

- 1) a draft letter Mr. Carson requested Pastor Trotter, in his official role, send to Congressman John Duncan
- 2) the related email string, and
- 3) Relevant excerpts and comments from the 2012 Book of Discipline

Attachment 1 Joseph Carson Complaint

Draft

Honorable John J. Duncan, Jr.
800 Market Street, Suite 110
Knoxville, TN 37902
Phone: (865) 523-3772
Fax: (865) 544-0728

Attention: Jennifer Stansberry

Subject: Resolving Joe Carson's concerns of law-breaking by federal agencies U.S. Office of Special Counsel and U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

Dear Mr. Duncan,

I respectfully call upon you to use the influence of your office to spur a lawful resolution of the public claims of Joseph Carson, PE, a longtime federal agency employee (at Department of Energy in Oak Ridge) of "decades-long, compounded, continuing, civilization-threatening, law-breaking in federal agencies U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) and U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB)."

I understand you serve on the House Committee, Oversight and Government Reform, that provides oversight of these agencies. I understand that expressions of interest such as this letter give you more reason and ability to spur a lawful resolution of Mr. Carson's claims. I understand these claims involve no disputed facts, only disputed civil service law, and have been independently vetted as at least "reasonably evidenced," by a Yale Law School graduate, who practices in Farragut, Loring Justice.

I understand that the legally established record is Mr. Carson, consistent with his positive legal and professional duty, as a licensed professional engineer (PE) employed by the Department of Energy (DOE) in a position with significant responsibilities for workplace and public safety, "blew whistles," about unsafe and unhealthy conditions in the Department of Energy, starting almost 25 years ago now, and repeatedly experienced unlawful reprisal for doing his duty to protect others during the next almost ten years.

As a ordained Christian minister who is the senior pastor of Mr. Carson's church, Concord United Methodist Church, I rebuke, in name of God, the established record of repeated, retaliatory, government agency law-breaking against Mr. Carson. God created governments to protect the common good and when government agencies engage in unlawful reprisal against an employee for doing his positive legal duty to protect that common good, God expects His Church to protest. This protest is delayed, as the established law-breaking by the Department of Energy occurred about 15 or more years ago, but as Mr. Carson's minister, I still formally lodge a rebuke, in God's name, about it.

I understand Mr. Carson claims that absent the law-breaking he now alleges by the OSC and MSPB, the DOE law-breaking would likely never have occurred. He also claims that this law-breaking is a factor in national calamities and catastrophes as loss of space shuttles, the successful terrorist attack of 9/11, going to war in Iraq for false reasons, the seemingly endless Veterans Affairs health care scandals, the economic meltdown of 2008, and puts civilization, particularly East Tennessee, at unnecessarily increased risk of a nuclear terrorist attack or other catastrophe.

I understand Ms. Stansberry of your staff has more familiarity with the approximately dozen specific civil service laws Mr. Carson claims OSC and/or MSPB have been violating for decades. Mr. Carson claims that because of these violations, too often the wrong people, for the wrong reasons, get hired, promoted, demoted or fired in federal agencies. He claims the dysfunction and corruption in these fundamental aspects the management culture in federal agencies then manifests in other corruption and dysfunction, imperiling civilization, given his opinion that America is still civilization's indispensable Country and the federal civil service has essential duties for the health, safety, security and welfare of America.

These are serious allegations and I understand Mr. Carson has offered to end his federal service if they are dispelled as a result of a review by the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice or other lawful mechanism. I understand Mr. Carson has 31 years of spotless federal service and a spotless personal record too. He claims that, as a Christian who is vocationally privileged to be a licensed professional engineer (PE), he thinks he is being obedient to God to risk and pay much to obtain a lawful resolution of his concerns, given their import for public health and safety. As his minister, I cannot disagree and I hope this letter provides more reason and ability for your efforts to obtain such a resolution.

Respectfully,

Rev. Larry Trotter, Senior Pastor
Concord United Methodist Church

Off 2 - Joseph Carson Complaint

Joseph Carson

From: Larry Trotter <larry@concordumc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 1:25 PM
To: Joseph Carson
Cc: Timothy A. Priest; Adam McKee
Subject: Re: Joe Carson's request of you/CUMC

Joe,

I read the letter attached to your previous email and after speaking with other church leaders for perspective I have determined that it is not something I can sign on behalf of myself or Concord United Methodist Church. As I explained in a previous email this is, indeed, a complex issue that transcends the scope of the local church. I cannot, with integrity, pronounce a rebuke in the name of God upon any person or institution based upon someone else's witness. Please know that by saying that I am not impugning your integrity or in any way discrediting your work on behalf of yourself as you advance your grievance against DOE. I am not and the church is not equipped or directed to conduct an investigation that would clearly be needed to participate in such a matter. Moreover, I would hope that you would not continue to impugn my or the church's integrity for not following through according to your directive simply because it is your desire. Again, I strongly suggest you take this up with the General Board of Church and Society which has the resources to independently investigate cases such as this to make a determination as to whether the church should add its voice.

I must tell you that I am very disappointed by your threats to do harm to the church you vowed to support when you joined. While I understand that within the framework of your argument you may consider your actions against the church as somehow serving the larger community and the greater good, but from my perspective your actions seem to be designed primarily to serve you and your goals. I am aware that the paragraph in the Book of Discipline to which you referred, 2702.3, allows for charges to be brought against a church member for reasons including harassment and undermining the ministry of the church. I want you to be aware that I will not participate in manipulating the policy and polity of the United Methodist Church to advance any agenda beyond the church's mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

Joe, I do not consider you an adversary, but instead, a brother in Christ. Though I don't understand the complexities of the history of your experience with DOE or the dynamics of your grievances, I do understand that this is very important to you and sense the passion that drives your resolve. That is why throughout the history of our conversations I have suggested you find other avenues for advancing your cause that may lead to the resolution you envision.

Our church will always be ready to offer spiritual support to you and all its members as they take on the challenges of kingdom living in a fallen world.

Blessings,
Larry

On Oct 12, 2015, at 10:06 PM, Joseph Carson <jpcarson@tds.net> wrote:

October 12, 2015

Rev. Larry Trotter

Senior Pastor
Concord United Methodist Church (CUMC)
www.concordumc.com

Subject: Choices in resolving Joe Carson's concerns

Dear Larry,

Attached is a draft letter from you to Congressman Duncan, also intended to be copied to the President, Senator Alexander, Senator Corker, Department of Energy Secretary Duncan, and Governor Haslam.

Should you deem it appropriate to send, my requests of you/CUMC will cease. Should you not, then I intend to do whatever it takes for you to initiate a formal charge against me by the UMC book of discipline, possibly including taking out ads criticizing you/CUMC in the Farragut Press, creating a website criticizing you/CUMC, hiring people to distribute pamphlets outside CUMC on Sunday that criticize you/CUMC, etc.

I don't want to do more than it takes, I have no interest in causing unnecessary discord, but I will do whatever it takes, within the law, obviously, to be formally charged with misconduct by the UMC Book of Discipline.

I have long prayed/pondered it and now perceive that obedience to God requires me, if you/CUMC continue to bystand to my concerns, to expose and stop how you/CUMC/UMC too much enable institutional evil, by bystanding to it, apparently because you perceive that to do otherwise is not in your professional interest.

I think I have the facts, logic, the Bible, human experience and the Book of Discipline on my side in this matter, which may be why you/CUMC have evaded using much formality in dealing with my concerns for many years now - it might just further indict your/CUMC's years-long bystanding to well-evidenced claims of institutional evil that, in my opinion, puts God's creation on planet earth - at least our unprecedented global civilization - at unnecessarily increased risk of collapse before year 2100.

I disagree that I have not been clear about my request in previous requests, the attached is largely a reread of previous communication. I disagree that my concerns are "too complex" for anyone in CUMC to understand - there are lots of attorneys in CUMC, my concerns have been independently vetted by a Yale Law School graduate who practices in Farragut, Loring Justice, and there are no disputed facts, my concerns solely involve disputed civic service law - which is not that complex, relative to many other aspects of law. The relevant legal standard for whether my concerns are valid and warrant lawful resolution is "reasonable belief" - a relatively low evidentiary standard, not anywhere near "proof beyond a reasonable doubt."

But what I am claiming to have at least "reasonable belief" about is explosive - decades-long, compounded, continuing, civilization-threatening, law-breaking in the two federal agencies most responsible to "regulate" the management culture in other federal agencies - i.e. the agencies that are supposed to serve as the "immune system" against corruption and dysfunction in other federal agencies regarding things as: 1) who gets hired and why, 2) who gets promoted and why, and 3) who gets demoted or fired and why. I hope you will agree that if corruption and dysfunction takes root in those essential function of a federal agency, it will then manifest in increased corruption and dysfunction in how the agency perform its mission to protect and advance some aspect of the public health, safety, security and/or welfare.

I don't look at you, CUMC or UMC as "the enemy," I perceive that God has burdened/blessed you/CUMC/UMC with missions to advance and defend His will on planet earth in 2015 in tangible and significant ways as reflected in the UMC Book of Discipline. Ditto for me, I perceive that God has also burdened/blessed me with the opportunity to move His will on earth in 2015 forward in tangible and significant ways, ways that could perceptibly increase the odds that our unprecedented global civilization will sustain to year 2100 and beyond, despite the unprecedented collective challenges it faces. That is quite a privileged/burdensome thought to hold in one's head, I hope you will agree.

CUMC/UMC has developed processes to deal with situations as this, the Book of Discipline describes them, I now think it God's will that they be utilized in ending CUMC/UMC bystanding or in justifying it. Look at me as a prisoner of conscience, asking what he needs to do in transgression of some institutional power, so he can be formally charged by that institution and make his case why the institution is the one in the wrong.

Respectfully,

Joseph Carson, PE
10953 Twin Harbour Drive
Knoxville, TN 37934
jpcarson@tds.net
865-300-5831
<draft-cumc-duncan.docx>

Attachment 3 of Joseph Carson's complaint

Relevant excerpts from 2012 UMC Book of Discipline with commentary

Preamble (p. 23)

The church is a community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redeemed and redeeming fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the church seeks to provide for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the *redemption* of the world.

Comment: The "redemption of the world" in 2015 includes the need for vocationally privileged Christians as the complainant and Pastor Trotter to not necessarily shun opportunities to "suffer persecution for righteousness' sake" because it might impact their professional standing and economic security. The established record is that the complainant has suffered much for the redemption of the world by confronting, via rule of law, government law-breaking. Pastor Trotter, on the other hand, finds reason after reason, year after year, to bystand, incompatible with Christian teaching and the rule and order of the UMC.

§102

...We assert that God's grace is manifest in all creation even though suffering, violence, and evil are everywhere present. The goodness of creation is fulfilled in human beings, who are called to covenant partnership with God. God has endowed us with dignity and freedom and has summoned us to responsibility for our lives and the life of the world. (p. 50)

....Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world. (p. 51)

...."It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind . . . ;

"Secondly: By . . . doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all . . . ;

"Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God" (see ¶ 104). (p. 52)

....The Social Principles (¶¶ 160-166) provide our most recent official summary of stated convictions that seek to apply the Christian vision of righteousness to social, economic, and political issues. Our historic opposition to evils such as smuggling, inhumane prison conditions, slavery, drunkenness, and child labor was founded upon a vivid sense of God's wrath against

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human injustice and wastage. (p. 53)

....Our struggles for human dignity and social reform have been a response to God's demand for love, mercy, and justice in the light of the Kingdom. We proclaim no personal gospel that fails to express itself in relevant social concerns; we proclaim no social gospel that does not include the personal transformation of sinners. (p. 53)

...It is our conviction that the good news of the Kingdom must judge, redeem, and reform the sinful social structures of our time. (p. 53)

....A church that rushes to punishment is not open to God's mercy, but a church lacking the courage to act decisively on personal and social issues loses its claim to moral authority. The church exercises its discipline as a community through which God continues to "reconcile the world to himself." (p. 53)

Comment: Pastor Trotter's pretextual reasons to bystand to the established, repeated, unappealable, record of government law-breaking against the complainant and to bystand to his well-evidenced claims of decades-long, compounded, continuing, civilization-threatening, law-breaking in federal agencies Office of Special Counsel and Merit Systems Protection Board are incompatible with all the above Christian teachings and the order and discipline of the UMC.

§103 (p. 59)

...The challenge to United Methodists is to discern the various strands of these vital movements of faith that are coherent, faithful understandings of the gospel and the Christian mission for our times.

Comment: The complainant is doing this, at great personal and professional cost, in ways that could perceptibly impact the chances of our civilization sustaining to year 2100 and beyond, while Pastor Trotter apparently finds reasons to bystand - apparently because his doing other than bystand may not be convenient to his professional standing and economic security.

§104 (p. 74-75)

....Article XVI—Civil Government

We believe civil government derives its just powers from the sovereign God. As Christians we recognize the governments under whose protection we reside and believe such governments should be based on, and be responsible for, the recognition of human rights under God. We believe war and bloodshed are contrary to the gospel and spirit of Christ. We believe it is the duty of Christian citizens to give moral strength and purpose to their respective governments through sober, righteous and godly living.



Comment: Pastor Trotter's bystanding to the established, repeated, legal record of government agency law-breaking against complainant and his bystanding to complainant's well-evidenced claims of government agency law-breaking is incompatible with this Christian teaching and the order and discipline of the UMC.

§105

.....Realities of intense human suffering, threats to the survival of life, and challenges to human dignity confront us afresh with fundamental theological issues: the nature and purposes of God, the relations of human beings to one another, the nature of human freedom and responsibility, and the care and proper use of all creation. (p.80)

.....The perils of nuclear destruction, terrorism, war, poverty, violence, and injustice confront us. Injustices linked to race, gender, class, and age are widespread in our times. Misuse of natural resources and disregard for the fragile balances in our environment contradict our calling to care for God's creation. Secularism pervades high-technology civilizations, hindering human awareness of the spiritual depths of existence. (p. 87)

We seek an authentic Christian response to these realities that the healing and redeeming work of God might be present in our words and deeds. Too often, theology is used to support practices that are unjust. We look for answers that are in harmony with the gospel and do not claim exemption from critical assessment. (p.87)

Comment: Pastor Trotter's bystanding advances institutional evil and its manifestations described above, making it incompatible with these Christian teachings and the order and discipline of the UMC.

§139

....Ordained ministers are called to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world and the promise of God for creation. (p.98)

Comment: Pastor Trotter's bystanding nullifies this purpose, making it incompatible with this Christian teaching and the order and discipline of the UMC.

§163

....The Economic Community

L) Graft and Corruption—God's good creation, the fullness of its bounty, and the loving, nurturing relationships that bind all together are intended by God to be enjoyed in freedom and responsible stewardship. To revere God's creation is a sacred trust that enables us to fashion just, equitable, sustainable relationships and communities. The strength, stability, security, and

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progress of such relationships and communities depend on the integrity of their social, economic, political, and cultural processes, institutions, and stakeholders. Graft, referring to unfair or illegal means of acquiring money, gain, or advantage, especially by abusing one's position in politics, business, and social institutions, transgresses human dignity and violates human rights.

Corruption, referring to dishonest and undue exploitation of power for personal gain, subverts God's intention for the fullness of life and creation. Graft and corruption tangle the social thread of communities, erode the moral fiber of human relationships, and sully the reputation of social institutions. Legislative and judicial mechanisms, including a strong, just criminal justice system, must deal with graft and corruption at every level of society. Good, just political governance characterized by transparency, accountability, and integrity is crucial to the eradication of graft and corruption. Societies that are graft-ridden and plagued with corruption are needful of God's pardoning love and redeeming grace. (p. 133-34)

Comment: Pastor Trotter's bystanding enables graft and corruption, making it incompatible with this Christian teaching and the order and discipline of the UMC.

§164

...The Political Community

A) Basic Freedoms and Human Rights—We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal; to the right to privacy; and to the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care. The form and the leaders of all governments should be determined by exercise of the right to vote guaranteed to all adult citizens. We also strongly reject domestic surveillance and intimidation of political opponents by governments in power and all other misuses of elective or appointive offices. The use of detention and imprisonment for the harassment and elimination of political opponents or other dissidents violates fundamental human rights. Furthermore, the mistreatment or torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever and whenever it occurs. (p. 134-35)

Comment: Pastor Trotter's bystanding to: 1) an established legal record of government agency law-breaking, and 2) well-evidenced claims of other government agency law-breaking advances institutional evil and its manifestations described above, making it incompatible with this Christian teaching and the order and discipline of the UMC.

§165

...The World Community

God's world is one world. The unity now being thrust upon us by technological revolution has far outrun our moral and spiritual capacity to achieve a stable world. The enforced unity of humanity, increasingly evident on all levels of life, presents the Church as well as all people with problems that will not wait for answer: injustice, war, exploitation, privilege, population, international ecological crisis, proliferation of arsenals of nuclear weapons, development of transnational business organizations that operate beyond the effective control of any governmental structure, and the increase of tyranny in all its forms. This generation must find viable answers to these and related questions if humanity is to continue on this earth. We commit ourselves as a Church to the achievement of a world community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love one another. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community. (p. 139)

Comment: Pastor Trotter's bystanding hinders viable answers to the unprecedented collective challenges faces our unprecedented global civilization solutions, advancing its destruction - the opposite of its redemption. Viable answers include governments that obey just law as well as vocationally privileged Christian religious professionals as Pastor Trotter refusing to bystand to established legal records of government law-breaking and well-evidenced claims of additional government law-breaking. Instead, Pastor Trotter bystands, incompatible with this Christian teaching and the order and discipline of the UMC.

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