

WITHDRAWAL OF UNITED METHODIST AGENCIES FROM MEMBERSHIP IN THE
RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

Whereas, the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) has published a book of worship aids entitled *Prayerfully Pro-Choice: Resources for Worship* (<http://www.readbag.com/rcrc-pdf-prayerfully>, accessed 2/5/2015), which includes materials written by RCRC staff, board members, and others affiliated with RCRC; and

Whereas, *Prayerfully Pro-Choice* contains no disclaimer that the views and positions expressed in it do not represent the views and positions of RCRC; and

Whereas, former President and CEO of RCRC, Rev. Carlton W. Veazy, in his introductory letter to *Prayerfully Pro-Choice*, endorses the resources contained therein by referring to them as "spiritually powerful writings" to inspire readers in "the important work" that they do; and

Whereas, the affirmation of RCRC that choice, including the choice to have an abortion, is a "God-given right" (*Prayerfully Pro-Choice*, 8) is inconsistent with the affirmations of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church that, "Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion," and that abortion involves "tragic conflicts of life with life" (*2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J); and

Whereas, the affirmation of RCRC regarding the unborn that, "We are certain that this is not a human being, equal in any way to the life of the mother, it is a form of 'potential life'" (*Prayerfully Pro-Choice*, 11) is inconsistent with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, which affirm, "Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life," and our affirmation that abortion involves "tragic conflicts of life with life" (*2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J); and

Whereas, the affirmation of RCRC that abortion is "a sacred choice" (*Prayerfully Pro-Choice*, 88) is inconsistent with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church that we are "reluctant to approve abortion" (*2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J); and

Whereas, RCRC's website promotes a prayer that broadly categorizes the performing of abortions as "holy work" (<http://rcrc.org/prayer-for-providers-of-womens-health-care/>, accessed 01/31/2015), which is also inconsistent with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church that we are "reluctant to approve abortion" (*2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J); and

Whereas, RCRC works for abortion rights in any and all circumstances, while The United Methodist Church teaches that moral discernment, on matters related to abortion, is essential, because the Church "[is] equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child," "cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control," and "unconditionally reject[s] [abortion] as a means of gender selection or eugenics" (*2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J).

Whereas, RCRC has consistently lobbied government against any attempt to limit the practice of partial-birth abortions, while The United Methodist Church has since 2000 "oppose[d] the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call[s] for the end of this practice" with rare exceptions (*2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J);

Whereas, RCRC supported the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which if adopted would have overturned all federal, state, and local laws even mildly restricting abortion, while The United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society withdrew its support of FOCA in 2008, because this RCRC-supported bill was in conflict with The United Methodist Church's position on abortion ("Living in the Truth: Church and Society, Obama, and Abortion," Lifewatch, p. 6, http://www.lifewatch.org/pdf/lifewatch_newsletter_03-09.pdf, accessed 2/2/2015; cf. *2012 Book of Discipline*, paragraph 161J); and

Whereas, the current President of RCRC, Rev. Harry Knox, has strongly opposed laws that restrict taxpayer funding for elective abortions (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/09/29/reverends-like-us-should-never-oppose-access-to-abortion-or-sex-ed/>, accessed 2/5/2015); and

Whereas, the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women are member organizations of RCRC.

Therefore, we, the members of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, meeting in session on May 31 – June 3, 2015, call upon the 2016 General Conference to withdraw immediately the General Board of Church and Society and the United Methodist Women from membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC); and

Therefore, we, the members of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, meeting in session on May 31 – June 3, 2015, charges its Conference Secretary, because of the fifty-word limit that has been imposed on the printed rationales in the public listings of General Conference petitions, to include with this petition the following rationale: "The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) is a one-sided political lobby that opposes all disapproval or limitation of abortion. RCRC's advocacy and publications often directly contradict our Social Principles on abortion, but RCRC still uses name of The United Methodist Church and its boards and agencies."