

## ***A Brief History of the Social Creed***

The work of the General Board of Church and Society can be traced to a series of documents, dating back to 1907, when a group of Methodist Episcopal Church leaders and members of the newly formed Methodist Federation for Social Service developed, in Washington, D.C., a *Social Creed*. That statement, adopted by General Conference in 1908, became the pattern for similar declarations by other Methodist denominations, the National Council of Churches, and other Christian denominations.

Through the years the Social Creed was revised, expanded and perfected. With the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church in 1968 it was determined that the new formed United Methodist Church should develop a new Social Creed. A committee was appointed and in 1972 "Our Social Creed" was adopted by General Conference. The Social Creed has been changed only slightly since that date.

The General Board of Church and Society has been considered the "trustee" of the United Methodist Social Principles, a direct out-growth of the Social Creed, and is charged by the Book of Discipline "to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns" and to "provide forthright witness and action on issues of human well-being, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation that call Christians to respond as forgiven people for whom Christ died." (2004 United Methodist Book of Discipline ~ paragraph 1004)

(For further study ~ Copies of the current United Methodist Social Principles and study guide can be ordered for \$1.25 each through the **General Board of Church and Society**, 100 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington DC 20002 ~ 202/488-5600 ~ [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) )

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## ***Our Social Creed*** **The United Methodist Church (2004)**

We believe in God, Creator of the world; and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God's gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.

We joyfully receive for ourselves and others the blessings of community, sexuality, marriage, and the family.

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging, and people with disabilities; to improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights and dignity of all persons.

We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the glory of God and the good of themselves and others and in the protection of their welfare in so doing; in the rights to property as a trust from God, collective bargaining, and responsible consumption; and in the elimination of economic and social distress.

We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world, to the rule of justice and law among nations, and to individual freedom for all people of the world.

We believe in the present and final triumph of God's Word in human affairs and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world. Amen.

*(It is recommended that this statement of Social Principles be continually available to United Methodist Christians and that it be emphasized regularly in every congregation. It is further recommended that "Our Social Creed" be frequently used in Sunday worship.*