

# RELIGION

## Confessing Movement Expands

United Methodists, whether conservative or liberal theologically, foresee a period of critical decision-making approaching on the mainline denomination's horizon.

Though membership declines have lessened in recent years, the United Methodist Church (UMC) is often perceived as a "sick denomination," one that requires serious rethinking and recommitment if it is to play a role in modern culture.

Membership in the United States, now at 8.6 million, has been decreasing for more than 25 years.

Several movements within the UMC are dedicated to furthering reform in the church. Perhaps none has the potential for controversy as much as the so-called Confessing Movement. Not even two years old, this movement, which seeks to regroup the church explicitly in its historic statements of theological doctrine

and mission, has attracted thousands of supporters and the focused attention of UMC's leadership.

That attention should only increase next April with the church's quadrennial general conference.

Confessing Movement leaders say they have assembled a coalition of UMC moderates, traditionalists, evangelicals, conservatives, and charismatics to prevent the denomination from losing its historic faith and doctrinal distinctives.

To that end, they urge the church to begin a vigorous internal discussion on the lordship and uniqueness of Christ, the status of its founding documents and statements of faith, and its duty to carry out the Great Commission.

The Confessing Movement's critics assert the movement has set itself up as the arbiter of orthodoxy and thus is a threat to the UMC's

tradition of tolerance.

Yet, movement leaders reject this characterization.

"We're not trying to define one narrow thing you've got to believe," says John Ed Mathison, chair of the movement's steering committee and senior pastor of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Ala. "But how much latitude can you have? When you've got some people who say you don't need Jesus Christ for salvation, you've gone too far."

The Confessing Movement sprang from an invitation-only meeting of about 90 United Methodists in Atlanta last year.

That meeting produced "An Invitation to the Church"—a call to reformation and doctrinal reinvigoration—which subsequently attracted 13,000 signatures of support. In April, an open meeting in Atlanta

saw about 900 attendees adopt "A Confessional Statement."

This statement emphasizes the centrality of Christ and takes the church to task for tolerating paganism, disregarding the world's poor, accepting modern norms of sexuality and marriage, resigning itself to racial and gender injustice, condoning homosexual practices and abdicating its role of support for the unborn and the mother.

At its heart, the Confessing Movement seeks to put boundaries on what is acceptable practice and belief within United Methodism.

It is also a reaction to nearly a century of liberal Protestantism, which it sees as drifting into the orbit of radical Protestants "who are creating their own religion," according to Prof. William J. Abraham, of Dallas's Southern Methodist University.

## Alternatives: Relief From Famine

BY M ISAACS

Everyone agrees that this world is in a "bad shape". Life is more transient; ignorance prevails; the people of this world are cold, hungry, diseased, discouraged, homeless and hopeless. A great number are godless. There are wars and destruction in diverse corners of the world. Tornados, bombings and floods are top news on our communications networks, and more and more hopelessness is apparent in the faces of the people of this world. We are in a state of famine; famine in state and federal governments; famine in spirit, corporate and individual. Our very souls crave the return of plenty and a disappearance of fear. We desperately need to be fed, filled, sated with that elusive thing that brings about a feeling of well being. What is really frightening is the evidence that God's people are losing their resolute devotion to Him who has promised relief from all types of famine. When life seems gloomy and completely out of our control; when nature vents it's fury upon us; when food and clothing is lacking and our basic needs for life weigh upon us, we, nevertheless, should have faith enough to know that nothing will keep God's purpose for us and this world from being accomplished.

Fasting is a self-preparation to come before Almighty God. It is not a hunger strike to force God to change his Will. Biblical fasting has as its objective a desire to hear from God and to know His Will. Churches are fasting almost in a frenzy, it seems. Groups of people are coming together for prayer. Prayer chains and group-fasts are being established throughout neighborhoods; from all this activity one would surmise that there is a universal return to the belief and worship of the one God, (who is) more powerful than anything in creation. But...are the motives for such fasting cemented in a desire to acknowledge and accept the power of God, or is this a frantic activity used as a means of bargaining with God to change that which has been prophesied; set in time and in the Will of Almighty God? Are we saying to God, "I will fast if you will feed the children; I will pray if you will answer by demolishing sexual abuse, alienate hunger; If you will abundantly bless the poor with riches, I will share your Word and fast and pray regularly". Have we forgotten, or did we ever really know that what is predestined will not change? Are we so brain washed with the much preached doctrine "that God will answer any sincere prayer and that

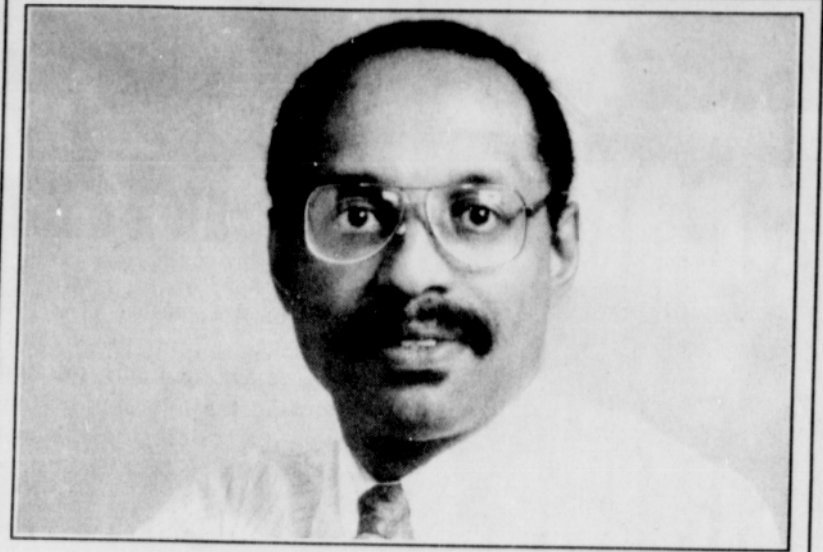
fasting and praying will change anything"? Have we forgotten that we are warned against 'foolish prayers' and warned against 'vain fasts', which seek to change that which God's Word tells us will happen? The signs which we now see, hear about an experience are there to warn us to be 'sober and watchful', looking unto our own salvation.

Our options for quick relief of the suffering of the people are few if not nil. Many seek the cities, hoping to obtain relief from government agencies and charitable organizations, etc.. Others seek the suburbs and outlying areas hoping to escape the crime, disease and high cost of living; to preserve and save that for which they've labored. A few are taking a good look at where this nation began, and the deep faith that existed in the hearts of the people. These few are turning or returning to the God of our Fathers; accepting that which they cannot change; that which has been pre-ordained and prophesied; these few are looking for the "promised relief", the end of all suffering. They have relinquished their selfish fasts and prayers; knowing that God knows each of us and cares for us; they loosen their hold on worldly possessions and fervently teach that the truthfulness and power

of God's Promises can transform despair into hope.

Wailing about the loss of government money and programs is a blatant waste of precious time. Time better spent in reaching out to each other, sharing not hoarding, our blessings; exhibiting a confidence in God's Word. We will struggle because we live in a world of fear and doubt, but we can learn to trust in the works of God's hands, even when it seems unreasonable to do so. We do not well (when we bemoan the fate of the world): This day is a day of good tidings, II Kings 7:9, which must be shared by the people and not left entirely to the Ministers and theology graduates. God holds the faithful and trusting person accountable not for results (this is in God's hands), but for a faithful proclamation of His Powerful Message.

To relieve the famine in our souls, we must establish a life style that testifies to an unshakable belief that God is just and right. We do that by following him, even when things are tough. Others need to see us humbly submit ourselves before God; Admitting our deep eternal need for the Redeemer. Acts 16:3. This is a hard lesson for some people to learn, but it is our only relief from all types of famine.



## In Memory Of Richard Charles Payne

Richard C. Payne was born on Nov. 17, 1944 and died Saturday, Sept. 30, 1995.

One of the Payne brothers, he was born in Salem and raised in Portland.

He attended Holiday and Eliot elementary schools and was a member of the class of 1962 at Benson High School. He graduated in 1967 from Willamette University in Salem and from the University of New Hampshire in 1969 with a masters degree in business administration.

He was a wonderful human being and a joy to be around. He was a husband, father, brother, uncle and role model for many individuals throughout his life. He always made time for you, you were important to him and he wanted you to know that.

He was the pioneering brother of the family. He traveled to Central and South American researching the family tree and was a proven example of what you can do and be in life. He provided the family

focus and leadership that the brothers are known for in the community.

He returned to Portland in 1993 after spending 27 years living on the East Coast and in the San Francisco Bay area. He was employed by Multnomah County's Department of Environmental Services as a management assistant for the director.

He is survived by his wife Florida; stepson Johnnie Mondragon of New Mexico; stepdaughters, Irene Gomez of California and Marcella Mondragon of Vancouver; brothers David L. Payne of Vancouver, Dennis G. Payne of Cleveland, Ohio and Russell J. Payne of Portland; and a sister, Kathryn Johnson of Richmond, Va. He also has many other family members and friends throughout the country.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Friday, Oct. 6 at Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church in Portland.

## New Church Established

On July 7, 1995, Martin Luther Memorial Lutheran Church was officially recognized as a member congregation of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.

"This action is historic in that this is the first time a predominant African American group has established a Lutheran Congregation in Portland." Noted the Pastor, Rev. Rozell Gilmore.

He went on to state that the Lutheran Church has a long history among Black people in the south and north eastern states but very little in Portland. And for that reason most have very little knowledge of its message, ministry or worship style.

The Church gets its name from its founder, Martin Luther, a Catholic Priest who, in 1517, led a protest against some of the teaching of

the Catholic Church. It is considered by historians to be the Mother Church of the Reformation.

The Congregation's meeting place is the Lutheran Inner City Ministries Community Center, 4219 NE MLK. Jr Blvd. at Skidmore.

Sunday worship time is 10:00 A.M., Sunday School is 11:45 A.M.

Rev. Gilmore extends an invitation to the public and all who want more information about the Church and its ministry. Ph. 281-5251 or 281-7036.



### Divorce Hurts!

Are you separated, divorced?

Dealing with pain and confusion from a broken relationship? **Portland First Church of the Nazarene** is offering a **Divorce Recovery Workshop "Picking Up the Pieces & Rebuilding Your Life"**

6 Tuesday evening sessions  
7-9:00pm, Oct. 3 - Nov. 14, Cost: \$49  
and with advanced registration childcare to age 11

**Portland First Church of the Nazarene**  
6100 SW Raab Road  
(Sunset Hwy at Sylvan Exit)  
Phone 297-6100 to register

### Grief Recovery

Dealing with the loss of a loved one can be devastating, especially if you are going through it alone.

**Portland First Church of the Nazarene** is offering a **Grief Recovery Workshop**

6 Tuesday evenings, Oct. 3 - Nov. 14, (No session Oct 31)  
Cost: \$15  
Additional costs for childcare

**Portland First Church of the Nazarene**  
6100 SW Raab Road  
(Sunset Hwy at Sylvan)  
Phone 297-6100 to register

### The October Bible Drive

The October Bible Drive is again underway. The need for Bibles is very great so everyone is encouraged to participate and tell their friends. The collection centers this year are:

- Christian Supply Center Stores in Portland, Oregon City, Beaverton, Wilsonville
  - The Christian Marketplace in Tigard
  - Emmanuel Gospel Supply in Vancouver
  - Higher Ground Christian Resource Center in Newberg.
- Contact Bible Foundation, 538-4897, for questions or assistance.

### St. Mark Baptist Church

103 NE Morris St., Portland, OR 97212

- Sunday School - 9:30am
  - Sunday Morning Worship Service - 11:00am
  - Sunday School Teacher's Meeting Tues - 6:30pm
  - Bible Study Wednesday 6:00pm
  - Prayer Meeting Wednesday - 7:00pm
- Church Phone Number  
287-7457

We Invite You To Come And Worship With Us.  
The Church Where Everybody is Somebody And Christ Is All.  
Dr. Joe S. Hardie, Pastor



### Mt Olivet Baptist Church

8501 N. Chautauqua Blvd.,  
at Willis Blvd.

Worship Services 8:00am & 11:00am,  
Church School 9:30 to 10:30am,  
Bible Study, Wednesdays, 10:30am & 7:00pm  
Radio Ministry each Sunday, 8:00am on KBMS  
A Teaching Church With A Reaching Ministry  
Dr. James E. Martin, Senior Pastor  
(503) 240-PRAY



### FAITH TEMPLE CHURCH

4224 S.E. 62nd Avenue  
(between Powell & Foster)  
Portland, Oregon 97206

SUNDAY  
Sunday School 9:30am  
Morning Worship 10:45am  
Evangelistic Service 7:30pm  
Tuesday Pastoral Teaching 7:00pm

FRIDAY  
Evangelistic Service 7:00pm

DAILY  
Prayer 12:00pm & 6:00pm



(503) 774-5470  
PASTORS: Bishop Robert Simpson, Jr. • Dr. Ida M. Simpson

### GREATER FAITH CHRISTIAN CENTER CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST



Invites You to Worship with Us!  
Sunday Morning 11:30am



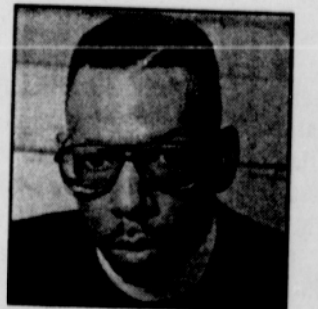
106 N. Killingsworth St.

Come and enjoy Christ centered Praise and Worship  
And  
The anointed Preaching/Teaching ministry of our Pastor,  
Rev. H. Bernard Ings, Jr.

#### Order of Services

Sunday School - 10:00am  
Morning Worship - 11:30am  
Sunday Evening - 6:30pm

Tuesday Evening - 7:30pm  
Prayer/Bible Study  
1st & 3rd Friday - 7:30pm  
Evangelistic Service



ONE SERVICE COULD CHANGE  
YOUR ENTIRE LIFE