

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
PETITION TO THE 2006 ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

**TITLE: METHODIST RESOLUTION URGING PRAYERFUL REFLECTION
ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN ABORTION COALITION**

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

- 1 The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference calls on members of the United Methodist Church to
- 2 prayerfully reflect on whether agencies of our church should continue their membership in the
- 3 Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2006

TERMINATION DATE: June 30, 2007

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION

Violet M. Winter

PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION TO CONFERENCE:

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FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

RATIONALE: Not debatable

- 4 WHEREAS the members of the United Methodist Church, like the rest of American Society,
- 5 have a wide range of views on the difficult matter of abortion;
- 6
- 7 WHEREAS the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society and the Women's
- 8 Division of our denomination's General Board of Global Ministries participate as member
- 9 organizations of the Religious Coal for Reproductive Choice (RCRC);

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10 WHEREAS RCRC goes significantly beyond what many self-described “pro-choice” people
11 believe, opposing parental notification requirements for abortions performed on minor girls,
12 supporting taxpayer funding of medically unnecessary abortions, and denouncing legal
13 protections for health care professionals who do not want to be forced to participate in abortions;
14

15 WHEREAS the *Social Principles* of the United Methodist Church “call for the end of” most
16 instances of “partial-birth” abortions (Paragraph 161J) while RCRC publicly condemned a
17 federal bill to ban the practice (11/5/2003 RCRC press release);
18

19 WHEREAS the *Social Principles* of the United Methodist Church oppose abortion being used
20 for such reasons as birth control and gender selection (Paragraph 161J) while RCRC admits no
21 situation in which abortion might be unjust;
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23 WHEREAS the *Social Principles* of the United Methodist Church affirm “the sanctity of unborn
24 human life (Paragraph 161J), consistent with the testimony of Scripture (for example, Psalm
25 130:14-15, Luke 1:41-44) and historic Christian teaching, while RCRC does not make the same
26 affirmation;
27

28 WHEREAS criticism by RCRC officials of opposition to extramarital sex and homosexual
29 practice raise concerns that affiliation with RCRC may compromise our denomination’s
30 standards on marriage and sexuality;
31

32 WHEREAS other “mainline” denominations with similar positions on abortion to that of the
33 United Methodist Church have either never associated with RCRC (e.g., the Evangelical
34 Lutheran Church in America and the Disciples of Christ), or have severed past ties with RCRC
35 (American Baptist Churches USA and the Northern Province of the Moravian Church);
36

37 WHEREAS in a January 24, 2005 sermon, Bishop Timothy Whitaker of the Florida Area of the
38 United Methodist Church lamented how during the 2004 General Conference, time was not
39 allotted for “much of a debate” about our denomination’s participation in RCRC;
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41 WHEREAS the 2005 sessions of at least three other annual conference of the United Methodist
42 Church (North Georgia, South Indiana, and Louisiana) adopted similar resolutions.