

has received numerous calls from regular “people in the pews” upset over Sprague’s comments. Her organization, with offices in Indianapolis, is an unofficial United Methodist group that describes itself as a renewal movement in the church.

Miller added that this has motivated many to become more active and involved in the future of the United Methodist Church. “In some ways it is strengthening the church in the classical biblical faith because now people are saying that is not what we believe. We do believe the Bible is the Word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God and that Jesus is the way to salvation.”

One of the signers, David Stanley of Muscatine, Iowa, is a member of the Confessing Movement’s board of directors. Three others – Lambrecht, the Rev. William Hines of Upper Sandusky, Ohio, and the Rev. Bradley Knepp of Mount Holly Springs, Pa. – are on the board of directors of Good News, a United Methodist renewal movement with offices in Wilmore, Ky.

The complaint was filed with Bishop Bruce R. Ough, president of the College of Bishops for the North Central Jurisdiction. The complaint asks that this matter be brought to investigation, and if sustained, “that Bishop Sprague either (publicly) renounce his contrary teaching and maintain his teaching within the doctrinal standards of the United Methodist Church, or that he resign (or be removed) from his office and surrender his credentials of ordination.”

“The Book of Discipline” states that when a complaint is filed against a bishop, the president of the jurisdictional college of bishops shall make a supervisory response. The response is “directed toward a just resolution and/or reconciliation among all parties.” This may include consultation with the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy or voluntary mediation in which a neutral, trained mediator or mediation team is brought in.

The supervisory response “is not a judicial process,” the book states. If the response doesn’t lead to a resolution, the case could be referred to a bishop from another jurisdiction or central conference or a pastor from the same jurisdiction or conference. That person would serve as church counsel, representing the denomination in pressing the complaint. The

counsel would sign the complaint and forward it to a committee on investigation. From there, the complaint would go through a clearly defined process. Meanwhile, efforts for resolution would continue.

The committee would have the power to call witnesses and hold hearings during its investigation. If it decided that the charges were valid, it could recommend that a trial be held. In that case, a trial court of 13 United Methodist clergy members would be convened. Nine votes would be needed to convict. With a conviction, the court would have the power to impose a number of penalties, some severe – such as expulsion from the church – and some less so.

Whitaker said the judicial process is not ideal for handling the case involving Sprague, but that the current system provides no other way to address concern about someone’s adherence to doctrinal standards. “I believe we need to look at our procedures and see if we need something that is a little different (and) that enables us to have more dialogue before we go to the judicial process.”

Five Holston members signed the complaint: Rev. Buford W. Hankins, Rev. Phyllis L. Hankins, Gerald B. Kersey and Cornele Kersey, and Robert E. Moore. ■

Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

Who Said That?

“A distracted clergy watches idly as the black community is engaged in new fights just as vital as the one against segregation of 40 years ago. The spread of AIDS, the high number of broken families, the crisis in public education, jails disproportionately filled with black men, and the high rate of children living in poverty constitutes today’s challenge in the life of the black church.” ■

—New York Times columnist **Juan Williams**, charging that leaders of black churches are ignoring today’s social and cultural issues while focusing on economic development.

News Briefs

Gathering will spotlight international mission

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (UMNS) – Church leaders from around the world will share their stories and challenges during the United Methodist “Global Gathering” April 10-13 in Birmingham. Sponsored by the Board of Global Ministries, the denomination’s mission agency, the event will feature morning and evening worship services, daily Bible study, panelists and keynote speakers discussing mission, a choice of 43 different workshops and a “global village” area with exhibits and performances. Events connected to the Global Gathering include the April 9-10 “Youth Go Global” conference. More information can be found at <http://gbgm-umc.org>, the board’s Web site.

Profile: Janette Carter, country musician

HILTONS, Va. (UMNS) – Janette Carter, daughter of country music legends A.P. and Sara Carter, is still going strong at age 80, staging shows at the Carter Family Memorial Music Center, which she started in 1974. A member of Holston’s Mount Vernon United Methodist Church in Hiltons, she says she takes time to thank God every day. “My grandson says, ‘Grandma, how do you go on and on and on?’ And I says, ‘Well, I pray a little, I pray and then I go a little ways, then I’ll pray some more and go on another little way.’” She shares her life journey in this month’s “UMC.org Profiles” audio-feature.

Commission recognizes young people

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – Young people will be recognized and honored for personal and selfless contributions to others in a program sponsored by the Commission on United Methodist Men. Five young people, between the ages of 12 and 19, representing each of the denomination’s five U.S. jurisdictions, will receive \$500 awards from the commission. For details, contact the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting, P.O. Box 340006, Nashville, TN 37203-0006; send an e-mail to mstowe@gcumm.org; or call (615) 340-7129.

Walk to Emmaus celebrates 25 years

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – The Walk to Emmaus, an international movement for spiritual renewal and leadership development for service through the church, celebrates its 25th anniversary this summer. The July 24-27 anniversary observance will offer the participants an opportunity to gather for spiritual renewal, church leadership training, learning about God’s work through the program and exchanging faith stories. The Upper Room, a ministry unit of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, is sponsoring the event. Although connected to the United Methodist Church, the program is ecumenical. For registration information, go to www.upperroom.org/emmasus/25th. ■

For complete versions of these and other United Methodist News stories, visit www.holstonconference.com/thecall and click on “National & World News.”

Holston members, continued from page 1

faith as outlined in the ‘Book of Discipline.’”

Other signers of the complaint include Robert Moore, member at Trinity UMC, Big Stone Gap District, and Gerald and Cornele Kersey, members at Broad Street UMC, Cleveland District. Eleven annual conferences were represented among the signatures.

Hankins said he hoped that the complaint would prompt Sprague to resign.

For additional coverage, see the United Methodist News Service report, “Group files complaint against Bishop Sprague,” on page 6. ■

U.S. Christmas (USX) is an American band from North Carolina that started playing together in 2002. They create very loud, loose and free music in a definite nasty psychedelic vein, but never jammy or amorphous. Everyone creates their own individual sound, and writes their own parts. And togâ€™ read more. U.S. Christmas (USX) is an American band from North Carolina that started playing together in 2002.