



*Faithful Witness for a New Century
Campaign for the Future of the Methodist
Federation for Social Action*

Question and Answer Sheet

Question: What is the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA)? How is it organized?

Answer: Founded in 1907, MFSA is an independent movement of progressive United Methodists committed to the Social Gospel and to living out our faith through acts of justice and mercy.

MFSA is organized into 40 chapters across the United States. The MFSA Board of Directors is composed of representatives from our forty chapters plus additional at-large members to ensure diversity and breadth of expertise. Supported entirely by annual memberships and contributions, MFSA is not an official United Methodist entity.

Question: How is MFSA related to the United Methodist Church?

Answer: MFSA was founded by a number of prominent Methodist leaders at a time when the church had no ministry agency to address the crying social needs of the day. The 1908 General Conference “heartily approved” of the objectives of the Federation and the 1912 General Conference adopted a report on “The Church and Social Problems” which ended with the recognition of the Federation as an “agency to rally the forces of the Church in support of approved measures...” within the report.

The Federation has remained an independent entity, carrying out its ministry *in relation* to the Methodist Church but not dependent on approval or support from official church bodies.

MFSA supports and augments already existing peace and justice ministries of the United Methodist Church as well as carrying out additional ministries. We call upon the United Methodist Church to expand its understanding and embodiment of the radical call of the Gospel to be the inclusive, justice-seeking, risk-taking Body of Christ.

Question: How is MFSA funded?

Answer: MFSA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. It has an annual budget of \$250,000 and a full-time staff of three: an executive director, an organizer and an office manager. It is funded through charitable gifts and membership dollars.

Question: How many members are in MFSA?

Answer: MFSA has 4,500 members and constituents throughout the United States organized into 40 chapters. MFSA is represented in every jurisdiction.

Question: Why does MFSA need expanded financial resources?

Answer: The organization does extensive work in the areas of peace, poverty, peoples' rights and progressive initiatives. It has performed admirably on the slimmest of financial margins for 100 years.

In recent years, MFSA has responded to the pressing needs of the day by expanding its program accordingly. In order to do this, MFSA has drawn down its reserve funds. If the current ministry is to continue, and if MFSA plans for future ministry are to be realized, expanded financial resources must be forthcoming.

Question: Is my MFSA campaign gift in place of or in addition to my MFSA annual gift?

Answer: *The Faithful Witness Campaign for the Future of MFSA* is a special project designed to generate new funds above and beyond existing levels of annual support.

Question: What kinds of gifts are expected?

Answer: Extraordinary gifts are needed for this unique and historic time for MFSA. This will mean different things to different people depending on your resources. What we are trying to communicate is that this is not a "business as usual" request. You are being asked to be part of something that will have a major impact.

Question: Why now? What is so urgent?

Answer: MFSA stands at a crossroads. During the last decade there has been

an extensive expansion of the scope of our work. Within this time MFSA:

- added a full-time organizer to the staff
- increased publications to include a E-Newsletter
- moved from a very basic, simple web site to a multi-layered site with news, resources and action items
- is in the process of revamping the web site to make it even more useful to constituents
- instituted bi-annual, national *Voices of Faith* conferences
- expanded the witness at General Conference
- developed a program of nonviolence training
- added five new chapters and now has a presence in all five jurisdictions

We cannot sustain this expanded program without additional funding nor can we continue to grow in the areas of communications and leadership training that are critical if MFSA is going to have a future.

It is important that we reach a broader constituency to provide ongoing support. In order to do this we must have additional communications capacity, provide leadership training to grassroots MFSA leaders across the country and under gird our finances with an endowment.

Question: I just finished paying off another campaign pledge for a different organization. I have other philanthropic opportunities and they need my support. Why should I support this campaign?

Answer: MFSA was founded at a time when the needs of the day were enormous. MFSA leaders felt compelled to respond from their understanding of the Gospel as that which called them into action.

We find ourselves in a similar situation today. The need for strong, clear, progressive faith witness addressing the pressing issues of our day is critical. Choosing to respond to support the Federation through this campaign is a choice to augment and strengthen the witness that MFSA already provides.

If we are going to grow and increase our effectiveness through better communications technology, additional organizing and leadership training and creating an endowment, this is a challenge that we must meet today. The additional funds generated for MFSA will have an impact on every aspect of the work of MFSA, increasing our prophetic voices within and beyond the UMC.