

## Second Largest Denomination Reaffirms Marriage and Morality

Last week the **United Methodist Church**, the second largest denomination in America rejected efforts to embrace same-sex marriage at its General Conference. The chief rulemaking body of the United Methodist churches voted **501-417** to affirm marriage in its **Book of Discipline** as a "*covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.*"

The conference meets every four years and brings together delegates from around the world. Some observers noted that while there may be some decline in the size of the Methodist church in the US, in Africa there has been a growth of the denomination. Almost 30% of the delegates in this session were from Africa. They forged an alliance with Evangelical US delegates to protect marriage. The internationals may comprise up to 40% of the 2012 delegation, which may help protect marriage and Biblical morality questions at the next conference.

**Mark Tooley**, Executive Director of the **Institute on Religion and Democracy's** *UMAction Committee*, observed:

*"The vote today in affirmation of traditional marriage represents the will of the international United Methodist Church. Those who demand acceptance of homosexual behavior maximized their campaign this year knowing it was their last chance to win in United Methodism."*

Tooley also noted that those delegates who defended marriage, *"are working for a renewed denomination faithful to historic Christian teaching, and culturally transformative instead of culturally accommodating."*