People are asking me, “Does the United Methodist Church support the health care bill that passed this year?” The short answer is “No.” However, a more detailed response is in order.

To begin with, the UMC can speak officially only once every four years, at General Conference. When General Conference met in 2008, this Health Care bill did not yet exist, so the General Conference could not have made an official pronouncement one way or another.

However, there are many groups within the UMC, all of which are free to express their opinions.

That’s where the confusion comes in. Our General Commission on Church and Society did come out in support of the Health Care Bill; however a majority of United Methodist Congresspeople voted against it. And such diversity of opinion is to be expected from a denomination in which both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former president George W. Bush are members!

To be clear, the United Methodist Church is on record as being in favor of Health Care reform [as are, in fact, both the Republican Party and Democratic Party. . . they just differ on what reform would look like.]

(By the way, were I in Congress, I would have voted against the bill. The process was certainly not the most shining moment in the history of legislation! And, I’m more of a free-market guy. However, that makes me neither more of, nor less of, a Christian, than those who would have voted differently.)

And this leads to a deeper point: Last I checked, God has registered neither as a Republican or nor a Democrat, though there are those in both parties who would have you believe otherwise. Any attempt to demonize a denomination for its positions is often un-Christian in itself.

For instance, I disagree completely with denominations that deny women the right to be pastors. I believe that their stance comes from a totally incorrect interpretation of Scripture. . . and I can

back it up! However, I would not call such denominations “evil.” Being incorrect and being evil are two different things.

— Eric Lindblade