

Welcome International Workshop for Net Business Ethics

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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the International Workshop for Net Business Ethics. I represent two groups that are helping to offer this workshop, and I am happy to bring greetings on behalf of the leaders of those organizations. First, I bring you greetings from Dr. Jerome King Del Pino, General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. He and those of us who represent that board recognize the challenges we face as the users of rapidly changing communication technologies. Because there is a need both to encourage and define ethical behavior for the users and to learn to protect oneself from those who do not share the same values and practices, we are pleased to participate in this workshop.

I also bring you greetings from Dr. Rukudzo Murapa, president of the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU). That is the organization of all educational institutions in the world established in the Wesleyan tradition—more than 775 institutions in 67 countries. IAMSCU is a young organization that, prior to this event, has held international conferences every three or four years since its founding in 1991. With this workshop on a high-profile topic, it initiates a new means of serving various constituents of these institutions. It is our hope that this is just one of many that will be offered to our colleagues in the future. We thank Dr. Masayuki Ida and Aoyama Gakuin University for leading this workshop and Dr. Amos Nascimento who joined him as an organizer of this event.

Technology, that wonderful, challenging, ever-changing tool we now have at our disposal creates both opportunities and challenges. This workshop addresses the issues of ethics and social responsibility relating to global technology and net business, in particular.

There are many levels to consider when thinking of ethics in regard to net business. On one level, we simply know that some things are right or wrong and we respond to those as our moral and spiritual upbringing guide us to do. On another level, we are faced with entirely new practices and options that need to be evaluated carefully. They represent the “grey” areas where a careful evaluation process that involves both values and logic must guide us in uncharted waters. Finally, there are areas of social responsibility that relate more to issues of omission than of commission. As Christian educators, we must keep in mind how our decisions regarding net business may affect individuals who are less fortunate by excluding them from opportunities or unintentionally decreasing

their quality of life. In the same way, we must give increasing attention to the ways our decisions may have a negative impact on this planet and on the sustainability of our environment.

So, welcome! This will be an informative and provocative workshop, and I look forward to learning with you and from you about net business ethics.

***Wanda Bigham** received a B. A. in music education and higher education from Morehead State University and a PhD in higher education from the University of Kentucky. She also studied Educational Management at Harvard University. She is the former President of Huntington College, Montgomery, Ala. Previously she served as president of Marycrest College, Davenport, Iowa, and led that institution through a time of reorganization and redirection. She was also Vice-President of Development and College Relations, executive assistant to the President at Emerson College and Associate Dean of academic programs at Morehead University. Dr. Bigham has been very active as member of the American Council on Education (ACE), the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) the International Association of University Presidents, the National Association of Schools and Colleges of The United Methodist Church, and the University Senate. Currently she is Assistant General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry – GBHEM – where she leads the Division of Higher Education and is responsible for a series of global projects involving IAMSCU and other international organizations. Wanda Bigham has received several awards for her work in the area of education.*