



AFRICA COLLEGE OF BISHOPS CONCLUDES LEARNING RETREAT  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE  
STATEMENT



We the Africa College of Bishops, through the providence of Almighty God, met in Freetown, Sierra Leone from September 3-7, 2018, for our annual learning retreat under the theme; “The African Church ten years from now.”

We remain deeply grateful to God for His grace and mercy and for accompanying us with His presence throughout our stay in Sierra Leone.

We are deeply grateful to Bishop John Yambasu, President of the Africa College of Bishops, for his genuine and transformational leadership, and the entire membership of The United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone for their extravagant hospitality, love and care accorded us during this time of meeting;

We are deeply grateful for the deep sense of community, Christian fellowship and worship and the rich learning experiences that prevailed throughout our stay in Sierra Leone. We offer special thanks to:

- The President of the All Africa Conference of Churches Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple, for his soul searching and inspiring sermon delivered during the opening worship.
- Dr. Julius Spencer from the University of Sierra Leone, for his profound lectures on “Leading Leaders”
- Mr. Leslie Scott for his presentation on “the Church’s role in advocacy, and,
- The various presentations by our General Agencies, namely, GCFA, UMCom and GBHEM.

We express our profound thanks and appreciation to GBGM Translator Don Reasoner and his team for the excellent translation during the retreat without which effective communication would have been a huge challenge.

Furthermore, we discussed at length the challenges posed by the issue of human sexuality and the ongoing tensions that are ripping the denomination apart including the potential impacts on the African church in particular, and;

We discussed at length how we as Bishops can lead the whole church in Africa towards sustainability.

Therefore, having come to a successful conclusion of our time together, it is our joy to share with the rest of the connection the below statement as an outcome of our conversation in Sierra Leone;

- Whereas, we reaffirm our position as traditionalists and view marriage as union between Man and Woman as clearly defined in scripture and affirmed in our COB 2016 statement in Lake Junaluska, and at the Africa extended cabinet (Ghana, February 2018), and at the May 2018 COB in Chicago, Illinois;

And,

- Whereas, we remain faithfully committed to our consecration vows as Bishops of the church to “maintain the unity of the church”; We want it to be known that:
  - I. We do not support any legislation that calls for the dissolution of The United Methodist Church. We uphold our values as a connectional and worldwide church committed to “Making disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world.”*
  - II. We commend the work of the Commission on a Way Forward and we commit ourselves to be in continued prayer and fasting for God’s guidance for our denomination as we go to St, Louis, Missouri, for the Special Call 2019 General Conference to receive and take action on the work of the Commission on a Way Forward.*
  - III. We further resolve that even if there is a split in the denomination, the Church in Africa will continue to exist as The United Methodist Church in Africa.*

***To God be the Glory***

Bishop John K Yambasu (President)

For and on behalf of the Africa College of Bishops