



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE AFRICA BISHOPS November 5, 2017

To all God's children called United Methodists in Africa;
Grace, peace and love from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was, who is and who ever shall be. AMEN

As we converge here at Lake Junaluska together with our colleague United Methodist Bishops from around the connection for our 2017 November Council of Bishops meeting, we received and are encouraged by news of the wonderful ways God is moving in our denomination throughout the African continent and the connection.

We prayed and thanked God for the shared ministry of disciple making which the whole church is engaged in around the world and we celebrated the phenomenal missional engagement of The United Methodist Church and its transforming impact on lives in Africa and across the connection.

At the same time, we lamented the current wave of events that have overshadowed our church and the huge potential these events have, in not only dividing us, but completely destroying our identity as a global/connectional church.

We are overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenge the issue of human sexuality has posed for the whole denomination. We realize and are saddened that our denomination is broken and in need of healing and wholeness.

We admit that our denomination is at the crossroads. We realize that the task of remaining a "united" church is certainly a daunting one. But challenging as these may seem, we draw on the rich experiences of our history, where from time to time, God, in his divine grace has led us from one daunting challenge to another.

We call on the entire African Church to continue to depend on this one Holy Triune God, the rock of ages, who has been our travelling companion throughout history, guiding us with "a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night," providing water out of the rock and feeding us with manna from heaven at every difficult stage along the journey (Exodus 13:21-22; 16)

As a church, we are called to keep the unity of the Spirit as a people belonging to "one body and one Spirit, one God, one Lord, one faith and one baptism" (Ephesians 3, 4 and 5)

As your spiritual leaders, we urge and encourage you to continue to support the ongoing work of the Commission on a Way Forward through prayer and fasting as they provide the needed leadership for the whole church. We believe that nothing is impossible with God (Mathew 19:26), and that no matter how fierce the storm may rage, God has the power to breathe his peace upon our stormy waters and usher calmness.

As your Bishops, we encourage you to keep the faith and to be still and Holy Spirit focused until the Commission on a Way Forward completes its work and the Council of Bishops gives direction to the whole church at the Special Session of General Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri February 23-26, 2019. May the peace of God continue to abundantly fill your heart this and every day. AMEN

Bishop John K Yambasu
President of the Africa College of Bishops
For and on behalf of the College of Africa Bishops

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