

Docket 0413 With All Documents

Docket 0413-1

IN RE: Review of a Bishop's Decision of Law in the Desert Southwest Annual Conference Regarding the Resolution Entitled "Inclusiveness Resolution"

Request for a Ruling of Law

Statement of Facts

The Desert Southwest Annual Conference, held at Glendale, Arizona on June 24, 2012, adopted the following resolution: 21.30 Inclusiveness Resolution.

During the discussion of the above mentioned resolution Rev. Duane Combs asked for a ruling of law on the resolution. As presiding officer, I, Bishop Minerva G. Carcalio ruled Rev. Combs out of order since no decision had thus far been made by the body. I further stated that I would be willing to consider Rev. Combs' request for a ruling of law once a decision was made.

The 21.30 Inclusiveness Resolution was passed by the annual conference by an overwhelming majority. It states as follows:

Inclusiveness Resolution

21.30

WHEREAS the 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church retained language in the Book of Discipline which continues to discriminate against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons; and

WHEREAS, No other marginalized group has been singled out in the Book of Discipline for discrimination or special exclusionary treatment. We believe this is in conflict with our traditional and historic emphasis on God's grace being available to all. The discriminatory language is itself in conflict with the inclusive language in other parts of the Book of Discipline, including the Constitution of our denomination.

WHEREAS we believe that LGBT persons should be embraced as members of the body of Christ, as United Methodists in full standing, and as gifted children of God entitled equally to all of the ministries, ceremonies, and sacraments of the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly"; and

WHEREAS, the nonviolent Civil Rights movement fought for justice and equality **in civil and** religious life in the United States with compassion and courage. Yet injustice continues to threaten us, in the United States and in the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, the recognition of the full humanity, sacred worth and equal rights of LGBT people is crucial to the civil rights struggle of our time. LGBT and straight United Methodist laity and clergy are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, and

WHEREAS, the continuing denial of full access to all the rights and privileges of church membership in the United Methodist Church is causing deep spiritual harm to our LGBT brothers and sisters and is a threat to us all; and

WHEREAS, when asked which commandment in the law is the greatest, Jesus said, "'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39): and

WHEREAS, in his sermons "The New Birth" and "The Catholic Spirit," John Wesley taught that as long as we hold in common the essential elements of our faith, and as long as we unite in love, meaning that we love one another, that we commend each other to God in prayer, that we provoke each other to love and to good works, that we love each other not only in word but in deed and in truth, then our hearts are right and we should walk together hand in hand. Wesley further taught that differences of opinion ought not to tear this union of hearts asunder; and

WHEREAS, our membership vows call us "to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves"; and

WHEREAS, the first of Wesley's General Rules is to Do No Harm, and

WHEREAS, the United Methodists Church claims to be a church of open hearts, open minds and open doors and to be a church that practices radical hospitality,

WHEREAS the Desert Southwest Conference, being part of the Western Jurisdiction has affirmed the *We Will Not Be Silent* statement adopted by the United Methodist Western Jurisdictional Conference in 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Desert Southwest Conference, took the bold and courageous stand in 2009, and voted as an Annual Conference to become a Welcoming and Reconciling Conference; therefore let it be

RESOLVED that the Desert Southwest Conference reaffirm its commitment to and work for the full civil and ecclesiastical rights and privileges of all persons including LGBT persons, and declares its opposition to continued restrictions of church law on the participation of LGBT people in The United Methodist Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we acknowledge when following the Book of Discipline it requires us to do harm and injustice by discriminating against, diminishing, or demeaning our LGBT brothers and sisters, and that we are placed in an impossible situation as to be guided by our Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience or by the Book of Discipline; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church work together to build a fully inclusive church. We commit to be in ministry with all people, regardless of their economic status, race, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, or immigration status.

Sometime later in the plenary Rev. Combs again asked for a ruling of law on 21.30 Inclusiveness Resolution. I received the request for a ruling of law stating that I understood I had a few days to respond and would do so.

At the conclusion of the annual conference session I requested the Combs' written request for a ruling of law. Rev. Combs had failed to submit a written request. In an effort to be responsive to Rev. Combs concern, I asked the conference secretary of the Desert Southwest Conference, Rev. Louie Lyons, to attempt to obtain a written request for a ruling of law from Rev. Combs. Rev. Combs submitted his request for a ruling of law on July 3, 2012 by email (attached).

Rev. Combs' request for a ruling of law asks:

1. Were the comments of the presenter acceptable?
2. Does this resolution give the people of the Desert Southwest Conference and the World the impression that we can pick and choose the parts of our church law that we like or dislike and will follow?
3. Does 21.30 meet the requirements of our Church law?

I would submit that:

1. That the comments of the presenter were acceptable. The presenter articulated in summary form the points of the resolution.
2. This question is hypothetical and therefore moot. There is no way for I or

anyone else to determine how others will receive or respond to this resolution.

3. Resolution 21.30 does not ask pastors or lay persons to disobey the *Book of Discipline of The UMC*. Rather it expresses an opinion about the perceived impact of the restrictions of church law and the frustration and pain that some experience when following these restrictions. It encourages ministry to and with all people in the spirit of the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

I would further submit that 21.30 Inclusiveness Resolution adopted by the Desert Southwest Conference is not in violation of the *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Submitted by Bishop Minerva Carcaño, July 25, 2012

Docket 0413-2

IN RE: Review of a Bishop's Decision of Law at the Western Jurisdictional Conference Regarding the Relationship Between ¶ 2711.2 and the Resolution "The Sense of the 2012 Western Jurisdictional Conference"

Bishop's Report To The Judicial Council
Of The United Methodist Church
Addendum of Relevant Information

Report of an Episcopal decision made by Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata during the session of the Western Jurisdiction Conference, meeting at San Diego, California on July 12, 2012.

Subject: Response to a question of law

On July 12, 2012, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Western Jurisdiction Conference meeting in San Diego, California, a motion to adopt the petition entitled "The Sense of the Western Jurisdiction of, the United Methodist Church" was duly presented to the body. Following discussion and a vote, the motion was adopted. Mr. Lonnie Brooks, a layperson from the Alaska United Methodist Conference, presented a question of law in response to the affirmative vote by the Jurisdictional Conference on the petition submitted by the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

The text of the question of law as presented is:

In the light of Par. 2711.2 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, which says, in relevant part, "The trial court shall determine the penalty," what is the force in law on the penalty phase of any trial conducted within the bounds of the jurisdiction of the resolution entitled "The Sense of the Western Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church," adopted by the 2012 Western Jurisdictional Conference.

THE DECISION: The petition is flawed in that the paragraph cited (Par. 2711.2) has no language to support the pretense of the question. The question of law is therefore declared moot.

PETITION TO THE WESTERN JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE 2012

Submitted by Laura Jaquith Bartle OR-ID Conference Secretary

Title: The Sense of the Western Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church, Paragraph 304.3

Sponsors: Oregon-Idaho Reconciling United Methodists
Oregon-Idaho MFSA
Jeanne Knepper (OR-ID clergy member)

The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference wishes to submit to the 2012 Jurisdictional Conference the following resolution:

The Sense of the Western Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church, Paragraph 304.3

Whereas the Constitution of The United Methodist Church reserves to the clergy members of each Annual Conference the exclusive right to vote "on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members," [The Constitution, 133, 2008 Book of Discipline, p. 31];

And whereas The United Methodist Church reserves to the clergy members of each Jurisdiction the exclusive right to sit on a trial court if a bishop from that jurisdiction is charged and tried for a violation of a disciplinary provision [12712, 2008 Book of Discipline, p. 773];

And whereas The Book of Discipline establishes among the laws of the Church that "... self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church" [2008 Book of Discipline, ¶ 304.3, p. 206];

And whereas the Western Jurisdiction has adopted resolutions and statements that are specifically welcoming of people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity;

Be it hereby resolved that the sense of the Western Jurisdiction is that if any bishop of the Western Jurisdiction be charged with ordaining or appointing a self-avowed practicing homosexual, and after due disciplinary process is tried and convicted of such an offense, that an appropriate penalty to assign

would be the suspension of said convicted bishop from the exercise of episcopal office [2008 Book of Discipline, ¶ 2712.6, p. 774] for a period of 24 consecutive hours.

Docket 0413-3

IN RE: Review of a Bishop's Decision of Law at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference Regarding Rescission of Resignation from the Episcopal Office

Report of an episcopal decision made by Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton and the Northeastern Jurisdictional College of Bishops during the session of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, meeting at Charleston, West Virginia on Wednesday, July 18, 2012.

Subject: During the NEJ Episcopacy Committee report to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, Rev. Joseph DiPaolo (Eastern Pennsylvania) requested, "as a question of law, that a determination be made as to the disposition of Bishop Hae Jong Kim's case, including the rescission (in 2007) of his earlier letter of resignation from the episcopacy to ensure that his case has been handled in accord with the due process requirements outlined in the Book of Discipline." This action took place at the opening session of the Jurisdictional Conference on Wednesday, July 18, 2012 with Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton presiding.

**Ruling on Question of Law Regarding Hae-Jong Kim
Submitted at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference
Charleston, West Virginia**

July 19, 2012

Question of Law Regarding Hae-Jong Kim

I ask for a ruling from the presiding bishop, that a determination be made as to whether the handling of the case of Bishop Hae-Jong Kim was in accordance with the due process requirements outlined in the *Book of Discipline*, with special attention to the following concerns:

- 1) Bishop Kim's letter to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee (dated Feb. 12, 2007, and copied to Bishop Jane Middleton) rescinding his earlier letter of resignation was never acted upon.

The official letter from Hae-Jong Kim requesting the rescinding of his resignation was addressed to the President of the Council of Bishops, Janice R. Huie (dated January 11, 2007), not the NEJ Episcopacy Committee. The letter to the NEJ Episcopacy Committee, dated February 12, 2007, requested that the Episcopacy Committee

consider providing “corporate wisdom and consideration” along with the possibility of setting up an “ad-hoc committee to help the process.”

At the time this letter was received, Hae-Jong Kim was a retired Elder of the New Jersey Annual Conference having resigned from the episcopacy sixteen months earlier on September 1, 2005.

The Council of Bishops, through its Executive Committee, consulted with the general Counsel for the Church (COB Executive Committee Meeting, January 16-17, 2007, Atlanta, GA, Docket item 07E-351) and determined that they had no jurisdiction in the consideration of this request.

The Book of Discipline does not provide any provision for the rescinding of a resignation. As a result, there is no procedure outlined in the Book of Discipline to act upon such a request. As such, the request in paragraph 1 is moot and hypothetical.

- 2) **The Council of Bishops never took any final action on his 2005 letter of resignation, specifically, by failing to issue a “certificate of resignation” as required by para. 408.4 of the *Book of Discipline* (2008).**

After extensive research it has been determined that there is no official “certificate” which designates one as resigned from the episcopacy. The purpose of such certification is to “entitle him or her to membership as a traveling elder in the annual conference (or its successor) in which membership was last held.” (¶408.4, 2008 Book of Discipline)

In the Press Release announcing Hae-Jong Kim’s resignation, Bishop Peter D. Weaver (President of the Council of Bishops) states: “Bishop Kim has resigned from the episcopacy for personal reasons, effective September 1, 2005. At that time, his clergy membership will return to the Greater New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church.”

In addition, Hae-Jong Kim has been listed as a “Retired Elder” in the Journal of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference since that time and has been listed in the Appointment Listing of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference as the “Retired Elder” appointed to The Alpine Community United Methodist Church since 2008.

As such, these statements “certify” that Hae-Jong Kim is “a traveling elder in the annual conference (or its successor) in which membership was last held” thus fulfilling the mandates of ¶408.4 of the 2008 Book of Discipline.

- 3) The Northeast Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee took no action and made no report or recommendation in its 2008 report.

The 2008 Book of Discipline requires the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee to report to the Jurisdictional Conference the following items:

¶150 Article VI: “The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. (pg. 37)

¶413.4: “Any actions of the jurisdictional or central conference committee taken on a complaint shall be reported to the next session of the jurisdictional or central conference. (pg. 309)

¶524.3a: “Review and evaluate the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report such evaluations and other findings to the jurisdictional conference for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. (pg. 336)

¶524.3h: “Prepare a report of its decisions, activities, and recommendations to be transmitted to its successor through the office of the secretary of the jurisdictional conference prior to the jurisdictional conference. The report shall be made available to delegates of the jurisdictional conference prior to the jurisdictional conference.” (pg. 336-337)

In January 2005 a written complaint concerning retired Bishop Hae-Jong Kim was received and processed in accordance with the provisions of the 2004 Book of Discipline. This complaint was sent to the Jurisdictional Committee on Investigation as a judicial complaint (¶413.3). Before the matter was considered by this committee, Hae-Jong Kim informed the committee that he was choosing to resign from the episcopacy. Hae-Jong Kim resigned from the episcopacy on September 1, 2005, thus ending the complaint procedure. This matter appropriately did not come before the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. As such, the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee was under no obligation to report this matter to the Jurisdictional Conference.

The official letter from Hae-Jong Kim requesting the rescinding of his resignation was addressed to the President of the Council of Bishops, Janice R. Huie (dated January 11, 2007), not the NEJ Episcopacy Committee. The letter to the NEJ Episcopacy Committee, dated February 12, 2007, requested that the Episcopacy Committee consider providing “corporate wisdom and consideration” along with the possibility of setting up an “ad-hoc committee to help the process.” The NEJ Episcopacy Committee chose to not act upon this recommended action and was under no obligation to do so

since Hae-Jong Kim had resigned and there are no provisions in the Book of Discipline to act upon a request to rescind a resignation. As such, the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee was under no obligation to act on this request or to formally report this matter to the Jurisdictional Conference.

- 4) In its 2012 report, the NEJ Episcopacy Committee again made no mention of Bishop Kim's case. Upon my inquiry on the floor of the 2012 NEJ Conference, the chair of the Episcopacy Committee indicated no knowledge whatsoever of Bishop Kim's resignation, rescission of the resignation, or any matters connected with the handling of this case.

Hae-Jong Kim's resignation, request for rescission of the resignation, or any matters connected with the handling of this case were not under consideration by the NEJ Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. No matters were referred to the Committee for consideration. As such, the request in paragraph 4 is hypothetical and not proper.

- 5) An investigation by the Commission on Religion and Race discovered procedural errors in the due process requirements of handling the original complaint, as outlined in a letter from the commission chair.

The investigation by the Commission on Religion and Race related to the events surrounding the complaint filed against Hae-Jong Kim in January, 2005. Before the complaint reached the Jurisdictional Committee on Investigation, Hae-Jong Kim resigned from the episcopacy, thus bringing closure to the Judicial Process in which he was the respondent.

The Commission on Religion and Race has no jurisdiction in the matter of the confidential agreements reached which resulted in the resignation of Hae-Jong Kim from the episcopacy. As such, the request in paragraph 5 is hypothetical and not proper.

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton
President
Northeastern Jurisdictional College of Bishops

Docket 0413-4

Review of a Bishop's Decision of Law in the Congo Central Conference Regarding Mandatory Retirement Age for Bishops in Light of ¶¶ 50, 408, and 543.3

A Request for Decision of Law

As a member of the Congo Central Conference and in conformity with paragraph #2609.6 of the Book of Discipline, I request that the presiding Bishop make a decision of law concerning the following questions:

Did the 2012 General Conference in its legislative actions regarding paragraph #408 of the Book of Discipline authorize the extension of Episcopal tenures in the DR Congo beyond the mandatory retirement age of 68 years?

1. Do the paragraphs #50 of the Constitution and # 543.3 of the Book of Discipline constitute an authorization of the Central Conference to extend Episcopal terms beyond the mandatory retirement age of 68 years?
2. In the absence of the above mentioned authorizations, can the Bishops extend their Episcopal terms themselves?

Decision of Law

Introduction:

At the Congo Central Conference, during the session for the election of a new Bishop for the new Episcopal area of Congo East, presided by the official delegate from the Council of Bishops, Bishop Patrick Streiff, a member of the Congo central conference, Césaire Ilunga Mushiya, submitted a request for a decision of law during the session of Tuesday, August 21, late morning.

Bishop Patrick Streiff gave an oral response in the beginning of the session in the afternoon of Tuesday, August 21, adding that he will put it in writing and hand it to the secretary of the central conference and send a copy to the Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church. The oral response was in four points and a final conclusion, as followed in writing:

Decision of Law:

1. Concerning the retirement age of bishops, the reference should not be made to the Book of Discipline of the central conference, published in 1990 (based on the *Book of Discipline 1988*). The reference has to be to the *Book of Discipline* established by General Conference.
2. At general conference 2008, the mandatory retirement age for all clergy was changed from age 70 to age 72 (*BOD 2008*, par. 358.1). *BOD 2008*, par. 50 and par. 543.3 speak about the power given to central conferences to fix the tenure of its bishops. However, the ministry of a bishop is not a third order which would not be subject to the rule for mandatory retirement age of clergy; see the reference made to par. 358.1 in *BOD 2008*, par. 408.1c, last part.
3. The *Book of Discipline 2008* includes a specific regulation for bishops in jurisdictions in the United States. This regulation mentions as mandatory retirement age if a bishop has reached his/her 68th birthday before July 1st of the year in which is held the session of the jurisdictional conference; see *BOD 2008*, par. 408.1a. The *Book of Discipline 2008* does not mention a similar regulation concerning bishops in central conferences.
4. General Conference 2012 wanted to clarify this question for bishops in central conferences through a petition (petition 20416; calendar item 372). This petition was amended in the Legislative Committee on Superintendency, based on a recommendation from the Standing Committee for Central Conference Matters, for adjusting to the different dates of the sessions of central conferences (they have to be held within a year following the general conference, see *BOD 2008*, par. 30), and this added a new par.

408.1b for the central conferences, but still mentioned a clear indication that it would become effective immediately. In the discussion on the floor of general conference, amendments on the effective date were proposed. In the final vote, it was approved by general conference that the amended petition in the episcopal areas of Central Congo (for one speaker) and of South Congo (for another speaker).

Conclusion

General Conference 2012 voted the effective date in full knowledge of the implications for the two episcopal areas in the Congo and thus allowing its bishops who have passed the age of 68 to continue in active service beyond the session of the central conference in 2012.

For the bishops in the Congo central conference who will continue in active ministry beyond their 68th anniversary, the mandatory retirement age remains at their 72nd birthday. At the time of their mandatory retirement during the quadrennium 2012 – 2016, the central conference (through its executive committee) may either call for an extraordinary session for the election of a successor, or ask the Council of Bishops to name a bishop for overseeing the episcopal area under consideration until a successor has been elected at the ordinary session of the central conference in 2016.

Bishop Patrick Streiff
August 23rd 2012

Docket 4012-5

IN RE: Request from the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference for a Ruling on the Legality of Certain Financial Actions and the Complaint Process Regarding the East Africa Annual Conference in Light of ¶¶ 258.4f, 413, and 613.13

Substitute motion by Robert Zilhaver: Approved.

I move that the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference petition the Judicial Council to hear and determine the legality of the following actions in regard to Petition 106 in accordance with ¶2609.5 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*.

- 1) Were the funds given by the Pittsburgh East District of the Western Pennsylvania Conference to the East African Annual Conference used in accordance with ¶258.4.f?
- 2) Were the funds given by members of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference in the payment of Isaac Sebit in compliance with ¶ 258.4.f and ¶613.13?
- 3) Was the complaint filed by one member of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference (Nancy Denardo) properly dealt with in accordance with ¶413 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*?

Docket 0413-6

IN RE: Request for a Declaratory Decision by the Northern Nigeria Annual Conference and the Southern Nigeria Annual Conference as to the Meaning,

Effect, and Application of ¶ 405 in the Election Process of the West Africa Central Conference

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALL SESSION BETWEEN THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN NIGERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF THE NIGERIA EPISCOPAL AREA HELD AT UMC LANKAVIRI, EUGENE WESLEY DISTRICT OF THE SOUTHERN NIGERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON THE 10/10/2012.

AGENDA

1. To discuss the purported election of Rev. Johnwesley Yohanna as a bishop of Nigeria Area by WACC held in Sierra Leone on the 6th October, 2012, against the will of the majority delegates (clergy and lay) of the Nigeria UMC.
2. Report from delegation that was sent by Southern and Northern Nigeria Annual Conferences to tender our complaint to WACC held in Sierra Leone.
3. AOB

OPENING PRAYER.

Rev. Daniel Y. Korot the Superintendent of the Northern Nigeria Annual Conference said the opening prayers after a service of choruses led by Rev. Philip Micah Dopah, Director Connectional Ministries of the Southern Nigeria Annual Conference.

EXHORTATION: Rev. Abbo Z. Wakili, the Conference Chaplain gave the exhortation from II Corinthians 6: 1ff

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

As a routine procedure of the church (BOD Par. 603(6), 2008, whenever a Bishop is not around, any travelling elder nominated to preside over the meeting pro-tempo. Nominations were done as follows: Rev. Philip Micah Dopah got 321 votes; Rev. Abbo Z. Wakili got 112 votes, Rev. Abainatus Akila, got 59 votes while Rev. Liatu J. Kane had 47 votes. 42 delegates abstained from voting. Rev. Philip Micah Dopah was then to preside.

INTRODUCTION OF DIGNITARIES:

The Director of Connectional Ministries Rev. Philip Micah Dopah who is also the presiding officer, welcomed and introduced the VIPs and the delegation that was sent to WACC to forward our complaints.

REGRETS: The presiding officer announced that the following people sent their regrets for being unavoidably absent; District Superintendent of Taraba West, Rev. Jonah T. Madugu, Rev. John Kwanneri, Rev. Jonah Jagampo and Women president of the Northern Nigeria Annual Conference.

WELCOME ADDRESS

The presiding officer thanked the delegates for the privilege accorded him to be the presiding officer. He welcomed all delegates to the special call session. He said this has become necessary in view of WACC's inconsiderate action to have gone ahead to purportedly elect Rev. Johnwesley Yohanna as a bishop of Nigeria Area even after we had collectively written series of complaints to Bishop Kulah and Bishop John G. Innis, being the President of WACC. He said delegates were aware that, nomination was not done in Nigeria, and our delegates to WACC who were to go for election in Sierra Leone did not go because it was our collective decision since we sensed that the discipline was about to be circumvented, which it has. He told the delegates to give constructive suggestions that will address the issue at hand. He also told the house that a 4-man delegation that was sent to Sierra Leone to carry our petition to the floor of WACC will brief the house on what transpired on the floor of WACC. The presiding officer also encouraged Pastors and members to stand by the truth as the truth shall set them free (John 8:32).

REPORT FROM THE SIERRA LEONE DELEGATION

The delegation comprised of one(1) clergy Rev. Wilson Gana from the Northern Nigeria Annual Conference and three(3) Lay persons- Dr David Ishaya, Mr. Solomon Olusiyi and Mrs. Emily Godwin Nyame from the Southern Nigeria Annual Conference. Dr. David Ishaya on behalf of the others told the house that they were able to submit the petition to the WACC's Committee on Petitions and Resolutions. That they were also able to address the committee on the complaints written earlier to the president of the West Africa College of Bishops (WACOB), which he replied earlier that Bishop Kulah should address the issue but he refused. He said after the committee on petitions has invited them for hearing, they later on told them that, they have met with the WACOB and that they have directed them not to listen to them again until they meet at the plenary. In the plenary the committee on petitions and resolution while giving her report said, there was a write up from Nigeria which is neither a petition nor complaint, because the heading did not capture the word "complaint". All attempts to explain to the conference not to throw out the complaint on the basis of technicalities but to look at the substance of the complaint was denied by the presiding Bishop, Bishop John K. Yambasu. He said the complaint was based on the fact that there was no nomination by the Nigeria Area and that the conference was requested not to go ahead with the elections. The delegation later thanked the delegates for the privilege accorded them to serve the church in that capacity.

RESOLUTIONS.

After series of discussions on the delegation's report, the house arrived at the following:-

1. WHEREAS the rules guiding the identification exercise by Bishop Kulah was violated in the Central Nigeria Annual Conference and nomination was subsequently not done in Nigeria, election ought not to have taken place at WACC held in Sierra Leone.
2. WHEREAS the election of the Bishop was not done in accordance with constitution of the Church (BOD) paragraph 405(2008) , the house agreed as follows:
3. That our members from the North and Southern Annual Conferences will continue to be members of the UMC-Nigeria but will seek redress for justice at the Judicial Council of the UMC.
4. That we will not allegiance Rev. Johnwesley Yohanna because he was not duly elected.
5. That no appointments will be accepted from the new Bishop imposed by West Africa central conference on us.
6. That we should put away our differences and come together to fight against this injustice and lack of fairness in a non-violent way.
7. That the Bishop will not be recognized by the northern and Southern conferences because of his moral bankruptcy (he masterminded the escalation of the problems of the UMCN from initial stage up to 2012).
8. The House also agreed that all the Churches in the northern and Southern Conference be communicated to be calm, prayerful and avoid any violent tendency throughout this period of struggle for justice.
9. That the District Superintendents and Pastors from the above conferences should ensure that there is no breach of law and order in any of our Churches.
10. That security personnel be deployed to the UMCN Cathedral and Bishop Dabale Memorial Secretariat to avert any breach of law.
11. That the Church should write to both the Judicial Council and the West Africa Central Conference College of Bishops to express our displeasure for refusing to listen to our petitions.
12. That the Laity advocacy forum should be co-opted in the writings to the above institutions. The Chairmen Laity advocacy were named as follows:- Dr. James Seni Barka from the Northern Conference and Mr. Urbanus Yunana from the Southern Conference.
13. The house also agreed that good standing Committees be formed to oversee the affairs of the Church in the Northern and southern Nigeria Annual Conferences. The offices agreed upon were as follows:-
 - a. Conference Lay Leaders from South/North
 - b. Superintendent from the North
 - c. Director of Connectional Ministries
 - d. Conference Secretaries from North and South
 - e. Board of Ordained Ministry Chairs- North and South
 - f. Men President from South and North

- g. Women President from South and North
- h. Youths President from North and South
- i. Youth Directors from South and North
- j. Chancellors from North and South
- k. Cabinet members
- l. Chaplain (s)
- m. Episcopal Committee members from North and South.

The above officers were told to ensure that they work diligently for the progress of the body of Jesus Christ. They were given the mandate to call meeting (s) wherever there is problem and they should sensitize the entire congregation on all developments.

12. That the report of our delegation sent to the West Africa Central Conference concerning the election of Bishop be typed and be distributed to the District Superintendents and Pastors.
13. That the WACC should tell us whether the office of the Bishop is now by act of appointment instead of election.
14. That letter of appreciation be written to the Taraba State Government her usual assistance to the Church and also sensitize the government on current developments in the church and the appointment of some key leaders to take charge of the affairs of the Church pending the time the issue at hand is resolved.

ADJOURNMENT AND PRAYERS

Motion for adjournment was moved by Mr. Urbanus Yunana from Jalingo District and was seconded by Matthew Manyazen from Pa'a Yorro District. Closing prayers was said by Rev. Hannaniya Ntoriko



Rev. Lantoya John Ezekiel
 Conference Secretary
 Southern Nigeria Annual Conference

This docket has the actual requests for Judicial Council action received by the Judicial Council inserted. This is done to comply with the amendment of ¶2608.1 by the 2012 General Conference.

For further information contact F. Belton Joyner, Jr., 1821 Hillandale Road, Suite 1B, PMB 334, Durham, NC 27705 E-mail: judicialcouncil@umc.org