

PRESS RELEASE



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African Delegates Affirm Commitment to United Methodist Church's Unity and Growth 11 January 2024

Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania - In a historic assembly held from January 4-7, 2024, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 190 African delegates to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) concluded their United Methodist Africa Forum (UMAF) meeting. During this pivotal gathering, delegates stood united against disaffiliation, solidifying their commitment to the Church's unity, and passionately embraced regionalization as a visionary pathway for the future of the Church in Africa.

Meeting separately by Central Conferences, the delegates deliberated on key issues, particularly regionalization and disaffiliation. Emphatically rejecting disaffiliation proposals, the three Central Conferences endorsed regionalization as outlined in the Christmas Covenant.

The African Delegates, convening in Dar es Salaam, unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

1. Disaffiliation:

The delegates unequivocally reject all disaffiliation proposals within the UMC in Africa, reaffirming their commitment to remain faithful members and work towards the Church's continued unity and growth. Delegates urge all United Methodists in Africa to reject divisive rhetoric and misinformation, fostering communication within the connectional Church.

2. Regionalization:

The delegates fully endorse and support the regionalization model proposed in the Christmas Covenant legislation. Delegates believe The Christmas Covenant legislation offers a promising path for the UMC in Africa to flourish, emphasizing greater self-determination and contextualized ministry rooted in African realities. The delegates call upon the General Conference to adopt the regionalization plan, considering the unique needs and perspectives of Africa. They urge active participation from all Central Conferences in Africa in its implementation.

The delegates advocate for a regionalization model ensuring equal opportunity and benefits for all regions within the UMC. Delegates emphasize the need for fair representation, equitable resource allocation, and shared decision-making power for all regions, including Africa. The importance of parity, equity, and equal privileges in finalizing the regionalization legislation is stressed.

3. Revised Social Principles:

The delegates support the adoption of the revised Social Principles with an amendment to recognize marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant between a man and a woman.

4. Continued Africa University Support:

The delegates affirm their support for the Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) resolution approved at their General Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, on April 14, 2023. Delegates also endorse the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) Report #4 and call for continued prioritization of the Africa University Fund. Additionally, delegates support the petition from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for a \$5 million quadrennial fund to support educational development in Africa.

5. Visa Support:

Recognizing the challenges African delegates face in obtaining visas for the General Conference, the delegates request the Commission on General Conference to facilitate the visa application process for delegates from the Africa Central Conferences.

6. Communication and Advocacy:

The delegates commit to providing accurate and credible information to all United Methodists in Africa about the regionalization process and its implications. Delegates pledge to ensure transparency and informed participation through various channels. Additionally, delegates will actively engage with African Bishops, urging them to uphold their previous anti-disaffiliation resolutions and advocate for the regionalization plan. The delegates aim to network with like-minded United Methodists across the connection, building a strong coalition in support of the Christmas Covenant legislation for adoption at the General Conference and subsequent ratification by annual conferences.

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