

I'd like you to be aware of the *Message from African Delegates* that was presented outside the Charlotte Convention Center yesterday afternoon [May 2, 2024]. There was singing, praying, and a public reading of their statement.

Here is what African delegates want the United Methodist Church, the people of Africa, and the rest of the world to know:

We speak as Africans, representing the majority of African delegates and, we believe, the vast majority of United Methodists in the thirty-five annual conferences in Africa.

We have loved The United Methodist Church. We have been grateful for The United Methodist Church. We have joyfully served The United Methodist Church. But now our hearts are troubled.

The postponed 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church has changed the United Methodist definition of marriage - not because the Bible has changed. But because western culture has changed. At this Conference The United Methodist Church has chosen to follow what pleases man instead of what pleases God.

Many African delegates are not here. They desired to be present and had planned to attend. But they were not invited by the Commission on General Conference in time to receive their visas. Over 70 of us from Africa are not present. That is roughly 25% of our delegates. Ten months ago we began sending letters and emails and making phone calls, alerting

the Commission on General Conference and some of our bishops that there was a problem. Many of these communications never received a single response. It felt as if we were not valued or wanted.



At a past General Conference, we Africans were told that we spoke too loudly and that we should close our mouths. After another General Conference a bishop said we Africans need to grow up and think for ourselves. At this conference many of us were not even provided with the documents we needed to be present.

One mainstream UMC leader wrote that The United Methodist Church should be willing to lose Africa to fulfill its progressive agenda. It is hard for us to believe we are valued as true brothers and sisters

within The United Methodist Church. It is difficult to trust that we are seen as equal partners.

The United Methodist Church has changed the definition of marriage. It now defines marriage differently from what God created it to be in the beginning (Genesis 2:18, 23-25). It has changed the definition of marriage from how Jesus described it in Matthew 19 as one man and one woman.

In Africa we do not believe we know better than Jesus. We do not believe we know better than God. We do not believe we know better than the Bible.

We must now return to Africa and tell our people that The General Conference did not listen to us, does not value us as partners, and is willing to lose us to pursue its liberal western agenda.

In his sermon to this General Conference, a UM bishop stated that if we cannot get on the UMC train and embrace its destination, we should leave. But what do we do when the train has run over us and left our hearts bleeding with sorrow and pain?

We want the UMC to hear. We want our people in Africa to hear. We want the world to hear. We do not accept a change in the definition of marriage, and we will never accept marriage as anything other than one man and one woman, no matter what the *Book of Discipline* says. We are devastated now to be part of a denomination that officially contradicts the Bible's teaching on marriage and sexual morality. We return to Africa with important decisions to make regarding the future.

Still, we go home full of hope, confident in Jesus, standing on the word of God, and determined to contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. We return to Africa where the church is growing, nonbelievers are coming to faith and disciples are being made for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory! Amen!

Signatories:

Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, Head of Delegation,
Liberia Annual Conference

Mr. Prosperous Tunda, Delegate,
East Congo Annual Conference

Rev. Dr. Danjuma Judi, Delegate,
Nigeria Annual Conference

Dr. Yeabu Kamara, Delegate,
Sierra Leone Annual Conference

Mr. Ginford Dzimati, Delegate,
Zimbabwe Annual Conference

Important Decisions Yet to Come

Important decisions have been made by The United Methodist General Conference. And in response, as our African sisters and brothers have indicated, United Methodists "back home" have important decisions to make about their future with the UMC.

Sent By Wesleyan Covenant Association - 5/03/24