



**187th Annual Session of the
Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church
Miller McAllister United Methodist Church
Gompa City, Nimba County, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

Theme : “A Future with Hope”

Texts : Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 5:1-6

Date : 10th -16th February 2020

RESOLUTION

OF THE LIBERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON PROPOSED PROTOCOL FOR RECONCILIATION AND GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION

INTRODUCTION

Whereas, the clergy and lay members of the 187th session of the Liberia Annual Conference, the United Methodist Church convened with the St. Paul River District Conference as the official host, and the following districts served as Co-Host: Grand Bassa, St. John River, Rivercess and Morweh;

Whereas, members to this 187th annual session have prayerfully reviewed, discussed, and reflected on the global crisis within the United Methodist Church, which is centered around our biblical and theological disagreement over our definition of marriage, sexual ethics and ordination standards;

Whereas, the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church's Delegation to the 2020 General Conference, presented to the 187th annual session various plans/legislations/petitions; and the proposed "Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation" that was recently developed by 16 key leaders from across our global connection for consideration at the 2020 General Conference;

I. Reaffirming our Core Values

Therefore, based upon our understanding and prayerful discernment of these proposed plans and protocol, we the members attending and participating in the 187th annual session of the Liberia annual conference do hereby reaffirm the following core values, beliefs and resolutions` of the Liberia annual conference, the United Methodist Church:

- (a) That the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church maintains its stance on the teaching of marriage consistent with the Holy Bible and the traditional understanding and practice of the Christian church for more than 2000 years, and our current Book of Discipline;
- (b) That marriage is defined as a sacred relationship between one man and one woman, not between any two consenting adults (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:2; Ephesians 5:22-30).
- (c) That, while we affirm "*All persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God,*" and that "*All persons need the ministry of the Church*", we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider it incompatible with Christian teaching; including but not limited to "Being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies" (Paragraph 2702.1b)
- (d) That consistent with the authentic teaching of the Holy Scriptures, our primary authority for faith and Christian living (Psalm 19:7-11; 119: 11;105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17), we do not condone the ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals or persons in same-sex

relationships for Christian ministry (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1: 24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

- (e) That the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church ascribes to the biblical and traditional understanding and teachings of the Christian church in our theology, polity, requirements for Ordination and Christian living (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 Timothy 3:1-13).

II. Maintaining the name “United Methodist”, the Cross and Flame

Whereas, the name “United Methodist” for us in Africa has indelible history and legacy, and has become an attractive, redemptive and Christian service-oriented name holistically throughout the continental connection of the UMC;

Whereas, the insignia of the UMC (Cross & flame) bears great spiritual impact on our evangelism, mission, witness and service throughout Africa and the world.

Whereas, our emblem of a cross and a dual flame reminds us of who we are in Jesus Christ; how we are connected to God through Christ (the Cross), and the Holy Spirit (the flame);

And, whereas, the flame also reminds us of the birth of the Christian church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3), and of the historic conversion experience and transformation of our founder, John Wesley on Aldergate Street in London, England; on 24 May 1738 when he felt his "heart strangely warmed";

Therefore, the name “United Methodist Church” as well as the emblem (flame & logo) shall be retained by the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the UMC in all the Central Conferences of Africa, with appropriate modifications (**A Resolution reflecting the views and position of almost all UMC across Africa**).

III. Equitable and Proportionate Sharing of General Church Fund

Whereas, since the birth of the UMC in Africa, we continue to faithfully make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the African Continent and the world, thereby now accounting for about 40% of our 13 million global population;

Whereas, we have and continue to contribute to the holistic growth and development of the global UMC through our material, human and financial resources, including contributions to the general church fund, consistent with our financial ability;

Whereas, the global UMC has determined that our disagreement over our biblical and theological understanding of human sexuality has become painful and hurtful that conservatives/evangelicals and progressives/liberals can no longer function and exist as one Christian denomination;

And, whereas the \$120m of unrestricted fund of the global UMC is to be apportioned to traditionalist UMC and progressive UMC, according to the Proposed PROTOCOL FOR RECONCILIATION AND GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION;

Therefore, we resolve that the \$120m liquid cash of the UMC be divided evenly between the five Jurisdictions in America and the seven Central Conferences outside of America to support ministries outside of America.

Ethnic ministries in America would benefit from the jurisdictions' share of the fund while the Africa University would benefit from the Africa Central Conference's share of the fund.

IV. Alignment of Central Conferences/Annual Conference/Congregations by Default to Post-Separation UMC

Whereas, any attempt to align or subjugate all central conferences and their annual conferences and congregations to a post-separation UMC by default, as the Protocol proposes, would be viewed as an act of colonialism and injustice against the Central Conferences;

We resolve that all central conferences be treated as equal members of our global connection and left to decide of their own volition their future association and destiny. We believe that every region of our global connection must be treated fairly in determining their own future

V. Percentage of Vote to Determine Traditionalist or Progressive Status of Jurisdiction/Central Conference, Annual Conference and Congregation

Whereas, the Central Conferences of Africa are traditionalists by law and by vote since the birth of the UMC in Africa, and do not therefore need to reaffirm its evangelical/conservative status, as required by the Protocol;

Whereas, for the common good of the global UMC, we support the need for an arranged separation, since we can no longer exist and function as one denomination; cognizant of the fact that, "It is better to be separated on truth than to be united on error";

Therefore, we resolve that a simple majority vote should determine the traditionalist or progressive status of all jurisdictions and central conferences, annual conferences and congregations; not a 2/3 majority or 57% majority vote for Central Conferences, Annual Conferences and congregations as proposed by the Protocol.

Conclusion

Therefore, delegates of the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to the 2020 General Conference Session are mandated by this 187th Session of our Conference to work along with African delegates, and other likeminded United Methodist delegates from across our global connection

- (a) To make decisions that glorify God and sustain biblical Christianity in Africa and the world.
- (b) To ensure that the PROPOSED PROTOCOL FOR RECONCILIATION AND GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION be adequately amended consistent with the

resolutions herein outlined, in the best interest of the Liberia Annual Conference in particular, the Central Conferences of Africa, and the global church in general that is committed to the Holy Scripture as primary authority for faith and Christian living.

This **RESOLUTION** is hereby affirmed by members of the 187th Annual Session of the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church by a vote of 725 members in favor, zero against, and one member abstained, on this 14th day of February 2020 in the city of Gompa, Nimba County, Republic of Liberia.

The Conference Secretariat
Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church
Gompa City, Nimba County, Republic of Liberia