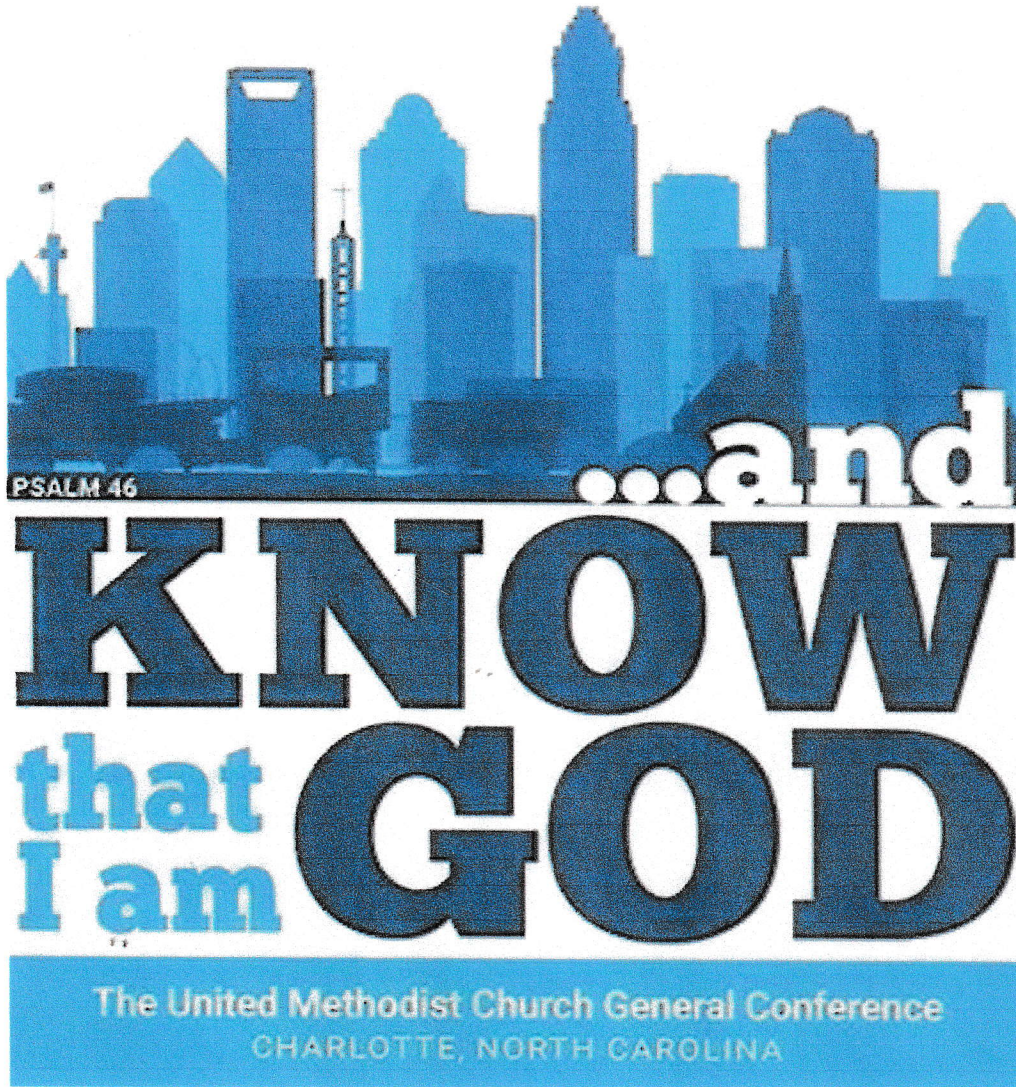


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**Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church
Postponed 2020 General Conference Delegation Report
Held in Charlotte, North Carolina, United States of America, 23 April to 3 May 2024
Theme: "...and Know that I am God" Text: Psalm 46**



Submitted to: The Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church



Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church
Delegation Report
From the Postponed 2020 General Conference, held in Charlotte, North
Carolina 23 April to 3 May 2024

29 July 2024

Bishop Samuel Jerome Quire, Jr.
Resident Bishop
Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church
12th Street, Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia

Dear Bishop Quire,

I bring you greetings of best wishes in the gracious name of our Savior and Lord, Christ Jesus. On behalf of the sixteen-member delegation of the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (LAC/UMC) to the postponed 2020, General Conference held in Charlotte, North Carolina from 23 April to 3 May 2024, I am very pleased to present to you a copy of our report on the General Conference to the Liberia Annual Conference. This report covers major decisions passed at the conference and their implications on the worldwide UMC Denomination in general and on the LAC/UMC in particular. We look forward to sharing the report with the Liberia Annual Conference.

We regret the delay in submitting a copy of our report to you since our return from the General Conference. During our working sessions at the General Conference, we set up a five-member committee to draft our report for the inputs of every member of the delegation. Following the close of the General Conference, some members of our delegation fell ill, including the secretary and chair of our five-member report drafting committee. They remained in the United States to undergo treatment. The period of their recovery before resuming work on our report impeded our efforts at completing the report in a timely manner. We solicit continued prayers for some of our members who are still in recovery as we anticipate their return to Liberia shortly.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Jerry Paye-Manfloe Kulah
Head of Delegation

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Section I: Introduction

Bishop Samuel J. Quire, Jr., Resident Bishop of the Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church (LAC/UMC), Retired Bishop Arthur Flomo Kulah, Bishop-in-Resident at the United Methodist University, conference officials, delegates to the Liberia Annual Conference, our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. We want to thank you for electing us to represent our Annual Conference to the recent 2020 postponed General Conference of our worldwide denomination, held in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Postponed 2020 General Conference of the UMC Church took place in Charlotte North Carolina, from April 23rd to May 3rd 2024.

In February 2018, the Liberia Annual Conference elected a 36-member delegation to represent it at the 2020 General Conference initially scheduled for Minnesota, the USA, at which time nine (9) ministerial and nine (9) lay delegates were elected as official delegates, while 18 others were elected as alternate/reserved delegates. **(See Appendix 1 & 2 for listing of elected delegates on Page 26)**

Of the 36 elected delegates, 18 primary and 18 reserved, only a 16-member delegation from the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) attended the General Conference (GC) to represent Liberia legally on the floor of the General Conference. Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, Vice President at the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, United Methodist University, headed the Liberian Delegation to the General Conference and Co-Chaired by Cllr. Tolbert G. Nyenswah, in his position as the Conference LayLeader. Bro. L. Olandor Boyce, I; was appointed by the Chair and approved by the delegation to serve as the delegation's Secretary. **(See Appendix 3 for listing of 16 attended delegates on Page 27).**

The General Conference (GC) is the highest legislative body of the UMC. It meets every four years to deliberate and revise church laws, adopt resolutions on current issues, and approve plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission on General Conference postponed the 2020 General Conference until 2024. The theme of the 2024 GC was "And Know that I am God," with the text taken from Psalm 46. Liberia is the oldest annual conference in Africa, established by Melville B. Cox from Edenton, North Carolina in 1833. Given our experience and exposure, our delegation played a significant role in assisting some African delegates to understand many of the GC issues, and enhance their participation in the deliberations at the 2024 postponed General Conference.



SECTION II: Mandates of the Liberian Delegation to the General Conference

Prior to the delegation departure to the General Conference, the Liberia Annual Conference held its 191st annual session in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County from 13-18 February 2024. At that Annual Conference Session, the head of delegation, Rev. Dr. Kulah requested a mandate from our annual conference to guide our delegation regarding issues expected to dominate discussions on the floor of the General Conference. In response, our Resident Bishop pointed out the following: "We are against same-sex marriage, the ordination of LGBTQ people becoming pastors, leaders and bishops in our denomination. We are against changing the definition of marriage. Homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teachings, and we define marriage as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman". The 191st Annual Conference delegates concurred that these issues elaborated by our Resident Bishop constitute the mandate of the delegation. We therefore went to the postponed 2020 General Conference armed with this mandate to speak against them and vote against them becoming laws within our denomination.

In addition, at that 191st annual session, the Committee on the Way-Forward that the Bishop had constituted on 13 July 2023 to survey the opinion of United Methodists across our Annual Conference regarding ongoing developments within the General Church made its report. Prior to voting on its recommendations to the Annual Conference, our Resident Bishop, Samuel J. Quire, Jr proffered an appeal that the Annual Conference should postpone taking a decision on the Way Forward Commission's report until our delegation goes to the General Conference and returns. The 191st Session of the Annual Conference accepted the Bishop's appeal that based on what would happen at the General Conference, upon their return, the Liberia Annual Conference would hold a Special Called Session and hear from the delegation. Then the Annual Conference would make an informed decision on the report from the General Conference as well as the recommendations contained in the report of the Way Forward Commission (**See appendix 8 Annual Conference Resolutions-191st session, page 31 and attached**).

Following the end of the 191st Session of the annual conference, the Bishop and his Cabinet met in a post annual conference meeting on 22 February. Among other things, Bishop and his Cabinet set 16-17 July 2024, as the scheduled date for the holding of the special called session upon the return of our delegation from the General Conference. The delegation therefore left for the General Conference and participated successfully. We are back home and are delighted to report to you on the events that took place at the postponed 2020 General Conference. This report therefore provides an overview of the General Conference orientation process, Legislative sessions, and critical issues discussed, and petitions voted and passed along with the number of votes taken. The report concludes with recommendations for the way forward for the LAC/UMC in view the decisions of the General Conference and its implications for the worldwide UMC Denomination in general, and the Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church in particular.



Section III: Central Conference Delegates Arrival and Challenges

There were 862 registered delegates to the 2024 General Conferences (GC), with 492 coming from the US Jurisdictional Conferences and 370 from central conferences (Africa, Asia, and Europe). Of the 862 delegates, 765 were present at the 2024 GC, with 487 present from the US jurisdictions and 278 from the Central Conferences. Of the 278 Central Conference delegates, 176 were from Africa, which 102 were from Europe and Asia. 72 Africa delegates were not present at the General Conference due to delay in receiving invitation letters from the Commission of General Conference, and denial of visas. This number of delegates absent constituted 25% of the African votes.

Below are some of the major challenges faced by the Central Conference delegates from Africa:

1. Getting entry visas to the US to attend the GC as official delegates.

This challenge resulted in 72 delegates from Africa Central Conferences not attending the General Conference, including the Liberia Annual Conference. Of the 18 official delegates, allotted the Liberia Annual Conference, The US Embassy denied visas to two clergy and six lay delegates. The delegation therefore brought in alternates who already had visas to visit the United States for different purposes to replace the official delegates. Consequently, only 16 official and alternate delegates had US visas to represent the LAC/UMC. Despite this challenge, most of our delegation arrived in Charlotte on 18 April 2024 to participate in the General Conference.

2. Lack of Understanding of Major Issues at GC

The delegate lacked understanding of the voting process and parliamentary procedures and most importantly, they lacked knowledge of the Regionalization Plan. At the General Conference, we discovered that none of the annual conferences in Africa had discussed the Regionalization Plan at any of their annual conference sessions to enable their members understand its implications and thus have a say about it. Hence, almost all African delegates, especially the non-English speaking African nations at the General Conference were completely at a loss during the discussion on the Regionalization Plan. Liberia Annual Conference did not also have the opportunity to discuss the Regionalization Plan in detail before its delegation left of the General Conference. However, given the fact that some of our delegates had attended previous general conferences where the issue of regionalization came up was defeated, they assisted in the process of providing some support to other delegations to understand the Regionalization Plan and participate in the discussion that ensued.

3. Failure of the General Conference to timely circulate DCA & ADCA Accordingly

Another factor that negatively impeded the African delegates' votes from central conferences to the General Conference was the failure of the General Conference to circulate the General Conference documents called the "Daily Christian Advocate" and



the "Advanced Daily Christian Advocate", DCA / ADCA, to all annual conference delegates of the General Conference. Worst still, the Commission on General Conference failed to circulate them in the official languages of the General Conference-Kiswahili, French, Portuguese and Spanish. These resources contained all of the petitions and legislations coming to the General Conference. By receiving, those resources ahead of the General Conference enables delegated to read and understand the issues ahead of time for their active participation in the deliberations. However, the Commission on General Conference denied African delegates of the opportunity to understand what was happening in time.

4. Provision of stipend for feeding and allowances

The 2024 General Conference leadership refused to listen to the plea of African delegates to give them their daily stipends for feeding, instead, decided to cook for everyone. Given the differences in our food types and cultural diversity, we pleaded with them on behalf of the African delegates, but they refused. Many of the African delegates could not eat the American-style food provided to them. One delegate from the Congo even cried on the floor of the General Conference that he was suffering because he had not eaten since his arrival at the General Conference. His cry went unnoticed; and unheeded.

Section IV: Delegates Orientation

At the orientation for Central Conference delegates, that took place from 19-21 April, most delegates soon noticed that the Commission on General Conference, instead providing us orientation, they took on a campaign trail to discuss some legislative petitions and solicit the opinion of delegates on them, soliciting votes and persuading delegates on how to vote. The Commission on General Conference invited the "Connectional Table" and "Wespath," responsible for the denomination's pension plan to openly campaign for the passage of the Regionalization Plan. They also promoted the passage of the draft Social Principles that was set to make drastic changes to the Book of Discipline of the UMC. Not only were they campaigning at the orientation session, they saturated the city of Charlotte with the hatch tag, "**Be UMC**". The souvenir bags they shared with every delegates as well as the key to hotel rooms carried bore hatch tag, "Be UMC". In addition, they requested that everyone appearing at the microphone to speak should indicate their genders. Therefore, for the first time at general conference, there were people introducing themselves as "straight, queer, binary, gay, and lesbian," including the first lesbian Bishop of the UMC, Karen Oliveto. When she took the stand to preside over the General Conference, introduced herself as a lesbian bishop.

At one instance, when our head of delegation revolted their actions, one of the Bishops from Europe who co-chaired the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (SCCCM), openly demanded him to shut up, sit down, and keep quiet. Later, he offered



an apology for his action, but they still their campaign trail, giving papers and pencils to delegates to write down their questions and submit them. They then sorted the questions and selected the ones to which they wanted to respond. These occurrences were very strange; they had not happened at previous general conferences. Had they taken the time to provide the needed orientation to Central Conference delegates instead of allotting it to the campaign, they would have helped some African delegates appearing at the General Conference for the first time to understand the general conference processes. They failed woefully because they had predetermined the outcome of the General Conference to ensure that they uproot the conservative stance of the worldwide denomination in favor the liberal and progressive position.

Section V: Legislative Committee Sessions

The Committee on General Conference divides the period of the General Conference into two major sessions. They allot the first week Legislative sessions where delegates are assigned to various legislative committees. Members of our delegation represented our annual conference to each of the 14 GC legislative committees. Some legislative committees elected some of our members to leadership positions. Cllr. Nyenswah served on two legislative committees during the General Conference, The Judicial Administration and Conference Reference committees.

Both committees elected Cllr. Nyenswah as Co-Chair. His election to the Reference committee was on the recommendation of the Council of Bishops. Mth. Ophelia Kennedy was elected Chair of a sub-committee of the Independent Commission, Rev. Dr. George Weagba was elected Chair of the sub-committee on Higher Education and Bro. Samuel Cole was elected Secretary of the Church and Society Committee, while the Standing Commission on General Conference Matters elected Mot. Muriel Nelson to serve on that commission. Delegates discussed and voted on all the major issues that were coming before plenary in their various legislative committees. All this happened during the first week of the General Conference.

During the second week, the entire conference came together in a plenary session for deliberations and decision-making. What follows were the decisions made at the 2020 postpone General Conference that have the proclivity to influence and transform the worldwide UMC for a long time. Each day's session began with a worship service. At the commencement of the first day's session of plenary, to the shock and dismay of many of the delegates, the former President of the Council of Bishops of the UMC, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, opened General Conference with a very divisive sermon, targeted at conservative delegates.

In his sermon, he told conservative delegates that we were not welcome, and that we were in the wrong place if we did not join the liberal train that was now directing the affairs of the worldwide denomination. He received a huge applaud from the predominantly liberal delegates after making such a divisive statement. Since then, we have heard no



rebukes from any of the Bishops, including African bishops. Ironically, Bishop Bickerton also challenged delegates to move forward from past conflicts and create a new United Methodist Church "under the power of the Holy Spirit". That, "despite challenges such as declining in membership and disaffiliation of churches, God is not done with the church". He concluded by calling for unity.

SECTION VI: Major Issues passed at the General Conference and its implications on the UMC Denomination and the Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church

1. Key Elections Results

Council of Bishops

Central and jurisdiction conferences elect bishops of The United Methodist Church to provide spiritual leadership to for the worldwide denomination. Prior to the General Conference, the worldwide membership of the UMC stood at about 12.5 million. The denomination is currently located on four continents- North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. All bishops are members of the Council of Bishops, which collectively is charged with the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual affairs of the entire Church.

At the seat of the recent General Conference, Bishop Tracy S. Malone, Resident Bishop of the East Ohio Conference, took the mantle of leadership as the new president of the Council of Bishops (COB) of The United Methodist Church. In so doing, she became the first Black woman in the history of the global denomination to ascend to this pinnacle of episcopacy leadership. The COB had elected Bishop Malone as its new President at its COB meeting at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina in November 2023. She will lead the COB for two years. Bishop Malone replaced, Bishop Bickerton.

Judicial Council

Cllr. N. Oswald Tweh, a distinguished member of the Liberia Episcopal Area, concluded his tenure as President of the Judicial Council of the UMC. The GC recognized his exceptional services to the worldwide denomination. The GC elected a new core of leaders to replace the former Judicial Council. **(See Appendix 4 for the listing of the new core of Judicial Council Members-page27).**

General Conference Secretary

Rev. Dr. Aleze Fubright was elected as the new Secretary-Designate of the General Conference, replaced Rev. Gary Greaves.



2. Worldwide Regionalization

The General Conference voted to regionalize the worldwide denomination. If ratified, this arrangement will divide the UMC into nine (9) regional conferences. The five jurisdictions in the United States will constitute one regional conference. Plans are underway to create an additional central conference in Africa, bringing the number to four (4) central conferences, and they will constitute four regional conferences. The three (3) central conferences in Europe will constitute three regional conferences and the one central conference in the Philippines will constitute one regional conference. This new regional structure of the denomination would allow regional conferences to create their own Regional Book Discipline that contextualizes their organization and administration of local churches and Annual Conferences. This includes part six (IV) of the BOD within the context of each region and the flexibility to adapt worship, music, membership, and administrative practices.

This constitutional amendment aims to put The United Methodist Church's different geographic regions on equal footing, allowing each region to align with the biblical, social, and legal contexts of their respective countries. For central conferences like the Liberia Area, this means having the opportunity to adopt a region-specific Book of Discipline. Emphasizing the denomination's worldwide nature, the amendment maintains a connection that supports and holds each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission while respecting individual cultural and social contexts. As stated in the Book of Discipline, ¶ 125: "United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission. Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsive to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining 'a vital web of interactive relationships.' Regionalization will grant missional contexts worldwide the flexibility to adapt worship, music, membership, administrative practices, and evangelism strategies. **(See Appendix 5 for regionalization petitions passed at the recent General Conference on Page 28).**

The predominantly liberal and progressive proponents of this regionalization plan claims that it aims to put The United Methodist Church's different geographic regions on equal footing, allowing each region to align with the biblical, social, and legal contexts of their respective countries. However, given the history of unsuccessful attempts by liberals in the past to regionalize the denomination in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2019 with the goal of allowing the practice of same-sex unions in certain regions of the church, conservatives strongly voted against regionalizing the denomination. In 2008, a task force of the General Conference proposed 23 amendments to the church's constitution called the Worldwide Nature of the Church, aimed at creating regional conferences. That plan failed to receive 2/3 votes from annual conferences. In 2012 and 2016, liberals and progressives made similar attempts at regionalizing the denomination but failed. Their

continued determination regionalize the church culminated into the establishment of the Way Forward Commission to determine whether the worldwide UMC should regionalized or not. That effort led to the creation of the One Church Plan, representing the liberalization and regionalization of the denomination, on the one hand, and the Traditional Plan, representing the conservative position of the church, on the other hand. The General Church organized the organized the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference to decide the future direction of the worldwide UMC. That one item General Conference took place in St. Louise, Missouri, from 21-26 February 2019. The General Conference voted to sustain the conservative stance of the UMC.

Even though the highest decision making body made the decision to keep the denomination biblical and conservative, the predominantly liberal, progressive and centrist bishops, pastors and leaders of the church refused to abide by the church's decision. They violated the Book of Discipline and went ahead to practice same-sex marriages, ordain LGBTQ persons as pastors and to elect and consecrate some as bishops within the UMC. That action led to majority conservative members of the UMC in the United States to leave the denomination and form a new denomination called the Global Methodist Church (GMC). Their action of violation continued unabated, with impunity, until they organized the recent postponed 2020 General Conference that took place from 23 April to 3 May in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA.

With the departure of the predominantly conservative members and delegates from the UMC in the USA, the liberal and progressive delegates were now in the majority. Hence, at the recent general conference, the majority delegates voted and passed the regionalization plan, now to be ratified in each annual conference. However, most conservatives still believe that the ultimate purpose, as in the past, is to facilitate social, cultural practices in different regions of the one denomination. This decision, if ratified, would render the one denomination preaching different gospels with some practicing Christianity contrary to the teaching of Holy Bible, with no possibility of members from one region having a say in what another region believes, teaches and practices.

The fact is the UMC worldwide has always function within regional context, however ensuring that one Book of Discipline bound us all. According to paragraph 125 of our current Book of Discipline, "United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission. Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsive to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining 'a vital web of interactive relationships.'" However, the current Regionalization Plan would undo our connectional polity, as no region would have a say in how another region aligns its social and cultural practices with the teaching of Scripture.



Additionally, paragraph 543 (7) of our current 2016 Book of Discipline reads,

A Central Conference shall have the power to make such changes and adaptations of the Book of Discipline as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area requires....provided, that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the constitution and the General Rule of the United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church.

However, in the new regionalization plan, the scope of limitation has widened to ensure that no regional conference alters *the following parts of the General Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church:*

- 1) Parts I & II: The Constitution within the General Book of Discipline;
- 2) Part III: The Doctrinal Standards and Theological Task of the UMC that affect our faith as Lay and Clergy persons;
- 3) Part IV: The Ministry of All Christians; and
- 4) Part V: The New Social Principles that defines [*marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith (adult man and adult woman of consenting age or two adult persons of consenting age) into a union of one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.*”];
- 5) *That allows for Abortion at the discretion of a person, and disallow the practice the polygamy in the UMC denomination.*

Despite the claim that regionalization, if passed would allow each region of the UMC to carry out ministry based on its own culture and context without the interference of any other region, Paragraph 4 of the new discipline says otherwise as indicated below:

¶ 4. Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church—*The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, gender, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, and now Sexual Orientation shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition, and now Sexual Orientation*

3. The Revised Social Principles

The Social Principles are a set of principles and guidelines that provide guidance on various social issues, such as poverty, racism, human sexuality, gender equality, and environmental stewardship. While the Social Principles are important for informing the church's stance on social issues, they be amended or revised by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church every four years. They're not set for ratification.

The Social Principles and the constitution of the United Methodist Church serve different purposes and have different levels of authority within the church.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church cover a wide range of topics related to social issues and ethical concerns. Some of the key topics addressed in the Social Principles include:

1. Human Rights: The Social Principles affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and advocate for the protection of human rights, including the rights of children, immigrants, refugees, and marginalized communities.

2. Poverty and Economic Justice: The Social Principles call for addressing poverty and economic inequality by promoting just economic systems, fair wages, access to education and healthcare, and the eradication of systemic barriers that perpetuate poverty.

3. Racism and Discrimination: The Social Principles denounce racism and discrimination in all its forms and affirm the church's commitment to racial justice, equality, and reconciliation. They call for actively working towards dismantling systemic racism and promoting inclusivity.

4. Gender Equality: The Social Principles affirm the equality of all genders and advocate for the elimination of gender-based discrimination, violence, and oppression. They support gender justice and equal opportunities for all individuals.

5. Environmental Stewardship: The Social Principles emphasize the responsibility of humanity to care for and protect God's creation. They promote environmental stewardship, sustainable practices, and the preservation of biodiversity.

6. Peace and Justice: The Social Principles advocate for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and the pursuit of justice and reconciliation. They oppose violence, war, and the proliferation of weapons, and encourage dialogue and nonviolent methods of resolving conflicts, and most importantly for our context;

7. Human Sexuality: The Social Principles articulate the United Methodist Church's teachings on sexuality, marriage, and relationships.

The Social Principles are also resources contained in the Book of Discipline that provides guidelines on the UMC's position on various social issues, such as poverty, racism, human sexuality, gender equality, and environmental stewardship. While the Social

Principles are important for informing the church's stance on social issues, the General Conference amend and revise portions of them during General Conference sessions when the church deems it necessary to do so. The changes do not require constitutional amendments.

Meanwhile, the General Conference made sweeping changes to all of these restricted parts of the Book of Discipline, the change in the definition of marriage, lifting of the ban on homosexual practices in the UMC and LGBTQ persons to serve as pastors and leaders in the UMC.

The Revised Social Principle (SP) on social community removed anti-homosexual stance and expanded the definition of marriage. The new definition defines marriage as **“a sacred, lifelong covenant between an adult man and adult woman of consenting age or two adult persons of consenting age.”** This means, according to the new teaching of the UMC worldwide, homosexuality is now compatible with Christian living, and same-gender marriage is legal in the UMC.

The UMC in Liberia does not condone the practice of polygamy among its pastors, leaders and members. However, the irony was that, while the General Conference voted to approve same-gendered marriage in the worldwide by amending the definition of marriage to include same- sex, it went on to prohibit polygamous marriage.

4. Amendments to the Definition of Marriage in the UMC

The new social principles on marriage go further to say,

“The United Methodist Church does not recognize marriage as a Sacrament; we celebrate and cherish this union as an expression of the couple’s faith grounded in their relationship with God and one another.” Vote: (523 to 161); takes effect as of January 1, 2025.

Petition 20017. ADCA 198. Para. 161: This petition adds language to include all gender identities and sexual orientations as given by God. Vote: (667 to 54). Takes effect as of January 1, 2025.

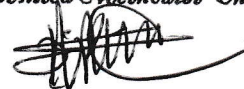
5. Removal of the Restriction on LGBTQ Practices and Marriages in the UMC

The UMC worldwide has legalized LGBTQ practices, including their ordination as clergy, leaders and election and consecration as bishops. LGBTQ stands for:

L: lesbian (a woman who is having sex with another woman);

G: gay (a man who can have sex with another man);

B: bi-sexual (a man who is having sexual affairs with both women and men or a woman who is having sexual affairs with both men and women);



T: transgender (a male who feels or thinks that he is a woman and therefore changes his sexual organs to that of a female, or a female who feels or thinks that she is a male and hence undergoes operations to change her sexual organs to that of a male;

Q: Queer. They are a group of people who belong to the queer society, a strange group of people who live a carefree life. In this society, a person may be sleeping with a woman and a man who are also sleeping with other women and men without any disagreement. There is no commitment; they live carefree lives as they know how.

The above definitions classed all these different categories of people into one group called Homosexuals. They are people who are in sexual love affairs with people of the same sex, a man married to another man or having sexual affairs with another man—alternatively, a woman married to another woman or having sexual affairs with another woman. According to the doctrine of the worldwide UMC, homosexuality is now compatible with Christian teaching. **(See Appendix 6 for petitions that the General Conference passed in support of LGBTQIA+-, page 29)**

6. Sexual Orientation: Mandated Diversity Category on Church Boards and Agencies

The General Conference voted to add the category of “sexual orientation” as a required category for mandated diversity on church commissions and agencies. Alongside race and gender diversity, people of various sexual orientations are now to be included in governing bodies, including annual conference and local church level as indicated below: **(See appendix 7: Sexual orientation as a mandated diversity category-page 30)**

7. Non-Binary Gender Categories Embraced

For the first time, at the 2024 General Conference, the Commission on General Conference asked all delegates approaching the microphone to state their name, conference, membership category of clergy/lay, and sexual orientation for statistical purposes. They asked delegates who wished to share their “preferred pronouns,” to do so, and many did. This will continue at all future General Conferences.

This means people identifying as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and queers are legal and official in the UMC as an identity that God gives them and therefore God approves of them. Vote: (667 to 54), takes effect in the denomination as of 1 January 2025. The petition that passed in favour of this new normal was Petition 20017. ADCA 198. Para. 161: Adds language to include all gender identities and sexual orientations as God-given. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.



8. Approval of Abortion Rights

One can abort a child for any and every reason because, as the denomination believes, a woman has the right over her body to decide what she does with it. However, the Bible reminds us that our bodies are parts of the body of Christ; we are temples of the living God (1 Corinthians 6:12-20). We must, therefore, present our bodies to the LORD as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2) because, someday, we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of what we did with our bodies (2 Corinthians 5:10).

On abortion, the Revised Social Principles contains a new resolution that says, "The United Methodist Church upholds a person's right to an abortion after informed consideration with their family, medical practitioners, pastor, and other pertinent counsel. State and federal laws and regulations prohibiting abortion violate a person's right to the full range of reproductive health care and, potentially, life. The General Conference also passed the following resolutions:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that United Methodists pledge solidarity with those who seek reproductive health care, including abortion, by taking active measures, including accompanying people to medical appointments when necessary.

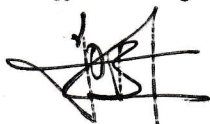
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that United Methodists and their churches will support a person's right to reproductive health care, including abortion, through personal prayer, letter-writing campaigns to their legislators, and, when necessary, peaceful protest. This resolution passed in committee room by 52-1 and was approved in plenary on the consent calendar. Vote: (692 to 51).

9. Polygamy Practices Banned in the UMC

The General Conference voted to add the new paragraph 162 (d) 2 to the Social Principles in the BOD as stated below:

We cannot endorse the practice of polygamy, which entails living in relationship multiple spouses. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the forced dissolution of such relationships presents significant problems. All too often, the women and children forced out of polygamous relationships and themselves cast into abject poverty with no means of support. We, therefore, urge church leaders, when dealing with the dissolution of polygamous relationships, to exercise the utmost care and to prioritize considerations related to the continued health and well-being of dependent women and children. We reject attempts to ostracize families who are or have been in polygamous relationships, especially women and children, or deny them access to the ministries of the church, including participation in the sacraments. Instead, we urge pastors and congregations to extend the same gracious welcome and hospitality to all those in need

The Petition Number: 20003- Vote: (609 to 91) voted by delegates birthed this new paragraph, 162D (2) in the Revised Social Principles.



10. Removal of Marital Faithfulness in Heterosexual Marriage and Celibacy in Singleness for Pastors in the UMC (No more discipline for Adultery & Fornication)

Specific bans on adultery and sex before or outside marriage were in §2702 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. They were removed in committee room a by a vote of 32-13 and in plenary by 474-206, rejecting a minority report to not dispute the deletion of homosexual behaviour but asking to retain as chargeable "not being celibate in singleness, or not being faithful in a marriage."

Those seeking ordination are no longer expected to demonstrate "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness," as was stated in §304 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. This deletion passed in plenary with a vote of 544-121.

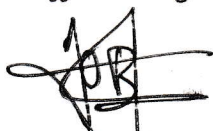
Regarding offenses against clergy, the predominantly liberal and progressive General Conference voted to remove "immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage". The definition of misconduct is now less defined and subject to the discretion of bishops, or the civil laws. There are concerns this change could open the door to permitting sex outside of marriage as a consensual act in the UMC, especially amongst Pastors.

General Conference passed Petition 20604. ADCA 243 Para. R9999 that opposes faithfulness in heterosexual relations. Petitions 20730; 20003. ADCA 208, 198 also supported same. Vote: (667 to 54). Takes effect as of January 1, 2025.

11. General and Annual Conferences to Offer Apology for Sexual Misconducts

The General Conference passed the following petition, 20593, mandating General and annual conferences and Bishops to apologize to the victims/survivors of Sexual Misconducts as indicated below:

Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship" and "interferes with the moral mission of the Church" (§ 161J). The Council of Bishops' press release, "United Methodist leaders respond to #metoo and #churchtoo movement, states, "Council of Bishops affirmed, through its members, renewed commitment to addressing the systemic causes of sexual misconduct and abuse of power.... The sin of sexual misconduct must be named by the Church at every level of ministry." The bishops pledge to do the right thing in every complaint received, including listening well to hear the story and developing a response, which holds persons accountable and offers healing for all affected to the extent of their ability. Therefore, in the spirit of offering healing for all affected to the extent of our ability, on behalf of the General Conference, we sincerely apologize to the victims and survivors of sexual misconduct perpetrated by the leaders (clergy and lay) of The United Methodist Church for the harm they have done. We acknowledge it is spiritual violence when a ministerial leader commits sexual misconduct and it is a clear violation of sacred trust. In addition, after General



Conference passes this petition, the President of Council of Bishop shall read this resolution from the plenary door and repent of this sin. Following the apology statement to all delegates and guests during a plenary session of the General Conference, Furthermore, this same action shall be repeated at the next annual Conferences session for all Jurisdictional and Central conferences, reading the apology statement during one of the conference's plenary or worship sessions. We encourage and support the reporting of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment. The abuse of inherent power in the leadership position will not be tolerated.

This petition passed in plenary with a vote of 667 to 54 amongst the consent calendar

12. Restriction of Global Church to Support Annual Conferences that Refuse to Develop Policy for Supporting Sexual Orientation

As a further measure to ensure that every annual conference includes LGBTQ people in all committees, boards and agencies at the local church, district and annual conference levels, the General Conference passed a petition to withhold funding from any annual conference that refuses to develop policy that ensures the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations. The following paragraph 811.1-G, Petition Number: 20363-FA requires the building a Fully Inclusive Church.

According to paragraph 811, General Policies— 1. The General Council on Finance and Administration is authorized to withhold approval of a portion or all of the budget of any agency or any church-related institution receiving general church funds (see ¶ 810.2) until such agency or church-related institution shall submit to the council in writing its established policies of:

- (a) recruiting, employing, utilizing, recompensing, and promoting professional staff and other personnel without regard to race, ethnicity, age, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, or gender;
- (b) fulfilling its duties and responsibilities in a manner that does not involve segregation or discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, or gender; and
- (c) insofar as possible, purchasing goods and services from vendors who are in compliance with such policies as are described in sections (a) and (b) of this paragraph. In the fulfilment of this directive, the council shall take the following steps:
 - (1) Collaborate with the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women in the development of a certification form to be submitted to the council by agencies and institutions receiving general church funds;
 - (2) Review copies of such certifications with the two commissions;



(3) In consultation with the two commissions determine adequate recommendations regarding possible noncompliance with these policies by agencies and institutions receiving general church funds; and

(4) In collaboration with the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine fair and just recommendations for withholding funds from agencies and church-related institutions that are noncompliant.

This petition contradicts the claims that individual annual conferences would have the freedom to decide whether they would embrace LGBTQ people in the leadership and pastoral services and allow same-sex activities within their annual conferences.

13. Local Church Discernment (Practice) of marriage and wedding services

The general conference agreed and resolved that no clergy shall be penalized for performing or refraining from performing a same sex marriage ceremony. All local church is allowed to host same sex wedding on church property, and must Grant all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.


(see petition 20717 -HS -P 419.12- of the new BOD)

14. Annual Conferences Required to Prepare Local Churches to Accept Gay Clergy

The recent General Conference expanded the definition of Open Itineracy to include accepting clergy regardless of sexual orientation. The revised ¶ 425.1 directs annual conferences to train Pastor Parish Relations Committees to receive pastors regardless of sexual orientation. Petition 20600. ADCA 240 Para. R9999. Supports LGBTQ ministry, including ordained minister. It eliminates the ban on "self-proclaimed practicing" gay clergy, which dates back to 1984. Vote: (692 to 51). The passage of this petition takes immediate effect. Several other petitions passed in support of the acceptance of gay clergy across the denomination.

15. Traditional United Methodist Protection Petitions Removed

The 2019 One Church Plan produced by the Commission on a Way Forward provided a raft of protections for traditionalists in the UMC that would accompany liberalization of the human sexuality position. These protections were mostly omitted from the changes approved at the recent General Conference. While General Conference made clear that no clergy can be coerced into conducting same-sex weddings, the following One Church Plan protections were omitted:



- (1) Language to “affirm those who continue to maintain that the Scriptural witness does not condone the practice of homosexuality. We believe that their conscience should be protected in the church and throughout society under basic principles of religious liberty.”
- (2) Language stating that marriage has been “traditionally understood as a union of one man and one woman,”
- (3) Language stating that same-sex weddings would only be allowed in churches that specifically voted to host them,
- (4) Language allowing annual conferences to develop their own policies on human sexuality, and (5) Allowances for bishops to decline to ordain practicing gay clergy (the jurisdiction would have provided another bishop to ordain gay candidates in such an instance.

16. Africa University Funds

The 1988 General Conference approved the establishment of a United Methodist university on the continent of Africa. By the time the 1992 General Conference convened, the site selection process was complete, the Zimbabwe Annual Conference had donated a large portion of land to the university on which to establish the main campus, and the university had been granted a charter by the government of Zimbabwe. On March 23, 1992, the College of Theology and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources opened on a site near Old Mutare to 40 students from six African countries.

Subsequent General Conferences have heard and affirmed reports on the continuing development of this university for all of Africa. The vitality of the University was evidenced by the creation of additional courses (now over 1,500), increases in the number of faculty members and students, and the growth of the physical plant. There are currently three colleges and one school within the University, namely: (1) College of Health, Agriculture and Natural Sciences; (2) College of Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance; (3) College of Social Sciences, Theology, Humanity and Education; and (4) the School of Law.

General Conference Approved \$5m to support Central Conference Theological Educational Fund (CCTEF). The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) is in stewardship of the funds, and the Council of Bishops appoints commission to administer portion of the fund annually to theological educations across the central conferences of Africa.

The commission meets annually to review grant proposals to bolster theological education in central conferences. Since 2016, CCTEF has awarded 232 grants to fund scholarships, faculty development, Courses of Study, and improved libraries, and has doubled its investment from the prior quadrennial.



17. Joining the UMC outside the Local Church Structure

In the local church now in the new UMC, membership is no more restricted to the Local Church process alone that we currently know in our church that going through the regularly and normal process of confirmation classes. A new provision in the Book of Discipline has been passed to allow for membership coming from campus-based and other advocacy groups outside of the UMC structure. What this means is that, going forward in the UMC, pastors will have very limited control on who becomes members of their local churches. Conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, membership, and confirmation classes would no longer be major requirements for taking up membership in a United Methodist churches.

18. Disaffiliation Ended

The General Conference voted and ended Disaffiliation by a vote of 519 to 203 for Petition #21087, Calendar Item #442. Disaffiliation is a process whereby an annual conference, local church or a group of churches could vote to sever relationship permanently with the Denomination for various reasons. The predominantly liberal and progressive General Conference delegates supported an end to the disaffiliation policy. The 2019 Special Session of the General Conference added paragraph 2553 to allow for disaffiliation. A quarter of U.S. churches used to leave The United Methodist Church and form the Global Methodist Church, while some went Independent. By passing the petition, General Conference decided that no one could now leave the denomination by disaffiliation even if one disagrees with its new policies.

The General Conference on the other approved by a vote of 629 to 96 a re-affiliation policy to welcome individuals as well as churches that wish to re-join The United Methodist Church in the United States and Europe. Millions of United Methodists in Africa now must choose whether to stay in a denomination that has lifted the ban on homosexual practices in the denomination, and consecrates gays and lesbians as bishops within the worldwide denomination.

19. Re-affiliation Approved.

While the General Conference voted to end disaffiliation, they simultaneously voted to approve re-affiliation of churches that which to join the UMC. They further required annual conferences to set a re-affiliation policy for churches that want to return to the denomination. That decision was approved by a vote of 629 to 96. **(See petition # 21027-DCA-P 2500)**

Under the Re-affiliation law passed, the Bishop will first review each church reason /resolution for disaffiliation, and submit it to the nearest District superintendent on why

they want to return to the UMC. Their rationale or reason for wanting to re-join the UMC should include the following:

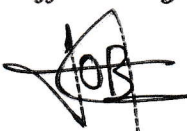
- * The church stance on inclusivity on LGBTQ person in the life and leadership of the church;
- * What has changed for the church to desire to be connected to the UMC; and
- * listing the total number of years since disaffiliation, amongst other things.

20. Financial Status of the Denomination

By a vote of 647 to 31 (a 95% majority), the 2020/2024 GC delegates approved a 2025 to 2028 denominational budget of US\$373.4 million, which represented a 43% reduction in the worldwide denomination budget of 2016 for 2025 to 2028. That total is contingent on collection rates being at 90% or more for the next two years. If giving is below that percentage, the budget bottom line will further drop to US\$353.6 million, thus increasing the shortfall to 47%, from the current 43%.

The current financial condition of the worldwide denomination is challenging. The USA wing of the UMC supports the General Church (boards, agencies, episcopal funds that pays all bishops, including African bishops, some capital projects across the world) with about 99% of the needed funds, while central conferences outside the United States contributes only about 1%. Because of the recent departure of about 25 percent of its membership through disaffiliation, the denomination currently finds it challenging to maintain its budget.

Due to the ongoing massive growth of the church in Africa, about 6.8 million of the current 12.5m population, the Council of Bishops promised additional five (5) bishops to the 13 episcopal leaders to Africa. However, they adjusted the decision through General Conference vote to add only two bishops, and increased the number of central conferences from three (3) to four (4). To exacerbate the problem, General conference voted to reduce its budget by 43% and reduce support to theological institutions in Africa, excluding African University, from 10m to 5m per quadrennial. The current economic reality of the denomination suggests that whether a conference remains in the denomination or, not every annual conference will have to endeavour to mobilize and amass local resources to support its ministries as the denomination currently operates on only 57% of its actual budget.



Section VII: Conclusion

Our participation at the General Conference was active and engaging. While conservative delegates were few in number to effect any significant changes in the votes taken, we made significant contributions to critical legislative committee deliberations, evidenced by the leadership roles played by some of our delegates. We also actively participated on the floor of the General Conference during plenary sessions. The General Conference passed petitions and resolutions that would shape the future direction of the United Methodist Church for a very long time. In as much as the new UMC denomination tries to push the pillar of inclusiveness, unity and effective global ministries in the church, it is not a hidden secret that the decisions and new laws have affected the church in many respects, and will do so for a long time.

Prior to heading for 2024 General Conference, Bishop Quire reiterated our position as an Annual Conference on issues that were likely to appear on the floor of the General Conference. He stated, "Our position is that we are against same-sex marriage, ordination of LGBTQ persons as pastors and leaders within our denomination, and the election and consecration of lesbians and gays as bishops". On the issue of Regionalization, the bishop kept silent in terms of giving a mandate, coupled with the fact that he did not want it to get on the floor for discussion.

We are saddened to inform you that every vice our annual conference stands against, consistent with our understanding and practice of biblical Christianity were voted in favour for. This report therefore confirms that the worldwide UMC denomination did not only legalize same-sex marriage, ordain LGBTQ persons as pastors and leaders within the denomination, the General Conference remove all restrictive languages from the Book of Discipline on fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness. The General Conference also legalized open abortion.

In actuality, the major decisions taken at the recent General Conference changed the worldwide UMC from a conservative/evangelical denomination to a liberal denomination. This change has many consequences-spiritual, social, cultural, contextual, and political for the UMC in Liberia as well as for almost all-annual conferences in Africa.

Given these changes that contravene our biblical and theological understanding and practice of Christianity over the decades, the UMC in Liberia has the choice to decide its own future if she must continue in fulfilling her biblical mandate of evangelizing the nation, revitalizing the church and transforming the Liberian society in particular, and Africa and the world in general. As Charles Wesley puts it in one of his hymns, we have "a charge to keep, a God to glorify, and a never dying soul to save and fit for the sky". To keep this charge, it might be very difficult, if not impossible, for us to remain a part of this newly branded liberal UMC denomination and preach the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ whether in Liberia or the USA, Europe or Asia.

Section VIII: Recommendations

Progressives swept the table at General Conference, opposed only by a portion of the Africans and a smattering of remaining U.S. traditionalists, with perhaps a few Filipinos and Europeans. One-third (1/3) of the delegates seats were supposed to have been African. However, visa problems kept 25-30% of African delegates from attending.

Millions of United Methodists in Africa now must choose whether to stay in a denomination where they are the majority, but are effectively disenfranchised by perennial visa problems and more so through an unfair delegate representation formula.

Hence, in light of what has happened and been reported from the General Conference, we recommend the following to the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church for a swift and timely actions in light of the rectification vote expected to take place before the new book of discipline takes effect on January 1, 2025.

1) Become an Independent Denomination.

This option aligns with the position of the majority respondents to the Way Forward Commission Survey conducted from July to October 2023. The report of that survey indicated that about 98% of respondents decided that it was time to sever our relationship with the worldwide denomination, based on all of the changes to its doctrines and discipline, mentioned in this report.

The Liberia Annual Conference can fulfil this mandate by making the decision to leave the denomination just as the Bulgarian, Rwanda, Burundi, Ivory Coast and Nigeria Annual Conferences, and the Kenya Provisional Conference have done.

Financial Implication

The financial implication is that the Liberia Annual Conference would support all of its ministries, including the payment of its own Bishop. Our Resident Bishop would no longer receive salaries office and transportation support from the Episcopal Fund that pays all bishops of the worldwide denomination. When we take this decision, the worldwide denomination will inevitably reduce or withdraw completely its support to projects it currently supports in the Liberia Annual Conference.

However; it is important to inform you that our Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA) paid US\$73,775.00 for fiscal year 2023 for Administrative and operational expenses for the running of the episcopal office. In this 2024 budget, the annual Conference has approved US\$78,440.00 for the running of the episcopal office. **(See CCFA Financial Report for 2023)** This amount is in addition to what the Bishop office receives from the General Church Annually. We (our Annual Conference) are

therefore capable of augmenting this amount to pay our bishop as well as support our capital projects. The reality is that the Liberia Annual Conference has a significant amount of assets to support its programs, projects and ministries, including the payment of its bishop, district superintendents and pastors, if we can put in the appropriate mechanisms to ensure meticulous accountability and proper management of our resources.

Besides, the predominantly liberal USA-UMC that currently contributes about 99% of funding for the worldwide UMC is fast declining in membership and will soon be unable to pay the salaries of African bishops. Because of its current financial challenge, at the recent General Conference, the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) reduced the denomination's budget by 43%. Therefore, it would be unwise for the Liberia Annual Conference in particular and any African annual conference to depend upon the American UMC for financial support, going forward.

2) Stay with the Worldwide UMC

That the UMC in Liberia remains a part of the worldwide denomination. This decision aligns with the decision of the General Conference that it no longer permits any annual conference to disaffiliate from the denomination. However, the only pathway for leaving the denomination is e, paragraph 572 (used by Eurasia). This paragraph would require a decision of an annual to leave the denomination, followed by an approval of a central conference, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and finally the General Conference. The process would take about 4 to 8 years to its realization. This may not be a good option, given the long process required.

If we remain with the worldwide UMC denomination, there is no guarantee that we will ever get General Conference to overturn the current decisions they have taken. Furthermore, we risk losing a significant number of our membership to other denominations, because a majority membership of our church does not want to identify with a denomination that has legislated same-sex marriage, lifted ban on the ordination of LGBTQIA+ people to become pastors, changed the definition of marriage and consecrated lesbians and gays as Bishops.

To remain in such a denomination signals our endorsement of their recent decision. We would be giving credence to them, and by implication telling our children that it is a good thing to do. Thus, we will be putting the future generation of Liberia, our children in harm's way. Hence, we further risk losing students from our United Methodist School System. Worst still, we would lost our credibility as an authentic Christian denomination in the Republic of Liberia. Given the social, economic and political influence of the UMC in Liberia, by our action to endorse the unbiblical decisions of the worldwide denomination, we would be directly or indirectly be licencing our national government to pass laws on the legalization of same-sex marriage. Additionally, we would be wounding the faith of many young converts who have looking up to pastors and leaders of the UMC for spiritual



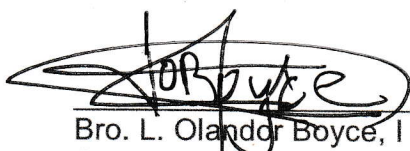
direction. On a larger scale, we would be going against our biblical conviction that has governed Christianity in Liberia, our African culture, tradition, and the laws of the Republic Liberia by association. If we endorse these harmful and unbiblical decisions by association, we would betray the trust, and posterity will judge us unfavourably.

Financial Implications

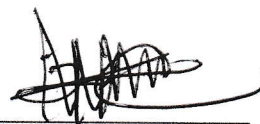
Remaining with the denomination means that the Episcopal Fund will still pay our Bishop salary and provide funding to run his office. The general church may also still support a few capital projects in Liberia. However, there is a very high probability that we would begin to take on a significant portion of our own financial responsibilities. The general church is fast becoming broke. There is no projection that it would recover financially in the soonest future. The projection is that the financial situation of the general church would become worst as more annual conferences, churches, and individual families leave the denomination because of its recent decision to deviate from the conservative position of the church to a liberal one. Therefore, whether we leave or stay, the best option for the Liberia Annual Conference is to intentionally prioritize becoming more self-supporting and self-sustaining, in addition to being self-governing and self-theologizing.

May God grant us his peace and understanding as we deliberate on this report, and thanks for giving us the opportunity to be of service to you and represent you at the 2020 postponed General Conference held in 2024.

Respectfully Submitted:



Bro. L. Olandor Boyce, I
Secretary of Delegation



Rev. Jerry P. Kulah
Chairperson of Delegation



Other members of the delegation are:

Signature

1. Cllr. Dr. Tolbert G. Nyenswah

2. Rev. Nelly W. Wright

3. Rev. Dr. Julius Nelson

4. Rev. Dr. George Weagba

5. Rev. Dr. James Z. Labala

6. Rev. Dr. Anthony G. Diah

7. Rev. Dr. George D. Wilson, Jr.

8. Rev. Varney A. Cassell

REV. VARNEY ALVIN CASSELL, I

9. Rev. Dorothy Macaulay

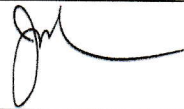
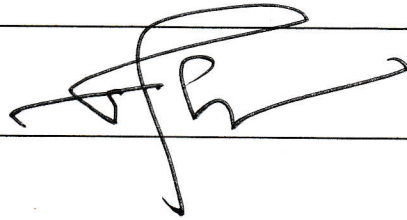
10. Dr. Muriel V. Nelson

11. Bro. Cletus A. Sieh

12. Bro. Samuel Cole

13. Sis. Theresa M. Davies

14. Sis. Ophelia Kennedy



APPENDICES

Section IX: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Members elected as Primary/Seated delegates

Ministerial Delegates:

1. Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah
2. Rev. Nelly W. Wright
3. Rev. Dr. Julius Sarwolo Nelson, Jr
4. Rev. Dr. George K. Weagba
5. Rev. Dr. James Z. Labala
6. Rev. P. Karyidia Gartor
7. Rev. Anna S. Kpaan *
8. Rev. Dr. George D. Wilson, Jr.
9. Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Browne

Lay Delegates:

1. Cllr Fth. Tolbert G. Nyenswah
2. Mth. Muriel V. Nelson
3. Fth. Abraham A. Newland
4. Bro. Victor K. Howard
5. Bro. Cyrus P. Yini
6. Bro. Jefferson B. Knight
7. Bro. L. Olandor Boyce, I
8. Bro. Adolphus W. Dupley
9. Mth. Phebean Tobey

Appendix 2: Members elected as Alternate/Reserved delegates

Ministerial Delegates:

1. Rev. Dr. Isaac C. Padmore
2. **Rev. Dr. Anthony G. Dioh**
3. Rev. Decontee Johnson
4. Rev. Cecelia B. Marpleh
5. **Rev. Alvin Varney Cassell, I**
6. Rev. Jebbeh Kiazolu
7. Rev. George Mombo
8. Rev. Robertha Nyankan
9. **Rev. Dorothy McCauley**

Lay Delegates:

1. Bro. S. Emmanuel Lloyd
2. **Mth. Ophelia S. Kennedy**
3. Bro. Dormah Kayakpan
4. Sis. Dekontee P. Tarr
5. Sis. Mai G. Pealey
6. Bro. Cyprus Saye *
7. Atty. Fth. Cletus A. Sieh
8. **Bro. Samuel Cole**
9. **Mth. Theresa M. Davis**

*Deceased

Appendix 3: List of 16 Delegates and their Representative Committees

Members	Committees
1. Rev. Nelly Wright	Church and Society 1
2. Rev. Dr. George Wilson	Church and Society 2
3. Sis. Theresa Dougba	Church and Society 3
4. Rev. Dr. Julius Nelson	Conferences
5. Bro. Samuel Cole	Discipleship
6. Rev. Dr. Jerry Kulah	Faith and Order
7. Bro. L. Olandor Boyce, I	Financial Administration
8. Atty. Cletus Sieh	General Administration
9. Rev. James Z. Labala	Global Ministries
10. Rev. Dr. Anthony Diah	Ordained Ministry
11. Rev. Dr. George Weagba	Higher Education
12. Mot. Dr. Muriel Nelson	Independent Commissions
13. Cllr. Dr. Tolbert G. Nyenswah	Judicial Administration
14. Rev. Dorothy Macaulay	Ordained Ministry
15. Rev. Varney Alvin Cassell, I,	Local Church
16. Sis. Ophelia Kennedy	Independent Commissions

Appendix 4 elected officers for the Judicial Council

Laity	Years	Laity Alternates
Harriett Jane Olson	(8-year term)	Erin Hawkins
Molly Hlekani Wayera	(8-year term)	Jessica Vittorio
Bill Wadell	(8-year term)	Kent Fulton
Andrew Vorbrich	(4-year term)	Thomas Lee
		Thomas Starnes
		Laurie Day

Clergy	Years	Clergy Alternates
Angela Brown	(8-year term)	Tim Bruster
Susan Henry-Crowe	(8-year term)	Taylor Walters Denyer
Jonathan Ulanday	(8-year term)	Paul Perez
Øyvind Helliesen	(4-year term)	Beverly Wilkes Null
Luan-Vu Tran	(4-year term)	Mark Grafenread
		Kate Croskery-Jones




Appendix 5: Summary of the eight parts of regionalization passed at the Recent General Conference

Each annual conference across the worldwide denomination must ratify these parts of the Regionalization Plan by a 2/3 votes in order for them to become laws in the UMC

1. Worldwide regionalization: petition #20957. ADCA 500. Para. 101: Constitutional amendments to transform the American and Central Conferences into Regional Conferences. Vote: (586 to 164).
2. Worldwide regionalization: petition #s 20157; 20956. ADCA 616; 1499. Para. 101: Changes to the Discipline to add references to Regional Conferences in the United States. Vote: (646 to 73)
3. Worldwide regionalization: petition # 21041: Updates the Standing Committee to become a Standing Committee on matters related to Regional Conferences outside the United States. Vote: (646 to 73).
4. Worldwide regionalization Non-disciplinary. Petition # 21042. Allows for the change the expression, "Central Conference" to "Regional Conference" throughout the Discipline. - Vote: (618 to 99).
5. Worldwide regionalization Non-disciplinary. Petition # 21043. Creates a Study Committee to update the structure of the Regional Conferences and review U.S. jurisdictions. Vote: (618 to 99).
6. Worldwide regionalization Non-disciplinary. Petition # 21044. Enabling legislation to create an interim U.S. Legislative Committee at the General Conference. - Vote: (663 to 55). Has taken effect.
7. Worldwide regionalization Discipline. Petition # 21045. Creates a Legislative Committee of the American General Conference, will come to an end of ratification of regionalization happens. Vote: (593 to 139).
8. Worldwide regionalization. Non-disciplinary. Petition # 21046. Create an organizational plan for an American Regional Conference. Vote: (639 to 85).

Other GC Decisions needing Constitutional Amendments of 2/3 votes by every annual conference

1. Adds to the Constitution that neither "sex" nor "ability" constitute barriers to membership in the Church. Vote: (607 to 67).
2. Stands out against racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy. Vote: (621 to 59).
3. Modifies educational requirements that allow local pastors to vote for General Conference clergy delegates. Vote: (547 to 99).



Appendix 6: Petitions passed at the General Conference in support of LGBTQ

1. End LGBTQ restrictions. Eliminates the ban on “self-proclaimed practicing” gay clergy, which dates back to 1984. Vote: (692 to 51). Takes immediate effect.
2. End LGBTQ restrictions. Removes ban on clergy officiating and on churches hosting “homosexual unions,” which dates back to 1996. Vote: (447 to 233). Takes immediate effect.
3. End LGBTQ restrictions. Performing same-sex marriages or being a “practicing” gay clergy is no longer a prosecutable offense. Vote: (474 to 206). Takes immediate effect.
4. End LGBTQ restrictions. Details sexual ethics for candidates for ordination, including fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection, and consent. Vote: (490 to 164). Takes effect on January 1, 2025 in the United States, and later in central conferences.
5. End LGBTQ restrictions. UMCOR conducts relief operations without taking into account people's sexual orientation, disability, and economic situation. Vote: (663 to 60). Takes effect as of January 1, 2025 in the United States, and later in the central conferences.
6. End LGBTQ restrictions. The board members of the denomination's Commission on Religion and Race are encouraged to be diverse. Vote: (663 to 60). Takes effect as of January 1, 2025 in the United States and later in the central conferences.
7. End LGBTQ restrictions. Establishes a process to reinstate clergy defrocked by LGBTQ-related bans. Vote: (474 to 178). Takes immediate effect.
8. End LGBTQ restrictions. Removes ban on funding of Annual Conferences and Agencies related to homosexuality. Vote: (667 to 54). Takes effect as of January 1, 2025 in the United States, and later in the central conferences
9. End LGBTQ restrictions. Removes the requirement that the General Board of Finance and Administration enforce the funding ban. Vote: (667 to 54). Takes immediate effect.
10. End LGBTQ restrictions. Rescinds the ban on considering candidates for ministry without determining whether they are homosexual. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective now
11. End LGBTQ restrictions. Faith-based boards should include LGBTQ people and people of varying economic status. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective January 1 in the United States, later in the central conferences.
12. End LGBTQ restrictions. Removes Traditional Plan provision that prohibited bishops from ordaining, “Self-proclaimed practicing” gay clergy. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.
13. End LGBTQ restrictions. This amendment removes a provision from the Traditional Plan relating to complaints against Bishops who take no action against clergy for performing same-sex Messages. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

14. End LGBTQ restrictions. Allows gay clergy "in good standing" to be appointed to all Annual Conferences. Conferences and churches are now banned from discrimination against clergy based on "sexual orientation." §425.1 now says: "Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnicity origin, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.
15. End LGBTQ restrictions. Establishes a moratorium on legal proceedings against "practicing" gay clergy and same-sex marriages. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective now.
16. End LGBTQ restrictions. Removes a provision from the traditional plan related to the appeal process. Vote: (667 to 54). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.
17. End LGBTQ restrictions. The new resolution calls on the Church to defend the excluded and marginalized, including LGBTQ people. Vote: (686 to 36). January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

Appendix 7: Sexual orientation as a mandated diversity category

End LGBTQ restrictions. Encourages inclusion of LGBTQ people in Youth Ministry Conference Boards. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

End LGBTQ restrictions. Encourages inclusion of LGBTQ people in Conference Boards on Young Adult Ministry. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

End LGBTQ restrictions. Encourages inclusion of LGBTQ persons on Conference Boards on Ministries to seniors. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

End LGBTQ restrictions. Encourages inclusion in the District Council on Youth Ministry. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

End LGBTQ restrictions. Encourages inclusion on the District Council of the denomination's Committee on Senior Citizens Ministry. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

End LGBTQ restrictions. Removes references to homosexuality when considering Ministry candidates. Vote: (606 to 91). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.

End LGBTQ restrictions. Encourages inclusion of LGBTQ person among the representatives the Council of Bishops and appointment to ecumenical bodies. Vote: (692 to 51). Effective January 1 in the United States/Later in the Central Conferences.



Appendix 8: General Resolution of the 191st Annual Session of the LAC/UMC (See next page)

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LIBERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS OF THE 191ST SESSION OF THE LIBERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WE, THE CLERGY AND LAY MEMBERS ACCREDITED TO THE 191ST SESSION OF THE LIBERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CONVENING WITH THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AS VENUE, BUCHANAN CITY, GRAND BASSA COUNTY, UNDER THE THEME AND TEXT "AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD" PSALMS 46:1-11, HAVING READ AND ASSESSED VARIOUS REPORTS SUBMITTED BY ALL REPORTING OFFICERS, DO HEREBY ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 015/LAC/UMC/BUCHANAN CITY, GRAND BASSA COUNTY; FEBRUARY 18, 2024, AS FOLLOWS TO WIT:

Handwritten: Budget #2, #1

Whereas, in order to ensure self-determination and sustainability of the LAC/UMC in the face of evolving challenges especially after careful and thoughtful review of several areas of the financial position of the Church, it is hereby resolved that the conference should endeavor to increase its connectional giving by the various districts, especially owing to the fact that the current contributions remain grossly inadequate; and in so doing, and after careful analysis of the 10% apportionment system by the CCF&A, it is hereby resolved that Kakata/Farmington River, Cape Palmas, Gbarnga, Gompa, Grand Bassa, Kokoyah, Sinoe, and St. John River District return to the none 10% apportionment along with districts already in the none 10% category apportionment, and their new apportionment should be as follows:

- a. Barrobo Circuit \$500
- b. Garraway \$1,500
- c. Gee River \$1,000
- d. Guinea Circuit \$500
- e. Jorquelleh \$1,000
- f. Kru Coast \$1,000
- g. Lofa River \$1,000
- h. Morweh \$1,000
- i. Nana Kru \$1,000
- j. River cess \$1,000
- k. Tappita \$1,500
- l. Weala \$1,000
- m. Cape Palmas \$2,000
- n. Gbarnga \$3,000
- o. Gompa \$3,500

Handwritten signature: JPB

Handwritten signature

- p. Grand Bassa \$3,000
- q. Kakata/Farmington \$3,000
- r. Kokoyah \$2,000
- s. Sinoe \$2,000
- t. St. John River \$2,000

#3

Whereas, in order to present a more realistic and attainable financial picture of the conference, it is hereby resolved that the conference writes off aged items in account receivables that are five years and beyond; or alternatively, these account receivables should be turned over to the Chancellor for litigation for recovery of the account receivables where applicable.

#4

Whereas the 2016 Book of Discipline gives oversight responsibility of issues involving finance and administration of the church to CCF&A, it is hereby resolved that all recommendations involving finance and administration from all Boards, Councils, Departments, institutions to include recommendations for the adjustment in, or re-visitation to the 10% required payment from churches, etc., especially pertaining to the query on whether the 10% payment affects special project/designated fund now and in the future should be channeled to and through the CCF&A through a petition, and that the CCF&A will carry out the necessary feasibility study so as to adequately inform the conference in its report to the 192nd annual session of the conference as to how this issue can be adequately addressed in the best interest of the conference.

#5

Realizing the cardinal role of the strategic plan document to the ministry and developmental initiatives of the LAC/UMC and considering that the five year life span of the present strategic plan has been exhausted, it is the resolution of this conference that a revision and evaluation committee be set up to assess the successes, challenges, and lessons learnt from the strategic plan; and within three months, this committee should present the findings of its evaluation to the Executive Committee of the LAC/UMC so as to pave the way for the carving of a new strategic plan of the church.

#6

Whereas, given the primacy of evangelism, spiritual formation, and mission in the life of the Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, as evidenced in its positioning as the first pillar of the strategic plan of the church; and considering the crucial role that United Methodist schools are expected and required to play in the evangelistic pursuit of the church, it is hereby resolved and reaffirmed that the Board of Education of the LAC/UMC, through the Department of General Education and Ministry, shall ensure and enforce the teaching of the Holy Bible and doctrinal teachings and standards of the United Methodist Church in all schools of the United Methodist School System.

ADD

#7

It is hereby resolved and reaffirmed that the Christian Education Sunday shall be emphasized and revitalized at all local churches with the express aim of raising

JOB

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ADM

funds for the support of the ministry of evangelism, spiritual formation, and mission of the LAC/UMC.

#8

Considering the indispensable contribution that agriculture has, and its propensity to bolster the economic self-sustainability of the LAC/UMC, and being conscious of the premium placed on agriculture by the GBGM through the provision of five million USD for the Bishop John K. Yambasu Agriculture Fund that has been distributed amongst the thirteen annual conferences in Africa, it is resolved by this Conference that the portion of the fund allotted to the Liberia Annual Conference be supervised by both the UMRAD and the CCF&A, with UMRAD being responsible for policy, governance, leadership, supervision, evaluation, and setting standards, and CCF&A be responsible for financial and administrative management; and the implementation of the agricultural projects be carried out by the 20 districts and 2 circuits of our District Agricultural Committees (DAC) to promote decentralization and the participation of all districts towards their sustainability; and that the districts conduct agricultural fairs in which their agricultural produce and livestock sold at the seat of annual conferences, both for the purpose of creating awareness about the viability of the LAC/UMC agricultural program as well as means of raising funds for the various districts.

ADM

#9

Acknowledging the assiduous work executed by the Way Forward Commission and their comprehensive report submitted to the conference, and being appreciative of the contributions provided by all during discussions of the report, and noting that the Conference reaffirms as United Methodists, its stance that homosexuality is incompatible to biblical standards, and the definition of marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman as upheld in scriptures and the 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, and considering that some of the recommendations contained in the Way Forward report are hinged on the futuristic precedent of the outcome of the 2024 General Conference, it is hereby resolved that deliberations and decision on the recommendations of the Way Forward Commission regarding the future direction of the LAC/UMC shall be tabled and reserved until after the 2020 General Conference to be held in April/May 2024 of the United Methodist Church at such future time and place, whether at a special session or where appropriate, as the Bishop and his cabinet shall deem propitious for such purpose.

#10

Whereas, in order to curtail the unabated wave of violence during young people's elections, and issues of young people activities of the conference, the conference hereby resolves and reaffirms the continuation of the mandate of the special task force on young people ministry commissioned by Bishop Samuel J. Quire, Jr. in 2022 to investigate the continuous disruptions surrounding young people elections and recommend effective and practical remedies to substantially minimize, if not eradicate, the reoccurrence of such unfortunate circumstances.

ADM

ADM

The General Resolution Committee

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Bro. Adama N. Tombekai | Acting Chairperson |
| 2. Sis. Juliet O. Jonah | Member |
| 3. Bro. Richard G. Wiah | Member |
| 4. Bro. Harrison K. Tarpeh | Member |
| 5. Rev. Dr. James Z. Labala | Member |
| 6. Rev. Dr. Julius Y.Z.K. Williams, I | Member |
| 7. Bro. Samuel K. Sagbeh | Member |
| 8. Youth Representative | Member |
| 9. Mt. Dr. Elizabeth K. Harris | Consultant |
| 10. Bro. Cllr. Powo C. Hilton | Consultant |



