



PRESS RELEASE

11/14/22

Africa Initiative condemns the election of a gay bishop within the United Methodist Church

During the period, 2 to 5 November 2022, the United Methodist Church within the geographical region of the United States of America had an opportunity to elect new episcopal leaders to replace those affected by mandatory retirement. The leadership of the Africa Initiative would like to appreciate this opportunity afforded our brothers and sisters to elect their episcopal leaders; something that the UMC in Africa is also looking forward to if principles of fairness and justice within the global UMC must prevail. We have also noticed with appreciation the intentional efforts by the Americans to try to strike a balance between gender and ethnicity in the overall results of that election process.

Sadly, however, out of the thirteen elected Bishops, one is an openly gay practicing person, a man married to another man. This action contravenes the teachings of both the Holy Bible (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Romans 1:26–27), and our current Book of Discipline (BOD, 2016, ¶161g, ¶304.3, ¶341.6, ¶2702.1). We are highly disappointed by the blatant breaking of our denominational rules with impunity. This is an open defiance to our own rules, with the acquiescence of the Council of Bishops. We expect our episcopal leaders to hold one another accountable to lead the UMC consistent with our current denominational Book of Discipline. Unfortunately, this is not the case. We are deeply concerned that the UMC in America in particular the global UMC in general is rapidly returning to the days of the Judges, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 17:6 NIV).

We mourn the lack of accountability by some of our Bishops whom we expect to lead by Christ-centered examples, upholding and enforcing our denomination’s doctrinal and moral standards. This behavior sadly continues to erode trust and increases our suspicion to an unprecedented level within the denomination about the Council of Bishops’ ability to provide spiritual guidance and leadership for the global UMC. We strongly condemn such acts of rebellion. We shudder at the thought of the space being promised to traditionalists in the so called “Big Tent” church being pitched in the rhetoric of the future UMC (post-separation UMC) by the powers that be.

As shepherds of God’s flock entrusted to their care, we expect Bishops within the UMC to uphold the virtue of accountability. Amidst the uncertainty of UMC’s future in Africa, we encourage our own African bishops to step forward and add their voices of disapproval of the breaking of our denominational rules in broad daylight with impunity. Kindly remember that not doing anything about the ongoing violations of our church’s doctrines and moral standards is actually doing something, and your silence implies your complicity.

We are fervently praying for sanity to prevail within the United Methodist Church. While the Book of Discipline has not yet changed, we expect our Bishops to lead the efforts toward ensuring that every faithful United Methodist remain law abiding. Our leaders must avoid selective applications of rules governing the UMC to disenfranchising majority membership of the church. Such action breeds a state of anarchy within the church, and makes the UMC an unhealthy Institution to belong. We are deeply concerned about these violations, and trust that the Council of Bishops in particular and the global leadership of the UMC in general would give our position statement a timely consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kulah", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah,
General Coordinator
On behalf of the Africa Initiative Leadership