



Dear Friends,

Action Needed! Please forward this email to your Bishop and demand that the Council of Bishops take immediate action against Bishop Yohanna. You can find the email for your Bishop on your conference website.

In an effort to intimidate his delegates, United Methodist Bishop, John Wesley Yohanna, went on national TV in Nigeria on January 14, 2024, and lied about the African delegates who gathered recently in Tanzania, saying they support gay marriage. He said the pro-gay caucus groups told the delegates how to vote on regionalization at General Conference 2024. This is all a lie, and we should all be concerned about this blatant intimidation of delegates. Please note in the video footage of the newscast (linked below), there is video of Rev. Keith Boyette, President of the Global Methodist Church (GMC). The GMC is actively working with Bishop Yohanna for the church in Nigeria to leave the UMC.

Bishop Yohanna is the same Bishop whose election in 2012 was unsuccessfully contested by Nigerians to the Judicial Council. This is the same Bishop who is accused of working with the civil authorities in 2021 in Nigeria to jail four members of his clergy. Bishop Yohanna is a long-time, outspoken critic of same-sex marriage and is leading the charge in Africa to conflate same-sex marriage with regionalization. Anyone, in his mind, who supports regionalization is pro-gay. This is directly out of the playbook of the far-right US

advocacy groups: the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA), Good News, and the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD). These groups have been condemned by the Africa College of Bishops. And, these groups are actively raising money to bring non-delegate observers from Africa to General Conference 2024 to further divide the church.

This all started when a group known as the Africa Forum hosted 190 people, most of them African Delegates to General Conference, in Tanzania January 4-7, 2024. According to the press release (linked below and verified by three Mainstream UMC Board Members who were present) this group unanimously voted to support regionalization, reject disaffiliations in Africa, and to support the adoption of the Revised Global Social Principles with one amendment: “Marriage is between a man and a woman.” This group openly lobbied against the agenda shared by Bishop Yohanna, but they clearly and publicly stated they do not support same-sex marriage.

Bishop Yohanna is intentionally putting people’s well-being at risk to support his political agenda of taking the Nigerian church out of the UMC and into the GMC—a move opposed by many in the country. Homosexuality is illegal in many African countries, including Nigeria. Amnesty International has raised the alarm about harm to LGBTQ persons and their allies in Nigeria after a mass arrest of 70 people as recently as August of 2023. This is the dangerous cultural environment Bishop Yohanna is leveraging to intimidate delegates.

One African delegate who attended the event in Tanzania emailed Mainstream UMC with four concerns about Bishop Yohanna’s lies:

1. Police may arrest us and put us in jail. (This has been done before.)
2. Our passports may be seized. (This would prevent attendance at General Conference.)
3. We may be targeted by mob justice.
4. We and our families will be open to public attacks.

At the end of the email, this person wrote: "Please help us."

How is it that a United Methodist is in fear for their well-being because of the lies of their United Methodist Bishop?!

The Council of Bishops must take immediate action.

The WCA, GMC, Good News, and the IRD must issue a statement condemning their ally, Bishop Yohanna and his behavior. Otherwise, they too are complicit in openly intimidating delegates to General Conference.

Please support Mainstream UMC's advocacy for General Conference 2024.

- Please support Mainstream UMC: www.MainstreamUMC.com/Donate
- Please forward this email to 5 friends and encourage them to sign up: www.MainstreamUMC.com/Sign-Up
- **Please forward this email to your Bishop and demand that the Council of Bishops take immediate action against Bishop Yohanna.** You can find the email for your Bishop on your conference website.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Mark Holland

Executive Director, Mainstream UMC

www.MainstreamUMC.com

If the web links above or below do not work, please copy and paste them directly into your browser. If you cannot see the header and footer, please download the pictures.

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Notes:

Watch the 3-minute newscast from Nigerian TV from January 14,

2024: <https://mainstreamumc.com/resources/bishop-yohanna-of-nigeria-condemns-delegates/>

Read the Africa College of Bishops' complete statement denouncing the WCA and their Africa

Initiative: <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/files/statement+from+africa+colleges+of+bishops+-+sept+8.pdf>

You can read Scott Field's WCA article here to fundraise for division at General Conference: <https://wesleyan covenant.org/2023/12/05/for-every-people-and-nation-what-is-fair-for-some-should-be-fair-for-all/>

Read where the 2012 UM Judicial Council declined to hear the appeal of Bishop Yohanna's election: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/judicial-council/judicial-council-decision-home/judicial-decisions/request-for-a-declaratory-decision-from-persons-in-the-northern-nigeria-annual-conference>

Read about Bishop Yohanna's 2021 rejection of Regionalization, Same-sex marriage, and his desire to join the GMC and take his annual conferences with him: <https://michiganumc.org/african-bishops-not-united-on-umc-future/>

Read two articles about Bishop Yohanna's 2021 involvement in jailing his pastors: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/divide-deepens-among-nigerian-church-leaders>

<https://um-insight.net/in-the-church/umc-global-nature/nigerian-united-methodists-accused-of-spying-for-emailing-ph/>

Read the press release by the Africa Forum that specifically calls for marriage between "a man and a woman." <https://www.umcafricaforum.org/news/press-release-11-january-2023-dar-es-salaam-tanzania>

Read the article from Amnesty

International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/nigeria-authorities-must-end-witch-hunt-after-more-than-70-arrested-for-attending-gay->

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