



Note: The Author of this letter is Rev. Ande I. Emmanuel, a delegate from Nigeria. Rev. Emmanuel is the Coordinator of Africa Voice of Unity and one of the leaders of the Africa Forum. He is also an active member of the Mainstream UMC Board. Rev. Emmanuel has been very vocal in supporting regionalization. This letter addresses concerns about African Delegates' ability to attend this General Conference.

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To: United Methodist General Conference Delegates  
From: The Africa Voice of Unity (AVOU)

**May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ be with all delegates to the 2024 General Conference.**

We pray that you had a joyful Easter celebration and extend to you a hopeful future for our United Methodist movement. We are voices of unity for the United Methodist Church from conferences across Africa. We are clergy and laity, including our youth, who are serving as delegates to the 2024 General Conference. We join in prayer with you as we seek a promising future for our beloved United Methodist Church.

**This statement emanates out of the passionate and deep love we have for**

**our beloved United Methodist Church at this critical time when we are close to our global legislative assembly.**

While we appreciate the efforts of the organizers of the 2024 General Conference and are aware of the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic which caused several postponements of the General Conference, we are very concerned about the challenges we see in organizing for the 2024 General Conference. The late arrival of delegates' invitation letters to aide in securing visas, lack of adequate information regarding travel arrangements and hotel accommodations and lack of communication between the organizers of the 2024 General Conference and the 2024 delegates. These problems will have an effect on some delegates' arrangements to attend the General Conference meeting.

In view of the above, we call on the organizers of the 2024 General Conference to make judicial use of the remaining time left before our meeting in Charlotte to ensure that travel itineraries are properly purchased and sent to the delegates and that information on hotel accommodations, delegates IDs, and other logistics needed to help delegates carry out their responsibilities are provided without further delay. Where seated delegates were not able to secure visas, expedited arrangements should be made for reserve delegates who have visas to be seated in their places. This is an urgent call to the organizers of the 2024 General Conference.

### **Going forward.**

Going forward, we call on the General Conference to designate a proportional representation of Africans among the organizers of the General Conference, including the business manager's office. These representatives should have the responsibility of addressing specific concerns of African delegates to the General Conference.

As we work on decentralizing powers and structures within the United Methodist Church, we call on the General Conference to create an extension of the General Secretary's office in Africa to ease engagement of delegates coming from Africa. These actions are necessary because of the complicated travel requirements and

the tremendous growth of the Church in Africa.

**Because Africans are not fully represented, we ask that the presiding bishops and committee chairs make a special effort to call on Africans to speak and that delegates listen closely to what we say.**

We celebrate the fast growth of the United Methodist Church in Africa and its youth. 70% of this growth is among our youth and young adults. While we celebrate, we are also worried about the future of our church in Africa and the rest of the world as we head to the 2024 General Conference. To approve disaffiliation will harm this growth and harm our mission. Our young people should be allowed to decide their future in the United Methodist Church in Africa.

**We need to hear their voices. This is an urgent plea to the 2024 General Conference delegates. We do not need disaffiliation in Africa.**

We have Faith in the 2024 General Conference to resurrect our Church. We celebrate our unity in mission and reject disaffiliation of the United Methodist Church in Africa. We need to recover from the tumultuous 2019 General Conference. We do not see any evidence of prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit in any of the plans that have been proposed. Our central conferences have not been part of any conversations related to these proposals. Therefore, we reject any plan that calls for disaffiliation in Africa. We call on African United Methodists to reject any disaffiliation and to affirm that beyond the 2024 General Conference – under the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit – we will continue to be the United Methodist Church in Africa represented by the Cross and Flame.

We stand with the Colleges of Bishops of Africa and that of the Philippines Central Conference in supporting worldwide regionalization. These bishops issued a separate statement which was published in September 2023 in which they declared firm support for REGIONALISATION and reaffirmed their commitment to the unity of our worldwide church.

Speaking only for myself, if regionalization did not require ratification, I would not be comfortable passing it without really good African representation at General

Conference. We must not impose it upon any region in the world. But because it requires ratification, every conference will have a chance to affirm or reject our work at General Conference.

**General Conference will not have as many delegates from Africa as it should. We grieve this. We still trust that God will work through the delegates that are present. We are also grateful that all Africans will have a chance to show our support for worldwide regionalization by voting on its ratification.**

As we prepare for General Conference, we call on all United Methodists to spend substantial time in prayer for the direction of the Holy Spirit. We pray for God's blessings upon the United Methodist Church in Africa and the rest of the world.

Signed:

Rev. Ande I. Emmanuel  
Coordinator of the Africa Voice of Unity

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Notes:

Read Rev. Emmanuel's previous letter posted by Mainstream UMC: <https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/open-letter-to-our-africa-college-of-bishops/>

Links for Mainstream UMC's support for regionalization and ending disaffiliations at General Conference 2024

Adopt Regionalization

<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/5-reasons-for-regionalization/>

<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/5-challenges-to-regionalization/>

Stop top-down disaffiliations from restarting and expanding

<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/why-a-ds-wants-to-end-disaffiliations/>

<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/6-fallacies-about-africa-disaffiliations/>

<https://mainstreamumc.com/blog/4-reasons-to-end-disaffiliations/>

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/say-no-to-disaffiliation-petitions>



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