

# Monthly Update

October 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

last year's October Update had information on Hurricane Harvey, among other things; we have just finished with Hurricane Florence here on the Eastern Seaboard – but I must differ to the next issue some of the good things that happened in the midst of the devastation that ensued. November is a very appropriate issue since that month is when we celebrate “Thanksgiving” – and we have much for which to be thankful. In addition we will defer much of the reporting from the Values Voter (V.V.) Coalition Conference in Washington, DC where we participated to next month's Update. We will, however, include more information on the “Way Forward” issue since that is of great importance to the future of our church – and there are more developments here, mostly good. I for one am optimistic about the future of our United Methodist Church and its potential.

Without getting too political I thought it might be good to print the text of President Donald Trump's speech that he gave in Shanksville, Pennsylvania on September 11<sup>th</sup> to remember the events of that horrific date in 2001. As you will remember, that was the flight on which the passengers evidently seized control of the plane from the hijackers – but crashed it into the ground in the western part of that state. In all probability, the hijackers had wanted to fly it into the Capitol Building or the White House; through the heroic actions of the passengers on board, that did not happen. Along with the memories that President Trump shared, I am including a fact sheet entitled “The Significance of September 11” that we had made available at the Values Voter Coalition Conference.

To touch on just a few things from the meeting in Washington, we in Concerned Methodists received a bit of attention. Three television crews stopped by our exhibit and did a bit of filming. The first was CBN – the Christian Broadcasting Network. The second was Aljazeera – English, the Arabic language television network that broadcasts here in the United States; they were very interested in the latest book we had published entitled *Islam through the Years* – the cover shows the Crescent over a depiction of the world; their TV camera spent a lot of time filming the display of this book on our table right below the “The Significance of September 11” fact sheet. The final network was Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK), the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, which is Japan's national public broadcasting organization headquartered in Tokyo. They interviewed me for about thirty minutes on different issues in our country and the V.V. conference. Last year it was a Japanese Newspaper; this year it was Japanese television. I don't know.

May I ask you to continue to stand with us financially as we do what the Lord has called us to? Also, please pray for our country – the increased turbulence that we see in society.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris  
Executive Director

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## October 2018 Update

### **Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church**

Love grows and multiplies when we divide it with others.

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#### **The Good Stuff.**

+ *African bishops reaffirm stance on marriage, vow to maintain unity.* [Note: Even though this should more properly be put in the “A Way Forward” section, I included it here because of their strong stand for Biblical integrity. – AOM]

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone – United Methodist African bishops unanimously reaffirmed their view that marriage is between one man and one woman and vowed to “maintain the unity” of The United Methodist Church. After a learning retreat Sept. 4-7 that included a closed executive session, the bishops issued a statement on their view of marriage. But the bishops did not endorse any of the three proposals by the Commission on a Way Forward to resolve The United Methodist Church’s decades-long impasse over how to be in ministry with LGBTQ people. “Which plan is chosen would be up to the General Conference delegates,” said Sierra Leone Area Bishop John K. Yambasu, president of the Africa College of Bishops. Yambasu issued the statement on behalf of the bishops, who he said unanimously supported the traditional view of marriage. He said the bishops had a long discussion about the “challenges posed by the issue of human sexuality and the ongoing tensions that are ripping the denomination apart, including the potential impacts on the African church in particular...” “We discussed at length how we as bishops can lead the whole church in Africa towards sustainability,” the statement said. But the bishops said they would not “support any legislation that calls for the dissolution of The United Methodist Church” and stressed their commitment to a connectional, worldwide church that is committed to “Making disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world.” A report by the Way Forward Commission, appointed by the Council of Bishop after the 2016 General Conference to resolve the impasse over sexuality and help find ways for the denomination to stay united, contains three plans for the future of the church. The commission’s report will be taken up at the special called 2019 General Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

Nigeria Area Bishop John Wesley Yohanna cited the creation story of Adam and Eve in stressing that “homosexuality remains incompatible with the teachings of Scripture.” “Marriage is between man and woman because when man was created, he was alone (Genesis 2) and God saw that it was not good.... So, God formed a woman,” Yohanna told UMNS. He referred to previous statements issued by the African bishops in 2016 and 2018 that spelled out their belief that “homosexuality is incompatible with Scripture.” They also discussed the leadership role bishops can play in attaining sustainability for potential breakup — an issue Yambasu addressed at the meeting of the extended cabinet last year, when he urged the African church to move away from relying on financial support from the U.S. and others.

The bishops stressed that they remain faithfully committed to their consecration vows to support “maintaining the unity of the church” and absolutely dissociate themselves from any resolution that might lead to a permanent breakup. The African bishops pledged that the church in Africa would remain as The United Methodist Church even in the worst-case scenario of a denominational split. “Our church is at crossroads. And we are preparing for the special session of the General Conference. We are praying that in that special session, delegates will be able to deliberate and we’d manage to remain as one church. As a bishop, I promote unity,” said East Africa Bishop Daniel Wandabula. He added that the church in Africa is growing and must continue focusing on making disciples of Jesus Christ. He emphasized that the church in Africa should work more towards becoming self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting.

While the African bishops believe that both the Bible and the Book of Discipline say marriage is between “one man and one woman,” he wants to see unity. “But also, we are praying for the West. What I want to see as a bishop in this denomination is unity. I see homosexuality as one of the many sins. So, I don’t separate one sin

from the other. What we need to do is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. And Christ says come the way you are. And when you accept you're a sinner, then the Holy Spirit works through you and you become a new creation; you can change," he said.

The bishops heard several speakers and presentations about leadership and the work of the church's boards and general agencies. Bishop Arnold C. Temple, president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, called for the church to work for reconciliation in Africa, and he encouraged the college of bishops to begin a process for bringing together the different branches of Methodism.

Leslie Scott, former Sierra Leone national director of World Vision, spoke about how church leaders must use advocacy. He said churches are respected around the world, and church leaders must advocate for the underprivileged. He said bishops are powerful, but that most of the time, the church fails to use that power. He added that those advocating for change must pray and arm themselves with facts and figures. Julius Spencer, a university lecturer and chief executive of a private media firm, was Sierra Leone's minister of Information and Communication during the 1991-2002 civil war. He urged the bishops to lead by example, which he said has a powerful effect on followers. He gave the example of General Maxwell Khobe, a Nigerian military leader who headed the Economic Community of West African States military wing, who led forces against rebels who had taken over Freetown in 1998.

Dan Krause, top executive of United Methodist Communications, told the bishops that the agency has spent \$2.5 million since 2006 to promote communications in Africa. Krause spoke about training events and other work the agency has done in Africa.

The Rev. Beauty R. Maenzanise, manager of Global Formation for New Spiritual Leaders at the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, spoke about the need for collaboration and partnerships among United Methodist general agencies, particularly in the area of theological education in Africa.

[Note: North Katanga Area Bishop Mande Muyombo was one of the people who spoke during a presentation Sept. 4 at an Africa College of Bishops' retreat Freetown, Sierra Leone. – AOM]

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Bishops' Full statement:

AFRICA COLLEGE OF BISHOPS CONCLUDES LEARNING RETREAT  
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE – STATEMENT

We the Africa College of Bishops, through the providence of Almighty God, met in Freetown, Sierra Leone from September 3-7, 2018, for our annual learning retreat under the theme; "The African Church ten years from now." We remain deeply grateful to God for His grace and mercy and for accompanying us with His presence throughout our stay in Sierra Leone.

We are deeply grateful to Bishop John Yambasu, President of the Africa College of Bishops, for his genuine and transformational leadership, and the entire membership of The United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone for their extravagant hospitality, love and care accorded us during this time of meeting;

We are deeply grateful for the deep sense of community, Christian fellowship and worship and the rich learning experiences that prevailed throughout our stay in Sierra Leone. We offer special thanks to:

- + The President of the All Africa Conference of Churches Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple, for his soul searching and inspiring sermon delivered during the opening worship.
- + Dr. Julius Spencer from the University of Sierra Leone, for his profound lectures on "Leading Leaders"
- + Mr. Leslie Scott for his presentation on "the Church's role in advocacy, and,
- + The various presentations by our General Agencies, namely, GCFA, UCom and GBHEM.

We express our profound thanks and appreciation to GBGM Translator Don Reasoner and his team for the excellent translation during the retreat without which effective communication would have been a huge challenge.

Furthermore, we discussed at length the challenges posed by the issue of human sexuality and the ongoing tensions that are ripping the denomination apart including the potential impacts on the African church in particular, and;

We discussed at length how we as Bishops can lead the whole church in Africa towards sustainability.

Therefore, having come to a successful conclusion of our time together, it is our joy to share with the rest of the connection the below statement as an outcome of our conversation in Sierra Leone;

- Whereas, we reaffirm our position as traditionalists and view marriage as union between Man and Woman as clearly defined in scripture and affirmed in our COB 2016 statement in Lake Junaluska, and at the Africa extended cabinet (Ghana, February 2018), and at the May 2018 COB [“Council of Bishops” meeting] in Chicago, Illinois;

And,

- Whereas, we remain faithfully committed to our consecration vows as Bishops of the church to “maintain the unity of the church”; We want it to be known that:

I. We do not support any legislation that calls for the dissolution of The United Methodist Church. We uphold our values as a connectional and worldwide church committed to “Making disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world.”

II. We commend the work of the Commission on a Way Forward and we commit ourselves to be in continued prayer and fasting for God’s guidance for our denomination as we go to St, Louis, Missouri, for the Special Call 2019 General Conference to receive and take action on the work of the Commission on a Way Forward.

III. We further resolve that even if there is a split in the denomination, the Church in Africa will continue to exist as The United Methodist Church in Africa.

To God be the Glory  
Bishop John K Yambasu (President)  
For and on behalf of the Africa College of Bishops

Summary of the above statement:

African bishops won’t support call for dissolution of UMC

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE – Bishops in Africa have resolved not to support any proposed legislation that calls for splitting The United Methodist Church over the issue of human sexuality, according to a statement released on Monday, September 24, 2018. “We do not support any legislation that calls for the dissolution of The United Methodist Church. We uphold our values as a connectional and worldwide church committed to ‘Making disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world’,” the bishops said.

In the statement released by Africa College of Bishops President Bishop John K. Yambasu, the African bishops further resolved to support and pray for the work of the Commission on a Way Forward as the denomination prepares for the Special Session of The United Methodist Church next year in St. Louis, Missouri. “We commend the work of the Commission on a Way Forward and we commit ourselves to be in continued prayer and fasting for God’s guidance for our denomination as we go to St, Louis, Missouri, for the Special Call 2019 General Conference to receive and take action on the work of the Commission on a Way Forward,” the statement said.

The full statement from the African bishops is available online.

– As reported by Phileas Jusu; United Methodist News Service (UMNS), Sept. 24, 2018. Jusu is director of communications for The UMC in Sierra Leone. News media: [newsdesk@umcom.org](mailto:newsdesk@umcom.org). Media POC: Rev.

Dr. Maidstone Mulenga, Director of Communications – Council of Bishops, The UMC. September 24, 2018

Of Interest.

+ **Pastor addresses Sessions controversy.** [Note: This is an example of subtle political advocacy. – AOM]

ARLINGTON, Va. – The pastor of Clarendon United Methodist Church used her Sunday sermon to address the controversy surrounding U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has long attended the church. Sessions faces

a formal complaint by fellow United Methodists over his role in the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy on illegal immigration. [Note: I am highly skeptical of anything that CNN reports. – AOM]

– Daniel Burke of CNN reports. As reported in UMNS Daily Digest – June 25, 2018

+ ***Complaints against Sessions dismissed.*** The formal complaints against U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions filed by fellow United Methodists under church law have been dismissed by a district superintendent. Alabama-West Florida Conference Bishop David Graves said in a statement that he and his cabinet agreed with the decision by the Rev. Debora Bishop, superintendent of the Mobile, Alabama, District. The district includes Sessions' home church in Mobile.

In June, more than 600 United Methodists sought to bring charges against Sessions for a get-tough approach to immigration that included separating children from parents apprehended for crossing into the U.S. illegally. The group cited Paragraph 2702.3 of the Book of Discipline, which deals with complaints against laypeople, and alleged Sessions' conduct amounted to child abuse and racial discrimination, among other offenses. Polity experts in the denomination noted it was extremely rare for a layperson to be the subject of an official complaint.

Graves in his statement said the church's judicial process can't be used against Sessions to address political actions. "A political action is not personal conduct when the political officer is carrying out official policy," Graves said, adding that Sessions was "carrying out the official policy of the President and/or the United States Department of Justice." Graves said his view and that of other conference leaders was that the chargeable offense provisions in the Book of Discipline did not apply to such political actions.

Some United Methodists who had filed complaints against Sessions posted on social media the letters they received informing them of the dismissals. The Rev. David Wright, a Pacific Northwest Conference elder and organizer of the effort to charge Sessions, said on Facebook that he was awaiting his letter. But he added that the dismissal decision "renders any claim to moral authority by the church moot." The Rev. Elizabeth Kevilus, a retired Rio Texas Conference pastor who served near the border, was among those getting a letter. She...hadn't expected much disciplinary action against Sessions but was disappointed the letter didn't mention what she described as a "cruel" policy on border enforcement. "It just seems like it raises all kinds of issues and perhaps even established a precedent," she said. "Do my vows as a member of The United Methodist Church not apply if I'm on the job?"

Sessions' office has not responded to requests for comment about the church controversy. In speeches, Sessions argued that the Trump administration policy was in the national interest and would protect children by discouraging parents from Latin American countries from bringing them on a dangerous journey to the U.S. He also cited the Bible at one point in justifying the "zero tolerance" policy that led to the family separations. His use of Romans 13 also sparked criticism from some United Methodists.

But the policy has faced bipartisan criticism in Congress, and the Trump administration is under a federal court order to reunite children separated from their parents. United Methodist bishops, including Graves, earlier issued statements calling on the reunification of families.

[Note: The foregoing is an example of how the political views of people are used to affect the way they view moral issues. It is good that they can twist Scripture to fit their views of what are politically-correct views of society. The Bible is replete with examples of Israel protecting its borders against those who were hostile to their country.

I personally sent a letter to the pastor, the bishop – and one to Attorney General Sessions attesting to my support of his performing his duties as he is charged by the Constitution. I received a very cordial response back with some hand written his own observations. His is a difficult position in a very challenging time – and he does not need frivolous charges being leveled against him by members of his own denomination. What UM personnel have done is rather silly. – AOM]

– By Sam Hodges, as reported in the UNMS, August 4, 2018

+ *President Trump's speech in Shanksville.*

*Remarks by President Trump at Flight 93 September 11 Memorial Service*

**"Speech given at the Flight 93 National Memorial"**

**Shanksville, Pennsylvania**

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Ryan. So beautiful.

We're gathered together on these hallowed grounds to honor the memory of nearly 3,000 souls who were murdered on this day 17 years ago. We're here to pay solemn tribute to the 40 passengers and crewmembers on Flight 93 who rose up, defied the enemy, took control of their destiny, and changed the course of history.

Today, we mourn their loss. We share their story. And we commemorate their incredible valor.

On September 11th, 2001, a band of brave patriots turned the tide on our nation's enemies, and joined the immortal ranks of American heroes.

At this memorial, on this sacred earth, in the field beyond this wall, and in the skies above our heads, we remember the moment when America fought back.

Melania and I are grateful to be joined for today's ceremony by Governor Tom Wolf and Governor Mark Schweiker. I also want to thank the members of Congress in attendance: Senator Bob Casey, Congressmen Lou Barletta, Keith Rothfus, Bill Shuster, and along with the president of the Families of Flight 93, Gordon Felt.

We're also joined by members of the National Park Service, along with firefighters, first responders, and incredible people from law enforcement. These are truly great people. (Applause.) Some of you here today answered the call and raced to this field 17 years ago. You fill our hearts with pride, and I want to thank you on behalf of our country. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Most importantly, to the family members of Flight 93: Today, all of America wraps up and joins together. We close our arms to help you shoulder your pain and to carry your great, great sorrow. Your tears are not shed alone, for they are shared grief with an entire nation. We grieve together for every mother and father, sister and brother, son and daughter, who was stolen from us at the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and here in this Pennsylvania field. We honor their sacrifice by pledging to never flinch in the face of evil, and to do whatever it takes to keep America safe. (Applause.)

Seventeen years ago, your loved ones were among The Forty of Flight 93 — the 40 passengers and crewmembers onboard the 8:00 a.m. United Airlines flight from Newark to San Francisco. They were men and women from every background. They were young people returning from visiting family, moms and dads on business trips, and friends going and coming from birthdays and weddings.

They boarded the plane as strangers — and they entered eternity linked forever as true heroes. (Applause.)

Soon after takeoff, Flight 93 was hijacked by evil men bent on terror and conquest. Passengers and crewmembers began using their phones to call home. They learned that two planes had already crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City.

Immediately, those onboard Flight 93 started planning a response. Sandy Bradshaw, a flight attendant, called her husband and told him they were in the back of the plane preparing hot water to throw onto the hijackers. Passenger Jeremy Glick explained the plan to his wife and said, "Stay on the line. I'll be back."

The passengers and crew members came together, took a vote, and they decided to act. At that moment, they took their fate — and America's fate — back into their own hands.

In the last 20 minutes, many placed their final calls home, whispering those eternal words: "I love you." Some said the Lord's Prayer. And then they bravely charged the cockpit. They attacked the enemy. They fought until the very end. And they stopped the forces of terror and defeated this wicked, horrible, evil plan.

Flight 93 crashed yards from where we stand, just 20 minutes flying time from the United States Capitol.

Through their sacrifice, The Forty saved the lives of countless Americans, and they saved our capital from a devastating strike.

In the days after the attack, tens of thousands of fire fighters, police officers, and recovery workers traveled to New York and Arlington to crawl through the rubble in search for survivors.

There were prayer vigils, memorials, and charity drives all across our nation.

Here in Shanksville, many of you raised up the first memorial – a wooden cross, a chain-linked fence, mementos and tributes pouring in, and dozens and dozens of American flags.

A piece of America’s heart is buried on these grounds but in its place has grown a new resolve to live our lives with the same grace and courage as the heroes of Flight 93.

This field is now a monument to American defiance. This memorial is now a message to the world: America will never, ever submit to tyranny. (Applause.)

Since September 11th, nearly 5.5 million young Americans have enlisted in the United States Armed Forces. Nearly 7,000 service members have died facing down the menace of radical Islamic terrorism. (Applause.)

Today, we also think of the more than 200,000 service members now serving overseas. And we think of every citizen who protects our nation at home, including our state, local, and federal law enforcement. These are great Americans. These are great heroes. We honor and thank them all. (Applause.)

As Commander-in-Chief, I will always do everything in my power to prevent terrorists from striking American soil.

Here with us today is Dorothy Garcia Bachler. Her husband Sonny was one of the passengers on Flight 93. On September 11th, 2001 – just over a month after their 32nd wedding anniversary – Sonny was on his way back from a business meeting. He called Dorothy – who he loved so much – called her on the plane and uttered her name before the line went dead silent. In the days after the attack, Dorothy told the investigators there was only one thing she wanted from this field: her husband’s wedding ring. They would know it by the inscription etched inside. “All my love,” it said, followed by the number “8/2/69” – the date of their anniversary. The officers – great people – promised to try. But in this field of wreckage, it seemed certainly impossible. Dorothy began to pray, and she asked her friends to do the same. Days went by, then months. Still no ring. A week before Christmas, on December 19th, she heard a knock at the door. Two officers were standing with a – really beautiful to her – she saw it was so beautiful; she knew what was happening – a beautiful, small white box. Inside it was a wallet, a luggage tag, a driver’s license, a small bag with the wedding ring inscribed with those three precious words: “All my love.”

Those words echo across this field. And those words tell the story of 40 men and women who gave all their love for their families, their country, and our freedom.

To Dorothy, and to every family here today, America will never forget what your loved ones did for all of us. (Applause.)

Earlier this week, you dedicated the final part of this memorial: the Tower of Voices. Standing at 93 feet tall, the Tower of Voices is now the first structure visitors see when they come to this now sacred ground. It will hold 40 beautiful chimes that ring throughout these fields – each a unique note, but all in perfect harmony.

Every time we hear those chimes playing in the wind, we will remember The Forty. We will remember their faces, their voices, their stories, their courage, and their love.

And we will remember that free people are never at the mercy of evil because our destiny is always in our hands. (Applause.) America’s future is not written by our enemies. America’s future is written by our heroes. (Applause.)

As long as this monument stands, as long as this memorial endures, brave patriots will rise up in America’s hours of need, and they too will fight back. (Applause.)

Seventeen years ago, forty incredible men and women showed the whole world that no force on Earth will ever conquer the American spirit. We treasure their memory. We cherish their legacy. And we ask God to forever bless the immortal heroes of Flight 93.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the families. And God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

– The White House; “President Trump’s speech in Shanksville” issued on: September 11, 2018.

**A Way Forward. Theologically Diverse Group Calls for Gracious Exit from the United Methodist Church.**

[Note: Following is a call for a “gracious exit” from the United Methodist Church that has recently been issued. It reflects what we espouse and as contained on page 2 of our latest issue of *The Christian Methodist Newsletter*. – AOM]

A theologically diverse group of West Ohio Annual Conference clergy and laity recently issued an open letter to the 2019 United Methodist General Conference delegates. The letter, issued on September 17, called on delegates to adopt a “gracious and equitable process for exit which can be used by any [local UM] congregation.” The sixteen signatories each identified their respective theological category – progressive, centrist, or traditional.

“We perceive that The United Methodist Church has come to a critical juncture in our life together,” the writers say. “Our divergent understandings of biblical interpretation and theology underlie our disagreement on human sexuality. We regretfully recognize that our divisions continue to impede our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The leaders candidly declare, “The reality of our circumstances convinces us that any decision made at the 2019 Special Session will likely lead to congregations and pastors deciding they are no longer able to remain in The United Methodist Church.”

The letter’s authors have formed a group, United Methodists for a Gracious Exit, and developed a web site, [www.um-gracious-exit.com](http://www.um-gracious-exit.com), where persons are invited to add their names to the letter. Hundreds of persons from many annual conferences have already done so.

Other denominations that have engaged in conflict around their sexual ethics, definitions of marriage, and ordination standards, have endured expensive legal battles in the aftermath of major decisions. For example, the Episcopal Church (USA) has spent over \$40 million in secular courts litigating over ownership claims regarding local church property and assets, and denominational properties.

The Book of Discipline of the UM Church provides a way for local churches to withdraw from the denomination; however, its property and assets are held in trust for the benefit of The UM Church. The scope and validity of such a trust clause depends on the law of each state. A gracious and equitable process for exit, as outlined by United Methodists for a Gracious Exit, would suspend the enforcement of or release local churches from the terms of the trust clause. Adoption of the proposal would allow local churches to depart the denomination without the fear of having to litigate for their property and assets. The current trust clause is a creation of the General Conference; it has the power under the Book of Discipline to release or amend the clause. There is no constitutional barrier preventing the General Conference from adopting a gracious and equitable process for exit.

The letter issued by United Methodist for a Gracious Exit is encouraging. For the first time in the long and acrimonious conflict persons from widely divergent theological positions have agreed to a common position. We hope their number increases. Rather than one side bludgeoning the other through deployment of political power, a gracious and equitable process for exit ensures that those who cannot subscribe to the outcome of the special General Conference will be treated fairly and can act with integrity.

The good faith of those who have launched United Methodists for a Gracious Exit is underscored by their request that a process for exit be adopted prior to consideration of any of the proposed plans before the special General Conference. By adopting a gracious exit path first, persons from all perspectives have an equal stake in ensuring consistent guidelines are adopted and applied to churches that determine that they cannot go forward with the UM Church. Without a gracious and equitable process for exit, congregations in different annual conferences may be treated very differently and be subject to arbitrary and even punitive actions. The existence of a gracious and equitable process for exit ensures that churches which cannot support whatever decision is made by the special General Conference are treated with integrity.

Dr. Jeff Greenway, chair of the WCA Council and one of the signatories of the letter, has observed, “The issues that divide the United Methodist Church are so significant that our inner squabbling does more harm than good to our witness to the world. We use the same words, pledge fidelity to the same Book of Discipline, cite the same John Wesley sermons, and quote the same scriptures, but we are practicing very different expressions of the Christian faith. Those differences almost make us unrecognizable to each other. I do not question the sincerity of the faith expressed by those who differ with me. I do not dislike them. I simply do not agree.” Greenway goes on to say, “Like the denomination in general, the West Ohio Conference is deeply divided. I believe it is time to allow those who cannot abide by our agreed upon covenant to be able to leave the denomination. The future of Methodism needs to be composed of the committed, not the constrained. This letter



asks the delegates of the 2019 General Conference to guarantee that possibility in a gracious and generous way.”

– “Letter issued by United Methodists for a Gracious Exit” description by The Rev. Keith Boyette; September 26, 2018.

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God doesn’t care about your ability; He wants your availability. – As quoted by Edgar, Men’s Promise Keeper’s Group

### Global Outlook

A budget is people telling their money where to go instead of wondering where it went. – John C. Maxwell

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**Congo. *Congo United Methodists seek to eradicate tribalism.***

KINDU, Congo (UMNS) – Tribalism is a daily reality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, home to 80 million people and more than 300 tribes. Delegates and bishops from four episcopal areas gathered for a three-day workshop to combat tribalism, co-sponsored by the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race.

– Judith Osongo Yanga, UM News Weekly Digest; Sep. 07, 2018.

**Philippines. *Picking up pieces after Philippines super typhoon.***

CABANATUAN CITY, Philippines (UMNS) – United Methodists were picking up the pieces and preparing to assist others after Super Typhoon Mangkhut struck the northern part of the Philippines, leaving dozens dead and missing after a massive mudslide. Parsonages, churches and a bishop’s home were among the structures sustaining damage.

– Gladys Mangiduyos reports, as contained in the UM News Weekly Digest – Sep. 21, 2018

**Zimbabwe. *Cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe closes church doors.***

HARARE, Zimbabwe (UMNS) — Zimbabwe has declared a state of emergency after a cholera outbreak in the capital city of Harare killed 20 people and left more than 2,000 infected. In order to contain the spread of the disease, all public gatherings have been banned. That ban led Glenview United Methodist Church to also close its doors.

– Priscilla Muzerengwa reports; UM News Weekly Digest; Sep 21, 2018.

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It takes hands to build a house, but it takes a heart to build a home. – As quoted by Curtis Stobie