



EBONY BISHOPS OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Amos 5:24

As the global United Methodist Church continues to pray, discuss and discern a path forward for our denomination, numerous gatherings have provided a space for reflecting and visioning. In an effort to provide a bridge for the grass-root conversations taking place among African-American clergy and laity, the Ebony bishops convened leadership from the constituencies of the Black church to speak its unique voice of hope for the future, not only for the Black church, but also for the unity of the entire denomination.

We give witness to the historical and theological giftedness of the Black church that has equipped it to speak into such a time as this. We believe that the voice of the Black church has within its spiritual, historical, and theological DNA a word that needs to be spoken into the current conversations being held throughout the United Methodist Church. Our witness is grounded in our experience of deliverance from enslavement, Jim Crow, the exclusionary practices of The Central Jurisdiction and the on-going discrimination in our world. The Black church understands the prophetic witness required in liminal spaces, spaces of the already and the not yet. Our faith, praise, stewardship and disciple-making focus did not and has not wavered, even as we yet await full justice and righteousness both within and without of the church. The brokenness of our world and denomination can benefit from this steadfast experience and voice.

Therefore, Black leadership in our denomination must continue to be given opportunities to share its perspectives and concerns for God's preferred future.

We, the Ebony Bishops affirm the following things to pursue that came out of these discussions:

1. Pursue legislative advocacy;
2. Build bridges with the African diaspora;

3. Create an anti-oppression agenda for the Black Church;
4. Claim African-American identity and missional imperatives; and,
5. Continue this work beyond General Conference 2020.

As a result, taskforces are being formed around this work with the intent of sharing more details in the coming weeks. Our commitment is to provide this information to the whole church, that it might not only be heard, but acted upon where and when action is necessary.

Through our unique role as bishops, we are committed to the following:

- Sharing information with the full Council of Bishops; and,
- Encouraging each member of the Council of Bishops to hear and respect the concerns, as well as work within their areas of influence, to not only share the information, but to support the vision.

It is our prayerful and hopeful expectation that the voice, leadership and needs of the Black church will not get lost in the conversation as it relates to what's next for the United Methodist Church. As the Ebony Bishops of the United Methodist Church, we are committed to a unity that embodies justice and righteousness for all of God's people.