



®

The United Methodist Church
“Forming Trusted Community Leaders”
Case for Support

God's Love for the World

"Taking an active stance in society is nothing new for followers of John Wesley. He set the example for us to combine personal and social piety. Ever since predecessor churches to United Methodism flourished in the United States, we have been known as a denomination involved with people's lives, with political and social struggles, having local to international mission implications. Such involvement is an expression of the personal change we experience in our baptism and conversion.



The United Methodist Church believes God's love for the world is an active and engaged love, a love seeking justice and liberty. We cannot just be observers. So we care enough about people's lives to risk interpreting God's love, to take a stand, to call each of us into a response, no matter how controversial or complex. The church helps us think and act out a faith perspective, not just responding to all the other 'mind-makers-up' that exist in our society."



Excerpt from The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2012. Copyright © 2012 by The United Methodist Publishing House.

The UMC: Transforming the World

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Fulfilling this mission is not possible without the thousands of dedicated leaders who are called to minister in places across the globe. These leaders are active participants in the communities in which they serve, and they are charged with engaging a world that is more diverse, complex and interconnected than ever before.

Working within this context, our clergy and local pastors nonetheless have a transformative effect on congregations and communities. Because of their efforts, the impact of our Church goes well beyond the 12,300,000 members in our connection. Evangelism, health ministry, and education have been our three pillars of mission in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, in building up vital congregations, the four areas of focus provide a window into our involvement in a global society: engaging in ministry with the poor, improving global health, developing principled Christian leaders, and creating new and renewed congregations. Through our leaders, we are able to achieve great progress in these areas.

Following are some examples of the global impact of our Church:

- In a new church started in Sibiu, Romania, the pastor, together with a professional musician, has built a community with young skaters who were not aware of the Christian faith previously
- In the Ivory Coast, the UMC has expanded its Christian radio program which became a voice of peace and reconciliation in times of high political tensions
- In the Philippines, the local churches of the UMC, under the leadership of their pastors, were among the first to reach out to neighbors in need after the natural disasters
- In Liberia, scholarships for theological studies have enabled the UMC to build a new generation of teachers after the devastation of civil war
- In Sierra Leone, the UMC bishop was among the very first leaders to alert authorities to the rising Ebola crisis before it made headlines in the news



Leaders of Our World-wide Church



Our Church's positive impact in communities contributes to our rapid growth in many regions. While membership in the UMC has declined in the United States, there has been a trend of growth in countries outside the U.S., presently organized in central conferences. This growth has been particularly strong in Africa and the Philippines. In the central conferences, our Church has grown more than 15% in less than a decade.

The United Methodist Church has seven central conferences, three in Africa (Africa, Congo, West Africa), one in Asia (Philippines), and three in Europe (Central and Southern Europe, Germany, and Northern Europe and Eurasia).

There are now more than 12,000 clergy and 5,000,000 professing members throughout the central conferences.



Theological education helps prepare church leaders in these regions to be community leaders - people who will be trusted - that can have an impact and address spiritual, social and economic needs of our world. Evidence of its effectiveness will be seen in the graces, gifts, and fruit of trained clergy, such as:

- *Pastor Taurai Emmanuel Maforo who led a group of 100 to clean an entire township in Zimbabwe, or*
- *Pastor Ivana Prochaskova who has developed educational courses for people that minister to children, or*
- *Rigels Kasmollari who is the first theologically trained, indigenous leader in Albania where the UMC builds up holistic ministry in a former atheistic country.*



In the central conferences, ministries are done in multiple languages and membership growth often exceeds the capacity to provide adequate theological training for clergy.

Extending Our Legacy of Education

In order to minister effectively and be prepared to serve as leaders for the challenges of the world, we must provide our leaders with the necessary tools and resources to be successful through education in the Wesleyan tradition. Global Methodist Education started with John Wesley. His statement, “The world is my parish,” was applied to church, society, and education. He studied the classics, philosophy, literature, history, science, medicine, and theology. He was involved in the most important theological, scientific, and educational discussions of his times. Methodism emerged out of this educational environment and education has been part of the global Methodist mission ever since.

Despite this rich history and tradition, education is not easily accessible in all regions of our Church. For those living in central conferences, receiving a theological education poses significant challenges including:

- Seminaries are too far away or too expensive
- Seminaries struggle to find well trained professors and to offer library resources in needed languages
- Courses of Study for initial and continuing education need to be developed
- Scholarships are needed for initial and post-graduate studies

An Illustration: The UMC in Europe:

- Ministry in **30** countries
- Delivered in more than **35** languages
- Only **4** seminaries to train our leaders

This region spans from Algeria to Norway and France to Russia. The four seminaries serving this vast region are not accessible to many individuals across Europe and the Balkans due to geographical, economic and language barriers.

These barriers prevent the formal education of future pastors that could transform congregations around the world. While we have only just begun to explore ways to bring education to those that want it, there are demonstrated means by which we can deliver theological education through the use of technology and partnerships that remove many of these barriers.

Promising First Steps

First steps already have been taken to enhance theological education in the central conferences. The 2012 General Conference approved support of approximately \$1,000,000 per year for theological education and established The Commission on Central Conference Theological Education for the disbursement of the funds. Recognizing the immense need and satisfied that the funds are being put to good use, General Conference 2016 demonstrated further support by doubling this support over the next quadrennium. The funds, managed by the Commission, have already had a tremendous impact, including:



- Prior to receiving a grant for solar electrification, Banyam Theological Seminary in rural Nigeria depended on antiquated, gasoline-powered generators for electricity. Often gas was unavailable, so the campus would go dark after sunset. Now students can study later – and safer. The presence of light on campus scares away snakes. Several students had suffered snake bites before the solar project, and only one since.

“I used to read for only one or two hours at night, but now, with 24-hour solar energy, I can read as long as I wish. After the installation of the solar system, I became an ‘A’ grader.”

-Pastor Wala Zubairu, student

- In Liberia the fund assists Gbarnga School of Theology by providing money for scholarships, library restoration and e-readers loaded with theological books and articles, many from a Wesleyan focus.
- The United Methodist Church in Romania used funds for developing the first year of a Course of Study.
- The Philippines Central Conference has used funds to develop online courses, purchase computers, assist radio ministry anchored by student pastors, furnish scholarships for continuing education and provide e-readers with theological texts to student pastors in areas where printed material is scarce. Funding also has been used for scholarships to the John Wesley College Divinity School.

Building a Sustainable, Long-Term Solution

In order to continue and build upon this work, a sustainable solution is required. At present, support for theological education in the central conferences is dependent on the decisions of each General Conference and limited to a quadrennium. The urgency for a solution is heightened by the growth of the UMC in the global South, by the living conditions in economically less developed countries and by the non-English and diverse cultural settings. Therefore, it is urgent to build up a sustainable support structure that broadens the ability to provide theological education across the world.

The most cost effective and sustainable method for strengthening theological education in the central conferences is an endowment fund. The purpose of **The Endowment Fund for Theological Education in the Central Conferences** is: to strengthen theological education in the Wesleyan tradition in the central conferences of The United Methodist Church and prepare principled Christian leaders, rooted in a Wesleyan mindset of joining knowledge and vital piety. This would be accomplished in the following ways:

- ✓ Theological education of local pastors
- ✓ Theological education of candidates for ordained ministry
- ✓ Continuing theological education of clergy
- ✓ Scholarships for theological education (on all levels including postgraduate studies)
- ✓ Development of infrastructure for theological education (literature and other resource material, libraries, networking among institutions, exchange of professors, etc.)
- ✓ Support and promotion of new promising avenues in theological education



**Endowing United Methodist
Theological Education
Africa | Europe | the Philippines**

The minimum requirement for this effort is \$25,000,000. A permanent endowment will be managed such that the principal is to remain intact in perpetuity and only a portion of the earnings to be used. The Commission on Central Conference Theological Education is in full support of the Endowment Fund and has proven to be an efficient and effective instrument for disbursing funds.

Your Participation

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about this important endeavor. As stated in the resolution by The Council of Bishops, endorsed in November 2014, “the sustainable growth of central conference theological education can be greatly enhanced through the building up of a permanent endowment fund that is based upon building up a sustainable source of funding for theological education in the central conferences of The United Methodist Church.” As we move forward to make this resolution a reality, we are called to endorse this effort with our support.

How you can help.

- *First*, please pray for the success of our effort to strengthen theological education in the Central Conferences.
- *Second*, make your pledge to support the campaign.
- *Third*, volunteer your time to invite others to participate and help make the campaign a success.

Our clergy are the link to equipping congregations to live out God’s mission in the world, and nowhere is the need for theological education or the potential for making an impact greater than in the central conferences. Providing education to the leaders of our Church and society is absolutely critical to the future of The United Methodist Church.

The profiles on the following pages illustrate some of the transformational work of clergy in the central conferences.



The Endowment Fund (Endow F- F-TECC) is a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The company is incorporated in the United States with the purpose of raising, managing, and dispersing funds to enhance and sustain theological education in the Central Conferences. It is recognized as a tax exempt organization because it is a subordinate organization in the group ruling held by GCFA. It has its own board of directors. Endow F-TECC works diligently to use funds given efficiently and wisely to have the greatest impact on theological education in the central conferences. We anticipate that operating, infrastructure, and fundraising costs will be less than 7% of the total raised. Once the endowment is funded appropriately, the costs related to administration of Endow F-TECC will be 100% funded through earned interest. Endow F-TECC work with the Commission on Theological Education in Central Conferences for the disbursement of funds.

Pastor Taurai Emmanuel Maforo (Zimbabwe)

Murombedzi UMC is positioned to grow due to various innovative strategies being implemented at the church.

Pastor-in-charge of the church, Taurai Emmanuel Maforo, believes the church must be relevant in the community and has set about ensuring that Murombedzi UMC is indeed a major force since his appointment in January 2014.

"In order to make the UMC visible, we had to introduce practical approaches to doing ministry," he said. "Since our mission looks at transformation, one cannot transform communities without dealing with the whole person."

In an unprecedented move, Pastor Maforo enlisted more than 100 church members, environmentalists and government authorities to clean up Murombedzi township on Saturday 6 June 2015.

Armed with pick and shovel, Maforo led the team of male volunteers who cleared an informal dumpsite that residents had created on the outskirts of the rural center.

Councillor for the area, Kizito Chamunorwa, said the United Methodist Church was the first denomination to show an interest in cleaning the area.

Councillor Chamunorwa said the UMC was a pioneer in caring for the community. "We have many doctors who grew up in Murombedzi but none have ever come back to offer free service to the residents," he said. "The United Methodist Church has shown us the light and brought hope."

Murombedzi UMC has gained 30 new members since Pastor Maforo took over the reins. "Percentage growth may be marginal, but we have witnessed the growth of positive perception of the UMC and visibility in the community," he said.

Maforo, 41, the fifth child in a family of six, was born at Arnoldine Mission Clinic in Headlands and was a marketing executive for a shop fitting company when he was called to ministry in 2005.

He began serving as a local pastor in 2006 and assumed theological training at the United Theological College in 2010.

"Theological training has greatly enhanced my ministry. As I began applying all the Contextual Theology approaches, I surprised myself at every turn as I see ministry becoming relevant in the community," Maforo said.

He graduated from UTC in 2014 and received awards for Practical Theology and Historical Courses. Maforo also holds a Diploma in Religious Studies which he also obtained last year.

Reverend Lizzy Chigwizura (Zimbabwe)

The Rev. Chigwizura is Pastor-in-Charge of St. James UMC in Chitungwiza, a city located about 30km south of the Zimbabwe capital of Harare, and she has firmly established a name for herself as a caring minister who does not discriminate who she serves in the community.

"Our pastor serves the whole community, regardless of whether they are United Methodist Church members or not, said Mrs. Marble Chimboza. "She accompanies the sick to the hospital, she goes the extra mile in caring for the congregation."

During her first appointment as local preacher at Zimunya South Circuit from 2000 - 2002, she studied and passed her O Levels. The year 2006 saw her graduating from the United Theological College and she was ordained in 2008. She also holds the Diploma in Religious Studies from The University of Zimbabwe.

The quest to further empower herself through education resulted in her attaining the Bachelor of Divinity degree from Africa University where she graduated on 13 June 2015. She was awarded prizes for Best Graduating Student who has Substantially Contributed to the Society and Best Graduating Female Student in Ministerial Studies.

The Rev. Chigwizura said theological education is fundamental for pastors. "Subjects such as Sociology equip you on how to interact and deal with society as you will be appointed to serve in different communities."

She said Psychology, Pastoral Care, Counselling and Philosophy all help in the field of ministry. "You become enlightened on how to deal with people and you become more accommodating," she said

Asked why she studied for the B.Div degree, she said it was necessary to prepare for pastoral ministry.

"I learned more about the church history and my understanding of scripture is now different. From the time I served as a local preacher to my initial theological training and then to my first degree, I believe there is a marked change and even my language and sermons have improved. I understand scripture better now. The Holy Spirit guides a pastor, but education definitely assists in executing the ministry," she said.

Maina Sashina (Siberia)

Maina Sashina is not just the first Udmurt in world history to receive a degree in theology from a Methodist Seminary, she is most likely the first of her indigenous ethnic group ever to graduate from any Protestant seminary! In June 2015, Maina received her degree from the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary in Estonia, eleven years after a mission partnership between Estonian Methodists and the Udmurt people began.

It was a realization that Jesus loves the Udmurt people that inspired Maina to form a ministry that is today called Inkrezh (meaning Divine Melody in the Udmurt language). Wearing traditional costumes they dance and sing songs which they write themselves in their own cultural style to tell their people that Inmar (God) loves the Udmurt people and sent his son, Jesus. The Udmurts have an ancient legend of Kyldyshin, the Divine Word that took clothing. Maina likes to tell of the excitement of the Udmurt people when they see the connection with John 1 and Jesus, the Word that became flesh.

With her degree completed in the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary, Maina's passion and vision for her people remain as strong as ever but with the added knowledge and skills that we pray will be used by God to fulfill her calling. Maina's vision is to see an indigenous Udmurt church praising God in the language and cultural forms that He has blessed them with and being active witnesses bringing both spiritual and cultural revival to their people.



Ivana Prochazkova (Czech Republic)

Having grown up in the most secularized country of Europe, **Ivana Prochazkova** (*1971) did not begin attending church until 1992. She became a believer and was baptized in 1993. One year later she decided to study theology at the Evangelical Theological Faculty at Charles University in Prague. These were her second studies, as she already had finished her master's studies of musicology and aesthetics. In 2006, she started her doctoral studies. Five years later she defended her doctoral thesis focusing on the meaning of the Old testament metaphor God-King and earned her PhD.

Ivana Prochazkova is married to **Petr Prochazka**, the District Superintendent of the UMC in the Czech Republic, and she is the mother of three children.

She was ordained an elder in 2001. Currently she is serving Prague 2 (**Nove Mesto**) UMC, to which also **Sedlcany** UMC belongs.

Ivana was, together with members of the Protestant Church of Czech Brethren, also involved in the development of the very successful course, **With Children on the Journey of Faith**, which meets many needs of people involved with ministries with children. In addition to these responsibilities, **Ivana** is a member of the Governing Board of the Methodist E-Academy, and she is involved in the coordination of higher theological education of the Methodist Related Theological Schools in Europe (MTSE).

Ivana is an inspiring example of how the investment in theological education bears multiple fruit with regard to the principles of teaching. She successfully developed and implemented theological courses for laity using resources from the Methodist E-Academy, which combines distance learning and on-site seminars. She also, together with others, developed the content for the course **With Children on the Journey of Faith** that has an impact far beyond the UMC in the Czech Republic and will help in shaping a new generation of Christians.



Rigels Kasmollari, Tirana (Albania)

Rigels Kasmollari (*1984) was one of the first two young men who started their theological studies after the foundation of the first United Methodist congregation in Albania in 1998 (there had been a Methodist presence in Albania in the late 19th century already, which had to be given up after a few decades). He was sent to Graz/Waiern (Austria) – first to learn German, and afterwards to start his theological studies at a Lutheran institution aiming to provide an education, which includes a regular participation in diaconal ministries. Rigels Kasmollari is married and father of one boy.

After his studies Rigels Kasmollari began his pastoral ministry in Albania. He quit the journey towards ordained ministry rather soon and started to study law instead. However, he remained faithful with the UMC. He proved to be an important and very committed lay leader as the congregation in Albania's capital Tirana grew. He continued to preach and to coordinate much of the ministry in Tirana. Additionally, he served as interpreter for many official guests, helped to publish a first Albanian hymn book, and provided leadership to various activities, among others to the annual national family camp.

For several years, he has served as Executive Director of Diakonia Metodiste (the legal entity of the UMC in Albania). Together with other indigenous leaders, he aims to further develop the local churches, and to share the Gospel in a society faced with huge economic and social problems. Thus a holistic ministry makes the church socially relevant.

One of the highlights of the past few years was the baptism of 29 new believers in a municipal theatre in Pogradec. A fourth local church has been opened in 2017.

Wesley's aim to combine personal and social holiness is put into action in establishing and managing income-generating ministries (e.g. cultivation of sage, common mallow, and fruit trees; sewing project for women) and diaconal ministries (e.g. with children/youth with special needs).

Rigels Kasmollari has proven to be an inspiring and faithful leader in the growing United Methodist ministry in Albania.

