



COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, *President*

November 1, 2018

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
Isaiah 61: 1-2a

To the leadership and fellow members of the World Council of Churches,

As one of the founding members of the World Council of Churches, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) is honored to offer its greetings as the global fellowship continues its celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the World Council of Churches.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was birthed in 1787 in the United States of America as social protest to the dehumanizing and sinful realities of slavery and racial discrimination and as theological renewal based on the biblical understanding that all people are made in the image of God and therefore are fearfully and wonderfully made. We seek to be a liberating and reconciling people bearing witness through mission, service, truth telling, and the proclamation of the Gospel of Justice and Peace. From our humble founding by former slaves, we now have presence in more than 40 nations.

The global fellowship of the WCC has assisted us in extending our mission and deepening our relationships and partnerships for holistic ministry. Over the course of these 70 years, AMEs have been enriched by the fellowship. Some among us have rendered leadership in the various governing and advisory bodies of the WCC. We recall Dr. Sylvia Ross Talbot, who served as vice-moderator of the Central Committee as well as Bishop Vinton R. Anderson, who served as WCC president of the North America region.

These greetings come as the executive committee of the WCC's central committee meets in Sweden to commemorate the Fourth WCC Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden. We find it appropriate that we offer our greetings at this time given the important role the Uppsala assembly played in articulating the mandate, which led to the Council's forming of the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR). We remain thankful for PCR's instrumental work in the global racial justice work and particularly in the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, a region of the world with strong AME presence.

At this time, the AME Church finds a renewed and reinvigorated call to the cause of liberation and reconciliation. Now is an extremely divisive time in the USA and in other parts of the world when many of the advances in racial justice and the work of full inclusion and equality of all people are under attack; and, hateful, nationalist and separatist rhetoric fuel fear rather faith. Our sanctuaries and sacred spaces

are sites of racist assaults and massacres, even as we continue to mourn our own experience of such in Mother Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, South Carolina, USA.

As we celebrate the anniversary of our fellowship's founding, the African Methodist Episcopal Church challenges all of us to remain vigilant and faithful to our common witness to justice and peace and our work to dismantle racism and all expressions of oppression, which separate the body of Christ and negate God's good gift of diversity and affirmation of the integrity of creation. We pledge our partnership and reaffirm our commitment to this fellowship.

Yours in our common pilgrimage,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Reginald T. Jackson".

Reginald T. Jackson
President
Council of Bishops
African Methodist Episcopal Church