

**To: United Methodists and Friends of Liberia**  
**Re: The Liberia United Methodist Empowerment Foundation (LUMEF)**  
**From: Bishop John G. Innis, Liberia Area, United Methodist Church**  
**Date: November 2003**

I greet you, brothers and sisters in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The Liberia United Methodist Empowerment Foundation (LUMEF) was established at the 169<sup>th</sup> session of the Liberia Annual Conference in February 2001. The Foundation was started to help secure the financial future of the United Methodist Church in Liberia, and support its various ministries. An ambitious goal of raising ten million dollars in the next ten years has been set, and great progress has been made. To date over \$80,000 U.S. dollars have been raised.

This is a critical time for the church of Christ in Liberia. The country of Liberia has been ravaged by a senseless civil war. This war has destroyed lives and properties of the church, and has left the people in a state of hopelessness. Yet, in the midst of the conflict and violence, The United Methodist Church in Liberia is vibrant and growing, because for many, the church is their hope. Evangelism is responsible for the growth of the Church.

For the people in northern Liberia, Ganta Hospital is a healing ministry of the Church, and it is in need of medications, equipment and supplies.

For the orphaned children in Monrovia, the Judith Craig Children's Village run by the Conference, provides the educational, medical and spiritual needs of almost 100 children orphaned by the war. Funds are needed to help pay teachers and pastors, many currently receive salaries as low as \$1.60 USD per month. There is a desperate need to improve the United Methodist School System, provide scholarships for students, and develop the new United Methodist University in Monrovia. This University, comprised of the Gbarnga School of Theology, the W.J. Harley Nursing College and Colleges of Business, Liberal Arts and Education, is the fastest growing university in Liberia.

While we continue to benefit from and enjoy the blessings of our brothers and sisters in the United States and Europe and their support of Liberia, the United Methodists in Liberia have begun to learn to help themselves. There is a saying in Liberia, "Heaven helps those who help themselves."

When we make an effort to help ourselves, God will continue to rain blessings upon our Church from every direction. For example, lay members

of the church have been encouraged to contribute \$100 Liberian dollars (LDS) (\$1.60 US) a year, each pastor contributes \$200 LDS (\$3.20 US), each District Superintendent contributes \$500 LDS (\$8.00 US), and the Bishop makes a contribution of \$1,000 US until his retirement.

God is moving the hearts of the people and joyous giving has happened even in the midst of our struggles. Including generous gifts from United Methodist Churches and loving individuals in the United States, over \$80,000 US has been raised. For example, the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas contributed \$20,000, churches in the Detroit Annual Conference, have agreed to contribute \$1 for every member in their church, the Kingswood UMC in Buffalo Grove, Illinois recently gave \$15,000 to the Foundation. The United Methodist Church Foundation in Evanston, Illinois is managing the LUMEF funds for the Liberia Annual Conference.

We are inviting United Methodists in the United States, Europe, and friends around the world to help support the work of Christ in Liberia through the LUMEF. Help us reach our goal by contributing whatever God lays on your heart. Also consider LUMEF when you are doing estate planning or writing your will.

We especially challenge former missionaries who have served in Liberia to consider LUMEF in their will. Any small or big gift can make a difference. United Methodists are noted for their generosity and giving hope in times of hopelessness.

Contributions can be made to: General Board of Global Ministry-General Council on Finance and Administration (GBGM/GCFA), United Methodist Church, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, 10115. Code: LUMEF-014368-8AT

Thank you for blessing us.

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**An Appeal For Peace , Reconciliation And Forgiveness  
To All Liberians In The United States And Other Parts Of The World**

By Bishop John G. Innis  
Resident Bishop Of The United Methodist Church In Liberia

July 7, 2003

First, let us begin this appeal by giving thanks and praise to God for listening to our concerns and hearing our cries in recent times for peace in Liberia.

Second, we would like to express our heart-felt thanks and appreciation to President Bush and all peace-loving Americans for the active role they are beginning to play in the Liberian situation. It is our prayer that God will keep speaking to the heart of President Bush to help us out of our trouble. It is also our prayer that other Americans might join President Bush to help liberate our people. We also extend thanks and appreciation to European and African governments who are concerned about peace in our homeland.

Third, we would like to thank the United Nations for their role in seeking ways to bring about peace and stability in Liberia. Fourth, thanks to the Congressional Caucus for their deep concern and support for peace in Liberia. Fifth, thanks to the Friends of Liberia for their deep commitment to peace and justice, and compassion for their brothers and sisters. Sixth, thanks to the African-American community for their voice of support to bring about lasting peace to every Liberian.

Finally, thanks to the Christian community across the world for their prayers and humanitarian hearts as a gesture of identifying with the plight of the Liberian people. Continue to pray until peace and justice reign.

Fellow Liberians, we need peace in our country. Peace means love in action. Therefore, we must put away hostility and violence. We must embrace and take responsibility for the gift of peace that God is about to offer us. Our country is a beautiful nation. Many have said good things about our country in the past. They have said, "Liberians we know have been a people of peace". But surprisingly, for the past fourteen years we have undermined our peace with hatred , cruelty and brutality that have caused people to wonder about our commitment to peace.

It is about time that we preach peace and act peace. It is also about time that we reconcile and forgive each other. Let us remember that Christ taught , preached and practiced reconciliation and forgiveness. Love and unity will be the foundation of a lasting peace. Love that is not proud and selfish must be a strong pillar for peace in Liberia, so that in unity, we can surely succeed in bringing peace to our war-ravaged nation.

Now fellow Liberians, let us not forget Liberia's glorious history. Liberia's founding history was based on peace and freedom. How can we forget that Liberia was the first independent republic in Africa? Liberia was an inspiration to many nations of Africa when they struggled for freedom. Liberia was also a haven for refuge for many Africans seeking asylum during colonialism. Our beloved country was also a learning forum for young African politicians needing to understand the affairs of a democratic state.

When the United Nations was founded, Liberia was one of the original signatories to its charter. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union (MRU) and many other regional and international organizations came into existence as a result of Liberia's initiative.

In many ways, Liberia was the "political mother of Africa". We do have a past we can be proud of. We need to do everything we can to recall this glorious past and use it as a foundation to build a peaceful and lasting future for our children and our families.

We wish to appeal to the humanity in all of us and to our sense of morality. We must stop supporting war in Liberia against our own brothers and sisters. But you see, we must remember that bullets have no names or tribes written on them. They kill anyone in their way. How can we walk with dignity in America, Europe and all other African countries, knowing the kinds of atrocities being committed by brother against brother in Liberia.

We must seek peace and reconciliation and forgiveness from God rather than to blame the war on one person or one group of people. Let us take responsibility for the problem and feel collectively obligated to find lasting resolutions for long-term stability in Liberia. Former Vice President, Bishop Bennie D. Warner once said, "What is wrong with us, is us". This means we brought the war on ourselves, and we must be responsible to put an end to it. Liberia needs peace-makers not war-makers.

Because Liberia is our home, we are moved with deep love to provide financial assistance to our relatives and friends. Each year Liberians in the United States send millions of dollars home through Western Union. Last year it is estimated that Liberians in the United States sent almost \$30 million to families in Liberia and the West African region. Liberians in Europe and other parts of the world did the same, I believe. What a loving act! What a caring act! However, there were Liberians who sent funds to support war activities rather than for humanitarian aid. Some of these funds were used to support war activities rather than for humanitarian aid like education, health, economic, personal advancement, and business.

The day has come to put an end to war in our homeland. We appeal to all Liberians not to give in and support international criminals whose purpose is to destroy, destabilize and steal our nation's mineral resources to enrich themselves. Instead of using our resources to help develop our country, they are used to buy weapons of mass destruction. These weapons have already led to suffering, hunger, disease and under-development in Liberia. It is about time for us to use our funds to restore basic needs in Liberia. Electricity needs to be restored, water is needed, highways and streets of our cities need rebuilding, medical facilities are in need of repair and supplies, doctors and nurses are in short supply, and the schools and universities need our help. If we begin to help ourselves in this direction, those that are pleading for peace on our behalf, will come to our aid immediately.

We must see ourselves as Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 46-47) who helped his family when there was a food crisis in his homeland. We must see ourselves as Esther who acted in the interest of her people because she realized that it was for "a time like this" that she was given a privileged place in the King's palace (Esther 4:14). We must see ourselves as Nehemiah in putting back together the broken pieces of our country. We must use our God-given talents in the task of repairing what we have broken down over the past fourteen years. And Jesus, our lover and the giver of life, will help us do this task well. We all have opportunities in America, Europe and other stable African nations to make a positive difference in Liberia. How many more people will die before we feel their pain? How many more years will our children suffer before we hear their cries? How long will Liberia be ravaged by war before we become serious about peace?

The time has come to put rhetoric and political ambitions aside. The time has come for Liberians to put away selfishness and bitterness against each other. And the time has also come for vision driven leaders, from common workers to our nation's President, who will motivate, appreciate and encourage our country's growth. Let us give Liberia the love it deserves. Let us work to give Liberia its place in the world community of nations. May we pray for our brothers and sister in arms. May we pray for the war lords in and outside our country so that God may transform their hearts into productive citizens. We know they have committed atrocities against us, but it is our responsibility to love them. Christ commands that we should love those who hate us, those who terrify us, those who looted our homes, those who have killed our brothers and sisters. Christ also says, "Forgive them, for they do not know what they have done".

To God be the Glory, for great things He has done!