

## **We Shall not be Moved**

*God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. (Psalm 46:1-5, KJV)*

I

Faith is the desire to rely on the fundamentals that do not change in a fast-changing world. God's love is unchanging in any case and situation.

We depend on that love when we are time-sick and desperate for God's presence and guidance.

When we are lonely, we hide in that love and receive the comfort of being together. This psalm of confidence is clear: 'God is in the midst of the city: it shall not be moved.' Others bear witness of our having a cornerstone, the ground of our being to hold us.

The psalmist reveals that when storms and chaos come, we have recourse for torment and woundedness.

Let's bring to consciousness that when disaster strikes, God is in the city, a shelter, a very present help in time of need. Ultimately God is our rock and refuge for the wind and waves that are external and also for the internal chaos, pain, and conflict we bear today. Just like the old song says it: 'we shall not be moved.'

It is God who calls: come to me all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens,  
It is God who calls lean on me when you are weary and too injured for another step,  
It is God who is an ocean of light in the dark night when we cannot see the future,  
It is God within us who is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.

This God is the power and love available to us today as we carry out the mission of The United Methodist Church and pray for a witness that sings, 'we shall not be moved.'

We are fulfilling our stewardship as directors, staff, missionaries, and church members, relying on God who says that I am the center of mission, I am the center of love, I am the center of life, and I am the refuge of refugee response.

As you and I humbly serve, I would like to reaffirm the conviction that God is God enough for 12 million United Methodists scattered around the world, sent to live the gospel, this is our strong covenant today, tomorrow, and forever, and as I hope to conclude this fall board meeting.

## II

In Psalm 46, the psalmist indirectly suggests that our reality is full of end-of-century challenges and calamities.

It is this psalm that calls us to have confidence in a God who is in the midst of the trembling of the mountains, the roar and foam of the seas, the insecurities of our mortal flesh, and gratuitous violence and racial injustice. God is our help. God is our everything.

I think humanity is experiencing its worst chaos and unrest in our lifetimes. For too many nations economic disparity, discrimination, and poverty have robbed a generation of its future, and causes millions to cry out for a country that has idolized and monopolized wealth. They choose to flee and emigrate just to survive, and to live a new life even as a refugee.

The reality is that America is seen as having a monopoly of wealth and power, and yet life expectancy has been dropping due to the costs of despair in drug use and senseless violence.

Too many people have nothing to eat, we have the disease of having too much and too little meaning.

Racism, social prejudice, and structural discrimination against people of color come to us as serious social structural evils. We are soul sick.

As the United Methodist Church becomes a global church and realizes the truth of a mission of mutual benefit, it is time for right relationship, repentant response, to put God's Shalom into practice. It is time for ubuntu practice—your well-being is my well-being, the words from Jeremiah 29:7 ring true: 'seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare, you will find your welfare.' So we are called to peace, equity, and justice for the entire global village, and do away from the US-centered thinking. YES, the time is now for a commitment of patience, critical thinking, and faith. We shall not be moved.

I am so thankful for our church offering almost 26 plus million dollars raised in the current war of the Eurasia area, offering UMCOR's presence for people displaced from the Ukraine.

I am so thankful for all the disaster response efforts after the Hurricanes and compassionate care for those places hit by natural disasters.

I am so proud of our continuous support for the educational ministry of Africa University which has supplied many leaders in the continent of Africa for the last 30 years.

We have an abundant God alive in bountiful United Methodist hearts! We shall not be moved.

### III

Despite cities collapsing, the earth weakening, the psalms declare that our God provides.

“God is in the midst of the city, it shall not be moved.”(5)

Our prayer and aspirations for peace must never yield. Humankind and this generation depend on us.

Although The United Methodist Church is currently going through an era of chaos and uncertainty, we know that our commitment to mission must remain unwavering. God continues God’s relentless solidarity with the little ones in harm’s way who will become witnesses of the gospel of Christ Jesus. They and we should not be shaken.

We must remember that God calls us and uses us as ambassadors for a time such as this.

We are instruments of peace. We are watchers at the guard towers for life. We are the evangelists who bear gospel transformation to the ends of the earth.

We are beautiful United Methodists who shine as a light to the nations.

Let us praise God, our unchanging Defender.

Let us have the confidence that God lifts us out of all calamities, confusion, and pain, and lifts up this beautiful church that we might take wing.

Let us not forget that God is God and above all, that God cherishes and loves you above all, and that above all he loves you infinitely—and we shall not be moved.

The foundation of faith is never broken. We shall not be moved.

The heart of love never grows cold. We shall not be moved.

We have hope no one can take from our hearts. We shall not be moved.

Thank you again for your hard work and prayers. We shall not be moved.

Amen and amen.