

Methodist pastor elected to interdenominational leadership in Congo

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Gabriel Yemba Unda, the first United Methodist bishop of the East Congo Episcopal Area, has been elected provincial president of the Church of Christ in the Congo in the Congolese district of Maniema.

The CCC is a union of 95 of the country's Protestant denominations.

Unda—who also is the moderator of the National Synod of the Church of Christ in the Congo—obtained 66 out of 91 votes in the elections. He will preside over various denominations of the Protestant churches in Maniema for the next six years. Unda

succeeds Bishop Joseph Bitingo Lusambya, who died in April 2021.

Jubilant scenes erupted when the news of Unda's election was shared on social media. Many pastors and laypeople expressed their feelings of joy.

Kalema Tambwe, Kindu South District's superintendent, said Unda's election is an answer to the prayers of several clergy of different denominations who demanded change at the head of the Church of Christ in the Congo in Maniema.

"(It is) a special day for us Methodists today, here in Kindu in particular and in the whole of the East Congo Episcopal Church," Tambwe said. "The Lord God of the armies has just answered the prayer of thousands of Methodists and non-Methodists for the change of leadership."

Lévi Ngangura Manyá, the bishop who presides over the Church of Christ in the Congo in the province of South Kivu, also welcomed the results.

"The choice of this man of God is not a coincidence, but God wants to use him to bring something more to this province," he said. —United Methodist News Service