

**TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES: 6**

**SUGGESTED TITLE: Proposal to Restructure the Global UMC – Connectional Conferences**

**DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: New Paragraph**

**GENERAL CHURCH BUDGET IMPLICATIONS: Yes**

**GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes**

**PETITION TEXT** Insert new paragraph between ¶8 and ¶ 9, and renumber subsequent paragraphs, as follows:

**¶ 9. Article II.—There shall be connectional conferences in all areas of the globe in which The United Methodist Church operates, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.**

Insert new Section IV, subsequent to the Restrictive Rules and prior to what is currently ¶ 23, as follows:

**Section IV. Connectional Conferences**

**¶ 23. Article I.—The connectional conferences shall be composed of the delegates from the annual conferences within its boundaries who have been elected to the Global Connectional Conference. No connectional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates, one half of whom shall be lay and one half clergy. The same formula shall be used to determine the number of delegates of all annual conferences and missionary conferences. In cases where a connectional conference would otherwise have fewer than 100 delegates, the additional delegates shall be elected in accordance with the above process; these delegates may be the**

same as those elected to regional conferences. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

¶ 24. Article II.—All connectional conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution.

¶ 25. Article III. —Each connectional conference shall meet within a year prior to or in conjunction with the Global Connectional Conference, at such time and in such place as shall be determined by the connectional College of Bishops or its delegated committee.

A special session of a connectional conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the connectional conference, may be called by the connectional conference's college of bishops, or in such other manner as the connectional conference may from time to time prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be stated in the call. Such special session of the connectional conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding connectional conference or their lawful successors, except that when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election it may do so. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call unless the connectional conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

¶ 26. Article IV.—The connectional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the Global Connectional Conferences:

1. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church within their boundaries, including to promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern, and benevolent interests of the Church, subject to the powers and authority

of the Global Connectional Conference. Connectional Conferences are authorized to create a connectional *Book of Discipline*, subject to the powers that have been vested in the Global Connectional Conference as contained within the global *Book of Discipline*.

2. To set the tenure and method of assignment of the episcopacy within the connection, to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop, and to fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the regional conferences.

3. To provide for a process of ordination and to set standards for conference membership and conference relationship, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender or status.

4. To regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.

5. To initiate and to direct all connectional enterprises of the Church within the connection and to provide boards for their promotion and administration, subject to the authority and powers of the Global Connectional Conference.

6. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of the connection.

7. To change the number and the boundaries of regional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences within the regional conferences involved.

8. To establish such commissions for the work of the Church within the connection as may be deemed advisable.

9. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and

**institutions of The United Methodist Church within the connection regardless of race, gender or status.**

**10. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding.**

**11. To provide a judicial system and method of judicial procedure, subject to the powers of the Global Connectional Conference and the authority of the Judicial Council, to determine legal questions on the rules, regulations, and other matters of connectional disciplinary law.**

**12. To enact such other legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and restrictions of the Constitution of the Church and powers and authority of the Global Connectional Conference.**

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The actual incremental costs of this proposal will be dependent upon the global structure finally adopted

by General Conference.

There will probably be some additional costs related to connectional conferences, committees, etc., but these costs may be offset by a possible reduction in costs related to the meeting of the Global Connection. If the business of the North America connection is removed from the agenda of the Global Connectional Conference, the duration of that meeting will be less than the current General Conference, perhaps by three or four days, resulting in a reduction in costs for that meeting.

The most significant increase in costs will probably involve the meetings of the connectional conferences. This proposal would require each connectional conference to meet quadrennially, prior to the Global Connectional Conference. Depending upon when and where the connectional conferences meet, the incremental cost of these meetings is estimated to be between US\$300,000 and US\$1,000,000. GCFA will be asked to develop more accurate cost projections.

Any incremental cost increases will also need to be examined in the context of the overall budget for the 2016 General Conference budget of over US\$10 million.

**DATE: August 28, 2015**

**SIGNATURE OF PETITIONER: *Tracy R Merrick***

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