

# Overlapping Regional Conferences

## *A Protocol of Graceful Unity*

### Creating Theologically Defined Overlapping Regional Conferences in Four Global Regions

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***Note: This document is a streamlined and re-formatted version of the composite set of petitions. It is designed to be more readable and easier to follow for the general public. Petitions that simply delete Book of Discipline paragraphs will be referenced by title and action only.***

## **ORC Petition #1, BOD ¶9**

### **Equalizing Jurisdictional and Central Conferences**

**Rationale:** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conferences Plan, this amendment of ¶9 makes jurisdictions and central conferences equal, changing the name to regional conferences. It also allows the creation of regional conferences based on grounds other than geography.

Amend ¶9 as follows:

~~¶9. Article II.—There shall be jurisdictional~~ regional conferences for the Church ~~in the United States of America,~~ with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference based on ~~any ground other than geographical and regional division~~ race or ethnicity. Such duties, powers, and privileges shall be the same, whether the regional conference is within or outside the United States, except as otherwise stated in the Constitution.

## **ORC Petition #2, BOD ¶10**

### **Equalizing Jurisdictional and Central Conferences**

**Rationale:** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this deletion of ¶10 ends central conferences, which will now become regional conferences.

Delete ¶10 and renumber succeeding Paragraphs as follows:

~~¶10. Article III.—There shall be central conferences for the Church outside the United States of America and, if necessary, provisional central conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.~~

## **ORC Petition #3, BOD ¶14**

### **General Conference Year**

**Rationale:** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment to ¶14 provides an extra year for transition to the new structure and ensures that future General Conferences will not be held in a United States election year.

Amend ¶14 as follows:

¶14. Article II.—The General Conference shall meet once in four years at such time and in such place as shall be determined by the General Conference or by its duly authorized committees. The change in the preceding sentence shall become effective at the close of General Conference in 2016. After the General Conference held in 2021 the next general conference shall be moved to 2025, thereafter shifting the four-year cycle to odd-numbered years.

A special session of the General Conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the General Conference, may be called by the ~~Council~~ Colloquy of Bishops, or in such other manner as the General Conference may from time to time prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be stated in the call...

### **ORC Petition #4, BOD ¶15** ***General and Regional Conference Representation***

**Rationale:** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment to ¶15 simply aligns Article III with the language of the ORC Plan.

Amend ¶15 as follows:

¶15. Article III. - The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General; ~~jurisdictional, and central~~ and Regional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ Regional conference.

### **ORC Petition #5, BOD ¶ 16** ***Regional Conference Adaptation***

**Rationale:** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment to ¶16 shifts a number of the powers of General Conference to Regional Conferences, thus allowing regional conferences to adapt various structures to the context in which they do ministry.

Amend ¶16 as follows:

¶16. Article IV.—The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively ~~connectional~~ global, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows:

- ~~1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.~~
- ~~2. To define and fix the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries.~~
- ~~3. 1. To define and fix the powers and duties of regional conferences, annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of central conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.~~
- ~~4. 2. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church outside the United States of America. globally.~~
- ~~5. 3. To define and fix the powers, duties, and privileges of the episcopacy. to adopt a plan for the support of the bishops, to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, and to provide for the~~

~~discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.~~

~~6. To provide and revise the hymnal and ritual of the Church and to regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.~~

~~7. 4. To provide a judicial system and a method of judicial procedure for the Global Church, except as herein otherwise prescribed.~~

~~8. 5. To initiate and to direct all ~~connectional~~ global enterprises of the Church and to provide boards for their promotion and administration.~~

~~9. 6. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of the Global Church.~~

~~10. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected by central conferences.~~

~~11. 7. To select its presiding officers from the bishops, through a committee, provided that the bishops shall select from their own number the presiding officer of the opening session.~~

~~12. To change the number and the boundaries of jurisdictional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each jurisdictional conference involved.~~

~~13. 8. To establish such commissions for the general work of the Church as may be deemed advisable.~~

~~14. 9. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.~~

~~15. 10. To allow the regional and annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding.~~

~~16. 11. To enact such other global legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and restrictions of the Constitution of the Church.~~

## **ORC Petition #6, New BOD ¶23** ***Establishing Regional Conferences***

***Rationale:*** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition establishes Regional Conferences, defines the primary values of each and ensures that the Constitution allows the transition to the new structure with a fair process. It incorporates language from the current Section VII. ¶¶28-31.

Create a new Section IV., ¶23 Regional Conferences to be placed after the current Section III. Restrictive Rules.

### **Section IV. Regional Conferences**

#### **¶23 Article I**

1. The United Methodist Church shall be comprised of four Global Regions: the Philippines, Africa, Eurasia, and the United States. The former Philippines Central Conference will become the Philippines Region. The former Central Conferences in Africa will become the Africa Region. The former Central Conferences in Europe and Asia will become the Eurasia Region. The former Jurisdictional Conferences in the United States will become the United States Region. Each Global Region will be comprised of two geographically overlapping but theologically defined Regional Conferences, provided

that each regional Conference shall have a total of at least fifty clergy and fifty lay delegates, except as the General Conference may fix a different number.

a. The Global Regions shall be united by a Global Book of Discipline which affirms a distinct United Methodist history and heritage, basic Christian affirmations and our Wesleyan theology, as set out in Part III of the 2016 Book of Discipline.

b. Each Global Region shall have within its bounds two Regional Conferences, geographically overlapping and theologically distinct, each which shall affirm the unifying doctrinal standards contained in the Global Book of Discipline.

(1) A Regional Conference, characterized by a commitment to the maintenance of the Church's historic expression of its doctrinal and moral standards.

(2) A Regional Conference, characterized by an acceptance of the evolving nature of the Church's expression of its historic doctrinal and moral standards.

c. Unity within the United Methodist Church shall be maintained by

(1) a covenantal acceptance and respect of each Regional Conference's distinct set of Social Principles

(2) Our affirmation of our unity in Jesus Christ as we live out the Gospel while acknowledging differences in applying and living our faith to different cultural contexts and global concerns including but not limited to: climate change, human sexuality, immigration, war and peace, and a myriad of other social, economical, and political concerns.

d. Membership in a Regional Conference shall not be determined by geography but by the formation, acceptance, and application of the distinct set of "historic" or "evolving" social principles adopted by each Regional Conference.

e. Each of these regional conferences is empowered to choose its own name and insignia, which may or may not include the use of the cross and flame and the name "United Methodist." When such names are chosen by a regional conference, the names in this Paragraph shall automatically be replaced with the new name without the need for additional constitutional amendment.

f. No regional conference shall adopt policies that are inconsistent with or violate ¶14 of the Constitution, either expressly or by practice.

2. Changes in the names and boundaries of the-overlapping regional conferences may be determined by the Regional Conference upon the consent of a majority vote by two-thirds of the annual conferences of each of the regional conferences involved.

3. The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas shall be determined by the regional conferences. The authority of regional conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.

4. Transfer of Local Churches—

a. A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another in which it is geographically located upon approval by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in each of the following:

i) the charge conference;

ii) the congregational meeting of the local church;

iii) each of the two annual conferences involved.

The vote shall be certified by the secretaries of the specified conferences or meetings to the bishops having supervision of the annual conferences involved, and upon their

announcement of the required majorities the transfer shall immediately be effective.

b. The vote on approval of transfer shall be taken by each annual conference at its first session after the matter is submitted to it.

c. Transfers under the provisions of this article shall not be governed or restricted by other provisions of this Constitution relating to changes of boundaries of conferences.

## **ORC Petition #7, BOD New ¶24**

### ***Standardize Regional Conferences***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #7, BOD New ¶24-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition moves the current powers of jurisdictional and central conferences into regional conferences. It moves the support of bishops to the regional conferences, creates Regional Books of Discipline and incorporates language from ¶¶23-27.

Create a new Section IV. ¶24 as follows:

#### **Section IV. Regional Conferences**

¶24. Article II. -

1. The regional conferences shall be composed of as many representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined by a uniform basis established by the General Conference, provided that no regional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates. The delegates shall be clergy and lay in equal numbers. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

2. All regional conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution. The ratio of representation of the annual conferences and missionary conferences in the General Conference shall be the same for all regional conferences.

3. The regional conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by the preceding respective regional conferences or by commissions appointed by them or by the regional College of Bishops.

4. The regional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conferences:

a. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within their boundaries.

b. To determine the number of bishops that may be elected, to elect bishops and to cooperate in carrying out plans for their support. Each regional conference shall provide the entire financial support for its bishops, including salary, housing, benefits, travel, and office expenses, unless supplemental funds are approved by the General Conference with the consent of the other regional conferences.

c. To establish and constitute regional conference boards as auxiliary to the general boards of the Church and to choose their representatives on the general boards in such manner as the regional conference may determine.

d. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences, provided that there shall be no annual conference with a membership of fewer than fifty clergy in full connection, except by the consent of the General Conference.

e. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the regional conference including changes and adaptations of the *Regional Book of Discipline* as

the conditions in the respective regional conferences may require subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Conference and subject to the Constitution.

f. To appoint, if desired, a regional judicial court to determine legal questions arising on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the *Regional Book of Discipline* enacted by the regional conference. There shall be a right of appeal of the decisions of regional judicial courts to the Judicial Council.

g. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher of that regional conference from the decision of a trial committee.

h. To define and fix the powers and duties of district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.

i. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.

j. To define and fix the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries, except as otherwise precluded by the Constitution, including ¶20.

k. To adopt a plan for the support of the bishops, to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, and to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability, except as otherwise precluded by the Constitution, including ¶45.

l. To provide and revise the hymnal and ritual of the Church and to regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.

## **ORC Petitions #8-12 BOD ¶¶23-27**

### ***Delete ¶¶23-27***

***Rationale:*** **ORC Petitions #8-12 BOD ¶¶23-27** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments simply delete the current ¶¶23-27 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into the new Section IV, ¶24.

**Petition 8:** Delete ¶23 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 9:** Delete ¶24 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 10:** Delete ¶25 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 11:** Delete ¶26 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 12:** Delete ¶27 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petitions #13-16, BOD ¶¶28-31** ***Ending Central Conferences***

**Rationale: ORC Petitions #13-16, BOD ¶¶ 28-31** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these petitions simply delete Section V: Central Conferences ¶¶28-31 since the new ¶24 combines the current powers of jurisdictional and central conferences and standardizes them for regional conferences.

**Petition 13:** Delete ¶28 and renumber the following sections and Paragraphs as appropriate:

**Petition 14:** Delete ¶29 and renumber the following sections and Paragraphs as appropriate:

**Petition 15:** Delete ¶30 and renumber the following sections and Paragraphs as appropriate:

**Petition 16:** Delete ¶31 and renumber the following sections and Paragraphs as appropriate:

## **ORC Petition #17, BOD ¶32** ***Annual Conference Membership***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #17, BOD ¶32-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment simply aligns ¶32 with the language of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan.

Amend ¶32 as follows:

¶32. Article I. The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members... In the annual conferences of the ~~central conferences~~ Regional Conferences outside the United States, the four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived by the annual conference for young persons under thirty (30) years of age. Such persons must be professing members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election....

## **ORC Petition #18, BOD ¶¶33-36** ***Name Changes***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #18, BOD ¶¶33-36-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this simply provides for replacing the names “jurisdiction,” “jurisdictional conference,” or “central conference” with “regional conference” for ¶¶33-36 to provide consistency with the overall plan.

Amend ¶¶33-36 by replacing “jurisdictional or central” with “regional” in each instance of occurrence.

¶33. Article II.—The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General and the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conferences, on all matters relating to the character ...

¶34. Article III.—The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference in the manner provided in this section,

Articles IV and V. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference. The additional delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conferences may act as reserve delegates to the General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference.

¶35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference shall be elected from the clergy members ...

¶36. Article V.—The lay delegates to the General and ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conferences shall be elected by the lay members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next preceding their election, and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the General and ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conferences.

**ORC Petitions #19 - 23, BOD ¶¶37 - 41**  
***Deleting ¶¶37 - 41***

***Rationale:*** ORC Petitions #19 - 23, BOD ¶¶37 - 41- As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶37-41 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into the new ¶23.

**Petition 19:** Delete ¶37 in its entirety.

**Petition 20:** Delete ¶38 in its entirety.

**Petition 21:** Delete ¶39 in its entirety

**Petition 22:** Delete ¶40 in its entirety

**Petition 23:** Delete ¶41 in its entirety

**ORC Petition #24 BOD ¶42.  
*District Conferences***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #24 BOD ¶42-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment brings annual conference and district conference organization into the Regional Conferences.

Amend ¶42 as follows:

¶42. Article I. There may be organized in an annual conference, district conferences composed of such persons and invested with such powers as the ~~General~~ Regional Conference may determine.

**ORC Petition #25, BOD ¶43  
*Charge Conferences***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #25, BOD ¶43-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment highlights the shared responsibilities and authorities within the local church as designated by both the Global Book of Discipline and the Regional Book of Discipline. This amendment incorporates language from Paragraph 44.

Amend ¶43 as follows:

¶43. Article I.—There shall be organized in each charge a charge conference composed of such persons and invested with such powers as the General or Regional Conference shall provide. Unless the General or Regional Conference shall order otherwise, the officers of the church or churches constituting a charge shall be elected by the charge conference or by the professing members of said church or churches at a meeting called for that purpose, as may be arranged by the charge conference, unless

**ORC Petition #26, BOD ¶44  
*Delete ¶44***

**Rationale: Petition #26, BOD ¶44 -** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition incorporates the language of ¶44 into the amended ¶43.

Delete ¶44 in its entirety.

**ORC Petition #27, BOD ¶ 45  
*Episcopacy***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #27, BOD ¶ 45-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition, incorporating paragraphs 46-54, envisions the Council of Bishops as a *Colloquy* of Bishops while

shifting some authority to the Regional Colleges of Bishops. It allows each regional conference to determine its bishops' tenure.

Amend ¶145, as follows,

### **DIVISION THREE—EPISCOPAL SUPERVISION**

#### ¶145 *Episcopal Supervision*

1. Article I.—There shall be a continuance of an episcopacy in The United Methodist Church of like plan, powers, privileges, and duties as now exist in The Methodist Church and in The Evangelical United Brethren Church in all those matters in which they agree and may be considered identical; and the differences between these historic episcopacies are deemed to be reconciled

and harmonized by and in this Plan of Union and Constitution of The United Methodist Church and actions taken pursuant thereto so that a unified superintendency and episcopacy is hereby created and established of, in, and by those who now are and shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church; and the said episcopacy shall further have such powers, privileges, and duties as are herein set forth.

2. Article II.—The bishops shall be elected by the respective regional conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by each regional conference provided that episcopal elections shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of the regional conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

3. Article III.—There shall be a Colloquy of Bishops composed of all the bishops of The United Methodist Church. The Colloquy shall meet at least once a year and shall serve as a missional body that helps gather and distribute best practices for church vitality; is a learning, equipping, and nurturing community; acts as connectors to the jointly-shared ministries; guides the Wesleyan DNA emphases around justice, fairness, and inclusiveness, with special concern around our historic efforts to combat racism and sexism; handles Ecumenical relations; mediates accountability challenges; and ensures the carrying into effect of the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by the General Conference.

4. Article IV.—The bishops of each regional conference shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories. Each college shall meet at least once a year and plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the Church within their regional conference and for carrying into effect the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by their regional conference. Each college shall also nurture and support its members and hold them accountable to the highest standards of United Methodist leadership and discipleship.

5. Article V.—The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the regional conferences in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one regional conference to another for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a regional conference that receives a bishop by transfer from another regional conference may transfer to that regional conference or to a third regional conference one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each regional conference shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a regional conference may receive a bishop from another regional conference and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the regional conference that elected the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers

shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the regional conference committees on episcopacy of the regional conferences that are involved. After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that regional conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Colloquy of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another regional conference than that which elected the bishop, provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the regional conference of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any regional conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Colloquy of Bishops may assign a bishop from another regional conference to the work of the said regional conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that regional conference.

6. Article VI.—The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union was consummated shall remain bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected prior to 2023 by the former jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a former central conference of The Methodist Church prior to 2023 shall have such tenure as the former central conference electing him/her had determined. Bishops elected in 2023 or after shall have such tenure as the regional conference electing them shall determine.

The regional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the regional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the regional conference.

These provisions shall not preclude the adoption by the General Conference of provisions for the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work, both as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.

7. Article VII.—A bishop presiding over an annual, or regional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference.

Such an episcopal decision shall not be authoritative except for the pending case until it shall have been passed upon by the Judicial Council for matters related to the Global Book of Discipline and by the regional conference judicial court (if any ¶123.4) for matters related to the regional conference *Book of Discipline*. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Judicial Council or regional conference judicial court as appropriate, which shall affirm, modify, or reverse them.

8. Article VIII.—The bishops of the several regional conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences.

9. Article IX.—In each annual conference there shall be one or more district superintendents who shall assist the bishop in the administration of the annual conference and shall have such responsibilities and term of office as the regional conference may determine.

10. Article X.—The bishops shall appoint, after consultation with the district superintendents, ministers to the charges; and they shall have such responsibilities and authorities as the Regional Conference shall prescribe, except as precluded by the Constitution, including ¶120.

**ORC Petitions #28 - 36, BOD ¶¶ 46 - 54**  
**Delete ¶¶ 46-54**

**Rationale: ORC Petitions #28 - 36 , BOD ¶¶ 46 - 54** - As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶46-54 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into the new ¶45.

**Petition 28:** Delete ¶46 in its entirety.

**Petition 29:** Delete ¶47 in its entirety.

**Petition 30:** Delete ¶48 in its entirety.

**Petition 31:** Delete ¶49 in its entirety.

**Petition 32:** Delete ¶50 in its entirety.

**Petition 33:** Delete ¶51 in its entirety.

**Petition 34:** Delete ¶52 in its entirety.

**Petition 35:** Delete ¶53 in its entirety.

**Petition 36:** Delete ¶54 in its entirety.

**ORC Petition #37, BOD ¶55**  
**Judicial Council**

**Rationale: ORC Petition #37, BOD ¶55-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment conforms ¶55 with the language of the ORC Plan and limits the authority of the Judicial Council to matters of the Global Book of Discipline and appeals from Regional Judicial Courts and incorporates ¶¶56-58.

Amend ¶55, as follows, and renumbering the following Paragraphs as appropriate:

¶ 55. Article I.—*The Judicial Council*

1. There shall be a Judicial Council. The General Conference shall determine the number and qualifications of its members, their terms of office, and the method of election and the filling of vacancies.

2. The Judicial Council shall have authority:

a. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal of a majority of the Colloquy of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a regional conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that regional conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that regional conference.

b. To pass upon decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences regarding the *Global Book of Discipline* or on appeal of a decision of law from a regional conference judicial court regarding a regional conference *Book of Discipline*.

c. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General Conference board or body, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Colloquy of Bishops.

d. To have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the General Conference.

e. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure.

3. All decisions of the Judicial Council shall be final. When the Judicial Council shall declare unconstitutional any act of the General Conference then in session, that decision shall be reported back to that General Conference immediately.

4. The General Conference, in consultation with the Regional Conferences, shall establish for the Church a judicial system that shall guarantee to our clergy a right to trial by a committee and an appeal, and to our members a right to trial before the Church, or by a committee, and an appeal.

### **ORC Petition #38, BOD ¶56** ***Regional Conference Judicial Court***

***Rationale: ORC Petition #38, BOD ¶56-*** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment allows regional conference judicial courts to rule on questions of law related to the Regional Conference Book of Discipline and actions of annual conferences or regional boards.

Delete the current ¶56 and replace as follows:

~~¶56. Article II.—The Judicial Council shall have authority: 1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a jurisdictional or central conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdictional or central conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that jurisdictional or central conference. 2. To hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of law made in the annual conference when said appeal has been made by one-fifth of that conference present and voting. 3. To pass upon decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences. 4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General Conference board or jurisdictional or central conference board or body, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of the bishops of a jurisdictional or a central conference. 5. To have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the General Conference. 6. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure.~~

¶56. Article II.—*The Regional Judicial Court*

1. There may be a Regional Judicial Court in each of the regional conferences. Each Regional Conference shall determine the number and qualifications of its members, their terms of office, the method of election and the filling of vacancies.

2. The Regional Judicial Court shall have authority:

a. to determine legal questions arising on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the *Regional Book of Discipline* enacted by the regional conference.

b. to hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of law regarding a regional conference *Book of Discipline* made in the annual conference when said appeal has been made by one-fifth of that conference present and voting.

c. to hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any Regional Conference board or body, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of a majority of the bishops of the regional conference.

d. to provide its own methods of organization and procedure

e. to have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the Regional Conference.

3. Decisions of law from a regional conference judicial court may be appealed to the Judicial Council for a decision upon request of one-fifth of the delegates a majority of the bishops of the regional conference.

### **ORC Petitions #39 - 40, BOD ¶¶57 - 58**

#### ***Delete ¶¶57 - 58***

**Rationale:** ORC Petitions #39 - 40, BOD ¶¶57 - 58 - As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶57 - 58 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into the new ¶55.

**Petition 39:** Delete ¶57 in its entirety:

**Petition 40:** Delete ¶58 in its entirety:

### **ORC Petition #41, BOD ¶59**

#### ***Amendments***

**Rationale:** ORC Petition #41, BOD ¶59- As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment simply aligns ¶59 with the language of the ORC Plan.

Amend ¶59 as follows:

¶59. Article I.—Amendments to the Constitution shall be made upon a two-thirds majority of the General Conference present and voting and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of

members of the several annual conferences present and voting, except in the case of the first and second Restrictive Rules, which shall require a three-fourths majority of all the members of the annual conferences present and voting. The vote, after being completed, shall be canvassed by the ~~Council~~ Colloquy of Bishops, and the amendment voted upon shall become effective upon their announcement of its having received the required majority.

In the event that the General Conference adopts an amendment to the Constitution, the General Conference and Regional Conferences may immediately adopt enabling legislation for such amendment which shall be contingent on ratification of the amendment by the required two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting, and effective once the ~~Council~~ Colloquy of Bishops, operating as a canvasser of votes, announces that the amendment has been passed. In the same manner, an annual conference may approve legislation in anticipation of such a change in the Discipline and/or Constitution that would likewise become effective upon the effective date of said disciplinary change or Constitutional Amendment.

### **ORC Petition #42, BOD ¶61** ***Name Changes***

***Rationale: ORC Petition #42, BOD ¶61*** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment to ¶61 simply provides consistency in language with the overall plan.

Amend ¶61 as follows:

¶61. Article III.—A ~~jurisdictional or central~~ regional conference may by a majority vote propose changes in the Constitution of the Church...

**This ends the petitions dealing with constitutional amendments.**

## **ORC Petition #43, BOD ¶101**

### ***Global and Regional Books of Discipline***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #43, BOD ¶101-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these changes define what portions of the Discipline apply to the whole church (Global Book of Discipline) and what portions are adaptable (Regional Books of Discipline.)

Delete the current Part II ¶101 in its entirety and replace with the following Part II ¶¶101-105:

#### **Part II**

#### **GLOBAL AND REGIONAL BOOKS OF DISCIPLINE**

#### Part II

#### GLOBAL AND REGIONAL BOOKS OF DISCIPLINE

#### ¶101—Our Life Together

The United Methodist Church seeks to build a life together by providing clearly defined spaces for laity, congregations, pastors, and bishops to live with theological integrity while trusting the Holy Spirit to shape our lives into a new form of unity and much respect in Christ. The Church does this by creating two geographically overlapping theologically and contextually defined Regional Conferences in each of four Global Regions of the United Methodist Church: the Philippines, Africa, Eurasia, and the United States.

#### ¶102 –Working Toward a Deeper Unity in the Midst of Diversity

In John 17:20-24, Jesus Christ prays for those who love him to live in unity. We, as human beings, cannot achieve this unity on our own because of the powerful forces pulling us apart. We can only receive the true unity Jesus offers as a gift, vision, and expectation as we trust him enough to step out in faith. Unity flowers through our relationship with one another in Jesus Christ. It is enriched as we work together in mission. It is deepened as we build relationships in spite of our real and significant differences. To be sure, there are boundaries that must be maintained, which is why a common commitment to our Doctrinal Standards is an essential requirement for being Part of the United Methodist Church. But more than anything, unity is a project undertaken for the long haul by persons who are committed to the messy work of living out Jesus' imperative for unity.

As United Methodists, we accept that God's divine gift of reason present in human beings causes a multiplicity of thought. Those thoughts lead to a multiplicity of convictions. Historically, differing thoughts and convictions have led to divisions within both humanity and the Church. However, we affirm there are fundamental beliefs, doctrines, and confessions which draw humanity and the Church together. Therefore, The United Methodist Church is formed on a principle that a fundamental unity of doctrine can join a multiplicity of convictions. Furthermore, respect is the gift which unites the two.

#### ¶103. Global Book of Discipline

The United Methodist Church is a worldwide denomination united by our Wesleyan way of serving Christ through doctrine, mission and the disciplined Christian life. The *Global Book of Discipline* expresses that unity as a connectional covenant.

Since the Global Book of Discipline is deemed to be global in nature it is not subject to regional change or adaptation except by action of the General Conference. The following parts and paragraphs constitute the Global Book of Discipline:

Parts I -V

- I. Constitution ¶¶1-61
- II. Global and Regional Books of Discipline ¶101
  - 1. Our Life Together
  - 2. Working Toward a Deeper Unity
  - 3. Global Book of Discipline
  - 4. Regional Books of Discipline
- III. Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task ¶¶102-105
- IV. The Ministry of All Christians ¶¶120-143
- V. Social Principles Preface and Preamble
- VI. General Organization and Administration ¶¶201-205, 214-220, 260-261, 301-303, 305-309, 361-363, 401-403, 421-423, 431-450, 501-511, 570-575, 601, 701-702, 703.1-4, 703.7-12, 704, 724, 801-809, 810-818, 901-907, 1301-1315, 2401, 1501-1712, 2201, 2501-2502, 2503, 2504-2511, 2552, 2553, 2601-2612, (All references in these Paragraphs referring to jurisdictional or central conferences shall be modified to refer to regional conferences. All references to the Council of Bishops shall be modified to refer to the Colloquy of Bishops. Where provisions between current jurisdictional and central conferences conflict, they shall continue to apply differently within the United States and outside the U.S., and the Standing Committee on Regional Conference Matters shall lead a process in consultation with the various Regional Conference Constituting Committees to submit legislation to the 2025 General Conference to reconcile the differences in Paragraphs containing conflicts.)
- VII. Independent Auxiliary Board and Agencies ¶¶1001-1212, 1401-1423, 1801-2109, 2301-2303  
Between 2023-2025 each regional conference shall elect four representatives to a task force to evaluate the General Agency structure and propose a new model to the 2025 General Conference. In that new model, independent auxiliary agencies shall serve only those regional conferences that desire to Participate in each auxiliary agency, and funding shall come only from Participating regional conferences. The above named task force shall determine which aspects of the General Board of Global Ministries are to be included in the *Global Book of Discipline* supported by the whole church.

¶104 Regional Books of Discipline

We also recognize that different traditions, practices and issues exist in the various Global Regions and Regional Conferences, and so to more fruitfully accomplish their mission we make room for these conferences to make changes and adaptations through *Regional Books of Discipline*. The following Parts and Paragraphs constitute the Regional Books of Discipline:

- I. Global and Regional Books of Discipline ¶101
  - 1. Our Life Together
  - 2. Working Toward a Deeper Unity
  - 3. Global Book of Discipline
  - 4. Regional Books of Discipline
- II. Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task ¶¶102-105
- III. The Ministry of All Christians ¶¶120-143

- IV. Social Principles Preface and Preamble  
 V. Social Principles ¶¶160-166  
 VI. Regional Organization and Administration ¶¶206-213, 221-259, 262-269, 304, 310-360, 364-369, 404-420, 424-430, 512-567, 580-593, 601-672, 703.5-6, 705-723, 819-824, 2512-2551, 2701-2719 (The above referenced Paragraphs, as amended by the General Conference held in 2021, shall remain in effect until the 2025 General Conference unless adapted by a regional conference. Based on decisions by regional conferences during 2022-25, the 2025 General Conference may add or subtract Paragraphs to this Part VI. All references in Paragraphs such as ¶¶512-548 referring to jurisdictional or central conferences shall be modified to refer to regional conferences. All references to the Council of Bishops shall be modified to refer to the College of Bishops. These Paragraphs shall be subject to adaptation by the regional conferences beginning in 2023.)

¶105 Paragraphs 101-104 shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops that all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph have received the required majority.

**ORC Petition #44**  
**Part V. The Social Principles (BOD ¶ 160)**  
*The Social Principle*

***Rationale: ORC Petition #44 Part V. The Social Principles (BOD ¶ 160)***- As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment establishes the shared responsibility of Social Principles. Because there is no Paragraph number for Preface and Preamble, we are citing the following ¶160.

Amend Part V, The Social Principles Preface and Preamble, preceding ¶160 as follows:

PREFACE

The United Methodist Church has a long history of concern for social justice. Its members have often taken forthright positions on controversial issues involving Christian principles. Early Methodists expressed their opposition to the slave trade, to smuggling, and to the cruel treatment of prisoners. A social creed was adopted by The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in 1908. Within the next decade similar statements were adopted by The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and by The Methodist Protestant Church.

The Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted a statement of social principles in 1946 at the time of the uniting of the United Brethren and The Evangelical Church. In 1972, four years after the uniting in 1968 of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a new statement of Social Principles, which was revised in 1976 (and by each successive General Conference). With the restructure of the United Methodist Church by the 2020 Session of the General Conference, the authority to further define the Social Principles within theological and geographical ministry contexts was granted to the Regional Conferences.

The Social Principles, while not to be considered church law, are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the Part of the ~~General Conference~~ Global Church to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundations as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions. They are a call to faithfulness and are intended to be instructive and persuasive in

the best of the prophetic spirit. The Social Principles are a call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice.

#### PREAMBLE

We, the people called United Methodists, affirm our faith in God our Creator and Father, in Jesus Christ our Savior, and in the Holy Spirit, our Guide and Guard. We acknowledge our complete dependence upon God in birth, in life, in death, and in life eternal. Secure in God's love, we affirm the goodness of life and confess our many sins against God's will for us as we find it in Jesus Christ.

We have not always been faithful stewards of all that has been committed to us by God the Creator. We have been reluctant followers of Jesus Christ in his mission to bring all persons into a community of love. Though called by the Holy Spirit to become new creatures in Christ, we have resisted the further call to become the people of God in our dealings with each other and the earth on which we live.

We affirm our unity in Jesus Christ while acknowledging differences in applying our faith in different cultural contexts as we live out the gospel. And while we honor our responsibility to define our witness and ministry by our historical foundations and evolving revelations; we recognize that in respecting the differing theological and biblical interpretations of our brothers and sisters within the United Methodist family, we stand united in declaring our faith that God's grace is available to all, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Grateful for God's forgiving love, in which we live and by which we are judged, and affirming our belief in the inestimable worth of each individual, we renew our commitment to become faithful witnesses to the gospel, not alone to the ends of earth, but also to the depths of our common life and work.

## **ORC Petition #45 BOD ¶201** ***The Local Church***

***Rationale: ORC Petition #45 BOD ¶201-*** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment establishes the shared responsibility of the work of the Local Church between the General and Regional Conferences. This change to Paragraph 201 incorporates language from Paragraphs 202-205, 260, and 261.

Amend ¶201, as follows:

(Insert prior to ¶201)

#### Preface

The local church is a connectional society of persons who have been baptized, have professed their faith in Christ, and have assumed the vows of membership in The United Methodist Church. They gather in fellowship to hear the Word of God, receive the sacraments, praise and worship the triune God, and carry forward the work that Christ has committed to his church. While we recognize that much of ministry is defined by cultural and communal context, nevertheless the local church is the ultimate agent for the redeeming work of Christ and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

#### Section I. The Church and Pastoral Charge

¶ 201. ~~Definition of a~~ The Local Church—The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the

sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world within the unique contexts in which they have been called.

a. The Function of the Local Church—The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the charge consisting of one or more local churches that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to all persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches and faith communities, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to Participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church. Such a church, being within The United Methodist Church and subject to its Global Discipline, is also an inherent Part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and which in the Apostles' Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

b. Care of Members—Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the people of the surrounding areas and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church. An equally important responsibility is to minister to all who are Part of the greater mission and ministry of the local congregation.

c. Definition of a Pastoral Charge—1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the Discipline of a Regional Conference of The United Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which an ordained or licensed minister is or may be duly appointed.

d. Transfer of a Local Church - A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another, within or between Regional Conferences by a two-thirds vote of the professing members who are present and voting in each of the following: (1) the charge conference, (2) a congregational meeting of the local church, and (3) each of the two annual conferences involved. Upon announcement of the required majorities by the bishop or bishops involved, the transfer shall immediately be effective. The votes required may originate in the local church or either of the annual conferences involved and shall be effective regardless of the order in which taken. In each case a two-thirds vote of those present and voting shall remain effective unless and until rescinded prior to the completion of the transfer by a vote of a majority of those present and voting.

e. Protection of Rights of Congregations - Nothing in the 1968 Plan and Basis of Union at any time after the union is to be construed so as to require any local church of the former Church of the United Brethren in Christ, or of the former The Evangelical Church, or of the former The Evangelical United Brethren Church, or of the former The Methodist Church to alienate or in any way to change the title to property contained in its deed or deeds at the time of union; and lapse of time or usage shall not affect said title or control.

## **ORC Petitions #46 - 49 BOD ¶¶202 - 205**

**Rationale:** ORC Petitions #46 - 49 BOD ¶¶202 - 205 - As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶202 - 205 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into ¶201.

**Petition 46:** Delete ¶202 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 47:** Delete ¶203 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 48:** Delete ¶204 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 49:** Delete ¶205 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

### **ORC Petition #50, BOD ¶220** ***Social Principles as Standards of Conduct***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #50, BOD ¶220-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this minor change to ¶220 acknowledges that the Social Principles are now in the Regional Books of Discipline.

Amend ¶220 as follows:

¶220 *The Call to Ministry of All the Baptized*

...Each member is to identify with the agony and suffering of the world and to radiate and exemplify the Christ of hope. The standards of attitude and conduct set forth in the Social Principles ~~(Part V)~~ of each member's Regional Conference *Book of Discipline* shall be considered as an essential resource for guiding each member of the Church in being a servant of Christ on mission.

Changes in this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

### **ORC Petitions #51 - 52 BOD ¶¶260 - 261** ***Delete ¶¶260 - 261***

**Rationale: ORC Petitions #51 - 52 BOD ¶¶260 - 261 -** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶260-261 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into ¶201

**Petition 51:** Delete ¶260 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 52:** Delete ¶261 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petition #53, BOD ¶422** ***Colloquy and College of Bishops***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #53, BOD ¶422-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this Paragraph reconfigures the Council of Bishops as a Colloquy of Bishops acting as a learning community that cares for our ecumenical relationships, while transitioning the oversight and accountability functions to the regional conference colleges of bishops.

Amend ¶422 as follows:

¶422. Council Colloquy and College of Bishops—1. Bishops, although are elected by jurisdictional or central regional conferences, are elected general superintendents of the whole Church and exercise their authority primarily within the regional conference college of bishops. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so bishops become through their election members first of the Council College of Bishops before they are subsequently assigned to areas of service. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops are members of the Council Colloquy of Bishops and of their college and are bound in special covenant with all other bishops. In keeping with this covenant, bishops fulfill their servant leadership and express their mutual accountability. The Council Colloquy of Bishops and the colleges of bishops, each with its own distinct responsibilities, are is a faith communities of mutual trust and concern responsible for the faith development and continuing wellbeing of its their members.

2. The Council Colloquy of Bishops and the colleges of bishops are is thus the collegial expressions of episcopal leadership in the Church and through the Church into the world. The Church expects the Council Colloquy of Bishops and the Colleges of Bishops to speak to the Church and from the Church to the world and to give leadership in the Christian unity and interreligious relationships.

3. In order to exercise meaningful leadership, the Council Colloquy of Bishops is to meet at stated intervals. The Council Colloquy of Bishops is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of shared by the whole Church, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the Church. The Colloquy of Bishops is a learning, equipping and nurturing community whose role is to gather and distribute best practices for church vitality; to act as a connector to the jointly-shared global ministries of the Church; to guide the Wesleyan DNA emphases around justice, fairness, and inclusiveness, with special concern around the elimination of racism and sexism; to develop and foster Ecumenical relations; to mediate accountability challenges; to ensure the proper administration of the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by the General Conference.

4. The bishops of each regional conference shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary

conferences, and missions within their respective regions. Each college shall meet at least once a year and plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the Church within their regional conference and for ensuring the proper administration of the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by their regional conference. Each college shall also nurture and support its members and hold them accountable to the highest standards of United Methodist leadership and discipleship.

4 5. The Council Colloquy of Bishops may assign one of its members to visit another episcopal area or Methodist-related church, subject to the consent of that area's College of Bishops or that church's leadership. When so assigned, the bishop shall be recognized as the accredited representative of the Council Colloquy of Bishops, and when requested by the resident bishop or president in that area or church, may exercise therein the functions of episcopacy.

shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops that all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph have received the required majority.

6. Changes to this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

### **ORC Petition #54, BOD ¶1501** ***General Conference Scope of Powers***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #54, BOD ¶1501-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment to ¶1501 would limit General Conference legislative powers to global matters, in keeping with the rest of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan.

Amend ¶1501 as follows:

¶ 501. Definition of Powers—The General Conference has full legislative power over all matters distinctively ~~connectional~~ global (see ¶ 16, Division Two, Section II, Article IV, The Constitution). It has no executive or administrative power. Changes to this paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

### **ORC Petition #55, BOD ¶1512-539** ***Jurisdictional Conference Elimination***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #55, BOD ¶1512-539-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this deletion of ¶¶1512-539 would eliminate the Jurisdictional Conference, and all of its associated authority and duties, in keeping with the rest of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan.

Delete Part VI - Chapter Four - Section II. The Jurisdictional Conference (¶¶1512-539) in its entirety. These deletions shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petition #56, BOD ¶540-548**

### ***Central Conference Elimination***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #56, BOD ¶540-548-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition would eliminate the Central Conferences, and all of its associated authority and duties in keeping with the rest of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan.

Delete Part VI - Chapter Four - Section III. The Central Conference (¶¶540-548) in its entirety. These deletions shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petition #57, BOD ¶560**

### ***Provisional Central Conferences***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #57, BOD ¶560-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment, incorporating language from ¶¶561-567, allows the Colloquy of Bishops to assign annual conferences, provisional annual conferences and missions in current provisional central conferences to appropriate Global Regions.

Delete ¶560 and replace as follows:

~~¶ 560: *Authorization*—Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions outside the United States that are not included in central conferences or in the territory of affiliated autonomous churches and that, because of geographical, language, political, or other considerations, have common interests that can best be served thereby, may be organized into provisional central conferences as provided in ¶ 540.1.21~~

~~The United Methodist Church shall have a provisional central conference with ministries in the following countries:~~

- ~~a) *Southeast Asia and Mongolia Provisional Central Conference:* Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam.~~

#### Section IV. Provisional ~~Central~~ Annual Conferences

¶ 560. 1. Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions outside the United States that were not included in former central conferences or in the territory of affiliated autonomous churches and that, because of geographical, language, political, or other considerations, have common interests that can best be served thereby, may be assigned by the Colloquy of Bishops a Global Region. Upon assignment, such entities shall choose which regional conference will hold their membership.

2. The United Methodist Church shall have a provisional annual conference with ministries in the following countries: *Laos, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam.*

3. Such annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions shall conform to the regulations prescribed for the regional conference to which they belong insofar as they are considered applicable by the bishop in charge.

4. The Regional Conference may grant to a provisional annual conference any of the powers of an annual conference except that of electing bishops.

5. In the interval between Regional Conferences, the Global region College of Bishops, upon the recommendation of the bishops in charge and after consultation with the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions concerned, may make changes in the boundaries of a provisional annual conference and may grant to a provisional annual conference or to any of its component Parts any of the powers of an annual conference except that of electing bishops. All changes in boundaries and all grants of powers shall be reported to the ensuing session of the Regional Conference and shall expire at the close of that session unless renewed by the Regional Conference.

6. The Colloquy of Bishops may provide, if and when necessary, for episcopal supervision or visitation of mission fields not included in Global Regions.

7. Changes to this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

### **ORC Petitions #58 - 64, BOD ¶¶561 - 567**

**Rationale: ORC Petitions #58 - 64, BOD ¶¶561 - 567** - As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶561 - 567 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into ¶560.

**Petition 58:** Delete ¶561 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 59:** Delete ¶562 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 60:** Delete ¶563 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 61:** Delete ¶564 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 62:** Delete ¶565 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 63:** Delete ¶566 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 64:** Delete ¶567 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petition #65, BOD ¶702**

### ***General Agency Accountability***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #65, BOD ¶702-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these changes to ¶702 would eliminate the accountability of general agencies to the Connectional Table. This is in alignment with the proposed deletion of the Connectional Table as found in ¶¶901-907.

Amend ¶702 as follows:

#### ¶ 702. Amenability and Program Accountability

1. All the general agencies of The United Methodist Church that have been constituted by the General Conference are amenable to the General Conference, except as otherwise provided.
2. Each organization, group, committee, council, board, and agency of the general Church shall adopt a code of ethics and policies that embody and live out our Christian values regarding conflict of interest, confidentiality, whistleblower protection, record retention and document destruction, and nepotism applicable to both members and employees.
3. ~~Between sessions of the General Conference, the following general agencies are accountable to the Connectional Table for those functions that are outlined in the 900 ¶¶s: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and the General Commission on Communication in matters pertaining to their program responsibilities.~~
4. ~~The Connectional Table shall review and evaluate the effectiveness of the general program-related agencies and connectional structures of the church as they collectively seek to aid annual conferences and local churches as they fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.~~
5. 3. Questions and concerns about programs, projects, or decisions of a Particular agency may be addressed directly to that agency, ~~with copies to the Connectional Table~~. Agencies shall acknowledge receipt of requests for information within ten days and provide information requested within thirty days or as soon thereafter as it is available.
6. 4. If any district, annual conference, or general agency initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in the 2008 Book of Resolutions should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church.
7. 5. In all matters of general agency accountability episcopal oversight as provided in ¶ 422 is assumed.

## **ORC Petition #66, BOD ¶1806**

### ***Finance Committee***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #66, BOD ¶1806-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, With the elimination of the Connectional Table, this petition authorizes GCFA, in consultation with the

Council/Colloquy of Bishops, to assume the Connectional Table's current financial responsibilities on an interim basis.

Amend ¶1806.1 *Fiscal Responsibilities* as follows:

1. It shall submit to each quadrennial session of the General Conference, for its action and determination, budgets of expense for each of the general funds of the Church, as listed or defined in ¶ 810.1, and such other general funds as the General Conference may establish. It shall also make recommendations regarding all other funding considerations to come before General Conference. Actual receipts for each fund for the quadrennium then ending shall be the basis for all budgeting procedures and comparisons for the coming quadrennium.

a) The council shall make recommendations to the General Conference as to the amount and distribution of the General Episcopal Fund and General Administration Fund, and, ~~in consultation with the Connectional Table,~~ other apportioned general funds.

b) In the case of the World Service Fund, Ministerial Education Fund, Black College Fund, Africa University Fund, and Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, during the interim between the 2020 and 2025 General Conferences the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~and the Connectional Table in conjunction with the Council/Colloquy of Bishops once it comes into existence~~ shall proceed in the following manner to develop budget recommendations as they relate to allocations to the general program agencies of the Church and funding level recommendations:

(1) The General Council on Finance and Administration shall establish the estimated amount available for distribution from the World Service Fund among the general program agencies and through the other funds.

~~(2) The Connectional Table will review the program priorities, missional priorities, and special programs and the estimated amount available to the general program agencies, and then establish the amounts to be distributed to those agencies from the annual World Service allocation. The Connectional Table will review both the funding priorities and the estimated amount available to the other funds and then establish the amounts to be distributed to each.~~

(3) The General Council on Finance and Administration will ~~review the~~ recommended allocations to the several general program agencies within the total sum of the World Service Fund budget, and the funding levels for each of the other listed apportioned funds. ~~When the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table agree, t~~These allocations and total sum will be included in the World Service budget and the funding levels of all these listed general apportioned funds will be recommended to the General Conference by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

c) It shall recommend the formulas by which all apportionments to the annual conferences shall be determined, subject to the approval of the General Conference.

d) Before the beginning of each year, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall estimate ~~and communicate to the Connectional Table~~ the sum available at that time from World Service contingency funds to meet requests for additional funding from the general program agencies. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall be authorized to approve allocations to the general program agencies for additional program funding up to the limit so established. ~~No money shall be allocated by the Connectional Table from this source for general administrative costs, fixed charges, or capital outlay without approval by the General Council on Finance and Administration.~~

e) The Connectional Table shall receive from the General Council on Finance and Administration copies of the proposed annual budgets of the general program agencies, in order that it may review such budgets in relation to the program proposals made by those agencies in their quadrennial budget requests:

### **ORC Petition #67, BOD ¶1818** ***Regional and Global Episcopal Funds Episcopal Fund***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #67, BOD ¶1818-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition moves the responsibility to determine and fund episcopal compensation to regional conferences and empowers GCFA to develop legislation for a more streamlined Episcopal Fund.

Amend ¶1818 by adding new Sections 1 - 3 and renumbering the following sections accordingly:

The Regional and General Episcopal Funds

¶1818. Regional Episcopal Funds - 1. There shall be in each Regional Conference a Regional Episcopal Fund to provide for the salary and expenses of effective bishops from the date of their consecration and for the support of retired bishops and surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops. Each regional conference will determine the compensation and means for funding the bishops affiliated with their conference. Each regional conference shall provide the entire financial support for its bishops, including salary, housing, benefits, travel and office expenses.

2. General Episcopal Fund - There shall be a General Episcopal Fund, administered by the General Council on Finance and Administration in conjunction with the Council/Colloquy of Bishops to be used as needed to initiate and support Global missional initiatives that require the leadership of a bishop.

3. Transition - Changes to this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph. The following Sections 4-15 of this Paragraph shall remain in effect until the 2025 General Conference, at which time the General Council on Finance and Administration in conjunction with the Council/Colloquy of Bishops shall submit legislation to transition to the new structure described above.

### **ORC Petitions #68 - 74, BOD ¶¶ 901 - 907** ***Delete ¶¶ 901 - 907***

**Rationale: ORC Petitions #68 - 74 BOD ¶¶ 901 - 907** - As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these seven petitions end the Connectional Table by deleting ¶¶901-907, thus allowing the newly structured UMC freedom to determine new ways to coordinate its mission, ministries and resources.

**Petition 68:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (¶901) in its entirety.

**Petition 69:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (¶902) in its entirety.

**Petition 70:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (¶903) in its entirety.

**Petition 71:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (¶904) in its entirety.

**Petition 72:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (§1905) in its entirety.

**Petition 73:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (§1906) in its entirety.

**Petition 74:** Delete Part VI - Chapter Five - Section III. Connectional Table (§1907) in its entirety.

## **ORC Petition #75, BOD §2602**

### ***Judicial Council***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #75, BOD §2602-** As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this petition reconfigure the Judicial Council as a representative body of the Global Church, ensuring equal representation from each Region. Language from §§2602-2606 and 2608.2 are incorporated into the new Paragraph.

**Delete the existing §2602 and replace as follows:**

#### ~~§2602. Members—~~

~~1. *Composition and Term*—The Judicial Council shall be composed of nine members and should reflect the diversity of The United Methodist Church, including racial, age, ethnic, gender, jurisdiction and central conferences, and congregational size. In the year 2000 and each sixteen years thereafter, there shall be elected three laypersons and two ordained clergy other than bishops. In 2004 and each eight years thereafter, there shall be elected two ordained clergy other than bishops and two laypersons. In 2008 and each sixteen years thereafter, there shall be three ordained clergy other than bishops and two laypersons. The laypersons shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church. Elections shall be held at each session of the General Conference for only the number of members whose terms expire at such session. A member's term of office shall be eight years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive eight-year terms, with a minimum of four years before reelection to the council.~~

~~2. *Nominations and Election*—Members of the council shall be nominated and elected in the manner following: At each quadrennial session of the General Conference, the Council of Bishops shall nominate by majority vote three times the number of ordained ministers and laypersons to be elected at such session of the General Conference. The number to be elected shall correspond to the number of members whose terms expire at the conclusion of such session. Each of the jurisdictions and the central conferences as a group shall be represented by at least one nominee, but it shall not be a requirement that each of the jurisdictions or the central conferences as a group be represented by an elected member. At the same daily session at which the above nominations are announced, nominations of both ministers and laypersons may be made from the floor, but at no other time. The names of all nominees, identified with the conference to which each belongs, and a biographical sketch that does not exceed one hundred words shall be published by the Daily Christian Advocate at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of election, which shall be set by action of the General Conference at the session at which the nominations are made; and from these nominations the General Conference shall elect without discussion, by ballot and majority vote, the necessary number of ministerial and lay members.~~

¶12602. 1. Members—The Judicial Council shall be composed of two members, one clergy and one lay, from each regional conference, elected in such a manner as each conference shall determine. In the same manner, each regional conference shall elect two alternates, one clergy and one lay. All the laypersons shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church. A member's term of office shall be eight years. The term of the alternates shall be for four years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive eight-year terms, with a minimum of four years off before reelection to the council. The terms of the two members of a regional conference shall be staggered, so that both terms shall not expire in the same quadrennium. The secretary of the General Conference in 2023 shall randomly determine which member (clergy or lay) in each regional conference shall be elected to a four-year term (serving 2025-2028), so that the number of clergy and lay members whose terms expire in a given quadrennium are equal or nearly so. All members elected in 2025, whether to a four or eight-year term, shall be eligible to be elected to one additional consecutive eight-year term.

2. Vacancies—a. If a vacancy in the membership of the council occurs during the interim between sessions of the regional conference, the vacancy shall be filled by the respective clergy or lay alternate. The alternate filling such vacancy shall hold office as a member of the Judicial Council for the unexpired term of the member whom the alternate succeeds. In the event of any vacancy, it shall be the duty of the president and secretary of the council to notify the alternate entitled to fill it. When an alternate becomes a member of the council, the regional conference college of bishops shall appoint a replacement alternate to fill out the unexpired term of the promoted alternate. b. In the event of an absence of one or more members of the council during a session of the Judicial Council, such temporary vacancy shall be filled by the respective clergy or lay alternate. If the appropriate alternate is unable to be present, the other alternate from that regional conference shall fill the temporary vacancy. Inability or failure to fill a vacancy does not affect the validity of any action of the council so long as a quorum is present.

3. Expiration of Term—The term of office of the members of the council and of the alternates shall expire upon the adjournment of the regional conference at which their successors are elected.

4. Ineligibility of Members—Members of the council shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General or Regional Conference or to serve in any General or Regional Conference board or agency.

5. Quorum—Eighty percent of the council members shall constitute a quorum except on questions of the constitutionality of acts of General Conference, in which case a quorum shall be all members or their alternates duly seated according to the rules established by the Judicial Council. An affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the council shall be necessary to declare any act of the General Conference unconstitutional. On other matters, a majority vote of the entire council shall be sufficient. The council may decline to entertain an appeal or a petition for a declaratory decision in any instance in which it determines that it does not have jurisdiction to decide the matter.

6. Time and Place—The council shall meet at the time and place of the meeting of the General Conference and shall continue in session until the adjournment of that body, and at least one other time in each calendar year and at such other times as it may deem appropriate, at such places as it may select from time to time.

7. Effective Date - This Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petitions #76 - 79, BOD ¶¶2603 - 2606**

**Rationale: ORC Petitions #76 - 79, BOD ¶¶2603 - 2606** - As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, these amendments delete ¶¶2603 - 2606 since the provisions of these paragraphs are now incorporated into ¶2602.

**Petition 76:** Delete ¶2603 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 77:** Delete ¶2604 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 78:** Delete ¶2605 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

**Petition 79:** Delete ¶2606 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petition #80, BOD ¶2608.2**

### ***Deletion of ¶2608.2***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #80, BOD ¶2608.2**- As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this amendment deletes ¶2608.2 since the provisions of this Paragraph are now incorporated into ¶2602.

Delete ¶2608.2 in its entirety. Deletion of this Paragraph shall become effective upon announcement by the Council of Bishops of the approval of all constitutional amendments associated with this Paragraph.

## **ORC Petition #81, BOD ¶2801**

### ***Implementation of Plan***

**Rationale: ORC Petition #81, BOD ¶2801**- As part of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan, this new Paragraph outlines the timeline and implementation process for transitioning into the new structure. It further describes the creation and work of Global and Regional Transition Teams to assist with developing and overseeing the transition process.

#### **Anticipated Financial Requirements:**

Due to the timing of the approval of constitutional amendments, there are no immediate financial needs created by this petition. Any future anticipated financial requirements caused by the creation of the Global Transition Team can be estimated and included by the General Council on Finance and Administration in the 2021-2025 budget.

**Add a new ¶2801 as follows:**

**¶2801 – Implementation of the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan**

1. *Precedence:* This Paragraph contains the process for implementing the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan and takes precedence over all other Paragraphs in the *Book of Discipline* not in the Constitution. The processes contained in this Paragraph substitute for any processes in other Parts of the *Discipline*, and those other processes and approvals are preempted by this Paragraph.

2. *Timeline and Implementation:*

a. By **November 15, 2021** the Council of Bishops shall appoint a **Global Transition Team** to assist the Council of Bishops with developing and overseeing a transition process for the Global Church moving from the General Conference held in **2021** to the **2025** General Conference, working with existing groups and agencies where possible and appropriate. Its term of service shall expire as of **December 31, 2025**. Should the enabling constitutional amendments fail to receive the required majority vote of annual conference members, the Team's service shall immediately expire. The Team shall work with the Council and be amenable to the Council, with necessary funds to be provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

(1) The Team shall be composed of 32 persons chosen for skill and expertise, with an equal number from each of the four Global Regions. Within each Global Region there shall be equal representation between those committed to the Regional Conference characterized by a covenantal commitment to the Church's historic (traditional) expression of its doctrinal and moral standards and those committed to the Regional Conference characterized by a covenantal commitment to the Church's evolving (progressive) expression of its doctrinal and moral standards.

(2) The responsibilities of the Global Transition Team shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. to assist Regional Colleges of Bishops and Regional Transition Teams in designing the process for electing delegates to the **2023** organizing regional conferences (¶2801.1(e))

ii. to ensure that candidates in the ministry process know how to transition into the new processes as designed by the regional conferences

iii. to track decisions by annual conferences and local churches about regional conference affiliation, and to communicate with each Regional College of Bishops and Regional Transition Team with up to date information

iv. to work with the Council of Bishops to develop the process for communicating with the regional conferences regarding moving and assigning clergy and transitioning churches to a regional conference different from their annual conference

v. to write legislation, in conjunction with the various Regional Transition Teams, to be submitted to the **2025** General Conference for a Standing Committee on Regional Conferences to foster cooperation between the conferences, monitor compliance with efforts to combat racism and sexism, and deal with issues of conflict between the conferences

vi. to work with the General Council on Finance and Administration to handle legal, financial, and administrative changes, General Agencies to handle changes with general funds, and with Wespath to handle pension changes necessary in the transition.

vii. to develop a plan for dealing with the assets and liabilities of former jurisdictional and central conferences.

viii. to adapt the transition schedule provided in this Paragraph as needed.

ix. To develop a draft Global Book of Discipline incorporating all changes reflected in the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan as guided by ¶104 along with other changes needed to provide consistency through other Paragraphs.

X. In conjunction with the General Council on Finance and Administration and Colloquy of Bishops, to submit recommendations to the 2025 General Conference for the elimination of other references to the Connectional Table found in the Book of Discipline (¶¶263, 264, 427, 511, 606, 654, 703, 705, 713, 804, 807, 812, 819, 820, 821, 1207, 1310, 1403, 1421, 1636, 1703, 1804, 1806, 1807, 1808, 2001, 2201, 2301 in the *2016 Book of Discipline*) and any distribution of responsibilities as needed. In the interim, references to the Connectional Table in these Paragraphs will not be applicable.

xi. other responsibilities assigned by the Council of Bishops not in conflict with the Constitution or with the duties and responsibilities of Regional Transition Teams.

(3) As approved by the Council/Colloquy of Bishops, the Team shall have a project manager hired by and responsible to the Team and other paid staff or contracted services hired by and responsible to the project manager.

b. As soon as possible after the adjournment of the General Conference held in 2021, and no later than December 1, 2021, the General Conference secretary shall forward to the annual conferences the Constitutional amendments approved by the General Conference for the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan. Annual conferences shall be responsible to vote on ratification of these amendments by September 30, 2022, forwarding the results of this vote to the Council of Bishops immediately at the conclusion of the annual conference. Any annual conference that has not forwarded the results of its ratification ballot to the General Conference Secretary by October 21, 2022, shall be deemed not present and voting under ¶159. The ratification percentage for the amendments shall be counted based on the ballots received, and ballots not received shall not count as Part of the total. A two-thirds affirmative vote is required for ratification. Upon certification by the Council of Bishops, results of the vote will be announced by November 30, 2022.

c. By January 1, 2023 each active or retired bishop shall register with the president of the Colloquy of Bishops and the Global Transition Team with which regional conference he or she desires to affiliate.

d. By February 1, 2023 each Regional Conference College of Bishops will meet to begin planning the new regional conference structure, in conjunction with the Global Transition Team. At their first meeting they will elect officers as needed from among their members. Each Regional College of Bishops shall appoint a **Regional Transition Team** to assist the Regional College of Bishops with developing and overseeing a plan for the formation of the regional conference.

(1) The number, composition and duration of the Team shall be determined by the Regional College of Bishops.

(2) The responsibilities of the Regional Transition Team shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. To develop a draft Regional Conference Book of Discipline incorporating all changes reflected in the Overlapping Regional Conference Plan as guided by ¶104 along with other changes needed to provide consistency through other Paragraphs.

ii. to assist the Regional College of Bishops, in conjunction with the Global Transition Team, in designing the plan and process for electing delegates to the 2023 Constituting Regional Conferences (¶2801.1(e))

iii. to design and implement the 2023 Constituting Regional Conference.

iv. to ensure that candidates in the ministry process identified by the Global Transition Team process know how to transition into the new processes as designed by the regional conferences

v. to maintain an accurate and timely record of the annual conferences and local churches deciding to join the regional conference, in conjunction with the Global Transition Team.

vi. to work with the College of Bishops to develop the process for receiving and assigning clergy and transitioning churches who chose to join their regional conference from annual conferences outside their region.

vii. to work with the General Council on Finance and Administration to identify and handle legal, financial, and administrative changes necessary in the transition, including preparation of a draft Regional Conference budget and a funding plan.

viii. to work with the Global Transition Team or Colloquy of Bishops to address appropriate current global church responsibilities.

ix. to consult with the Global Transition Team in preparing legislation to be submitted to the 2025 General Conference for a Standing Committee on Regional Conferences to foster cooperation between the conferences, monitor compliance with efforts to combat racism and sexism, and deal with issues of conflict between the conferences.

x. To recommend to the 2023 Constituting Regional Conference an identifying name for the regional conference.

xi. other responsibilities assigned by the College of Bishops not in conflict with the Constitution or duties and responsibilities of the Global Transition Team.

e. The Constituting Conference of each regional conference shall take place between **September 1 - December 31, 2023** on a date and in a place set by each regional conference's College of Bishops in consultation with the Global Transition Team and Regional Constituting Committee. Notwithstanding other provisions in the *Discipline*, materials proposed to be adopted by the organizing conference, including an *Interim* Regional Book of Discipline and nominations for an *interim* Executive Committee, shall be in the hands of the delegates no later than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the meeting.

f. Each annual conference shall meet by **July 1, 2024** to choose by simple majority vote of the delegates present and voting as to which of the two regional conferences in their Global Region they will join. All assets and liabilities owned by the annual conference shall belong to the regional conference with which that annual conference joins when the regional conference becomes effective. The decision of each annual conference shall be immediately communicated to the president of the Colloquy of Bishops and the Transition Team. After **July 1, 2028**, an annual conference may by a 60 percent majority vote of its members present and voting decide to switch its affiliation from one regional conference to another. Such a switch in affiliation shall require the majority approval of the receiving regional conference. An annual conference shall not consider a switch in its affiliation within less than four years from a previous vote on the question.

g. Between **July 1, 2024** and **October 1, 2024** any active or retired clergy person (ordained or licensed or in process) may register with his or her bishop and the Transition Team a desire to affiliate with a different regional conference than that chosen by his or her annual conference. Any clergy person not registering a choice shall by default remain a member of that person's annual conference and affiliate with the regional conference chosen by that annual conference.

h. Between **July 1, 2024**, and **December 1, 2024**, any local church that disagrees with the decision of its annual conference may vote to join a different regional conference by a simple majority vote of the church's professing members present and voting at a duly called regular or special church conference. The proposal to affiliate with a different regional conference shall originate either from the church council (or equivalent structure) or from a petition signed by a minimum of ten percent of the congregation's professing members. The bishop and Cabinet, along with other appropriate individuals of the annual conference, shall facilitate the orderly and timely administration of this process. The decision of each local congregation shall be immediately communicated to the president of the Colloquy of Bishops and the Transition Team. After **December 1, 2028**, any local congregation desiring to switch its affiliation from one regional conference to another shall follow the requirements of ¶41. A local church shall not consider a switch in its affiliation within less than four years from a previous church conference vote on the question.

i. After **January 1, 2025** each regional conference *interim* executive committee shall begin making interim assignments for bishops.

j. By **May 1, 2025** Regional Conferences will meet to redraw the boundaries of their annual conferences in order to encompass all their territory and congregations. Any new annual conferences formed shall have their organizing meeting on a date set by the regional conference college of bishops.

k. Between **May 1 - June 1, 2025** the Global Conference will meet.

3. Past and current pension and annuity liabilities under the Clergy Retirement Security Program shall remain the legal obligations of the annual conferences. Clergy affiliating with a different regional conference from their original annual conference shall have their associated past and current pension and annuity liabilities and related assets calculated, assigned and transferred as appropriate by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to the annual/regional conference to which the clergy Participant transfers.

4. Clergy appointments taking effect **July 1, 2024**, shall be made as much as possible by matching the desired affiliation of clergy and congregation. Clergy credentials of ordination, commissioning, and licensing shall be recognized by all regional conferences and shall not be repeated, no matter which conference granted the credential, but the ability to serve in a Particular annual conference shall be determined by the qualifications and expectations set by that annual and regional conference.

a. **Transitional Appointments.** Clergy may make themselves temporarily available to serve in an annual conference/regional conference different from their preferred one, either by continuing a current appointment or in an interim appointment. In order to serve in an annual/ regional conference different from their preferred one, a clergy person shall agree to meet the qualifications of the different annual/regional conference and maintain the standards of conduct as set forth by the annual/regional conference they are serving. Failure to abide by this agreement shall constitute grounds for the bishop to revoke the appointment. Such transitional appointments are designed to be temporary until a place of service is found in the clergy person's preferred annual conference.

b. **Service in Other Regional Conferences.** Clergy persons may make themselves available to serve in more than one annual/regional conference. Such clergy person shall designate one annual conference for their primary conference membership. They shall indicate to their bishop a willingness to serve in other annual/regional conferences. In order to serve in an annual/regional conference different from the one where his or her membership is lodged, a clergy person shall agree to meet the qualifications of the different annual/regional conference and maintain the standards of conduct as set forth by the annual/regional conference they are serving. Failure to abide by this agreement shall

constitute grounds for the bishop to revoke the appointment. Such a clergy person shall maintain membership in his or her designated annual/ regional conference, but shall be eligible for appointment to a different annual/regional conference with the approval of the receiving annual conference bishop and clergy session.

5. During the period 2020-2025, the General Council on Finance and Administration and General Board of Global Ministries shall continue to facilitate and support the financial underwriting of bishops, annual conferences, and mission work outside the United States through the general apportionment and Advance giving

6. The general agencies shall continue in the structure and funding level established by the General Conference held in 2021 through 2025, with the possibility of using reserve funds to supplement apportionments for those agencies not included in the *Global Book of Discipline* for the years 2021-2025. Other general church funds shall be budgeted through the normal process for this period, with plans to accommodate the potential loss of apportionment income through the transition.

7. This Paragraph shall become effective immediately upon the close of the General Conference held in 2021.