

Global Structure Proposal - Legislation

Whereas, the 2012 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference (NEJ) authorized the creation of a task force to develop recommendations regarding the global structure of The United Methodist Church (hereinafter “Task Force”); and

Whereas, these recommendations are to be provided by the Task Force to each of the NEJ annual conferences prior to their 2015 sessions, so that the recommendations can be considered by each Annual Conference for possible submission to the 2016 General Conference; and

Whereas, the Task Force was appointed by the College of Bishops and has been meeting since July 2013; and

Whereas, the Task Force discerned a set of core values to guide its work:

- Be Christ Focused - The denominational structure should reflect the teachings of and empower the mission of Jesus Christ.
- Embody Structural Fairness - The denominational structure should provide for greater global equality in the church around access to services, participation in structures, and shaping the agenda of The United Methodist Church. Any plan should provide for an equitable global resourcing and distribution of apportioned funds.
- Extend Community - Everyone, everywhere must be welcome and safe in The United Methodist Church. Any new structure must honor non-essential differences and defend the essential dignity and worth of all God’s children; and

Whereas, the Task Force has been in communication with others from across the denomination that are also working on aspects of the global structure, including: the Connectional Table, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and jurisdictional groups in the Western and North Central Jurisdictions; and

Whereas, the Task Force distributed two preliminary proposals in March 2014 and September 2014 across the jurisdiction and to the groups listed above and has revised its recommendations based on the feedback it received; and

Whereas, the Task Force has developed the attached Concept Proposal which outlines the global structure it is recommending for submission to the 2016 General Conference for its action; and

Whereas, the Task Force has also developed the attached amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, which are needed to support the Concept Proposal;

Be It Therefore Resolved, that the 2015 session of the _____ Annual Conference commends the attached Concept Proposal and Constitutional amendments to the 2016 General Conference for its action; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Conference Secretary of the _____ Annual Conference shall forward the Concept Proposal and Constitutional Amendments as a petition from the _____ Annual Conference to the 2016 General Conference.

Northeastern Jurisdiction Global Structure Task Force
Concept Proposal
January 2015

The NEJ Global Structure Task Force has developed this proposal for the 2016 General Conference to consider and to designate a representative task force or committee to write the legislation needed to implement its provisions.

An Equitable Global Structure:

A. United Methodist Global Connection

1. The United Methodist Global Connection shall be responsible for global matters pertaining to The United Methodist Church and will not address non-global matters relating to individual connections in Africa, Asia, Europe, or North America.
2. The Global Connection shall be responsible for:
 - a. Constitution of The United Methodist Church
 - b. Global Book of Discipline
 - c. Global Social Principles
 - d. Global Connectional budget
 - e. Global responsibilities of the current General Conference as defined in the 2012 Book of Discipline and in actions of previous general conferences, except for those matters delegated elsewhere
 - f. Hearing reports about ministry successes and challenges from each connection and providing opportunities for the discussion of global issues
 - g. Number and boundaries of United Methodist connections
 - h. Definition of the powers and roles of connectional, regional, annual, missionary, district, and charge conferences
 - i. Number of episcopal areas within each of the United Methodist connections
 - j. Definition of the powers, duties, and privileges of episcopal leaders
 - k. Decisions regarding the funding of connectional and regional conferences
 - l. Global agency statements of purpose, accountability to statements of purpose, and sizes and make-up of global agency boards of directors.
 - m. Definition of the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply pastors, local pastors, deaconesses, and home missionaries
 - n. Definition of the conditions, privileges, and duties of church membership
 - o. Standards for the election of delegates to the Global Connectional Conference
3. The Global Connectional Conference shall replace the General Conference, which currently “has full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional ... It has no executive or administrative power.” (§501)
 - a. The Global Connectional Conference shall focus on global matters during its quadrennial meeting which shall last less than two weeks.
 - b. The Global Connectional Conference shall be constituted in the same way as the current General Conference, shall be assigned responsibilities that are similar to the current General Conference, shall be subjected to the same Restrictive Rules as the current General Conference, and shall function in ways that are similar to the current General Conference. (§§13-16 and §§501 – 511).

- c. The Global Connectional Conference shall consist of 600 – 1000 delegates with an equal number of lay and clergy delegates elected by annual conferences and missionary conferences. The formula for determining the number of delegates from each annual conference shall be the same for all annual conferences and missionary conferences, with the provision that each annual conference and missionary conference shall elect at least one lay and one clergy delegate.
 - d. Concordat churches, affiliated autonomous Methodist churches, and affiliated united churches may elect delegates to the Global Connectional Conference:
 - The Methodist Church in Great Britain may elect four delegates with voice and vote. The United Methodist Church may send two delegates each year to the British Methodist Conference.
 - Other concordat churches may elect two delegates with voice and vote.
 - Affiliated autonomous Methodist churches and affiliated united churches may elect two delegates with voice and without vote. If such a church has more than 70,000 full members it is entitled to send three delegates with voice but not vote.
4. The Council of Bishops, the Global Judicial Council, and the global agencies shall serve the entire United Methodist Global Connection.
- a. The Council of Bishops shall continue to have similar responsibilities and shall function in ways that are the similar to the current Council of Bishops (§§47 – 54 and §§ 401 – 442).
 - b. The Global Judicial Council shall continue to have similar responsibilities and shall function in ways that are the similar to the current Judicial Council (§§55 – 58 and §§ 2601-2612). In addition, it shall have the option to review all decisions by connection judicial committees and regional committees on appeal. It shall also handle matters that reference both the Global Book of Discipline and one or more connectional books of discipline.
 - c. The agencies which the Global Connection defines as global shall be structured to fully serve all of the connections and shall establish boards of directors with members equitably distributed across all regions of the Global Connection.

B. United Methodist Connections (Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America)

1. A United Methodist Connection shall be established in each of the following: Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Each connection shall focus on the church’s mission from the perspectives of the regions within the connection by understanding and addressing the contextual implications of nations, cultures, languages, and other important realities.
2. Each connection shall be responsible for:
 - a. A connectional book of discipline
 - b. Authorizing provisions within its connectional book of discipline to accommodate the specific needs of the regions within its purview
 - c. Defining needs for the presence and roles of agencies within the connection
 - d. Connectional-specific agencies: agency statements of purpose, accountability to agency statements of purpose, and sizes and make-up of connectional-specific agency boards of directors
 - e. Number and boundaries of regions within the connection
 - f. Episcopal matters: tenure, process of election, methods of assignment, retirement plans, itineracy, and standards of conduct

- g. Clergy standards: process for ordination, conference relationship, and clergy membership
 - h. Financial matters: connection's budget, pensions, distribution of funds to support regional conferences
 - i. Legislation to the Global Connectional Conference regarding the Global Book of Discipline
3. If a connection is organized without regions, the roles and responsibilities of the region shall be added to the roles and responsibilities of that connection.
 4. The connectional conferences shall meet quadrennially prior to the Global Connectional Conference.
 - a. Each connectional conference shall consist of the delegates to the Global Connectional Conference from the connection with the provision that no connection conference shall have less than 100 delegates. Additional delegates where needed shall be elected according to the same process, and may be the delegates that were elected to the regional conferences within the connection.
 - b. Connectional conferences shall be organized in ways similar to the Global Connectional Conference and shall function in similar ways.
 5. The connectional college of bishops, connectional judicial committee, connectional-specific agencies, and global agencies with a presence in a connection shall serve that connection.
 - a. The connectional college of bishops shall be responsible for leading the connection and shall function in ways similar to the current colleges of bishops. (§48, §51, and §52).
 - b. The connectional judicial committee will deal with questions of law relating to its connection's books of discipline
 - c. The connectional-specific agencies shall be accountable to the connectional conference and their boards of directors shall be elected by the regional conferences in the connection.
 - d. Any global agencies with a presence within a connection shall be organized to be responsive to the needs of the connection and shall be accountable to the connectional conference and the global agency's board of directors..

C. Regions

1. Regions shall be established geographically and all regional conferences shall have the same authority and responsibilities.
2. Current jurisdictional conferences and central conferences shall become 12 regions:
 - a. United Methodist Connection in Africa - three regions:
African Region, Congo Region, and West Africa Region
 - b. United Methodist Connection in Asia - one region:
Philippines Region
 - c. United Methodist Connection in Europe - three regions:
Central / Southern Europe Region, German Region, and Northern Europe and Eurasia Region
 - d. United Methodist Connection in the North America - five regions:
North Central Region, Northeastern Region, South Central Region, Southeastern Region, and Western Region

3. Regions will be responsible for:
 - a. Promotion of the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within its boundaries
 - b. Number and boundaries of annual conferences
 - c. Boundaries of episcopal areas
 - d. Election and assignment of bishops
 - e. Election of members to global and connectional agency boards and regional committees
 - f. Legislation to the Global Connectional Conference regarding the Global Book of Discipline
 - g. Legislation to its connectional conference regarding the connectional book of discipline
 - h. Regional budget
 - i. Organizing as needed to accomplish its work

4. Regional conference meetings will be conducted quadrennially within one year following the meeting of the Global Connectional Conference.
 - a. The number of delegates and composition guidelines of regional conferences will be determined by the Global Connectional Conference. Regional conference membership will consist of equal numbers of laity and clergy and no regional conference shall have less than 100 members.
 - b. The delegates to the Global Connectional Conference shall be considered the first delegates from an annual conference elected to a regional conference.

5. The regional college of bishops and the regional committees will serve the Church within the region.
 - a. The regional college of bishops will continue to have the same roles as defined in the 2012 Book of Discipline. (§48, §51, and §52).
 - b. The region will establish at least the following committees to support its work:
 - Regional committee on appeals to hear and decide the appeal of a clergy person or a bishop following the decision of a trial committee, and
 - Regional committee on the episcopacy to fulfill the provisions in §§ 524.3 of the 2012 Book of Discipline.

D. Annual Conferences

1. The current configuration of annual conferences across each connection will be retained, unless altered by the region or connection.
2. Annual conferences will be responsible for electing delegates to the Global Connectional Conference, the connectional conference, and the regional conference.
3. The annual conference purpose, composition, organization, responsibilities, and agencies will remain unchanged, unless adapted by its connectional conference. (§§32 – 36 and §§601 – 657).