

Report from the Northeastern Jurisdiction Global Structure Task Force February 28, 2015

The Northeastern Jurisdiction (“NEJ”) Global Structure Task Force (“Task Force”) is recommending that this proposal (Introduction, Concept Proposal, nine Constitutional Amendments, and Frequently Asked Questions) be submitted in the form of a report to each annual conference in the NEJ in 2015. This change in approach is being recommended after recent consultations with the NEJ College of Bishops and the NEJ Vision Table.

Background

The 2012 NEJ Conference authorized the creation of the Task Force to develop recommendations regarding the global structure of The United Methodist Church. The NEJ Conference action also indicated that the Task Force’s proposal was to be provided in the Spring of 2015 so that the recommendations could be considered by each annual conference for possible submission to the 2016 General Conference.

The Task Force was appointed by the College of Bishops in mid-2013 and has met multiple times in person and via conference call.

In the early stages of its work, the Task Force discerned a set of core values to guide its efforts:

- 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.

The Task Force distributed two preliminary proposals (in March 2014 and September 2014) for consideration and feedback and has revised its recommendations based on the input it received.

The Task Force has been working with and will continue to work with other groups across the denomination which are also addressing aspects of the global structure: the Connectional Table, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and jurisdictional groups in the Western and North Central Jurisdictions. The Task Force is developing a plan to collaborate with various partners across the church with a goal to partner with them in submitting a global structure proposal to General Conference.

In summary, this final proposal recommends that:

- The Global Connectional Conference will be similar to General Conference, except that it will ONLY deal with global issues and will be responsible for a Global Book of Discipline.
- The UMC will be organized into four continent-wide “connections”: Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.
- Each of the four connections will have the option of organizing into regions. Each connection will be responsible for its own, connection-wide book of discipline, relevant to matters that are not global.
- Annual Conferences will remain the same.

We offer this proposal in humility and in gratitude for God's guidance.

Tracy Merrick, Chairperson of the NEJ Global Structure Task Force

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Legislation assistance: Kevin Nelson

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).

**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Global Connectional Conference

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: ¶ 8, 13, 14, 15, 16

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Amend ¶ 8 by revision as follows:

¶ 8. *Article I.*—There shall be a ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** for the entire Church with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth...

Amend ¶ 13 by revision as follows:

Section II. ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference**

¶ 13. *Article I.*—1. The ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall be composed of not less than 600 nor more than 1,000 delegates, one-half of whom shall be clergy and one half lay members, to be elected by the annual conferences. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

2. Delegates shall be elected in a fair and open process by the annual conferences. **The same formula shall be used to determine the number of delegates of all annual conferences and missionary conferences, provided that no annual conference or missionary conference shall have fewer than two delegates.**

3. Delegates may be elected by other autonomous Methodist churches if and when the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall approve concordats with such other autonomous Methodist churches for the mutual election and seating of delegates in each other's legislative conferences.

~~3.~~ **4.** In the case of The Methodist Church in Great Britain, mother church of Methodism,

30 provision shall be made for The United Methodist Church to send two delegates annually to the
31 British Methodist Conference, and The Methodist Church in Great Britain to send four delegates
32 quadrennially to The United Methodist ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference**,
33 the delegates of both conferences having vote and being evenly divided between clergy and laity.

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35 **Amend ¶ 14 by revision as follows:**

36 ¶ 14. *Article II.*—1. The ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall meet ~~in the~~
37 ~~month of April or May~~ once in four years at such time and in such place as shall be determined
38 by the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** or by its duly authorized
39 committees.

40 A special session of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference**, possessing the
41 authority and exercising all the powers of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional**
42 **Conference**, may be called by the Council of Bishops, or in such other manner as the ~~General~~
43 ~~Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** may from time to time prescribe, to meet at such
44 time and in such place as may be stated in the call. Such special session of the ~~General~~
45 ~~Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall be composed of the delegates to the
46 preceding ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** or their lawful successors,
47 except that when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a
48 new election it may do so. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and
49 only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call
50 unless the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** by a two-thirds vote shall
51 determine that other business may be transacted.

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53 **Amend ¶ 15 by revision as follows:**

54 ¶ 15. *Article III.*—The ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall fix the ratio
55 of representation in the ~~General~~ **Global, connectional,** ~~jurisdictional, and central~~ **and regional**
56 conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual
57 conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual
58 conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the
59 annual conference and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference,
60 missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy
61 and one lay delegate in the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** and also in
62 the **connectional and** ~~jurisdictional or central~~ **regional** conferences.

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64 **Amend ¶ 16 by revision as follows:**

65 ¶ 16. *Article IV.*—The ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall have full
66 legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, **except for those powers**
67 **constitutionally delegated to the connectional conferences,** and in the exercise of this power
68 shall have authority as follows:

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

71 2. To define and fix the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply ~~preachers~~ **pastors,**
72 local ~~preachers~~ **pastors,** ~~exhorters,~~ deaconesses, and home missionaries, **which shall in every case**
73 **be without reference to race, gender, or status.**

74 3. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual
75 conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of ~~central conferences,~~ **connectional**
76 **conferences, regional conferences,** district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational
77 meetings.

- 78 4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church ~~out~~
79 ~~the United States of America~~ **around the globe.**
- 80 5. To define and fix the powers, duties, and privileges of the episcopacy, to adopt a plan for the
81 support of the bishops. ~~to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, and to provide for the~~
82 ~~discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.~~
- 83 6. To provide and revise the ~~hymnal and~~ ritual of the Church ~~and to regulate all matters relating~~
84 ~~to the form and mode of worship,~~ subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive
85 Rules.
- 86 7. To provide a judicial system and a method of judicial procedure for the church, except as
87 herein otherwise prescribed.
- 88 8. To initiate and to direct all **global** connectional enterprises of the Church and to provide
89 boards for their promotion and administration.
- 90 9. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of
91 the Church.
- 92 10. To ~~fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences~~
93 ~~and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected by the central conferences~~ **regional**
94 **conferences.**
- 95 11. To select its presiding officers from the bishops, through a committee, provided that the
96 bishops shall select from their own number the presiding officer of the opening session.
- 97 12. To change the number and the boundaries of ~~jurisdictional conferences~~ **connectional**
98 **conferences** upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in
99 each ~~jurisdictional~~ **connectional** conference involved.
- 100 13. To establish such commissions for the ~~general~~ **global** work of the Church as may be deemed

101 advisable.

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

104 15. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated
105 structures notwithstanding.

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

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109 **RATIONALE:**

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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Connectional Conferences

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: New Paragraph

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

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

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

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

Section IV. Connectional Conferences

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

¶ 24. Article II.—All connectional conferences shall have the same status and the same

30 privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution.

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

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

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

46 1. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church
47 within their boundaries, including to promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary,
48 social-concern, and benevolent interests of the Church, subject to the powers and authority
49 of the Global Connectional Conference. Connectional Conferences are authorized to create
50 a connectional *Book of Discipline*, subject to the powers that have been vested in the Global
51 Connectional Conference as contained within the global *Book of Discipline*.

52 2. To set the tenure and method of assignment of the episcopacy within the connection, to
53 provide a uniform rule for their retirement, to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop,

54 and to fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the regional conferences.

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

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

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

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

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

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

69 9. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and
70 institutions of The United Methodist Church within the connection regardless of race, gender
71 or status.

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

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

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

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81 **RATIONALE:**
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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Regional Conferences

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: ¶¶ 9, 10, 23-31

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Delete ¶¶ 9 and 10 and replace with a new paragraph as follows:

~~¶ 9. *Article II.*—There shall be jurisdictional conferences 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 conferences based on any ground other than geographical and regional division.~~

~~¶ 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.~~

¶ 9. *Article II.*—A Connectional conference shall have the option of establishing regional conferences for the organization of the church in the connection, and, if necessary, provisional regional conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that there shall be no regional conference based on any ground other than geographical division. In connectional conferences without regional conferences, the connectional conference will assume the responsibilities assigned to a regional conference. Initially, the number and boundaries of the regional conferences shall match the previous boundaries of the central conferences and jurisdictions. Subsequently, the connectional conferences shall have the authority to change the number and boundaries of regional conferences.

30 Delete ¶¶ 23-27 on Jurisdictional Conferences and ¶¶ 28-31 on Central Conferences and
31 replace with new paragraphs as follows:

32 **Section IV. Regional Conferences**

33 **¶ 23 Article I.—The regional conferences shall be composed of as many representatives**
34 **from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined by a**
35 **uniform basis established by the Global Connectional Conference, provided that no**
36 **regional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates. The delegates shall be clergy and**
37 **lay in equal numbers.**

38 **¶ 24. Article II.—The regional conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the**
39 **meeting of the Global Connectional Conference at such times and places as shall have been**
40 **determined by the preceding respective regional conferences or by commissions appointed**
41 **by them or by their respective College of Bishops.**

42 **¶ 25. Article III.—All regional conferences shall have the same status and same privileges of**
43 **action within the limits fixed by the Constitution.**

44 **¶ 26. Article IV—The regional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and**
45 **such others as may be conferred by the Global Connectional Conference:**

46 **1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern and benevolent**
47 **interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within their**
48 **boundaries.**

49 **2. To elect bishops for the respective regional conferences in number as may be determined**
50 **from time to time, upon a basis fixed by the Global Connectional Conference, and to**
51 **cooperate in carrying out such plans for their support as may be determined by the Global**
52 **Connectional Conference.**

53 **3. To establish and constitute regional and conference boards as auxiliary to the global and**

54 connectional boards of the Church as the need may appear and to choose their
55 representatives on the global and connectional boards in such manner as the Global
56 Connectional Conference may determine.

57 4. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences, provided that there shall be no
58 annual conference with a membership of fewer than 50 clergy in full connection, except by
59 the consent of the Global Connectional Conference.

60 5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within
61 the region, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the Global
62 Connectional Conference and connectional conferences.

63 6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a clergy person
64 of that region from the decision of a trial court.

65 7. To appoint a committee on the episcopacy.

66 8. To establish and to appoint such other committees as may be necessary.

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68 **RATIONALE:**

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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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**TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Miscellaneous Provisions About Annual Conferences
Related to Global Church Structure**

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPHS: 33, 34, 35, 36

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: NO

PETITION TEXT Revise ¶ 33 as follows:

¶ 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 conferences~~ **Global, connectional and regional conferences**, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and...

Revise ¶ 34 as follows:

¶ 34. *Article III.*—The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** and to its ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **connectional conference and regional conference** in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and connectional conference** shall be representatives in ~~that body~~ **those bodies**. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by ratio for representation in the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference**, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference**. The additional delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference** shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and**

31 **connectional conference**. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates
32 to the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference** as it may deem desirable. These
33 reserve clergy and lay delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **regional conferences**
34 may act as reserve to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and**
35 **connectional conference** when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at
36 the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference or connectional conference**.

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38 **Revise ¶ 35 as follows:**

39 ¶ 35. *Article V*—The clergy delegates to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional**
40 **Conference** and to the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **connectional conference and regional**
41 **conference** shall be elected from...

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43 **Revise ¶ 36 as follows:**

44 ¶ 36. *Article V*.—The lay delegates to ~~General and jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **Global**
45 **Connectional, connectional and regional conferences** shall be elected by... ..and are members
46 thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the ~~General and~~
47 ~~jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **Global Connectional, connectional and regional**
48 **conferences**.

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50 **RATIONALE:** These amendments clean up language as pertains to the various proposed,
51 global, connectional and regional conferences and the former general, central and jurisdictional
52 conferences.

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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Boundaries

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPHS: 37, 38, 39, 40

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Insert new paragraph before ¶ 37 as follows:

Section VII. Boundaries

¶ 37. Article I.—The United Methodist Church shall organize its work into connectional conferences. There shall be one connectional conference each for Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

Delete ¶ 37 (the North American Connectional Conference will have authority to maintain these boundaries as regional conferences, but they won't be listed in the Constitution).

Insert new paragraph before ¶ 38 as follows:

¶ 38. Article II.—The connectional conferences shall determine the number and boundaries of their regions, upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences within the regional conferences. The initial number and boundaries of the regions shall coincide with the previously existing jurisdictional and central conferences.

Delete ¶¶ 38 and 39.

Renumber ¶ 40 and revise as follows:

29 ¶ ~~40. Article IV.~~ ¶ **39. Article III.**—Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the annual
30 conferences and episcopal areas may be effected by the ~~jurisdictional conferences in the United~~
31 ~~States of America and by the central conferences outside the United States of America~~ **regional**
32 **conferences** according to the provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective
33 structures of the ~~jurisdictional and the central conferences~~ **regional conferences.**

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35 **RATIONALE:**
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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: The Episcopacy Within a New Global Structure

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: ¶¶ 46-54

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Amend paragraph 46 as follows:

¶ 46. *Article II.*—The bishops shall be elected by the respective ~~jurisdictional and central~~
~~conferences~~ **regional conferences** and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place
as may be fixed by the ~~General Conference~~ for those elected by the ~~jurisdictions~~ and by each
~~central conference~~ for those elected by such ~~central conference~~ **by each connectional**
conference.

Amend paragraph 47 as follows:

¶ 47. *Article III.*—There shall be a Council of Bishops composed of all the bishops of The
United Methodist Church. The council shall meet at least once a year and plan for the general
oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire Church and for
carrying into effect the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by
the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** and in accord with the provisions set
forth in this Plan of Union.

Insert new paragraph between ¶¶ 47, 48 as follows:

¶ 48. Article IV.—The bishops of each connectional conference shall constitute a
connectional College of Bishops. Such connectional College of Bishops may meet according
to its needs in order to plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and
spiritual interests of the connection.

32 **Amend paragraph 48 as follows:**

33 ~~¶ 48 Article III~~ **¶ 49 Article V.**—The bishops of each ~~jurisdictional and central~~
34 ~~conference~~ **regional conference** shall constitute a **regional** College of Bishops, and such
35 College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences,
36 missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories.

37

38 **Amend paragraph 49 as follows:**

39 ~~¶ 49 Article V~~ **¶ 50 Article VI.**—The bishops shall have residential presidential supervision in
40 the ~~jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **regional conferences** in which they are elected or to
41 which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** to
42 another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** for presidential and residential supervision under the following
43 conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a ~~jurisdiction~~ **region**
44 that receives a bishop by transfer from another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** may transfer to
45 that ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** or to a third ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** one of its own bishops eligible for
46 transfer, so that the number transferred in by each ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** shall be balanced by the
47 number transferred out; or (b) a ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** may receive a bishop from
48 another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No
49 bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop
50 shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in
51 the ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** that elected the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall
52 require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of
53 the ~~jurisdictional~~ **regional** committees on episcopacy of the ~~jurisdictions~~ **regions** that are
54 involved. After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a
55 member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by
56 that ~~jurisdictional~~ **regional** conference.

57 A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary

58 service in another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** than that which elected the bishop, provided that the
59 request is made by a majority of the bishops in the ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** of the proposed service.
60 In the case of an emergency in any ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region** through the death or
61 disability of a bishop or other cause, the ~~Council of Bishops~~ **respective connectional College of**
62 **Bishops** may assign a bishop from another ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region** to the work
63 of the said ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region**, with the consent of a majority of the bishops
64 of that ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region**.

65

66 **Amend paragraph 50 as follows:**

67 ~~¶ 50 Article VI ¶ 51 Article VII.~~— The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical
68 United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be
69 bishops of The United Methodist Church.

70 The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, active bishops of The
71 Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions
72 of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central
73 conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing
74 him shall have determined. **Each bishop shall have such tenure as has been determined by**
75 **the connectional conference within which said bishop has been elected.**

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

84

85 **Amend paragraph 51 as follows:**

86 ~~¶ 51 Article VII~~ **¶ 52 Article VIII.**—A bishop presiding over an annual, ~~central, or~~
87 ~~jurisdictional~~ **connectional or regional** conference shall decide all questions of law coming
88 before the bishop in the regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented
89 in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference...

90

91 **Amend paragraph 52 as follows:**

92 ~~¶ 52 Article VIII~~ **¶ 53 Article IX.**—The bishops of the several ~~jurisdictional and~~
93 ~~central~~ **connectional and regional** conferences shall preside in the session of their respective
94 conferences.

95

96 **Amend paragraph 53 as follows:**

97 ~~¶ 53 Article IX~~ **¶ 54 Article X.**—In each annual conference there shall be one or more district
98 superintendents who shall assist the bishop in the administration of the annual conference and
99 shall have such responsibilities and term of office as the ~~General Conference~~ **respective**
100 **connectional conferences** shall prescribe.

101

102 **Amend paragraph 54 as follows:**

103 ~~¶ 54 Article X~~ **¶ 55 Article XI.**—The bishops shall appoint, after consultation with the district
104 superintendents, ministers to the charges; and they shall have such responsibilities and
105 authorities as the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and connectional**
106 **conferences** shall prescribe.

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109 **RATIONALE:**

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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: The Judiciary Within a New Global Structure

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPHS: ¶¶ 55-58

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Amend paragraph 55 as follows:

¶ 55. *Article I.*—There shall be a Judicial Council. The ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall determine the number and qualifications of its members, their terms of office, and the method of election and the filling of vacancies.

Amend paragraph 56 as follows:

¶ 56. *Article II.*—The Judicial Council shall have authority:

1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** upon an appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** and to determine the constitutionality **or legality under the global Book of Discipline** of any act of a ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **connectional or regional conference** upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **connectional or regional conference** or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **connectional or regional conference**.

2. To hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of **global** 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. **3.** To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** board ~~or jurisdictional or central conference~~

32 ~~board or body~~, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council
33 of Bishops or a majority of the bishops of a ~~jurisdictional or a central conference~~ **connectional**
34 **or regional conference.**

35 **4. To review, on its own motion and at its own discretion, any ruling by a connectional**
36 **judicial committee if it is believed that said ruling has such global import as to make this**
37 **necessary, including when a case had unrecognized implications for constitutional or global**
38 **church law.**

39 ~~5.~~ **4.** To have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the ~~General~~
40 ~~Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference.**

41 ~~6.~~ **5.** To provide its own methods of organization and procedure.

42

43 Insert new paragraph between ¶¶ 56 and 57 as follows:

44 **¶ 57. Article III.—There shall be connectional judicial committees in each connectional**
45 **conference. Connectional Judicial Committees shall have five members who shall be elected**
46 **by the respective connectional conferences. The respective connectional conferences shall**
47 **determine the qualifications of their respective connectional judicial committee’s members,**
48 **their terms of office, and the method of election by the connectional conference and the**
49 **filling of vacancies.**

50 **The Connectional Judicial Committees shall have authority to review matters of**
51 **connectional church law as follows:**

52 **1. To determine the legality of any act of their respective connectional conferences upon an**
53 **appeal of a majority of the respective connectional College of Bishops or one-fifth of the**
54 **members of the Connectional Conference in accordance with their connectional**
55 **disciplinary law, and to determine the legality of any act of one of their regional**
56 **conferences upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that regional conference or**
57 **upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that regional conference in accordance with**

58 their connectional disciplinary law.

59 2. To hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of connectional
60 disciplinary law made in the annual conference when said appeal has been made by one-
61 fifth of that conference present and voting.

62 3. To pass upon decisions of connectional disciplinary law made by bishops in annual
63 conferences.

64 4. To hear and determine the legality under connectional law of any action taken therein by
65 any connectional conference board or regional board or body, upon appeal by one-third of
66 the members thereof, or upon request of the connectional college of bishops or a majority
67 of the bishops of a regional college of bishops.

68 5. To have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by its respective
69 connectional conference.

70 6. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure.

71

72 Insert new paragraph before ¶ 57 as follows:

73 ¶ 58 Article IV.—Connectional Judicial Committees shall not have authority to review
74 matters of constitutional and/or global church law. Questions that include such points,
75 including when they include points of connectional and constitutional and/or global church
76 law, shall be referred to the Judicial Council.

77

78 Amend paragraph 57 as follows:

79 ~~¶ 57 Article III~~ ¶ 59 Article V.—All decisions of the Judicial Council shall be final. When the
80 Judicial Council shall declare unconstitutional any act of the ~~General Conference~~ Global
81 Connectional Conference then in session, that decision shall be reported back to that ~~General~~
82 ~~Conference~~ Global Connectional Conference immediately.

83

84 Amend paragraph 58 as follows:

85 ¶ ~~58. Article IV~~ ¶ **60. Article VI.**—The General Conference **Global Connectional Conference**
86 shall establish for the Church a judicial system that shall guarantee to our clergy a right to trial
87 by a committee and an appeal, and to our members a right to trial before the Church, or by a
88 committee, and an appeal. **This right shall also be respected by the connectional conferences.**

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91 **RATIONALE:**

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**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: General Conference Re-named Global Connectional Conference within the Constitution

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: multiple

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Amend by changing the term “General Conference” to “Global Connectional Conference” wherever it appears in the Constitution.

~~General Conference~~ Global Connectional Conference

RATIONALE:

**PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Jurisdictional Conference and Central Conference Re-named Regional Conference within the Constitution

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: multiple

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: no

PETITION TEXT Amend by changing the terms “jurisdictional conference” and “central conference” to “regional conference” and “jurisdiction” to “region” wherever they appear in the Constitution:

Revise: Jurisdictional Conference Regional Conference

Revise: Central Conference Regional Conference

Revise: jurisdiction- region

RATIONALE:

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the major changes in this proposal?

- The Global Connectional Conference will replace the General Conference and will only be responsible for those functions and matters of The UMC that are global in nature.
- Non-global or regionally contextual ministry matters would be assigned to four connections: one each in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America (Note: The North America Connection would include Central America. The Methodist denominations in South America are currently autonomous Methodist churches).
- Each connection will have the option to organize into regions equivalent to the current central conferences in Africa, Asia, and Europe and the jurisdictions in the United States.
- The proposal recommends a Global Book of Discipline, as well as connectional books of discipline. Currently, only the central conferences can adapt the Book of Discipline.

How will the proposed “Global Connectional Conference” differ from the current “General Conference”?

The proposed quadrennial Global Connectional Conference will be similar to the current quadrennial General Conference, except that its focus will only be on global matters. Currently, a majority of the time at General Conference is spent on U.S.-centric issues. A focus on global matters will shorten the length of the Global Connectional Conference and allow it to concentrate on matters of importance to all connections, not just one. For example, the agenda could include time for each connection to share ministry successes and challenges. This would give all the connections an opportunity to understand similarities and differences in cultural contexts and to discover ways to assist in overcoming challenges, as we all seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Why do we need another level of church organization?

Because ministry concerns vary between continents where UMC churches are located, this organizational structure encourages each of the four identical connections to focus on matters of importance to that connection. They are designed to provide opportunities to revitalize ministries and discuss new ideas and thoughts that are relevant in the context of a connection’s ministries.

What Book of Discipline paragraphs will be included in the Global Book of Discipline?

This proposal anticipates that the paragraphs in the current Book of Discipline (BoD) that are global in nature will be included in the Global BoD and others will be included in the connectional books of discipline. We have not specified the allocation between the two in this proposal because other UMC bodies (Connectional Table, Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and Committee on Faith and Order) are already developing a Global BoD for action by the 2016 General Conference. The Task Force decided we should not duplicate their work and plans to review the Global BoD when it is available. General Conference will need to find the balance between what is and is not global.

How will having separate Books of Discipline affect ordination and itinerancy?

Ordination, orders, and licensing will be under the purview of the connections, with an acknowledgement that the roles, expectations, and needs are different around the globe. The possibility exists that the connections may allow their regions to have different requirements, and that would be a decision made by the connection as a whole.

Itinerancy in The UMC refers to clergy moves within annual conferences, and by extension within a region and a connection. Consistency of ordination provisions would enable itinerancy to continue easily within connections. The Task Force's proposal does not include a recommendation regarding whether itinerancy provisions should be included in the Global Book of Discipline or in the connection books of discipline.

Would the new structure change the understanding that we are a global church?

The Task Force expects that this proposal will strengthen the understanding that The UMC is a global church. By assigning global responsibilities to the Global Connection and non-global responsibilities to the connections, this proposal hopefully allows both the global church and the connections to thrive. Currently U.S concerns dominate General Conference, taking time and energy that could be used to focus on global issues during that gathering. This proposal will empower the Global Connection to thrive at being the global church, and empower the connections and regions to thrive at being United Methodist in ways most appropriate to their context.

What does regionalizing mean to those who are marginalized outside the U.S.? Separation may limit the ability to seek justice across the globe.

While people in one connection may disagree with decisions of another connection, this proposal allows each connection to decide about issues of justice within its own context. At the same time, there will be global rules, and the Global Connection will retain the capacity to decide issues of justice on the global scale. Unfortunately, our system currently does not protect all marginalized people in all places. It does trust that United Methodists around the world will seek justice for all marginalized people, wherever they may live.

Does this change what it means to be United Methodist?

For some, it may. We hope for the better. The current system is not one of equity around the world. We hope this revised proposal will change that. For example, renaming the General Conference to the Global Connectional Conference and the central conferences and jurisdictions to regions highlights our connectional heritage. But name changes are not sufficient. The proposed structure is designed to foster stronger connections globally and within the continental connections. We have worked hard to retain the basic identity of The United Methodist Church.

Will the addition of the four connections increase costs of the United Methodist structure?

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

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

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