

1 **Sub-Committee on Structure of the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of**  
2 **the UMC, March 19, 2011, Affirmed in Dallas, March 2011**

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4 **A Proposed Model for The United Methodist Church**

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6 Guiding Vision of the Committee: We see a worldwide United Methodist Church driven  
7 to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To live more fully  
8 into this vision, we are working toward: 1) deeper connections throughout the church, 2)  
9 greater local authority, and, 3) more equitable sharing of power and representation  
10 around the world.

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12 **Urgency for Change**

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14 What the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church Study Committee heard in  
15 its listening sessions in the United States, the Philippines, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo,  
16 Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Europe was a desire for change.

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18 The requests for change were many: greater equality among the parts of the church; less  
19 United States dominance of General Conference; locating General Conference in  
20 countries besides the United States; moving cultural issues out of General Conference  
21 and into local conferences; greater emphasis at General Conference on the mission of the  
22 Church. We heard requests for more opportunities for interaction among the Central  
23 Conferences. We heard negative comments on the politicization of elections, both of  
24 delegates and of bishops; we heard displeasure at salary inequalities. We heard many  
25 comments about The Book of Discipline: of its irrelevance to impoverished portions of  
26 the world and the need for a more useable Book. We heard requests for a smaller Global  
27 Book of Discipline containing only those things necessary to the identity of The United  
28 Methodist Church, and for separate Books of Discipline dealing with what are currently  
29 the adaptable portions of the Discipline. There were many issues concerning Boards and  
30 Agencies, structural problems, issues concerning financing, issues concerning our social  
31 principles, and issues concerning the great need for more educational opportunities in  
32 Africa and in the Philippines.

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34 What follows are the Study Committee's proposals in response to what we have heard.

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36 **I. General Conference 2012**

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38 **The Worldwide Nature of the Church Study Committee requests that one hour**  
39 **during 2012 General Conference be designated for four groups to meet**  
40 **simultaneously for the purpose of hearing the Covenant Statement and the proposed**  
41 **model or models.** Group One would be all delegates from Africa; Group Two would be  
42 all delegates from Asia; Group three would be all delegates from Europe and Eurasia;  
43 Group four would be all delegates from North America. These gatherings are in response  
44 to an expressed need heard in every listening post for a place where issues relevant to  
45 Annual Conferences in each area can be discussed and relationships strengthened. The  
46 committee uses the name "Continental Conferences" for these groups.

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48 **Suppositions Used in this Report:**

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- 50 1) The Book of Discipline is being divided into a Global Book of Discipline not  
51 adaptable by the regions of the Church, and a local/Continental Book of  
52 Discipline developed and adopted by the four Continental Conferences of the  
53 Church.
- 54 2) These Continental Conferences are: African Conference, Asian Conference,  
55 Europe/Eurasian Conference, North American Conference.
- 56 3) The Continental Conferences have sole authority to adapt/adopt their respective  
57 Continental Books of Discipline. The Continental Conference may delegate this  
58 authority.
- 59 4) Annual Conferences elect delegates to the Continental and General Conference.  
60 The same person is delegate to both the regional and the General Conference.
- 61 5) There will be a reconfiguration of agencies including some agencies that are  
62 global and others that are regional.
- 63 6) There will be a reconfiguration of connectional funding in some way that would  
64 create some funds that are global and others than may be regional.

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66 **Process:**

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- 68 1. The WNUMC Study Committee will present a tentative model for a new  
69 global structure to the continental bodies at the 2012 General Conference.  
70 Appendix A reflects the current thinking of the Committee.
- 71 2. Develop a study guide presenting redesigned models to Annual Conferences for  
72 study during 2012-2014. (This model may be refined following the discussion at  
73 the 2012 General Conference.)
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- 75 3. In the fall of 2014, the WNUMC Study Committee shall reconvene to receive  
76 comments from Annual Conferences, reconsider models, and develop legislative  
77 petitions for change to the 2016 General Conference
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- 79 4. Present legislative changes to 2016 General Conference for establishment of  
80 African, Asian, Europe/Eurasian, and North American Conferences and a new  
81 global structure stemming from the study process.

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83 **Present Thinking of the Committee**

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85 The following represents the current thinking of the WNUMC Study Committee which  
86 will be further developed for its July 2011 meeting in Chicago:

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88 **GENERAL CONFERENCE\***

89 **Areas of Responsibility**

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- Global Book of Discipline/Social Principles
- Election of Judicial Council
- Worship/Maintaining the Connection

- 93 • General Church Programs and Initiatives
- 94 • Financial Action on Global Funds
- 95 • Accountability for Global Agencies
- 96 • Doctrines and Rituals for global use
- 97 • Membership
- 98 •

#### 99 **Meeting Logistics**

- 100 • Every four years
- 101 • Following opening day of gathering and worship, there will be several days for
- 102 meetings of Continental Conferences and Ecumenical Partners/Affiliated
- 103 Churches.
- 104 • Following the above, General Conference reconvenes to receive reports from
- 105 Continental Conferences and Ecumenical Partners/Affiliated Churches, to act
- 106 upon petitions regarding global Book of Discipline, to act on proposals for
- 107 missional initiatives, and other possible matters.
- 108 • Concludes with Worship.

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### 111 **CONTINENTAL CONFERENCES – EUROPE/EURASIA, AFRICA, ASIA, N.**

### 112 **AMERICA**

#### 113 **Areas of Responsibility**

- 114 • Local/Continental Book of Discipline. Each Continental Conference has the
- 115 power to delegate authority for changes to its Book of Discipline to the the
- 116 Central Conferences. Any changes thus enacted must be reported to the
- 117 Continental Conference.
- 118 • May pass resolutions having to do with social concerns important to regions and
- 119 recommend these to General Conference.
- 120 • Financial action on regional funds
- 121 • Accountability for regional agencies
- 122 • Re-drawings of boundaries of Central Conferences
- 123 • Educational standards and opportunities for clergy and laity
- 124 • Lifting up lay leadership

#### 125 **Meeting Logistics**

- 126 • At least every four years at General Conference on designated days following
- 127 opening gathering and worship
- 128 • Each of the Continental Conferences has the option of meeting at the General
- 129 Conference site several days prior to General Conference. In this case, housing
- 130 and meal expenses for these days shall be the responsibility of the Continental
- 131 Conference.
- 132 • Each of the Continental Conferences has the option of meeting outside the
- 133 General Conference structure at a site of its own choosing and at its own expense.

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135 \*Delegates to continental conferences are the same delegates to General Conference

136 \*There can be provision prior to conference for screening, bundling of GC petitions

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138 **CENTRAL CONFERENCES/JURISDICTIONS**

139 **Areas of Responsibility**

- 140 • Election of Bishops and making episcopal assignments.  
141 • Establishment of boundaries for annual conferences and episcopal areas  
142 • Recommend changes in Central Conference boundaries to Continental  
143 Conference  
144 • Recommendations/petitions for changes in Continental and/or Global Book of  
145 Discipline

146 **Meeting Logistics**

- 147 • Quadrennial meetings within twelve months of General Conference  
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150 **ANNUAL CONFERENCES**

- 151 • Elect delegates to General/Continental conference (same person elected is a  
152 delegate to both)  
153 • Elect delegates to Central Conference/Jurisdiction  
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155 **Enabling Provisions**

- 156 • At Council of Bishops, Continental Bishops would meet together to enable  
157 actions of Continental Conferences.  
158 • **We request 2012 General Conference to set aside one hour during which**  
159 **each of the proposed Continental Conferences would meet. Members of the**  
160 **WWNUMC Study Committee would present to each group the consensus**  
161 **statement, the proposed model, and the annual conference study plan.**  
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164 The committee affirms the general direction reflected in this model. The  
165 subcommittee is asked to consider some of the concerns brought out in the discussion.  
166 Those concerns are detailed in materials before the sub-committee.