

## **World Wide Nature of the Church Petitions to the 2008 General Conference**

### **Petition 1**

#### **Amend ¶ 9 Article II. by deletion and addition of a word**

There shall be jurisdictional 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. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### **Petition 2**

#### **Amend ¶ 10 Article III by deletion and addition of a few words:**

There shall be ~~central~~**regional** conferences ~~for the church outside the United States of America~~ and, if necessary provisional ~~central~~**regional** conferences, all with such powers, duties and privileges as are hereinafter set forth. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### **Petition 3**

#### **Amend ¶ 15 Article III by deletion and addition of a few words**

The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General, **regional and** jurisdictional, ~~and central~~ 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. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 4**

**Amend ¶ 16 Article IV by deletion and addition of a word in the following places:**

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

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~~**regional** conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 5**

**Amend the heading of Section V and ¶ 28 Article I by deletion and addition of a few words:**

Section V. ~~Central~~ **Regional** Conferences

There shall be ~~central~~**regional** conferences for the work of the Church ~~outside the United States of America~~ with such duties, powers and privileges as are hereinafter set

forth. ~~The number and boundaries of the central conferences shall be determined by the~~  
~~Uniting Conference.~~ ~~Subsequently t~~ The General Conference shall have authority to  
change the number and boundaries of ~~central~~**regional** conferences. The ~~central~~**regional**  
conferences shall have the duties, powers and privileges hereinafter set forth. (The change  
in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this  
parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 6**

#### **Amend ¶ 29 Article II by deletion and addition of a word**

The ~~central~~regional conferences shall be composed of as many delegates as shall  
be determined by a basis established by the General Conference. The delegates shall be  
clergy and lay in equal numbers. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes  
effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed  
from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 7**

#### **Amend ¶ 30 Article III by deletion and addition of a few words**

The ~~central~~ **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 ~~central~~**regional** conferences or by commissions appointed by them  
or by the General Conference. ~~The date and place of the first meeting succeeding the~~  
~~Uniting Conference shall be fixed by the bishops of the respective central conferences, or~~

~~in such manner as shall be determined by the General Conference.~~ (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### **Petition 8**

**Amend ¶ 31 Article IV by the deletion and addition of a word in the following places:**

The ~~central~~ **regional** conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference: . . .

2. **In those regional conferences where there are no jurisdictional conferences,** ~~to~~ elect bishops for the respective ~~central~~**regional** conferences in number as may be determined from time to time, upon a basis fixed by the General Conference, and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops as may be determined by the General Conference. **In those regional conferences where there are jurisdictional conferences, bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional conferences.**

3. To establish and constitute such ~~central~~**regional** conference boards as may be required and to elect their administrative officers.

6. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted or new sections of the ~~central~~**regional** conference Discipline enacted by the ~~central~~**regional** conference.

7. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher of that ~~central~~**regional** conference from the decision of a committee on

trial. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### **Petition 9**

#### **Amend ¶ 32 Article I by deletion and addition of a word**

The annual conference shall be composed of clergy members as defined by the General Conference, together with professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses under Episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference. In the annual conferences of the ~~central~~ **regional** conferences, 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. Each charge served by more than one clergy shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members. The lay members shall have been for the two years next preceding their election members of The United Methodist Church and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election.

If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 10**

**Amend ¶ 33 Article II by deletion and addition of a word**

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, **regional** and ~~the jurisdictional or central~~ conferences, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on ordained ministry with vote. It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 11**

**Amend ¶34 Article III by the deletion and addition of several words**

The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its jurisdictional ~~and of central~~ **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 shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional ~~and of central~~ **regional** conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the jurisdictional ~~and of central~~ **regional** conference. The additional delegates to the jurisdictional ~~and of 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 ~~and of central~~ **regional** conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional ~~and of 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. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 12**

**Amend ¶ 35 Article IV by the deletion and addition of a word**

The ordained ministerial delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional ~~and of central~~ **regional** conference shall be elected by and from the ordained ministerial members in full connection with the annual conference or provisional annual conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 13**

**Amend ¶ 36 Article V by the deletion and addition of a few words**

The lay delegates to the General, ~~and jurisdictional~~ **and of 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 ~~and of central~~ regional conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 14**

**Amend ¶ 38 Article II by the deletion and addition of a word**

The work of the Church ~~outside the United States of America~~ may be formed into ~~central~~ **regional** conferences, the number and boundaries of which shall be determined by ~~the Uniting Conference,~~ the General Conference having authority ~~subsequently to make changes in the number and boundaries.~~ (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 15**

##### **Amend ¶ 40 Article IV by the deletion and addition of a few words**

Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas may be effected by the jurisdictional conferences in the United States of America and by the ~~central~~ **regional** conferences outside the United States of America according to the provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective structures of the jurisdictional and the ~~central~~ **regional** conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 16**

##### **Amend ¶ 46 Article II by the deletion and addition of a few words**

The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and ~~central~~ **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~~ **regional** conference for those elected by such ~~central~~ **regional** conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 17**

**Amend ¶ 48 by the deletion and addition of a several words**

The bishops of each jurisdictional and ~~central~~ **regional** conference shall constitute a College of Bishops. **In Regional Conferences where there are Jurisdictional Conferences, the Jurisdictional Colleges shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions within their jurisdictions. In Regional Conferences where there are no Jurisdictional Conferences, the Regional Conference** ~~and such~~ College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 18**

**Amend ¶ 49 Article V by the deletion and addition of several words**

The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the jurisdictional ~~and or central~~ **regional** conferences in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of the two bases: (a) a jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a jurisdiction may receive a bishop from another jurisdiction 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 jurisdiction 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 jurisdictional committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions 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 jurisdictional conference. A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop; *provided* that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any jurisdiction or ~~central~~ **regional** conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another jurisdiction or ~~central~~ **regional** conference to the work of the said jurisdiction or ~~central~~ **regional** conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdiction or ~~central~~ **regional** conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 19**

**Amend ¶ 50 Article VI by the deletion and addition of a few words**

The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be 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 by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a ~~central~~ **regional** conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the ~~central~~ **regional** conference electing him shall have determined.

The jurisdictional 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 delegations. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional 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 jurisdictional conference. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 20**

#### **Amend ¶51 Article VII by the deletion and addition of a word**

A bishop presiding over an annual, ~~central~~ **regional** or jurisdictional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular 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. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Judicial Council, which shall affirm, modify or reverse them. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 21**

**Amend ¶ 52 Article VIII by the deletion and addition of a word**

The bishops of the several jurisdictional and ~~central~~ **regional** conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

**Petition 22**

**Amend ¶ 56 Article II by deletion and addition of a few words in the following places:**

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~~ **regional** conference upon an appeal of the majority of the bishops of that jurisdictional or ~~central~~ **regional** conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that jurisdictional or ~~central~~ **regional** conference. . . .

4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General Conference board or jurisdictional or ~~central~~ **regional** 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~~ **regional** conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 23**

##### **Amend ¶ 61 Article III by deletion and addition of a word**

A jurisdictional or ~~central~~ **regional** conference may by a majority vote propose changes in the Constitution of the Church, and such proposed changes shall be submitted to the next General Conference. If the General Conference adopts the measure by a two-thirds vote, it shall be submitted to the annual conferences according to the provision for amendments. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### **Petition 24**

##### **Enabling Resolution for Further Study**

**Resolved:** That the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table jointly continue their study of how to lead the United Methodist Church to reflect its worldwide nature and explore how the *Book of Discipline* might be altered so that the United States would be one Regional Conference while maintaining the current jurisdictions. The study will include consultation with the Affiliated Autonomous and Affiliated United Churches. Cost for this study will be borne by the Episcopal Fund and the General Administration Fund. It should be guided by the following principles:

##### **A. General Conference and US Regional Conference**

1. The General Conference would meet for one week with the same number of delegates as currently elected apportioned in the same way as now done.
2. Following the meeting of the General Conference, the US delegates to General Conference would meet as the US Regional Conference to conduct its business.
3. General Conference will always meet prior to any and all Regional Conferences.
4. While this arrangement could continue indefinitely, each body could decide to meet at a separate time and place. However, for reasons of cost and the long-range plans already made for General Conferences in the near future, it is envisioned that back-to-back meetings will be held in the United States for the first two quadrennia after passage.

#### **B. Powers of the General Conference**

Essentially, the power of the General Conference will remain the same. It will have authority over the following:

1. Constitution
2. Doctrinal Standards, Doctrinal History, Doctrinal Heritage and Our Theological Task
3. Mission Statements and Global Mission Initiatives
4. Social Principles
5. Resolutions on Global Issues
6. Clergy Orders
7. Episcopacy. The Council of Bishops remains the Council for the whole church.
8. Financial Matters regarding the following funds: World Service, Episcopal, Interdenominational Cooperation, and General Administration, and Africa University. GCFA remains a Council for the whole church.
9. Administrative Order defined or delegated.
10. Judicial order for global matters. The Judicial Council remains a general church body elected at General Conference.
11. Relationships with other denominations, world communions and interreligious groups.
12. Definition of and requirements for church membership defined or delegated.

#### **C. General Agencies**

All General Agencies remain as agencies for the whole church.

### **RATIONALE FOR THE LEGISLATION**

General Conference should be able to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference should belong to a Regional Conference which should be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences. Further study is needed to explore how to live more fully into our world-wide nature.