

Notice: Original petition submitted by the Philippine Annual Conference Cavite on behalf of the Christmas Covenant to the 2020 General Conference and now resubmitted with expansion and additional amendments.

Total Number of Pages: 16

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #1 of 8 – Amend the Constitution to Create Regional Conferences on a Worldwide Basis

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶¶ 9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 46, 49, 50, 52, 56, 61 and add new 13; renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly.

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

AMEND ¶¶ 9, (which shall be renumbered ¶ 10), 10 (which shall be renumbered ¶ 9), 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 46, 49, 50, 52, 56, 61 and add new 13 as follows:

¶ 10-9. ~~Article III~~ Article II. - There shall be ~~central~~ regional conferences for the work of the worldwide 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, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no regional or jurisdictional conference based on any ground other than geographical division.

¶ 9 10. ~~Article II~~ Article III. - There shall ~~may~~ be jurisdictional conferences for the work of 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~~ conference based on any ground other than geographical and regional division.

(NEW - Renumber subsequent paragraphs) ¶ 13. ~~Article VI.~~ – The General Conference, regional conferences, jurisdictional conferences, and annual conferences shall have autonomy of

action within the limits fixed by the Constitution, provided that any legislation enacted within the respective powers of a conference but overlapping with the powers of another shall not be rendered invalid, unless its purpose and substance are beyond the authority of the enacting body.

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

In a regional conference with jurisdictions, the regional conference shall fix the ratio of representation in its jurisdictional 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 jurisdictional conference and further provided that all general and regional conference delegates will be members of their respective jurisdictional conferences.

¶ **16. Article IV.**- The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, subject to the limits fixed by the Constitution, and in the exercise thereof shall have authority as follows:

...

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

16.4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the worldwide Church outside the United States of America.

...

16.10. 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 without jurisdictions.

...

16.12. To change the number and the boundaries of regional conferences, and to change the number and the boundaries of jurisdictional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each jurisdictional conference involved.

...

16.17. To legislate what is non-adaptable for regional conferences by a 60% majority vote, while respecting the powers given to regional conferences according to ¶31.5.

¶ 23. *Article I.*-The jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of as many representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined by a uniform basis established by the ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist, provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100

delegates. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

¶ **24. Article II.** - All jurisdictional conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution. The ratio of representation of the annual conferences and missionary conferences in the General Conference and the regional conference where jurisdictions exist shall be the same for all jurisdictional conferences.

¶ **25. Article III.** - The ~~General Conferences~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist shall fix the basis of representation in the jurisdictional conferences, provided that the jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates to be elected by the annual conferences, the missionary conferences and the provisional annual conferences.

¶ **26. Article IV.** - Each jurisdictional conference shall meet at the time determined by the ~~Council~~ College of Bishops of the regional conference where jurisdictions exist or its delegated committee, each jurisdictional conference convening on the same date as the others and at a place selected by the jurisdictional committee on entertainment, appointed by its respective ~~College of Bishops~~ unless such a committee has been appointed by the preceding jurisdictional conference.

¶ **27. Article V.** - The jurisdictional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conferences:

...

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

5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the jurisdiction, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Conference and in the regional conferences.

6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a ~~traveling preacher~~ clergy or lay member of that jurisdiction from the decision of a trial committee.

Section V. ~~Central~~ Regional Conferences

¶ 28. *Article I.*— There shall be ~~central~~ regional conferences for the work of the worldwide Church outside the United States of America with such powers, duties, powers, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, to be exercised equitably across the regional conferences, subject to limits fixed by the Constitution.

~~The number and boundaries of the central conferences shall be determined by the Uniting Conference. Subsequently the General Conference shall have authority to change the number and boundaries of central conferences. The central conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth.~~

1. Initially, the number and boundaries of the regional conferences shall be as follows:

a) There shall be a regional conference for the work of the Church in the United States of America that includes all of the areas that comprise the jurisdictional conferences identified in Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 37.

b) The central conferences or provisional central conferences which existed prior to the postponed 2020 General Conference shall become regional or provisional regional conferences.

2. The General Conference shall have the authority to change the number and boundaries of regional conferences and provisional regional conferences.

¶ **29. Article II.**– 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.

¶ **30. Article III.**– 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.~~

¶ **31. Article IV.**– The ~~central~~ regional conferences shall have the following powers and duties as the special conditions and the mission of the Church in the area require, subject to the limits fixed by the Constitution, and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference:

1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern, and benevolent interests and institutions of the Church within their own boundaries.

2 . In regional conferences without jurisdictions, ¶to elect the 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; to fix the tenure of their bishops, the episcopal areas and residences, and to assign the bishops who are to reside in the respective regional conference to their areas; and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops as may be determined by the General Conference.

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

4. To determine the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences in accordance with ¶ 40 within their respective areas.

5. To ~~make such~~ legislate rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including ~~such~~ changes and adaptations of the ~~General~~ *Discipline* as follows, as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference while upholding the Constitution and the decisions of General Conference in accordance with ¶ 16.17:

a) To establish and publish a regional *Discipline* with legislation and provisions pertaining to the regional, annual, district, and charge conferences within its boundaries, including qualifications and educational requirements of clergy and specialized lay ministries, and forms of organization according to the laws of the country or countries.

b) To set standards of character and other qualifications for admission of lay members.

c) To acknowledge annual conferences as the basic bodies of the church (¶ 33) voting on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and therefore considering the requirements set forth in a regional *Discipline* regarding specialized lay ministry and license, ordination, or conference membership, as minimum requirements.

d) To establish and publish a regional hymnal and ritual of the Church, including ecclesial acts of marriage and burial, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules, but authorizing to interpret Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion so as to recognize the governments of the country or countries.

e) To allow the annual conferences to adopt structures adequate to their mission while upholding mandated structures.

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

7. To adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy, including bishops, and lay members of the Church and to provide the necessary means and methods of implementing the said rules; provided, however, that the ordained ministers shall not be deprived of the right of trial by a clergy committee, and lay members of the Church of the right of trial by a duly constituted committee of lay members; and to make changes in the chargeable offenses and their penalties.

~~To~~A regional conference or a jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, shall appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a ~~traveling preacher~~ clergy or lay member of ~~that central~~ the respective conference from the decision of a committee on trial.

¶ **32. Article I.**— The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members. The clergy membership shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection, provisional members, associate members, and local pastors under appointment. The lay membership shall consist of professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses, and home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of ~~United Methodist Women~~ United Women in Faith, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries, conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), 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 outside the USA, 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.

¶ **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 Conference and their respective regional-jurisdictional or central conferences, as well as jurisdictional conference if its regional conference has jurisdictions, 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 and the committee on investigation 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.

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

In regional conferences with jurisdictions, all general and regional conference delegates shall be delegates to the jurisdictional conference. Whenever possible, reserve delegates to the

regional conference shall also serve in order of election as delegates to the jurisdictional conference, with any reserve delegates who cannot be seated as jurisdictional delegates becoming reserve delegates to the jurisdictional conference. As needed, additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional conference. The annual conference may also elect additional reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional conference as it may deem desirable.

¶ **35. Article IV.**-The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to their respective regional and jurisdictional or central conference as well as jurisdictional conference, if its regional conference has jurisdictions, shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree or its equivalent in regional conferences outside of the USA and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

¶ **36. Article V.**-The lay delegates to the General Conference and to their respective regional conference, and jurisdictional or central conferences as well as jurisdictional conference if its regional conference has jurisdictions, 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 Conference and jurisdictional or

~~central regional conferences as well as the jurisdictional conferences, if its regional conference has jurisdictions.~~

[DELETE ¶ 38 and ¶ 39 and renumber all of the articles within its section and renumber all subsequent paragraphs of the Constitution.]

~~¶ 38. *Article II.*—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.~~

~~¶ 39. *Article III.*—Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the jurisdictional conferences may be effected by the General Conference upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences of each of the jurisdictional conferences involved.~~

~~¶ 40 *Article IVII.*— The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas shall be determined by the respective regional conferences or by the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions. ~~jurisdictional conferences in the United States of America and by the central 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 conferences.~~ The authority of regional and jurisdictional and central conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.~~

~~¶ 46. *Article II.*—The bishops shall be elected by the respective regional conferences or by the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, ~~jurisdictional and central 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 conference~~, provided that episcopal elections in ~~central~~ regional conferences without jurisdictions shall be held at a regular, not an extra, session of ~~the central~~ such regional conference, except in the case where an unexpected vacancy must be filled.

¶ 48. *Article IV.*-The bishops of each ~~jurisdictional and central conference~~ regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories.

¶ 49. *Article V.*-The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in ~~the jurisdictional or central conferences~~ their respective regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for residential and presidential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of 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 or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, 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 or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, to the work of the said ~~jurisdiction or central~~ regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that ~~jurisdiction or central~~ regional conference or jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions.

¶ 50. *Article VI.* - ~~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 bBishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bBishops elected by a central regional conference without jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central regional conference electing him them shall have determined.~~

The regional conference or the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions, ~~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

delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to ~~the~~ its respective regional conference or jurisdiction,~~at conference~~ if a region has jurisdictions, 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~~ respective regional conference or the jurisdiction, if a regional conference has jurisdictions.

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

¶ **52. Article VIII.** - The bishops of the several regional ~~jurisdictional and central~~ conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences. If a regional conference has jurisdictions, the bishops shall also preside in the session of their respective jurisdictional conference.

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

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

...

4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General Conference board, ~~or regional, or jurisdictional or central~~ conference board or body, upon appeal

by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of the bishops of a regional or jurisdictional ~~or a central~~ conference.

...

¶ **61. Article III.** - A regional or jurisdictional ~~or central~~ 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 ratification process by the annual conferences for the constitutional amendments in this petition shall begin no later than 30 days after the adjournment of the postponed 2020 General Conference.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:



Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

Matters

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Notice: Original petition submitted by the Philippine Annual Conference Cavite on behalf of the Christmas Covenant to the 2020 General Conference and now resubmitted with expansion and additional amendments.

Total Number of Pages: 19

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #2 of 8 – Enabling Legislation on Regional Conferences, Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments to Create Regional Conferences on a Worldwide Basis Discipline Paragraphs: ¶¶ 512-529, 540-548, 560-567

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

AMEND ¶¶ 512, 514, 522, 525, 529, 540-543, 545-548, 560-567 as follows:

¶ 512. *Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy* - 1. There shall be an Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy elected by the ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist consisting of the persons nominated by their annual conference delegations to serve on the several jurisdictional committees on episcopacy. The committee shall meet not later than the fifth day of the conference session and at the time and place set for their convening by the president of the ~~Council~~ College of Bishops of the regional conference where jurisdictions exist and shall elect from their number a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. The function of this joint committee shall be to discuss the possibility of transfers of bishops across jurisdictional lines at the forthcoming jurisdictional conferences for residential and presidential responsibilities in the ensuing quadrennium; and to review on the basis of missional needs an application from a jurisdiction which, by number of its church members as provided in ¶ 404, would experience a reduction in the number of its bishops, and recommend the number of bishops to which that jurisdiction should be entitled to the General Conference for determination by the General Conference. This provision regarding missional

needs is enabling, and it is not constraining on the power of General Conference to act in the absence of a recommendation from the committee.

...

A record of the proceedings of the committee shall be kept by the Office of Episcopal Services of the General Council on Finance and Administration. (~~Changes in 1. shall take effect at the close of General Conference 2012.~~)

...

4. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will report to each ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist the action taken during the previous quadrennium.

¶ 514. *Membership* - The membership of each jurisdictional conference shall consist of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by the annual conferences as provided in the Discipline. Consideration shall be given to electing an inclusive delegation (¶¶ 124, 140). The number of delegates to which an annual conference is entitled shall be twice the number of its General Conference delegates, except when the application of that formula results in a total number of delegates to a jurisdictional conference less than 100. In that event, the Secretary of the ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist shall adjust the number of delegates to the jurisdictional conference in the same proportion among the annual and missionary conferences of the jurisdiction to achieve a total of 100, ensuring that no annual or missionary conference shall be represented by fewer than four delegates.

¶ 522. *Presiding Bishops* - The jurisdictional conference shall be presided over by the bishops of the jurisdiction or a bishop of ~~another jurisdiction or of a central~~ a regional

conference. In case no bishop of the jurisdiction is present, the conference may elect a president from the clergy delegates.

¶ 525. *Powers and Duties of Jurisdictional Conference* - The jurisdictional conference shall have powers and duties as described in the Constitution. It shall also have such other powers and duties as may be conferred by the General Conference or its regional conference. It shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church with respect to elimination of discrimination based upon race.

¶ 529. *Agencies* - The jurisdictional conference shall have the authority to appoint or elect such agencies as the ~~General Conference~~ regional conference where jurisdictions exist may direct or as it deems necessary for its work. Insofar as possible, the membership on councils, boards, and agencies of the jurisdictional conference shall include one-third clergy, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen in keeping with the policies for general Church agencies, except for the Board of Ordained Ministry and the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of clergywomen, youth, young adults, older adults, single adults, persons with disabilities, persons from churches of small membership, and racial and ethnic persons. (See ¶ 710.9 a-c.) Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the jurisdiction shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the agencies of which they are members to engage in witness ministries and, in particular, to ask, “How are we intentionally reaching new people for Jesus Christ through our ministries?” and “How are we helping new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?”

Section III. ~~Central~~ Regional Conferences

¶ 540. *Authorization* - 1. ~~In territory outside the United States, annual~~ Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, mission conferences, and missions, in such numbers as the General Conference by a ~~two-thirds~~ majority vote shall determine, may be organized by the General Conference into ~~central~~ regional conferences or provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences, with such powers, duties, and privileges, ~~and powers~~ as are hereinafter set forth and as the General Conference by a ~~two-thirds~~ majority vote shall prescribe, provided that the names or boundaries of an existing regional conference may not be changed without the consent of such regional conference.

2. There shall be such ~~central~~ regional conferences as have been authorized or shall be hereafter authorized by the General Conference, provided that a ~~central~~ regional conference shall have a total of at least thirty clergy and thirty lay delegates on the basis of representation as set forth in this section, except as the General Conference may fix a different number.

3. The United Methodist Church shall have ~~central~~ regional conferences with ministries in the following countries:

a) *Africa ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, ~~Swaziland~~ Eswatini, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe;

b) *Central and Southern Europe ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Albania, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, ~~Bulgaria, Croatia~~, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, ~~Slovak Republic~~, Switzerland, Tunisia;

c) *Congo ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zambia;

d) *Germany ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Germany;

e) *Northern Europe and Eurasia ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan;

f) *Philippines ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Philippines;

g) *West Africa ~~Central~~ Regional Conference*: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone.;

h) *United States Regional Conference*: United States of America and all countries, regions and territories that are part of ¶ 37.

4. A provisional ~~central~~ regional conference may become a ~~central~~ regional conference upon the fulfillment of the necessary requirements and upon the authorization of the General Conference.

¶ 541. *Composition* - 1. The ~~central~~ regional conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members in equal numbers, the clergy members elected by the clergy members of the annual conference and the lay members by the lay members thereof. Their qualifications and the manner of election shall be determined by the ~~central~~ regional conference itself, subject only to constitutional requirements. Each annual conference and provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least two clergy and two lay delegates, and no other selection of delegates shall be authorized that would provide for more than one clergy delegate for every six clergy members of an annual conference; except that a majority of the number fixed by a central regional conference as the ratio of representation shall entitle an annual conference to an additional clergy delegate and to an additional lay delegate. For the purposes of this paragraph, missionary conferences in regional conferences with jurisdictions shall be treated as an annual conference (see ¶ 23). Each ~~missionary conference and mission~~ is authorized to elect and send one of its members to the

~~central~~ regional conference concerned as its representative, said representative to be accorded the privilege of sitting with the committees of the ~~central~~ regional conference, with the right to speak in the committees and in the regular sessions of the ~~central~~ regional conference, but without the right to vote. Representatives of missionary conferences or missions shall have the same claim for payment of expenses as is allowed to members of their respective ~~central~~ regional conference.

2. In the case of a ~~central~~ regional conference, the rule of proportionate representation shall be applied by each annual conference.

¶ 542. *Organization* - 1. The first meeting of a ~~central~~ regional conference shall be called by the bishop or bishops in charge at such time and place as they may elect to which members of the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions concerned shall be elected on the basis of representation as provided herein. The time and place of future meetings shall be determined by the ~~central~~ regional conference or its executive committee.

2. Each ~~central~~ regional conference shall meet within the year succeeding the session of the General Conference at such time and place as the ~~central~~-regional conference itself or its bishops may determine ~~for the purpose of electing bishops when vacancies occur and for attending to other matters as required~~. The ~~central~~ regional conference has the right to hold such adjourned sessions as it may determine. The sessions of said conference shall be presided over by the bishops. In case no bishop is present, the conference shall elect a temporary president from among its own members. The bishops resident in a ~~central~~ regional conference or a majority of them, with the concurrence of the executive committee or other authorized

committee, shall have the authority to call an extra session of the ~~central~~ regional conference to be held at the time and place designated by them.

3. The Council of Bishops may assign one or more of its number to visit any central regional conference or provisional ~~central~~-regional conference. When so assigned, the bishop shall be an accredited representative of the general Church, and when requested by a majority of the bishops resident in that conference may exercise therein the functions of the episcopacy.

4. ~~The presiding officer of the central conference shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the central conference, and~~ Presiding officers of regional conferences shall decide questions of law, subject to an appeal to the Judicial Council, but questions relating to the interpretation of the rules and regulations made by the ~~central~~ regional conference for the governing of its own session shall be decided by the ~~central~~ judicial court of the regional conference. The presiding officer of a regional conference outside the USA shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the respective regional conference.

5. A ~~central~~ regional conference, where the laws of the land permit, shall have the power to organize and incorporate one or more executive committees, executive boards, or councils of cooperation, with such membership and such powers as may have been granted by the ~~central~~ regional conference for the purpose of representing it in its property and legal interests and for transacting any necessary business that may arise in the interval between the sessions of the ~~central~~ regional conference or that may be committed to said boards or committees by the ~~central~~ regional conference.

6. Each ~~central~~ regional conference within the bounds of which the General Board of Global Ministries has work shall maintain a cooperative and consultative relationship with the said board through a duly constituted executive committee, executive board, or council of

cooperation; but the legal distinction between the General Board of Global Ministries and the organized church on the field shall always be kept clear.

¶ **543.** *Powers and Duties* - The regional conference shall have the powers and duties as described in the Constitution. It shall also have such other powers and duties as may be conferred by the General Conference. It shall act in all aspects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church, in particular with respect to inclusiveness, racial justice and ecumenical relations (see Constitution, Division One). In particular:

1. To a ~~central~~ regional conference shall be committed for supervision and promotion, in harmony with the *Discipline* and interdenominational contractual agreements, the missionary, educational, evangelistic, industrial, publishing, medical, and other connectional interests of the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within its territory and such other matters as may be referred to it by said bodies or by order of the General Conference; and it shall provide suitable organizations for such work and elect the necessary officers for the same.

2. A ~~central~~ regional conference without jurisdictions, when authorized by a specific enabling act of the General Conference, may elect one or more bishops from among the traveling elders of The United Methodist Church. The number of bishops to be elected by each ~~central~~ regional conference without jurisdictions shall be determined from time to time by the General Conference.

3. ~~When a central conference shall have been authorized to elect bishops, such elections shall be conducted under the same general procedure as prevails in the jurisdictional conferences for the election of bishops.~~ A ~~central~~ regional conference without jurisdictions shall have power to fix the tenure of bishops elected by the said ~~central~~ regional conference.

4. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the apportionment amounts for the annual conferences of the ~~central~~regional conferences for the succeeding quadrennium based on calculation methodology approved by the General Conference upon recommendation by the Council. The scope of apportionments and the calculation methodology may be different in the USA and outside the USA. This determination shall be informed by consultation with the Council of Bishops.

5. A ~~central~~regional conference without jurisdictions, in consultation with the bishops of that ~~central~~regional conference, shall fix the episcopal areas and residences and make assignments to them of the bishops who are to reside in that ~~central~~regional conference. The bishops of a ~~central~~regional conference shall arrange the plan of episcopal visitation within its bounds.

6. A ~~central~~regional conference shall have authority to elect and support general officers in all departments of the work of the Church within the boundaries of the ~~central~~regional conference but may not determine the number of bishops.

7. A ~~central~~regional conference shall have power to make ~~such~~ changes and adaptations of the *Book of Discipline* as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require as provided by the Constitution, ~~especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, and annual conference levels~~, Such changes shall be made provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. ~~Subject to this restriction, a central~~
A regional conference may delegate to an annual conference within its boundaries the power to

make ~~one or the other~~ of the changes and adaptations referred to in this paragraph, upon the request of such annual conference.

8. A ~~central~~ regional conference without jurisdictions shall ~~fix~~ determine the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences, and fix the boundaries of provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within its bounds, proposals for changes first having been submitted to the annual conferences concerned as prescribed in the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church. No annual conference shall be organized with fewer than thirty-five clergy members except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium, which shall not reduce the number below twenty-five. Nor shall an annual conference be continued with fewer than twenty-five clergy members except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium.

9. A ~~central~~ regional conference may advise its annual conferences and provisional annual conferences to set standards of character and other qualifications for admission of lay members.

10. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have power to make changes and adaptations in procedure pertaining to the annual, district, and charge conferences within its territory and to add to the business of the annual conference supplementary questions considered desirable or necessary to meet its own needs.

11. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have authority to examine and acknowledge the journals of the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions located within its bounds and to make rules for the drawing up of the journals as may seem necessary.

12. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have authority to adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy, including bishops, and lay members of the

Church and to provide the necessary means and methods of implementing the said rules; provided, however, that the ordained ministers shall not be deprived of the right of trial by a clergy committee, and lay members of the Church of the right of trial by a duly constituted committee of lay members; ~~and provided also, that the rights of appeal shall be adequately safeguarded;~~ and to make changes in the chargeable offenses and their penalties. A regional conference or a jurisdiction if a regional conference has jurisdictions, shall appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher or lay member of the respective conference from the decision of a committee on trial.

13. A ~~central~~ regional conference is authorized to prepare and translate simplified or adapted forms of such parts of the ritual as it may deem necessary, such changes to require the approval of the resident bishop or bishops of the ~~central~~ regional conference.

14. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have the power to conform the detailed rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage to the statute laws of the country or countries within its jurisdiction.

15. Subject to the approval of the bishops resident therein, a ~~central~~ regional conference shall have the power to prescribe courses of study, including those in the vernaculars, for its ministry, both foreign and indigenous, including local preachers, lay servants, Bible women, deaconesses, teachers—both male and female—and all other workers whatsoever, ordained or lay. It shall also make rules and regulations for examination in these courses.

16. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have authority to edit and publish a ~~central~~ regional *Discipline*, which shall contain in addition to the Constitution of the Church such sections from the general *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church as may be pertinent to the entire Church and also such revised, adapted, or new sections as shall have been enacted by the

~~central~~ regional conference concerned under the powers given by the Constitution or the General Conference.

17. In a ~~central~~ regional conference or provisional ~~central~~ regional conference ~~using a language other than English~~, legislation passed by a General Conference shall not take effect until twelve months after the close of that General Conference in order to afford the necessary time to make adaptations and to publish a translation of the legislation that has been enacted, the translation to be approved by the resident bishop or bishops of the ~~central~~ regional conference. This provision, however, shall not exclude the election of delegates to the General Conference by annual conferences within the territory of ~~central~~ regional conferences or provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences.

18. A ~~central~~ regional conference outside the USA is authorized to interpret Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion (page 71) so as to recognize the governments of the country or countries within its territory.

19. A ~~central~~ regional conference outside the USA shall have power to authorize the congregations in a certain state or country to form special organizations in order to receive the acknowledgment of the state or country according to the laws of that state or country. These organizations shall be empowered to represent the interests of the Church to the authorities of the state or country according to the rules and principles of The United Methodist Church, and they shall be required to give regular reports of their activities to their respective annual conferences.

20. A ~~central~~ regional conference may, with the consent of the bishops resident in that conference, enter into agreements with churches or missions of other denominations ~~for the division of territory or of responsibility~~ for Christian work within the territory of the ~~central~~ regional conference.

21. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have the right to negotiate with other Protestant bodies looking toward the possibility of church union; provided that any proposals for church union shall be submitted to the General Conference for approval before consummation.

¶ 545. *Records and Archives* - 1. The journal of the proceedings of a ~~central~~ regional conference, duly signed by the president and secretary, shall be sent for examination to the General Conference through its secretary. Two paper copies in every translation shall be sent without charge to the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Council on Finance and Administration, and one copy of a digital version shall be sent along with the paper copies, if available. It is recommended that the journal include memoirs of deceased clergy and deceased clergy spouses.

2. The secretary of a ~~central~~ regional conference without jurisdictions in which one or more bishops have been chosen shall report to the secretary of the General Conference the names of the bishop or bishops and the residences to which they have been assigned by the ~~central~~ regional conference.

3. The secretary of each ~~central~~ regional conference shall submit a hardcopy of ~~every translation and adaptation of the general~~ the regional *Discipline* ~~or portion thereof~~ in use in that ~~central~~ regional conference to the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

¶ 546. *Property* - 1. A ~~central~~ regional conference, through a duly incorporated property-holding body or bodies, shall have authority to purchase, own, hold, or transfer property for and on behalf of all the unincorporated organizations of The United Methodist Church within the territory of that ~~central~~ regional conference or on behalf of other organizations of The United Methodist Church that have entrusted their property to that ~~central~~ regional conference.

2. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall have authority to make the necessary rules and regulations for the holding and management of such properties; provided, however, that (a) all procedure shall be subject to the laws of the country or countries concerned; (b) no transfer of property shall be made from one annual conference to another without the consent of the conference holding title to such property; and (c) the status of properties held by local trustees or other holding bodies shall be recognized.

3. A ~~central~~ regional conference shall not directly or indirectly, through its incorporated property-holding body or bodies, alienate property or proceeds of property without due consideration of its trusteeship for local churches, annual conferences, the General Board of Global Ministries, and other organizations, local or general, of the Church.

4. A ~~central~~ regional conference or any of its incorporated organizations shall not involve the General Board of Global Ministries or any organization of the Church in any financial obligation without the official approval of said board or organization. All invested funds, fiduciary trusts, or property belonging to an annual conference, a provisional annual conference, a missionary conference, or a mission, or any of its institutions, acquired by bequest, donation, or otherwise and designated for a specific use, shall be applied to the purpose for which they were designated. They shall not be diverted to any other purpose, except by the consent of the conference or mission involved and with the approval of the ~~central~~ regional conference concerned and civil court action when necessary. The same rule shall apply to similar funds or properties acquired by a ~~central~~ regional conference for specific objects. In cases involving the diversion of trust funds and properties within the territory of a ~~central~~ regional conference, the ~~central~~ regional conference concerned shall determine the disposition of the interests involved, subject to an appeal to the judicial court of the ~~central~~ regional conference.

¶ 547. *Conference Agencies* - 1. A ~~central~~ regional conference may have a standing committee on women's work. This committee should preferably be composed of the women delegates and such other persons as the ~~central~~ regional conference may elect. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of women to the Church and to devise ways and means of developing this portion of the Church membership, to the end that it may assume its rightful responsibilities in the extension of the Kingdom. The committee shall make recommendations to the ~~central~~ regional conference regarding women's organizations within its areas. A ~~central~~ regional conference organization may become a member of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women and may elect a representative to the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women within the provisions of the federation.

2. A ~~central~~ regional conference may organize a women's unit, after consultation with the committee on women's work, in connection with any annual conference or provisional annual conference within its bounds and provide a constitution and bylaws for it.

3. A ~~central~~ regional conference that adapts and edits the *Discipline* as provided in ¶ 543.16-31.5 shall establish a judicial court, which in addition to other duties that the ~~central~~ regional conference may assign to it shall hear and determine the legality of any action of the ~~central~~ regional conference taken under the adapted portions of the *Discipline* or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the central regional conference pertaining to the adapted portions of the *Discipline*, upon appeal by the presiding bishop or by one-fifth of the members of the ~~central~~ regional conference. Further, the judicial court shall hear and determine the legality of any action of an annual conference taken under the adapted portions of the *Discipline* or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the annual conference pertaining to the adapted portion of the *Discipline*, upon appeal of the presiding bishop or of such percentage of the

members of the annual conference as may be determined by the ~~central~~ regional conference concerned.

4. A ~~central~~ regional conference may have a standing committee on young people's ministry. This committee shall be composed of youth, young adults, and adult leaders of youth or young-adult ministry from each annual conference in the ~~central~~ regional conference. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of young people to the Church and to devise ways and means of developing the Church's ministry for, with, and by young people. The committee shall make recommendations to the ~~central~~ regional conference regarding youth and young-adult organizations within its areas as well as elect delegates to the Global Young People's Convocation (§ 1210).

5. Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the ~~central~~ regional conference shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the agencies of which they are members to engage in witness ministries and, in particular, to ask, "How are we intentionally reaching new people for Jesus Christ through our ministries?" and "How are we helping new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?"

6. A regional conference may establish such other agencies, commissions, or committees as it may determine are important to the work and witness of the Church within its bounds.

¶ 548. *Bishops in Retired Relation* - 1. An ordained minister who has served a term or part of a term as a bishop in a ~~central~~ regional conference where term episcopacy has prevailed shall, upon retirement from the effective relation in the ministry, be paid an allowance from the General Episcopal Fund in such sum as the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine for the years during which the ordained minister served as a bishop.

2. When former ~~central~~ regional conferences of The United Methodist Church outside the USA become or have become autonomous churches or entered into church unions, retired bishops therein shall continue to have membership in the Council of Bishops if the retired bishops involved so desire.

Section IV. Provisional ~~Central~~ Regional Conferences

¶ **560.** *Authorization* - Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions outside the United States that are not included in ~~central~~ regional conferences or in the territory of affiliated autonomous churches and that, because of geographical, language, political, or other considerations, have common interests that can best be served thereby, may be organized into provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences as provided in ¶ 540.1.

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

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

¶ **561.** *Organization* - The organization of provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences shall conform to the regulations prescribed for ~~central~~ regional conferences insofar as they are considered applicable by the bishop in charge.

¶ **562.** *Powers* - The General Conference may grant to a provisional ~~central~~ regional conference any of the powers of a ~~central~~ regional conference except that of electing bishops.

¶ **563.** *Ad Interim Provisions* - In the interval between General Conferences, the General Board of Global Ministries, upon the recommendation of the bishops in charge and after consultation with the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary

conferences, and missions concerned, may make changes in the boundaries of a provisional ~~central~~ regional conference and may grant to a provisional ~~central~~ regional conference or to any of its component parts any of the powers of a ~~central~~ regional conference except that of electing bishops. All changes in boundaries and all grants of powers authorized by the General Board of Global Ministries shall be reported to the ensuing session of the General Conference and shall expire at the close of that session unless renewed by the General Conference.

¶ 564. - An annual conference or a provisional annual conference ~~in the field of~~ within the bounds of a provisional ~~central~~ regional conference shall have the power to set standards of character and other qualifications for admission of its lay members.

¶ 565. *Ad Interim Provisions for Conferences Outside the United States*—To annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions that are outside the United States and are not included in ~~central~~ regional conferences or provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences, the General Conference may grant any of the powers of ~~central~~ regional conferences except that of electing bishops; and in the interval between General Conferences, the General Board of Global Ministries may grant such powers when requested to do so by the bishop in charge and by the annual conference, provisional annual conference, missionary conference, or mission concerned.

¶ 566. *Episcopal Supervision* - The General Conference shall make provision for the episcopal supervision of work ~~in the territory outside the United States~~ that is not now included in ~~central~~ regional conferences.

¶ 567. *Episcopal Visitation* - The Council of Bishops may provide, if and when necessary, for episcopal visitation of mission fields not included in ~~central~~ regional or provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences.

All provisions of the enabling legislation in this petition shall be contingent upon the ratification of constitutional amendments to create regional conferences on a global basis and shall take effect contemporaneously with the ratification of said constitutional amendments.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ciriaco Francisco', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left and a small mark below the name.

Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

Matters

Phone: +63 917 798 2012

City, Province, Country: Manila, Rizal, Philippines

Email: cfrancisco@umcbishops.org

Notice: Original petition submitted by the Philippine Annual Conference Cavite on behalf of the Christmas Covenant to the 2020 General Conference and now resubmitted with additional amendments.

Total Number of Pages: 4

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #3 of 8 – Enabling Legislation on the Standing Committee on Regional Conference Matters Around the World Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments to Create Regional Conferences on A Worldwide Basis

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶ 2201

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

AMEND Section XVI. Standing Committee on ~~Central~~ Regional Conference Matters

Outside the USA

¶ 2201. *General Provisions* - 1. The General Conference recognizes the differences in conditions that exist in various areas of the world and the changes taking place in those areas. There shall be a Standing Committee on ~~Central~~ Regional Conference Matters Outside the USA serving as an independent coordinating body. The General Board of Global Ministries shall be the facilitating agency to the standing committee. The standing committee shall serve as the coordinating body to study the structure and supervision of The United Methodist Church in its work outside the United States and its territories and its relationships to other Church bodies.

2. The standing committee shall meet at least twice within the quadrennium in order to review, consider, and develop resolutions and petitions related to ~~central~~ regional conferences outside the USA and may be called into session during General Conference as needed. It shall review and prepare such recommendations as it considers necessary for presentation directly to the General Conference. The committee shall submit its report and recommendations in

accordance with the timelines governing general agencies for submission of petitions and resolutions. All resolutions and petitions related to ~~central~~ regional conferences outside the USA presented to the General Conference shall be referred to the committee for consideration, and the committee shall report its recommendations directly to the General Conference. On matters related to regional conferences outside the USA, dealing with the determination of episcopal areas (§ 404.1), affiliation and autonomy (§ 572), and joining The United Methodist Church (§ 575), the committee shall report directly to the General Conference.

3. Other paragraphs of the *Discipline* notwithstanding, members may serve for three (3) four-year terms and may serve on one other general agency. The standing committee shall be composed of one bishop from each jurisdiction in the United States Regional Conference and from each ~~central~~ regional conferences outside the USA named by the Council of Bishops; one ordained minister and one layperson from each jurisdiction in the United States Regional Conference and from each ~~central~~ regional conference outside the USA who are delegates to the General Conference and named by the Council of Bishops; ~~central~~ regional conferences outside the USA with more than three episcopal areas shall elect additional members, lay or clergy, up to the total number of episcopal areas in ~~the central~~ such regional conference; one bishop, one ordained minister, and one layperson who are members of the General Board of Global Ministries and named by the General Board of Global Ministries. ~~The central conference~~ One bishop from the from a regional conference outside the USA assigned to the Council of Bishop's Leadership Team on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations and/or to the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships shall also be a member of this committee. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of women, lay, clergy, youth, and young adults. The chairperson of the committee shall be a ~~central conference~~ bishop from a regional conference

outside the USA and shall also serve as a member of the Connectional Table. (~~This legislation will take effect immediately upon action by General Conference for the membership of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters for 2016-2020.~~)

4. The Standing Committee ~~on Central Conference Matters~~ on Regional Conference Matters Outside the USA will convene at the conclusion of the General Conference at which it was elected and continue its work through the following General Conference. To facilitate transition, incoming members shall participate in the deliberations of the committee during such General Conference, having voice but no vote until the organizing meeting.

5. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall recommend to the General Conference for its action and determination a provision in the budget of an appropriate general Church fund for the expenses incurred by the standing committee.

AND

AMEND terms wherever they occur in the *Discipline*, Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to Standing Committee on Regional Conference Matters Outside the USA

All provisions of the enabling legislation in this petition shall be contingent upon the ratification of constitutional amendments to create regional conferences on a worldwide basis and shall take effect contemporaneously with the ratification of said constitutional amendments.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ciriaco Francisco', written over a horizontal line.

Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

Matters

Phone: +63 917 798 2012

City, Province, Country: Manila, Rizal, Philippines

Email: cfrancisco@umcbishops.org

Notice: Original petition submitted by the Philippine Annual Conference Cavite on behalf of the Christmas Covenant to the 2020 General Conference and now expanded and resubmitted.

Total Number of Pages: 2

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #4 of 8 – Enabling Legislation to Change Terminology of Central Conference(s) Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments To Create Regional Conferences in A Worldwide Basis

Discipline Paragraphs:

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

AMEND terms wherever they occur in the *Discipline*, Parts II-VI:

AMEND: central conference to regional conference outside the USA;

AMEND: central conferences to regional conferences outside the USA.

Furthermore, within its mandate for revision of ¶ 101, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall propose to the next General Conference after the postponed 2020 General Conference all needed changes in the Discipline, Parts II-VI, in order to be consistent with the constitutional amendments voted by the postponed 2020 General Conference. This includes among others the following changes:

- where “regional conference(s) outside the USA” shall be revised and applicable in all regional conference(s) of the worldwide United Methodist Church;

- where the creation of a United States regional conference shall lead to passing authority from the General Conference to the respective regional conference, in particular in Part VI, chapter 5 of the *Book of Discipline*.

All provisions of the enabling legislation in this petition shall be contingent upon the ratification of constitutional amendments to create regional conferences on a worldwide basis and shall take effect contemporaneously with the ratification of said constitutional amendments.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Francisco', with a horizontal line extending to the left and a small flourish at the end.

Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

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Notice: Original petition submitted by the Connectional Table to the 2020 General Conference and published in the *ADCA* 2020, Petition 20723, pp. 323-324, now resubmitted with additional amendments.

Total Number of Pages: 2

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #5 of 8 – The Creation of the U.S. Regional Committee

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶ 507

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

ADD New paragraph between existing ¶¶ 506 and 507 and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

[NEW ¶ 507.] *United States Regional Committee*—1. There shall be a United States Regional Committee (“the Committee”) composed of all General Conference delegates representing annual conferences in the United States which shall have legislative function. In addition, one lay and one clergy from General Conference delegates of each of the central conferences (“central conferences” would change to “regional conferences outside the USA” upon ratification of constitutional amendments) shall be elected by the regional conferences outside the USA or their leadership bodies and shall serve with voice and vote. This Committee shall be assigned all petitions pertaining to the operation, governance, witness, and ministry of The United Methodist Church in the United States and which are adaptable by regional conferences according to ¶ 31.5 and ¶ 101 and per ¶ 543.7 (referred to hereafter as U.S. Region – Adaptable). The Committee shall operate in accordance with provisions enacted by the General Conference and the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference, as amended, to provide for the work of this Committee.

2. The provisions pertaining to the Committee shall be in effect until a United States Regional Conference has been created and is functional, at which time the Committee and these provisions will expire.

3. The Committee shall convene and process the legislation assigned to it immediately prior to the opening of the General Conference.

4. Actions of the Committee will be reported to the General Conference for vote of the General Conference, in accordance with procedures for legislation coming from the Committee.

This legislation shall take effect immediately after the adjournment of the postponed 2020 General Conference.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:



Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

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Notice: Original petition submitted by the Connectional Table to the 2020 General Conference and published in the *ADCA* 2020, Petition 20722, pp. 373-374, now resubmitted with additional amendments.

Total Number of Pages: 3

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #6 of 8 – A Non-Disciplinary Petition Enabling an Interim United States Legislative Committee

Discipline Paragraphs: None

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

A Non-Disciplinary Petition Enabling an Interim United States Legislative Committee

An interim United States Legislative Committee (“the Committee”), a committee of the General Conference with legislative function, shall be established to deal with U.S. Region – Adaptable petitions concerning United States matters. The objectives of this Committee are to unburden the full General Conference from United States legal, contextual, and financial matters that are outside the purview of central conference delegates (“central conferences” would change to “regional conferences outside the USA” upon ratification of constitutional amendments) and to provide a venue for consideration of U.S. Regional Conference – Adaptable petitions and other matters pertaining to the Church in the United States. This Committee may be an interim body and shall continue functioning until a United States Regional Conference is created and is functional. The Committee shall operate according to the following provisions:

1. A bishop assigned by the Council of Bishops shall convene the Committee initially for the purpose of electing Committee officers. Officer elections shall follow the processes for election of legislative committee officers in the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference.

2. Based on the number and nature of petitions assigned to the Committee, the Commission on the General Conference shall set the number of subcommittees as needed.

3. Legislative items receiving no more than 50 votes against the prevailing position in the committee shall be placed on a General Conference consent calendar for United States matters. It shall require the requisite number of signatures, as per the Rules of the General Conference, to remove an item from this consent calendar.

4. The Commission on the General Conference shall be responsible for developing any other rules, responsibilities, and limitations needed for the functioning of the Committee and the attainment of its objectives as stated above.

5. Where not otherwise specified in the *Book of Discipline*, in this petition or other General Conference actions, or in the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, the rules for General Conference legislative committees will direct the processes of this Committee.

6. Petitions which pertain to U.S. Region – Adaptable matters shall be coded accordingly, in a manner comparable to the coding used to denote petitions with financial implications or worldwide impact.

All provisions of this petition shall take effect promptly following the adjournment of the postponed 2020 General Conference.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ciriaco Francisco', written over a horizontal line.

Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

Matters

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Notice: Original petition submitted by the Connectional Table to the 2020 General Conference and published in the *ADCA* 2020, Petition 20724, p. 374, now resubmitted with additional amendments.

Total Number of Pages: 3

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #7 of 8 – A Non-Disciplinary Petition to Create a Plan for Organization of a United States Regional Conference

Discipline Paragraphs: None

General Church Budget Implications: Yes

Global Implications: Yes

A Non-Disciplinary Petition to Create a Plan for Organization of a United States Regional Conference

Authorization - There shall be an Interim Committee on Organization for one quadrennium that organizes and plans for the establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference comprising the five jurisdictions of the United States.

Composition - The Council of Bishops, through the Leadership Discernment Committee, shall appoint a 20-25-member Interim Committee on Organization. The committee membership shall be determined using proportionate representation of the United States jurisdictions, with a minimum of three members from each United States jurisdiction, ensuring broad diversity, including racial, young adults, persons with disabilities (special needs) and gender inclusion. All members of the Interim Committee on Organization shall be chosen from among the voting delegates elected by the annual conferences in the United States jurisdictions. Meeting and other necessary costs shall be funded by the General Administration Fund. In addition, three regional conference members shall be elected by the regional conferences outside the USA or their leadership bodies to advise and consult the Interim Committee on Organization.

Responsibilities - The Interim Committee on Organization shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. The Interim Committee on Organization shall choose the time and place for the convening of the initial gathering of the United States Regional Conference.
2. The Interim Committee on Organization shall work with the Secretary of the General Conference and the Business Manager of the General Conference in planning for the first gathering of the United States Regional Conference.
3. The Interim Committee on Organization, in consultation with the appropriate committees of the Commission on the General Conference, shall recommend to the United States Regional Conference for action at its first gathering what committees and officers are required to ensure the functionality of the United States Regional Conference.
4. Upon the completion of the first United States Regional Conference gathering, the Interim Committee on Organization shall cease to exist as a committee of the General Conference, unless the United States Regional Committee authorizes the continuation of their work for a specific time and purpose.

This petition will go into effect only upon the General Conference approval of the establishment of the United States Regional Conference.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:



Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

Matters

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APPENDIX

Anticipated Financial Requirements—United States Regional Conference

The creation of the United States Regional Conference is predicted to decrease the cost of General Conference by reducing the number days of the gathering, due to a decrease in number of days for the entire General Conference and the expectation that the United States Regional Conference would save money for the denomination. The United States Regional Conference could convene promptly at the end of General Conference or in conjunction with Jurisdictional conferences and meet for not more than a few days to handle the United States specific matters.

The Interim Committee on Organization for the United States Regional Conference would meet a total of two times during the quadrennium, each time for no more than three days (two nights lodging). The committee could meet in a central United States location and perhaps could receive donated meeting space from a church or an agency. At a maximum number of 25 members with flights, meals, lodging, staffing, and venue costs meeting two times, the committee would need new funding of between \$83,000 and \$98,000. The committee would only meet for one quadrennium and not beyond.

Notice: Original petition submitted by the Philippine Annual Conference Cavite on behalf of the Christmas Covenant to the 2020 General Conference and now revised and resubmitted.

Total Number of Pages: 2

Suggested Title: Worldwide Regionalization, Petition #8 of 8 – A Non-Disciplinary Petition to Update and Perfect the New Regional Conference Structure Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments in Petition 1

Discipline Paragraphs: None

General Church Budget Implications: No

World Implications: Yes

A Non-Disciplinary Petition to Update and Perfect the New Regional Conference Structure Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments to Create Regional Conferences on a Worldwide Basis

Authorization - There shall be a study to update and perfect the new regional conference structure to ensure full equity between regional conferences. This will be facilitated by The Connectional Table and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (the name of the committee will change to “Standing Committee on Regional Conference Matters Outside the USA” after ratification of constitutional amendments) which shall report the results of this joint study, including any recommendations, to the next General Conference.

Its mandate shall include, among others:

- Whether a regional conference should have jurisdictions, including whether a United States Regional Conference shall continue to be subdivided in jurisdictions, and propose legislation as needed to a forthcoming General Conference;

- Whether a process of arbitration/mediation shall be developed for situations where a regional conference may be seen as overstepping its power of adaptation, and propose legislation as needed to a forthcoming General Conference;
- Other questions of equity in a worldwide church.

This petition will go into effect only upon the General Conference ratification of the constitutional amendments to create regional conferences on a worldwide basis. The study may begin immediately even while the annual conferences are still going through the ratification process.

Date: September 4, 2023

Signature of Petitioner:



Identification of Petitioner: Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference

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