



March 16, 2020

The Connectional Table (CT) has received many questions about the relationship between the CT's U.S. Regional Conference legislation and the recently released legislation referred to as the Christmas Covenant (please see page 3 of this PDF).

After a close examination of this legislation, we affirm that the Christmas Covenant accurately reflects the CT legislation which proposes creating a U.S. Regional Conference. It also makes the regional conference structure consistent worldwide.

The Christmas Covenant was named as such in recognition of the historic Christmas Conference of 1784. It was written by a coalition of central conference members from the Philippines, Africa and Europe. The legislation has been endorsed and sent to General Conference by the Philippines Annual Conference-- Cavite.

We celebrate that the Christmas Covenant was created by members of our central conferences and seeks to bring structural equity and regional self-determination to the whole church. It has always been the vision and work of the Connectional Table to raise awareness and appreciation of our worldwide connection by listening to voices from all parts of our connection, especially our central conference brothers and sisters.

Like the CT USRC legislation, the Christmas Covenant legislation creates a two-stage process in relation to the U.S. It starts with an interim U.S. Regional Committee that does not require constitutional changes. It then creates a U.S. Regional Conference, which requires amendments to the Constitution. In addition, it includes the CT's non-disciplinary petition creating an Interim Committee on Organization for the U.S.

Much of the Christmas Covenant legislation related to central conferences simply effects a name change. The legislation changes the terminology in the Book of Discipline related to the central conferences, replacing "central" with "regional" and "church outside the U.S." with the more globally equitable language, "church around the globe." These changes are consistent with the intent of the CT legislation to move away from the painful racist history of the Central Jurisdiction by using "regional" instead of "central" for the whole church.

Moreover, the Christmas Covenant puts into place structural changes related to equity. For instance, to create consistency in structure across the globe, it gives the regional conferences outside the U.S. the ability to create jurisdictions. In addition, it gives all regional conferences, including the U.S. Regional Conference, the option of abolishing jurisdictions or not using them at all. However, like the CT legislation, it keeps in place the current structure, powers and duties of jurisdictions in the United States.

Regional governance legislation, like the CT USRC legislation or the Christmas Covenant, can provide the regional adaptation authority necessary for self-determination in our worldwide church. Such legislation can provide a way for our church to remain a “big tent” church worldwide as we each shape ministry for our different contexts. Providing the space for us to stay connected in ministry but more regional in governance is a way we can seek to continue to be the Body of Christ together.

The Christmas Covenant gives the CT and the successor body of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters a role in perfecting this structure to insure equity. This collaborative group would bring a report to the 2024 General Conference. If this legislation passes, the Connectional Table would welcome such work on behalf of our worldwide connection.



Rev. Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai
Chief Connectional Ministries Officer, the Connectional Table



Bishop Christian Alsted
Chair, the Connectional Table



Judi Kenaston
Chair, U.S. Contextual Ministries Advisory Group of the Connectional Table

Total Number of Pages: 10

Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #1 – Amendment to the Constitution to Create Regional Conferences on a Global Basis

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶¶ 9, 10, 16, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 40, and 50

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

AMEND ¶¶ 9, (which shall be renumbered ¶ 10), 10 (which shall be renumbered ¶ 9), 16, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 40, and 50 as follows:

¶ ~~10~~ 9. ~~Article III~~ Article II.– There shall be ~~central~~ regional conferences for the work of the Church outside the United States of America around the globe 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 ~~shall~~ may be jurisdictional conferences for the work of the Church in the United States of America within the boundaries of a regional conference, 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.~~

...

¶ 16. Article IV.– The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional except as provided for elsewhere in the Constitution:

...

¶ 16.3. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, ~~and of central~~ regional conferences,

jurisdictional conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.

¶ 16.4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church ~~outside the United States of America~~ around the globe.

...

¶ 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.

...

¶ 16.12. To change the number and the boundaries of ~~jurisdictional~~ regional conferences upon the consent of a ~~majority~~ two-thirds of the annual conferences in each ~~jurisdictional~~ regional conference involved.

...

¶16.17. To prohibit by a two-thirds vote changes to portions or provisions of the Discipline that a regional conference would otherwise by the Constitution be permitted to make.

...

Section V. ~~Central~~ Regional Conferences

¶ 28. Article I.— There shall be ~~central~~ regional conferences for the work of the Church ~~outside the United States of America~~ around the globe with such duties, powers, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth. All regional conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution, provided that during a transition time ending on January 1, 2033 that the General Conference may allow for differences among

regional conferences including having different portions of the General Discipline apply to different regional conferences.

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

1. 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.

2. The number and boundaries of regional conferences outside the United States of America shall be as established by the 2020 General Conference, provided that, should the 2020 General Conference make no changes to the boundaries of a central conference which existed prior to the 2020 General Conference, each such central conference shall become a regional conference.

¶ 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 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. 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, and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops as may be determined by the General Conference, provided that, in regional conferences that have jurisdictional conferences:

a) its bishops will be elected by each of its jurisdictional conferences, and

b) the regional conference shall establish a uniform basis to allocate among its jurisdictional conferences the total number of bishops the General Conference has determined may be elected in that region, provided that a jurisdiction may choose to elect fewer bishops than the regional conference has allocated to that jurisdictional 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 boundaries of the annual conferences within their respective areas, provided that, in a regional conference with jurisdictional conferences, the jurisdictional conferences shall determine the boundaries of the annual conferences within their respective jurisdictions.

5. ~~To make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General *Discipline* as the conditions in~~

~~the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.~~ To make changes or additions to the General *Discipline* in the following areas as the conditions and the mission of the Church in the region may require provided that no change shall be made to a portion or provision of the General *Discipline* which the General Conference has by a two-thirds vote prohibited from being changed:

- a. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.
- b. To define and fix the qualifications, powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries without reference to race, gender, or status.
- c. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, jurisdictional conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.
- d. To supplement the hymnal and ritual of the Church and matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.
- e. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by its region and by any jurisdictional conferences within its bounds.
- f. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.
- g. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding.
- h. To make changes in the chargeable offenses and/or their mandatory penalties.

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

6. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising ~~from~~ on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted ~~changed~~; 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, provided that in a regional conference with jurisdictional conferences that:

a) the regional conference shall not appoint said committee on a regional basis, and

b) each jurisdiction conference shall appoint said committee to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher of that jurisdictional conference.

8. To establish jurisdictional conferences by dividing all of the area within its boundaries into jurisdictional conferences, and also to abolish such plan of jurisdictional conferences provided that a majority of annual conferences within each jurisdiction consent to the abolishment of the jurisdictional conferences. Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the jurisdictional conferences may be effected upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences of each of the jurisdictional conferences involved.

...

¶ 38. *Article II.*— ~~The work of the Church outside the United States of America~~ around the globe may be formed into ~~central~~ regional conferences, the names, 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 General Conference shall have the authority to establish regional conferences by a two-thirds vote including where no regional

conference exists, provided that changes in boundaries which involve of one or more existing regional conferences require the consent of two-thirds of the annual conferences of each regional conference involved. Further, once this paragraph is ratified:

a) The General Conference shall have the authority to make changes to the boundaries of regional conferences without requirement to amend to Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 37.

b) Regional Conferences shall have the authority to make changes to the boundaries of their jurisdictional conferences without requirement to amend to Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 37.

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

~~¶ 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 IV.* – The number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas shall be determined by ~~the jurisdictional conferences in the United States of America~~ and by ~~the central regional conferences outside the United States of America~~ which have not organized jurisdictional conferences within their boundaries according to the provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective structures of the jurisdictional and the ~~central regional~~ regional conferences. The authority of jurisdictional and ~~central regional~~ regional conferences provided herein is not circumscribed or limited by the authority provided to the College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision.

...

¶ ~~5049. 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 The bishops elected by the jurisdictions or regional conferences which include parts of the United States of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a ~~central~~ regional conference which is entirely outside of the United States of America of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the ~~central~~ regional conference electing ~~him~~ them shall have determined.~~

~~The~~ Each regional conference without jurisdictions and each 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 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.

AND

AMEND terms wherever they occur in the Constitution by changing “central conference” to “regional conference”

Revise: ~~central conference~~ to regional conference.

Revise: ~~central conferences~~ to regional conferences.

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 2020 General Conference.

Date: March 06, 2020
Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria
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Total Number of Pages: 21

Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #2 – Enabling Legislation on Regional Conferences, Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments to Create Regional Conferences on a Global Basis

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶¶ 540-548, 551-555, 560-567

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

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 vote shall determine, may be organized by the General Conference into ~~central~~ regional conferences or provisional ~~central~~ regional conferences, with such duties, privileges, and powers as are hereinafter set forth and as the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall prescribe, provided that the names or boundaries of an existing regional conference may not be changed without the consent of two-thirds of the annual conferences in each regional conference that is involved.

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, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, 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 for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g*—1. ~~The central~~ A regional conference in ¶ 541.3a-g 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. 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 the ~~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 for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g* —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~~ regional conference shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the ~~central~~ regional conference, and 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~~ 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 for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g* —1. To A ~~central~~ a 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, 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 shall be determined from time to time by the General Conference.

3. When a ~~central~~ regional 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 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. This determination shall be informed by consultation with the Council of Bishops.

5. A ~~central~~ regional conference, 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 including ¶31.5 to make changes to the General *Discipline* in the following areas as the conditions and the mission of the Church in the region may require provided that no change shall be made to a portion or provision of the General *Discipline* which the General Conference has by a two-thirds vote prohibited from being changed:

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

b) To define and fix the qualifications, powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries without reference to race, gender, or status.

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

d) To supplement the hymnal and ritual of the Church and matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.

e) To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by its region and by any jurisdictional conferences within its bounds.

f) To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.

g) To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding.

h) To make changes in the chargeable offenses and/or their mandatory penalties.

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

~~, 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 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 shall fix the boundaries of the annual conferences, 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.

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 conference *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 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 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.

¶ 544. *[Reserved]*

¶ 545. *Records and Archives for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g* —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 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 *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 for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g* —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. *Regional Conference Agencies for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g* —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 Women and may elect a representative to the World Federation of Methodist 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 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?"

¶ 548. *Bishops in Retired Relation for regional conferences in ¶ 541.3a-g*—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 or regional conferences of The United Methodist Church 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.

¶ 551. *Composition for United States Regional Conference in ¶ 541.3h* —The United States Regional Conference shall be composed of all General Conference delegates from annual conferences in its jurisdictions who are elected to the General Conference immediately prior to the United States Regional Conference meeting and said delegates shall represent those same annual conferences. Reserve delegates elected from the annual conferences in its jurisdictions to the General Conference shall also serve as reserve delegates to the United States Regional

Conference. In addition, one lay person and one clergyperson from each regional conference outside the United States shall be elected by their regional conferences or their leadership bodies and shall serve with voice but not vote.

¶ 552. Organization for United States Regional Conference in ¶ 541.3h) —1. The United States Regional Conference shall initially meet as the Interim Committee on Organization during General Conference and then within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such time and place as determined by the preceding United States Regional Conference. The date and place of the first United States Regional Conference meeting shall be fixed in such manner as determined by the General Conference.

2. The United States 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 of the jurisdictional conferences. The bishops shall have the authority to call an extra session of the United States Regional Conference to be held at the time and place designated by them.

3. The presiding officer of the United States Regional Conference shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the United States Regional Conference, and 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 United States Regional Conference for the governing of its own session shall be decided by the United States Regional Conference.

4. The United States Regional Conference 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 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 United States Regional

Conference or that may be committed to said boards or committees by the United States Regional Conference, provided these actions do not modify or supersede the powers and duties of its jurisdictional conferences.

¶ 553. Powers and Duties for United States Regional Conference in ¶ 541.3h) —1. The United States Regional Conference shall receive and act on missionary, educational, evangelistic, industrial, publishing, medical, and other connectional interests of its annual conferences, missionary conferences, and jurisdictions and such other matters as may be referred to it by these bodies or by the General Conference. It shall provide suitable organizations for such work and elect the necessary officers for the same.

2. The United States Regional Conference shall have power as provided by the Constitution including ¶ 31.5 to make changes or additions to the General Discipline in the following areas as the conditions and the mission of the Church in the region may require provided that no change shall be made to a portion or provision of the General Discipline which the General Conference has by a two-thirds vote prohibited from being changed:

- a. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.
- b. To define and fix the qualifications, powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries without reference to race, gender, or status.
- c. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, jurisdictional conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.

- d. To supplement the hymnal and ritual of the Church and matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.
- e. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by its region and by any jurisdictional conferences within its bounds.
- f. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.
- g. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding.
- h. To make changes in the chargeable offenses and/or their mandatory penalties.
- i. To enact such other legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and restrictions of the Constitution of the Church.

These 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.

3. The United States 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.

4. The United States Regional Conference shall have authority to examine and acknowledge the journals of the jurisdictional conferences, annual conferences, and missionary conferences within its bounds and to make recommendations for the drawing up of the journals as may seem necessary.

5. The United States Regional Conference shall have authority to edit and publish a regional conference *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 changed or new sections as shall have been enacted by the regional conference under the powers given by the Constitution or by the General Conference.

¶ 554. *Records and Archives for United States Regional Conference in ¶ 541.3h) —1.*
The journal of the proceedings of the United States Regional Conference, duly signed by the president and secretary, shall be sent for examination to the General Conference. Two paper copies 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.

2. The United States Regional Conference shall submit a copy of every adaptation of the general *Discipline* or portion thereof in use in the regional conference to the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

¶ 555. *Conference Agencies for United States Regional Conference in ¶ 541.3h) —1.*
The United States Regional Conferences shall establish a judicial court, which in addition to other duties that the regional conference may assign to it shall hear and determine the legality of any action of the regional conference taken under the adapted portions of the *Discipline* or of a decision of law by a presiding bishop of the United States 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 United States 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 United States Regional Conference.

2. The United States Regional Conference shall establish such other agencies, commissions, or committees as it may determine are important to the work and witness of the Church within its bounds.

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. *Lay Membership*—An annual conference or a provisional annual conference in the field 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 Regional 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.

AND

AMEND terms wherever they occur in the Constitution by changing “central conference” to “regional conference”

Revise: ~~central conference~~ to regional conference.

Revise: ~~central conferences~~ to 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: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

Identification of the Petitioner: Secretary, Philippines Annual Conference - Cavite

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Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #3 – Enabling Legislation on the Standing Commission on Regional Conference Matters Outside of the United States of America Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments to Create Regional Conferences on A Global Basis

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶ 2201

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

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

Outside of the United States of America

¶ 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 of the United States of America 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 of the United States of America (see ¶ 540.3a-g) 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 of the United States of America 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 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 conference outside of the United States of America 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 of the United States of America who are delegates to the General Conference and named by the Council of Bishops; ~~central~~-regional conferences outside of the United States of America 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~~-regional bishop from the regional conference outside of the United States of America assigned 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~~-regional bishop in a regional conference outside of the United States of America 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 of the United States of America 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 of the United States of America”

REVISE: ~~Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters~~ to Standing Committee on Regional Conference Matters Outside of the United States of America.

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: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

Identification of the Petitioner: Secretary, Philippine Annual Conference - Cavite

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Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #4 – Enabling Legislation to Change Terminology of Bishops Outside of the United States of America Contingent Upon the Ratification of the Constitutional Amendments To Create Regional Conferences in A Global Basis

Discipline Paragraphs:

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

CHANGE terms wherever they occur in the *Discipline*:

REVISE: ~~central conference bishop~~ to bishop in a regional conference outside of the United States of America.

REVISE: ~~central conference bishops~~ to bishops in a regional conferences outside of the United States of America.

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: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

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Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #5 – The Creation of the U.S. Regional Committee

Discipline Paragraphs: ¶ 507

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

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

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

[NEW ¶ 507.] U.S. Regional Committee—1. There shall be a U.S. 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 person and one clergyperson from each of the Regional Conferences shall be elected by the Regional Conferences outside of the United States 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 ~~central~~ regional conferences according to ¶ 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.
needed.)

Date: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

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Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #6 – A Non-Disciplinary Petition Enabling Legislation for a United States Regional Conference

Discipline Paragraphs: None

General Church Budget Implications: No

Global Implications: Yes

A Non-Disciplinary Petition Enabling Legislation for a United States Regional Conference

A United States Regional Committee (“the Committee”), a committee of the General Conference with legislative function, shall be established to deal with United States Regional Conference – Adaptable petitions concerning U.S. matters. The objectives of this Committee are to unburden the full General Conference from U.S. legal, contextual, and financial matters that are outside the purview of Regional conference delegates [outside of the United States of America] 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 U.S. 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 global impact.

All provisions of this petition shall take effect immediately upon the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference.

Date: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

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Total Number of Pages: 3

Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #7 – 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 (ICO) for one quadrennium that organizes and plans for the establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference (USRC) 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 (ICO). 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 ICO shall be chosen from among the voting delegates elected by the annual conferences in the U.S. jurisdictions. Meeting and other necessary costs shall be funded by the General Administration Fund. In addition, two regional conference members shall be elected by the Regional Conferences outside of the United States or their leadership bodies to advise and consult the ICO.

Responsibilities—The ICO shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. The ICO shall choose the time and place for the convening of the initial gathering of the United States Regional Conference.

2. The ICO 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 ICO, 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 USRC.

4. Upon the completion of the first United States Regional Conference gathering, the ICO shall cease to exist as a committee of the General Conference, unless the USRC 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.

All provisions of this petition shall take effect immediately upon the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference.

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 during or at the end of General Conference or in conjunction with Jurisdictional conference and meet for not more than a few days to handle the U.S. specific matters.

The Interim Committee on Organization for the United States Regional Conference would meet two times total 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, so the expenses would be needed for 2021-2024, but not beyond.

Date: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

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Suggested Title: A Christmas Covenant (Global Regionalism) Petition #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

Global 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 Global 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 with the new Standing Committees created by General Conference relative to ministry matters in regional conferences in the United States and around the globe. The Connectional Table shall report the results of this joint study, including any recommendations, to the 2024 General Conference.

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

All provisions of this petition shall take effect immediately upon the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference

Date: March 6, 2020

Signature of the Petitioner: Rev. Randy Austria

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