

2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference Resolutions

Subject: Global Connection Plan

Presenter: Jan Nelson, Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

Organization: Western Methodist Justice Movement

Petitioners: Jan Nelson and 9 others

Names of Other Petitioners: Frank Wulf, Greg Bergquist, JoAnn Yoon Fukumoto, Skip Strickland, Odette Lockward-Stewart, Ken Ellis, Sandy Olewine, Richard Bentley, Austin Adkinson

Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

Whereas the 2012 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference adopted a motion referring a restructuring proposal to a jurisdictional task force which was appointed by the NEJ College of Bishops;

Whereas one of the first steps of the NEJ Global Structure Task Force (“the Task Force”) was to develop the following guiding principles to guide its work:

- Be Christ Focused - The denominational structure should reflect the teachings of and empower the mission of Jesus Christ.
- Embody Structural Fairness - The denominational structure should provide for greater global equality in the church around access to services, participation in structures, and shaping the agenda of The United Methodist Church. Any plan should provide for an equitable global resourcing and distribution of apportioned funds.
- Extend Community - Everyone, everywhere must be welcome and safe in The United Methodist Church. Any new structure must honor non-essential differences and defend the essential dignity and worth of all God’s children.

Whereas the Task Force prepared two draft proposals which were distributed in 2014 to leaders within the NEJ and across The UMC;

Whereas the Task Force received feedback and prepared a final proposal, which was also distributed in January 2015 to leaders within the NEJ and across The UMC;

Whereas the Task Force submitted the final proposal entitled the Global Connection Plan to the 2016 General Conference legislation coordinator in September 2015;

Whereas the 2016 General Conference did not adopt the Global Connection Plan or any other restructuring plan for The United Methodist Church but did pass a report from the Council of Bishops which included the formation of a Special Commission to discern future directions for The United Methodist Church;

Whereas, since The United Methodist Church is struggling with how to deal with matters of human sexuality, and many across the denomination are discussing a possible schism in the church, the Western Jurisdiction would like to offer the Global Connection Plan as an option for dealing with these concerns;

Therefore be it resolved that the Secretary of the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference forward this resolution and the attached Global Connection Plan (Concept Proposal and constitutional amendments) to: 1) The Special Commission which will be organized by the Council of Bishops, 2) The Connectional Table, and 3) The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, with the recommendation that these organizations consider the Global Connection Plan as a way forward.

Global Connection Plan

Concept Proposal

September 2015

The NEJ Global Structure Task Force has developed this proposal for the 2016 General Conference to consider and to designate a representative task force or committee to write the legislation needed to implement its provisions.

An Equitable Global Structure:

A. United Methodist Global Connection

1. The United Methodist Global Connection shall be responsible for global matters pertaining to The United Methodist Church and will not address non-global matters relating to individual connections in Africa, Asia, Europe, or North America.
2. The Global Connection shall be responsible for:
 - a. Constitution of The United Methodist Church
 - b. Global Book of Discipline
 - c. Global Social Principles
 - d. Global Connectional budget
 - e. Global responsibilities of the current General Conference as defined in the 2012 Book of Discipline and in actions of previous general conferences, except for those matters delegated elsewhere
 - f. Hearing reports about ministry successes and challenges from each connection and providing opportunities for the discussion of global issues
 - g. Number and boundaries of United Methodist connections
 - h. Definition of the powers and roles of connectional, regional, annual, missionary, district, and charge conferences

- i. Number of episcopal areas within each of the United Methodist connections
 - j. Definition of the powers, duties, and privileges of episcopal leaders
 - k. Decisions regarding the funding of connectional and regional conferences
 - l. Global agency statements of purpose, accountability to statements of purpose, and sizes and make-up of global agency boards of directors.
 - m. Definition of the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply pastors, local pastors, deaconesses, and home missionaries
 - n. Definition of the conditions, privileges, and duties of church membership
 - o. Standards for the election of delegates to the Global Connectional Conference
3. The Global Connectional Conference shall replace the General Conference, which currently “has full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional ... It has no executive or administrative power.” (¶501)
- a. The Global Connectional Conference shall focus on global matters during its quadrennial meeting which shall last less than two weeks.
 - b. The Global Connectional Conference shall be constituted in the same way as the current General Conference, shall be assigned responsibilities that are similar to the current General Conference, shall be subjected to the same Restrictive Rules as the current General Conference, and shall function in ways that are similar to the current General Conference. (¶¶13-16 and ¶¶501 – 511).
 - c. The Global Connectional Conference shall consist of 600 – 1000 delegates with an equal number of lay and clergy delegates elected by annual conferences and missionary conferences. The formula for determining the number of delegates from each annual conference shall be the same for all annual conferences and missionary conferences, with the provision that each annual conference and missionary conference shall elect at least one lay and one clergy delegate.
 - d. Concordat churches, affiliated autonomous Methodist churches, and affiliated united churches may elect delegates to the Global Connectional Conference:
 - The Methodist Church in Great Britain may elect four delegates with voice and vote. The United Methodist Church may send two delegates each year to the British Methodist Conference.
 - Other concordat churches may elect two delegates with voice and vote.
 - Affiliated autonomous Methodist churches and affiliated united churches may elect two delegates with voice and without vote. If such a church has more than 70,000 full members it is entitled to send three delegates with voice but not vote.
4. The Council of Bishops, the Global Judicial Council, and the global agencies shall serve the entire United Methodist Global Connection.
- a. The Council of Bishops shall continue to have similar responsibilities and shall function in ways that are the similar to the current Council of Bishops (¶¶47 – 54 and ¶¶ 401 – 442).
 - b. The Global Judicial Council shall continue to have similar responsibilities and shall function in ways that are the similar to the current Judicial Council (¶¶55 – 58 and ¶¶ 2601-2612). In addition, it shall have the option to review all decisions by connection judicial committees and regional committees on appeal. It shall also

handle matters that reference both the Global Book of Discipline and one or more connectional books of discipline.

- c. The agencies which the Global Connection defines as global shall be structured to fully serve all of the connections and shall establish boards of directors with members equitably distributed across all regions of the Global Connection.

B. United Methodist Connections (Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America)

1. A United Methodist Connection shall be established in each of the following: Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Each connection shall focus on the church's mission from the perspectives of the regions within the connection by understanding and addressing the contextual implications of nations, cultures, languages, and other important realities.
2. Each connection shall be responsible for:
 - a. A connectional book of discipline
 - b. Authorizing provisions within its connectional book of discipline to accommodate the specific needs of the regions within its purview
 - c. Defining needs for the presence and roles of agencies within the connection
 - d. Connectional-specific agencies: agency statements of purpose, accountability to agency statements of purpose, and sizes and make-up of connectional-specific agency boards of directors
 - e. Number and boundaries of regions within the connection
 - f. Episcopal matters: tenure, process of election, methods of assignment, retirement plans, itineracy, and standards of conduct
 - g. Clergy standards: process for ordination, conference relationship, and clergy membership
 - h. Financial matters: connection's budget, pensions, distribution of funds to support regional conferences
 - i. Legislation to the Global Connectional Conference regarding the Global Book of Discipline
3. If a connection is organized without regions, the roles and responsibilities of the region shall be added to the roles and responsibilities of that connection.
4. The connectional conferences shall meet quadrennially prior to the Global Connectional Conference.
 - a. Each connectional conference shall consist of the delegates to the Global Connectional Conference from the connection with the provision that no connection conference shall have less than 100 delegates. Additional delegates where needed shall be elected according to the same process, and may be the delegates that were elected to the regional conferences within the connection.
 - b. Connectional conferences shall be organized in ways similar to the Global Connectional Conference and shall function in similar ways.

5. The connectional college of bishops, connectional judicial committee, connectional-specific agencies, and global agencies with a presence in a connection shall serve that connection.
 - a. The connectional college of bishops shall be responsible for leading the connection and shall function in ways similar to the current colleges of bishops. (§148, §151, and §152).
 - b. The connectional judicial committee will deal with questions of law relating to its connection's books of discipline
 - c. The connectional-specific agencies shall be accountable to the connectional conference and their boards of directors shall be elected by the regional conferences in the connection.
 - d. Any global agencies with a presence within a connection shall be organized to be responsive to the needs of the connection and shall be accountable to the connectional conference and the global agency's board of directors..

C. Regions

1. Regions shall be established geographically and all regional conferences shall have the same authority and responsibilities.
2. Current jurisdictional conferences and central conferences shall become 12 regions:
 - a. United Methodist Connection in Africa - three regions:
African Region, Congo Region, and West Africa Region
 - b. United Methodist Connection in Asia - one region:
Philippines Region
 - c. United Methodist Connection in Europe - three regions:
Central / Southern Europe Region, German Region, and
Northern Europe and Eurasia Region
 - d. United Methodist Connection in the North America - five regions:
North Central Region, Northeastern Region, South Central Region,
Southeastern Region, and Western Region
3. Regions will be responsible for:
 - a. Promotion of the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the Church and to provide for interests and institutions within its boundaries
 - b. Number and boundaries of annual conferences
 - c. Boundaries of episcopal areas
 - d. Election and assignment of bishops
 - e. Election of members to global and connectional agency boards and regional committees
 - f. Legislation to the Global Connectional Conference regarding the Global Book of Discipline

- g. Legislation to its connectional conference regarding the connectional book of discipline
 - h. Regional budget
 - i. Organizing as needed to accomplish its work
4. Regional conference meetings will be conducted quadrennially within one year following the meeting of the Global Connectional Conference.
 - a. The number of delegates and composition guidelines of regional conferences will be determined by the Global Connectional Conference. Regional conference membership will consist of equal numbers of laity and clergy and no regional conference shall have less than 100 members.
 - b. The delegates to the Global Connectional Conference shall be considered the first delegates from an annual conference elected to a regional conference.
 5. The regional college of bishops and the regional committees will serve the Church within the region.
 - a. The regional college of bishops will continue to have the same roles as defined in the 2012 Book of Discipline. (¶48, ¶51, and ¶52).
 - b. The region will establish at least the following committees to support its work:
 - Regional committee on appeals to hear and decide the appeal of a clergy person or a bishop following the decision of a trial committee, and
 - Regional committee on the episcopacy to fulfill the provisions in ¶¶ 524.3 of the 2012 Book of Discipline.

D. Annual Conferences

1. The current configuration of annual conferences across each connection will be retained, unless altered by the region or connection.
2. Annual conferences will be responsible for electing delegates to the Global Connectional Conference, the connectional conference, and the regional conference.
3. The annual conference purpose, composition, organization, responsibilities, and agencies will remain unchanged, unless adapted by its connectional conference. (¶¶32 – 36 and (¶¶601 – 657).

**Global Connection Plan
Constitutional Amendments
September 2015**

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Global Connectional Conference

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

PETITION TEXT Amend ¶ 8 by revision as follows:

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

Amend ¶ 13 by revision as follows:

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

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

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

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

~~3.~~ ~~4.~~ In the case of The Methodist Church in Great Britain, mother church of Methodism, provision shall be made for The United Methodist Church to send two delegates annually to the British Methodist Conference, and The Methodist Church in Great Britain to send four delegates quadrennially to The United Methodist ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference**, the delegates of both conferences having vote and being evenly divided between clergy and laity.

Amend ¶ 14 by revision as follows:

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

A special session of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference**, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference**, may be called by the Council of Bishops, or in such other manner as the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** may from time to time prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be stated in the call. Such

special session of the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** or their lawful successors, except that when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election it may do so. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call unless the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

Amend ¶ 15 by revision as follows:

¶ 15. *Article III.*—The ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** shall fix the ratio of representation in the ~~General~~ **Global, connectional, jurisdictional, and central and 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~~ **Global Connectional Conference** and also in the **connectional and** ~~jurisdictional or central~~ **regional** conferences.

Amend ¶ 16 by revision as follows:

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

1. 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.
2. To define and fix the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers **pastors**, local preachers **pastors**, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missionaries, **which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.**
3. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of ~~central conferences,~~ **connectional conferences, regional conferences,** district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.
4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church ~~out the United States of America~~ **around the globe.**
5. To define and fix the powers, duties, and privileges of the episcopacy, to adopt a plan for the support of the bishops. ~~to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, and to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.~~
6. To provide and revise the hymnal and ritual of the Church and ~~to regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship,~~ subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.
7. To provide a judicial system and a method of judicial procedure for the church, except as herein otherwise prescribed.

8. To initiate and to direct all **global** connectional enterprises of the Church and to provide boards for their promotion and administration.
9. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of the Church.
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 the central conferences~~ **regional conferences**.
11. To select its presiding officers from the bishops, through a committee, provided that the bishops shall select from their own number the presiding officer of the opening session.
12. To change the number and the boundaries of ~~jurisdictional conferences~~ **connectional conferences** upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each ~~jurisdictional~~ **connectional** conference involved.
13. To establish such commissions for the ~~general~~ **global** work of the Church as may be deemed advisable.
14. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all **global** agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.
15. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding.
16. To enact such other legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and restrictions of the Constitution of the Church.

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Connectional Conferences

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: New Paragraph

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

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

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

Section IV. Connectional Conferences

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

¶ 24. Article II.—All connectional conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution.

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

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

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

1. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church within their boundaries, including to promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern, and benevolent interests of the Church, subject to the powers and authority of the Global Connectional Conference. Connectional Conferences are authorized to create a connectional *Book of Discipline*, subject

to the powers that have been vested in the Global Connectional Conference as contained within the global *Book of Discipline*.

2. To set the tenure and method of assignment of the episcopacy within the connection, to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop, and to fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the regional conferences.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Regional Conferences

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: ¶¶ 9, 10, 23-31

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

~~¶ 9. *Article II.*—There shall be jurisdictional conferences the Church in the United States of America, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no jurisdictional or central conferences based on any ground other than geographical and regional division.~~

~~¶ 10. *Article III.*—There shall be central conferences for the church outside the United States of America and, if necessary, provisional central conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.~~

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

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

Section IV. Regional Conferences

¶ 23 *Article I.*—The regional 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 Global Connectional Conference, provided that no regional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates. The delegates shall be clergy and lay in equal numbers.

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

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

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

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

- 2. To elect bishops for the respective regional conferences in number as may be determined from time to time, upon a basis fixed by the Global Connectional Conference, and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for their support as may be determined by the Global Connectional Conference.**
- 3. To establish and constitute regional and conference boards as auxiliary to the global and connectional boards of the Church as the need may appear and to choose their representatives on the global and connectional boards in such manner as the Global Connectional Conference may determine.**
- 4. To determine the boundaries of their annual conferences, provided that there shall be no annual conference with a membership of fewer than 50 clergy in full connection, except by the consent of the Global Connectional Conference.**
- 5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the Church within the region, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the Global Connectional Conference and connectional conferences.**
- 6. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a clergy person of that region from the decision of a trial court.**
- 7. To appoint a committee on the episcopacy.**
- 8. To establish and to appoint such other committees as may be necessary.**

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

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPHS: 33, 34, 35, 36

PETITION TEXT Revise ¶ 33 as follows:

¶ 33. *Article II.*—The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the ~~General and the jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **Global, connectional and regional conferences**, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and...

Revise ¶ 34 as follows:

¶ 34. *Article III.*—The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** and to its ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **connectional conference and regional conference** in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and connectional conference** shall be representatives in that body ~~those bodies~~. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by ratio for representation in the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference**, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference**. The additional delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference** shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and connectional conference**. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ **regional conference** as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the ~~jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **regional conferences** may act as reserve to the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference and connectional conference** when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference or connectional conference**.

Revise ¶ 35 as follows:

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

Revise ¶ 36 as follows:

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

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Boundaries

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPHS: 37, 38, 39, 40

PETITION TEXT Insert new paragraph before ¶ 37 as follows:

Section VII. Boundaries

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

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

Insert new paragraph before ¶ 38 as follows:

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

Delete ¶¶ 38 and 39.

Renumber ¶ 40 and revise as follows:

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

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

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: ¶¶ 46-54

PETITION TEXT Amend paragraph 46 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 47 as follows:

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

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

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

Amend paragraph 48 as follows:

~~¶ 48 Article III~~ **¶ 49 Article V.**—The bishops of each ~~jurisdictional and central conference~~ **regional conference** shall constitute a **regional** 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.

Amend paragraph 49 as follows:

~~¶ 49 Article V~~ **¶ 50 Article VI.**—The bishops shall have residential presidential supervision in the ~~jurisdictional or central conferences~~ **regional conferences** in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** to another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** that receives a bishop by transfer from another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** may transfer to that ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** or to a third ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** may receive a bishop from another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** 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~~ **region** 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~~ **regional** committees on episcopacy of the ~~jurisdictions~~ **regions** 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~~ **regional** conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** than that which elected the bishop, provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the ~~jurisdiction~~ **region** of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region** through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the ~~Council of Bishops~~ **respective connectional College of Bishops** may assign a bishop from another ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region** to the work of the said ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region**, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that ~~jurisdiction or central conference~~ **region**.

Amend paragraph 50 as follows:

~~¶ 50 Article VI~~ **¶ 51 Article VII.** — 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, active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined. **Each bishop shall have such tenure as has been determined by the connectional conference within which said bishop has been elected.**

The ~~jurisdictional conference~~ **regional 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~~ **regional 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~~ **regional conference**.

Amend paragraph 51 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 52 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 53 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 54 as follows:

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

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

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPHS: ¶¶ 55-58

PETITION TEXT Amend paragraph 55 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 56 as follows:

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

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

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

~~3. To pass upon decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences.~~

~~4. 3.~~ To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any ~~General Conference~~ **Global Connectional Conference** board or ~~jurisdictional or central conference~~ board or body, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of the bishops of a ~~jurisdictional or a central conference~~ **connectional or regional conference**.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. To determine the legality of any act of their respective connectional conferences upon an appeal of a majority of the respective connectional College of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the

Connectional Conference in accordance with their connectional disciplinary law, and to determine the legality of any act of one of their regional conferences upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that regional conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that regional conference in accordance with their connectional disciplinary law.

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

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

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

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

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

Insert new paragraph before ¶ 57 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 57 as follows:

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

Amend paragraph 58 as follows:

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

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

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: 2, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61

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

~~General Conference~~ Global Connectional Conference

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

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: 9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 56, 61

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

Revise: Jurisdictional Conference Regional Conference

Revise: Central Conference Regional Conference

Revise: jurisdiction- region

Global Connection Plan Frequently Asked Questions September 2015

What are the major changes in this proposal?

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

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

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

Why do we need another level of church organization?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Does this change what it means to be United Methodist?

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

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

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

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

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

SUBJECT: Statement of Lament on the General Conference 2016 Affirmation of Fossil Fuel Investments

NAME OF DELEGATE PRESENTING THE LEGISLATION: Marie Kuch-Stanovsky

ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO WHICH THE DELEGATE BELONGS: Lay member of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SOCIETY, BOARD, DELEGATE, CLERGY OR LAY MEMBER, CHURCH AND/OR ORGANIZATION FROM WHICH THE LEGISLATION COMES:

Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

FIRST NAME ON THE PETITION: Marie Kuch-Stanovsky

NUMBER OF OTHER PETITIONERS: 2

NAMES OF OTHER PETITIONERS:

Reverend Shirley DeLarme, Conference Secretary, on behalf of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

Reverend Jenny Phillips, Fossil Free UMC Coordinator

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT: None

BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Jurisdictional Conference adopt the following **Statement of Lament on the General Conference 2016 Affirmation of Fossil Fuel Investments**.

General Conference 2016 voted to continue investing hundreds of millions of dollars in the fossil fuel industry. During debate, proponents of fossil fuel investing cited shareholder advocacy as the primary reason for maintaining these investments. The following week, ExxonMobil continued its decades-long history of rejecting climate-related shareholder resolutions, this time voting down a resolution asking the company to report on the impact that limiting global warming to 2-degrees Celsius will have on its business. (The UM pension board had \$19.5M invested in ExxonMobil in Q1 2016. Its investments in the top 200 fossil fuel companies lost 30% in value in 2015).

Meanwhile, United Methodists worldwide are suffering the impacts of climate change. Our colleagues in ministry tell stories of drought and fire in Africa, mothers and children torn apart and swept away by typhoon waters in the Philippines, and rising sea levels in Tonga. Closer to home, extreme temperatures continue to scorch the West, exacerbating long-term drought, fueling wildfires, melting glaciers and permafrost, and stressing agriculture, ecosystems and animals.

The United Methodist Church has a long history of screening industries from its investments when those industries cause widespread harm. Yet the suffering and harm caused by climate change will exceed the harm caused by the industries we already screen, including alcohol, tobacco, gambling, pornography, weapons and private prisons.

Jesus says that if anyone does not listen to what you have to say, you should leave that house or town and once outside it, shake its dust from your feet. Faith communities have voiced our climate concerns to the fossil fuel industry for more than two decades, yet The United Methodist Church remains invested in coal, petroleum and natural gas companies that exploit God's creation. As long as we invest in fossil fuels, we have a financial stake in their success, and provide moral cover for their broken business model—a model that recklessly exploits fossil fuels despite the harm they cause. When we profit from these companies, then their coal dust, fracking waters and tar sands cling to our feet, and we leave our dirty footprints in our places of ministry around the world. United Methodist churches, institutions and agencies should seek alternative investments that contribute to a sustainable, low-carbon future.

The Western Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church laments that General Conference 2016 failed to support fossil fuel divestment, and we are sorry for the impact that the United Methodist Church's continued affirmation of the fossil fuel economy will have on vulnerable people and places. We urge annual conferences of The United Methodist Church to work together to identify low-carbon alternatives to fossil fuel investments.

Marie Kuch-Stanovsky

Shirley DeLorme

Subject: The Intersectionality of Justice

Presenter: Molly Vetter, California Pacific Annual Conference

Organization: Western Methodist Justice Movement

Petitioners: Molly Vetter and 8 others

Names of Other Petitioners: Norma Kehrberg, JoAnn Yoon Fukumoto, Megan Armstrong, Frank Wulf, Sandy Olewine, Tonya Harris, Richard Bentley, Austin Adkinson

Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

Whereas a jurisdiction is “to promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary and benevolent interests of the Church” (The Constitution, Para. 27.1);

Whereas the Western Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church faces diverse ministry challenges as one of the largest geographic expanses of any jurisdiction or central conference over many cultural contexts;

Whereas the United Methodist churches in the Western Jurisdiction need to respond to their wide breadth of ministry challenges in ways that reach out and help the diversity of people living in the Western Jurisdiction to hear and respond to the gospel in ways that are authentic;

Therefore be it resolved that the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference calls on its churches and annual conferences to provide leadership in the many places where the call for justice intersects especially in the following areas:

- strongly affirming the rights of women, including reproductive health, choice, and justice issues that intersect with many areas of justice,
- working for racial justice and resisting exploitative systems that teach racial, ethnic and/or tribal superiority and inferiority,
- not profiting from the oppression of others by divesting from companies earning profits through business in the occupied territories,
- divesting from companies who will not engage on sustainability and climate change and whose profits come from fossil fuels as a way of moving our world towards using sustainable, renewable resources and combating climate change,
- ending the use of mascot names which demean Native Peoples by not meeting in cities which have sports teams with such names,
- advocating economic policies that reflect love of neighbor by ensuring a living wage and such basic needs as food, clothing, shelter, quality education, healthcare and a clean environment,
- supporting effective gun control to help create safer communities,

- not complying with the Book of Discipline whenever it denies full inclusion of a person based on their sexual orientation or gender identity in the life, ministry and leadership of The United Methodist Church.

And be it further resolved that we call on the Western Jurisdiction Leadership Team and Western Jurisdictional Mission Council to work with the leadership of the annual conferences of the Western Jurisdiction in these areas to move from resolutions and words to actions that make a tangible and lasting difference.

**PETITION TO THE 2016 WESTERN JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE FROM THE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN AND YELLOWSTONE CONFERENCES OF THE MOUNTAIN
SKY AREA**

DATE: JULY 1, 2016

**SUBJECT: SEEKING APPROVAL FROM THE WESTERN JURISDICTIONAL
CONFERENCE TO REALIGN CONFERENCE BOUNDARIES OF THE ROCKY
MOUNTAIN AND YELLOWSTONE CONFERENCES**

**PRESENTERS: BRADLEY LAURVICK, CLERGY, ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

JEREMY SCOTT, CLERGY, YELLOWSTONE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, the Western Jurisdiction conferences committee prepared a proposal for the 2012 Western Jurisdictional Conference which, if followed, could have resulted in a simple merger of the Denver (now Mountain Sky) Area conferences; and

WHEREAS, the (then) Denver Area Futures Task Group was created by the Bishop of the Mountain Sky Area, Elaine J. W. Stanovsky, to listen, learn and discern the missional hopes of the two conferences; and

WHEREAS, this Futures Task Group comprised of members from both conferences identified a strong context, vision and mission between the conferences and recommended a new name and shared permeable boundaries for certain staff, including the experiment of a single District Superintendent for Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, the next Futures Team concluded its work by recommending creation of a *new annual conference model (organization and structure)* versus simple merger of the existing conference structures; and

WHEREAS, the vision of a simplified organization would better empower and enable laity and clergy of local churches and faith communities to deliver the mission and ministry of the church; and

WHEREAS, the Mission Shaped Future Committee was appointed by Bishop Elaine Stanovsky to carry out the Futures Team recommendations both in terms of building the new annual conference model and identifying opportunities to express Wesleyan grace and vitality in both congregational and non-congregational ways; and

WHEREAS, the Mission Shaped Future Teams determined that experiments in shared staff and resources, while very beneficial to the ministries of both conferences, are not sustainable with two separate conferences and their institutional structures to which staff must relate; and

WHEREAS, the Mission Shaped Future Committee generated a vision for the new annual conference emphasizing Wesleyan vitality in Mission and Disciple-Making, and shared that vision in 19 listening sessions and 2 rounds of Christian Conferencing across both conferences during the Spring of 2016; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 Rocky Mountain Conference voted 76% in favor of moving forward with consideration of the new conference model (Yes – 381, No – 114, Abstain – 7) and the 2016 Yellowstone Annual Conference voted 87% in favor of the same proposal (Yes – 93, No – 13, Abstain – 1);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Jurisdictional Conference approve realigning the boundaries of the Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain Annual Conferences to form one, new annual conference, following, and contingent upon, the full discernment and agreement of the two participating conferences.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective upon adoption by the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference.

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION: The Mountain Sky Area Mission Shaped Future Groups appointed by Bishop Elaine Stanovsky

Group 1:

Rev. Janet Forbes, Chair (Highlands Ranch, Colorado)
Philip Cardin (Salt Lake City, Utah)
Kristi Kinnison (Denver, Colorado)
Rev. Betty Nguyen (Denver, Colorado)
Mark Sanman (Whitefish, Montana)
Rev. Laura Rainwater (Cheyenne, Wyoming)
Rev. Reuben Wilbur (Loveland, Colorado)
Ruth Wills (Parker, Colorado)
Rev. Debbie Schmidt (Whitefish, Montana)

Group 2:

Rev. Jeremy Scott, Chair (Billings, Montana)
Rev. Sarah Beck (Billings, Montana)
Victoria Casarrubias (Boulder, Colorado)
Chris Frasier (Last Chance, Colorado)
Jerry Krause (Littleton, Colorado)
Janna Lauver (Bozeman, Montana)
Rev. Jasper Peters (Denver, Colorado)

Conference Staff:

Rev. Youngsook Kang (Denver, Colorado)
Rev. David Burt (Billings, Montana)

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no expected financial impact to the Western Jurisdiction. Leadership teams from the Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain Annual Conferences will allocate or redirect existing funds as needed to facilitate the full discernment and agreement of the two participating conferences.

RATIONALE:

"I want the whole Christ for my Savior, the whole Bible for my book, the whole Church for my fellowship and the whole world for my mission field." - John Wesley

We desire to reclaim our Mission Field in the spirit of John Wesley.

1. The Western Jurisdictional Conference, meeting July 13-16, 2016 in Scottsdale, Arizona, has the power to determine the names and boundaries of the areas and annual conferences within the Western Jurisdiction (2012 Book of Discipline, Paragraphs 27.4 and 40). An approval from the WJC in 2016 provides the needed flexibility to form a new annual conference before 2020, when and if the two conferences are ready.
2. The Yellowstone Annual Conference is faced with an URGENT situation. As of 2012, the Yellowstone Annual Conference was comprised of 99 active clergy (49 elders), 129 churches and 13,602 members. Soon, the resources will no longer be enough to meet the requirements required of an annual conference as defined by the Book of Discipline.
3. The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference is in a FRAGILE state, facing similar trends as the Yellowstone Annual Conference. As of 2012, the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference was comprised of 336 active clergy (229 elders), 265 churches, and 65,820 members. Although the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference has been able to subsist in spite of a continuous decline of resources, expenses continue to outpace income.
4. A consolidated structure would alleviate concerns of declining trends and diminishing resources. These concerns inhibit creativity. A consolidated structure would provide efficiency and economies of scale so that the annual conference could apply energy and resources toward discovering innovative ministry, methods, and service. Only then will the work of the annual conference be renewed to its purpose of equipping churches for ministry, as it is instructed in the Book of Discipline.
5. The region's Mission Field is growing. Since the founding of the Rocky Mountain Conference the population of Colorado has more than doubled, from 2.2 million to 5.4 million. Since the founding of the Yellowstone Annual Conference, the population of Montana has increased by almost half, from 700 thousand to just over one million. And these demographic trends are expected to continue with increasing diversity. It is time to reclaim the mission field in the same way John Wesley did.

WHAT ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES DO WE FACE?

1. We, the people of both Annual Conferences, recognize the risk of loss of individual conference identity. We intend to mitigate this risk by taking intentional steps to grow relationships between the conferences during the transition process. In fact, this has already begun. For example, the Whole Church Initiative (WCI), which started as an initiative in the Yellowstone Annual Conference, has since expanded to an area-wide effort involving more than 30 churches by the end of 2016.
2. We recognize the risk of managing geographic distance. The Mission Fields of the Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone Annual Conferences are arguably unique, comprised of large urban areas, medium and small towns, farming communities and Native American Tribal lands – spread across a very large geographic area. In fact, our two major metropolitan areas, Salt Lake City and Denver, are themselves widely separated in terms of geography and travel cost. We intend to mitigate this risk by re-applying organizational lessons learned including “the Wyoming Experiment” as well as judicious use of teleconferencing technology.
3. We recognize the fact that our success will depend on aligning resources (human, financial, real, and tangible assets) first and foremost according to focusing priorities which include:
 - a. Renewing and establishing vital congregations
 - b. Developing leaders who are gifted at empowering local churches and laity in the church mission.
 - c. Establishing new faith communities to meet the needs of our unique Mission Field.
4. Finally, we acknowledge the challenge of assuring our missional work and disciple-making efforts continue to support and build upon each other. Our plan to create a new conference versus simply merging the two existing conferences goes to the heart of this challenge. We believe the affiliated and the unaffiliated will experience *Wesleyan Christian values* through people not buildings, actions not meetings, relational not institutional activities, connections not committees. We will serve outwardly, not inwardly, by open expressions of love and understanding with both tangible and intangible gifts.

This is a rebirth of a conference.

TIMELINE:

2016

The Western Jurisdictional Conference agrees to this petition.

The Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone Annual Conferences develop a comprehensive PLAN FOR THE CREATION of a new annual conference. The plan may include the Book of Discipline questions, alignment of resources according to vision and missional priorities, structure, staffing, budget, pension and health insurance benefits, property management, candidacy and ordination processes,

and appointments. This work continues into 2017 to include the STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION/TRANSITION.

2017

At separate conference sessions, the two annual conferences refine the PLAN FOR THE CREATION and STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION / TRANSITION. Formal approval is sought and received from both annual conferences for creation of the new conference.

2018

We host the FIRST JOINT CONFERENCE SESSION, either face-to-face or in regional locations through cyber-connection.

2019

We affirm the INCORPORATION of a new annual conference and enact the TRANSITION PLAN. This work likely continues into 2020.

ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS OF CONTACT PERSONS:

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LINKS TO DOCUMENTS:

YELLOWSTONE ANNUAL CONFERENCE PETITION:

<http://www.yacumc.org/2016petitions> and then click on "Mission Shaped Future"

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE PETITION:

<http://www.rmcmc.org/missionshapedfuture> and then click on "Annual Conference 2016 MSF Petition"

Subject: The Call Toward Healing Relationships With Indigenous Peoples

Presenter: Mark Stephenson, California-Pacific Annual Conference

Organization: Western Methodist Justice Movement

Petitioners: Mark Stephenson and 8 others

Names of Other Petitioners: Jeffrey Kuan, Cedrick Bridgeforth, Karen Oliveto, Megan Armstrong, Sandy Olewine, Patricia Farris, Austin Adkinson, Richard Bentley

Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

Whereas the 2012 General Conference engaged in an Act of Repentance service as a first step in calling the church to acknowledge and seek forgiveness for past sins while launching a process of healing relationships with indigenous persons throughout the world; and

Whereas the 2012 Western Jurisdictional Conference embarked on a journey of healing relationships with indigenous peoples; and

Whereas, during the 2013-16 quadrennium, the Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone Conferences led the denomination in acts of repentance around the 150th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre, which took place in 1864 with significant leadership from Methodists; and

Whereas, during the 2013-16 quadrennium, many of the other Conferences of the Western Jurisdiction engaged in acts of repentance; and

Whereas the Western Jurisdiction and its constituent Conferences have made progress but have not fully met the goals and objectives laid out in the adopted 2012 *Resolution on Responding to the Act of Repentance*, especially around establishing new and revitalizing existing Native American/Indigenous Churches;

Therefore be it resolved the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference commend the resolution entitled *Native People and the UMC*, which was overwhelmingly adopted by the 2016 General Conference, to its constituent Conferences for study and action;

Be it further resolved the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference direct its constituent Conferences to continue to work with the Council of Bishops and the Western Jurisdictional College of Bishops in fulfilling the promises of the 2012 *Statement from the Council of Bishops As We Embark on a Journey toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples*.

Be it further resolved the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference directs the Western Jurisdictional Conference Leadership Team to ensure that any plans for starting new churches and revitalizing existing churches during the 2017-20 quadrennium include:

1. A strategy for starting new Native American/Indigenous ministries in each annual conference, with specific targets set after consultation with the Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) of each annual conference and with the Western Jurisdiction Inter-Ethnic Coordinating Committee; and
2. Concrete plans for strengthening and undergirding existing Native American/Indigenous ministries;

Be it further resolved that each annual conference report its progress on fulfilling this resolution to the annual meetings of the Western Jurisdictional Leadership Team and to the 2020 session of the Western Jurisdictional Conference.

And therefore be it further resolved that United Methodist and other seminaries in the Western Jurisdiction are ardently encouraged to invest in the enhancement of leadership for The United Methodist Church by participation in deep listening / learning from the peoples upon whose ancestral lands we live, and with whom will be consulted in the development of these opportunities.

Subject: Commending the Love Your Neighbor Coalition's *Open Letter to the African Bishops of The United Methodist Church* for study and implementation

Presenter: Frank Wulf, California-Pacific Annual Conference

Organization: Western Methodist Justice Movement

Petitioners: Frank Wulf and 4 others

Names of Other Petitioners: Cedrick Bridgeforth, Jan Nelson, Richard Bentley, Austin Adkinson

Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

Whereas the United Methodist Bishops of Africa issued a statement on September 11, 2015 that addressed issues of global terrorism, marriage and sexuality, and the unity of the church; and

Whereas several of the annual conferences of the Western Jurisdiction are deeply engaged with annual conferences in Africa; and

Whereas many United Methodists in the Western Jurisdiction seek to be engaged missionally with United Methodists in Africa while also engaging with them in deeper conversation about human sexuality; and

Whereas the Love Your Neighbor Coalition (LYNC) issued *An Open Letter to the African Bishops of The United Methodist Church* on January 6, 2016 that identified points of both commonality and difference even as it called the whole church to "do the hard work of discerning God's will by engaging "in conferencing that is truly holy... conferencing that is actually open to the ongoing movement of God's Spirit;"

Therefore be it resolved that the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference lift up LYNC's *Open Letter to the African Bishops of The United Methodist Church* (which is reprinted below) as one approach to working together in areas of common ground while also engaging in deeper conversation about areas of difference;

And be it further resolved that the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference commend this open letter for study by annual conferences and United Methodists throughout the Western Jurisdiction;

And be it still further resolved that the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference forward this open letter to the Commission on Human Sexuality, which is to be formed by the Council of Bishops, and urge the Commission use the open letter as a resource for faithfully engaging the church in conferencing that is truly holy and fully open to the leading of God's Spirit.

**An Open Letter to the African Bishops of The United Methodist Church
From the Love Your Neighbor Coalition**

January 6, 2016

Grace and hope to you during this season of Epiphany as together we celebrate the revelation of God's saving presence and commit ourselves anew to the sacred work of doing justice and making peace.

We are writing in response to the statement issued by the African College of Bishops of The United Methodist Church at their meeting of 7-11 September 2015 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Their words come to us as a mixture of both blessing and curse. Even as they inspire hope on some fronts, they deepen our despair on others. That is why we have discerned a profound need to respond.

It is not our goal to deepen the divisions that threaten to splinter our United Methodist Church. We do not believe that schism is in anyone's best interest. Rather than facilitating the church's crucial work of preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, liberating the oppressed, and proclaiming the year of God's favor (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2), schism engages us in internecine battles that threaten to make us irrelevant as a witness to the reality of God's love for our *whole* world (John 3:16). In this regard, we agree with the College of African Bishops when they assert that there are "important issues that unite us," and that we, as a church, "are called to be in solidarity with people who suffer as a result of unjust political systems, wars, famine, poverty, natural disasters, diseases, illiteracy, etc." We commit ourselves to pray and work for a church that can indeed be unified around these crucial matters that affect the lives of far too many of God's children around our world.

We also join the Bishops in their condemnation of the atrocities that have been and continue to be perpetrated as a result of "the ongoing bloody and brutal civil war in Syria, the ISIS insurgency across parts of Europe, as well as the Boko Haram and Al-Shabab insurgencies in parts of Africa." We recognize that international terrorism has helped to fuel human rights crises of untold proportions that must be addressed by the church with courage, resourcefulness, and commitment. We cannot stand idly by as thousands of families are made homeless and turned into refugees, as women and children are raped and enslaved, as innocent civilians are intentionally slaughtered or caught in the crossfire of warring factions, as children are denied access to education, and as the diseases of war and poverty take a terrible toll on whole populations of God's people. As "God's messengers of peace and reconciliation," we must engage our world leaders to do what is necessary to make real peace – not just to bring about a begrudging cessation of hostilities, but to create communities of safety and abundance where all can thrive. To this end, we applaud the Bishops' call to engage in authentic dialogue with grassroots movements of ordinary citizens, including young people and women, as well as community and political leaders.

The issue of global terrorism is not just about disaffected people engaging in horrible and terrifying acts to advance particular agendas or ideologies. There is more involved in global terrorism than just "radical Islam." As the African Bishops rightly point out in their statement, Global terrorism is but one response to "unjust political systems and the manipulation of weaker nations by world powers." We join with the Bishops in urging The United Methodist Church to pay real attention to "the stark realities of needless suffering and pain in our world" not merely by raising voices of lament but by bringing together our best minds, engaging our most fervent prayers, and utilizing our significant resources "to usher in God's reign of peace, justice and freedom to all." These issues must not be pushed to the sidelines of the work that we do together as church, particularly during the 2016 General Conference, but must take center focus as we pray and conference together about how best to be God's people and to do God's will in our world.

Having discerned these points of commonality in our witness for the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must nevertheless take issue with the College of African Bishops' analysis of our ongoing conflict in the church about marriage and sexuality. We do not believe that our ongoing work around these issues can be sidelined while the church focuses on other issues of global importance. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has so eloquently stated in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

We understand that our disagreements around issues of human sexuality have, for several decades, tended to monopolize the church's attention during General Conferences and other international

gatherings. These issues have divided us into warring camps and have threatened us with the specter of schism. We do not believe that God is calling us to split the church apart. We apologize for the times when our actions have perpetuated an “us vs. them” mentality.

Nevertheless, we must insist that peace is not going to come through ignoring the demands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians for full inclusion in the church. We will not heal our church’s divisions by ignoring the need for women to have control over the reproductive capacities of their own bodies through the use of family planning tools such as birth control and abortion. Unity will not be found in silence. Nor will silence change the realities of the multiple structures that already exist in family life.

We are longing for our church to talk honestly about human sexuality and the realities of family life. Not only do we need to address the growing reality of same-sex marriage, but we also need to address concerns around polygamy, the sexual exploitation of children and the sexual violence of subjugation faced by so many women and young girls. We are bringing these issues into the light because we believe that being united is worth being uncomfortable during tough conversations. Even our Methodist founders disagreed sometimes. Points of theological conflict should open our hearts to the fact that God is bigger and more complicated than any of us can imagine.

To work toward a goal of honest holy conferencing and not forced conformity, we insist that the final word has not been spoken about the teachings of Scripture on human sexuality. A whole literature exists that takes the Scriptures seriously, sets them into their appropriate historical context, and seeks to draw guidance for our current understanding of sex and sexuality. This literature belies the claim that Scripture issues a clear and unequivocal denunciation of sexual practices and institutions that do not fit the norm of marriage between one man and one woman. We consequently contend that *The Book of Discipline’s* claim that “sexual relations are affirmed only within the covenant bond of a faithful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage” creates a moral dilemma in United Methodism. A dilemma, because faithful United Methodists believe this pronouncement and subsequent church policies and practices to be unjust; and, denying the right of those who believe it is their faithful duty, “under the constraint of conscience and, after having exhausted all legal recourse, to resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or that are discriminately enforced” (BOD ¶ 164.F). This dilemma is the result of creating a state of hypocrisy in the United Methodist Church within our own Book of Discipline.

We further deny the Bishops’ allegation that sexual relations are not affirmed “within same-sex unions or polygamy.” Not only are these completely separate issues, but this is harmful and offensive language; reminiscent of the past efforts to demonize homosexual persons by equating homosexuality with pedophilia.

It is beyond doubt that *The Book of Discipline* is a work in progress that provides guidance for the people called United Methodist, but in no way can it be taken as the final definitive word on this or any other matter. That is why we, as a church, gather every four years in General Conference to review it and amend it.

The real issue that confronts us in our battles about human sexuality is not the existence of diversity in belief and practice, but the mean-spirited way that those who advocate for change in the church’s traditional position have been treated. Rather than listening to our testimony and engaging us in prayerful dialogue that honestly seeks to discern God’s will on matters of human sexuality, there are those in the church who have attacked us, demonized us, humiliated us, and all too often

ignored us. Herein lies the problem! The real threat to unity in our denomination does not come from faithful Christians who are calling the church to reconsider its traditional stands on human sexuality, but from those who refuse to engage in honest, respectful, humble, and prayerful dialogue, including those who stand at microphones during the General Conference and use words that are both hateful and untrue against those with whom they disagree.

Our testimony is this: We have seen God at work powerfully, inspirationally and miraculously in the lives of people who do not fit within traditional heterosexual norms. In the lives and ministries of these people, we experience the fruit of the Spirit, which is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23) Some of these people are Spirit-filled leaders in our denominational movements to establish justice and peace around our world. We join with the apostle Peter in recognizing that the work of the Spirit trumps our historical assumptions about what must be true because it has always been assumed to be true. (Acts 10:47) It is the Spirit who must give us guidance in these matters, and we will do well to trust that the Spirit is leading us in ways that are true. Let us be reminded of Gamaliel’s prescient warning to his colleagues on the Jerusalem Sanhedrin: “I tell you, keep away from these people and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God!” (Acts 5:38-39)

There is much in the world that demands the church’s attention and our prophetic action. It is tragic that we find ourselves incapable of doing what must be done to do justice and make peace because of our divisions around issues of human sexuality. And yet, we cannot simply ignore these divisions. The church must do the hard work of discerning God’s will. It must engage in conferencing that is truly holy... conferencing that is actually open to the ongoing movement of God’s Spirit. While we may find that we still disagree, we may find a way to recognize each as fellow travelers in the way of Jesus who together find unity in grace rather than law, compassion rather than hatred, and love rather than fear.

The members of the Love Your Neighbor Coalition Leadership Team, representing thirteen United Methodist caucus organizations, respectfully await your willingness to work together on all of the issues that are facing our denomination and world! To the Glory of God and out of our deep and abiding love for Jesus, the Christ!

1. The Rev. Walter Lockhart, Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns
2. The Rev. Cedrick Bridgeforth, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)
3. Deborah Dangerfield, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)
4. Jenny Phillips, Fossil Free UMC
5. The Rev. Amy DeLong, Love Prevails
6. The Rev. Lyssette Perez, MARCHA: Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa de los Hispano-Americanos
7. Chett Pritchett, Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA)
8. Jayson Dobney, Methodists In New Directions (MIND)
9. The Rev. Sara Thompson Tweedy, Methodists In New Directions (MIND)
10. The Rev. Dr. Jacob Dharmaraj, National Federation of Asian American United Methodists (NFAAUM)
11. Cynthia Kent, Native American International Caucus of United Methodists (NAIC)
12. Monalisa Tuitahi, Pacific Islanders Caucus of United Methodists (PINCUM)

13. Bridget Cabrera, Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN)
14. The Rev. Janine Delaunay, United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities
15. The Rev. Frank Wulf, Western Methodist Justice Movement (WMJM)
16. The Rev. Richard Bentley, Western Methodist Justice Movement (WMJM)
17. The Rev. Steven Clunn, Love Your Neighbor Coalition Coordinator (LYNC)

Subject: A Resolution of Non-Conformity With The United Methodist Book of Discipline

Presenter: Megan Kilpatrick, Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

Organization: Western Methodist Justice Movement

Petitioners: Megan Kilpatrick and 3 others

Names of Other Petitioners: Austin Adkinson, Megan Armstrong, Richard Bentley

Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

WHEREAS, 1 John 4:18-19 states, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because God first loved us.”

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that our United Methodist Book of Discipline names the loving behavior of persons of the same-sex as “incompatible with Christian teaching” and thus discriminates against and encourages fear against those in same-sex relationships.

WHEREAS, we recognize that this language and its underlying (ir)rationale is a barrier not only to persons of non-heterosexual sexual orientations, but also to an increasing number of people unafraid to embrace those in same-sex relationships, and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the Western Jurisdiction has publicly declared, “We cannot accept discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons and therefore, we will work toward their full participation at all levels in the life of the church and society” and each succeeding Jurisdictional Conference has reaffirmed that statement and expanded it into extravagant hospitality in ministries with all of God's children, and

WHEREAS, in 2012 **A Resolution of Non-Conformity With The United Methodist Book of Discipline** affirmed the practice of Biblical Obedience, and asked retired Bishop Melvin Talbert to oversee a grassroots movement challenging bishops, clergy, laity and local churches and ministry settings to operate as if the statement printed in the Book of Discipline Paragraph 161F does not exist, and

WHEREAS, General Conference recognized the deep division in The United Methodist Church and have made clear that we are not of one mind, and have formed a commission to study “*A Way Forward*,” and

WHEREAS, we are called to follow Jesus who stood on the side of the oppressed and worked to tear down barriers that kept people apart and who answered God’s call to actively love those who in his context were deemed to be of a lesser worth.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Western Jurisdiction cast out our fear and prophetically call our Annual Conferences and local churches to not conform to or comply with provisions of the Discipline which discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, including marriage (161.B), the incompatibility clause (161.F), ordination and appointments (304.3), homosexual unions (341.6), the Annual Conference funding ban (613.19), the GCFA funding ban (806.9), chargeable offenses pertaining to being “a self avowed practicing homosexual” or to officiating at weddings for couples regardless of the sex of the partners (2702.1b,d);

That the Western Jurisdiction insist that the church be in ministry to and with all persons and that we not conduct judicial procedures against our bishops and clergy related to the Discipline’s provisions which

discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and even when complaints are filed, they no longer conduct trials;

That the Western Jurisdiction realign its funding to reflect these commitments, using no reserve funds to pay for judicial procedures related to the Discipline's provisions which discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and instead ask the Western Jurisdiction Leadership Team to use these funds to lead trainings in cultural competency, anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-ageism, anti-heterosexism, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and anti-oppression at the conference and district levels.

Subject: A Resolution To Support The Council of Bishops' Proposal *A Way Forward*

Presenter: Rev. Sharon Moe, Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

Organization: Western Methodist Justice Movement

Petitioners: Sharon Moe and 3 others

Names of Other Petitioners: Megan Armstrong, Austin Adkinson, Richard Bentley

Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

WHEREAS, in May 2016 The United Methodist General Conference adopted the recommended plan authored by the Council of Bishops entitled *A Way Forward*, and deferred consideration of all legislation related to human sexuality before the 2016 General Conference;

WHEREAS, *A Way Forward* provides that the Council of Bishops shall appoint a special Commission “to develop a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph in our Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality” and that the Council of Bishops will “maintain an on-going dialogue with the Commission” and that if they complete their work in time, report to a called General Conference before the regular 2020 General Conference;

WHEREAS, the Western Jurisdiction supports *A Way Forward*, and endorses the leadership of the Council of Bishops and the 2016 General Conference in its decision to address discrimination against lesbian and gay persons currently in the Book of Discipline;

WHEREAS, the Western Jurisdiction Conference previously expressed its views on human sexuality in the following ways:

1. In each quadrennial WJC since 2000, the body has adopted a resolution calling for full inclusion of all persons without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity;
2. In the 2008 WJC, a resolution entitled “Resolution on Human Sexuality in Western Jurisdiction” was adopted, supporting the “Majority Report” of the Human Sexuality Subcommittee of Church and Society II legislative committee;
3. In 2008, the WJC adopted a resolution, “Western Jurisdiction in Ministry To All of God's Children,” which named the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identities in the West, and proclaimed “that those diversities of gender identity and sexual orientation are good elements of God’s creation;”
4. In 2012, the WJC adopted a resolution of “Apology to LGBTQIA Persons” for the continued marginalization, dehumanization, and demonization of LGBTQIA persons;
5. Also in 2012, the WJC adopted a resolution entitled “Gospel Obedience” which stated our belief that the UMC is in error on the subject of “homosexuality’s incompatibility with Christian teaching” and commended “to our bishops, clergy, local churches and ministry settings, the challenge to operate as if the statement in Para. 161F does not exist, creating a church where all people are truly welcome.”

WHEREAS, we believe that the statement in Social Principle ¶161F, Book of Discipline Paragraphs ¶341.6 and ¶304.3, as well as other sections which discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, conflict with the Constitution of The United Methodist Church’s guarantee that “all persons are of sacred worth,” (Division 1 Article 4). In addition the Social Principles “implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.” (Social Principles ¶161F)

WHEREAS, our United Methodist connection calls us to treat well-intentioned, well-reasoned differences of opinion with mutual respect rather than insisting upon a verdict or language that rejects one side of the other;

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the critical importance of carrying out this historic process with the utmost of care, effectiveness, and timing. And, while we agree that establishing the details and naming the members of the Commission are paramount to overall success, we must also acknowledge the harm that grows with each passing day and the importance of preserving momentum and collective trust that this new way forward will not ultimately result in failure as similar Commissions have in our past. We must not repeat past mistakes;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Jurisdiction Conference, endorses *A Way Forward*, commits to being in continued prayer for the Council of Bishops and the Commission throughout the journey ahead, and encourages the Council of Bishops to do the following:

1. Name the members of the *A Way Forward* Commission as soon as possible but no later than August 1, 2016 and require that the first Commission meeting be convened within 60 days of the Commission members being appointed;
2. Among the members of the Commission, include self-identifying LGBTQIA persons (at least 10% but no fewer than 3) so that such voices will be represented in what will otherwise be a conversation about LGBTQIA persons by heterosexual persons identifying with their gender assigned at birth. Such conversation will lack integrity if LGBTQIA voices are not included;
3. Authorize and encourage the Commission to seek out and invite established experts to provide information as needed;
4. Provide a forum for the Commission to receive input from individual churches and members, perhaps through and with the cooperation of the Annual Conferences.
5. Report to the Annual Conferences at least once each quarter on the progress of the work of the Commission;
6. Provide a final report at least two months in advance of any called General Conference that shall take up any necessary legislation to implement the recommendations of the Commission;
7. Provide continued leadership and a commitment to unity during this interim and vulnerable period, agreeing to a moratorium on the processing of any current or future complaints related to Discipline paragraphs having to do with human sexuality until the General Conference is reconvened.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Bishops contact the Western Methodist Justice Movement, the Love Your Neighbor Coalition, Signers on the Coming Out Letter of May 9, 2016, and following, among others, for names of LGBTQIA persons who would be willing to serve on the Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Bishops have the Commission put in place assurances that LGBTQIA clergy, lay and others serving on the Commission be assured of their safety, such that no negative repercussions accrue to them from their serving as openly LGBTQIA on the Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference Secretary convey this resolution to the President of the Council of Bishops.

Subject: A Call For Common Sense Gun Safety
Presenter: Mark Stephenson, California-Pacific Annual Conference
Petitioners: Mark Stephenson and 8 others
Names of Other Petitioners: Cedrick Bridgeforth, Rosie Rios, Frank Wulf, Karen Oliveto, Donna Pritchard, Patricia Farris, Sandy Olewine, Richard Bentley
Estimated Fiscal Impact: None

WHEREAS, in an average year, over 108,000 people in America are victims of gun violence, of which over 32,000 individuals die as a result;

WHEREAS, the devastating toll of mass shootings have recently impacted numerous cities including Orlando, FL, San Bernardino, CA and Charleston, SC;

WHEREAS, the victims of gun violence extend beyond the grave of those lost to these tragic shootings;

WHEREAS, millions of guns are sold every year without background checks;

WHEREAS, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount instructs his followers to be instruments of peace:

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also."
"...You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:38-39,43-44);*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Jurisdictional Conference, in response to the destructive impact on communities due to deaths by gun violence, calls for the following steps to be taken by our local, state and federal lawmakers:

1. Require and enforce universal background checks and mandatory waiting periods on all gun sales;
2. Except for the use of military and law enforcement agencies, institute a clear ban on all future sales, transfer, importation and manufacture of assault rifles, high-capacity ammunition magazines and multiple-impact ammunition;
3. Ban the importation and manufacture of full-auto conversion kits that convert automatic weapons;
4. Make gun trafficking a Federal crime, and increase penalties for those who engage in "straw purchases" of firearms for ineligible persons;
5. Prohibit persons from purchasing guns without evidence of gun safety training.
6. Compel the government to complete the criminal background checks and enter all of the felonies that have currently been omitted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Western Jurisdictional Conference asks local churches to download and conduct the free United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) study on gun violence, *Kingdom Dreams, Violent Realities*.

Subject: **Protecting the Right to Peacefully Address Injustice through Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions**

Presenter: Sandra Olewine, California-Pacific Conference

Conference Organizations: United Methodists' Holy Land Task of the California-Pacific Conference, the Israel/Palestine Task Force of the California-Nevada Conference, and the Oregon-Idaho Holy Land Task Force

Petitioner: Sandra Olewine and 7 others

Other Petitioners: Donna Pritchard, Jim Nibbelink, JoAnn Fukumoto, Frank Wulf, Sharon Moe, Jan Nelson, and Billie Fidlin

Estimated Fiscal Impact: Minimal; letters to be sent to government leaders.

Whereas boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) are constitutionally protected forms of free speech and protest that have often been used by people of conscience to effect positive social and political change;

Whereas a wave of anti-BDS legislation that has been proposed in the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures and public institutions across the United States threatens to penalize the use of these time-honored nonviolent justice-seeking actions;

Whereas United Methodists and other religious communities have long used the nonviolent methods of boycotts, divestment and sanctions to stand in solidarity with oppressed people and to work for justice, and such advocacy measures by the United Methodist Church have proven to be useful tools in helping to bring about a wide range of constructive social change, including the strengthening of labor rights for farm workers in the United States and ending of apartheid in South Africa;

Whereas, in 2005, after studying the success of such efforts, a broad coalition of Palestinian civil society issued a call for a global movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) to advance the Palestinians' long-denied rights to self-determination, freedom, justice, and equality;

Whereas, in 2009, Palestinian Christians echoed the call for boycott and divestment in their landmark document, *Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth*, an ecumenical confession of faith and urgent call to action signed by thousands of Palestinian Christians and endorsed by the 13 Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem that has often been compared to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, and other Christian manifestos written in times of crisis;

Whereas, in recent years, more than a dozen United Methodist Annual Conferences, including several in the Western Jurisdiction, have called for their own conference and/or the denomination to divest from companies that support and profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land;

Whereas, in 2012, the United Methodist General Conference approved the resolution "Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land," (#6111) which calls on "all nations to prohibit...the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land," i.e. calls for an international boycott of the Israeli settlements;

Whereas, in 2016, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church announced that five Israeli banks would be excluded from their investment portfolios, explicitly because of those banks' involvement in settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2016 Western Jurisdictional Conference of the United Methodist Church opposes any legislation that seeks to restrict the right to address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions and joins the Rabbinical Council of Jewish Voice for Peace in calling on our elected officials "to resist efforts to stifle the movement toward justice for Palestinians through the current wave of 'anti-BDS' legislation;"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference Secretary write a letter to the President of the United States and to the governors, the congressional representatives

and the members of the legislatures of the states within the Western Jurisdiction, informing those elected officials of this resolution of the Western Jurisdictional Conference, said letter to include the approximate number of congregations and church members within the Western Jurisdiction and/or within the respective state of the recipient;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Western Jurisdictional Conference urges all annual conferences, congregations, and church members to contact their governors, congressional representatives and state legislators to communicate this resolution of the Western Jurisdictional Conference and to advocate against anti-BDS legislation anywhere in the United States.