

# Chapter Three

## THE SUPERINTENDENCY

### Section I. The Nature of Superintendency

¶ 401. Task—The task of superintending in The United Methodist Church resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendent, with each possessing distinct and collegial responsibilities. The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (see Part III, Section I). From apostolic times, certain ordained persons have been entrusted with the particular tasks of superintending. The purpose of superintending is to equip the Church in its disciple-making ministry. Those who superintend carry primary responsibility for ordering the life of the Church. It is their task to enable the gathered Church to worship and to evangelize faithfully.

It is also their task to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for the equipping of Christian people for service in the Church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ and to help extend the service in mission. It is their task, as well, to see that all matters, temporal and spiritual, are administered in a manner that acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the Church. The formal leadership in The United Methodist Church, located in these superintending offices, is an integral part of the system of an itinerant ministry.<sup>1</sup>

### Section II. Offices of Bishop and District Superintendent

¶ 402. Special Ministry, Not Separate Order—The offices of bishop and district superintendent exist in The United Methodist Church as particular ministries. Bishops are elected and district superintendents are appointed from the group of elders who are ordained to be ministers of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order and thereby participate in the ministry of Christ, in sharing a royal priesthood that has apostolic roots (1 Peter 2:9; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

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<sup>1</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 524.

¶ 403. The Role of Bishops and District Superintendents—Bishops and superintendents are elders in full connection.

1. Bishops are elected from the elders and set apart for a ministry of servant leadership, general oversight and supervision (¶ 401). As followers of Jesus Christ, bishops are authorized to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church. The role and calling forth of the bishop is to exercise oversight and support of the Church in its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The basis of such discipleship of leadership (episko-pé) lies in discipline and a disciplined life. The bishop leads therefore through the following disciplines:

a) A vital and renewing spirit. The role of the bishop is to faithfully practice, model and lead the spiritual disciplines of our faith and to call and inspire the clergy and laity within the Church to practice the Christian disciplines in their individual lives through the tradition of personal holiness. The bishop is to lead in public worship, in the celebration of the sacraments and in the commendation of our faith.

b) An enquiring mind and a commitment to the teaching office. The role of the bishop is to continue to learn and to teach how to make disciples and lead faithful and fruitful congregations using scripture, spiritual disciplines, our Wesleyan heritage, and the history and doctrines of the Church.

c) A vision for the Church. The role of bishop is to lead the whole Church in claiming its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The bishop leads by discerning, inspiring, strategizing, equipping, implementing, and evaluating the fulfillment of the mission of the church. Working in partnership with the Council of Bishops, the cabinet and lay and clergy leadership of the annual conference, and the professing members of the church, the bishop urges the whole church to move toward the vision of sharing Christ with the world in fulfillment of our mission, faithful discipleship and a “more excellent way” of being Christ’s people in the world.

d) A prophetic commitment for the transformation of the Church and the world. The role of the bishop is to be a prophetic voice for justice in a suffering and conflicted world through the tradition of social holiness. The bishop encourages and models the mission of witness and service in the world through proclamation of the gospel and alleviation of human suffering.

e) A passion for the unity of the church. The role of the bishop is to be the shepherd of the whole flock and thereby provide leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation and unity within the Church—the United Methodist Church and the church universal.

f) The ministry of administration. The role of the bishop is to uphold the discipline and order of the Church by consecrating, ordaining, commissioning, supervising and appointing persons in ministry to the Church and the world. As the presiding officer of the annual conference, the resident bishop provides order and leads in new opportunities for ministry within the annual conference. The bishop shares with other bishops the oversight of the whole church through the Council of Bishops and is held accountable through the Council of Bishops in collaboration with conference and jurisdictional committees on episcopacy.

2. District superintendents are elders in full connection appointed by the bishop to the cabinet as an extension of the superintending role of the bishop within the annual conference through the same disciplines and in accordance with their responsibilities designated in the Book of Discipline under the supervision of the resident bishop.

### **Section III. Election, Assignment, and Termination of Bishops**

\* ¶ 404. Provisions for Episcopal Areas—

1. In central conferences, the number of bishops shall be determined on the basis of missional needs, as approved by the General Conference on recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

\* 2. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

¶ 405. Election and Consecration of Bishops—1. Nomination—An annual conference, in the session immediately prior to the next regular session of the jurisdictional or central conference, may name one or more nominees for episcopal election. Balloting at jurisdictional and central conferences shall not be limited to nominees of annual conferences nor shall any jurisdictional or central conference delegate be bound to vote for any specific nominee. Each jurisdictional or central conference shall develop appropriate procedures for furnishing information about nominees from annual conferences. This shall be done at least two weeks prior to the first day of the jurisdictional or central conference. Similar procedures shall be developed for persons nominated by ballot who receive ten votes, or 5 percent of the valid votes cast, and the information shall be made available to the delegates at the site of the conference.

2. Process—a) Jurisdictional and central conference delegates, in electing bishops, shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church with respect to sex, race, and national origin. In addition, consideration shall be given to the nature of superintendency as described in ¶ 401.

b) The jurisdictional and central conferences are authorized to fix the percentage of votes necessary to elect a bishop. It is recommended that at least 60 percent of those present and voting be necessary to elect.

c) Consecration of bishops may take place at the session of the conference at which election occurs or at a place and time designated by the conference. The consecration service may include bishops from other jurisdictional and central conferences. It is strongly urged that the consecration service also include representatives from other Christian communions (see ¶¶ 124, 427.2, 1901).

\* ¶ 406. Assignment Process—\* 1. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

2. Central Conference Committee on Episcopacy—The central conference committee on episcopacy, after consultation with the College of Bishops, shall recommend the assignment of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the central conference.<sup>2</sup>

3. Special Assignments—The Council of Bishops may, with consent of the bishop and the concurrence of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, assign one of its members for one year to some specific church-wide responsibility deemed of sufficient importance to the welfare of the total Church. In this event, a bishop shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area for that term. Another bishop or bishops, active or retired, and not necessarily from the same jurisdictional or central conference, shall be named by the Council of Bishops on recommendation of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction involved to assume presidential responsibilities during the interim. In the event that more than one retired bishop is assigned to fulfill presidential responsibilities in one episcopal area, the Episcopal Fund shall be responsible only for the difference between the pensions paid the retired bishops and the remuneration of one active bishop. This assignment may be renewed for a second year by a two-thirds vote of the Council of Bishops and majority vote of the jurisdictional or central committee on episcopacy, and the consent of the bishop and the College of Bishops involved. The bishop so assigned shall continue to receive regular salary and support.

¶ 407. Vacancy in the Office of Bishop—A vacancy in the office of bishop may occur due to death, retirement (¶ 408.1, .2, .3), resignation (¶ 408.4), judicial procedure (¶ 2712), leave of absence (¶ 410.1), or incapacity (¶ 410.4). In case assignment of a bishop to presidential supervision of an episcopal area is terminated by any of the above causes, the vacancy shall be filled by the Council of Bishops on nomination of the active bishops of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction or central conference concerned, after consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference and annual conference committees on the episcopacy and the cabinet(s); or, if the vacancy should occur within twenty-four months of the episcopal assumption of presidential supervision of that area, the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction or central conference concerned may call a special

<sup>2</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 248.

session of the jurisdictional or central conference as provided in ¶ 521.2. When a bishop is elected under the provisions of this paragraph, the years remaining in the quadrennium within which the election occurs shall count as a full quadrennium for purposes of assignment. It is recommended that the previous bishop serving the vacant episcopal area not be appointed to serve in the interim.

¶ 408. Termination of Office—An elder who is serving as a bishop up to the time of retirement shall have the status of a retired bishop.<sup>3</sup>

1. Mandatory Retirement—*a)* A bishop shall be retired on August 31 next following the regular session of the jurisdictional conference if the bishop's sixty-eighth birthday has been reached on or before July 1 of the year in which the jurisdictional conference is held.<sup>4</sup>

*b)* Pension as approved by the General Conference shall be payable on September 1 following the close of the jurisdictional conference.

*c)* If, however, the retired bishop accepts any one of the following assignments of churchwide responsibility, the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall set a level of compensation not to exceed a maximum determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration: (1) assignment of a special nature with direct relationship and accountability to the Council of Bishops, or (2) assignment to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education. Only the difference between the compensation as established and the continuing pension shall be paid from the Episcopal Fund. Assignment of retired bishops to United Methodist Church-related institutions of higher education must be at the initiative of the institutions, with service not to exceed the mandatory retirement ages of the institutions.

If a bishop is assigned to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education, that agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education shall participate by payment of 50 percent of the difference between the compensation herein established and the pension of the bishop. The general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education shall further assume all responsibility for the bishop's operational and travel expenses related to the assignment.

Compensation for any special assignment shall cease after the bishop has reached the mandatory age of retirement for all ordained ministers (¶ 358.1) or completes the assignment, whichever comes first, except that retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops as Executive Secretary and Ecumenical Officer may continue to be compensated for such special assignment(s) throughout the terms

3 See Judicial Council Decision 361, 407.

4 See Judicial Council Decisions 413, 578.

of office. No assignment to a jurisdiction, central conference, annual conference, or non-United Methodist agency shall qualify for additional compensation from the Episcopal Fund under the provisions of this paragraph. The status of a retired bishop on special assignment shall, for purposes of housing and other benefits, be that of a retired bishop.

2. Voluntary Retirement—*a)* Bishops who have completed twenty years or more of service under full-time appointment as ordained ministers or as local pastors with pension credit prior to the opening date of the session of the jurisdictional conference, including at least one quadrennium as bishop, may request the jurisdictional conference or central conference to retire them with the privilege of receiving their pension as determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration, payment of which may begin the first of any month when such payments would be permissible under the provisions of the Ministerial Pension Plan, amended and restated effective January 1, 2007, as the Clergy Retirement Security Program. If the bishop has not reached age sixty-five or completed forty years of service at the time of retirement, the pension benefit for years of service prior to January 1, 1982, may be actuarially reduced as provided under guidelines adopted by the General Conference.

*b)* Vocational Retirement—A bishop who has served at least eight years in the episcopacy may seek retirement for vocational reasons and may be so retired by the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy on recommendation by the involved College of Bishops. Such bishops shall receive their pensions as provided in ¶ 408.2 (a). If the employing entity provides or makes health insurance available to employees, then the bishop who retires under this provision will be insured under that program, whether or not the bishop is required to pay the premium for that coverage, and the Episcopal Fund will assume no future obligation to provide health insurance for the bishop or the bishop's family. If the employing entity does not provide or make health insurance available to employees, either while employed or in retirement, then the bishop retiring under this provision will be provided with health and welfare benefits for retirees as specified from time to time by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

*c)* Bishops who have attained age sixty-two or have completed thirty-five years of service under full-time appointment as an elder or bishop may request the jurisdictional or central conference to place them in the retired relation with the privilege of receiving their pension as determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

*d)* Any bishop who seeks a voluntary retired status shall notify the president of the Council of Bishops at least six months prior to the General Conference.

The provisions of ¶ 408.2c are suspended until January 1, 2009. This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2008 General Conference.

e) A bishop may seek voluntary retirement for health reasons and shall be so retired by the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy upon recommendation by the involved College of Bishops and upon presentation of satisfactory medical evidence. Such bishops shall receive their pensions as provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.

f) Pension as approved by the General Conference shall be payable on September 1 following the close of the jurisdictional conference.

3. Involuntary Retirement—*a)* A bishop may be placed in the retired relation regardless of age by a two-thirds vote of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy if, after not less than a thirty-day notice in writing is given to the affected bishop and hearing held, such relationship is found by said committee to be in the best interests of the bishop and/or the Church. Appeal from this action may be made to the Judicial Council with the notice provisions being applicable as set forth in ¶ 2716.

*b)* A bishop, for health reasons, may be retired between sessions of the jurisdictional or central conference by a two-thirds vote of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy upon the recommendation of one third of the membership of the involved College of Bishops. The affected bishop, upon request, shall be entitled to a review of his or her health condition by a professional diagnostic team prior to action by the involved College of Bishops. Notification of action to retire shall be given by the chairperson and secretary of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy to the secretary of the Council of Bishops and the treasurer of the Episcopal Fund. Appeal from this action may be made to the Judicial Council with the notice provisions being applicable as set forth in ¶ 2716. Upon such retirement, the bishop shall receive a pension as determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration. See also 2d above.

4. Resignation—A bishop may voluntarily resign from the episcopacy at any time. A bishop may resign from the office by submitting his or her resignation to the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops shall have authority to take appropriate actions concerning matters relating to the resignation, including the appointment of an acting bishop to act until a successor is elected and assigned. The consecration papers of a bishop in good standing so resigning shall be properly inscribed by the secretary of the Council of Bishops and returned. He or she shall be furnished with a certificate of resignation, which shall entitle him or her to membership as a traveling elder in the annual conference (or its succes-

sor) in which membership was last held. Notification of this action shall be given by the secretary of the Council of Bishops to the chairperson and secretary of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy. When the resigned bishop or surviving spouse and dependent children become conference claimants, the Episcopal Fund shall pay a pension as determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

¶ 409. Status of Retired Bishops—A retired bishop is a bishop of the Church in every respect and continues to function as a member of the Council of Bishops in accordance with the Constitution and other provisions of the Discipline.

1. Retired bishops may participate in the Council of Bishops and its committees, but without vote. They may preside over sessions of an annual conference, provisional annual conference, or mission if requested to do so by the bishop assigned to that conference, or in the event of that bishop's incapacity, by the president of the College of Bishops to which the conference is related. Retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops may serve as the executive secretary and the ecumenical officer of the Council. In emergency situations, where the resident bishop is unable to preside, the College of Bishops shall assign an effective or retired bishop to preside over the sessions of the annual conference (¶ 48). They may not make appointments or preside at the jurisdiction or central conference. However, when a retired bishop is appointed by the Council of Bishops to a vacant episcopal area or parts of an area under the provisions of ¶¶ 409.3, 410.1, or 410.3, that bishop may function as a bishop in the effective relationship.<sup>5</sup>

2. A retired bishop may be considered a member of an annual conference, without vote, for purposes of appointment to a local charge within the said conference.

3. A bishop retired under ¶ 408.1, .2 above may be appointed by the Council of Bishops upon recommendation of the involved College of Bishops to presidential responsibility for temporary service in an area in the case of death, resignation, disability, or procedure involving a resident bishop (¶ 2703.1). This appointment shall not continue beyond the next jurisdictional or central conference.

4. Colleges of Bishops are encouraged to work with prospective retirees and institutions across the Connection on possible retirement assignments (e.g. bishop-in-residence), particularly assignments expressive of the office's residential, presidential and missional nature.

¶ 410. Leaves—1. Leave of Absence—A bishop may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, and

5 See Judicial Council Decision 248.

the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the executive committee of the Council of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area. Salary and other benefits shall be continued through the Episcopal Fund.

2. Renewal Leave—Every bishop in the active relationship shall take up to three months' leave from his or her normal episcopal responsibilities for purposes of reflection, study, and self-renewal during each quadrennium. The College of Bishops, in consultation with the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, shall coordinate details pertaining to such leaves.

3. Sabbatical Leave—A bishop who has served for at least two quadrennia may be granted a sabbatical leave of not more than one year for a program of study or renewal in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for which the sabbatical leave is granted, the bishops shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area, and another bishop or bishops shall be designated by the Council of Bishops to assume the presidential duties. The bishop shall receive one-half salary and, where applicable, housing allowance for the period of the leave.

¶ 411. Expiration of Terms in Central Conferences—In a central conference where term episcopacy prevails, bishops whose term of office expires prior to the time of compulsory retirement because of age and who are not reelected by the central conference shall be returned to membership as traveling elders in the annual conference (or its successor) of which they ceased to be a member when elected bishop. Their term of office shall expire at the close of the central conference at which their successor is elected, and they shall therefore be entitled to participate as a bishop in the consecration of the successor. The credentials of office as bishop shall be submitted to the secretary of the central conference, who shall make thereon the notation that the bishop has honorably completed the term of service for which elected and has ceased to be a bishop of The United Methodist Church.<sup>6</sup>

¶ 412. Review and Evaluation of Bishops— In its review of the work, character and official administration of the bishops under ¶ 524.3.a, the Jurisdictional or Central Conference Committee on Episcopacy shall establish and implement processes that provide, at least once each quadrennium, for each active bishop, a full and formal evaluation which will include self-evaluation, assessment by episcopal peers, and comment by persons affected by his/her superintendency (such as cabinets, lay leaders, directors of agencies served). Such processes shall include

<sup>6</sup> See Judicial Council Decisions 61, 236, 370.

the participation of the Conference or Area Committee on Episcopacy. It shall be the duty of each jurisdiction's College of Bishops/central conference's College of Bishops, under the leadership of its president, to consult with and to cooperate with the committee in order to schedule and facilitate such reviews and evaluations as well as to address issues that may arise in the course of that work.

¶ 413. Complaints Against Bishops—1. Episcopal leadership in The United Methodist Church shares with all other ordained persons in the sacred trust of their ordination. The ministry of bishops as set forth in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church also flows from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles (¶ 402). Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized.

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall be submitted to the president of the College of Bishops in that jurisdictional or central conference. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the secretary of the College of Bishops. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702.<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this paragraph, the United Methodist bishops of the central conferences shall constitute one college of bishops.

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2, the president and the secretary of the College of Bishops, or the secretary and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the president (or the president and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the secretary), shall, within 10 days, consult the chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy who shall appoint from the committee one professing member and one clergy member who are not from the same episcopal area; who are not from the episcopal area that the bishop under complaint was elected from or has been assigned to; and who are not of the same gender.<sup>8</sup>

a) When deemed appropriate to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church and/or bishop, the College of Bishops, in consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed sixty days. During the suspension, salary, housing and benefits will continue.

b) The supervisory response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution. It is not a part of any judicial process. The

7 See Judicial Council Decision 751.

8 See Judicial Council Decision 763.

supervisory response should be carried out in a confidential manner and should be completed within 120 days. There may be an extension of 120 days if the supervising bishop and the two jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process shall determine that an extension will be productive. There may be a second extension of 120 days by the mutual written consent of the supervisory bishop, members of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee appointed to the supervisory process, the complainant and the bishop under complaint.

The supervising bishop shall regularly advise all parties of the status of the process and shall notify all parties within 7 days after a determination is made that the supervisory response will not lead to a resolution of the matter.

No verbatim record shall be made and legal counsel shall not be present, although the bishop against whom the complaint was made and the complainant both may choose another person to accompany him or her, with the right to voice. At the determination of the president (secretary), persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory responses. Others may be consulted as well.

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 361.1[b]). The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement.

d) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (¶ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may refer the matter as an Administrative Complaint (¶ 413.3[e]) or a Judicial Complaint (¶ 2704.1).

e) Administrative Complaint—If the complaint is based on allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform episcopal duties, the president and secretary of the College of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint) shall refer the complaint to the

jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.<sup>9</sup> The committee may recommend involuntary retirement (§ 408.3), disability leave (§ 410.4), remedial measures (§ 363.2), other appropriate action, or it may dismiss the complaint. When the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy deems the matter serious enough and when one or more offenses listed in § 2702 are involved, the committee may refer the complaint back to the president and secretary of the College of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint) for referral as a judicial complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on investigation. The provisions of § 362.2 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.

4. Any actions of the jurisdictional or central conference committee taken on a complaint shall be reported to the next session of the jurisdictional or central conference.

5. Each jurisdiction shall develop a protocol for the caring of lay, clergy and staff determined to be affected by the processing of the complaint.

#### **Section IV. Specific Responsibilities of Bishops**

¶ 414. Leadership—Spiritual and Temporal—1. To lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church which confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and particularly to lead the Church in its mission of witness and service in the world.

2. To strengthen the local church, giving spiritual leadership to both laity and clergy; and to build relationships with people of local congregations of the area.

3. To guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically.

4. To travel through the connection at large as the Council of Bishops (§ 427) to implement strategy for the concerns of the Church.

5. To teach and uphold the theological traditions of The United Methodist Church.

6. To provide liaison and leadership in the quest for Christian unity in ministry, mission, and structure and in the search for strengthened relationships with other living faith communities.

7. To organize such missions as shall have been authorized by the General Conference.

8. To promote and support the evangelistic witness of the whole Church.

9. To discharge such other duties as the Discipline may direct.

10. To convene the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders and work with the elected chairperson of each order.

<sup>9</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 784.

11. To promote, support, and model generous Christian giving, with special attention to teaching the Biblical principles of giving.

¶ 415. *Presidential Duties*—1. To preside in the general, jurisdictional, central, and annual conferences.<sup>10</sup>

2. To provide general oversight for the fiscal and program operations of the annual conference(s). This may include special inquiry into the work of agencies to ensure that the annual conference and general church policies and procedures are followed.

3. To ensure fair process for clergy and laity as set forth in ¶ 2701 in all involuntary administrative and judicial proceedings through monitoring the performance of annual conference officials, boards, and committees charged with implementing such procedures.

4. To form the districts after consultation with the district superintendents and after the number of the same has been determined by vote of the annual conference.<sup>11</sup>

5. To appoint the district superintendents annually (¶¶ 417-418).

6. To consecrate bishops, to ordain elders and deacons, to consecrate diaconal ministers, to commission deaconesses, home missionaries and missionaries, and to see that the names of the persons commissioned and consecrated are entered on the journals of the conference and that proper credentials are furnished to these persons. As these services are acts of the whole Church, text and rubrics shall be used in the form approved by the General Conference.

7. To fix the appointments of deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries and to see that the names and appointments are printed in the journals of the conference.

¶ 416. *Working with Ordained, Licensed, Consecrated, and Commissioned Personnel*—1. To make and fix the appointments in the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions as the Discipline may direct (¶¶ 430-434).

2. To divide or to unite a circuit(s), station(s), or mission(s) as judged necessary for missional strategy and then to make appropriate appointments.

3. To announce the appointments of deaconesses, diaconal ministers, home missionaries, and laypersons in service under the General Board of Global Ministries.

4. To fix the charge conference membership of all ordained ministers appointed to ministries other than the local church in keeping with ¶ 344.

5. To transfer, upon the request of the receiving bishop, clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, provided said member(s) agrees to said trans-

10 See Judicial Council Decision 395.

11 See Judicial Council Decision 422.

fer; and to send immediately to the secretaries of both conferences involved, to the conference boards of ordained ministry, and to the clearing house of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, written notices of the transfer of members and of their standing in the Course of Study if they are undergraduates.<sup>12</sup>

6. To appoint associate members, provisional members, or full members to attend any school, college, or theological seminary listed by the University Senate, or to participate in a program of Clinical Pastoral Education in a setting accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Such appointments are not to be considered as extension ministry appointments.

7. To keep and maintain appropriate supervisory records on all district superintendents and other records on ministerial personnel as determined by the bishop or required by the Discipline or action of the annual conference. When a district superintendent is no longer appointed to the cabinet, the bishop shall give that person's supervisory file to the superintendent of record. Supervisory records shall be kept under guidelines approved by the General Council on Finance and Administration. The supervisory records maintained by the bishop are not the personnel records of the annual conference.

### **Section V. Selection, Assignment, and Term of District Superintendents**

¶ 417. Selection and Assignment—Inasmuch as the district superintendency is an extension of the general superintendency, the bishop shall appoint elders to serve as district superintendents. Prior to each appointment, the bishop shall consult with the cabinet and the committee on district superintendency of the district to which the new superintendent will be assigned (¶ 431) for the purpose of determining leadership needs of the annual conference and the district (¶ 401). In the selection of superintendents, bishops shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church with respect to sex, race, national origin, physical challenge, and age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.

¶ 418. Limitations on Years of Service—The normal term for a district superintendent shall be up to six years, but this may be extended to no more than up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and the district committee on superintendency.

No superintendent shall serve for more than eight years in any consecutive eleven years. No elder shall serve as district superintendent more than fourteen years. In addition, consideration shall be given to the nature of superintendency as described in ¶ 401.<sup>13</sup>

12 See Judicial Council Decisions 114, 254, 554.

13 See Judicial Council Decisions 368, 512.

## Section VI. Specific Responsibilities of District Superintendents

¶ 419. The district superintendent shall oversee the total ministry of the clergy and of the churches in the communities of the district in their missions of witness and service in the world: (a) by giving priority to the scheduling of time and effort for spiritual leadership, pastoral support, supervision, and encouragement to the clergy and to the churches of the district; (b) by encouraging their personal, spiritual, and professional growth; (c) by encouraging their personal commitment to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church; (d) by promoting, supporting, and modeling generous Christian giving, with special attention to teaching the biblical principles of giving; (e) by nominating persons to serve as guides for the ministry inquiring process; (f) by nominating clergy in compliance with ¶ 349.1a,b in *The 2004 United Methodist Book of Discipline* to serve in the ministry of mentoring candidates, commissioned ministers, local pastors and other provisional members; (g) by participating with the bishops in the appointment-making process; (h) by assigning persons such as certified lay ministers to churches who do not have appointed clergy; (i) by enabling programs throughout the district that may assist local churches to build and extend their ministry and mission with their people and to the community; (j) by working in cooperation with appropriate district and annual conference agencies to explore long-range, experimental, ecumenical, multicultural, multi-racial, and cooperative ministries; (k) to provide representation and leadership in the district in the quest for Christian unity in ministry and mission, encouraging local congregations in the development of an understanding and relationship with other living faith communities and in working with ecumenical agencies and coalitions in the sharing of resources, and, where appropriate, serving as an ecumenical liaison with other living faith communities; (l) by assisting the bishop in the administration of the annual conference. In the fulfillment of this ministry, the superintendent shall consult at least annually (¶ 668.3) with the committee on district superintendency. In the context of these basic responsibilities, the district superintendent shall give attention to the following specific tasks.<sup>14</sup>

¶ 420. **Spiritual and Pastoral Leadership**—The district superintendent is responsible for giving spiritual leadership to clergy and laity in the churches of the district. The district superintendent should model and encourage spiritual formation through the practices of personal prayer, Bible study, communal worship, service, and frequent participation in the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.

1. To give pastoral support and care to the ordained, licensed, consecrated, and commissioned personnel and their families by traveling through the district, preaching, visiting, and maintaining the connectional order of the Discipline.

2. To counsel with clergy, consecrated, commissioned, and certified personnel concerning matters affecting their ministry and personal life.

3. To encourage the building of covenantal community among the clergy, consecrated, commissioned, and certified personnel for mutual support and discipline; to build systems of mutual support for their families.

¶ 421. Supervision—1. To work with elders, deacons, local pastors, diaconal ministers, and charge conferences in formulating statements of purpose for congregations in fulfilling their mission and with committees on pastor-parish relations to clarify the priorities for the ministry of clergy and diaconal ministers.

2. To establish a clearly understood process of supervision for clergy of the district, including observation of all aspects of ministry, direct evaluation, and feedback to the clergy involved.

3. To consult with committees on pastor-parish relations to update their profiles for appointment in accordance with ¶ 432.1 and with pastors to update their profiles for appointment in accordance with ¶ 432.2.<sup>15</sup>

4. To make specific provision for the supervision of provisional members and local pastors appointed within the district.

5. To receive annually from each clergyperson a written report describing his or her program of continuing education and spiritual growth, to give counsel concerning the clergyperson's future plans for continuing education, and to encourage congregations to give time and financial support for programs of continuing education mutually agreed upon by the clergy, district superintendent, and the staff-parish relations committee.

a) To make specific provision for the support and supervision of certified lay ministers or other laity assigned within the district.

¶ 422. Personnel—1. To work with clergy and diaconal ministers, committees on pastor-parish relations, and congregations in interpreting the meaning of ministry and in identifying and enlisting candidates of the highest quality for ordained ministry, with special concern for the inclusiveness of the Church with respect to gender, race, national origin, and disabilities; to encourage candidates to attend United Methodist seminaries in preparation for their leadership in the church.

2. To work with the district committee on ordained ministry in enabling a meaningful and appropriate examination of candidates into ordained ministry; to issue and renew licenses to preach when authorized (¶ 315); to keep careful records of all such candidates; to maintain regular communication with all candidates in order to advise and encourage them in spiritual and academic preparation for their ministry. The district superintendent shall not serve as chairperson of the district committee on ordained ministry.

<sup>15</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 701.

3. To work with the bishop and cabinet in the process of appointment and assignment for ordained ministers.

4. To cooperate with the board of ordained ministry in its efforts to provide or arrange support services and liaison for clergy at times of changing conference relationships or termination (§§ 352-360, 361-364).

\* § 423. Administration—1. To schedule and preside, or authorize an elder to preside, in each annual charge conference or church conference within the district (§§ 246, 248).

2. To administer the district office, including supervision of support staff (§§ 614.1a; 668.4a).

3. To develop adequate compensation for all clergy, including provision for housing, utilities, travel, and continuing education.

\* 4. To keep and maintain appropriate supervisory records on all ministerial personnel appointed or related to charges within the district. Supervisory records shall be kept under guidelines approved by the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Council. At the time of appointment change, supervisory records shall be given to the superintendent of record. The bishop shall be the superintendent of record for the district superintendents.

5. To cooperate with the district board of church location and building and local church boards of trustees or building committees in arranging acquisitions, sales, transfers, and mortgages of property; and to ensure that all charters, deeds, and other legal documents conform to the Discipline and to the laws, usages, and forms of the county, state, territory, or country within which such property is situated and to keep copies thereof.

6. To ensure that an investigation be made and a plan of action be developed for the future missional needs of The United Methodist Church or the community prior to consenting to the proposed action to sell or transfer any United Methodist local church property.

7. To keep accurate and complete records for one's successor, including:

a) All abandoned church properties and cemeteries within the bounds of the district and to insure that all records of such churches are placed with the Conference Commission on Archives and History;

b) All church properties being permissively used by other religious organizations, with the names of the local trustees thereof;

c) All known endowments, annuities, trust funds, investments, and unpaid legacies belonging to any pastoral charge or organization connected therewith in the district and an accounting of their management;

d) Membership of persons from churches that have been closed.

8. To receive a plan for the cultivation of giving from each congregation that includes promotion for current and deferred financial support in local churches for district, conference, and denominational causes.

9. To develop with appropriate district committees strategies that give careful attention to the needs of churches of small membership and to the formation of cooperative ministries.

10. To transfer members of a discontinued church to another United Methodist church of their choice or to such other churches as members may elect and to insure that all records of such discontinued churches are placed with the Conference Commission on Archives and History.

11. To recommend to the bishop for approval, after consultation with the churches involved, any realignment of pastoral charge lines and report them to the annual conference.

12. To serve within the district as acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop or where no pastor has been appointed.<sup>16</sup>

13. To see that the provisions of the Discipline are observed and to interpret and decide all questions of Church law and discipline raised by the churches in the district, subject to affirmation, modification, or reversal by the president of the annual conference.

\* 14. To secure an annual audit report of any and all district funds and send a copy to the district and annual conference councils.

¶ 424. Program—1. To oversee the programs of the Church within the bounds of the district in cooperation with clergy and congregations, working with and through the district council on ministries where it exists.

2. To work cooperatively with the conference council on ministries or alternative structure and its staff in all program concerns of the Church; may serve as a member of the annual conference council on ministries.

3. To give leadership within the district in the quest for Christian unity and interreligious relationships as an extension of the episcopal office.

4. To establish long-range planning that is responsive to ecumenical and racially inclusive perspectives and to initiate new and vital forms of ministry.

5. To participate with the cabinet in submitting to the annual conference a report reflecting the state of the conference, with recommendations for greater effectiveness.

¶ 425. Renewal and Study Leave—A district superintendent may take up to three months' leave from his or her normal superintendent responsibilities for purposes of reflection, study, and self-renewal once during his or her term as

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16 See Judicial Council Decision 581.

superintendent. The bishop and cabinet, in consultation with the committee on district superintendency, shall coordinate details pertaining to such leaves.

### **Section VII. Expressions of Superintendency**

¶ 426. Relationship Between Bishops and District Superintendents—The offices of bishop and district superintendent are linked with each other in ways described elsewhere (¶ 402). The interdependence of the offices calls for a collegial style of leadership. However, both the office of bishop and that of district superintendent are embedded in their own contexts.

¶ 427. Council of Bishops—1. Bishops, although elected by jurisdictional or central conferences, are elected general superintendents of the whole Church. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so bishops become through their election members first of the Council of Bishops before they are subsequently assigned to areas of service. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops are members of the Council of Bishops and are bound in special covenant with all other bishops. In keeping with this covenant, bishops fulfill their servant leadership and express their mutual accountability. The Council of Bishops is a faith community of mutual trust and concern responsible for the faith development and continuing well-being of its members.

2. The Council of Bishops is thus the collegial expression of episcopal leadership in the Church and through the Church into the world. The Church expects the Council of Bishops to speak to the Church and from the Church to the world and to give leadership in the quest for Christian unity and interreligious relationships.

3. In order to exercise meaningful leadership, the Council of Bishops is to meet at stated intervals. The Council of Bishops is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the whole Church, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the Church.

4. The Council of Bishops may assign one of its members to visit another episcopal area or Methodist-related church. When so assigned, the bishop shall be recognized as the accredited representative of the Council of Bishops, and when requested by the resident bishop or president in that area or Church, may exercise therein the functions of episcopacy.

¶ 428. Conference of Methodist Bishops—There may be a conference of Methodist bishops, composed of all the bishops elected by the jurisdictional and central conferences and one bishop or chief executive officer from each affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, which shall meet on call of the Council

of Bishops after consultation with other members of the conference of Methodist bishops. The travel and other necessary expense of bishops of affiliated autonomous Methodist or united churches related to the meeting of the Conference of Methodist Bishops shall be paid on the same basis as that of bishops of The United Methodist Church.

\* ¶ 429. Cabinet—1. District superintendents, although appointed to the cabinet and assigned to districts, are also to be given conference-wide responsibilities. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so district superintendents become through their selection members first of a cabinet before they are subsequently assigned by the bishop to service in districts.

2. The cabinet under the leadership of the bishop is the expression of superintending leadership in and through the annual conference. It is expected to speak to the conference and for the conference to the spiritual and temporal issues that exist within the region encompassed by the conference.

3. The cabinet is thus also the body in which the individual district superintendents are held accountable for their work, both for conference and district responsibilities.<sup>17</sup>

4. In order to exercise meaningful leadership, the cabinet is to meet at stated intervals. The cabinet is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a conference, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the conference.

\* 5. The cabinet is to consult and plan with the board of ordained ministry in order to make a thorough analysis of the needs of the district for clergy, implementing this planning with a positive and conscious effort to fill these needs (¶ 635.2a).

6. When the cabinet considers matters relating to coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, and other matters as the cabinet and director of connectional ministries, or equivalent, may determine, the director shall be present. The conference lay leader shall be invited to be present.

7. The cabinet shall assume leadership responsibility for ascertaining those places where ecumenical shared ministry would be an effective way of expressing the United Methodist presence in a community.

### **Section VIII. Appointment-Making**

¶ 430. Responsibility—1. Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, character-

<sup>17</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 763.

istics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible.

2. Appointment-making across conference lines shall be encouraged as a way of creating mobility and open itineracy. The jurisdictional committee on ordained ministry will cooperate with bishops and cabinets in providing information on supply and demand within the jurisdiction.

3. The United Methodist Church promotes and holds in high esteem the opportunity of an inclusive church (§ 4. Article IV) with the formation of open itineracy (§ 430.1).

4. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are made as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the church and in its leadership. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations in which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. When such appointments are made, Bishops, cabinets, and boards of ordained ministry shall provide specific training for the clergy persons so appointed and for their congregations.

¶ 431. Consultation and Appointment-Making—Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or district superintendent confer with the pastor and committee on pastor-parish relations, taking into consideration the criteria of ¶ 432, a performance evaluation, needs of the appointment under consideration, and mission of the Church. Consultation is not merely notification. Consultation is not committee selection or call of a pastor. The role of the committee on pastor-parish relations is advisory. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of change in appointment.<sup>18</sup>

1. The process of consultation shall be mandatory in every annual conference.

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18 See Judicial Council Decisions 101, 501.

2. The Council of Bishops shall inquire annually of their colleagues about the implementation of the process of consultation in appointment-making in their respective areas.<sup>19</sup>

¶ 432. Criteria—Appointments shall take into account the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and also the gifts and evidence of God’s grace of a particular pastor. To assist bishops, cabinets, pastors, and congregations to achieve an effective match of charges and pastors, criteria must be developed and analyzed in each instance and then shared with pastors and congregations.

1. Congregations—The district superintendent shall develop with the pastor and the committees on pastor-parish relations of all churches profiles that reflect the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for mission of the charge consistent with the Church’s statement of purpose (¶ 421.1). These profiles shall be reviewed annually and updated when appropriate to include:

a) The general situation in which a congregation finds itself in a particular setting: size, financial condition, quality of lay leadership, special needs for pastoral ministry, and history.

b) The convictional stance of the congregation: theology; prejudices, if any; spiritual life.

c) The ministry of the congregation among its people for the sake of the community: service programs, basis for adding new members, reasons for losing members, mission to community and world, forms of witness.

d) The qualities and functions of pastoral ministry needed to fulfill the mission, goals, and special needs of the congregation.

2. Pastors—The district superintendent annually shall develop with the pastor profiles reflecting the pastor’s gifts, evidence of God’s grace, professional experience and expectations, and also the needs and concerns of the pastor’s spouse and family. These profiles shall be reviewed annually and updated when appropriate to include:

a) Spiritual and personal sensibility: personal faith, call and commitment to ordained ministry, work through the institutional church, integration of vocation with personal and family well-being, lifestyle.

b) Academic and career background: nature of theological stance, experience in continuing education, professional experience, record of performance.

c) Skills and abilities: in church administration, leadership development, worship and liturgy, preaching and evangelism, teaching and nurturing, interpreting and promoting the connectional giving system, counseling and group work, ability to work in cooperation, ability in self-evaluation, and other relational skills.

d) Community context: the ability of the pastor to relate effectively to his or her community setting, such as rural, town, urban, suburban, and so forth.

<sup>19</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 701.

e) Family situation.

3. Community Context—The district superintendent may develop community profiles with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations. Sources of information for these profiles could include: neighborhood surveys; local, state, and national census data; information from annual conference committees on parish and community development; and research data from the Connectional Table and other Church agencies. Profiles may be reviewed annually and updated when appropriate to include:

a) General demographic data and trends including age, sex, and racial-ethnic composition of the community.

b) Economic trends, including the incidence of poverty.

c) Projected community changes.

d) Other sociological, economic, political, historical, and ecumenical aspects of the community surrounding the church.

¶ 433. Process of Appointment-Making—The process used in appointment-making shall include:<sup>20</sup>

1. A change in appointment may be initiated by a pastor, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a district superintendent, or a bishop.

2. The bishop and the cabinet shall consider all requests for change of appointment in light of the profile developed for each charge and the gifts and evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and family needs of the pastor.

3. When a change in appointment has been determined, the district superintendent should meet together or separately with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations where the pastor is serving, for the purpose of sharing the basis for the change and the process used in making the new appointment.

4. All appointments shall receive consideration by the bishop, the district superintendent(s), and the cabinet as a whole until a tentative decision is made.

5. The process used in making the new appointment shall include:

a) The district superintendent shall confer with the pastor about a specific possible appointment (charge) and its congruence with gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience and expectations, and the family needs of the pastor, identified in consultation with the pastor (¶ 432.2).

b) If the appointment is to a cooperative parish ministry or to a charge that is part of a cooperative parish ministry, the following shall be included in the consultation process:

(1) The prospective appointee shall be informed prior to the appointment that the charge under consideration is part of a cooperative parish ministry.<sup>21</sup>

20 See Judicial Council Decision 701.

21 See Judicial Council Decision 556.

(2) The coordinator or director of the cooperative ministry, or, if there is no coordinator or director, a representative of the staff of the cooperative ministry, shall be conferred with concerning the prospective appointment and shall have the opportunity to meet with the prospective appointee prior to the appointment being made.<sup>22</sup>

(3) The prospective appointee shall have demonstrated skills in cooperative Christian mission or show potential for the same to ensure that the cooperative venture is strengthened during the time of the appointee's leadership.

c) If the appointment is to a position other than pastor in charge, the following shall be included in the consultation process:

(1) The prospective appointee shall be informed prior to the appointment that the position under consideration is part of a multiple-staff ministry and shall be furnished an initial written job description approved by the committee on pastor-parish relations.

(2) The pastor in charge shall be conferred with concerning the prospective appointee.

(3) The prospective appointee and pastor in charge shall meet for discussion of the job description and mutual expectations.

6. The district superintendent shall confer with the receiving committee on pastor-parish relations about pastoral leadership (§ 432.1).

7. When appointments are being made to less than full-time ministry, the district superintendent shall consult with the clergy person to be appointed and the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding proportional time, salary, and pension credit and benefit coverage.

8. If during this consultative process it is determined by the bishop and cabinet that this decision should not be carried out, the process is to be repeated until the bishop, basing his or her decision on the information and advice derived from consultation, makes and fixes the appointment.

9. A similar process of consultation shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church.

10. When the steps in the process have been followed and completed, the announcement of that decision shall be made to all parties directly involved in the consultative process, that is, the appointment cabinet, the pastor, and the committee on pastor-parish relations, before a public announcement is made.

¶ 434. Frequency—While the bishop shall report all pastoral appointments to each regular session of an annual conference, appointments to charges may be made at any time deemed advisable by the bishop and cabinet. Appointments are made with the expectation that the length of pastorates shall respond to the long-term

<sup>22</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 556.

pastoral needs of charges, communities, and pastors. The bishop and cabinet should work toward longer tenure in local church appointments to facilitate a more effective ministry.

¶ 435. Appointment of Deacons in Full Connection—The deacons shall be appointed by the bishop in the annual conference where they are members in full connection. Appointments of the deacons are to be made in consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of the deacon, needs of the community, and the gifts of the congregation and institutions. The appointment shall reflect the nature of the ministry of the deacon as a faithful response of the mission of the church meeting the emerging needs in the world (¶ 331). It may be initiated by the individual deacon in full connection, the agency seeking their service, the bishop, or the district superintendent.

