

Chapter Four

THE CONFERENCES

The United Methodist Church is a connectional structure maintained through its chain of conferences.

Section I. The General Conference

¶ 501. Definition of Powers—The General Conference has full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional (see ¶ 16, Division Two, Section II, Article IV, The Constitution). It has no executive or administrative power.

¶ 502. Composition—1. The voting membership of the General Conference shall consist of:

a) An equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by the annual conferences as provided in the Discipline. The missionary conferences and provisional annual conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purposes of this paragraph. Annual conferences are urged to seek inclusiveness (as defined in ¶ 139) in the election of delegates.

b) Delegates from The Methodist Church in Great Britain and other autonomous Methodist churches with which concordat agreements have been established providing for mutual election and seating of delegates in each other's highest legislative conferences (¶¶ 13.2, 13.3; 574).

2. The number of delegates to which an annual conference is entitled shall be computed on a two-factor basis: the number of clergy members of the annual conference, and the number of members of local churches in the annual conference.¹

The term clergy members as used in this paragraph shall refer to both active and retired members of the annual conference (¶ 602.1).

3. The secretary of the General Conference shall calculate the number of delegates to be elected by each annual conference, based on the factors specified above, as follows:

1 See Judicial Council Decisions 109, 333, 592.

a) One clergy delegate for the first 375 clergy members of the annual conference and one clergy delegate for each additional 375 clergy members or major fraction thereof,² and

b) One clergy delegate for the first 26,000 members of local churches of the annual conference and one clergy delegate for each additional 26,000 local church members or major fraction thereof, and

c) A number of lay delegates equal to the total number of clergy delegates authorized as above.

d) Every annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate.

e) This formula is designated to comply with the Constitution, Division Two, Section II, Article I (§ 13), which defines the minimum and maximum number of delegates to a General Conference. Should the computations provided in the paragraph result in a figure below the prescribed minimum or above the prescribed maximum for delegates, the secretary of the General Conference shall be authorized to remedy the situation by adjusting up or down the numbers of clergy members and members of local churches of the annual conference necessary to entitle an annual conference to elect delegates, any such adjustment to be proportionally the same for the two factors.³

4. Delegates to the General Conference shall be elected at the session of the annual conference held in the calendar year preceding the session of the General Conference. At least thirty days prior to the beginning of that calendar year, the secretary of the General Conference shall notify the bishop and the secretary of each annual conference of the number of delegates to be elected by that annual conference.

5. The secretary of each annual conference, using the certificate of election form supplied by the secretary of the General Conference, shall report to the secretary of the General Conference the names, addresses, and such other information as may be required for delegates and reserves elected by the annual conference.

6. The secretary of the General Conference shall prepare and send to each annual conference secretary credentials to be signed and distributed to the delegates and reserves elected by the annual conference.

¶ 503. Presiding Officers—The bishops shall be the presiding officers at the General Conference.

¶ 504. Election of Secretary-Designate—1. The Council of Bishops shall present a nomination from the ordained ministry or lay membership of The United Methodist Church for secretary-designate.

2 See Judicial Council Decisions 327, 558.

3 See Judicial Council Decision 687.

Other nominations shall be permitted from the floor. The election, if there be two or more nominees, shall be by ballot.

2. Assumption of Office—The secretary-designate shall assume the responsibilities of the office of secretary as soon after the adjournment of the General Conference as all work in connection with the session has been completed, including the corrections to the *Daily Christian Advocate*, which serves as the official journal of the General Conference. The exact date of the transfer of responsibility to the secretary-designate shall be determined by the Commission on the General Conference, but shall not be later than December 31, following the adjournment of the General Conference.

3. Assigned Duties—The secretary, in cooperation with the General Commission on the General Conference, shall initiate procedures to prepare delegates from central conferences for full participation in the General Conference by providing information concerning both the operation of the General Conference and materials it will consider. As far as possible, the materials should be provided in the languages of the delegates. After consultation with the Council of Bishops and the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, the secretary shall issue invitations to ecumenical representatives.

¶ 505. Rules of Order—The Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference shall be the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order as approved by the preceding General Conference until they have been altered or modified by the action of the General Conference.

¶ 506. Quorum—When the General Conference is in session, it shall require the presence of a majority of the whole number of delegates to the General Conference to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business; but a smaller number may take a recess or adjourn from day to day in order to secure a quorum, and at the final session may approve the journal, order the record of the roll call, and adjourn sine die.

¶ 507. Petitions to General Conference—Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference in the following manner:

1. The petition must be sent to the secretary of the General Conference or a designated petitions secretary. It shall be in typed or printed form, or other means approved by the secretary of the General Conference, and shall follow a format determined by that officer.

2. Each petition must address only one issue if the Discipline is not affected; if the Discipline is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the Discipline, except that, if two or more paragraphs in the Discipline are so

closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another.

3. Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, local church, or United Methodist board or agency relationship. Each petition submitted by fax or electronic mail must identify the individual submitting it, accompanied by identification as above, and must contain a valid electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice.

4. All petitions submitted to the General Conference, except those submitted by individual members of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, which call for the establishment of new programs or the expansion of existing programs will be invalid unless accompanied by supporting data that address the issue of anticipated financial requirements of the program.

5. Petitions must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 210 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

6. If petitions are transmitted by a means other than a national postal service, they must be in the hands of the petitions secretary no later than 210 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 210 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.

7. Petitions adopted and properly submitted by annual conferences, jurisdictional and central conferences, the Division on Ministries With Young People, or general agencies or councils of the Church, and petitions properly submitted by individual members (either clergy or lay) of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, provided that they have been received by the petitions secretary or secretary of the General Conference no later than 210 days before the opening of General Conference, shall be printed in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate.

8. Petitions and/or resolutions not printed in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate shall be printed or copied and provided to all delegates. Where the content of petitions is essentially the same, the petition will be printed once, with the first author named and the number of additional copies received printed.

9. The secretary of the General Conference shall arrange for electronic access to all petitions, including General Conference action and the resulting impact on The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, throughout the

General Conference session. This access shall be available until the publication of the new edition of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. Implementation shall be according to guidelines established by the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order.

¶ 508. Legislation Effective Date—All legislation of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church shall become effective January 1 following the session of the General Conference at which it is enacted, unless otherwise specified (¶ 543.18).

¶ 509. Speaking for the Church—1. No person, no paper, no organization, has the authority to speak officially for The United Methodist Church, this right having been reserved exclusively to the General Conference under the Constitution. Any written public policy statement issued by a general Church agency shall clearly identify either at the beginning or at the end that the statement represents the position of that general agency and not necessarily the position of The United Methodist Church (¶ 717).⁴

2. Any individual member called to testify before a legislative body to represent The United Methodist Church shall be allowed to do so only by reading, without elaboration, the resolutions and positions adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

¶ 510. Duties of the Secretary—The secretary of the General Conference shall be responsible for the permanent record of the General Conference, which shall include:

1. Corrections to the *Daily Christian Advocate*. The editor will then file with the Commission on Archives and History two bound copies of the *Daily Christian Advocate* and corrections as the official record of General Conference. Bound copies shall also be made available at cost by The United Methodist Publishing House.

2. A *Book of Resolutions* to be edited by The United Methodist Publishing House. The book shall contain all valid resolutions of the General Conference. The preface of the *Book of Resolutions* shall include the guidelines for writing resolutions.

a) Resolutions and positions adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church are valid until they are specifically rescinded, amended, or superseded by action of subsequent sessions of the General Conference. All valid resolutions and positions of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, beginning with those adopted by the 1968 Uniting Conference, shall be listed in each edition of the *Book of Resolutions*. There shall be a complete subject index to all valid resolutions of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in each edition of the *Book of Resolutions*. Resolutions shall

⁴ See Judicial Council Decision 458.

be considered official expressions of The United Methodist Church for eight years following their adoption, after which time they shall be deemed to have expired unless readopted. Those that have expired shall not be printed in subsequent editions of the Book of Resolutions.

b) The program boards and agencies shall review all valid resolutions and recommend to the General Conference the removal of time-dated material.

3. The Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate and the Daily Christian Advocate.

4. All original documents of a General Conference shall be filed with the General Commission on Archives and History.

¶ 511. Commission on the General Conference—There shall be a Commission on the General Conference, hereinafter called the commission.

1. Membership—a) The voting members of the commission shall be elected quadrennially by the General Conference and shall consist of twenty-five members as follows: two persons from each jurisdiction, one person from the central conferences of each continent of Africa, Asia, and Europe, one young adult, the chairperson of the host committee, and ten additional members. The additional members shall be allocated to reflect the proportionate jurisdictional membership based upon combined clergy and lay membership of the church.

b) Members shall be nominated from the elected delegates to the General Conference by the Council of Bishops at its fall meeting preceding General Conference and elected by the General Conference for a term of eight years. The commission shall be equally divided between clergy and lay membership to the extent possible with consideration of the membership qualifications specified in ¶ 710. Approximately half of the commission shall be elected by the General Conference each quadrennium.

c) If vacancies occur, the Council of Bishops shall elect geographically appropriate successors to serve through the next session of the General Conference and then nominate for election by the General Conference persons to serve any remainder term.

d) The Secretary of the General Conference, the Treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Business Manager of the General Conference, and a bishop named by the Council of Bishops shall have the right to the floor without the privilege of voting. The Business Manager of the General Conference shall be the chief administrative officer of the commission.

2. Officers—The officers of the commission shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary, all of whom shall be elected by the commission at the quadrennial organizational meeting. They shall serve until the adjournment

of the next succeeding quadrennial session of the General Conference after their election and until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

3. Committees—*a) Executive Committee*—There shall be an executive committee of the commission, consisting of the officers of the commission, the chairperson of the host committee, the bishop serving on the commission, the Secretary of the General Conference, the Business Manager of the General Conference, and the chairperson and secretary of the Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order.

b) Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order—The commission shall organize a Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order from within its membership. The composition of the committee shall be determined by the commission. The committee shall be organized at the initial meeting of the commission following General Conference. It shall elect its own chairperson and secretary, who will serve on the commission's executive committee. The committee shall study and consider any proposed amendments to the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order and make needed changes and adaptations to be presented to the entire Commission on the General Conference for approval and submission to the General Conference. Any other matters relating to parliamentary order or procedure in the business of the General Conference may be referred to this committee.

4. Responsibilities—*a) The commission shall select the site and set the dates of the General Conference up to four quadrennia in advance and shall send an official notice to all elected delegates announcing specifically the opening day and hour of the General Conference and anticipated time of adjournment.*

b) The commission shall plan the schedule for the opening day of the Conference and shall further advise the delegates in advance of all such special events and orders of the day, the dates and times of which have been determined prior to the opening of the General Conference, in order that the delegates may have an overview of the General Conference program.

c) The commission in cooperation with the United Methodist Publishing House shall make all necessary arrangements for the publication of the Daily Christian Advocate and quadrennial reports of the Connectional Table and the general agencies of the church.

d) The commission shall take necessary measures to assure full participation of all General Conference delegates including but not limited to providing accommodation for languages and physical challenges of the delegates, and access to approved licensed childcare during the session at or near the site of the General Conference for children of General Conference delegates.

e) The commission shall recommend to the General Conference the per diem allowance to be paid to the elected delegates for housing and meals.

f) The commission shall set the number of legislative committees and the assignment of legislative materials to those committees in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference and the Business Manager of the General Conference.

Section II. The Jurisdictional Conference

* ¶ 512- 537. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

Section III. Central Conferences

* ¶ 540. Authorization—1. In territory outside the United States, annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, mission conferences, and missions, in such numbers as the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine, may be organized by the General Conference into central conferences or provisional central conferences, with such duties, privileges, and powers as are hereinafter set forth and as the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall prescribe.⁵

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

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

a) Africa Central Conference: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe;

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

c) Congo Central Conference: Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zambia;

d) Germany Central Conference: Germany;

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

f) Philippines Central Conference: Philippines;

⁵ See Judicial Council Decision 549.

g) West Africa Central Conference: Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone.

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

¶ 541. Composition—1. The central conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members in equal numbers, the clergy members elected by the clergy members of the annual conference and the lay members by the lay members thereof. Their qualifications and the manner of election shall be determined by the central conference itself, subject only to constitutional requirements. Each annual conference and provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least two clergy and two lay delegates, and no other selection of delegates shall be authorized that would provide for more than one clergy delegate for every six clergy members of an annual conference; except that a majority of the number fixed by a central conference as the ratio of representation shall entitle an annual conference to an additional clergy delegate and to an additional lay delegate. Each missionary conference and mission is authorized to elect and send one of its members to the central conference concerned as its representative, said representative to be accorded the privilege of sitting with the committees of the central conference, with the right to speak in the committees and in the regular sessions of the central conference, but without the right to vote. Representatives of missionary conferences or missions shall have the same claim for payment of expenses as is allowed to members of the central conference.⁶

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

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

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

6 See Judicial Council Decision 371.

thorized committee, shall have the authority to call an extra session of the central conference to be held at the time and place designated by them.⁷

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

4. The presiding officer of the central conference shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the central conference, and shall decide questions of law, subject to an appeal to the Judicial Council, but questions relating to the interpretation of the rules and regulations made by the central conference for the governing of its own session shall be decided by the central conference.⁸

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

6. Each central conference within the bounds of which the General Board of Global Ministries has work shall maintain a cooperative and consultative relationship with the said board through a duly constituted executive committee, executive board, or council of cooperation; but the legal distinction between the General Board of Global Ministries and the organized church on the field shall always be kept clear.

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

2. A central conference, when authorized by a specific enabling act of the General Conference, may elect one or more bishops from among the traveling elders of The United Methodist Church. The number of bishops to be elected by each central conference shall be determined from time to time by the General Conference.

7 See Judicial Council Decision 371.

8 See Judicial Council Decisions 375, 376, 381.

3. When a central conference shall have been authorized to elect bishops, such elections shall be conducted under the same general procedure as prevails in the jurisdictional conferences for the election of bishops. A central conference shall have power to fix the tenure of bishops elected by the said central conference.⁹

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

5. A central conference, in consultation with the bishops of that central conference, shall fix the episcopal areas and residences and make assignments to them of the bishops who are to reside in that central conference. The bishops of a central conference shall arrange the plan of episcopal visitation within its bounds.

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

7. A central conference shall have power to make such changes and adaptations of the Book of Discipline as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require, especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, and annual conference levels, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connec-tional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. Subject to this restriction, a central conference may delegate to an annual conference within its boundaries the power to make one or the other of the changes and adaptations referred to in this paragraph, upon the request of such annual conference.¹⁰

8. A central conference shall fix the boundaries of the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within its bounds, proposals for changes first having been submitted to the annual conferences concerned as prescribed in the Discipline of The United Methodist Church. No annual conference shall be organized with fewer than thirty-five clergy members except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium, which shall not reduce the number below twenty-five. Nor shall an annual conference be continued with fewer than twenty-five clergy members except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium.¹¹

9 See Judicial Council Decisions 311, 430.

10 See Judicial Council Decision 313.

11 See Judicial Council Decisions 525, 541, 549.

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

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

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

12. A central conference shall have authority to adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy, including bishops, and lay members of the Church and to provide the necessary means and methods of implementing the said rules; provided, however, that the ordained ministers shall not be deprived of the right of trial by a clergy committee, and lay members of the Church of the right of trial by a duly constituted committee of lay members; and provided also, that the rights of appeal shall be adequately safeguarded.¹²

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

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

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

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

17. In a central conference or provisional central conference using a language other than English, legislation passed by a General Conference shall not take effect until twelve months after the close of that General Conference in order to

12 See Judicial Council Decisions 310, 595.

afford the necessary time to make adaptations and to publish a translation of the legislation that has been enacted, the translation to be approved by the resident bishop or bishops of the central conference. This provision, however, shall not exclude the election of delegates to the General Conference by annual conferences within the territory of central conferences or provisional central conferences.

18. A central conference is authorized to interpret Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion (page 65) so as to recognize the governments of the country or countries within its territory.

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

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

21. A central conference shall have the right to negotiate with other Protestant bodies looking toward the possibility of church union; provided that any proposals for church union shall be submitted to the General Conference for approval before consummation.¹³

¶ 544. [Reserved]

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

2. The secretary of a central conference in which one or more bishops have been chosen shall report to the secretary of the General Conference the names of the bishop or bishops and the residences to which they have been assigned by the central conference.

3. The secretary of each central conference shall submit a hardcopy of every translation and adaptation of the general Discipline or portion thereof in use in

13 See Judicial Council Decision 350.

that central conference to the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

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

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

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

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

* ¶ 547. Conference Agencies—1. A central conference may have a standing committee on women's work. This committee should preferably be composed of the women delegates and such other persons as the central conference may elect. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of women to the Church

and to devise ways and means of developing this portion of the Church membership, to the end that it may assume its rightful responsibilities in the extension of the Kingdom. The committee shall make recommendations to the central conference regarding women's organizations within its areas. A central conference organization may become a member of the World Federation of Methodist Women and may elect a representative to the World Federation of Methodist Women within the provisions of the federation.

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

* 3. A central conference that adapts and edits the Discipline as provided in ¶ 543.17 shall establish a judicial court, which in addition to other duties that the central conference may assign to it shall hear and determine the legality of any action of the central conference taken under the adapted portions of the Discipline or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the central conference pertaining to the adapted portions of the Discipline, upon appeal by the presiding bishop or by one-fifth of the members of the central conference. Further, the judicial court shall hear and determine the legality of any action of an annual conference taken under the adapted portions of the Discipline or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the annual conference pertaining to the adapted portion of the Discipline, upon appeal of the presiding bishop or of such percentage of the members of the annual conference as may be determined by the central conference concerned.

a) Membership—The court shall be composed of one member each, with personal substitute, from Denmark, Estonia, Finland S/F, Latvia/Lithuania, Norway, Russia C/NW/E/S, Sweden and Ukraine/Moldova.

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

5. Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the central conference shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the agencies of which they are members

to engage in witness ministries and, in particular, to ask, “How are we intentionally reaching new people for Jesus Christ through our ministries?” and “How are we helping new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?”

¶ 548. Bishops in Retired Relation—1. An ordained minister who has served a term or part of a term as a bishop in a central conference where term episcopacy has prevailed shall, upon retirement from the effective relation in the ministry, be paid an allowance from the General Episcopal Fund in such sum as the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine for the years during which the ordained minister served as a bishop.¹⁴

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

* ¶ 549. **Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Council**—The council executes assignments given by the central conference, and administers running business between central conference sessions. It is amenable and accountable to the central conference and reports to the central conference. Its purpose is for the discernment and articulation of the vision for the church, sharing of experience and good practices, and channeling of connectional resources and mutual help.

a) *Membership*

(1) Members of the council are the bishops ex officio, and the following number of representatives, with personal substitutes:

- 3 members each, both clergy and lay, from Norway and Sweden,
- 2 members each from Denmark and Estonia,
- 1 member each from Finland S, Finland F, Latvia, Lithuania (primarily the District Superintendent if possible), Central Russia, Northwest Russia, South Russia, East Russia & Central Asia, and Ukraine & Moldova.

(2) *Membership regulations*

- Minimum of one member from each annual and national district conference must be a member of its conference council.
- Annual and national district conferences that have more than one member must secure a mix of clergy and lay.
- Annual and national district conferences that have more than one member must secure a mix of women and men.

(3) *Membership recommendations*—In addition to the above regulations, it is recommended that

14 See Judicial Council Decision 394.

- Norway and Sweden elect their respective annual conference council chairperson to be an ex officio member,
- one of the Danish members is either district superintendent or annual conference council chairperson,
- Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania coordinate the election of their representatives so that the Baltic region is represented by both women and men,
- The members from Latvia and Lithuania shall be the district superintendents.
- Central Russia, Northwest Russia, South Russia and East Russia & Central Asia coordinate the election of their representatives so that at least one also is member of the Area Council of Finance and Administration (Russia UMC Administrative Council), at least one is a district superintendent, and two are lay persons, and that there are equal numbers of women and men, and that
- the council members are also delegates to the central conference.

(4) *Membership term*— The representatives and their personal substitutes are elected by their respective conference for the quadrennium, serving from the adjournment of the ordinary central conference session in the beginning of the quadrennium until the adjournment of the following ordinary session.

b) *Area groups*—The members are divided into two groups, arranged by episcopal areas.

c) *Meetings*—The full council meets normally at a spring meeting each year. In the fall, the area groups meet separately in their respective area. Other arrangements can be agreed upon if the budget allows.

d) *Officers*—Each area group elects its own chairperson and secretary in the fall meetings. The bishops agree among themselves who is chairperson. The other bishop and the two area chairpersons are all vice chairpersons of the council. A council secretary is elected by the council. All elections are for the quadrennium.

e) *Office*—The office of the chairperson is also the Office of Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference.

f) *Presidium*

(1) The chairperson, the three vice chairpersons, and the assistant to the chairperson, form the presidium of the council. Until other officers are elected, the two bishops and the assistant to the chairperson carry the responsibilities of the presidium.

(2) The presidium prepares meetings of the council, and assigns matters to the area groups.

(3) If necessary, the presidium can decide upon matters that cannot wait until next meeting of the council.

g) *Council responsibilities*—It is the responsibility of the council

(1) To elect treasurers for the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Fund, the Eurasia Area Fund, the Nordic and Baltic Area Fund, the Eurasia Episcopal Fund, and the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Fund.

(2) To receive annual and complete financial reports, audited by a certified public accountant.

(3) To give an annual report to the annual and national district conferences, and receive an annual statistical summary from these.

(4) To give a quadrennial report to the central conference, which grants discharge of liability for the period.

(5) Either to publish The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church in Northern Europe & Eurasia (NEEBoD) each quadrennium or to make changes available in written or electronic form.

(6) To set the time and select the place for holding the central conference, and plan for it, all in consultation with the bishops.

h) *Area group responsibilities*—It is the responsibility of the area groups to deal with matters assigned to them by the council or its presidium. All decisions are reported to the council and considered preliminary until confirmed by the council. On a permanent basis, the area groups are assigned

(1) To function as the committee on episcopacy (§ 550).

(2) To function as the episcopal residence committee.

1. The provision of housing for effective bishops in the central conference shall be the responsibility of the annual conferences comprising the episcopal area to which the bishop is assigned.

2. The committee shall be composed of the persons elected as members of the central conference council.

3. It shall be the responsibility of the episcopal residence committee:

a) To make recommendations to the annual conferences regarding the purchase, sale, or rental of an episcopal residence.

b) To prepare an annual budget covering the cost of providing the episcopal residence, which may also include utilities, insurance, and normal costs of upkeep in maintaining the residence.

c) To supervise the expenditure of funds allocated from all sources for expenses related to the provision of the episcopal residence and to account for such expenditures annually to each annual conference in the episcopal area.

d) To give oversight in all matters related to upkeep, maintenance, improvements, and appropriate insurance coverages for the episcopal residence.

4. Titles to properties held as episcopal residences shall be held in accordance with ¶ 2514.

(3) To be responsible for the necessary administration, in case of vacancy in the office of bishop due to death or other reason, until the vacancy is filled (¶ 408).

(4) To develop annual budgets for the episcopal fund (Eurasia Episcopal Fund and the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Fund respectively) to be submitted to the General Council on Finance and Administration for approval.

i) *Subcommittees*—In order to support and perform its duties, the council can organize ad hoc subcommittees to fulfill any of its permanent tasks

j) *Economy*—(1) The travel expenses of the council, including its area groups, are covered by the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Fund. Housing and travel meals (per diem) are paid by respective conference.

(2) Each annual and national district conference participates in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Fund on payment of its apportionment calculated on the salaries and salary benefits of all pastors under appointment, currently 0.75%.

*¶ 550. Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Committee on Episcopacy—

a) There shall be a central conference committee on episcopacy, composed by the elected members of the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Council. The elected vice chairperson of the Central Conference Council is the chairperson of the committee on episcopacy, and the secretary of the Central Conference Council is the secretary of the committee on episcopacy. The bishops are not members of the committee, but give a personal report to the committee in connection with an annual consultation.

b) The functions of the conference committee on episcopacy shall be:

(1) To support the bishop of the area in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, with special reference to the area where the bishop has presidential responsibility.

(2) To be available to the bishop for counsel.

(3) To assist in the determination of the episcopal needs of the area and to make recommendations to appropriate bodies.

(4) To keep the bishop advised concerning conditions within the area as they affect relationships between the bishop and the people of the conference

agencies.

(5) To interpret to the people of the area and to conference agencies the nature and function of the episcopal office.

(6) To engage in annual consultation and appraisal of the balance of the bishop's relationship and responsibilities to the area and annual conferences, general Church boards and agencies, and other areas of specialized ministry, including, at all levels, concern for the inclusiveness of the Church and its ministry with respect to sex, race, and national origin, and understanding and implementation of the consultation process in appointment making.

(7) To include decisions and recommendations in the minutes of the central conference committee, and report to the central conference.

*¶ 551. **Other central conference work** is performed by the following boards, which are also responsible for the promoting and coordinating activities within respective working area:

Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Youth Council

Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Board of Global Ministries

* ¶ 552. **European Methodist Council**

1. The Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference is a member of the European Methodist Council.

2. A financial contribution to the council shall be included in the budget for the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference Fund.

3. The Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference is represented in the European Methodist Council by six members, including the two bishops and at least two lay representatives. The annual and national district conferences submit nominations to the Central Conference Council. This council coordinates the nominations, making sure that one member comes from the Baltic countries, one from Eurasia, and two from the Nordic countries, and that both men and women are represented by at least two members. The council forwards the nominations to the central conference.

Section IV. Provisional Central Conferences

¶ 560. Authorization—Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions outside the United States that are not included in central conferences or in the territory of affiliated autonomous churches and that, because of geographical, language, political, or other considerations, have common interests that can best be served thereby, may be organized into provisional central conferences as provided in ¶ 540.1.¹⁵

¹⁵ See Judicial Council Decision 525.

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

¶ 562. Powers—The General Conference may grant to a provisional central conference any of the powers of a central conference except that of electing bishops.¹⁶

¶ 563. Ad Interim Provisions—In the interval between General Conferences, the General Board of Global Ministries, upon the recommendation of the bishops in charge and after consultation with the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions concerned, may make changes in the boundaries of a provisional central conference and may grant to a provisional central conference or to any of its component parts any of the powers of a central conference except that of electing bishops. All changes in boundaries and all grants of powers authorized by the General Board of Global Ministries shall be reported to the ensuing session of the General Conference and shall expire at the close of that session unless renewed by the General Conference.

¶ 564. Lay Membership—An annual conference or a provisional annual conference in the field of a provisional central conference shall have the power to set standards of character and other qualifications for admission of its lay members.

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

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

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

16 See Judicial Council Decision 403.

Section V. Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated United Churches, Covenanting Churches, Concordat Churches

¶ 570. Churches located outside the boundaries of the jurisdictional conferences and which have entered into relationship with or have agreements with The United Methodist Church, including that of sending representatives to General Conference of The United Methodist Church are described as follows:

1. Autonomous Methodist Churches

a) A self-governing church of the Wesleyan tradition and which may or may not have entered into the Act of Covenanting with The United Methodist Church.

b) Autonomous Methodist churches are not entitled to send delegates to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches

a) A self-governing Methodist church in whose establishment The United Methodist Church or one of its constituent members (The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church or its predecessors) has assisted and which by mutual agreement has entered into a Covenant of Relationship (in effect from 1968 to 1984) or an Act of Covenanting (see ¶ 573) with The United Methodist Church.

b) Each affiliated autonomous Methodist church shall be entitled to two delegates, one clergy and one layperson, to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in accordance with

¶ 2403.1b. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. Such a church having more than 70,000 full members shall be entitled to one additional delegate. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or president of the affiliated autonomous Methodist churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

3. Affiliated United Churches

a) A self-governing church which is formed by the uniting of two or more denominations, at least one of which shall have been related to The United Methodist Church or one of its constituent members (The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church or its predecessors).

b) Each affiliated united church shall be entitled to two delegates, one clergy and one layperson, to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in accordance with ¶ 2403.1b. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. Such a church having more than 70,000 full members shall be entitled to one ad-

ditional delegate. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or president of the affiliated united churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

4. Covenanting Churches

a) An autonomous Methodist church, an affiliated autonomous Methodist church, an affiliated united church, or another Christian church which has entered into a covenanting relationship with The United Methodist Church through an Act of Covenanting as described in ¶ 573 and in the 2000 Book of Resolutions (adopted 1992).

b) The Act of Covenanting does not warrant that the covenanting churches shall be entitled to delegates at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, or at the equivalent body of the covenant partner.

5. Methodist Churches with Concordat Agreements

a) Other Methodist churches which have Methodist heritage in common with The United Methodist Church or one of its constituent members (The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church or their predecessors) and which have entered into concordat agreements in accord with ¶ 574 with the purpose of manifesting the common Methodist heritage, affirming the equal status of the two churches and expressing mutual acceptance and respect, and creating opportunities for closer fellowship between the two churches, especially on the leadership level.

b) Such concordat agreement, with the exception of The Methodist Church of Great Britain (see ¶ 13.3), shall entitle the two churches to the following rights and privileges:

(1) The two churches, entering a concordant relationship, shall each elect two delegates, one clergy and one lay, to be seated in each other's General Conference or equivalent bodies with all rights and privileges. The agreements with the Methodist Church of Mexico and the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas shall be honored.

(2) The host church shall make provisions for hospitality, including room and board, for the delegates of the other concordat church. Travel and other expenses shall be the responsibility of the visiting church.

¶ 571. Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches, and Affiliated United Churches—1. Certificates of church membership given by clergy in one church shall be accepted by clergy in the other church.

2. When the requirements of such a Methodist church for its ordained ministry are comparable to those of The United Methodist Church, clergy may be transferred between its properly constituted ministerial bodies and the annual and provisional annual conferences of The United Methodist Church and their

ordination(s) recognized as valid, with the approval and consent of the bishops or other appointive authorities involved in compliance with ¶ 347.

3. A program of visitation may be mutually arranged by the Council of Bishops in cooperation with the equivalent leadership of the autonomous Methodist church, affiliated autonomous Methodist church, and/or affiliated united church.

4. The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries, shall work out plans of cooperation with these churches. The General Board of Global Ministries shall serve as the agent of The United Methodist Church for a continuing dialogue looking to the establishment of mission priorities with special reference to matters of personnel and finance.¹⁷

Becoming An Autonomous Methodist,
Affiliated Autonomous Methodist, or
Affiliated United Church from Central Conferences

¶ 572. When conferences outside the United States that are parts of The United Methodist Church desire to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church, approval shall first be secured from the central conference involved and this decision be ratified by the annual conferences within the central conference by two-thirds majority of the aggregate votes cast by the annual conferences.¹⁸

1. The conference shall prepare a historical record with reasons why affiliation and/or autonomy is requested and shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (¶ 2201) on proceedings for affiliation and/or autonomy.

2. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the conferences involved shall mutually agree on the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. These shall be prepared with care and shall be approved by the conferences.

3. Preparation of its Discipline is the responsibility of the conference(s) desiring affiliation and/or autonomy.

4. Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, when all disciplinary requirements for affiliated and/or autonomous relationship have been met, the General Conference through an enabling act shall approve of and grant permission for the conference(s) involved to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist or affiliated united church.

5. Then the central conference involved shall meet, declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the conference(s) involved

17 See Judicial Council Decision 692.

18 See Judicial Council Decision 548.

dissolved, and reorganize as an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist or affiliated united church in accordance with the enabling act granted by the General Conference. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and, when the plans are consummated, report to the Council of Bishops. The proclamation of affiliated and/or autonomous status shall then be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the secretary of the General Conference.

6. A plan of cooperation shall be developed in accordance with ¶ 571.4.

Becoming a Covenanting Church

¶ 573. 1. A covenanting relationship, whose elements were adopted by the 1992 General Conference in an action called an “Act of Covenanting Between Christian Churches and The United Methodist Church” may be established between autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated united churches, or other Christian churches and The United Methodist Church.

a) The purpose of an Act of Covenanting with another Christian church is to encourage a new sense of global common cause, mutual support, mutual spiritual growth, common study of Scripture and culture, creative interaction as ministers in the mission of God’s church, cross-fertilization of ideas about ways to be in that mission, sharing of resources, and exploration of new forms of service directed at old and emerging needs.

b) An Act of Covenanting will include recognition of our respective baptisms as different facets of the one baptism; recognition of one another as authentic expressions of the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church of Jesus Christ; recognition of the ordained ministries of the two churches; commitment to systematic participation in full eucharistic fellowship; and commitment to function in new ways of partnership, visitations, and programs.

c) For The United Methodist Church, oversight of the covenantal relationships is the responsibility of the Council of Bishops, with the assistance of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, while participation in specific projects is the responsibility of the appropriate general agency or agencies.

2. The Council of Bishops shall represent The United Methodist Church in developing an Act of Covenanting with a prospective partner church. The Council of Bishops shall make recommendations to General Conference as to the specific covenanting agreements. When approved by General Conference and by the chief legislative body of the partner church, the Act of Covenanting becomes effective when signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the

secretary of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church and by the authorized persons in the covenanting church. The text of each Act of Covenanting as adopted shall be printed in the appropriate General Conference journal or equivalent.¹⁹

Concordat Agreements

¶ 574. Concordat Agreements—1. With the exception of The Methodist Church of Great Britain, such concordats may be established by the following procedure:

a) The Methodist church shall, through its major decision-making body, request a concordat relationship with The United Methodist Church through the Council of Bishops. Concordats may also be initiated by The United Methodist Church acting through the Council of Bishops who shall, in cooperation with the Methodist church in question, ascertain that all disciplinary conditions are met and then prepare the necessary enabling legislation for adoption by the General Conference.

b) When such concordat agreement has been approved by the General Conference, the Council of Bishops shall prepare a statement of the concordat agreement to be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops, the secretary of the General Conference, and two representatives of the Methodist church with whom the concordat agreement is made. Such concordats shall be printed in the Daily Christian Advocate of that General Conference.

2. Such concordat agreement shall entitle the two churches to the following rights and privileges:

a) A program of mutual visitation may be arranged by the Council of Bishops in cooperation with the equivalent leadership of the other concordat church. The Council of Bishops may assign one or more of its members for episcopal visitation to concordat churches.

b) Clergy may be transferred between the two churches in accordance with ¶¶ 347.2b and 571.2.

Joining The United Methodist Church

¶ 575. A church outside the United States may join The United Methodist Church when all of the following requirements are fulfilled:

1. Said church shall accept and approve the Constitution, Articles of Faith, Discipline, and polity of The United Methodist Church.

2. Said church, if it is within the boundaries of a central or provisional central conference, shall apply for membership in that conference. Such application shall be approved by the central or provisional central conference and by the General

¹⁹ See Judicial Council Decision 692.

Conference. In the event that said church is not within the boundaries of an existing central or provisional conference, then its membership application shall be reviewed by the Council of Bishops and shall be approved by the General Conference.

3. Said church shall declare its own constitution and church order null and void.

4. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall advise and assist said church in this process and prepare the necessary enabling act for approval by the General Conference.

5. The General Conference shall approve legislation authorizing the necessary adjustments in the organization of the central or provisional central conference involved. In the event that said church is not within the boundaries of an existing central or provisional central conference, then legislation shall be approved to either change boundaries of a contiguous conference or to establish a new central or provisional central conference.

6. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist said church in the process of becoming a part of The United Methodist Church, determine when all requirements are met, and report to the General Conference.

Section VI. Provisional Annual Conferences

¶ 580. Definition—A provisional annual conference is a conference that, because of its limited membership, does not qualify for annual conference status.

¶ 581. Provisions—Any missionary conference or mission established under the provisions of the Discipline may be constituted as a provisional annual conference by the General Conference, in consultation with the central conference, provisional central conference, or jurisdictional conference within which the missionary conference or mission is located, provided that:

1. No provisional annual conference shall be organized with fewer than ten clergy members or be continued with fewer than six clergy members.

2. The total financial support from the General Board of Global Ministries, including the Advance, shall not exceed an appropriate percentage as determined in consultation with the board.

3. The membership and contributions of the conference have shown a reasonable increase during the previous quadrennium and give evidence of an aggressive program for continued progress in both areas.

¶ 582. Organization—A provisional annual conference shall be organized in the same manner and have the same powers and functions as an annual conference, subject to the approval of the presiding bishop; and its members shall share

pro rata in the proceeds of The United Methodist Publishing House with members of the annual conferences, with the following exceptions:

1. The bishop having episcopal supervision of a provisional annual conference in a foreign or a home mission field may appoint a representative as superintendent, to whom may be committed specific responsibility for the representation of the General Board of Global Ministries in its relation to the indigenous church and also in cooperation with other recognized evangelical missions. Such duties shall be exercised so as not to interfere with the work of the district superintendent. This superintendent may also be a district superintendent, provided the superintendent is a member of the said conference. The superintendent shall be responsible directly to the bishop appointed to administer the work in that episcopal area and shall make adequate reports of the work and needs of the field to the bishop and to the secretaries of the General Board of Global Ministries immediately concerned.

2. A provisional annual conference shall meet annually at the time appointed by the bishop. If there is no bishop present, the superintendent shall preside. In the absence of both, the presidency shall be determined as in an annual conference (§ 603.6). The conference or a committee thereof shall select the place for holding the conference.

3. In a provisional annual conference receiving major funding from the General Board of Global Ministries, the assigned staff of the board shall provide consultation and guidance in setting up the annual budget and Advance projects within the conference and in the promotion of new mission projects. The conference, in making requests for appropriations for support, including grants and loans for building projects, shall submit to the General Board of Global Ministries a statement of the proposed annual budget and proposed financial plan for new mission and building plans. Items involving increased appropriations from the General Board of Global Ministries or increased askings from the Advance shall be subject to modifications by the General Board of Global Ministries.

4. A provisional annual conference shall elect one ordained minister and one layperson as delegates with full voting and other rights to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional conference. Delegates to central conferences shall be elected in accordance with § 541.1.

§ 583. Board of Global Ministries—In a provisional annual conference in the United States, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands, there shall be a conference board of global ministries constituted as in an annual conference and having the same duties and powers.

Section VII. The Missionary Conference

¶ 585. Definition—A conference is a missionary conference because of its particular mission opportunities, its limited membership and resources, its unique leadership requirements, its strategic regional or language considerations, and ministerial needs. The General Board of Global Ministries shall provide administrative guidance and major financial assistance, including attention to the distinctive property matters.

¶ 586. Organization—A missionary conference shall be organized in the same manner and with the same rights and powers as an annual conference (¶¶ 601-604), but with the following exceptions:

1. The College of Bishops shall provide episcopal supervision for any missionary conference(s) within its jurisdictional boundaries as are organized. The bishop thus placed in charge and having episcopal supervision within the respective episcopal area in cooperation with the General Board of Global Ministries shall appoint a conference superintendent and/or district superintendents. Such conference and/or district superintendent(s) shall be an elder(s) and shall be subject to the same limitations on years of service as district superintendents (¶ 418). Years of service may be either consecutive or nonconsecutive. Years of service as a conference and/or district superintendent in a missionary conference shall be counted toward the total of twelve years permitted in a regular annual conference.²⁰

2. The General Board of Global Ministries shall give close supervision and guidance in setting up the administrative and promotional budgets and Advance projects within the conference and in the promotion of new mission projects. The conference, in making requests for appropriations for support and grants and loans for building projects, shall submit to the General Board of Global Ministries a statement of the proposed annual promotional and administrative budget and the proposed financial plan for new mission and building projects. New work and building projects involving increased appropriations from the General Board of Global Ministries shall first have the approval of the General Board of Global Ministries.

3. Missionary conferences shall elect clergy and lay delegates to General and jurisdictional conference on the same basis as annual conferences as provided in ¶¶ 502 and 514.

4. a) Membership—A missionary conference shall determine by majority vote whether it will establish the right of full ministerial membership. With approval and consent of the bishops or other judicatory authorities involved, appointments are to be made by the resident bishop of the conference in which the clergy person is to serve.

20 See Judicial Council Decisions 448, 512.

b) An ordained minister in full connection with an annual conference who is appointed to a missionary conference that has previously voted to include full membership under § 4a may choose either to request the bishop of the missionary conference to seek the transfer of his or her membership into full membership with the missionary conference or retain his or her membership in a home conference and be considered in an affiliated relationship to the missionary conference.

c) In a missionary conference which has not voted to include full membership, each United Methodist cleric appointed by the bishop shall retain his or her membership in a home conference and be considered in an affiliated relationship to the missionary conference.

d) Affiliated relationship shall entitle the ordained minister to the fellowship of the conference, to full participation in its activities, including holding office and representing the missionary conference in general and jurisdictional conferences. An affiliate member of a missionary conference shall not vote in his or her annual conference while retaining the affiliate relationship to a missionary conference. Such affiliate relationship to a missionary conference shall be only for the duration of the ordained minister's appointment to the conference.

An affiliate member elected to a general or jurisdictional conference from a missionary conference shall not be eligible to be elected to such position from the conference where his or her membership is held.

e) A missionary conference may elect into full ministerial membership those persons desiring full membership in accordance with ¶ 588.

f) A pastor under full-time appointment in a missionary conference, upon consultation with and the approval of the bishop and conference or district superintendent or cabinet, may waive his or her claim upon the conference minimum salary. This waiver is to be reviewed annually and is to be effective until the time of subsequent appointment.

g) In a missionary conference that has not established the right of full ministerial membership (§4.a), if the missionary conference is part of an episcopal area consisting of two or more annual and missionary conferences, then for purposes of candidacy for ordination (§§310-314), provisional membership (§§324-327), and election to full conference membership (§§328-336), the missionary conference may function as a district of an annual conference in the same episcopal area, with and only with the approval of the presiding bishop, the board of ordained ministry of the annual conference, and the committee on ordained ministry of the missionary conference. If the missionary conference does not have a committee on ordained ministry, then approval may be provided by the body of

the missionary conference to which the functions of the committee on ordained ministry have been assigned.

5. A missionary conference may include in its membership representation of such mission agencies within its boundaries as it deems advisable, provided, however, such representation shall not exceed a number equal to one-third of the total membership of the missionary conference and that such representatives shall be members of The United Methodist Church in accordance with constitutional requirements.²¹

6. In order to provide traditional and experimental ministries, the bishop of the missionary conference may appoint an effective elder to other than full-time pastoral appointment combined with secular employment. This will in no way affect the conference relationship. Pension and other benefits shall be provided in consultation with the parties involved and with the approval of the missionary conference.

7. A missionary conference that has not established the right of full ministerial membership may ordain indigenous racial and ethnic persons as deacons who, although they are not associate members, shall be accorded all the rights and privileges of associate membership in the missionary conference, provided that they have completed all of the necessary requirements for candidacy and such other requirements the missionary conference may establish. Further, these persons have the right to pursue transfer of their ministerial relationship to another annual conference as an associate member and to pursue a relationship of full connection under the guidance of that annual conference.

¶ 587. Only the General Conference can create a missionary conference or change a missionary conference to a provisional annual conference or an annual conference. A petition to the General Conference for change in status from a missionary conference shall set forth details of the history and status of the conference and shall be accompanied by a report and recommendation of the General Board of Global Ministries.

¶ 588. Rights and Privileges—Missionary conferences shall have the same rights as those given to the central conferences in ¶ 543.7, .8 to make such changes and adaptations regarding the ministry and ordination of ordained ministers as the effective use of indigenous leadership in the missionary conference may require, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church.

Section VIII. Mission

¶ 590. Definition—A mission is an administrative body for a field of work inside or outside the structures of any annual conference, provisional annual conference, or missionary conference that is under the care of the General Board of Global Ministries and exercises in a general way the functions of a district conference.

The purpose of a mission is to provide ministry with a particular group or region whose needs cannot be fully met with the existing structures and resources of the annual conference(s). It may also be the initial stage in moving toward the formation of a provisional or missionary conference.

The establishment of a mission may involve special considerations in areas of leadership, language resources, and/or property.

¶ 591. Establishment and Administration of a Mission—1. The General Board of Global Ministries, in consultation with the presiding bishop or bishops (¶ 414.6) of an annual conference(s), shall determine the need and set the boundaries for the mission established within an annual conference, across conference lines, or for another extended region or constituency.

2. In accordance with the Wesleyan ecumenical spirit, the mission will seek to establish and maintain cordial and cooperative relationships with other denominations serving in the area as well as with appropriate interdenominational, ecumenical and interfaith agencies and organizations.

3. A mission shall be made up of all regularly appointed missionaries, both lay and clergy, mission pastors, and other lay members. The mission shall determine the number of lay members and the method of their selection. In so doing, it shall ensure that all aspects of the mission's work are represented.²²

4. (a) When the mission lies within the bounds of one episcopal area, the resident bishop shall preside over the mission. (b) When the mission crosses the boundaries of one or more episcopal areas, jurisdictions, or central conferences, the College(s) of Bishops shall assign a bishop to the mission. (c) When the mission lies outside the bounds of an established episcopal area in jurisdictions or central conferences, the Council of Bishops will assign a bishop to be its presiding officer. The assigned bishop, in collaboration with the General Board of Global Ministries, and in consultation with an annual conference, will seek a cooperative agreement with that annual conference which will serve as the correspondent annual conference to the mission for the purposes of ordination and conference membership as well as for local pastor licensing. (d) The bishop assigned to a mission, in consultation with the general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, may appoint one or more superintendents of the mission as may be determined and for whom support has been provided. The bishop shall decide which groups or charges the respective superintendents shall supervise.

²² See Judicial Council Decision 341.

5. A mission shall meet annually at the time and place designated by the bishop in charge, who shall preside. The bishop will work with the General Board of Global Ministries and with mission officials to make sure that the mission sets up, organizes and implements the necessary mechanisms and processes to fulfill the functions of the mission. Where appropriate, these mechanisms and processes will conform to the directions given in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* with due attention and care given to necessary adaptation of those provisions as already permitted in the Central Conferences. In the absence of the bishop, a superintendent of the mission shall preside. The presiding officer shall bring forward the regular business of the meeting and arrange the work.

6. The annual meeting shall have the power to certify candidates for the ordained ministry, to pass on the character of clergy who are not members of an annual conference, to receive mission pastors, and to recommend to an annual conference proper persons for provisional membership and ordination. The examination of local pastors shall be held by the mission and certified to an annual conference.

Mission pastors are members of the mission without being members of an annual conference. The mission shall determine the requirements for a mission pastor in order to most effectively utilize the indigenous leadership. Mission pastors are limited in their itineration to the bounds of the mission.

7. The bishop shall, at the annual meeting, assign the missionaries and mission pastors to the several charges for the ensuing year; provided that transfer of missionaries related to the General Board of Global Ministries shall be completed only after consultation with the board.

8. Administration, initiation, and coordination of a mission shall be in the General Board of Global Ministries. The board, in consultation with the bishop and mission officials, will coordinate the development and approval of the mission's work plan and budget. Neither the mission nor its officers shall assume financial obligations or make financial commitments on behalf of the General Board of Global Ministries without the Board's explicit, written authorization.

9. Recommendations for a change of status of a mission shall be made by the General Board of Global Ministries following the procedures established in *The Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Section IX. The Annual Conference

¶ 601. Purpose—The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.

* ¶ 602. Composition and Character—1. The clergy membership of an annual conference (¶ 369) shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection (¶ 333), provisional members (¶ 327), associate members, affiliate members (¶¶ 344.4, 586.4), and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge (¶317).²³ (See also ¶ 32.)

a) Clergy members in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference except in the election of lay delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences and shall have sole responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.²⁴

b) Provisional clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

c) Associate and affiliate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference board of ordained ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 634.1).

d) Full-time and part-time local pastors under appointment to a pastoral charge shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments; election of delegates to the general and jurisdictional or central conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.²⁵ When local pastors are members of the Conference board of ordained ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 634.1).

e) Each annual conference having campus ministers, chaplains and Wesley Foundation directors shall include the same in its lay and clergy annual conference composition. In districts where United Methodist laypersons serve as campus ministers/directors of Wesley Foundations, they shall be added as district-at-large lay members to the annual conference. In districts where United Methodist clergy serve as chaplains, campus ministers, and directors of Wesley Foundations, the laypersons elected as their balancing counterpart shall be elected from either the campus ministry board of directors or a student from that ministry/foundation. In making sure that such inclusion is adhered to, special consideration

23 See Judicial Council Decisions 341, 371, 477, 552, 584.

24 See Judicial Council Decision 690.

25 See Judicial Council Decision 862.

shall be given to the inclusion of United Methodist young adults who are active participants in campus ministry.

2. Persons who enter candidacy for diaconal ministry prior to January 1, 1997, shall be allowed to complete candidacy, and those consecrated will serve as lay members of the annual conference as long as they maintain this status in The United Methodist Church.

3. Persons who become associate members prior to January 1, 1997, shall be allowed to continue in this relationship and serve under the provision of the 1992 Book of Discipline as long as they hold this status.

4. The lay membership of the annual conference shall consist of a professing member elected by each charge, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, home missionaries, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders,²⁶ the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, one youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen and one young adult between the ages of eighteen and thirty from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference (in the case of central conferences, the youth member shall be not younger than twelve and no older than twenty-five and the young adult member shall be not younger than eighteen and not older than thirty-five), and the chair of the annual conference college student organization. If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference.

Each charge served by more than one clergy member under appointment (including deacons in full connection for whom this is their primary appointment) shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members under appointment. The lay members shall have been members of The United Methodist Church for the two years preceding their election and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years preceding their election (§§ 32, 251.2).

a) In the annual conference or the central conferences, the four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived for young persons under thirty years of age. Such persons must be members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election.

b) By authorization of a central conference, national diaconal ministers may be given the same privileges as a diaconal minister.²⁷

26 See Judicial Council Decision 924.

27 See Judicial Council Decision 505.

5. The lay member or alternate, whoever was last seated in the annual conference, shall be seated in a special session of the annual conference when convened, provided that no local charge shall be deprived of its lay member due to death, serious illness, or cessation of membership. Under such circumstances, another lay member may be elected by the charge conference.²⁸ (See ¶ 32.)

6. The lay members of the annual conference shall participate in all deliberations and vote upon all measures except on the granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into full conference membership, or any question concerning the character and official conduct of ordained ministers, except those who are lay members of the board of ordained ministry and committee on investigation. Lay members shall serve on all committees except those on ministerial relations.²⁹

7. When at any time a lay member is excused by the annual conference from further attendance during the session, the alternate lay member, if present, shall be seated. The lay member or the alternate shall be the lay member of the annual conference, and it shall be the duty of the lay member to report to the local church on actions of the annual conference.

8. It is the duty of every member and all provisional and local pastors of the annual conference to attend its sessions and furnish such reports in such form as the Discipline may require. Any such person unable to attend shall report by letter to the conference secretary, setting forth the reason for the absence. Should any ordained minister in active service be absent from the session of the annual conference without a satisfactory reason for the absence, the matter shall be referred by the conference secretary to the board of ordained ministry.

* 9. The following shall be seated in the annual conference and shall be given the privilege of the floor without vote: official representatives from other denominations invited by the annual conference; missionaries regularly assigned by the General Board of Global Ministries and serving within the bounds of the annual conference; lay missionaries regularly appointed by the General Board of Global Ministries in nations other than the United States and certified lay missionaries from nations other than the United States serving within the bounds of the annual conference.

10. If not otherwise a voting member of the annual conference, the conference chancellor shall be seated in the annual conference and shall be given the privilege of the floor without vote.

¶ 603. Organization—1. Annual conferences may become severally bodies corporate, whenever practicable, under the law of the countries, states, and territories within whose bounds they are located.³⁰

28 See Judicial Council Decision 319.

29 See Judicial Council Decisions 109, 505, 592.

30 See Judicial Council Decision 108.

2. The bishops shall appoint the times for holding the annual conferences.

3. The annual conference or a committee thereof shall select the place for holding the conference, but should it become necessary for any reason to change the place of meeting, a majority of the district superintendents, with the consent of the bishop in charge, may change the place.

4. The annual conference sessions shall be held in places that are accessible to people with disabilities.

5. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call.³¹

6. The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or, in case of inability, shall arrange for another bishop to preside. In the absence of a bishop, the conference shall by ballot, without nomination or debate, elect a president pro tempore from among the traveling elders. The president thus elected shall discharge all the duties of a bishop except ordination.³²

7. The annual conference at the first session following the General Conference or jurisdictional or central conferences (or, if it may desire, at the last session preceding the general, jurisdictional, or central conferences), utilizing such nominating procedure as the Annual Conference shall determine, shall elect a secretary and statistician to serve for the succeeding quadrennium. In the case of a vacancy in either office in the interim of the sessions, the bishop, after consultation with the district superintendents, shall appoint a person to act until the next session of the annual conference. (See ¶ 619 for election of the treasurer.) This legislation shall become effective immediately upon the adjournment of the 2008 General Conference.

8. The annual conference may designate as chancellor and associate chancellors one or more persons who are members in good standing of a local church or an annual conference in the episcopal area, and who are members of an appropriate bar of a state in the episcopal area. Each chancellor and associate chancellor shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the annual conference. The chancellors, assisted by the associate chancellors shall serve as legal adviser to the bishop and the annual conference. The annual conference may have more than one chancellor.

9. a) The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and is an officer of the annual conference. The conference lay leader shall be a professing member of a local church in the annual conference. The conference lay leader

31 See Judicial Council Decision 397.

32 See Judicial Council Decisions 367, 373.

shall participate in annual conference sessions as a partner in ministry with the bishop.

* ¶ 604. Powers and Duties—1. The annual conference, for its own government, may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the Discipline of The United Methodist Church, provided that in exercise of its powers, each annual conference shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church with respect to elimination of discrimination.³³ (See ¶ 4, Article IV.)

2. An annual conference cannot financially obligate any organizational unit of The United Methodist Church except the annual conference itself.³⁴

3. The annual conference may admit into clergy membership only those who have met all the disciplinary requirements for membership and only in the manner prescribed in the Discipline.³⁵

4. The annual conference shall have power to make inquiry into the moral and official conduct of its clergy members. Subject only to the provisions of ¶¶ 2701-2719, the annual conference shall have power to hear complaints against its clergy members and may try, reprove, suspend, deprive of clergy office and credentials, expel, or acquit any against whom charges may have been preferred. The annual conference shall have power to locate a clergy member for failure to perform effectively and competently the duties of itinerant ministry.³⁶

5. The status of a clergy member and of a provisional and the manner and conditions of a transfer of a clergy member from one annual conference to another are governed by the section on the ordained ministry (Chapter Two).

6. Transfers of traveling preachers are conditioned on the passing of their character by the conference to which they are amenable. The official announcement that a preacher is transferred changes the preacher's membership so that all rights and responsibilities in the conference to which that preacher goes begin from the date of transfer. Such member of an annual conference shall not vote twice on the same constitutional question, nor be counted twice in the same year in the basis for election of delegates, nor vote twice in the same year for delegates to the general, jurisdictional, or central conferences.

7. Whenever clergy members, whether provisional member or in full connection, are transferred to another annual conference, either in connection with a transfer of the pastoral charge to which they are appointed or by reason of the dissolution or merger of the annual conference, they shall have the same rights and obligations as the other members of the conference to which they are transferred.

33 See Judicial Council Decisions 43, 74, 109, 141, 318, 323, 367, 373, 418, 432, 435, 476, 536, 584, 590, 592, 688, 694, 699, 876.

34 See Judicial Council Decision 707.

35 See Judicial Council Decision 440.

36 See Judicial Council Decisions 534, 782.

8. The annual conference shall have power to make inquiry into the financial status of the local churches, and where there is a deficit in finances, it may require the pastor and the lay member to appear before the appropriate committee and make explanation. Based upon its findings, it shall provide counsel to help the church overcome such a deficit position.

9. The annual conference shall have the power to make inquiry into the membership status of the local churches, and where no members have been received on confession of faith during the year, it may require the pastor and the lay member to appear before the appropriate agency and make explanation.

10. The annual conference shall give recognition to any new churches that have been organized during the year and shall, through the presiding bishop and the secretary, send to each new church a certificate of organization, which the district superintendent shall, on behalf of the conference, present to the new church in an appropriate ceremony.

* 11. The annual conference shall secure, during the course of its annual session, the answers to the questions for conducting annual conference sessions, and the secretary to the annual conference shall include the answers to these questions in the conference journal and in the report to the conference council.

12. If any annual conference initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in *The Book of Resolutions, 2008*, should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church.

13. The annual conference may choose to adopt a conference-wide plan for compensation of pastors. Such a plan shall provide the method for setting and funding the salaries, and/or other compensation elements as specified in the plan, of the pastors appointed to the charges of the annual conference.

¶ 605. Business of the Conference—1. The session shall open with a period of devotion, followed by a call of the roll, including the roll of the local pastors.

2. The annual conference, to expedite the transaction of its business, may adopt an agenda as a basis of its procedure. Such agenda shall be prepared by the bishop, the district superintendents, the conference lay leader, and such others as the conference may name and shall be submitted to the conference for adoption.

3. Members for all standing committees, boards, and commissions of the annual conference shall be selected in such manner as the *Book of Discipline* may specifically require or as the annual conference may determine.³⁷ Attention shall be given to inclusiveness (¶¶ 124, 139).

For the purpose of adjusting tenure, a certain number of members may be elected or appointed for particular terms. Members shall hold office until their successors are elected. For the annual conference agencies provided for by the

³⁷ See Judicial Council Decision 559.

Discipline, see ¶ 610.1; and for the agencies established by the annual conference itself, see ¶ 610.2.

4. The business of the annual conference shall include receiving and acting upon reports from district superintendents, officers, standing and special committees, boards, commissions, and societies and also making such inquiries as the Council of Bishops shall recommend by the provision of a supplemental guide.³⁸

5. The agenda of the annual conference shall provide time for an address or report that shall be the responsibility of the conference lay leader.

6. The annual conference shall make inquiry into the moral and official conduct of its ordained ministers and local pastors. In response to the inquiry whether all such persons are blameless in their life and official administration, the district superintendent may answer for all the preachers in the district in one answer, or the board of ordained ministry may make inquiry of each district superintendent about each ordained minister in the district and make one report to the bishop and the conference in open session.³⁹ Questions relating to matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy shall be the business of the clergy session. The actions of the clergy session shall be for and on behalf of the annual conference. The provisions of the Book of Discipline applicable to an annual conference shall also be applicable to the clergy session. All clergy members

(¶¶ 601.1, 602.1) of the annual conference and the lay members of the board of ordained ministry may attend and shall have voice in the clergy session. Only the ordained clergy in full connection and the members of the board of ordained ministry may vote (¶ 602.1a). Others may be admitted by express action of the clergy session, but shall not have vote, nor, unless specifically granted by the clergy session, shall have voice (¶ 333).⁴⁰

7. At the conclusion of the examination of the standing of the ordained ministers and local pastors in the conference or at such later times as the bishop may designate, the presiding bishop may call to the bar of the conference the class to be admitted into full connection and receive them into conference membership after asking the questions to be found in ¶ 336. This examination of the ordained ministers and the passing of their characters may be the business of one session.

8. The annual conference shall adopt a comprehensive policy for handling sexual and gender harassment of clergy when laypersons are the perpetrators. This policy shall guide the local church in how to handle the report, how to care for the accuser and the accused, the victim and the perpetrator, the findings

38 See Judicial Council Decision 367.

39 See Judicial Council Decisions 42, 406, 534, 555.

40 See Judicial Council Decisions 686, 690, 769, 782.

and settlement. It shall make provision for support of the pastor and for care of church members.

* ¶ 606. Records and Archives—1. The annual conference shall keep an exact record of its proceedings according to the forms provided by the general, jurisdictional, and central conferences. If there are no archives of the annual conference, the secretary shall keep the bound copy or copies to be handed on to the succeeding secretary. The conference shall send to its jurisdictional conference or central conference copies of the minutes of the quadrennium for examination.

* 2. Each annual conference shall send to its Episcopal Area office three printed copies of its annual journal and one printed copy to the General Commission on Archives and History.

3. The annual conference may form a committee on journal publication. The annual conference journal shall include the following divisions, in the following order:

- a) Officers of annual conference,
- b) Boards, commissions, committees; rolls of conference members,
- c) Daily proceedings,
- d) Business of the annual conference report (formerly known as the disciplinary questions),
- e) Appointments,
- f) Reports as ordered by the annual conference,
- g) Annual report of the district superintendents, if any.
- h) Memoirs as ordered by the annual conference following the guidelines of the General Commission on Archives and History,
- i) Roll of dead-deceased clergy members,
- j) Historical,
- k) Miscellaneous,
- l) Pastoral record (including the records of accepted local pastors in such manner as the conference may determine),
- m) Statistics,
- n) Index.

* 4. A conference in Northern Europe & Eurasia shall include in its journal a list of the deaconesses and missionaries, clergy and lay, active and retired, who have gone from the conference into mission service or who are presently serving in such capacity within the bounds of the annual conference.

5. The annual conference journal shall include a listing of the consecrated diaconal ministers and their service records.

6. The secretary, treasurer, or other administrative officer named by the annual conference shall keep a complete service record of ordained and diaconal

ministry personnel in the annual conference. Service records shall include but not be limited to biographical information supplied by the individual, a list of appointments, and a record of annual conference actions with regard to conference relationships. In addition to service records, the secretary, treasurer, or other administrative officer named by the annual conference shall keep descriptions of circumstances related to changes in conference relationships, credentials surrendered to the bishop or district superintendent, and confidential trial records.

* 7. The local church report to the annual conference shall be submitted on the prescribed forms at a date set by the annual conference.

8. Official records of secretaries, statisticians, and treasurers shall be kept according to the forms prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration so that official statistical and financial items shall be handled alike in all annual conferences and that uniformity of reporting shall be established as a worldwide church policy.

* 9. All records of candidates and ordained and diaconal ministry personnel maintained by the conference secretary, treasurer, or other administrative officer named by the annual conference, board of ordained ministry, board of pensions, and the district committee on ordained ministry are to be kept on behalf of the annual conference in conformity with guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the following principles:

a) The annual conference is the owner of its personnel records and files;

b) Individuals in whose name a record is kept shall have access to the information contained in a record or file, with the exception of surrendered credentials and information for which a right-of-access waiver has been signed;

* c) Access to unpublished records by persons other than the bishop, district superintendent, conference secretary, treasurer, or other administrative officer or the board of ordained ministry, through its chair, board of pensions, through its chair, the board of ordained ministry, through its chair, counsel for the Church, and committee on investigation, through its chair, shall require written consent of the person in whose name a record is kept; access to trial records shall be governed by the provisions of ¶¶ 2712.5, 2713.5.⁴¹

* ¶ 607. The Conference Lay Leader

1. The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and will have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church and enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the annual

⁴¹ See Judicial Council Decisions 751, 765.

conference, district, and local church in cooperation with the bishop, district superintendents, and pastors.

2. The conference lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the conference such as United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth, and Scouting Ministries, encourage and support their work, and help them coordinate their activities. The conference lay leader shall also have the general responsibility in: (1) developing the advocacy role for laity in the life of the Church; (2) increasing the participation of laity in the sessions and structure of the annual conference; and (3) encouraging laypersons in the general ministry of the Church.

* 3. The conference lay leader shall be the chairperson of the conference board of laity, or its equivalent structure, and shall be a member of the annual conference, the conference council, the executive committee, if any, of the conference council on ministries, the conference committee on nominations, the conference committee on episcopacy, and the committee planning annual conference sessions; and may be designated by virtue of office to membership on any conference agency by the annual conference.

4. The conference lay leader shall be responsible for presenting a report to the annual conference.

5. The conference lay leader may serve on the conference board of ordained ministry and will participate in the Service of Ordination at annual conference.

6. The conference lay leader shall meet with the cabinet when matters relating to the coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, or other matters as the cabinet may determine are on the agenda.

7. The conference lay leader will meet regularly with the Bishop to discuss the state of the annual conference, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.

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

9. The conference lay leader shall be elected for a term of not less than four years by the annual conference as the annual conference may determine. The method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. Associate lay leader(s), to work with the conference lay leader, may be elected by the annual conference as it may determine. The conference lay leader and associate lay leader(s) will receive reasonable reimbursement for approved dues and expenses necessary for the ministry.

10. The conference lay leader shall be a member of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders.

11. This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2004 General Conference.

¶ 608. Connectional Ministries—Each annual conference is responsible to focus and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within its boundaries by:

1. envisioning the ministries necessary to live out the mission of the church in and through the annual conference;
2. creating and nurturing relationships and connections among the local, district, annual conference, and general church ministries;
3. providing encouragement, coordination, and support for the ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness in districts and congregations for the transformation of the world;
4. ensuring the alignment of the total resources of the annual conference to its mission;
5. developing and strengthening ethnic ministries, including ethnic local churches and concerns;
6. providing for advocacy and monitoring functions to ensure that the church is consistent with its stated values.

It is recommended that each annual conference have a director of connectional ministries or designated person to focus and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within the annual conference.

- a) The director may be lay or clergy.
- b) The director shall serve as an officer of the annual conference and shall sit with the cabinet when the cabinet considers matters relating to coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, and other matters as the cabinet and director may determine. Whether appointed or elected to this position, the director shall be amenable to the bishop, in consultation with the appropriate annual conference personnel body.
- c) In partnership with the bishop and cabinet and the elected leadership of the conference, the director of connectional ministries shall have the following primary responsibilities:
 - (1) to serve as steward of the vision of the annual conference, including the development, clarification, interpretation, and embodiment of the vision;
 - (2) to serve as leader of the continuous process of transformation and renewal necessary for the annual conference to be faithful to our Christian identity in a changing world;
 - (3) to ensure alignment of the total resources of the conference to its vision;
 - (4) to ensure the connections among the local, district, annual

conference, and general church ministries for the purpose of networking, resourcing, and communicating their shared ministry.

¶ 609. There shall be in each annual conference or episcopal area a director of communications or designated person to focus and guide the communications ministry of The United Methodist Church within the annual conference or episcopal area.

a) It is recommended that the director have the following primary responsibilities:

- (1) To help identify, equip, and coordinate the work of a communications team (staff and/or volunteer);
- (2) To develop and guide the implementation of strategies for effective communication among annual conference agencies, districts, and local churches;
- (3) To promote and coordinate activities to enhance the awareness and reputation of the Church;
- (4) To help guide the strategy to interpret the conference budget and other benevolences;
- (5) To provide guidance and training in effective communications for annual conference, district, and/or local church leaders;
- (6) To lead the conference in developing effective relationships with the news media within the annual conference;
- (7) To guide conference leaders in developing and implementing an effective communication strategy under the connectional ministry;
- (8) To lead the conference in using new and emerging technologies as tools for ministry;
- (9) To provide the connectional relationship between the conference and United Methodist Communications.

b) It is recommended that the director or designated person be a part of the extended cabinet (or equivalent leadership structure) to provide advice and counsel concerning communications strategies relating to the conference program, apportionment and benevolence interpretation, crisis management, and other matters as the cabinet and director may determine.

Conference Agencies

¶ 610. The annual conference is responsible for structuring its ministries and administrative procedures in order to accomplish its purpose (¶ 601), with the exception of the mandated provisions of ¶¶ 635, 636, 639, 640, 647, 648. In so doing it shall provide for the connectional relationship of the local church, district, and conference with the general agencies. It will monitor to ensure inclu-

siveness— racial, gender, age, and people with disabilities—in the annual conference. Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the annual conference shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the groups of which they are members to engage in witness ministries and, in particular, to ask, “How are we intentionally reaching new people for Jesus Christ through our ministries?” and “How are we helping new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?”

1. An annual conference shall provide for the functions and General Conference connections with all general agencies provided by the Discipline as follows:

- a) There shall be clear connections between the General Conference agencies, annual conference program and administrative entities, and the local congregation;
- b) There shall be clear checks and balances regarding program functions and financial/administration functions within the annual conference. In doing this, the annual conference may organize units so long as the functions of ministry are fulfilled and the connectional relationships are maintained.⁴²

2. The annual conference may appoint additional committees for the purpose of promoting the work of The United Methodist Church within the bounds of the said annual conference and may prescribe their membership and their powers and duties.

3. Each annual conference may make its agencies of such size as its work may require, provided that consideration shall be given to the inclusion of lay and clergypersons from small membership churches. All local pastors serving charges are eligible for election or appointment to such agencies, except those dealing with qualifications, orders, and status of clergy and local pastors.

4. Whenever possible, meetings scheduled by the annual conference and its districts, boards, or committees should be held in places that are accessible to persons with disabilities even if this means scheduling meetings outside church-related facilities.

5. In the nomination and election of the membership on councils, boards, and agencies of the annual conference, special attention shall be given to the inclusion of clergywomen, youth (§ 256.2.), young adults, older adults, persons from churches with small memberships, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons, in keeping with policies for general Church agencies. It is further recommended that the membership of such agencies, except for the board of ordained ministry, include one-third clergy, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen, who are professing members of local churches.⁴³

42 See Judicial Council Decisions 827, 835, 848, 878, 983.

43 See Judicial Council Decisions 446, 558.

6. Members of general agencies (§ 701) shall serve as ex officio members of the corresponding annual conference agency or its equivalent structure (see § 710.4, .5). If this results in a person being a member of more than one annual conference agency in violation of either annual conference policy or another provision of the Book of Discipline, the person shall choose the annual conference agency on which to serve.

7. It is strongly recommended that the annual conference provide for child and dependent care both during the sessions of the annual conference and during meetings of the annual conference boards and agencies. Child and dependent care should follow the annual conference policy of child protection. If no policy is in place, care should be given to keep all people safe, and procedures should be followed as suggested by the General Board of Discipleship and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration

* § 611. In each annual and national district conference within Northern Europe Central Conference there shall be a conference council. In Denmark the council is called Landsledelsen, in Estonia Kirkuvalistus, in Finland Kirkkohallitus (Finnish) or Kyrkostyrelsen (Swedish), in Latvia Baznīcas Valde, in Lithuania Baznycios administracinės, in Norway Hovedstyret, in Russia “Совет ежегодной конференции”, in Sweden Kyrkostyrelsen, and in Ukraine “Рада щорічної конференції”.

* § 612. The conference council shall have the following functions, membership and organization:

1. Functions—The conference council shall have the following functions:

a) annual conference council on finance and administration (§§ 613-619), of which the purpose is to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference.

* b) annual conference council responsible for connectional ministries (§ 608)

c) annual conference board of trustees (§§ 2512-2516)

d) annual conference board on church location and building (§§ 2518-2523)

e) annual conference committee on Christian unity and interreligious concerns (§ 642)

* f) Annual conference board of pensions, when not separately organized (§ 639).

2. Membership^{44 45}—Members of the council are the bishop, the district superintendents, the conference lay leader, and those persons the conference wishes to elect. The conference treasurer may be a member of the conference council.

3. Officers—The council shall have a chairperson elected by the annual conference. The council elects among its voting members a vice chairperson, a secretary, and other officers as the council decides. The conference treasurer/director of administrative services (§ 615.4) shall be the treasurer of the council.

4. No member of the council shall vote on or take part in deliberations on significant matters directly or indirectly affecting her or his business, income, or employment, or the business, income, or employment of his or her immediate family.

5. Organization— a) The council may establish committees and task forces and define their duties and authority as it deems necessary for fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities.

b) The annual conference may enact bylaws governing meetings, quorum, and other matters of procedure for the council, or it may authorize the council to enact such bylaws; in any event, such bylaws shall not be in conflict with the Book of Discipline.

c) If deemed necessary for the fulfillment of its functions and if so authorized by the annual conference, the council may be incorporated.

6. Amenability—The council shall be amenable and report directly to the annual conference.⁴⁶

* § 613. Responsibilities—The council shall have authority and responsibility to perform the following functions:

1. To recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination budgets of anticipated income and proposed expenditures for all funds that provide for annual conference clergy support, annual conference administrative expenses, and annual conference benevolence and program causes (§ 614).⁴⁷

2. To receive, consider, report, and make recommendations to the annual conference regarding the following prior to final decision by the annual conference: (a) any proposal to raise capital funds for any purpose; (b) funding considerations related to any proposal that may come before the conference; (c) any requests to conduct a special conference-wide financial appeal, whether by special collections, campaigns, or otherwise in the local churches of the conference.

* 3. To recommend to the annual conference for its action and decision the methods or formulas by which apportionments to churches, charges, or districts

⁴⁴ See Judicial Council Decision 441.

⁴⁵ See Judicial Council Decisions 10, 493.

⁴⁶ See Judicial Council Decisions 551, 560.

⁴⁷ See Judicial Council Decisions 521, 744.

for duly authorized general, central, conference, and district funds shall be determined (§ 615).

4. To consult and cooperate with the commission on communication in providing district superintendents, pastors, and appropriate officers of the local churches and charge conferences with interpretive aids or other materials to assist in gaining understanding and support of the conference budget and other approved conference causes.

* 5. To develop policies governing the investment of conference funds, whether in debt or equity, short-term or long-term instruments, with the aim of maximizing funds available for mission in a manner consistent with the preservation of capital, the Policies Relative to Socially Responsible Investments (§ 716), and the Social Principles of the Church. A statement of such policies shall be printed in the conference journal at least once in each quadrennium.

6. To recommend to the annual conference procedures for funding local churches and assisting them in making their church buildings, facilities, and programs accessible.

7. To recommend to the annual conference for its action procedures for dealing responsibly with situations in which budgeted funds, as approved by the annual conference, are inadequate to meet emerging missional needs or unforeseen circumstances.⁴⁸

* 8. To review *ata* regular basis and to account to the annual conference for the disbursement of funds in accordance with budgets approved by the conference.

9. To recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination the conditions under which it may borrow funds for current expense purposes and the maximum amount of such borrowing.

10. To have authority and supervision over the conference treasurer/director of administrative services subject to § 619; to establish policies governing the treasurer/director's work.

11. To work in cooperation with other annual conference agencies for the design and implementation of a plan by which the annual conference may designate the conference treasury as a central treasury for funds designated for any or all conference agencies participating in conference funds.

* 12. To establish uniform and equitable policies and practices in the employment and compensation of personnel, in consultation and cooperation with other conference agencies that employ staff, unless the annual conference has designated another agency to carry this responsibility. These policies and practices shall be in accordance with the Social Principles (§ 162 A, E, F, and G).

48 See Judicial Council Decision 551.

13. To promote and standardize the financial recording and reporting system in the local churches of the conference.

14. In cooperation with relevant annual conference agencies and institutions, and local churches, to make recommendations to the annual conference regarding the development, promotion, and review of a broad general program of insurance protection.

15. To train and encourage volunteers and employed in the areas of church business and administration.

16. To make recommendations to the annual conference for its action and determination regarding plans to initiate or cause to be organized a foundation or similar organization for the purpose of securing, conserving, or expending funds for the direct or indirect benefit or support of the annual conference, or of any conference agency, or any of its programs or work. The council shall have opportunity to make its recommendations regarding such plans if the foundation or similar organization is: (1) proposed to be organized by the annual conference itself, whether acting alone or in concert with other annual conferences; (2) proposed to be organized by any conference council, board, commission, committee, or other agency; (3) to make use of the name United Methodist in its title or solicitation; or (4) proposed for the purpose of soliciting gifts primarily from the United Methodist constituency.

17. To perform such other administrative and fiscal functions and services as the annual conference may assign.

18. To ensure that no apportioned conference funds are expended for the use of alcoholic beverages.

19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality. The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church's ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events where the Church's official position is fairly and equally represented.

* ¶ 614. Budgets—The council shall recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination budgets of anticipated income and proposed expenditures for all funds to be apportioned to the churches, charges, or districts.⁴⁹

Prior to each regular session of the annual conference, the council shall make a diligent and detailed study of the needs of all the conference agencies and causes asking to be included in the budget of any conference fund. The chairperson of each conference agency, or other duly authorized representative, shall have opportunity to represent the claims of that agency before the council.

⁴⁹ See Judicial Council Decisions 551, 560, 744.

1. Clergy Support Budgets—a) It shall be the duty of the council, unless otherwise provided, to estimate the total amount necessary to furnish a sufficient and equitable support for the district superintendents of the conference, including base compensation, travel, staff, office, and housing. The council shall report specific recommendations to the annual conference for conference action (§§ 423.2, 663.4a).⁵⁰

b) The council shall report to the annual conference at each session the percentage approved by the General Conference as the basis for the Episcopal Fund apportionment to the annual conference and shall include in its recommended clergy support budget the amount determined by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration as necessary to meet this apportionment.

c) Based on recommendations from the episcopal residence committee (§ 637.4d), the council shall recommend the amount to be raised as the annual conference share of the cost of the bishop's housing.

d) After consultation with the conference board of pensions, the council shall report to the annual conference the amounts computed by that agency as necessary to meet the needs for pensions and benefit programs of the conference. Such amounts need not be derived solely from apportionments.

e) It shall recommend to the annual conference an amount determined in consultation with the commission on equitable compensation to be used for compliance with the approved schedule of equitable base compensation for pastors (§ 624.3).

f) It shall recommend to the annual conference estimates of the amounts needed for any other programs of clergy support the conference may adopt.

2. Administration Budget—a) The council shall recommend to the annual conference estimates of the amounts needed for administrative expenses of the conference, including its own expenses and those of the conference treasurer's office. It shall consult with the conference agencies and officers to be included in the administrative budget regarding the estimated budgets of their expenses and base its conference administration budget recommendations on information thus received.

b) It shall include in its estimates recommendations regarding the conference's share of the central conference fund.

3 Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference

4. Other Apportioned Causes—The council shall include in its budget recommendations specific amounts recommended for all other funds properly apportioned to the annual conference for the support of duly authorized general or other connectional funds. The budget recommendations shall likewise include

⁵⁰ See Judicial Council Decisions 44, 584, 590, 591, 818.

any other amounts to be apportioned to the districts, charges, or churches by the annual conference for conference or district causes of any kind.

5. Special Appeals—a) No annual conference agency or interest, including any related agency or institution such as a school, college, university, hospital, home, housing project, or other service institution, shall make a special conference-wide appeal to the local churches for funds without the approval of the annual conference upon recommendation of the council, except in case of an extreme emergency, when such approval may be given by a two-thirds vote of the district superintendents and of the council, acting jointly. Neither shall special conference-wide appeals to local churches for funds be made by such boards, interests, agencies, or institutions that are not related to the annual conference in which the appeal is to be made, unless approval for such an appeal is granted by the annual conference upon recommendation of the council. The annual conference approvals specified in this paragraph shall not be required for special churchwide financial appeals that have been approved under the provisions of ¶ 811.4, for solicitations that have been approved under the provisions of ¶ 812.3, or for any other general fund promotion or appeal authorized by the General Conference or approved and conducted under other provisions of the Book of Discipline.

b) When application is made to the council for the privilege of a special conference-wide financial appeal, whether by special collections, campaigns, or otherwise, the council shall investigate the application and its possible relation to other obligations of the conference and in the light of the facts make recommendations to the conference for its action and determination. If application for privilege of a special appeal is made directly to the conference, the application shall be referred to the council before final action is taken.

c) The council may include in its budget recommendations to the annual conference amounts to be considered as goals for special appeals or other nonapportioned causes.

* ¶ 615. Apportionments—The council shall recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination the methods or formulas by which the approved budgeted amounts for clergy support, administration, and other causes shall be apportioned to the churches or charges of the conference.

¶ 616. Depository—The council shall be responsible for designating a depository or depositories for conference funds.

¶ 617. Auditing—The council shall have the following authority and responsibility with respect to the auditing of the financial records of the conference and its agencies:

1. To have the accounts of the conference treasurer for the preceding fiscal year audited by a certified public accountant within 150 days after the close of the conference fiscal year and to receive, review, and report such audit to the annual conference.⁵¹

As a part of the audit, the accountant shall confer with the presiding bishop of the annual conference and the president of the council.

2. To require and review at least annually audited reports, in such detail as it may direct, from all conference agencies and from all agencies, institutions, and organizations receiving any financial support from conference funds or from any authorized conference-wide appeal.

3. To require and review at least annually, in such detail as it may direct, compiled or audited reports of all funds received or administered by districts or district agencies, including funds held or administered by treasurers or officers other than the conference treasurer. Based on its review of such audits, the council may make such recommendations to the annual conference as it deems appropriate.

4. The council may establish an audit review committee to review all of the reports and audits required by ¶ 617.1, .2. If the council chooses to establish such a committee, at least half of its members should be persons who are not members of the council and who are chosen for their expertise in areas related to the work of the committee. Consideration shall be given to inclusiveness (¶¶ 124, 139) in the selection of persons to serve on the committee.

¶ 618. Bonding—The council shall have the following authority and responsibility with respect to the bonding of conference and conference agency officers and staff whose responsibilities include the custody or handling of conference funds or other negotiable assets:

1. The council shall provide for the fidelity bonding of the conference treasurer and other staff under its authority and supervision in amounts it judges to be adequate.

2. In the case of those agencies, institutions, and organizations for which the conference treasurer does not serve as treasurer, the council shall have authority to require fidelity bonding of their treasurers in such amounts as it deems adequate and to withhold payment of the allocation of any such agency, institution, or organization until evidence of the required bonding has been submitted.

3. The council may provide, or require any conference agency to provide, directors' and officers' liability insurance in amounts it judges to be adequate.

4. The council shall require compliance with the policies established as provided by this paragraph and shall report annually to the annual conference on such compliance.

51 See Judicial Council Decision 334.

* ¶ 619. Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services—Each annual conference, on nomination of its council on finance and administration, shall at the first session of the conference after the quadrennial session of the General Conference or Central Conference, or at such other times as a vacancy exists, elect a conference treasurer or conference treasurer/director of administrative services.⁵² The treasurer or treasurer/director shall serve for the quadrennium or until a successor shall be elected and qualify. If a vacancy should occur during the quadrennium, the council shall fill the vacancy until the next session of the annual conference. After consultation with the bishop in charge, the council may remove the treasurer or treasurer/director from office for cause and fill the vacancy until the next session of the conference. The treasurer/director shall be directly amenable to the council. The treasurer/director may sit with the council and its committees at all sessions and have the privilege of voice but not vote.

1. As conference treasurer, this officer shall have the following functions:

* a) The conference treasurer shall receive and disburse, in accordance with the actions of the annual conference and the provisions of the Book of Discipline, remittances from local church treasurers for all duly authorized general, central, annual conference, and district causes.⁵³

(1) Local church treasurers shall remit monthly to the conference treasurer all amounts contributed in each local church for annual conference funds, in accordance with ¶ 614, unless otherwise directed by the annual conference.

(2) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

(3) The treasurer shall, as far as practicable, remit monthly to the several district superintendents the amount due each of them (¶ 614.1a).

(4) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

(5) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

b) The conference treasurer may serve as treasurer for any or all agencies served by a conference central treasury (¶ 613.11). The treasurer shall enter the proper credits to each at the end of each month's business. Disbursements from funds allocated to any conference agency shall be made only on proper order from the agency.⁵⁴

c) The treasurer shall prepare at regular intervals such financial statements and reports as may be required for the bishop in charge, the district superintendents, the annual conference, the council, the agencies served by the conference central treasury and its officers.

(1) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

52 See Judicial Council Decision 185.

53 See Judicial Council Decisions 456, 591.

54 See Judicial Council Decisions 400, 521, 539.

(2) The treasurer shall prepare annually a report of all receipts, disbursements, and balances of all funds under his or her direction, which report shall be printed in the conference journal.

d) The treasurer may be authorized by the council to invest funds in accordance with policies and procedures established by the council (§ 613.5). A listing of securities held shall be printed annually in the conference journal.

e) The treasurer shall provide counsel and guidance to local church business administrators, treasurers, financial secretaries, and committees on finance in the development of standardized financial recording and reporting systems (§ 613.13).

f) The treasurer shall perform such other staff services as the council may require in the fulfillment of its functions and responsibilities.

2. As director of administrative services, this officer may have responsibility in one or more of the following areas: office management; payroll and personnel services; the provision of administrative services for annual conference officers and agencies; property management with respect to property owned by the annual conference or any of its agencies; and such other responsibilities of an administrative nature as the council, by mutual agreement with other annual conference officers and agencies, may assign. The director shall be present when the cabinet considers matters relating to conference administration related to the conference treasurer's or conference treasurer/director of administrative services' responsibilities, and other matters as the cabinet and director may determine. The director shall not be present during the cabinet discussions on matters related to the making of appointments.

3. The council shall have authority and supervision over the director and shall, after consultation with those annual conference officers and agencies for whom the director might be expected to perform services, define his or her specific responsibilities and do regular evaluation.

* § § 620-628. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

Other Conference Agencies

* § 629. Conference Board of Church and Society—1. The annual conference shall organize a board of church and society or other structure to provide for the functions of this ministry and maintain the connectional relationship between the General Board of Church and Society and the conference, district, and local church, as well as for church and society responsibilities related to the objectives

and scope of work of the General Board of Church and Society as set forth in ¶¶ 1002-1004.

* 2. The conference board of church and society or equivalent structure shall be composed of those persons as determined by the annual conference, including, by virtue of their offices, the mission coordinator for social action of the conference United Methodist Women and members of the General Board of Church and Society from the annual conference who shall serve within limits set by ¶¶ 610.6 and 710.5. Guidelines for inclusiveness in the membership shall be followed (¶ 610.5).

3. The conference board, in cooperation with the General Board of Church and Society and the annual conference council on ministries, shall develop and promote programs on church and society within the bounds of the conference that include prison ministry and reform concerns. To this end, it may divide its membership into committees of approximately equal size patterned after the organization of the General Board of Church and Society. Committees of the board shall have responsibility to cooperate with one another to advance the respective and mutual concerns of their respective areas in social education, service, witness, and action.

4. The conference board of church and society shall serve to connect the General Board of Church and Society and the district and local churches in relating the gospel of Jesus Christ to the members of the Church and to the persons and structures of the communities, nation, and world in which they live. Program shall be developed that provides education and action on issues confronting the Church consistent with the Social Principles and the policies adopted by the General Conference.

5. The board shall estimate annually the amount necessary for support of its work and shall report this amount according to the procedure of the annual conference. The work of the board may be considered a benevolence interest of the Church within the conference.

6. The annual conference may employ a person or persons to further its purposes. Two or more annual conferences may cooperate in developing their programs and in employing one or more persons.

* ¶ 630. Conference Board of Discipleship—The annual conference shall organize a board of discipleship or other equivalent structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationship between the General Board of Discipleship and the conference, district, and local church, and to provide for discipleship functions related to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Discipleship as set forth in ¶¶ 1101, 1102. The person or persons serv-

ing as member(s) of the General Board of Discipleship shall be member(s) of the conference board of discipleship and may be granted voting privileges.

1. General Responsibilities—a) To lead and assist the congregations and districts in the conference in their efforts to communicate and celebrate the redeeming and reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ to persons of every age, ethnic background, and social condition; to invite persons to commit their lives to Christ and to his church; and to enable persons to live as Christian disciples in the world.

b) To foster and promote a holistic approach to the development of Christian disciples. This shall include such ministries as Christian education and other small-group ministries; camping, retreat, and outdoor activities; evangelism; stewardship; worship; lay development; Christian spiritual formation and devotional life; age-level, life-span, and family-life ministries; leadership education; and such other areas of work as the annual conference may determine.

c) To foster and promote camping experiences for persons with disabilities, including camps specifically designed for persons with disabilities, and the participation of persons with disabilities, when feasible, in camps sponsored by the district and conference.

d) To provide training for clergy and laity in ministries with persons with disabilities, including the areas of the Sunday school, camps and retreats, and faith development.

e) To provide guidance and training for related district leaders and agencies and for local church councils, officers, and committees.

f) To develop a unified and comprehensive program for leadership training to serve all age groups in the home, church, and community.

g) To provide continued training for pastors in effective ministry with children, child and faith development of children, and interpretation of curriculum resources.

h) To enable and strengthen the ministry with and to youth at all levels of the Church.

i) To determine the necessary directors, coordinators, or designated leaders for discipleship responsibilities at the annual conference level, including the maintenance of linkage with the General Board of Discipleship and related district committees within the annual conference.

* 2. Responsibilities in the Area of Christian Education—a) To develop and promote a conference program of Christian education for the whole life span, to lead, assist, and support congregations and districts in developing systems for educational and small-group ministries that give children, youth, young adults, adults, older adults, and families knowledge of and experience in the Chris-

tian faith and the spiritual disciplines as motivation for Christian service in the Church, the community, and the world. This may include guidance and training for district leaders responsible for Christian education and for local church ministry areas and commissions on education, superintendents of the church school, church school division superintendents, church school teachers, and other leaders in the educational ministry of local churches.

* b) To develop and maintain an organized system for communicating and working with persons responsible for Christian education programs in local churches, districts, central conferences, and the General Board of Discipleship.

c) To provide training for confirmation leaders and to equip local congregations in confirmation experiences and in the use of approved resources.

d) To encourage the observance of the first Sunday of Christian Education Week, or some other day designated by the annual conference, in each local church as Christian Education Sunday for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of Christian education and for receiving an offering for the work of Christian education. (See ¶ 265.1.)

e) To develop and recommend to the annual conference plans for the acquisition or disposition of conference camps and/or retreat properties in accordance with standards of camping developed by the General Board of Discipleship (¶ 1110.10).

f) To promote church school extension by: (1) encouraging the development of new United Methodist church schools; (2) starting new classes; (3) expanding teaching and learning opportunities in the congregation and community.

g) To assist local congregations in initiating programs of teacher recruitment, development, training, and retraining in biblical, theological, and ethical thinking as well as in the procedures and methods of Christian education.

* h) To cooperate in the promotion of knowledge about the support for all schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries related to the conference and the campus ministry of the conference, region, or area through the establishment and support of such programs as may be approved by the annual conference in harmony with the policies and procedures of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

3. Responsibilities in the Area of Evangelism—a) To plan and promote an effective, comprehensive ministry of evangelism for people of all ages.

b) To create an understanding of, interest in, and commitment to evangelism throughout the conference.

c) To provide for the training of clergy and laypersons in leadership in ministries of evangelism, the distribution of promotional literature, the encouragement

and enlistment of local church participation in an ongoing ministry of evangelism, and the support of church revitalization and new church development.

d) To give guidance to the groups responsible for the work of evangelism in the districts and to the ministry area of evangelism in the local church.

e) To give particular emphasis to the promotion of ministries of evangelism, which may include ministries in jails and prisons with offenders, victims, and their families, in order that all persons living in a community where there is a local United Methodist church, and who are without a church affiliation or who make no profession of faith, will be included within the nurturing and caring responsibility of that local church.

f) To recommend annually, in consultation with the board of ordained ministry, to the conference and to the bishop in charge the appointment of certain effective members of the conference as general evangelists, provided that such persons shall meet the standards set for general evangelists by the General Board of Discipleship. This person shall serve as an ex officio member of the conference board of discipleship area of evangelism. In the event that there is more than one general evangelist in said annual conference, at least one shall be selected by the conference committee on nominations.

g) To recommend and endorse the ministry of said general evangelist to the pastors and leadership of the annual conference.

* 4. Responsibilities in the Area of Worship—*a)* To be responsible for the concerns of worship for people of all ages within the annual conference.

* *b)* To foster the use of the best resources for worship at conference meetings and in all the churches of the conference, promote the use of officially approved hymnals and books of worship in all the churches of the conference. To plan and promote seminars and demonstrations on cooperative planning for worship involving pastors and musicians, forms of worship, and the use of music and other arts, with particular emphasis on congregational singing. This includes cooperating with the resident bishop, who has primary responsibility for planning all worship services at each annual conference.

* *c)* To provide exhibits at the conference sessions, to promote seminars and training events in the area of worship, including music and other arts.

d) To assist local congregations in discovering and recruiting persons to serve as musicians (instrumentalists, singers, and song leaders) and in developing the skills of those serving in local congregations in cooperation with the General Board of Discipleship. This focus shall include persons who work full-time, part-time, and especially as volunteers in church music.

* 5. Responsibilities in the Area of Stewardship—*a)* To plan and promote a comprehensive program of stewardship for people of all ages throughout the con-

ference in such areas as stewardship education, proportionate giving and tithing, funding the Church's ministries, planned giving, time and abilities, economics and money management, and lifestyle.

b) To interpret the biblical and theological basis for stewardship.

c) To promote giving consistent with a Christian lifestyle.

d) To develop funding concepts within annual conference, district, and local church consistent with sound stewardship principles and the doctrine of The United Methodist Church.

e) To educate the local church that tithing is the minimum goal of giving in The United Methodist Church.

f) To design and schedule training events, distribute promotional material, and enlist local church participation in a year-round program of stewardship.

g) To give guidance to the ministry area of stewardship in the districts and to the ministry area of stewardship and the committee on finance in the local church.

h) To develop a program that will create concern on the part of every local church for the ecological and environmental problems that confront the world and to motivate them to accept responsibility for aiding in the solution of such problems.

* i) To participate in the work of organizations related to stewardship.

6. Responsibilities in the Area of Spiritual Formation—It is recommended that a separate committee be established to carry out the following responsibilities:

a) To promote spiritual formation and the development of the devotional life for families and people of all ages, clergy and laity, throughout the conference.

b) To conduct seminars and training events in the areas of private and corporate prayer.

c) To encourage and assist with the distribution and use of resources for spiritual formation as provided by The Upper Room and the General Board of Discipleship.

d) To encourage every local church to have a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray.

e) To encourage every local church to have a prayer room or designated place for prayer and prayer resources.

f) To encourage intentional prayer for pastoral leadership of the local church.

* ¶ 631. Conference Board of Laity—1. There shall be in every annual conference a conference board of laity or other equivalent structure to provide for these functions and maintain connectional relationship.⁵⁵ It shall provide for the

ministry of the laity related to the objectives of the General Board of Discipleship as set forth in ¶¶ 1101-1127.

2. The purpose of the conference board of laity shall be:

a) To foster an awareness of the role of the laity both within the local congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church; to develop and promote programs to cultivate an adequate understanding of the theological and biblical basis for lay life and work among the members of the churches of the annual conference.

b) To develop and promote stewardship of time, talent, and possessions within the annual conference in cooperation with the conference council on ministries or other appropriate conference bodies.

c) To provide for the training of lay members of annual conference.

d) To provide support and direction for the ministry of the laity on the local, district, and annual conference levels and to promote the observance of Laity Sunday.

e) To provide organization, direction, and support for the development of local church leaders.

* 3. The following membership of the board is recommended: the conference lay leader, associate conference lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Speaking Ministries, the conference scouting coordinator, and the presidents and two representatives elected by each of the conference organizations of United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Young Adults, and the conference council on youth ministries; and in addition, the district lay leaders, two laymen, two laywomen, and two youth elected by the annual conference upon nomination of the conference nominating committee, a district superintendent designated by the cabinet, and the presiding bishop. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of people with disabilities and racial and ethnic persons. All members shall be professing members of local churches.

4. The conference lay leader shall chair the board. Other officers shall be elected as the board shall deem necessary.

5. The board shall relate to Lay Speaking Ministries and other organized lay groups in the conference, such as United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Young Adults, and United Methodist Youth and shall support their work and help them coordinate the activities of the organized laity of the conference.

* 6. Conference Committee on Lay Speaking Ministries— Every annual conference is encouraged to create a conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries or other equivalent structure to fulfill the requirements of ¶¶ 266-268, 271

and to relate to the conference board of laity and the General Board of Discipleship as per ¶ 1117 and others that might apply.

7. Responsibilities in the area of Ministry of the Laity—*a)* To develop and promote programs to cultivate an adequate understanding of the theological and biblical basis for ministry of the laity among the members of the churches of the annual conference; to give special emphasis to programs and services that will enable laity of all ages to serve more effectively as leaders in both church and community.

b) To provide support and direction for such lay programs as Lay Speaking Ministries, the observance of Laity Day, and the work of lay leaders on the local and district levels.

c) To give support and direction to the conference and district program for local church leadership development, coordinating and developing training experiences that will enable persons of all ages to serve more effectively as members of local church councils on ministries, church councils, and the committees, commissions, and task forces related to these groups.

d) To organize a conference committee on Lay Speaking Ministries that will fulfill the requirements of ¶¶ 266-268 on behalf of the conference. This committee shall set guidelines and criteria to be used by district committees (see ¶ 668).

* ¶ 632. Conference Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns—

* 1. There may be in every annual conference a conference Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns or other structure to provide for these basic functions and to maintain connectional relationship.

2. It shall provide for these functions:

a) Keeping the vision of ethnic local church concerns before the annual conference;

b) Providing guidance and resources to churches in the annual conference as they minister with and to ethnic constituencies;

c) Coordinating annual conference strategies related to ethnic local church concerns including general church emphases and initiatives;

d) Providing a forum for dialogue among the ethnic constituencies, as well as with annual conference agencies;

e) Providing training for annual conference and congregational leaders;

f) Promoting and interpreting ethnic local church concerns to the annual conference; and

g) Working with annual conferences to identify and nurture leaders, lay and clergy, of ethnic communities.

3. The membership of this committee shall be nominated and elected by established procedures of the annual conference. The annual conference shall

determine the number and composition of the membership of the committee. It is recommended that the committee be constituted so that the majority of the membership be representative of racial and ethnic people, reflecting the racial and ethnic constituencies and local churches of the annual conference (§ 705.3). Care should be taken, where feasible, to ensure balance of membership with clergy and laity, men and women, youth and young adults.

* § 633. Conference Board of Global Ministries—1. The annual conference shall organize a board of global ministries or other structure to maintain the connectional relationship and provide for global ministries responsibilities related to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Global Ministries as set forth in §§ 1302-1303.

* 2. The conference board of global ministries or equivalent structure shall be composed of those persons as determined by the annual conference and shall fulfill those responsibilities as assigned. The chairperson of the conference board of global ministries shall work with the conference secretary of global ministries to relate the annual conference board of global ministries to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Global Ministries. A person or persons serving as member(s) of the General Board of Global Ministries from the annual conference shall, by virtue of their office, be member(s) of the conference board of global ministries (see §§ 610.6 and 710.5).

* 3. There shall be a conference secretary of global ministries who shall be a member of the annual conference board and may be a member of the annual conference council on ministries or equivalent structure.

The conference secretary of global ministries shall work with the chairperson of the conference board of global ministries to relate the annual conference board of global ministries to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Official contact between the conference board of global ministries and the General Board of Global Ministries goes through its directors elected from the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference and the European Commission on Mission (ECOM).

4. a) The annual conference and the General Board of Global Ministries shall cooperate in carrying out the policies and promoting all phases of the work as related to the scope of the board as set forth in § 1302.

b) Responsibilities—(1) To designate the necessary committees, sections, or commissions and individual secretaries, coordinators, or other leaders for global ministries responsibilities at the annual conference level.

(2) To interpret to the annual conference the programs, plans, and policies of the General Board of Global Ministries and to plan and promote emphases on

global ministries. To undergird with education, constructive evaluation, communication, and cultivation the total program of the General Board of Global Ministries.

(3) To receive reports of the liaison to the annual conference from the General Board of Global Ministries.

(4) To interpret to the General Board of Global Ministries the mission program, priorities, and concerns of the annual conference and the local churches to enable the board to fulfill its responsibilities as an extension of the local church.

(5) To plan and promote various kinds of meetings and experiences throughout the conference for the purpose of developing a spirit of mission and participation in global ministries for training, education, and leadership development of mission leaders and persons in the field of human services and health and welfare ministries.

* (6) To cooperate with the General Board of Global Ministries in its program.

(7) To identify with all who are alienated and dispossessed and to assist them in achieving their full human development—body, mind, and spirit—including encouraging and implementing affirmative action programs.

(8) To engage in direct ministries to human need, both emergency and continuing institutional and noninstitutional, however caused.

(9) To cooperate with the conference organization of United Methodist Women in helping to equip all women for full participation in the mission of the Church.

(10) To cultivate, through the channels of the Church other than United Methodist Women, the Advance Special Gifts for ministries administered by designated units of the General Board of Global Ministries, including United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

(11) To promote the development of covenant relationships between local churches and General Board of Global Ministries personnel.

(12) To encourage, maintain, and strengthen the relationships between the annual conference and agencies related to the appropriate divisions and departments of the General Board of Global Ministries and provide a channel through which these agencies shall report to the annual conference.

(13) To develop and implement Church financial support of conference mission projects and programs, and health and welfare ministries, with particular emphasis on benevolent care and Golden Cross, education and social service ministries, and World Communion Scholarships.

* (14-23) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

(24) To cooperate with the General Board of Global Ministries in the recruitment and support of missionaries and to cooperate with the appropriate conference units such as a Conference Committee on Mission Personnel or an equivalent body in the promotion and recruitment of persons for health and welfare service careers and other Church-related occupations.

* (25-37) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

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

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

* ¶ 634. Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry—1. There shall be in each annual conference a board of higher education and campus ministry or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships. The number of members shall be determined by the annual conference, including representation from appropriate constituencies.

2. The annual conference board of higher education and campus ministry or equivalent structure shall provide for the connectional relationship between the Division of Higher Education of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the conference, district, and local church and shall provide for a ministry in higher education related to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the Division of Higher Education. A person serving as a member of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry from that annual conference shall, by virtue of his or her office, be a member of the conference board of higher education and campus ministry or equivalent structure (see ¶¶ 610.6 and 710.5).

3. The annual conference chairperson of higher education and campus ministry or equivalent structure shall be a member of the annual conference council on ministries.

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

* ¶ 635. Conference board of ordained ministry—1. Each annual conference at the first session following the General Conference, shall elect for a term of four years a board of ordained ministry.⁵⁶ At least six ordained elders and deacons in full connection and, when possible, at least two associate members or local pastors who have completed the Course of Study shall be included as members of the board with voice and vote. Each annual conference shall elect at least one-fifth laypersons, which may include diaconal ministers, and may at its discretion elect further lay members, up to one-third of the membership of the board. All laypersons shall be professing members of local churches in the annual conference. The board membership shall include women and ethnic persons, at least one ordained clergyperson in the retired relationship, at least one ordained clergyperson in extension ministry, and when possible at least one young adult clergyperson in

56 See Judicial Council Decision 887.

full connection age 35 or younger, and a district superintendent named by the bishop to represent the cabinet. Two-thirds of the members who are elders shall be graduates of seminaries listed by the Northern Europe & Eurasia Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

a) Members shall be nominated by the presiding bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board, the executive committee, or a committee elected by the board of the previous quadrennium, and with the cabinet. To ensure adequate board membership, consultation shall include an evaluation of the workload of the board in meeting disciplinary and annual conference responsibilities. Vacancies shall be filled by the bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board. An elected board member may serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms. The Chair of the Order of Deacons, the Chair of the Order of Elders, and the Chair of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members shall be members of the board of ordained ministry (§ 1c) and its executive committee.

b) This board shall be directly amenable to the annual conference, notwithstanding its organizational relationship within any other program or administrative unit of the annual conference. The annual conference council on finance and administration shall recommend adequate administrative funds for the board and its staff in light of its workload.

c) The board shall organize by electing from its membership a chairperson, registrars, and such other officers as it may deem necessary. The board shall designate its executive committee, which shall include elders, deacons, and laity. The board shall organize in such manner as to care for its responsibilities, including the needs of certified persons, diaconal ministers, local pastors, deacons, and elders. The organization of the board shall include a committee to fulfill the governance responsibilities for diaconal ministers and those in process of becoming diaconal ministers (see *The Book of Discipline*, 1992, ¶¶ 301-317 and 734) and shall provide for certification in specialized ministry careers under the guidelines of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (see ¶ 1421). The board may include in its organization a division of deacons and a division of elders.

d) To ensure maximum contact with and support of persons in appointments beyond the local church, the board shall maintain relationships with all general agencies that have responsibility for persons in such appointments.

e) The board shall meet at least once prior to its meeting at the time of the annual conference session and may set a deadline prior to annual conference for transacting its business.

f) The board shall select from its own membership an official representative to serve as a member of each district committee on ordained ministry, which shall function as subcommittees of the board.

g) The board shall provide orientation for new members, including distribution of any available written guidelines.

* 2. The duties of the annual conference board of ordained ministry shall be:

* a) To assume the primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of ordained clergy by working in consultation with the cabinet and the Northern Europe & Eurasia Board of Higher Education and Ministry to study and interpret the clergy needs and resources of the annual conference, with due regard to the inclusive nature of the Church. It shall, with the assistance of the local church committee on pastor-parish relations, conference agencies, and every ordained minister of the conference, enlist women and men of all races and ethnic origins for the ordained ministry and guide those persons in the process of education, training, and ordination, recommending colleges and schools of theology listed by the Northern Europe & Eurasia Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Persons recruited should have an understanding of and appreciation for persons of different racial and ethnic heritages.

b) To seek from a school of theology information about the personal and professional qualities of an applicant for provisional membership or of a provisional member; provided, however, that the applicant or member consent to the provision of such information.

c) To receive annual reports on the progress made by each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school and to record credit for work satisfactorily completed.

* d) It shall require a transcript of credits from each applicant before recognizing any of the applicant's educational claims. In case of doubt, the board may submit a transcript to the Northern Europe & Eurasia Board of Higher Education and Ministry for evaluation.

e) The board shall annually appoint and train a sufficient number of mentors in each district in consultation with the district superintendent.

* f) To guide the candidate for ordained ministry who is not enrolled in a theological school and who is pursuing the Course of Study as adopted by the Northern Europe & Eurasia Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

g) To examine all applicants as to their fitness for the ordained ministry and make full inquiry as to the fitness of the candidate for: (1) annual election as local pastor; (2) election to provisional membership; and (3) election to full conference membership.

h) To provide all candidates for ordained ministry a written statement on the disciplinary and annual conference requirements for the local pastor, provisional, and full membership.

i) To interview and report recommendation concerning: (1) student local pastors; (2) certified candidates for ordination as deacons; and (3) certified candidates for ordination as elders.⁵⁷

j) To assign a board member to serve as liaison to retired clergy in the conference.

k) To interview applicants and make recommendation concerning: (1) changes from the effective relation to a leave of absence or retirement; (2) return to the effective relation from other relations; (3) honorable location; (4) readmission of located persons and persons discontinued from provisional membership; (5) sabbatical leave; (6) incapacity leave; (7) appointment as a student; (8) termination; and (9) changes to or from less than full-time ministry.

The board shall keep a record of these changes and the reason behind them and place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference maintained by the secretary of the conference.

l) To ensure confidentiality in relation to the interview and reporting process. The personal data and private information provided through the examinations of and by the board of ordained ministry will not be available for distribution and publication. There are occasions when the board of ordained ministry would not report privileged information, which in the judgment of the board, if revealed in the executive session of clergy members in full connection with the annual conference, would be an undue invasion of privacy without adding measurably to the conference's information about the person's qualifications for ordained ministry. However, it is the right of the executive session of the clergy members in full connection with an annual conference to receive all pertinent information, confidential or otherwise, related to the qualifications and/or character of any candidate or clergy member of the conference.⁵⁸

m) To be in consultation with the bishop through the chairperson or the executive committee regarding transfers. This consultation is to be at the bishop's initiative and, where possible, to take place prior to transfers into the annual conference.

n) To provide support services for the ordained minister's career development, including personal and career counseling, continuing education, formation in servant leadership and continuing spiritual growth in Christ, assistance in preparation for retirement, and all matters pertaining to clergy morale. In providing such support, the board, in cooperation with the cabinet, shall give training and

57 See Judicial Council Decision 405.

58 See Judicial Council Decisions 406, 751.

guidance to each local committee on pastor-parish relations regarding its work and role.

o) To work with and support the Order of Deacon and the Order of Elder, including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating the Order's activity with the continuing formation offerings of the board. The board may delegate continuing formation responsibility to the Orders by mutual agreement, with final approval, evaluation, and budgeting remaining with the board.

p) To work with and support the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members (see ¶ 323), including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating their continuing formation.

q) To provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of ordained ministers in the annual conference (¶¶ 604.4, 350). Suggested guidelines will be provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry. In cooperation with the cabinet, the board shall develop standards of effectiveness for clergy serving as pastors of congregations in that annual conference.

r) To interpret the high ethical standards of ordained ministry set forth in the Discipline and to study matters pertaining to character (¶ 605.6).

s) To recommend to the full members of the annual conference for validation special ministries for which members seek appointment.

The appointment to such ministries is the prerogative of the bishop and the cabinet.

t) to provide continuing support and management of consecrated diaconal ministers using the policies described in ¶¶ 301-317 of the 1992 Book of Discipline.

u) To care for the administration of professional certification established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry through (1) enlisting and recruiting clergy and laity to become certified in Christian education, music, youth, evangelism, and other areas established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (2) determining whether applicants meet the standards established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (3) to recommend to the annual conference board and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (4) to renew or discontinue professional certification biannually based on a review of their ministry; and (5) to report annually to the annual conference for publication in the conference journal a roster of all persons certified in professional careers for which they have received certification, including places of service address.

v) To report annually to the annual conference for publication in the conference journal a roster of all persons certified as Lay Ministers.

w) To administer the portion of the Ministerial Education Fund for use by the annual conference in its programs of enlistment, basic professional educational aid, continuing formation, ethnic ministry and language training, and professional growth of ordained ministers. Priority shall be given to scholarships for seminary students preparing for ordination.

x) To cooperate with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and assist in: (1) the interpretation of current legislation concerning ordained ministry; (2) the interpretation and promotion of the Ministerial Education Fund; (3) the promotion and observance of Ministry Sunday; and (4) the supplying of a record of all information, recommendations, and action on each candidate for ordained ministry after each session of the annual conference; (5) the promotion and addition of standards required for certification in specialized ministry careers.

y) To promote in the annual conference and/or jurisdictional conference a system of financial aid to ministerial students. A conference transferring a person with less than three years of active service into another conference may require reimbursement either from the person or from the receiving conference for outstanding obligations for theological education financed through conference funds.

z) To report in a timely manner any change in the conference relationship of a clergy member of the conference to the conference board of pensions.

* 3. The board shall elect a registrar and such associate registrars as it may determine; one such associate registrar to be given responsibility for candidacy, including giving leadership to the training and guidance of mentors in each district. A staff executive may be named by the board to fulfill the functions of registrar.

a) The registrar shall keep full personnel records for all candidates for ordained ministry under the care of the board, including essential biographical data, transcripts of academic credit, instruments of evaluation, and, where it applies, psychological and medical test records, sermons, theological statements, and other pertinent data.

* b) Pertinent information and recommendations concerning each candidate shall be certified to the annual conference. The registrar shall forward an acknowledgment of transfer to the pastor of the local church where each newly elected provisional and associate member held membership.

c) The registrar shall keep a record of the standing of the students in the Course of Study and report to the conference when required. This record shall include the credits allowed students for work done in accredited schools of theology, in approved Course of Study schools, or Course of Study correspondence.

d) The registrar shall file in the bishop's office for permanent record a copy of circumstances involving the discontinuance of provisional membership or termination of the local pastor status.

e) The records and files of the board of ordained ministry are kept on behalf of the annual conference and shall be maintained under guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pensions.

4. Administrative costs of the board of ordained ministry shall be a claim on the conference operating budget. The board of ordained ministry shall have direct access to the conference council on finance and administration in support of its program.

¶ 636. Conference Administrative Review Committee—There will be an administrative review committee composed of three clergy in full connection and two alternates who are not members of the cabinet, the board of ordained ministry or immediate family members of the above. The committee shall be nominated by the bishop and elected quadrennially by the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference. Its only purpose shall be to ensure that the disciplinary procedures for involuntary leave of absence (¶ 354.1b), involuntary retirement (¶ 358.3), or administrative location (¶ 362.2c) are properly followed. The entire administrative process leading to the action for change in conference relationship shall be reviewed by the administrative review committee, and it shall report its findings to the clergy session of members in full connection with the annual conference prior to any action of the annual conference. The administrative review committee shall notify the parties of the review of the process. The administrative fair process hearing procedures (¶ 362.1a) should be followed by the administrative review committee. Prior to its report, if the committee determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action.⁵⁹

* ¶ 637. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

* ¶ 638. Episcopal Residence Committee-1. The provision of housing for effective bishops in the central conference shall be the responsibility of the annual conferences comprising the episcopal area to which the bishop is assigned.

2. The committee shall be composed of the persons elected as members of the central conference council.

3. 4. It shall be the responsibility of the episcopal residence committee:

a) To make recommendations to the annual conferences regarding the purchase, sale, or rental of an episcopal residence.

59 See Judicial Council Decision 921.

- b) To prepare an annual budget covering the cost of providing the episcopal residence, which may also include utilities, insurance, and normal costs of upkeep in maintaining the residence.
- c) To supervise the expenditure of funds allocated from all sources for expenses related to the provision of the episcopal residence and to account for such expenditures annually to each annual conference in the episcopal area.
- d) To give oversight in all matters related to upkeep, maintenance, improvements, and appropriate insurance coverages for the episcopal residence.

5. Titles to properties held as episcopal residences shall be held in accordance with ¶ 2514.

* ¶ 639. Conference Board of Pensions—1. Authorization—There may be organized in each annual conference a conference board of pensions that shall have charge of the interests and work of providing for and contributing to the support, relief, assistance, and pensioning of clergy and their families, other church workers, and lay employees of the institutions, organizations, and agencies within that annual conference of The United Methodist Church, except as otherwise provided for by the general board.

* 2-7. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

¶ 640. Each annual conference shall have a board of trustees, whose membership and duties are detailed in ¶ 2512.1-7.

¶ 641. 1. In each annual conference there shall be a conference commission on archives and history. The number of members of the commission and their terms of office shall be as the conference may determine and may include an ex officio representative of each United Methodist heritage landmark in its bounds. It shall be the duty of the commission to collect, preserve, and make accessible the historically significant records of the annual conference and its agencies, including data relating to the origin and history of the conference and its antecedents; to encourage and assist the local churches in preserving their records, compiling their histories, and celebrating their heritage; to provide for the permanent safekeeping of the historical records of all abandoned or discontinued churches in the bounds of the annual conference and its antecedents (see ¶ 2548.3); to maintain a fire-safe historical and archival depository and to see that all items that obviously will have value for future history are properly preserved therein; to provide for the ownership of real property and to receive gifts and bequests; to nominate to the General Commission on Archives and History buildings, locations, or structures within the annual conference for designation as historic sites or heritage landmarks; to maintain contact with officially designated historic sites and heritage

landmarks in their bounds; to assist the bishop or the appropriate conference committee in planning for the historical hour and other appropriate historical observances at annual conference sessions; to establish retention and disposition schedules for annual conference and local church records under standards or guidelines developed by the General Commission on Archives and History; to cooperate with and report, when requested, to the general and jurisdictional commissions on archives and history; and to engage with other Wesleyan, Methodist, or Evangelical United Brethren-related denominations in lifting up our joint heritage.

2. The commission may organize a conference historical society and encourage membership therein for the purpose of promoting interest in the study and preservation of the history of the conference and its antecedents. The officers of the conference commission on archives and history may be the officers of the conference historical society. Membership in the historical society shall be established as the society may determine. Membership may include the payment of dues as the society may direct, and in return, members shall receive official publications and publicity materials issued by the commission and the society and other such benefits as may be deemed suitable.

3. Each annual conference may have a historian to undertake specific duties as may be designated by the commission. The annual conference historian may be a member of the annual conference commission on archives and history.

4. The annual conference commission on archives and history shall work with the ethnic congregations of the conference to develop and preserve the historical records of those congregations and antecedent conferences.

* ¶ 642. 1. Each annual conference shall create a conference commission or committee on Christian unity and interreligious concerns or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships with the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns. The commission or committee will report each year to the conference in such manner as the conference may direct. The responsibilities of the commission on Christian unity and interreligious concerns may be assigned to an existing or newly created multifunctional agency.

* 2-3. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

4. The duties of the commission or committee shall be to act in cooperation with the annual conference council on ministries, in coordination with the duties of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, as outlined in ¶¶ 1902-1903, and as it may recommend, and to take initiative in ecumenical and interreligious concerns as follows:

* a-h) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

* ¶ 643. 1. There shall be in each annual conference a conference commission on religion and race or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships. It shall follow the general guidelines and structure of the General Commission on Religion and Race as outlined in ¶¶ 2002 and 2008, where applicable.

* 2-5. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

* ¶ 644. There shall be in each annual conference, including the central conferences, a conference commission on the status and role of women or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships.⁶⁰

1. The responsibility of this commission shall be in harmony with the responsibility of the general commission (see ¶ 2103), with the following objectives established as guidelines for adaptation to the needs of the respective annual conferences:

* a - f) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

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

* ¶ 645. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

¶ 646. In each annual conference there shall be a commission on communications or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationship. It shall include persons with skills in communications nominated for membership in a manner determined by the conference in accordance with ¶ 610.5.

The commission shall be a service agency to meet the communication, publication, multimedia, public and media relations, interpretation, and promotional needs of the annual conference. It may be responsible for providing resources and services to conference agencies, districts, and local churches in the field of communication. The commission shall have a consultative relationship with agencies and bodies within the conference structure.

* ¶ 647. United Methodist Women—Constitution of United Methodist Women in the Conference—Article 1. Name—In each annual conference there shall be a conference organization named United Methodist Women, auxiliary to the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Article 2. Function—The function of the conference organization of United Methodist Women shall be to work with the district organizations and the local units of United Methodist Women in developing programs to meet the needs and interests of women and the concerns and responsibilities of the global Church; to encourage and support spiritual growth, missionary outreach, and Christian social action; and to promote the plans and responsibilities of the Women's Division.

60 See Judicial Council Decision 712.

Article 3. Authority—Each conference organization of United Methodist Women shall have authority to promote its work in accordance with the plans, responsibilities, and policies of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Article 4. Membership—The conference organization of United Methodist Women shall be composed of all members of local units within the bounds of the conference. The resident bishop shall be a member of the conference organization of United Methodist Women and of its executive committee.

Article 5. Officers and Committees—The conference organization shall elect a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a committee on nominations. Additional officers and committees shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the plans of the Women’s Division as set forth in the bylaws of the conference organizations of United Methodist Women.

Article 6. Meetings and Elections—a) There shall be an annual meeting of the conference organization of United Methodist Women, at which time there shall be presented a program designed to meet the needs of the women of the conference in harmony with the purpose, plans, and responsibilities of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries. Officers and the committee on nominations shall be elected, the necessary business transacted, and pledges made for the ensuing year.

b) The voting body of the annual meeting of the conference organization shall be composed of representatives from units in local churches as determined by the conference organization; such district officers as the conference organization may determine; the conference officers and chairpersons of committees; members of the Women’s Division and officers of the jurisdictional organization residing within the bounds of the conference.

c-d) *Not relevant in the Northern Europe Central Conference.*

Article 7. Relationships—a) The president of the conference organization of United Methodist Women is a member of the annual conference, as set forth in ¶ 32.

b) Designated officers shall represent the conference organization on the various agencies, councils, commissions, and committees of the conference as the constitutions and bylaws of such agencies provide.

c) The conference organization shall encourage women to participate in the total life and work of the Church and shall support them in assuming positions of responsibility and leadership.

Article 8. Amendments—Proposed amendments to this constitution may be sent to the recording secretary of the Women’s Division prior to the last annual meeting of the division in the quadrennium.

¶ 648. United Methodist Men—Constitution of United Methodist Men in the Conference—Article 1. Name—In each annual conference there shall be a conference organization named United Methodist Men, auxiliary to the jurisdictional committee on United Methodist Men and to the General Commission on United Methodist Men (¶ 2301).

Article 2. Function—The function of the conference organization of United Methodist Men shall be to build and support the district organizations of United Methodist Men in developing resources to meet the needs and interests of men and the responsibilities of discipleship; to empower personal witness and evangelism; to enable outreach in individual and group mission and ministry; to encourage and support spiritual growth and faith development; and to promote the objectives and responsibilities of the General Commission on United Methodist Men. In the absence of a district organization, the conference organization, in consultation with the district superintendent, shall fulfill the district responsibilities (¶ 671).

Article 3. Authority—Each conference organization of United Methodist Men shall have the authority to promote its work in accordance with the plans, responsibilities, and policies of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Article 4. Membership—The conference organization of United Methodist Men shall be composed of all men of local churches or charges (chartered or unchartered) within the bounds of the conference and all clergy.

Article 5. Officers and Committees—a) The conference organization shall elect a president, at least one vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

b) The resident bishop shall serve as the honorary president and be a member of the conference organization and its executive committee.

c) The conference lay leader (or designated representative) shall be a member of the conference organization and its executive committee.

d) Additional officers (including civic youth-serving agencies/scouting coordinator) and committees shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the guidelines of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and/or the bylaws of the conference organization of United Methodist Men.

Article 6. Meetings and Elections—a) There shall be an annual meeting of the conference organization of United Methodist Men, at which time there shall be presented an annual report and a program plan designed to meet the needs of the men of the conference. Officers and committees shall be elected in accordance with the requirements of the organization's bylaws.

b) The voting body of the annual meeting of the conference shall be determined by the organization's bylaws but shall include conference and district offi-

cers and committee chairpersons as determined, members of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and members of the jurisdictional committee on United Methodist Men residing within the bounds of the conference.

Article 7. Relationships—a) The president of the conference organization of United Methodist Men is a member of the annual conference, as set forth in ¶ 32.

b) The president of the conference organization of United Methodist Men shall represent the conference organization on the jurisdictional committee on United Methodist Men. In the absence of the president a designated vice president may represent the conference organization.

c) Designated officers or members shall represent the conference organization on the various agencies, councils, commissions, and committees of the annual conference as the constitutions, bylaws, and rules of such agencies provide.

d) The conference organization shall encourage men to participate in the total life and work of the Church and shall encourage them to assume positions of responsibility and leadership as part of their discipleship.

Article 8. Finances—The Conference United Methodist Men shall secure funds for the fulfillment of its purpose. All funds from whatever source secured by the Conference United Methodist Men belong to the organization and shall be disbursed only in accordance with its constitution and/or by-laws and by its order.

a) Conference United Methodist Men may have their own bank accounts.

b) It is recommended that there be an annual financial audit.

Article 9. Amendments—Proposed amendments to this constitution may be sent to the recording secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men prior to the last annual meeting of the commission in the third year of the quadrennium.

Article 10. Connectional Reporting and Accountability—a) Each annual conference United Methodist Men shall have on file a current copy of their constitution and bylaws with the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

b) Each annual conference shall submit an annual report to the General Commission on United Methodist Men. This report will be presented by the conference president at the spring meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents and shall include but not be restricted to:

1. Annual goals and progress towards those goals in the last 12 months.
2. A review of the work in evangelism, mission and spiritual growth within the annual conference or beyond.
3. A listing of training events conducted at a conference, district and local church level to expand men's ministry in the all levels of the church.

4. An assessment of the General Commission on United Methodist Men to include the annual conference UMM's appraisal of the commission's goals and the commission's progress toward those goals in the last 12 months.
5. A report of the significant challenges to men's ministry and the significant successes of men's ministry to be shared with other conference organizations of UMM.

These reports will become part of the internal review process of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and each conference report shall be shared with the annual conference leadership by the Conference President.

* ¶ 649. 1. In each annual conference there shall be a conference council on youth ministry or other equivalent structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships, or the responsibilities outlined below may be assigned to such organization that follows the same membership requirements as the annual conference provides pursuant to ¶ 609.1. Its purpose shall be to strengthen the youth ministry in the local churches and districts of the annual conference. For administrative purposes, the council shall be related to the annual conference council on ministries or equivalent structure. (See ¶¶ 1201-1212 for the Division on Ministries With Young People.)

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

* ¶ 650. 1. In each annual conference there shall be a conference council on young-adult ministry or equivalent structure. Its purpose shall be to strengthen the young adult ministry in the local churches and districts of the annual conference. For administrative purposes, the council shall be related to the annual conference council on ministries or alternative structure.

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

* ¶ 651. 1. In each annual conference there may be a conference council on older-adult ministries. Its purpose shall be to strengthen the older-adult ministries in the local churches and districts of the annual conference. For administrative purposes, the council shall be related to the annual conference board of discipleship, or the annual conference board of laity, or equivalent structure.

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

* ¶ 652. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

¶ 653. There shall be in each annual conference a committee on disability concerns or other structure to provide for the functions of this ministry and maintain the connectional relationships.

1. The basic membership of the committee shall be nominated and elected by established procedures of the respective annual conference. Each annual conference shall determine the number and composition of the total membership.

Membership shall include persons with physical disabilities and persons with mental disabilities.

2. It shall be the responsibility of this committee:

a) To be aware of, and advocate for, the role of persons with disabilities in ministry, including ordained and diaconal ministries and local church and annual conference leadership positions.

b) To advocate for and help develop programs within the annual conference that meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

c) To be informed about current ministries within the annual conference that are related to persons with disabilities.

d) To develop ways to sensitize persons in leadership positions on issues that affect persons with disabilities and therefore the entire Church.

e) To foster cooperation among ministries within the annual conference that focus on specific disabilities (deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, development disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness, visual impairment, physical disabilities, etc.).

f) To be a resource for local churches who are attempting to develop ministries that are attitudinally and architecturally accessible.

g) To promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of the local church and the annual conference.

h) To participate in jurisdictional accessibility associations in the sharing of knowledge and resources.

* ¶ 654. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

* ¶ 655. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

¶ 656. The annual conference is encouraged to establish a committee on criminal justice and mercy ministries (CJAMM) to accomplish the following: (1) raise awareness and generate local church involvement; (2) identify existing programs; (3) promote criminal justice ministries; and (4) serve as a resource and connectional link with local churches, general program agencies, and ecumenical groups, and use prison ministry and prison reform resources made available through the general agencies. The purpose is to promote a ministry to persons of all genders and ages who are in prison, to the families of those in prison, and to the victims of crime and their families and to be an advocate for prison concerns. The CJAMM committee may relate to the board of global ministries and/or the board of church and society, which shares social justice concerns. The results of the work in this area will be reported to the annual conference.

Section X. The District Conference

Upon approval of the annual conference, the term subdistrict may be used in the references to district in ¶¶ 657-671.

¶ 657. A district conference shall be held if directed by the annual conference of which it is a part and may be held upon the call of the district superintendent, which call shall specify the time and place.

¶ 658. 1. A district conference shall be composed of members as determined and specified by the annual conference, giving attention to inclusiveness (see ¶¶ 124, 139).

2. The district conference may choose its own order of business. The secretary duly elected shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and submit it to the annual conference for examination.

3. The district conference shall issue certificates of candidacy for the ordained ministry on recommendation of the district committee on ordained ministry and shall consider for approval the reports of this committee.

4. The district conference may incorporate a district union, under the laws of the state in which it is located, to hold and administer district real and personal property, receive and administer church extension and mission funds for use within the district, and exercise such other powers and duties as may be set forth in its charter or articles of incorporation as authorized by the annual conference having jurisdiction over said district. If a district union is so incorporated, it shall also assume the power and duties of the district board of trustees (¶ 2517.2). All such district unions chartered or incorporated by districts of the churches that joined and united in adopting the Constitution of The United Methodist Church are declared to be disciplinary agencies of The United Methodist Church as though originally created and authorized by that Constitution and may act for or as a district conference when convened for that purpose by the district superintendent, who shall be its executive secretary, or by its president or other executive officer.

5. If any district or conference initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in The Book of Resolutions, 2008, should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church.

¶ 659. 1. The district lay leader is the elected leader of the district laity and shall be a professing member of a local church. The district lay leader shall provide for the training of local church lay leaders for their ministries in the local churches in relation to ¶ 249. The district lay leader shall have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within congregations and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving

the mission of the Church, and supporting and enabling lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the district and the local churches in cooperation with the district superintendent and pastors.

2. The district lay leader shall be elected as determined by the annual conference for a term of not less than four years. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference.

There may be one or more associate district lay leader(s) within a district. The associate district lay leader(s) shall be elected as determined by the annual conference. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. The district lay leader and the associate district lay leader(s) may be reimbursed for their approved expenses.

3. The district lay leader will meet regularly with the district superintendent to discuss the state of the district, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.

4. The district lay leader is a member of annual conference (see ¶ 32).

5. The district lay leader shall be a member of the conference board of laity or equivalent structure.

6. The district lay leader shall work with the District Superintendent to ensure that there is a district director of Lay Speaking Ministries and shall serve on the district committee on Lay Speaking Ministries.

7. The district lay leader is a member of the district conference and shall be a member of the district council on ministries or alternative structure and its executive committee. The district lay leader shall also be a member of the committee on district superintendency of the district.

8. The district lay leader may serve as a lay member of the district committee on ordained ministry (or equivalent agency) and the district board of church location and building (or equivalent agency).

9. The district lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the district such as United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Youth and support their work and their activities.

10. The district lay leader may designate persons to serve as proxy in any of the above groups except the annual conference, the district conference, district council on ministries, and the district council on ministries executive committee, district committee on ordained ministry, and the district board of church location and building.

11. This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2004 General Conference.

* ¶ ¶ 660 - 667. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

¶ 668. Committee on District Superintendency—There shall be a committee on district superintendency.

1. Membership—This committee shall be composed of eleven members, including the district lay leader, and two persons appointed by the district superintendent. It is recommended that the remaining members of the committee consist of two laywomen, two laymen, two clergy, and two at-large members, all of whom should be selected with special attention to the representation of racial and ethnic persons, youth (¶ 256.2), young adults, older adults, and people with disabilities. At least three of the eleven persons shall be clergy, and seven shall be laypersons. All laypersons shall be professing members of a local church.

2. Selection—The members shall be selected in such manner as may be determined by the district conference or, where there is no district conference, by the annual conference. The district committee shall be authorized to co-opt members as advisory members who have expertise in areas of special need. The bishop of the area, or his or her authorized representative, shall be an ex officio member of said committee.

3. Meeting—The district committee shall meet at least annually and upon call of the district superintendent and/or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary.

4. Purpose—The purpose of the committee on district superintendency shall be to support the district superintendent of the district in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, with special reference to the district where the superintendent has responsibilities. In fulfilling this purpose, the committee shall give attention to the following responsibilities:

a) To advocate for adequate budget-support services for the district superintendent, such as adequate secretarial support, travel, continuing education, and parsonage needs (¶¶ 423.2, 614.1a).

b) To be available for counsel.

c) To keep the district superintendent advised concerning conditions within the district as they affect relations among the district superintendent, the laity, the clergy, and the district agencies.

d) To establish a clearly understood process for observing the district superintendent's ministry with direct evaluation and feedback, with special concern for the inclusiveness of the Church and its ministry with respect to sex, race, and national origin, and implementation of the consultative process in appointment-making.

e) To consult with the district superintendent concerning continuing education and to arrange with the cabinet and bishop for the necessary time and financial assistance for the attendance of the district super-

intendent at such continuing education events as may serve his or her professional and spiritual growth.

f) To interpret to the people of the district and to the district boards and agencies the nature and function of the district superintendency.

5. Consultation—The district committee and the district superintendent shall engage in an annual consultation and appraisal of the work of the district superintendent in the district and shall serve in an advisory relationship with the bishop of the area.

* ¶ 669 - 671. *Not relevant in the Northern Europe & Eurasia Central Conference*

