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Suggested Title: Living into the Future

Establishing the Connectional Table

Discipline Paragraph: New Paragraph after ¶907

Financial Implications: Yes

Agency Name: The General Council on Ministries

Add new section after ¶907

Connectional Table

Name – There shall be a Connectional Table in The United Methodist Church, as the general agency where ministry and money are brought to the same table in order to coordinate the mission, ministries, and the resources of The United Methodist Church. Effective January 1, 2007, the Connectional Table shall be assigned the primary responsibilities, general policies and practices found in the relevant 700, 800, and 900 paragraphs.

Purpose – The purpose of the Connectional Table (CT) is for the discernment and articulation of a vision for the church and the stewardship of the mission, ministries, and resources of The United Methodist Church as determined by the actions of the General Conference and in consultation with the Council of Bishops. As part of the total mission of the church, the CT is to serve as a steward of the vision and resources for mission and ministry, provide fiscal accountability and management, and establish policies and procedures to carry out the mission of the church. The essential functions of the Connectional Table are:

- 1. To provide a forum for the understanding and implementation of the vision, mission, and ministries of the global church as determined in consultation with the Council of Bishops and/or the action of the General Conference.**
- 2. To enable the flow of information and communication between and among annual conferences, jurisdictions, central conferences, general agencies, and the Council of Bishops.**
- 3. Consistent with actions of the General Conference, to align the program life of the church with the mandates of the gospel and the needs of the global community by listening to the expression of needs, addressing emerging issues, and determining the most effective, cooperative, and efficient way to provide optimum stewardship of ministries, personnel, and finances.**
- 4. To review and evaluate the effectiveness of the general agencies in fulfilling the ministries assigned to them. To evaluate the connectional structures of the church and recommend to the General Conference such legislative changes as may be appropriate to effect desirable modifications.**
- 5. To provide leadership in planning and research, assisting all levels of the church to evaluate needs and plan strategies to carry out the mission of the church.**
- 6. To be accountable to The United Methodist Church through the General Conference in all matters relating to the receiving, disbursing, and reporting of funds authorized by the General Conference. In the exercise of its fiscal accountability role, the CT shall have the authority and responsibility to perform the following:**
 - a. To provide a finance committee to include persons with expertise (which shall include non-CT members) that shall be amenable to the CT whose decisions shall be binding.**
 - b. To provide for an audit and review committee that shall include non-CT members with special expertise.**

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- c. To submit to each quadrennial session of the General Conference budgets of expense for each of the general funds of the church and to make recommendations regarding all other funding considerations to come before the General Conference.**
- d. To receive and disburse general funds raised throughout the church in accordance with approved budgets.**
- e. To require an annual audit of all treasuries receiving general church funds.**
- f. To undertake an annual general agency budget review and approval.**
- g. To ensure that all general funds expenditures are in compliance with the church's social principles.**
- h. To develop and implement such general investment policies as may be appropriate.**
- i. To provide for investment oversight through such instruments as an investment committee which shall include non-CT members and persons with special expertise.**
- j. To review and approve special offerings and church-wide appeals.**
- k. To establish and implement policies governing the ownership, sale, rental, and major renovation or purchase of properties by general agencies.**
- 7. To take all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of the denomination, which may include the provision of legal services to general agencies and the Council of Bishops.**
- 8. To provide a personnel policies committee to oversee such matters as may be appropriate, i.e. equitable and adequate compensation and benefits.**
- 9. To establish general policies to inform the personnel practices of the general agencies.**
- 10. To collect, organize and maintain such statistics as may be required to inform the planning and work of the church, i.e. the General Minutes.**
- 11. To elect, upon nomination of the general agency boards, the general secretaries of the agencies.**
- 12. To provide for the staffing needs for the Connectional Table to assure fulfilling of the essential functions of the Table.**

The organizational plan for the Connectional Table shall be effective January 1, 2007.

Incorporation –The Connectional Table shall be incorporated in such state or states, as the Connectional Table shall determine. This corporation shall be the successor corporation and organization to the General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church, the Council on World Service and Finance (including the Council on World Service and Finance of The United Methodist Church, an Illinois corporation; the World Service Commission of the Episcopal United Brethren Church in Ohio, an Ohio corporation; the Board of Administration, Church of the United Brethren in Christ, an Ohio corporation), the General Council on Ministries of The United Methodist Church, an Ohio corporation, and the Program Council of The United Methodist Church and the Board of Trustees.

Amenability—The Connectional Table shall report to and be amenable to the General Conference.

Organization of Connectional Table – 1. Membership

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a) The voting members of the Connectional Table shall consist of a maximum of 131 persons as follows:

(1) 85 persons elected through jurisdictional and central conferences, one from each of the 64 annual and missionary conferences in the United States, three from each of the seven central conferences;

(2) Up to 14 bishops to include the President of the Council of Bishops, three bishops named at the discretion of the Council of Bishops to ensure a minimum of three bishops from the Central Conferences, plus bishops elected as presidents of agencies;

(3) The general secretaries and the presidents, by virtue of their office, of the following agencies: General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, General Commission on Religion and Race, General Commission on Status and Role of Women, General Commission on United Methodist Men, General Commission on Communications, and General Commission on Archives and History. These agencies are accountable to the Connectional Table and are an exception to ¶710.5 and 710.6.

(4) Up to 12 members at large for balance of laity/clergy, racial/ethnic background, gender and geography. The members at large shall be nominated by a nominating process as determined by the Connectional Table;

b) Jurisdictional, central conferences, and other groups involved in the nominating and election of persons to the Connectional Table shall ensure the diversity objectives of, insofar as possible, fifty percent clergy, fifty percent laity, fifty per cent female, fifty percent male, not less than thirty percent members of racial/ethnic minority groups (excluding central conference members), not less than ten percent youth and young adults.

c) The general secretaries and presidents of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the United Methodist Publishing House may sit at the Table and shall have the right to the floor without the privilege of voting.

d) The voting members, excluding general secretaries of agencies, shall be eligible for membership on another general agency of The United Methodist Church and may be deployed as an additional member to agencies that are accountable to the Connectional Table. This is an exception to ¶710.4.

e) Vacancies occurring between sessions of the General Conference shall be filled by a Connectional Table nominating process upon recommendation from the College of Bishops where the vacancy occurred.

2. Meetings – The Connectional Table shall meet at least annually and at such other times as are necessary on call of the president or on written request of one-fifth of the members. One more than half of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

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3. Officers – The officers of the Connectional Table shall be elected from the Connectional Table and shall serve for a quadrennium or until their successors are duly elected.

4. Internal Structure – The Connectional Table shall determine its internal structure as it deems appropriate for the performance of its duties related to programmatic and fiduciary oversight, giving priority consideration to the missional purpose of the Church.

5. Staff – The Connectional Table shall determine the staff that it deems appropriate to carry out the responsibilities of the agency. To provide continuity, staff may be the former General Council on Finance and Administration and the General Council on Ministries personnel. Staff who are elected by the Connectional Table are elected annually. Executive staff members sit with the Connectional Table with voice, but without privilege of vote.

Bishop Edward W. Paup, President

Daniel K. Church, General Secretary

937-227-9400

clong@gcom-umc.org

Rationale: The Connectional Table would be formed in the fall of 2004 but would have a two year period to organize itself and begin working on its style of operation. As of January 1, 2007, the transfer of responsibilities from GCOM and GCFA would be completed. The Connectional Table is envisioned to be the locus to bring ministry and financial resources to the same table where visioning and discernment for the church would occur more holistically.