

General Conference 2020

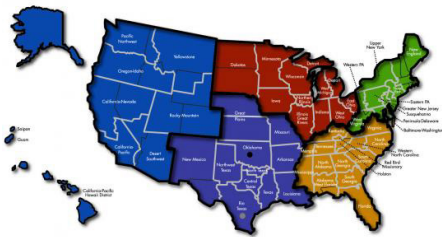
U.S. Regional Conference Proposal



Wespath strongly supports the UMC Connectional Table's General Conference 2020 legislation toward creating a U.S. Regional Conference.

Proposal At-a-Glance

The petition would establish a new U.S. Regional Conference for governance of U.S.-only matters. General Conference (GC) delegates from across the global Church would no longer need to vote on petitions that affect only people who live, worship and minister in the U.S.



United Methodist Jurisdictions and Annual Conferences in the U.S.

The proposal is designed as a two-stage process:

Stage 1: U.S. Regional Committee

Committee of the GC (temporary until Stage 2 is implemented)

- Effective at the close of GC 2020
- Functions as a legislative committee at GC 2024
- Processes legislation for U.S.-specific matters; refers petitions to full GC plenary (consent calendar or calendar item)
- Jurisdictions retain current responsibilities
- Representation:
 - All GC delegates from U.S. annual conferences
 - One clergy and one lay person from every Central Conference

Stage 2: U.S. Regional Conference

Creates forum for U.S. jurisdictions to address regional/national issues

- Earliest potential functioning: 2024
- Requires Constitutional amendment (ratification by 2/3 of annual conferences' voting members)
- Jurisdictions retain current responsibilities
- Representation:
 - All GC delegates from U.S. annual conferences
 - One clergy and one lay person from every Central Conference

Decision-Making for U.S. Matters

A U.S. Regional Conference could make decisions that affect *only* the U.S. For example:

- Compensation and pension plans for U.S. clergy
- Policies related to U.S. laws
- Adaptable parts of *The Book of Discipline*

U.S. jurisdictional conferences would continue to function and elect bishops. *The U.S. would remain in connection with the global UMC.*



U.S. Laws



Cross-Connectional Support

The Connectional Table's proposal for a U.S. Regional Conference was created through collaboration by many groups, including representatives from:

- Connectional Table
- Several general agencies (including Wespath)
- U.S. annual conferences
- Central Conferences

The proposal also has favorable support from:

- **Council of Bishops**
- **Central Conference College of Bishops**

More Info

Petition and FAQs at Wespath.org/gc2020

Why Create a U.S. Regional Conference?

Helps The United Methodist Church (UMC)

- Upgrades UMC governance to meet needs of demographic shifts.
- Aligns with work toward *General Book of Discipline*—distinguishes between connectional issues (for global Church) vs. adaptable issues (regional/national).
- Allows for U.S. decision-making *on adaptable matters for the U.S.*



General Conference:
Connectional Matters

Simplifies General Conference proceedings, reduces GC costs

- Makes more GC time available for connectional matters for the global Church (much less focus on U.S.-only petitions).
- May save the Church millions of dollars per quadrennium (potentially shorter GC, fewer petitions to translate into multiple languages).
- Delegates from outside the U.S. would not spend time studying and voting on hundreds of petitions that have no impact on their local churches or ministry.



National/Episcopal Governance:
Adaptable, Local Matters

Creates consistent governance between U.S. and Central Conferences

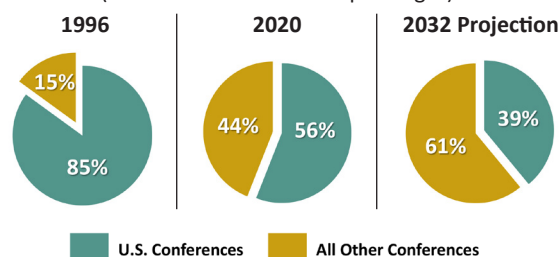
- Each Central Conference already makes its own decisions at the episcopal or national level. They do not need GC approval for local matters like clergy pensions, pastors' salaries or adaptable parts of the *Discipline*.
- *U.S. is the only part of the Church whose adaptable matters are decided by the full General Conference.*

UMC's Changing Demographics

When the UMC was formed in 1968, about 90% of UMC membership lived in the U.S. As the UMC becomes less U.S.-based, it is inefficient and even illogical for a growing majority of non-U.S. delegates to spend so much GC time on decisions that affect only U.S. clergy and church members.

UM News article: [U.S. dips below majority of membership](#)
(Nov. 25, 2019)

General Conference Delegates
(reflects UMC membership changes)



NOT in Response to Human Sexuality or UMC Restructure

The U.S. Regional Conference proposal is **NOT a response** to the UMC's dialogue about human sexuality or any plans submitted that would restructure the UMC or create new Methodist expressions. This proposal will not address the UMC's impasse over homosexuality.

Timeline

