

PART EIGHT CONNECTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Section I: Administrative and Program Commissions

¶ 801. **CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS.** Working on behalf of local congregations and conferences, the connectional commissions of the General Church provide for essential functions in an efficient, fiscally responsible, and cooperative manner, conducive to the needs of our collective ministry. To this end, they exist to serve the Church, whether embodied in resourcing its members, clergy, local churches, missions, or conferences; or embodied in the exercising of authority on behalf of the General Church and its constituent bodies. At all times the commissions exist to serve and facilitate the mission and ministry of the Church, which in turn exists to serve her Lord.

1. All commissions of the Church are amenable to the General Conference, except as herein otherwise provided, or as governed by appropriate civil law.

2. The General Conference shall have authority to create, regulate, reconfigure, or abolish connectional commissions, except as limited herein or as governed by appropriate civil law; and shall have the authority to define the scope of authority for commissions of the Regional and Annual Conferences.

a. The following connectional commissions are established within the _____ Church: Commission on Evangelism, Missions, and Church Planting; Commission on Discipleship and Just Ministry; Commission for Higher Education and Ministry; Commission for Communications; and the Commission for Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits.

3. Regional and Annual Conferences shall have authority in like manner to establish, regulate, reconfigure, or abolish their own commissions; provided this is done in accordance with the requirements established by the General Conference.

a. Regional and Annual Conferences may share commissions between them by joint agreement for the purpose of promoting greater economy, efficiency, and accountability.

4. The program and priorities of the connectional commissions shall be established by the General Conference or other governing entity at the time of the commission's creation, subject to the provisions of the *Doctrines and Discipline* and governing law, and may be altered by the General Conference as needed. Each commission is permitted to structure itself for maximum effectiveness, subject to the requirements of the *Doctrines and Discipline* and the limitation of available funding.

5. Commissions and their sub-units may meet electronically where it is feasible to ensure the full and equal participation of all its members.

6. All general church staff shall be employed by the Connectional Council and assigned to support and resource the various commissions as needed by the connectional operating officer. All staff positions must be approved by the Connectional Council, subject to the budget limits set by General Conference and allocated by the Council.

¶ 802. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSIONS. The members of general church commissions shall be elected by the General Conference, drawing on persons nominated by the annual conferences. The term of service shall be six years, with members eligible to be reelected once for a total of twelve years. The procedure for election shall be as follows:

1. Each annual conference shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to eight persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for connectional commissions and with at least half being lay. Nominees shall be designated for one or two commissions based on gifts, training, and experience. Care shall be taken to include persons from a broad range of racial, ethnic, tribal, gender, economic, and age characteristics.

2. Persons eligible for nomination shall have been members of a local church or annual conference within the _____ Church (or its predecessor) for a period of two years at the time of their nomination.

3. The General Conference Committee on Nominations shall, from the list of candidates received from the annual conferences, propose a diverse slate of individuals to serve on the general commissions of the church, for election by the General Conference, provided that individuals nominated by annual conferences who do not appear on the slate may be nominated from the floor. The slate for each commission shall include the number of members specified by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, as well as the person the committee nominates to serve as the commission chair.

4. The General Conference shall elect by simple majority two-thirds of the members of each commission and chair. The remaining one-third of the members of each commission shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant commission. Persons interested in serving may apply to the relevant commission. Members elected by the Connectional Council are for the purpose of securing greater inclusiveness, experience, or special skills needed for the commission's work. The membership of each commission shall be at least one-half lay.

5. No person may serve simultaneously on more than one connectional commission (not including the Connectional Council). Members of commissions, including the chair, shall serve without remuneration. Travel and meeting expenses shall be paid for commission members by the commission out of its budget.

¶ 803. LEADERSHIP OF COMMISSIONS.

1. *Commission Chair.* The presiding officer of the commission shall be the chair of the commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be subject to the membership requirement of ¶ 802.2. The General Conference shall elect the chair from names nominated by the annual conferences, for a term of six years, with eligibility to be re-elected once for a second term of six years. Time served as a commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant commission.

2. *Officers.* The commission shall elect a secretary and may elect other officers to facilitate its work.

3. *Role of Bishops.* No person may serve as the chair of a commission while serving in the episcopal office. Each connectional commission will have one bishop, selected by the Council of Bishops, serving with voice and vote to help maintain communication and

coordination with the Council of Bishops and to provide spiritual leadership to the commission.

¶ 804. OPERATIONS. Except as provided herein, each connectional commission shall have the authority to structure its own work and business.

1. *Staff.* Each connectional commission may request such staff as is required for the pursuit of its mission. All staff positions must be approved by the Connectional Council, subject to the budget limits set by General Conference and allocated by the Council. Except for the connectional operating officer, all staff are hired, assigned, and evaluated by the connectional operating officer (¶ 812.2j) and serve as at-will employees.

a. Special grants, or gifts designated for staffing, may be used for the hiring and retention of additional staff on a temporary basis, subject to the availability of said monies and with approval of the Connectional Council. Such staff shall be hired and supervised by the connectional operating officer, respecting the purpose of the grant or designated gift.

b. Connectional commissions may contract with organizations, missions, and denominational entities within the denomination, other ecclesiastical bodies, or parachurch organizations and ministries for the purpose of fulfilling their mission or coordinating on a particular project; provided that no contract will be made with an organization whose mission and/or theological position is inconsistent with those of the connectional commission or of the _____ Church. Contracts that have financial implications beyond the commission's budget must be approved in advance by the Connectional Council.

c. Each commission shall have the power to dismiss any member of that commission for any of the following reasons: incapacity or a pattern of ineffectiveness, including failure to attend meetings or to perform the duties of their office, immorality, breach of trust, doctrinal incompatibility, or criminal activity. A commission may recommend dismissal or other disciplinary action against a staff person.

2. *Nondiscrimination.* The _____ Church is committed to open and fair processes in its commissions and institutions, including in the hiring, retention, compensation, promotion, and retirement of staff. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, disability, current or potential pregnancy, or chronic or potentially terminal illnesses, including HIV, provided that the individual is able to adequately discharge the duties assigned to her or him. As a part of our witness, individuals employed by the church shall subscribe to the doctrinal and moral standards of the _____ Church and give evidence of the same in their life and ministry, including faithfulness in marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman, or chastity in singleness.

¶ 805. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND MISSION. The areas of responsibility specified below shall accrue to each of the connectional commissions of the Church. Commissions are encouraged to partner with existing ministries or organizations that are effectively accomplishing one or more of the commission's responsibilities. Commissions shall have the flexibility to organize themselves within the resources allotted to or raised by that commission. No commission may serve as a lobbying agency to engage with governmental bodies, either directly or through other entities, except as explicitly authorized by the General Conference and a commission shall not profess to speak for the _____ Church unless it reflects statements adopted by the General Conference. The members of each commission and

supporting staff are expected to coordinate and collaborate in sharing best practices and in resourcing a full-orbed general church ministry incorporating all the components of each ministry area together, working together with other commissions where possible, in support of the _____ Church's mission and strategic plan.

¶ 806. COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM, MISSIONS, AND CHURCH PLANTING.

1. This commission shall consist initially of 15 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 35 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to General Conference approval.
2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in the following ministry areas, to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Evangelism - Train and equip both individuals and congregations to lead others to know Christ and to foster spiritual renewal across the church, including the certification of those called to serve as approved evangelists of the church.
 - b. Missions -- foster cross-cultural and international partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences, vet, approve, and maintain accountability for mission projects and their funding, recruit, train, deploy, and support missionaries in partnership with mission agencies, foster holistic mission strategies that address both physical and spiritual needs, expand the passion for mission outreach in local churches and channels for mission outreach by local churches, provide for disaster relief and refugee ministry.
 - c. Church Planting – identify and provide resources for church planting in various cultural contexts, consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, and local churches to plan and strategize for planting churches, identify, recruit, and train church planters, plant churches in consultation with the relevant bishops and presiding elders

¶ 807. COMMISSION ON DISCIPLESHIP, DOCTRINE, AND JUST MINISTRY

1. This commission shall consist initially of 15 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 35 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to General Conference approval.
2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas, to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Discipleship - Encourage and resource the continuing spiritual growth of individuals at all levels of the church through such discipleship programs as

classes, bands, and other small groups, the training of leaders, and through identifying and developing liturgies and orders of worship for use by both local congregations and the general church with General Conference approval, emphasizing racial, tribal, gender, and language equity throughout.

- b. Doctrine - Increase understanding of the importance of our doctrine through teaching and preaching ministries and the use of liturgical resources that are consistent with our understandings of the faith, study and propose any revisions in our doctrinal statements, and give guidance to ecumenical engagement with other Christian churches.
- c. Just Ministry - Enable both individuals and congregations to “do justice” in ways consistent with our social witness and commitments to the sacred worth and equality of all individuals, including developing policies, procedures, and training for addressing sexual harassment and sexual misconduct and advocacy with and on behalf of women, persons of various racial, ethnic, and tribal identities, and persons with disabilities for full and equal participation in the membership and leadership of the church, monitoring and growing compliance with the non-discrimination policy (§ 804.2) and the Hosier Rule (§ 517), resourcing annual conferences and local churches in the areas of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, and resourcing local churches in engaging with the church’s Social Witness and social issues from a variety of political perspectives and from a biblical foundation.

¶ 808. COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

1. This commission shall consist initially of 15 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 35 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to General Conference approval.
2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas, to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Ministry Credentials – implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference, certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders, develop curricula for ministry training courses, resource annual conference boards of ministry, ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates, and approve seminaries for ministry training.
 - b. Higher Education - Help unite “knowledge and vital piety” by encouraging Christian perspectives within institutions of higher education that are related

to the church, provide a network of such institutions, and assist in the founding and growth of needed Christian colleges and seminaries with a Wesleyan theological perspective across the world, particularly in underserved regions.

- c. Ministry Endorsement – establish and refine criteria and qualifications for various forms of non-parish ministry, such as hospital and military chaplaincy, evaluate and approve training programs that meet the criteria and qualifications, examine and credential persons for various forms of non-parish ministry, and support persons engaging in non-parish ministry.

¶ 809. COMMISSION ON COMMUNICATIONS

1. This commission shall consist initially of 15 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 35 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to General Conference approval.
2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas, to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Develop and encourage communication strategies appropriate across various geographical and cultural contexts that can help to tell the story and mission of the church better, and develop and administer the branding of the church.
 - b. Create print and digital resources that communicate the work of the church, including its commissions and programs, to both laity and clergy, including the publishing of the *Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*, and other materials to foster the growth and discipleship of all of our members, translate communications and resources into the languages of the church, and grow the digital communication capability of the church.

¶ 810. COMMISSION ON FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION, PENSIONS, AND BENEFITS

1. This commission shall consist initially of 15 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 35 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to General Conference approval.
2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas, to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Finance - Oversee the financial and fiduciary life of the general church, including its commissions and programs, to insure both its their integrity and efficiency, reporting publicly the detailed expenses and income of all groups,

conducting an annual independent audit of each commission's finances, collecting and allocating distributing all income received by the general church, and recommending to the General Conference through the Connectional Council both a budget and apportionment allocations to each annual conference.

- b. General Counsel - Manage the legal work of the general church and provide legal counsel to annual conferences and local congregations as requested, provide for the ownership and maintenance of any general church property.
- c. Archives and History - Maintain the historical archives of the _____ Church and encourage the study of our history to better understand how "hitherto the Lord has helped us" (1 Samuel 7.12).
- d. Statistics - Collect, make public, and help interpret accurate and timely statistics on our membership, ministry, and participation by our members.
- e. Pensions and Benefits - Give oversight to the pension and benefits (i.e., insurance, disability, etc.) programs for clergy and lay employees of the church worldwide and encourage conferences worldwide to provide adequate pension funding and medical care for those who serve in the church's ministry (active and retired).

¶ 811. CONNECTIONAL COUNCIL

1. Each general commission shall elect two of its members who are not bishops, including the commission chair, to represent the commission on the Connectional Council. The top staff person supporting each commission shall also be a member of the Connectional Council with voice but without vote. The Council of Bishops shall elect four bishops who are globally representative and not members of one of the other commissions to serve with voice and vote. Members shall be elected by each commission at the first commission meeting following General Conference and shall serve until their successors are elected or their membership on the commission ceases, whichever comes first. In case of a vacancy, a commission shall elect a replacement member. The Connectional Council shall elect its own officers from among its members. The connectional operating officer shall serve as the staff person for the Council, with voice but without vote.
2. The Connectional Council shall meet at least twice per year face-to-face (absent exigent circumstances that would require electronic or other forms of meeting) and electronically at other times for the purpose of communication and coordination of ministry among the commissions. The Council shall have the following specific authority and responsibilities:
 - a. To engage in proactive global strategizing, including a strategic plan, for growth in discipleship and mission, and to implement the priorities

established by General Conference, making recommendations to the commissions for implementation.

- b. To adjust the general church budget between General Conferences with published rationale, as long as it does not exceed the total amount of the budget.
- c. To hire the connectional operating officer and evaluate his/her work annually (§ 812).
- d. To approve the staffing levels for all commissions, consistent with budget limitations.
- e. To adopt policies and procedures applicable to the general church, its commissions, and its other entities in alignment with the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and the priorities set by General Conference.
- f. To fill vacancies among the members or chair of a commission that occur between General Conferences, upon nomination by the relevant commission.
- g. To coordinate proposals coming from the commissions to the General Conference, including the proposed budget, to assure congruence with the church's mission and strategy, as well as congruence with each other.
- h. To initiate, staff, and set parameters for task forces dealing with issues beyond the scope of an individual commission.

3. The Connectional Council shall be an incorporated legal entity.

§812. THE CONNECTIONAL OPERATING OFFICER. The connectional operating officer shall bear primary responsibility for the fruitful and accountable functioning of the general church and serve as its chief executive and administrative officer. The connectional operating officer shall be directly amenable to the Connectional Council. The connectional operating officer shall assign staff to support and resource any general commission and provide oversight to all general church staff.

1. *Selection.* The connectional operating officer may be either a clergy or lay person and shall be selected by the Connectional Council by majority vote of the Council.

2. *Term.* The connectional operating officer serves at the pleasure of the Connectional Council and shall serve no more than twelve years, unless the Connectional Council approves an extension of no more than two years for missional reasons by a three-fourths vote.

3. *Responsibilities and Duties.* The responsibilities of the connectional operating officer shall include the following:

a. Serve as the general church's chief executive and administrative officer and oversee all connectional commissions and enterprises.

b. Oversee planning and research to advance and implement the mission and strategic plan of the church.

c. Serve as the staff person for the Connectional Council in assisting the Council in all its work, but especially to provide a unified sense of vision and mission for all the work of the denomination.

d. Along with the Connectional Council, coordinate the ministries of the general church to fulfill the mandates of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and to implement the actions of the General Conference.

e. Review and evaluate the missional effectiveness of the general commissions of the church, making recommendations to the Council.

f. In consultation with the Commission on Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits, prepare the proposed connectional budget for Connectional Council and General Conference approval and, once approved, oversee its implementation, including, but not limited to, overseeing connectional finances and the maintenance of financial records.

g. Oversee yearly audits of connectional financial records.

h. Direct the development of policies and procedures to implement the provisions of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, including but not limited to personnel matters.

i. Direct and/or oversee connectional communications, public relations, and marketing.

j. Serve as the chief spokesperson for the denomination to the extent authorized by the General Conference or the Council.

k. With appropriate consultation, manage the process for and make the final decision on hiring, assigning, and retaining all general church staff, supervise and direct all general church staff, including performance reviews in consultation with the relevant commission(s), recommend compensation levels for all program staff for Connectional Council approval, and set compensation levels for all support staff. All processes shall comply with the policies and procedures adopted by the Connectional Council.

l. Negotiate and/or oversee negotiation of contracts for services including, but not limited to, facilities, connectional pension, insurance, and other benefit programs, with the approval of the relevant commission.

m. Recommend to General Conference through the Connectional Council changes to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* and implementing legislation.

n. Carry out other responsibilities and duties assigned by the General Conference or the Connectional Council.

[Note: Paragraph 812 replaces and supersedes ¶ 613 of the first draft of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.]