

Draft of a *General Book of Discipline* 2020

New Part VI

General Organization and Administration

Chapter Three

The Superintendency

Section I. The Nature of Superintendency

¶ 401. *Nature* – 1. From apostolic times, persons have been entrusted with particular tasks of oversight within the body of Christ. In The United Methodist Church, this oversight, or superintendency, resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendent for the purpose of equipping the Church in its disciple-making ministry for the transformation of the world. Bishops possess distinct and collegial responsibilities, working together to order the life of the Church, to enable the gathered Church to worship and evangelize faithfully, and to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for extending the service in the Church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

2. The office of bishop is a particular ministry, not a separate order. Bishops are elected from the group of elders in full connection who are ordained to the ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order. They participate in the servant ministry of Christ, in sharing a royal priesthood that has apostolic roots (1 Peter 2:9; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

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GBOD ¶ 401.1 = 401; 401.2=402

Section II. The Council of Bishops and the Role of a Bishop

¶ 402. *The Council of Bishops*. – 1. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops are members of the Council of Bishops and are bound in special covenant with all other bishops. In keeping with this covenant, bishops fulfill their servant leadership and express their mutual accountability. The Council of Bishops is a faith community of mutual trust and concern responsible for the faith development and continuing wellbeing of its members.

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

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

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

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

6. Retired bishops may participate in the Council of Bishops and its committees, but without vote. Further provisions shall be according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R 412).

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GBOD ¶ 402.1-4 = 422.1-4; 402.5=567; 402.6=409

¶ 403. *Role of a Bishop.* – 1. Bishops undertake a ministry of servant leadership, general oversight and supervision. They are authorized to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and *Discipline* of the Church.

2. Additionally, the role of a bishop includes the following:

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

b) To continue to learn and to teach how to make disciples and lead faithful and fruitful congregations using scripture, spiritual disciplines, our Wesleyan heritage, and the history and doctrines of the Church.

c) To work in partnership with the Council of Bishops, the cabinet and lay and clergy leadership of the annual conference, and the professing members of the church, to urge the whole church to move toward the vision of sharing Christ with the world in fulfillment of our mission, faithful discipleship and “an even better way” of being Christ’s people in the world.

d) To be a prophetic voice for justice in a suffering and conflicted world through the Wesleyan tradition of social holiness, encouraging and modeling the mission of witness and service in the world through proclamation of the gospel and alleviation of human suffering.

e) To have a passion for the unity of the church in being the shepherd of the whole flock and thereby providing leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation and unity within the Church – The United Methodist Church and the church universal.

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

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GBOD ¶ 403Intro = 403.1; 403.a-f=403.1a-1f

Section III. The Responsibilities of a Bishop

¶ 404. *Leadership Responsibilities.* – 1. To lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church in a manner that acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding, while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the Church.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. To convene the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders and work with the elected chairperson

of each order.

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

10. To discharge such other duties as the *Discipline* may direct.

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GBOD ¶ 404.1 = 414.1+401; 404.2=414.3; 404.3=414.5; 404.4=414.4; 404.5=414.8; 404.6=414.6; 404.7=414.2; 404.8=414.10; 404.9=414.11; 404.10=414.9

¶ 405. *Presidential Responsibilities.* – 1. To preside in the General, jurisdictional, central, and annual conferences.¹

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

3. To ensure fair process for clergy and laity as set forth in ¶ 2701 in all involuntary administrative and judicial proceedings through monitoring the performance of annual conference officials, boards, and committees charged with implementing such procedures.²

4. To form the districts after consultation with the district superintendents and after the number of the same has been determined by vote of the annual conference.³

>VII: 405.001<

5. To consecrate bishops, to ordain elders and deacons, to commission deaconesses, home missionaries and missionaries. As these services are acts of the whole Church, the text and rubrics approved by General Conference shall be used. (see ¶ 512.6 for central conferences).

GBOD ¶ 405.1-4 = 415.1-4; 405.5=415.6

¹ See Judicial Council Decision 395.

² See Judicial Council Decision 524.

³ See Judicial Council Decision 422.

¶ 406. *Appointment-making Responsibilities.* – 1. Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible. The bishop is empowered to make and fix all appointments of clergy in the episcopal area.

The United Methodist Church promotes and holds in high esteem the opportunity of an inclusive church (¶ 4) with the formation of open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic or tribal origin, gender, being differently abled, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.

Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy.⁴

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

3. A change in appointment of deacons may be initiated by a deacon, an agency seeking their service, a district superintendent, or a bishop. The appointment shall reflect the particular nature of the ministry of a deacon.

4. Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to

responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.

5. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments to a congregation in which the majority of its constituency is different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. They are made as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity. When such appointments are made, cabinets and boards of ordained ministry shall provide specific training for the clergy persons so appointed and for their congregations.

6. As part of the appointment-making process, the bishop is responsible for:

a) Dividing or uniting a circuit(s), station(s), or mission(s) as judged necessary for missional strategy and then to make appropriate appointments.

b) Appointing the district superintendents annually.

c) Fixing the charge conference membership of all ordained clergy appointed to ministries other than the local church in keeping with ¶ 331.3.

d) Fixing the appointments of deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries.

e) Transferring, upon the request of the receiving bishop, clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, provided said member(s) agrees to said transfer.⁵ >VII: 406.001<

7. The process of consultation shall be mandatory in every annual conference.⁶ Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and /or district superintendent confer with the pastor and committee on pastor-parish relations, taking into consideration a performance evaluation, needs of the appointment under consideration, and mission of the Church. The role of the committee on pastor-parish relations is advisory. [JC Decisions 492,1174?] Each central conference shall establish its minimum standards for the consultation process. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 406.002<

GBOD ¶ 406.1 = 425.1+3; 406.2=428.1; 406.3=430; 406.4=425.1+4

406.5=425.4; 406.6a=416.2; 406.6b=415.5; 406.6c=416.4; 406.6d=416.3; 406.6e=416.5;

406.7=426.1+Intro

⁴ See Judicial Council Decision 492.

⁵ See Judicial Council Decisions 114, 254, 554.

⁶ See Judicial Council Decision 701

Section IV. Election, Assignment, and Termination of Bishops

¶ 407. *Provisions for Episcopal Areas.* – The number of bishops shall be determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the proper committees, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters or jurisdictional conferences, according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R 407).⁷

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GBOD ¶ 407 = 404

⁷ See Judicial Council Decision 1312.

GC-R ¶ 407. Provisions for Episcopal Areas— 1. In Central Conferences -In central conferences, the number of bishops shall be determined on the basis of missional potential, as approved by the General Conference on recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Before recommending changes in the number of episcopal areas, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall:

a) consider these criteria in the following order of priority:

(1) the number of charge conferences and the number of active clergy in episcopal areas;
(2) the geographic size of episcopal areas, measured by the square miles / square km, and the numbers of time zones and nations;

(3) the structure of episcopal areas, measured by the number of annual conferences, and the overall church membership in all annual, provisional annual, and missions in episcopal areas.

b) conduct a further analysis of the context and missional potential of changes in episcopal areas.

2. *In Jurisdictions* -In the jurisdictions, the number of bishops shall be determined on the following basis:

a) Each jurisdiction having 300,000 church members or fewer shall be entitled to five bishops and each jurisdiction having more than 300,000 church members shall be entitled to one additional bishop for each additional 300,000 church members or major fraction thereof.

b) If the number of church members in a jurisdiction shall have decreased by at least ten percent below the number of church members which had previously entitled the jurisdiction to its number of bishops, then the number of bishops to which it shall be entitled shall be determined on the basis of missional needs, as approved by the General Conference on the recommendation of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, provided however that said jurisdiction shall be entitled to no less than the number of bishops to which it would be entitled under subparagraph a) above. It shall be the responsibility of the affected jurisdiction, through its Committee on Episcopacy, to request consideration of its missional need for an exception, and in the absence of such a request, there shall be no obligation on the part of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy to consider such an exception nor to make any report on such an exception to General Conference. In no case shall there be any constraint on General Conference's power to act in the absence of such a recommendation or to reject any recommendation that might be received.

c) If a jurisdiction, as a result of the provisions of this paragraph, shall have the number of bishops to which it had previously been entitled reduced, then the reduction in the number of bishops to which it is entitled shall be effective as of September 1 of the calendar year in which said reduction has been determined by the General Conference.

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GBOD GC-R ¶ 407.1-2 = 404.1-2

¶ 408. *Election and Consecration of Bishops.* – 1. Each central conference – in cooperation with their committee on episcopacy shall fix a procedure for the election of their bishops according to their own context. It may fix the tenure and term of office. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

The following minimum standards shall be followed in central and jurisdictional conferences:

a) Balloting shall not be limited to nominees of annual conferences nor shall any delegate be bound to vote for any specific nominee.

b) Delegates, in electing bishops, shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church.

c) The conferences are authorized to fix the percentage of votes necessary to elect a bishop. It is recommended that at least 60 percent of those present and voting be necessary to elect. >VII: 408.001<

2. It is strongly urged that the consecration service also include representatives from other Christian communions.

3. *Expiration of Terms in Central Conferences* - In a central conference where term episcopacy is in practice, bishops whose term of office expires prior to the time of their retirement and who are not reelected by the central conference shall be returned to membership as traveling elders in the annual

conference (or its successor) of which they ceased to be a member when elected bishop. Outgoing bishops are entitled to participate as a bishop in the consecration of their successor.

The credentials of office as bishop shall be submitted to the secretary of the central conference, who shall make thereon the notation that the bishop has honorably completed the term of service for which elected and has ceased to be a bishop of The United Methodist Church.⁸

GBOD ¶ 408.1 = 405.1-2b; 408.2=405.2c; 408.3=411

⁸ See Judicial Council Decisions 61, 236, 370.

¶ 409. *Assignment Process* – 1. The central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, after consultation with the College of Bishops, shall recommend the assignment of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the central or jurisdictional conference. >VII: 409.001<

2. Special assignments shall be done according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R 409).

GBOD ¶ 409 = 406

GC-R ¶ 409. *Assignment Process for Special Assignments* – The Council of Bishops may, with consent of the bishop and the concurrence of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, assign one of its members for one year to some specific churchwide responsibility deemed of sufficient importance to the welfare of the total Church. In this event, a bishop shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area for that term. Another bishop or bishops, active or retired, and not necessarily from the same central or jurisdictional conference, shall be named by the Council of Bishops on recommendation of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction involved to assume presidential responsibilities during the interim. In the event that more than one retired bishop is assigned to fulfill presidential responsibilities in one episcopal area, the Episcopal Fund shall be responsible only for the difference between the pensions paid the retired bishops and the remuneration of one active bishop. This assignment may be renewed for a second year by a two-thirds vote of the Council of Bishops and majority vote of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, and the consent of the bishop and the College of Bishops involved. The bishop so assigned shall continue to receive regular salary and support.

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GBOD GC-R ¶ 409 = 406.3

¶ 410. *Review and Evaluation of Bishops* – The central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy shall establish and implement processes that provide, at least once each quadrennium, for each active bishop, a full and formal evaluation which will include self-evaluation, assessment by episcopal peers, and comment by persons affected by his or her superintendency. >VII: 410.001<

GBOD ¶ 410 = ¶412

¶ 411. *Leaves* – 1. *Renewal Leave* – Every bishop in the active relationship shall take up to three months' leave from his or her normal episcopal responsibilities for purposes of reflection, study, and self-renewal during each quadrennium. The College of Bishops, in consultation with the respective central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, shall coordinate details pertaining to such leaves.

2. *Generalities for Leaves Exceeding Three Months* – Leaves exceeding three months may be granted for a justifiable reason for not more than six months in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for

which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities. Another bishop chosen by the executive committee of the Council of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area.

3. *Leave of Absence of Up To Six Months* – a) Salary and other benefits shall be continued through the Episcopal Fund.

b) Such leave may be granted including for medical reasons. If, due to impaired health, the bishop is still unable to perform full work after the six-month period is over, disability benefits through the benefit program provided to the bishop should be applied for.

4. *Sabbatical Leave* – A bishop who has served for at least two quadrennia may be granted a sabbatical leave of not more than one year for a program of study or renewal. The bishop shall receive one-half salary and, where applicable, housing allowance for the period of the leave.

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GBOD ¶ 411.1 = 410.2; 411.2=410.1+3+4; 411.3a=410.1; 411.3b=410.4; 411.4=410.3

¶ 412. *Retirement of Bishops.* – 1. An elder who served as a bishop up to the time of retirement shall have the status of a retired bishop.⁹

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

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

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

b) In central conferences, a bishop shall be retired at the end of the month following the scheduled session of the central conference if the bishop's sixty-eighth birthday is reached on or before the opening day of the scheduled session of the central conference.¹⁰

5. *Voluntary Retirement* –Bishops who have attained age sixty-two or have completed thirty years of service under full-time appointment as an elder or a bishop may request the central or jurisdictional conference to place them in the retired relation. They shall notify their respective committee on episcopacy and the president of the Council of Bishops at least six months prior to the General Conference.

6. *Involuntary Retirement* –A bishop may be placed in the retired relation regardless of age by a two-thirds vote of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy if, after not less than a thirty-day notice in writing is given to the affected bishop and hearing held, such relationship is found by said committee to be in the best interests of the bishop and / or the Church. The reason for the action must be clearly stated in the report of the committee. The provisions for fair process in administrative hearings (¶¶ 349.4 & 352.2) shall apply to this administrative process. >VII: 412.001<

7. *Resignation* – A bishop may voluntarily resign from the episcopacy at any time, by submitting his or her resignation to the Council of Bishops. The consecration papers of a bishop in good standing so resigning shall be properly inscribed by the secretary of the Council of Bishops and returned, together with a certificate of resignation, which shall entitle him or her to membership as a traveling elder in the annual conference (or its successor) in which membership was last held. Notification of this action shall be given by the secretary of the Council of Bishops to the chairperson and secretary of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy.

8. *Further Provisions* – All further provisions shall be according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R 412).

GBOD ¶ 412.1 = 408Intro; 412.2=409Intro; 412.3=409.2; 412.4a=408.1a; 412.4b=408.1b(BOD2012); 412.5=408.2c+d; 412.6=408.3; 412.7=408.4; 412.8=NEW

⁹ See Judicial Council Decisions 361, 407.

¹⁰ See Judicial Council Decisions 1248, 1370.

GC-R ¶ 412 Retirement of Bishops. – 1. General Provisions

a) Pension, as provided under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply, shall be payable as provided in such plan or program following the close of the central or jurisdictional conference.

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

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

Compensation for any special assignment shall cease after the bishop has reached the mandatory age of retirement for all ordained ministers (¶ 412.3) or completes the assignment, whichever comes first, except that retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops as Executive Secretary and Ecumenical Officer may continue to be compensated for such special assignment(s) throughout the terms of office. No assignment to a jurisdiction, central conference, annual conference, or non-United Methodist agency shall qualify for additional compensation from the Episcopal Fund under the provisions of this paragraph. The status of a retired bishop on special assignment shall, for purposes of housing and other benefits, be that of a retired bishop.

2. Voluntary Retirement-

a) Bishops who have completed twenty years or more of service under full-time appointment as ordained ministers or as local pastors with pension credit prior to the opening date of the session of the central or jurisdictional conference, including at least one quadrennium as bishop, may request the central or jurisdictional conference to retire them with the privilege of receiving their pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

b) *Vocational Retirement*-A bishop who has served at least eight years in the episcopacy may seek retirement for vocational reasons and may be so retired by the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy on recommendation by the involved College of Bishops. Such bishops shall receive their pensions as provided in §2a) above. If the employing entity provides or makes health insurance available to employees, then the bishop who retires under this provision will be insured under that program, whether or not the bishop is required to pay the premium for that coverage, and the Episcopal Fund will assume no future obligation to provide health insurance for the bishop or the bishop's family. If the employing entity does not provide or make health insurance available to employees, either

while employed or in retirement, then the bishop retiring under this provision will be provided with health and welfare benefits for retirees as specified from time to time by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

c) Bishops who have attained age sixty-two or have completed thirty years of service under full-time appointment as an elder or a bishop may request the central or jurisdictional conference to place them in the retired relation with the privilege of receiving their pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

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

e) A bishop may seek voluntary retirement for health reasons and shall be so retired by the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy upon recommendation by the involved College of Bishops and upon presentation of satisfactory medical evidence. Such bishops shall receive their pensions to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

3. *Involuntary Retirement*--A bishop, for health reasons, may be retired between sessions of the central or jurisdictional conference by a two-thirds vote of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy upon the recommendation of one third of the membership of the involved College of Bishops. The affected bishop, upon request, shall be entitled to a review of his or her health condition by a professional diagnostic team prior to action by the involved College of Bishops. Notification of action to retire shall be given by the chairperson and secretary of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy to the secretary of the Council of Bishops and the treasurer of the Episcopal Fund. Appeal from this action may be made to the Judicial Council with the notice provisions being applicable as set forth in ¶ 2712. Upon such retirement, the bishop shall receive a pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

4. *Resignation*— Pension benefits will be payable to the resigned bishop to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

5. *Status of Retired Bishops* a) Retired bishops may participate in the Council of Bishops and its committees, but without vote. They may preside over sessions of an annual conference, provisional annual conference, or mission if requested to do so by the bishop assigned to that conference, or in the event of that bishop's incapacity, by the president of the College of Bishops to which the conference is related. Retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops may serve as the executive secretary and the ecumenical officer of the Council. In emergency situations, where the resident bishop is unable to preside, the College of Bishops shall assign an effective or retired bishop to preside over the sessions of the annual conference (¶ 48). They may not make appointments or preside at the central or jurisdictional conference. However, when a retired bishop is appointed by the Council of Bishops to a vacant episcopal area or parts of an area, that bishop may function as a bishop in the effective relationship.¹¹

b) A bishop retired under ¶ 412.4, .5 may be appointed by the Council of Bishops upon recommendation of the involved College of Bishops to presidential responsibility for temporary service in an area in the case of death, resignation, disability, or procedure involving a resident bishop (¶ 2705.1). This appointment shall not continue beyond the next central or jurisdictional conference.

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

6. *Retirement After Term Episcopacy* - 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.¹²

7. *On Becoming an Autonomous or United Church* -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.

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GBOD GC-R ¶ 412.1a+b = 408.1c+d; 412.2=408.2; 412.3=408.3b; 412.4=408.4; 412.5=409.1+3+4; 412.6=548.1; 412.7=548.2

¹¹ See Judicial Council Decision 248.

¹² See Judicial Council Decision 394.

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*. – 1. Episcopal leadership in The United Methodist Church shares with all other ordained persons the sacred trust of their ordination. Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God’s work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized.

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall be submitted in a written statement to the president of the College of Bishops in that central or jurisdictional conference. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the secretary of the College of Bishops or, if non existing in a central conference, to the chair of the central conference committee on episcopacy. The bishop to whom the complaint has been submitted shall inform the chair of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy within ten days.¹³

3. Each central conference shall make provisions for complaint procedures, including suspension, supervisory response, just resolution, administrative complaint, and reporting, as well as a protocol for the caring of the affected episcopal area. Such provisions shall follow, as appropriate, the complaint procedures for ordained clergy (¶ 353) and shall define the role of the central conference committee on episcopacy in complaints against a bishop. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 413.001<

GBOD ¶ 413.1-2 = 413.1-2; 413.3=413.3-5

¹³ See Judicial Council Decision 1149.

¶ 414. *Vacancy in the Office of Bishop* – A vacancy in the office of bishop due to death, leave of absence, medical leave, retirement, resignation, or judicial procedure, shall be filled by the Council of Bishops on nomination of the active bishops of the respective College of Bishops, after consultation with the respective committee(s) on episcopacy.

>VII: 414.001<

GBOD ¶ 414 = 407

Section V. Cabinet and District Superintendency

¶ 415. *The Cabinet.* —1. Oversight, or superintendency, resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendency for the purpose of equipping the Church in its disciple-making ministry. Like bishops, district superintendents possess distinct and collegial responsibilities, working together with bishops to order the life of the Church, to enable the gathered Church to worship and evangelize faithfully, and to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for extending the service in the Church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

2. Like the office of bishop, the district superintendency is a particular ministry, not a separate order. Bishops appoint superintendents from the group of elders in full connection who are ordained to the ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order. >VII: 415.001<

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

4. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so district superintendents become through their selection members first of a cabinet before they are subsequently assigned by the bishop to service in districts. District superintendents appointed and assigned to districts are also to be given conference-wide responsibilities as members of the cabinet. The cabinet is thus also the body in which the individual district superintendents are held accountable for their work, both for conference and district responsibilities.

5. In order to exercise meaningful leadership, the cabinet is to meet at stated intervals. The cabinet is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a conference, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the conference. Central conferences may determine how best to implement the ministry of the cabinet according to their regional contexts. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 415.002<

GBOD ¶ 415.1 = 401; 415.2=402.1; 415.3=424.2; 415.4=415.1; 415.5=424.4

¶ 416. *Selection and Term of District Superintendents* —1. *Selection*—District superintendents are elders in full connection appointed by the bishop in consultation with the cabinet. They serve under the supervision of the resident bishop. In the selection of superintendents, bishops shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church (¶ 4). >VII: 416.001<

2. *Term of Service.* —The central conference shall determine the maximum term for district superintendents. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.¹⁴

>VII: 416.002<

GBOD ¶ 416.1 = 417; ¶416.2=418+new

¹⁴ See Judicial Council Decisions 368, 512.

¶ 417. *Duties.* – 1. The district superintendent shall oversee the total ministry of the clergy (including clergy in extension ministry and ministry beyond the local church) and of the churches in the communities of the district in their missions of witness and service in the world. This oversight requires the superintendent to use his or her gifts and skills related to spiritual and pastoral leadership, personnel leadership, administration, and program.

2. Superintendents are the chief missional strategists of their respective districts. They shall be committed to living out the values of the Church, including a mandate of inclusiveness, modeling, teaching, and promoting generous Christian giving, cooperating to develop Christian unity, and

ecumenical, multicultural, multiracial, and cooperative ministries. Superintendents work with persons across the Church, including clergy in settings beyond the local church, to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into and across the world. >VII: 417.001<

3. Superintendents shall work with the bishop and cabinet in the process of appointment and assignment for ordained and licensed clergy, or assignment of qualified and trained lay servant ministries. Within their district, they are the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed. They shall establish working relationships with pastor-parish relations committees, clergy, and lay leadership, to develop faithful and effective systems of ministry within the district.

4. Superintendents shall work with the Board of Ordained Ministry to develop an effective process for recruitment, mentoring and examination of candidates for ordained or licensed ministry. >VII: 417.002<

5. In the framework of their supervisory responsibility, superintendents shall offer support, care, and counsel to clergy. >VII: 417.003<

6. Superintendents shall maintain appropriate records of all clergy on the district, including clergy in extension ministry, as well as records dealing with property, endowments, and other tangible assets of The United Methodist Church within the district.

7. Superintendents shall interpret and decide all questions of Church law and discipline raised by the churches in the district, subject to review by the resident bishop of the annual conference.

8. Superintendents shall serve at the pleasure of the bishop and assume other leadership responsibilities as the bishop determines for the health and effectiveness of the district and annual conference.

9. Central conferences may establish further provisions, including renewal and study leaves for superintendents. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 417.004<

GBOD ¶ 417.1 = 419Intro; 417.2=419.1; 417.3=419.2+Intro+4; 417.4=419.3; 417.5=419.6; 417.6=419.8; 417.7=419.10; 417.8=419.12; 417.9=new.

Section VI. Ecumenical Relationships

¶ 418. *Council of Bishops, Ecumenical Officer, and Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships* – 1. The Council of Bishops shall be the primary liaison in formal relations with other churches and/or ecclesial bodies.

2. In pursuit of its responsibilities and in order to deepen and expand the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of The United Methodist Church, the Council of Bishops shall receive the input of the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR).

3. Funding for the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of the Church shall be provided by the Council of Bishops in one or more clearly identified line items in the Episcopal Fund budget request to General Conference.

4. OCUIR shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 418).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 418 = 436; 418.2=437; 418.3=440; 418.4=new

GC-R 418. *Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR)* —1. *Responsibilities and Powers*—The responsibilities and powers of OCUIR shall be assigned by the Council of Bishops.

2. *Membership*—The OCUIR shall be composed of one episcopal member from a jurisdictional conference and one episcopal member from a central conference, one of whom shall be the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops, and of one person from each jurisdiction and one person from each of the following regions: Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. The bishop who is not the ecumenical officer shall be counted as one of these eight persons. In aiming at inclusiveness, each central or jurisdictional conference will nominate two candidates, and the Council of Bishops will elect seven members from this pool of nominees. Two additional members with voice and vote will be from churches in Full Communion, nominated by them.

3. *Staff*—a) There shall be an ecumenical staff officer of The United Methodist Church to be selected by the Council of Bishops. The work of the OCUIR shall be facilitated by the ecumenical staff officer who shall be in charge of the day-to-day work of the OCUIR. The ecumenical staff officer shall be the OCUIR's principal administrative and executive officer and report to the Ecumenical Officer of the Council of Bishops. b) Additional staff shall be selected in number and responsibility as determined by the Council of Bishops and serve at the pleasure of the ecumenical staff officer. c) The staff of the OCUIR shall be positioned in locations to be determined by the Council of Bishops.

4. *Interdenominational Cooperation Fund*—The OCUIR shall consult with the Council of Bishops in establishing the guidelines for the administration of the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund. Financial support of ecumenical organizations, ecumenical dialogues, and multilateral conversations, approved by the Council of Bishops, shall be remitted from this fund in accordance with ¶ 814.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R 418.1 = 441; 418.2=438; 418.3=439; 418.4=431.3+432;

¶ 419. *Ecumenical Agreements and Full Communion*—1. The Council of Bishops shall have the authority to enter into ecumenical agreements with other Christian bodies. However, all proposed denominational level agreements of formal “full communion” relationships and permanent membership in ecumenical organizations must be approved and ratified by General Conference, before coming into effect.

2. A formal “full communion” relationship is one that exists between two or more Christian churches that:

- a) recognize each other as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, the Body of Christ, as described in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the church's historic creeds;
- b) recognize the authenticity of each other's sacraments and welcome one another to partake in the Eucharist;
- c) affirm the authenticity of each church's Christian ministry;
- d) recognize the validity of each other's offices of ministry.

3. A formal “full communion” relationship commits the churches to working together as partners in mission toward fuller visible unity. The Council of Bishops is charged to implement this relationship.

4. A formal “full communion” relationship does not mean there are no differences or distinctions between churches; but does mean that these differences are not church dividing.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 419.1 = 431.1a; 419.2-4=431.1b, c, +e

¶420. *Methodist Unity*—1. *World Methodist Council*—a) The United Methodist Church is a member of the World Methodist Council, its predecessor Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches having been charter members of such body. The council is a significant channel for United Methodist relationships with other Methodist churches and with autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated

autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated united churches formerly part of The United Methodist Church or its predecessor denominations, and other churches with a Wesleyan heritage.

b) Each affiliated autonomous Methodist church and each affiliated united church that is a member of the World Methodist Council may choose to send delegates either to the General Conference or to the World Methodist Council (receiving from the General Administration Fund the expense of travel and per diem allowances thereto for one of the two events in a quadrennium).

2. *Pan-Methodist Commission*—Given the relationship and shared history of the denominations of the Wesleyan tradition in the United States, there shall be a Pan-Methodist Commission established jointly among The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, and The United Methodist Church. >VII: 420.001<

3. *Conference of Methodist Bishops* - There may be a conference of Methodist bishops, composed of all the bishops elected by the central and jurisdictional conferences and one bishop or chief executive officer from each affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, which shall meet on call of the Council of Bishops after consultation with other members of the conference of Methodist bishops. The travel and other necessary expense of bishops of affiliated autonomous Methodist or united churches related to the meeting of the Conference of Methodist Bishops shall be paid on the same basis as that of bishops of The United Methodist Church.

4. *Striving Toward Union*—As a result of our heritage as a part of a people called Methodist, The United Methodist Church commits itself to strive toward closer relationship with other Methodist or Wesleyan churches wherever they may be found (§ 6).

GBOD ¶ 420.1 = 433.1; 420.2=433.2Intro; 420.3=433.3;

¶ 421. *Relationships with churches of the Wesleyan tradition and United Churches* - 1. *Autonomous Methodist Churches* – Autonomous Methodist churches are self-governing churches of the Wesleyan tradition which may or may not have entered into the Act of Covenanting with The United Methodist Church. They are not entitled to send delegates to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. *Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches* –Affiliated autonomous Methodist churches are self-governing churches in whose establishment The United Methodist Church or one of its predecessor churches 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 (GC-R 421.5) with The United Methodist Church.

3. *Affiliated United Churches*- Affiliated united churches are self-governing churches formed by the uniting of two or more denominations, at least one of which was related to The United Methodist Church or one of its predecessor churches.

4. *Covenanting Churches* – 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.

5. *Methodist Churches with Concordat Agreements* – A Methodist church which has Methodist heritage in common with The United Methodist Church or one of its predecessor churches and which has entered into concordat agreements 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 becomes a concordat church.

6. Relationships with these churches shall be organized according to the provisions of General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 421).

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GBOD ¶ 421.1-3 = 570.1-3; 421.4=573.1; 421.5=570.5; 421.6=New

GC-R ¶ 421. *Relationships with churches of the Wesleyan tradition and United Churches—* 1. *Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches—* Each affiliated autonomous Methodist church shall be entitled to send two delegates, one clergy and one layperson to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to one additional delegate, if the church has more than 70,000 full members. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or the president of the affiliated autonomous Methodist churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

2. *Affiliated United Churches—* Each affiliated united church shall be entitled to send two delegates, one clergy and one layperson, to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to one additional delegate, if the church has more than 70,000 full members. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or the president of the affiliated united churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

3. *Transfers and Cooperation With Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches, and Affiliated United Churches-* a) Certificates of church membership given by clergy in one church shall be accepted by clergy in the other church.

b) 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 ¶ 331.

c) 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.

d) The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, 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.¹⁵

4. *Covenanting Churches—* 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, while participation in specific projects is the responsibility of the appropriate general agency or agencies.

d) The Council of Bishops shall represent The United Methodist Church in developing an Act of Covenanting with a prospective partner church. It 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.¹⁶

e) 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.

6. *Methodist Churches With Concordat Agreements*—a) Concordat agreements may be initiated by a Methodist church or by The United Methodist Church through the Council of Bishops. 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 shall be printed in the appropriate General Conference journal or equivalent.

c) Such concordat agreement shall entitle the two churches to the following rights and privileges:

(1) 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.

(2) Clergy may be transferred between the two churches in accordance with ¶ 337.2.

d) Concordat churches, with the exception of The Methodist Church of Great Britain (see ¶ 13.3), shall be entitled to 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. 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.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 421.1 = 570.2b; 421.3=570.3b; 421.3=571; 421.5=573+570.4b; 421.6=574+570.5b

¹⁵ See Judicial Council Decision 692.

¹⁶ See Judicial Council Decision 692.

¶ 422. *Ecumenical Relationships*—The United Methodist Church strives toward greater Christian unity through its participation in councils of churches and/or covenantal relationships. Permanent membership in ecumenical organizations shall be approved and ratified by the respective conference, worldwide by General Conference, regional by Central Conferences, and where within the boundaries of one single annual conference by the respective annual conference.

1. *The World Council of Churches*—The United Methodist Church is a member of the World Council of Churches, its predecessor Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches having been charter members of such body.

2. *Other Worldwide Ecumenical Organizations*— The Council of Bishops shall lead the church in sending observers or prepare membership in other worldwide ecumenical organizations.

3. The Council of Bishops shall be in dialogue with United Methodists in whatever countries they may reside, and shall coordinate, explore, and advocate United Methodist participation in regional ecumenical and interreligious organizations. >VII: 422.001<

4. Further regulations shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (see GC-R ¶ 422).

GBOD ¶ 422Intro = 434Intro+434.2b; 422.1=434.3a; 422.2=434.3b+c; 422.3=434.2b; 422.4=New

GC-R ¶ 422. *Ecumenical Relationships* – 1. The United Methodist representatives to ecumenical organizations shall be selected by the Council of Bishops and reflect consideration of balances required both by The United Methodist Church and the respective ecumenical organization.

2. When proxies are needed to substitute for United Methodist representatives to a specific ecumenical organization, the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops is authorized to name such proxies and shall report their names at the next meeting of the Council of Bishops.

3. The Council of Bishops shall receive reports of the ongoing partnership of The UMC in the central conferences that are in full communion with Lutheran Churches and other denominations in order to learn from each other how to “provide leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation and unity within the Church-the United Methodist Church and the church universal” (¶ 403.2e).

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 422.1-2 = 431.4; 422.3=442.2

VII. Committee on Faith and Order

¶ 423. *Committee on Faith and Order* – 1. There shall be a Committee on Faith and Order related and amenable to the Council of Bishops. This relationship shall be collaborative, with attention paid in particular to working with the persons designated by the Council of Bishops.

2. *Purpose*- The Committee on Faith and Order shall give leadership to The United Methodist Church in reflecting upon, discerning and living out matters of faith, doctrinal teaching, order, and discipline in the midst of mission and ministry in the church and world. The committee shall be a visible expression of the commitment of the United Methodist Church to carry on informed theological reflection for the present time in dynamic continuity with the historic Christian faith, our common heritage as Christians grounded in the apostolic witness, and our distinctive Wesleyan heritage. The committee shall be charged with three broad responsibilities:

a) Upon request of the Council of Bishops, to support and provide resources to the council in its responsibility to “guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically”.

b) To lead and coordinate studies commissioned by the General Conference in matters related to faith, doctrine, order and discipline of the church.

c) To prepare and provide resources and study materials to The United Methodist Church as deemed appropriate.

3. *Responsibilities* – The Committee on Faith and Order shall have the authority and power to fulfill all the responsibilities according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 423).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 423.1 = 443; 423.2=444; 423.3=446=>445

GC-R ¶ 423. Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the Committee on Faith and Order shall be:

1. To provide a venue and context for ongoing conversation on matters of faith, doctrine, order and discipline.

2. To draw upon scholars and scholarship in biblical studies, biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, Christian ethics, Wesleyan studies, practical theology, missiology, and other areas thereby providing expertise and knowledge to lead and assist the church in addressing matters of faith and order critical to the life, ministry and mission of the church.

3. To provide research and resourcing for the Council of Bishops upon their request in matters related to faith, doctrine, order and discipline.

4. To receive and administer mandates from the General Conference for studies on matters that require significant inquiry into and application of the faith and order of the church.

5. To bring studies, materials, or publications as appropriate to the Council of Bishops or to the General Conference for approval and action.

6. To make provision for the preparation and dissemination of study documents and materials for the Church upon request of the Council of Bishops, or the General Conference.

7. To coordinate and provide for effective interaction and communication among various study committees, commissions, and teams when multiple studies have been mandated.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 423=445

¶ 424. Organization—1. The Committee on Faith and Order (CFO) shall be composed of sixteen persons.

2. It shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (see GC-R ¶ 424).

3. In collaboration with the Council of Bishops, it shall propose its budget as part of the Episcopal Fund, to be approved by General Conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 424.1 = 447Intro; 424.2=>447, 448, 449; 424.3=450

GC-R ¶ 424 Organization of the Committee on Faith and Order- 1. Membership-a) Nominations to the CFO shall be made by the CFO Executive Committee, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, and sent to the Council of Bishops and to the entire Committee on Faith and Order for their review.

(1) Four bishops shall serve as members one of whom shall be the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church and three other bishops as assigned by the Council of Bishops. At least one of the bishops shall be from central conferences.

(2) New members of the committee shall be elected by the Council of Bishops at its spring meeting in the year of the General Conference. Election shall be for a term of eight (8) years, and no person shall serve as a member of the Committee on Faith and Order for more than sixteen (16) years in succession. The classes of membership shall be established so that the terms of service of 50 percent of the membership expire when their successors are seated at the organizational meeting of the committee following each General Conference.

b) The composition of the committee, and all sub-committees and teams, shall attend to lay and clergy status, racial/ethnic and gender diversity, and regional representation. It shall model effective representation of the theological diversity of The United Methodist Church. The Council of Bishops shall

exercise oversight in the nomination and election of members with regard to inclusiveness, diversity, and representation. Vacancies occurring during any quadrennium shall be filled by the CFO Executive Committee in consultation with the Council of Bishops.

c) The committee may, in consultation and collaboration with the Council of Bishops, carry out any mandated study internally or may create such sub-committees and teams using members from within the committee and others beyond the committee as may be required by the volume and complexity of work.

d) Membership on the board of directors of any other general agency, or serving as a staff member of a general agency, does not make one ineligible to serve as a member of this committee, ¶¶ 710.5 and 715.6 to the contrary notwithstanding, and the limitations specified in ¶ 710.4 for membership on general agencies shall not apply to anyone as a result of membership on this committee.

2. *Organization and Meetings*-a) The committee shall elect from its episcopal membership a chairperson and from its total membership other officers as it may determine.

b) There shall be an executive committee of the CFO with powers as determined by the CFO.

c) The committee shall meet for organizational purposes each quadrennium prior to the end of the first quarter of the year following the year in which the General Conference is held.

d) The committee shall meet at least annually and at such other times as it shall deem necessary. A majority of members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

3. *Staffing*- Staff for the work of the Committee on Faith and Order shall be provided as determined by the Council of Bishops in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Committee on Faith and Order. The Council of Bishops may request staff assistance and consultation from agencies and other bodies of the Church.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 424.1 = 447.1-6; 424.2=448; 424.3=449