

**Report to 2008 General Conference
of The United Methodist Church**

From the Task Force to Study the Episcopacy

Philippians 2:5-11: Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹

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¹ Bruce M. Metzger et al, *The New Revised Standard Version*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. All of the biblical references in this report come from this version.

I. The Work of the Task Force

General Conference directed the Council of Bishops to convene a Task Force to Study the Episcopacy that was to be ambitious in its mission – to study all aspects of the episcopacy. (See Appendix 1: Legislation, DCA, 1745) The charge from General Conference oriented the Task Force to fundamental, post-Christendom issues that the Church faces and that affect its capacity to fulfill its mission, especially finances and membership and attendant cutbacks in every sector of the Church's life. We do not frame our statement in the language of crisis nor concede that United Methodism must adjust to minority status, but instead reflect on leadership, mindful of the Church's capacity for reform and renewal and of the critical importance of bishops in facing our challenges and achieving our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our discussions were long, wide-ranging, thoughtful and sometimes tense in their desire to affirm and contribute to Methodism's rich, missional and apostolic understanding of itinerant general superintendency. The office, we concluded, has been and will be shaped by those whom the Church elects and by the way they live out their calling. Hence our "exhortation," to use a good Wesleyan term, is to trust the Spirit to guide us into ever more discerning election processes that will continue to bring us visionary leaders.

Although the Task Force included able representatives from Central Conferences, was enlightened by their insights, and at points did consider Central Conference issues and/or implications for those conferences different from jurisdictional arrangements, the preponderance of the Task Force's work and this report focuses on the jurisdictions. The complexities that United Methodism faces in providing leadership for a worldwide church requires, in our judgment, a commission or task force with more representation from the Central Conferences to attend to their specific missional needs.

The Task Force thus does not offer a comprehensive statement on episcopacy but makes recommendations and offers observations that deal primarily with bishops in jurisdictional conferences.

The Task Force was much helped by a number of formal presentations made by Lisa Schilling, Managing Actuary, General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (GBOPHB) and Scott Brewer, Director, Office of Analysis and Research (GCFA); faculty James Kirby, Russell Richey, and Thomas Frank out of their studies on episcopacy; Bishop Ruediger R. Minor on Central Conference episcopacy historically and theologically considered; Debbie Maltbie, the CBO (Conference Benefits Officer) and Treasurer of the Kansas West Conference, and Scott Selman, the CBO and Treasurer of the North Alabama Conference, on behalf of the Denominational Health Task Force of GBOPHB; Randolph Nugent, former General Secretary of GBGM on various issues with Central Conference episcopacy; Lisa Schilling of GBOPHB and Dan Gary of GCFA on the Episcopal Pension Program for Central Conferences. Members of the task force conducted listening sessions with conference lay leaders, jurisdictional

committees on episcopacy, retired bishops, including those bishops who retired early, and members of the Connectional Table. In addition, the drafter drew on the Task Force's own rich discussions and the several resources on Episcopacy (Appendix 9: Selected Resources) to frame questions and posit some assumptions. (Appendix 3: Questions and Appendix 4: Assumptions)

II. The Theological and Missional Nature of Episcopal Leadership

We acknowledge, however, that in its directive to the Council of Bishops with respect to this task force to study the episcopacy, the General Conference did invite a comprehensive review, specifically identifying as the first of its long list of desiderata the "theological and missional nature of episcopal leadership." And we realize that The United Methodist Church needs creative, visionary, dynamic, thoughtful, caring energetic bishops and it needs a theology of the office that summons to just such transformative exercises of superintendency:

- for its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;
- for its own revitalization and growth;
- for its faithful transmission of its Trinitarian witness;
- for its pursuit of the unity for which Christ prayed (internally within the U.S. , in its global identity, in its dialogue with other Christian churches);
- for its enabling of effective leadership at all levels;
- for its guarding our Wesleyan order, liturgy and discipline.

The importance of humble, servant leadership is found in Matthew 20:25-28, and in the current *Book of Discipline*:

As followers of Jesus Christ called to servant leadership, bishops are authorized to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church; to seek and be a sign of the unity of the faith; to exercise the discipline of the whole Church; to supervise and support the Church's life, work, and mission throughout the world; and to lead all persons entrusted to their oversight in worship, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in their mission of witness and service in the world. Bishops carry a primary responsibility to support and encourage the ministry of all Christians. They share with other bishops in the supervision of the whole Church, encouraging and supporting all baptized people in the exercising of their gifts and ministries, praying for them, and proclaiming and interpreting to them the gospel of Christ. Bishops are to be prophetic voices and courageous leaders in the cause of justice for all people. Bishops are also authorized to appoint ordained clergy to their responsibilities, consecrate, ordain, and commission persons in ministry to the Church and world. ¶ 404.1

We revise and enrich this Disciplinary statement in an effort to address the Council of Bishops' concern for development of the theological and missional nature of

the episcopal office. And we offer some notes towards a theology of episcopacy (Appendix 5: Toward a Theology of Episcopacy: Reflecting Theologically and Missionally). However, we urge, as we say in our “Recommendations” below, that General Conference find an appropriate way, in concert with the Council of Bishops (COB), to begin the process of elaborating a more vigorous theological understanding of the one office protected by our Restrictive Rules, that of itinerant general superintendency.

III. Thinking Radically

In response to the wide-open commission from General Conference, to assumptions and questions we posed for ourselves, and to UMC norms, practices and institutional givens, the Task Force explored a number of thinkable and some unthinkable ways of re-envisioning episcopacy. The several options or chains of options allowed us to test our assumptions about and theological understandings of episcopacy. In several respects those options went quite against the grain of The United Methodist traditions; in a couple of instances requiring the rewriting of significant portions of the *Discipline*; and in some cases diametrically opposite of one another. These thought experiments certainly prompted lively discussion. Some of the possible (if previously unthinkable) initiatives had important financial implications, in some instances providing cost savings for the general Church, in other cases shifting costs.

- Consecrating jurisdictional bishops at General Conference
- Defining all episcopacy as term episcopacy
- Eliminating or changing jurisdictional boundaries
- Assigning bishops by population areas
- Establishing one bishop per state
- Creating an association for retired bishops
- Establishing membership of bishops upon retirement in an Annual Conference as opposed to membership in the Council of Bishops
- Constituting the Council of Bishops so as to include only active bishops
- Restricting Episcopal Fund expenditures to active bishops only
- Assigning pension responsibilities for retirees, spouses and dependents to Annual Conferences
- Establishing the U.S. as a Central Conference and electing bishops at that level
- Limiting meetings of the entire Council of Bishops to General Conference years
- Distinguishing salary and pension responsibilities of the several Central Conferences
- Assigning bishops to the Annual Conferences which nominated them
- Reducing the number of bishops
- Assigning multiple Annual Conferences to every bishop
- Increasing the number of bishops dramatically and reducing the number of District Superintendents even more dramatically
- Encouraging the election of jurisdictional bishops at a younger age so as to encourage longer service

- Extending the mandatory retirement age for jurisdictional bishops
- Establishing the United Methodist Church episcopacy as a third order
- Establishing the Council of Bishops as a House of Bishops with Senate-like power and authority
- Developing more robust theologies of episcopacy and connection
- Phasing out the Episcopal Fund, or at least its coverage of pensions
- Establishing a permanent presidency for the Council of Bishops
- Creating a system for deployment/appointment of bishops post-term, upon retirement

IV. Wide-Ranging Conversations re: Fiscal and Practical Concerns

Such outside-the-box proposals and the serious fiscal and practical challenges that the Church faces prompted quite-wide ranging conversations. In just one session, for instance, our discussion covered the following topics and themes, a number of them often vetted (some applied only to jurisdictional bishops, some only to Central Conference bishops, and others to both central and jurisdictional):

1. Mode and Place of Election/Length and Flexibility of Assignment

- Expand usual two quadrennial pattern to twelve years (for jurisdictional bishops)
- Modes of election and assignment
- Lifetime versus term episcopacy
- Election of bishops by jurisdictions at General Conference
- Inter-jurisdictional assignment of bishops
- Moving mandatory retirement back one quadrennium (age 72)
- Possible transition back to Annual Conferences after service
- Minimum age for bishops
- Minimum service time to serve
- Uniformity of election process: interviews, block voting

2. Retirees

- Deployment/support of retired bishops
- Exit interviews of early retirees
- Relationship of retirees to their colleges/the Council of Bishops

3. Mission and Money

- Increased cost of the episcopacy
- Equal support of episcopal offices (inadequate/varying support)
- Annual Conference and Area boundaries
- What staffing would it take for “episcopacy for growth?”
- Housing/residence issues
- Annual Conferences help pay health costs for retirees
- Perceived disconnect of issues from local church to general church

- Addressing the Central Conference pension fund issue without involving the Episcopal Fund
- Are bishops and the Council of Bishops co-opted by general agencies on the mission of the Church?

4. Nature/Responsibility/Roles of Itinerant General Superintendency

- Complaint process: time/early retirement
- Role of bishops: active and retired
- Criteria for the number of bishops/Areas (managerial load)
- Role of episcopacy and Boards of Ordained Ministry
- Role of the episcopacy at General Conference
- Bishop/District Superintendent roles
- World-wide nature of the episcopacy
- Roles of bishops in boards/agencies
- General Superintendent versus diocesan model
- Programmatic and prophetic leadership
- Partnership between bishops and laity
- Recover the teaching role of the episcopacy

5. Training/Evaluation/Review/Intervention

- Helping new bishops to learn the ropes
- Help bishops to improve
- Evaluation/review of bishops (performance)

6. Episcopacy Committees

- Equipping committees on episcopacy/the role of committees on episcopacy (Annual Conference, Area, jurisdictional/central)
- Strengthen the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy

7. Central Conference Bishops

- Who may be a bishop? Qualities? Experience?
- Central Conference episcopacy
- More Central Conference bishops needed

8. Equipping the COB for Leadership

- Set-aside 4-year president of the COB
- Strengthening the COB for its leadership role, including its prophetic role

V. Findings and Concerns

1) The Task Force learned and therefore wishes to report that a Pension Plan for Central Conference Bishops has not been established. Retired Central Conference Bishops receive a pension from funds provided by the General Board of Pensions. After inquiry and discussion by the Task Force, a line item has been included in the Episcopal Fund budget to reflect these funds from the Board of Pensions. The Task

Force further understands and endorses a Pension Plan for Central Conference Bishops which will be presented to General Conference in 2008 by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Additional funds for this Plan may be needed from the Episcopal Fund in future budgets.

2) The workload of bishops and ways of accounting for it in the determination of the number and deployment of bishops were recurrent concerns heard by the Task Force in its listening interviews with active and retired bishops, as also a charge from General Conference. If demands on bishops' time, energy and patience governed allocations of bishops to jurisdictions, then the number of clergy per jurisdiction, we discovered, would serve as the most important determining factor, with the number of annual conferences over which to be presided a close second. Much further down the criteria would be the present and recommended determinant, namely church members. The Task Force did consider proposing that the Church base its allocations on clergy numbers or on clergy numbers and church membership. Since such alternative bases for equitable assignment did not significantly change the numbers of bishops per jurisdiction, the Task Force decided for simplicity to stay with the current procedure. However, we do call attention to the recommendations regarding work load in Appendix 6 and encourage jurisdictions to utilize the study in their deployment of bishops.

3) The Task Force believes that the Council of Bishops, the general agencies and the Connectional Table should continue to explore ways in which they might with new procedures, more effective patterns of interaction, and revised agenda more faithfully attend to the mission of the Church, enhance the effectiveness of the agencies' work, and facilitate the bishops' responsibility--collectively and individually--to oversee "all matters, temporal and spiritual," and the administration thereof (§§ 401, 427.3).

4) The Task Force devoted considerable discussion to Central Conference episcopacy but felt itself not adequately constituted to bring detailed and explicit recommendations, especially given the variety of issues and practices in the Central Conferences. Recognizing the importance to the whole Connection of the opportunities and challenges that the Central Conferences face, we do believe that the Commission on Central Conference Affairs needs to meet with greater frequency than now stipulated and not simply at the site of and during General Conference. We considered, for instance, the addition to § 405.1 of some such sentence: "In the exercise of its responsibilities, the Commission may meet periodically in the interim of General Conferences, perhaps coordinating its meetings with those of the Council of Bishops and/or GBGM." That would require then the addition of the same sentence to § 2201 following the specification "The commission shall meet at the seat of the General Conference." (No changes, in our judgment, would be needed for §§ 572, 575 or 705.5c.).

VI. Recommendations

The Task Force does believe that its most important contribution or counsel to the Church lies in its encouragement to the Church to live fully into its vocation through affirmation of Methodism's rich, missional and apostolic understanding of itinerant general superintendency. So although the Task Force's primary goal was not to bring concrete legislation, we do offer a number of recommendations, several of which point beyond this quadrennium to studies and explorations that we believe will strengthen episcopacy and the capacity of our bishops to provide visionary leadership for the Church. For the shorter run, we propose several changes that move us in such directions and do so within the fiscal realities which informed General Conference's mandates to us.

1) Propose to formulate the role and calling of bishops in accordance with mission language adopted and used by the Council of Bishops and therefore **recommend** that The United Methodist Church's mission statement in ¶120 be augmented and changed to read as follows:

¶120 The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ **for the transformation of the world**. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.

2) Recommend to delete ¶402 and substitute the following for the current ¶404.

¶404. The Role of Bishops and District Superintendents—Bishops and superintendents are elders in full connection.

1. Bishops are elected from the elders and set apart for a ministry of leadership, general oversight and supervision. **As followers of Jesus Christ, bishops are authorized to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church.** The role and calling forth of the bishop, as a follower of Jesus Christ, is to exercise oversight of the Church in its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The basis of such discipleship of leadership (*episkopé*) lies in discipline and a disciplined life. The bishops lead therefore through the following disciplines:

a) *A vital and renewing spirit:* The role of the bishop is 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 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) *An enquiring mind and a commitment to the teaching office:* The role of the bishop is 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) *A vision for the Church:* The role of bishop is to lead the whole Church in claiming its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The bishop leads by discerning, inspiring, strategizing, equipping, implementing, and evaluating the fulfillment of the mission of the Church. Working 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, the bishop urges the whole church to move toward the vision of sharing Christ with the world in fulfillment of our mission, faithful discipleship and a “more excellent way” of being Christ’s people in the world.

d) *A prophetic commitment for the transformation of the church and the world:* The role of the bishop is to be a prophetic voice for justice in a suffering and conflicted world through the tradition of social holiness. The bishop encourages and models the mission of witness and service in the world through proclamation of the gospel and alleviation of human suffering.

e) *A passion for the unity of the church:* The role of the bishop is to be the shepherd of the whole flock who thereby provides leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation and unity within the church.

f) *The ministry of administration:* The role of the bishop is 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 conference and jurisdictional committees on episcopacy.

3) Recommend referring Appendices 7 and 8 to the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table in support of their work on the Study of the Church’s Global Nature.

4) Recommend that, should General Conference establish a Committee on Faith and Order as recommended by the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, that among its first orders of theological enquiry be a study of the mission, identity and nature of The United Methodist Church including the implications for the episcopacy (See Appendices 7 and 8).

5) Recommend the addition to the *Discipline* of the following new ¶413 and the re-numbering of existing ¶413 and all following paragraphs as appropriate:

¶413 Review and Evaluation of Bishops— In its review of the work, character and official administration of the bishops under ¶522.3.a, the Jurisdictional or Central 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/her superintendency (such as cabinets, lay leaders, directors of agencies served). It shall be the duty of each jurisdiction's College of Bishops/Central Conference's College of Bishops, under the leadership of its president, to consult with and to cooperate with the committee in order to schedule and facilitate such reviews and evaluations, as well as to address issues that may arise in the course of that work.

Modify existing ¶522.3.a) as shown follows:

¶522.3.a) Review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report **such evaluations and other findings** to the jurisdictional conference ~~its findings~~ for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power

6) Recommend

- the excision of the words "in Jurisdictions" from the title of ¶ 405
- the following procedures to achieve the reduction of the number of jurisdictional bishops to 47 (with the understanding that Disciplinary changes taking effect January 1, 2009 would be implemented in 2012):
 - the reduction in the minimum number of jurisdictional bishops to five, and
 - establishing of 300,000 church members as the threshold for additional bishops.

¶ 405 as revised would then read:

¶ 405. *Provision for Episcopal Areas--*

1. In Central Conferences, the number of bishops shall be determined on the basis of missional needs, as approved by the General Conference upon recommendation of the Commission on Central Conference Affairs.

2. 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) A jurisdiction shall not have the number of bishops to which it is entitled reduced until and unless the number of its church members 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.

c) 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 that said jurisdiction shall be entitled to no less than the number of bishops to which it would be entitled under subparagraph a) above.

d) 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 fourth calendar year after said reduction has been determined by the General Conference.

7) Recommend that ¶ 409.1 be changed to substitute in relation to mandatory retirement the sixty-eighth birthday in place of the sixty-sixth birthday.

8) Recommend the following insertion of a new ¶ 409.2 (b) and the re-lettering of subsequent items:

¶ 409.2 (b) 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 jurisdictional or Central Conference committee on episcopacy on recommendation by the involved College of Bishops. Such bishops shall receive their pensions as provided in (a) 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.

Recommend therefore the addition to ¶ 410 of a new item (4.): 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.

9) Recommend in accord with the principles and procedures for peer review proposed by the Study of Ministry Commission and with the tradition of review of the character of preachers by annual conferences and in recognition of the inordinate drain that supervision and litigation now place on bishops, that General Conference charge GBHEM, the Legal Department of GCFA and the Council of Bishops with review and possible amendment of ¶ 362 so as to provide for greater flexibility in trial administration, to permit appropriate delegation of responsibilities and authority to chancellors and District Superintendents, and to guarantee peer involvement in reviews and trials.

10) The specification of dates for General Conference was established by custom when General Conference was composed only of male preachers (and preferably, according to Bishop Francis Asbury, of unmarried ones). There were several issues of concern to this Task Force: greater flexibility in scheduling episcopal elections, in the attendance of youth and young adults at General Conference and in relating General Conference to the scheduling of Annual, Jurisdictional and Central Conferences. All of these point to reconsideration of the current calendaring of General Conference. We therefore **recommend** that the Constitution ¶ 14. *Article II* be amended deleting the specification of dates “in the month of April or May.”

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: 2004 Legislation and Petitions

1) From *DCA*, p. 1745

Substitution for original 41219 in its entirety as follows:

The General Conference directs the Council of Bishops to convene a task force to study all aspects of the episcopacy. The scope of the task force will include but not be limited to:

- The theological and missional nature of episcopal leadership
- Deployment of bishops, including the use of retired bishops
- Workload of episcopal offices
- Unique needs throughout the Church
- Jurisdictional/Central Conference boundaries
- Compensation of bishops, including pensions
- Determination of process for the number of bishops
- Rising demand on Episcopal Fund, including the operating of episcopal Areas
- Possibility of implementing episcopal term limits

The task force will be convened no later than January 31, 2005. The task force will be directly responsible to the General Conference and will report its findings and recommendations to the 2008 General Conference.

The task force will be composed of three members of the GCFA Episcopacy Services Committee, one of whom shall be from a Central Conference; one clergy and one lay member of each of the five United States Jurisdictional Committees on the Episcopacy, and three bishops to be selected by the Council of Bishops, one of whom shall be from a Central Conference, and one member at-large for Central Conference inclusivity, to be named to by the Council of Bishops.

2) Referred by General Conference to the Episcopal Study Committee that it created on 5/6/04: Petition 40230 "Full-Time Executive for Council of Bishops"

By committee and GC action referred to the Task Force

Amend ¶¶ 49 as follows:

¶ 49. Article V.—The bishops shall have . . .

The Council of Bishops may elect from among its membership a full-time executive officer of the Council of Bishops. The bishop so elected shall be released from residential and presidential supervision during the period of holding such office.

Appendix 2: Members of the Study of the Episcopacy Task Force

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| The Rev. Charlotte Abram | SCJ Episcopacy Committee |
| The Rev. Michele Wright Bartlow | NEJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Dr. Ronald Bretsch | NEJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Dr. Carolyn Briscoe | SEJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Dr. Anita H. Crump | SCJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Ms. Marlene Cummins | NCJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Bishop Sally Dyck | COB |
| Mr. Paul Extrum-Fernandez | WJ Episcopacy Committee |
| The Rev. L. Jonathan Holston | GCFA Episcopal Services |
| The Rev. Steven Jones | GCFA Episcopal Services |
| The Rev. Rachel Lieder Simeon | WJ Episcopacy Committee |
| The Rev. Joe May | SEJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Dr. Myron F. McCoy | NCJ Episcopacy Committee |
| Bishop Ruediger Minor | COB |
| Bishop William B. Oden | COB |
| Ms. Nimfa Pastores | At-Large Member |
| The Rev. Hilaire Pesse | GCFA Episcopal Services |
| Dr. Russell E. Richey | Writer |
| Mr. Lonnie D. Brooks | Legislative Consultant |
| Ms. Peggy I. Sewell | Staff Support, GCFA |
| Ms. Jo Ann Mattos McClain | Staff Support, COB |

Appendix 3: Questions

In the course of its work the Task Force posed to itself and for its exploration of the charge from General Conference a series of questions. Among them were:

- What do you think the church and the world need from United Methodism's leaders? What parts of that mandate ought to lie with the bishops?
- Is your overarching aim to strengthen the office? If so, with respect to what ends and with regard to which aspects or dimensions of its nature and work?
- Is there a vision of the office that guides your thinking?
- What aspects of superintendency do you most wish to accent:
 - the teaching office?
 - its missional/strategic responsibilities?
 - its administrative, appointive authority?
 - its connectional roles?
 - its leadership through the Council?
 - its sacramental and pastoral dimensions?
 - its responsibility for the unity of and apostolic witness of the church?
- To make space for this/these roles, what responsibilities might be reassigned or delegated?
- How do you conceive of the bishops in relation to the church's ministry as a whole?
 - What should be represented in the episcopal office?
 - What should be shared with the whole people of God?
 - What should be lodged with elders or deacons?
 - What should be expressed among and within the representative ministerial offices?
- With respect to the superintending roles, which need to be focused in and exercised by bishops and which can be readily shared with District Superintendents?
- Is your concern primarily with episcopacy and the work of bishops within the United States? If so, ought that to be explicitly enunciated and dealt with directly?

- Where and how do you think bishops should be elected and would returning the election site to General Conference permit the Church to rethink many other aspects of episcopacy?
 - What do you think most needs attention?
 - the bishop-in-conference?
 - the bishops in Council?
 - the bishops in relation to General Conference?
 - the bishops through their connection to boards and agencies?
 - the bishops in their role as teachers and witnesses?
 - the commonalities, bonds, and understandings that make central and jurisdictional conference episcopacies nevertheless one?
- What changes in the Council would be most conducive to the leadership that the Church needs?
- In what new ways might the Church, the active bishops and the Council make use of the rich pool of talent, wisdom, experience, and memory represented in the retired bishops?

Appendix 4: Assumptions

To sharpen its focus and work towards some common understandings, the Task Force developed early in its meetings the following assumptions:

1) Given the above Disciplinary tasks and duties (Appendix 1), a first priority is to discern what ought to be the role of the bishop in fulfilling and providing oversight for the mission of The United Methodist Church in the 21st century. We were therefore guided in our efforts to think about episcopacy by the mission of the Church, the well-being of the people called United Methodist, and the effectiveness of our witness to the world.

2) Inherent in, indeed central to oversight and supervision – to the *episkopé* to which bishops are called and consecrated -- is their stewardship of the Church's resources in aiding it to fulfill its mission. As the Church's chief stewards, the bishops and the episcopal office should model and exemplify that good order to which they summon all the faithful. Such stewardship encompasses all the Church's talents -- spiritual, human, environmental, material, financial, cultural -- and entails effective deployment of all these limited resources.

3) Until recently, the UMC has been spared some of the financial impact of mainstream Protestantism's decline and the challenges of stewardship under such constraints. This may be because our members have given beyond the level that might have been projected. Now projections of income and of ballooning expense factors (rising medical costs, longer life spans, early or earlier retirements) oblige many Annual Conferences to reduce Conference staff, the number of District Superintendents, and support of programs. Connectional agencies experience similar constrictions, and the Episcopal Fund cannot be excluded from the financial impact of our decline. Itinerant general and district superintendency can and should be reshaped to lead and model stewardship in a time of diminishing resources.

4) No matter how much we wish to enhance episcopacy or how monumental the changes we propose, we do not start afresh to conceive and define the office. Instead we work from itinerant general superintendency as lived in our heritage, from Scripture's witness about leadership, from the wisdom about office and order derived from tradition and mirrored for us in other communions, from best practices and our best thinking in relation to these givens, and from discernment of what the Gospel beckons us toward. (See Appendix 5 on thinking biblically, theologically, missionally, ecumenically and practically.)

5) Itinerant general superintendency is so central and integral to the United Methodist connectional system that any change to episcopacy affects everything else, including our ministry as a whole, the conference structures (both those within Jurisdictions and those organized as Central Conferences), our congregations, the agencies and the work they all undertake. Even minor changes to the episcopacy can produce large alterations in the Connection.

6) In keeping with traditions inherited from John Wesley, refined through the centuries by Methodists, Evangelicals and United Brethren, and codified in *The Book of Discipline*, we affirm the distinctive leadership in all roles and offices, lay, licensed, consecrated, commissioned and ordained ministry, and in particular the ministry of the whole people of God and the distinctive roles of the laity.

7) Our purpose, therefore, ought to be to think in terms of and to enhance the connection, and to strengthen the whole people of God: laity in their various roles, and ministry at all levels and in all dimensions -- spiritual, teaching, serving, evangelizing, caring.

8) In particular, acceptable renewal of the episcopacy ought to strengthen, to make more effective and faithful, and to help the Church's leadership generally to fulfill the mission of the Church.

9) Insofar as possible our proposals ought to reflect our Wesleyan theology and practice of ministry and be offered in some dialogue with the parallel General Conference Study of Ministry Commission.

10) As we probe the nature and purpose of itinerant general superintendency, we must think of the world-wide nature of the church, most specifically of United Methodism but also of the autonomous/affiliated churches, of our larger communion as represented in the World Methodist Council, of the episcopal churches with which we are engaged bi-laterally and multi-laterally, and of the councils of churches within which our leaders function. Alterations in our understanding and practice of episcopacy ought to move The United Methodist Church towards the unity of the body of Christ for which Jesus prayed.

11) As much as possible, we should on prior and current studies of episcopacy, district superintendency, ministry, sacraments and church order.

12) Some matters of great concern, such as pensions for Central Conference bishops and the status of Jurisdictions, need to be dealt with in other contexts and/or after future studies.

Appendix 5: Toward a Theology of Episcopacy: Reflecting Theologically and Missionally

A faithful statement of the Wesleyan understanding of itinerant general superintendency must begin with consideration of Scripture and *episkopé*, draw freshly and imaginatively on the Wesleyan pattern, take special note of episcopacy as lived out in the Methodist² experience (with particular attention to the United States) and reflect the fullness of the ecumenical witness. That is to say, a Wesleyan understanding must be quadrilaterally undertaken. Beginning with Scripture, it reasons with Wesleyan terms and practices, acknowledges how under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we have lived into that Scriptural-Wesleyan paradigm and tests our notions against the ecumenical traditions. Our norms, then, are

Scripture: Texts on leadership generally and episcopacy particularly
Reason: Terms and practices expressive of the Wesleyan pattern
Experience: Episcopacy as lived (with particular attention to North America)
Tradition: Including particularly that mediated by the ecumenical witness

Scripture and episcopacy

Ministry -- lay and ordained; licensed, appointed, commissioned, consecrated; diaconal, presbyterial, episcopal -- norms itself on that of Christ (¶ ¶ 301, 403). So the Apostle Paul exhorts (Philippians 2:5-11): "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness." All ministry must emulate that of Christ and, insofar as humanly possible, look to Christ's servant ministry. Bishops, as "followers of Jesus Christ," are "called to servant leadership." (¶ 404.1) In that servant style, Bishops exercise for the church and the world the three offices of Christ's ministry: those of prophet, priest and king (prophetic, priestly and royal).

On the **royal office in servant style**, Christ himself provided directive and example, as Matthew and John inform us:

Matthew 20:25-26: But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.

John 13:5-9, 12-14: Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

² In this section, which covers the sweep of the Methodist and EUB experience, "United Methodist" is used when the reference is to the post-1968 or contemporary church and "Methodist" is allowed to stand for the composite experience (United Brethren, Evangelical Association, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, Methodist Episcopal Church South).

Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ... After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

The royal office certainly involves oversight, guidance, ordering, leadership, discipline, superintendence, but is "lordly" not according to societal patterns but to that of the one who washed his disciple's feet. Understood and exercised in such fashion, the "kingly" office inverts what history remembers about the conduct of kings. Bishops lead in diaconal fashion, that of basin and towel. They indeed "exercise the discipline of the whole Church" and "supervise and support the Church's life, work, and mission throughout the world." (§ 404.1) They guard, supervise, support, encourage and oversee. They appoint, consecrate, ordain, commission and order (in various ways) the church's ministry. They do so after the style of Christ and as we will note below through Christian conferencing.

The **priestly office in servant style** might appeal, as well, to the John passage. The retrospective from Hebrews also reminds us that it was as suffering servant that Christ exercised intercessory priestly submissions on our behalf.

Hebrews 5: 7-10 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

As priestly followers of the Suffering Servant, bishops do guard, model, teach and celebrate the church's liturgy. Bishops "lead all persons entrusted to their oversight in worship, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in their mission of witness and service in the world." They minister to all those who minister (lay, licensed, commissioned and ordained), praying for, encouraging, supporting and enabling them. And of course, they lay hands on to bless, "consecrate, ordain, and commission persons in ministry to the Church and world." (§ 404.1)

The **prophetic office in servant style** might well look to the beginning of Christ's ministry.

Luke 4: 16-21 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.
The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say
to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Bishops are servants of the Word. They lead the church in the proclamation of the kingdom, spreading the good news, especially the good news to the poor, the outcast, the marginalized and the exploited. "Bishops are to be prophetic voices and courageous leaders in the cause of justice for all people." (§ 404.1) They promise redemption. They call to discipleship. They witness to the radical demands of Christian living. Under the mandate to preach the Gospel, they exercise the church's teaching office. Bishops are authorized, indeed charged, "to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church." (§ 404.1) As such, United Methodist bishops labor on behalf of the whole church, sharing with all those who exercise *episkopé*, responsibility for interpreting and transmitting the gospel of Christ, seeking "to be a sign of the unity of the faith," and "are to be prophetic voices and courageous leaders in the cause of justice for all people." (§ 404.1) [See below for further elaboration of the ecumenical episcopal prophetic teaching office.]

Scripture has much to say about leadership, indeed witnesses throughout in both Testaments to ways in which God calls and directs God's servants in the exercise of *episkopé*. And in several places, the early church gave counsel about the episcopal office, as for instance from Timothy and Titus:

1 Timothy 3.1-7 The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way -- for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1.7-12 For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and

self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

In interpreting such Biblical passages, with their culturally limited conceptions of appropriate leadership, Methodists and EUBs have, of course, been drawn by the Spirit's guidance, by the wider Scriptural witness, and by other elements of the quadrilateral to broaden their sense of who should occupy the episcopal office. It is also the case that Methodists have their own take on Scripture and a Wesleyan reading of leadership, one that sees "itinerant general superintendency" as *the* faithful expression of the Apostolic pattern. To that we now turn briefly.

The Wesleyan Pattern

In their chapters on "Episcopacy and Methodism" and "Itinerant General Superintendency: Asbury's Precept and Practice," Thomas Frank and Russell Richey attend at some length to the very distinctive leadership style(s) and norm(s) exemplified by John Wesley and Francis Asbury. They appeal to the consensus in early American Methodism that its practice of superintendency faithfully followed that of John Wesley, adjusting and adapting it as necessary to the North American context. And they indicate that Asbury, Thomas Coke and their successors in the episcopal office understood itinerancy in general and itinerant, general superintendency in particular to be not just Wesleyan, but a recovery of the New Testament pattern of leadership: that of Christ and the apostles. Coke and Asbury spell this out in their annotations on the *Discipline* (see the reference in Appendix 9), insisting their episcopacy was "the primitive and apostolic plan." Methodism, the first bishops argued, reached back past the centuries of settled, diocesan episcopacies to effect a distinctive recovery of apostolic leadership -- ministry as missional, evangelistic, sent, appointed/appointive -- "a royal priesthood that has apostolic roots." (§403)

As apostolic, Methodism's conception and practice of episcopacy was pneumatological, an understanding spelled out in some detail in the Richey/Frank volume and therefore not reiterated here. When truly pneumatological, when truly faithful, Methodism has been Spirit-led in its exercise of *episkopé* and its understanding and exercise of superintendency, making it accordingly dynamic in character, subject to renewal and to critique. A full discussion of its pneumatological character would require much attention to the long, dynamic process of Methodism's growing in the Spirit, a rehearsal of the history of the church's understanding and practice of superintendency. This would be a theological reading of the adoption of the Restrictive Rules, of episcopacy as contested in virtually every Methodist squabble and deeply implicated in and affected by the fight over slavery, of bishops as bearers of Methodism's evangelical doctrines and witnesses to social holiness, of the witness brought into our several unions out of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South, Methodist Protestant and Evangelical United Brethren experience, of dimensions of the office lost with the creation of the Judicial Council and gained with the establishment of

the Council of Bishops, of the discoveries that the global dimension of the Council of Bishops has yielded, and of the effect of leadership transformations in American society (our next topic). Such a quick overview should suggest what we indicate, as do James Kirby, Gerald Moede and others (references in Appendix 9), namely that the Methodist/Wesleyan pattern does not remain static. American Methodist episcopacy has evolved, as has our connection as a whole. Bishops have done much to effect change as they are both agents and creatures of connection.

Certainly another Wesleyan emphasis, though not absolutely unique, is our understanding of Bishops as a special ministry, not a special order, elected from the elders and consecrated -- not ordained -- to their ministry of general oversight and supervision (§§ 403, 404). Given that commitment, we might question the warrant for separating the treatment of superintendency from the overall discussion of "The Ministry of the Ordained," a change made with *The 1976 Book of Discipline*. Prior *Disciplines* considered the episcopacy as a chapter within the larger section on Ministry, a placement rather more in keeping with our doctrine. Or to put it positively, one can make a strong case for revising our theology to construe episcopacy as, in fact, a separate order from the current *Discipline's* organization, from the way some clergy and laity revere bishops, from the manner in which bishops treat one another, from the relocation of their membership on election to the Council of Bishops, and from the office's life character.

Episcopacy as lived (with particular attention to North America)³

In reflecting on episcopacy experientially, we might take note of the long-term effect of 1) American (U.S.) democratic protocols, 2) certain functional or best-practice dictates, 3) the power of contemporary leadership patterns, and 4) ways that The United Methodist Church and its predecessor churches (Evangelical Association, United Brethren, Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Protestant Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South) have interacted with these societal influences.

1. American democratic protocols

At least from the moment of Asbury's decision to accept the office only if elected, Methodist superintendency has felt the pressure of civil political practice. For some around Asbury and his successors, including some of the bishops' closest co-workers, mere election did not begin to care for the monarchical power inherent in the Wesleyan pattern. So began two centuries of efforts to widen participation in governance, decision-making, appointments. Virtually every schism turned, in one way or another, on episcopal power and authority or perceived abuse thereof. And virtually every development in the church has had its effect on the episcopal office, sometimes by

³ In *An Introduction to World Methodism*, Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White argue persuasively and despite Wesleyanism's fragmentation that the Methodist experience in British and American contexts establishes "two quite distinct traditions." (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): vii.

design, other times by accident -- presiding elders (District Superintendents), the Council of Bishops, General Conference, delegations, Restrictive Rules, boards and agencies, *Christian Advocates*, cabinets, conflicts over race and slavery, lengthening of term limits, accommodating language and ethnicity, colleges and seminaries, admission of laity, women in ministry, unification, Judicial Council, jurisdictional elections, consultation, accountability, the increasingly global make-up of the church. The litany could go on and on, listing new or altered features of our connection, which in one way or another brought American democratic precepts or practices into juxtaposition with episcopacy. From these "experiences" the United Methodist Church has come to expect bishops to exercise *episcopate* -- to superintend, to lead, to appoint, to govern, to equip, to teach, to guard the faith, to evangelize -- in some accord with the wisdom, practices and procedures of American democracy.

2. Functional or best-practice dictates

Bishops and Methodist episcopacy have experienced and been affected by a second set of societal/cultural best-practice norms. These sometimes touch the authority or power of the office but more typically affect its exercise. Here, too, the list might be long. Included would be educational practices and patterns that shape how bishops exercise the teaching office, expectations about good business practice, about accountability and transparency, about administrative effectiveness, and about financial management and fiscal integrity. The episcopal office also is shaped by, and shapes itself by, the practitioners whom it employs and who extend its work. Here one might list various new roles and offices on local, regional and national levels, including communication specialists, program coordinators, chancellors, executive assistants, directors of ministerial services, directors of connectional ministries, information technocrats and directors of new church development. Adopting best practices and enhancing its leadership with specialists, United Methodist episcopacy textures itself, adds competencies, and develops nuances that await full articulation.

3. Contemporary leadership patterns

A third experience, closely related to the prior two, derives from ideals or models of leadership. More so than other experiential norms, this one is time-sensitive, one ideal giving way to another. Sometimes those derive from societal styles, sometimes from politics, sometimes from the corporate or business arena, sometimes from other religious communities. The appropriation of servant leadership and its introduction into the *Discipline* as it became a powerful -- indeed, the prevailing form -- of corporate practice illustrates how experience contributes to our conception of episcopacy. The United Methodist Church could, as we suggest above, find ample New Testament grounds for servant leadership and servanthood and, of course, it is central to our understanding of the diaconate. However, the underdeveloped Biblical and theological warrant would lead one to suspect that the notion has been imported from corporate America.

Leadership as exercised in other religious communities can also influence Methodist practice. One highly visible example, namely the media-savvy, contemporary culture-sensitive, charismatic preacher/worship leader, a leadership style dominant in religious broadcasting and modeled by self-anointed “bishops,” is unlikely to gain Disciplinary status any more than did its nineteenth century counterpart, the camp meeting preacher. But as the latter did affect episcopal practice so a few United Methodist bishops will, we suspect, draw some inspiration from that media model. United Methodism would more likely borrow and arguably already has borrowed ideals or models from other episcopal churches, Anglican and Roman Catholic especially. Their patterns add precedent and warrant to what has been a gradual shift away from “itinerant general superintendency” and towards a diocesan model -- with administration, budgetary roles, pastoral oversight, and problem-solving focused locally. Leadership styles do change and the current forms in society, politics, business, communications and religious communities offer United Methodism ways of being effective, being incarnational, for the day. So we should expect episcopal leadership to change -- some patterns (as for instance that of the CEO which normed executive ministry) giving way to new ones for a new day. With that assumption, the Task Force recommends the removal of the now dated leadership terms of “Mode,” “Pace,” and “Skill,” introduced in *The 1976 Book of Discipline* as ¶ 502, now ¶ 402.

4. The UMC (EA, UB, MEC, MPC, MECS) Experience

The above three experiential resources for the understanding and practice of superintendency derive from the church’s and bishops’ engagement with the world and with leadership beyond the church. Methodism learns also from itself. Indeed, sometimes Methodism teaches the world about effective leadership. Methodist connectionalism and its successful expansion by planting relatively uniform order, liturgy, practice and governance across the nation (and eventually the world) taught the business community a trick or two. Methodist itinerancy and stump preaching shaped nineteenth century political practice. Methodist national communication systems -- the *Christian Advocates*, Sunday school materials, missionary magazines -- outpaced their secular counterparts and doubtless influenced business practices.

So, if superintendency in some respects has been confined or crowded, as the first two experiential norms might suggest, it has expanded on, developed, experimented with and shaped leadership -- its own and that of Methodist ministry in general. Methodist bishops have, from the beginning, modeled leadership. Asbury did so self-consciously and deliberately, from the moment he landed in North America, conscious of setting a Wesleyan example, especially with regard to itinerancy. Later bishops may not have been quite so self-conscious in their exemplification of leadership. However, their actual practice, more so than precept, modeled ministry -- on itinerancy, daily and weekly rhythms, work, reading, spirituality, speech, writing, self-expectations, residency, sabbaticals, discernment, and holy conferencing -- each of which deserves a dissertation. One illustration of the bishop’s leading by example will have to suffice. The trend in United Methodist ministry towards longer pastorates tracks

the bishop's shifting from multiple conference itinerating superintendency into a diocesan mode and into two and more quadrennial terms.

American Methodist bishops historically have been the church's chief strategists -- exercising missionary, evangelistic, envisioning, initiative-taking roles. Focused preeminently in the person and authority of Asbury, these strategic responsibilities over time have been divided, diffused, differentiated, and delegated. The *Discipline* nevertheless specifies the charge (§401):

The purpose of superintending is to equip the Church in its disciple-making ministry... It is also their task to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for the equipping of Christian people for service in the Church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ and to help extend the service in mission.

Bishops have shared that strategic role and the superintending office with a distinctive Methodist office, that of the presiding elder (PE), now district superintendent (DS), to whom superintendency or *episkopé* is extended (§401). The Presiding Elder or District Superintendent historically functioned as chief strategist within his district, a vital delegation when bishops presided over multiple conferences and not necessarily the same ones year-to-year. A contested office -- one of the denomination's bitterest fights and longest enduring schism came over whether the presiding elders should be elected or appointed -- the district superintendency needs more theological treatment. The *Discipline* is long on responsibilities (§§ 419, 421, 422, 423, 424) and short on the qualities for the office (§420). Nor has Methodist literature been very helpful. Insiders will have to provide our theology, exegeting practice in the manner of Asbury and Coke, of our corporate, collegial superintendency.

Another Methodist distinctive related to the District Superintendent has been the practice of corporate and, more recently, collegial superintendency, represented preeminently in the institution of the cabinet. The bishop-in-cabinet as well as the office of District Superintendent deserves more adequate description and theological commentary. Again, such treatment will have to come from an insider since the work of the cabinet and much of the activity of the District Superintendent are conducted *in camera* and/or governed by expectations of confidentiality.

The Church has been more explicit on the corporate and collegial dimension of the Council of Bishops (COB) as are certainly the bishops themselves. Their practices of covenanting and covenant groups, discernment decision-making, holy conferencing and restructuring for mission have set the terms for similar practices at conference and local church levels. These episcopal patterns and their diffusion represent but the present expression of episcopal modeling of "conference," of the church's corporate nature, and of collegial leadership. That practice of modeling and diffusion can be traced from Wesley and from Asbury onward. Among the recent ways in which the bishops have established patterns for the church as a whole has been in their living into the diversity and global nature of the church. Although it may not yet be fully evident to those outside the Council of Bishops and not yet adequately theologized, the election to

the episcopacy and presence in the Council of African Americans, Asian Americans, women, Hispanic Americans and Central Conference bishops is reshaping United Methodism's understanding and practice of episcopacy and of leadership generally. We recognize the inclusiveness on the Council remains incomplete at the present time.

As the bishops model leadership for the denomination, so also the episcopacy responds to the development of other offices and institutions. In addition to those already mentioned within conferences, cabinets and extended cabinets, the general agencies, the colleges, universities, hospitals, camps and homes, the Judicial Council and more recently the caucuses have affected the episcopacy in important if sometimes subtle ways. Power-sharing with other leaders reshapes what bishops do and redefines the office. In the past, for instance, the teaching office that belongs by Christian tradition to the bishop came to be exercised *de facto* by the *Christian Advocate* editors and then passed along to educators and to the program agencies. More recently, the Council, through its theological initiatives, and individual bishops within Annual Conferences have labored to recover the teaching office. The episcopacy, then, defines and is defined in its interaction with the array of United Methodist leadership.

The office is shaped as well by the elections that produce it, by the processes for nomination, and by the politicking around episcopacy. Those dynamics need as well to be reflected in our theology of the office.

The ecumenical witness

In its search for unity, the ecumenical movement, to which United Methodism is constitutionally committed and to which Methodism has contributed materially and consistently, has turned to the witness of the early church and of Scripture. The harvest of this wisdom out of the tradition on ministry, on much of which we have already touched, can be found in the 1982 Faith and Order publication of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.⁴ BEM's consensus on episcopacy is a study in conciseness:

M29. Bishops preach the Word, preside at the sacraments, and administer discipline in such a way as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight, continuity and unity in the Church. They have pastoral oversight of the Area to which they are called. They serve the apostolicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission. They relate the Christian community in their Area to the wider Church, and the universal Church to their community. They, in communion

⁴ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111. (Geneva: WCC, 1982), abbreviated BEM. Copyright 1982 World Council of Churches, ISBN 2-8254-0709-7, 30th printing, 1996. <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/bem5.html>. Not to be reproduced mechanically or electronically for commercial purposes or with changes in the text without prior permission. The references are to the paragraph number of the section, Baptism #, Eucharist #, or Ministry # which should guide the reader to the appropriate place whether in the printed or electronic version.

with the presbyters and deacons and the whole community, are responsible for the orderly transfer of ministerial authority in the Church.

BEM posits the threefold pattern of ministry (bishop, elder, deacon) as based in Scripture, as sustained in the traditions of the churches, and as ecumenical norm. It treats episcopacy as preeminently sacramental, pastoral, teaching -- presidency and proclamation exercised so "as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight, continuity and unity in the Church." **(M29)** Bishops are to be exemplars and witnesses to the "apostolicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life." **(M27)** Their leadership as that of all in ministry should be personal, collegial, and communal. **(M26)** Bishops should be representative -- a term which we used in prior *Disciplines* but now slight -- pointing to dependence on Christ but also representing the community to God, and leading the community in its representation of Christ to the world. Many of the other themes in *BEM* have been touched upon already as they have become staples in Christian thinking about leadership. Not heretofore treated are the notions of the historic episcopate which *BEM* treats under the rubric of the "Apostolic Tradition," offering reinterpretations that also inform the United Methodist Church's conversations with the Episcopal Church (ECUSA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Such bi-laterals, the important quadrilateral Pan-Methodist Commission, as well as the larger ecumenical conversations help Methodism claim the larger, longer traditions that see bishops as servants of the whole church, as exercisers of the teaching office, as signs and laborers for the church's unity. So now Lutherans and United Methodists can affirm:

"Bishops are given authority to preach, teach, and uphold the apostolic faith of the church: to lead all persons entrusted to their oversight in worship and in the celebration of the sacraments; to supervise and support the church's life, work and mission throughout the world; and to consecrate, commission, ordain, or authorize the ordination of persons for the ministries to which they are called."
Confessing our Faith Together, ¶62

United Methodism configures the office and bishops exercise their authority so as to further the church's ecumenical commitments and apostolic faith.

The Church lodges a special ecumenical and doctrinal charge with the bishops collectively. By Constitution, (¶ 2, Article IV and ¶ 6, Article VI, Doctrinal Standards (¶ 101), Theological Task (¶ 104), and various Disciplinary precepts committed to the unity of the church, United Methodism asks the Council of Bishops to guide its (The United Methodist Church's) ecumenical endeavor. Specifically, it "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." (¶ 427.2) The *Discipline* further specifies that, "In formal relations with other churches and/or ecclesial bodies, the Council of Bishops shall be the primary liaison for The United Methodist Church." (¶ 2401.1) In its exercise of these ecumenical responsibilities, the Council is guided by one of its own, who serves as the denomination's chief ecumenical officer and he (currently William B. Oden) and the Council of Bishops are aided by the General

Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (§ 1903.20, 22, 23, 25; § 1904; § 1905.4; § 2401.2). Under his leadership, United Methodists and other United Methodist bishops participate in our several ecumenical conversations. This “holy conferencing” radiates beyond the participants “to tradition” the Council, the bishops as individual leaders and the denomination. The United Methodist office of bishop thereby claims the rich heritage of wisdom and practice of *episkopé*.

Conclusion

Our norms for thinking about episcopacy, then, are of course the diverse Biblical counsels and models (**Scripture**), the Wesleyan pattern (**Reason**), episcopacy or superintendency as lived, with particular attention to North America (**Experience**), and the ecumenical witness (**Tradition**). The quadrilateral provides a working guide for leadership that orients United Methodism to its mission and offers us Faithfulness + Hope + Love. Our charge as a denomination, we think, is for us to be in our rethinking episcopacy as in all else:

- Faithful to Scripture, the Wesleyan norms, the Constitution.
- Instructed by our experience with itinerant general superintendency.
- Cognizant of best practices of leadership, teaching, ministry.
- Drawn by our vision of the kingdom of God and our hope for the unity of Christ's church.
- Committed to and oriented by the church's apostolic witness.

Appendix 6: Work Load Study

Task Force to Study the Episcopacy: A Recommendation Regarding Work Load

In its legislation to create the Task Force to Study the Episcopacy, General Conference specified that the workload of bishops should be addressed. The Task Force heard that concern repeatedly voiced by the bishops, active and retired, whom it interviewed. And we found it to be a factor in precipitating early retirements.

Determining workload is difficult because of the various natures, needs and specific missions of each annual conference as well as the various gifts and leadership styles of the bishops. In an attempt to obtain reliable actual data on episcopal workload, a request was sent out to the Council of Bishops (retired and active, jurisdictional and Central Conference) soliciting input or ideas that they might have in determining and sharing workload throughout the connection. Respondents identified the following factors as placing the highest demand or stress on bishops (and the list and rankings have been confirmed by others who did not initially respond and confirmed in some Colleges of Bishops' discussion that followed):

- 1) The number of clergy that a bishop supervises and appoints
- 2) The number of Annual Conferences over which a bishop presides
- 3) Geography (terrain or expanse to be served and over which to be traveled)
- 4) Missional reasons (such as overseeing the outreach to growing populations in various places in the US and world)
- 5) Church membership (the basis of the current formula, ¶405)
- 6) Size of available cabinet and staff in each Annual Conference
- 7) The number of churches
- 8) The number of countries and time zones a bishop has in Annual Conference(s)
- 9) General Church and Council of Bishop responsibilities

The first four were most consistently mentioned as being of utmost importance. The latter five do not represent any particular weight or order in priority.

To develop a formula related to workload, we began by looking at what causes the most stress and what entails the most work for bishops. The **number of clergy** clearly seems to be the primary time and energy factor in most bishops' experience rather than number of churches or membership. Clergy require more and more time in terms of supervision, complaints and legal processes, and leadership training on the part of the bishop.

An "audit" of the number of clergy as opposed to the number of church members would be easier to make in jurisdictional and Central Conferences, influenced by fewer factors such as how well church membership records are maintained, etc. Clergy numbers included appointed elders in full connection, full-time/part-time local pastors, not retired.

Based on 1 bishop/1100 appointed clergy (including part-time and full-time local pastors) the allocation would be:

| <u>Jurisdiction</u> | <u>Avg. clergy/bishop</u> | <u># of bishops</u> | <u>current #</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| NCJ | 1032 | 9 | 10 |
| NEJ | 885 | 8 | 10 |
| SCJ | 752 | 8 | 11 |
| SEJ | 1182 | 13 | 13 |
| WJ | 603 | 3* | 6 |

*Presently the *BOD* makes six (6) the minimum number of bishops/jurisdiction. From a workload perspective this number is essential in order to have enough leadership to determine complaints against bishops, determine important missional strategy, and resource each other and the jurisdiction.

Since geography -- the terrain overseen -- is also a critical factor in terms of keeping the connectional fabric strong, the formula would continue by taking expanse into account. Taking the average square mileage per bishop in a jurisdiction (sq. mileage doesn't change), 1 bishop would be added for every increased increment of 75,000 square miles. (Conversely if the jurisdictions would be reduced in square mileage, a bishop would be reduced based on the same incremental change.) Including geography as a factor produces the following allocation:

| <u>Jurisdiction</u> | <u>avg sq mi/bishop</u> | <u># of bishops based on 1 bishop/1100 clergy</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|
| NCJ | 49,376 | no additional bishops |
| NEJ | 22,520 | no additional bishops |
| SCJ | 86,619 | 1 additional bishop = 9 |
| SEJ | 34,924 | no additional bishops |
| WJ | (262,517*) 165,516 | (4 additional = 7) 2 additional = 5 |

*262,517 is the square mileage of the Western Jurisdiction if the full square mileage of Alaska is taken into account. Many believe that since there are not churches in all areas of the state of Alaska, the full mileage should not be used. The numbers in the parentheses are for the full area and the numbers outside the parentheses are for the area where churches are located.

However, this double-factor formula doesn't address the reality (and feedback) that having multiple Annual Conferences places significant workload and stress on the bishop. "Double the pleasure, double the fun," as one bishop put it. It's important that if there are substantial changes in the episcopacy, including the reduction of the number of bishops, the "cost" of the reduction not be borne only by the episcopal leaders (or there will be unintended consequences of money, stress, illness, etc.).

Over and over again, the feedback and discussions on workload stressed that the leadership style of the bishop is important. Some of the style-generated work-stress issues need to be addressed in the election of bishops, in the training sessions, and in the expectations held by clergy and laity; for instance, that a bishop will not be “hands-on,” even in smaller conferences where there is less extended staff, and higher expectation for a bishop to be more “hands on” in regards to programming or administration, but will also focus on vision/mission, presence and legal matters.

This workload study only addressed these factors associated with the jurisdictions. In looking at similar factors in Central Conferences, the complexities only increased. In order to address workload, other issues need to be changed so as to prevent adding more work and stress on the bishops. Recommended legislation would look at these issues:

- 1) Change in guaranteed appointments
- 2) Legislation that permits and suggests the use of a conference superintendent
- 3) Legislation that makes the 12-year stay in an Annual Conference/Area more of the norm than the exception
- 4) Legislation/policy that discourages first-quadrennium bishops from being the President of the College
- 5) Better and focused training for superintendents (as extensions of the bishop)
- 6) Better legal support from the General Church
- 7) Council of Bishops meeting more frequently and/or 1 full Council meeting/year and 1 regional meeting (Central Conferences and US) a year to deal with issues related to the fulfilling of the mission of the Church for those regions as well as greater support, specific training, accountability, and mutual resourcing
- 8) If there is a reduction of bishops, instead of Annual Conferences being “yoked,” larger Areas would be created so as to avoid doubling the Annual Conference work which significantly adds to episcopal workload and stress

Number of Bishops Based on Mission or U.S. Population

Although not a workload issue, conversation often turned to what a missional perspective on the number of bishops would look like. In rough figures, the population areas for each jurisdiction are given with the ration of bishop per millions of people:

| <u>Jurisdiction</u> | <u># bishops</u> | <u>population</u> | <u>bishop/pop</u> | <u>sq. mileage</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| NCJ | 10 | 50.5 million | 1/5 mil | 493, 764 |
| NEJ | 10 | 63.5 million | 1/6 mil | 225, 205 |
| SCJ | 11 | 67.3 million | 1/6 mil | 886, 806 |
| SEJ | 13 | 64.6 million | 1/5 mil | 419, 092 |
| WJ | 6 | 64.6 million | 1/10 mil | 993, 095 |

The following chart, courtesy of GCFA, breaks out several of the work-load factors:

| Episcopal Area | Jurisdiction | Area (Sq Miles) | 2005 Membership | Area Populati on | Percent of population with no reported religious affiliation | United Methodist Mem bership as a percentage of Area Population | Number of Local Churches | Number of Pastoral Charges | Median Church Size (Members) |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| CHICAGO AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTHERN ILLINOIS | NC | 11,639 | 107,161 | 9,308,976 | 43.05% | 1.15% | 387 | 367 | 177 |
| DAKOTAS AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| DAKOTAS | NC | 114,250 | 42,133 | 1,328,627 | 29.65% | 3.17% | 278 | 179 | 79 |
| ILLINOIS AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| ILLINOIS GREAT RIVERS | NC | 46,368 | 149,003 | 3,454,395 | 49.00% | 4.31% | 923 | 589 | 87 |
| INDIANA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTH INDIANA | NC | 17,099 | 98,292 | 3,295,720 | 57.84% | 2.98% | 561 | 508 | 101 |
| SOUTH INDIANA | NC | 20,261 | 111,320 | 2,976,253 | 56.28% | 3.74% | 674 | 569 | 79 |
| IOWA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| IOWA | NC | 56,470 | 193,637 | 2,966,334 | 41.52% | 6.53% | 840 | 580 | 132 |
| MICHIGAN AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| DETROIT | NC | 34,681 | 102,427 | 6,709,182 | 57.19% | 1.53% | 465 | 377 | 126 |
| WEST MICHIGAN | NC | 23,351 | 67,894 | 3,401,233 | 60.11% | 2.00% | 420 | 330 | 97 |
| MINNESOTA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| MINNESOTA | NC | 71,236 | 81,890 | 5,091,519 | 38.34% | 1.61% | 392 | 302 | 133 |
| OHIO EAST AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| EAST OHIO | NC | 18,859 | 180,463 | 5,613,069 | 50.93% | 3.22% | 816 | 660 | 136 |
| OHIO WEST AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| WEST OHIO | NC | 26,960 | 230,626 | 5,850,973 | 59.04% | 3.94% | 1,176 | 982 | 104 |
| WISCONSIN AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| WISCONSIN | NC | 52,590 | 93,736 | 5,504,317 | 39.52% | 1.70% | 487 | 368 | 108 |
| ALBANY AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| TROY | NE | 21,496 | 51,636 | 1,545,785 | 52.27% | 3.34% | 302 | 260 | 111 |
| WYOMING | NE | 10,249 | 63,683 | 741,467 | 48.83% | 8.59% | 299 | 204 | 138 |
| BOSTON AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NEW ENGLAND | NE | 52,073 | 95,742 | 11,683,664 | 42.26% | 0.82% | 539 | 470 | 129 |
| | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|---------|---------|------------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| HARRISBURG AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA | NE | 19,070 | 146,564 | 2,699,835 | 49.52% | 5.43% | 804 | 499 | 109 |
| NEW JERSEY AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| GREATER NEW JERSEY | NE | 9,924 | 102,755 | 9,516,610 | 41.54% | 1.08% | 602 | 548 | 103 |
| NEW YORK AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NEW YORK | NE | 13,186 | 124,527 | 15,830,961 | 36.63% | 0.79% | 480 | 429 | 197 |
| NEW YORK WEST AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTH CENTRAL NEW YORK | NE | 21,537 | 77,742 | 1,850,622 | 53.31% | 4.20% | 408 | 306 | 125 |
| WESTERN NEW YORK | NE | 10,380 | 57,091 | 1,429,429 | 48.30% | 3.99% | 261 | 236 | 164 |
| PHILADELPHIA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA | NE | 8,660 | 126,739 | 5,746,028 | 41.93% | 2.21% | 464 | 443 | 196 |
| PENINSULA-DELAWARE | NE | 5,278 | 92,281 | 1,270,734 | 59.10% | 7.26% | 452 | 295 | 106 |
| PITTSBURG AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA | NE | 19,989 | 191,593 | 3,597,494 | 36.51% | 5.33% | 885 | 562 | 133 |
| WASHINGTON AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON | NE | 7,592 | 196,487 | 5,901,465 | 53.80% | 3.33% | 684 | 576 | 187 |
| WEST VIRGINIA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| WEST VIRGINIA | NE | 25,770 | 105,348 | 1,713,150 | 64.03% | 6.15% | 1,222 | 574 | 38 |
| ARKANSAS AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| ARKANSAS | SC | 52,068 | 138,309 | 2,779,154 | 42.88% | 4.98% | 716 | 483 | 64 |
| DALLAS AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTH TEXAS | SC | 17,294 | 159,762 | 4,407,857 | 46.42% | 3.62% | 327 | 281 | 149 |
| FORT WORTH AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| CENTRAL TEXAS | SC | 26,794 | 160,039 | 3,318,491 | 47.27% | 4.82% | 318 | 253 | 195 |
| HOUSTON AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| TEXAS | SC | 45,759 | 283,483 | 7,369,532 | 47.20% | 3.85% | 715 | 556 | 96 |
| KANSAS AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| KANSAS WEST | SC | 59,892 | 85,796 | 1,203,057 | 45.77% | 7.13% | 377 | 266 | 124 |
| KANSAS EAST | SC | 23,148 | 74,966 | 1,554,797 | 54.62% | 4.82% | 330 | 234 | 98 |
| LOUISIANA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| LOUISIANA | SC | 43,562 | 126,826 | 4,523,628 | 41.22% | 2.80% | 526 | 372 | 94 |
| MISSOURI AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| MISSOURI | SC | 68,384 | 173,794 | 5,782,112 | 48.36% | 3.01% | 902 | 628 | 82 |
| NEBRASKA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NEBRASKA | SC | 72,673 | 83,015 | 1,754,865 | 41.17% | 4.73% | 400 | 243 | 109 |
| NW TEXAS-NM AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NEW MEXICO | SC | 154,873 | 39,218 | 2,892,568 | 40.68% | 1.36% | 150 | 128 | 109 |
| NORTHWEST TEXAS | SC | 61,956 | 65,772 | 1,215,152 | 29.03% | 5.41% | 219 | 187 | 158 |
| | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---------|---------|------------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| OKLAHOMA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| OKLAHOMA | SC | 68,667 | 244,880 | 3,547,884 | 39.24% | 6.90% | 540 | 442 | 183 |
| OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSIONARY | SC | 29,403 | 6,237 | 5,653,166 | 45.05% | 0.11% | 86 | 70 | 60 |
| SAN ANTONIO AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| RIO GRANDE | SC | 79,450 | 14,468 | 15,802,366 | 44.36% | 0.09% | 95 | 84 | 99 |
| SOUTHWEST TEXAS | SC | 82,883 | 119,657 | 5,554,701 | 42.94% | 2.15% | 346 | 304 | 167 |
| AL--W FLORIDA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA | SE | 36,363 | 147,942 | 2,811,151 | 51.72% | 5.26% | 659 | 473 | 65 |
| BIRMINGHAM AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTH ALABAMA | SE | 23,952 | 153,703 | 2,698,401 | 42.25% | 5.70% | 832 | 684 | 74 |
| CHARLOTTE AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| WESTERN NO CAROLINA | SE | 21,836 | 293,090 | 4,513,717 | 49.00% | 6.49% | 1,139 | 877 | 138 |
| COLUMBIA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | SE | 30,109 | 241,664 | 4,255,083 | 52.43% | 5.68% | 1,031 | 672 | 126 |
| FLORIDA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| FLORIDA | SE | 44,445 | 321,849 | 14,462,106 | 58.77% | 2.23% | 726 | 704 | 239 |
| HOLSTON AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| HOLSTON | SE | 21,522 | 167,340 | 2,692,480 | 46.60% | 6.22% | 921 | 595 | 85 |
| LOUISVILLE AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| KENTUCKY | SE | 35,282 | 152,193 | 3,879,889 | 46.81% | 3.92% | 846 | 622 | 88 |
| RED BIRD MISSIONARY | SE | 2,799 | 1,406 | 62,213 | 71.02% | 2.26% | 24 | 16 | 49 |
| MISSISSIPPI AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| MISSISSIPPI | SE | 48,140 | 188,783 | 2,921,088 | 45.35% | 6.46% | 1,154 | 696 | 73 |
| NASHVILLE AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| MEMPHIS | SE | 13,044 | 88,265 | 1,719,804 | 50.63% | 5.13% | 458 | 279 | 78 |
| TENNESSEE | SE | 17,995 | 117,358 | 2,268,748 | 51.61% | 5.17% | 617 | 388 | 78 |
| NORTH GEORGIA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTH GEORGIA | SE | 22,085 | 341,813 | 6,666,783 | 55.35% | 5.13% | 921 | 792 | 126 |
| RALEIGH AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| NORTH CAROLINA | SE | 29,894 | 236,544 | 4,232,459 | 60.82% | 5.59% | 818 | 641 | 147 |
| RICHMOND AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| VIRGINIA | SE | 35,119 | 341,264 | 6,730,309 | 58.94% | 5.07% | 1,212 | 903 | 148 |
| SOUTH GEORGIA AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| SOUTH GEORGIA | SE | 36,507 | 137,831 | 2,389,753 | 54.83% | 5.77% | 648 | 446 | 74 |
| DENVER AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| YELLOWSTONE | W | 154,451 | 15,754 | 1,033,225 | 55.13% | 1.52% | 132 | 88 | 68 |
| ROCKY MOUNTAIN | W | 171,967 | 68,796 | 6,345,194 | 53.44% | 1.08% | 268 | 248 | 128 |
| LOS ANGELES AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC | W | 73,125 | 88,665 | 23,425,196 | 50.11% | 0.38% | 379 | 389 | 152 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-----|
| PHOENIX AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| DESERT SOUTHWEST | W | 164,533 | 43,003 | 7,617,847 | 61.12% | 0.56% | 140 | 141 | 166 |
| PORTLAND AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| OREGON-IDAHO | W | 104,449 | 33,752 | 4,551,825 | 64.40% | 0.74% | 213 | 184 | 92 |
| SAN FRANCISCO AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| CALIFORNIA-NEVADA | W | 156,348 | 85,925 | 14,563,957 | 61.36% | 0.59% | 358 | 367 | 146 |
| SEATTLE AREA | | | | | | | | | |
| ALASKA MISSIONARY | W | 81,263 | 4,000 | 558,514 | 65.73% | 0.72% | 28 | 27 | 96 |
| PACIFIC NORTHWEST | W | 86,959 | 57,497 | 6,543,942 | 66.99% | 0.88% | 268 | 252 | 146 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| UNITED STATES | | 3,017,961 | 7,995,429 | 296,410,404 | 50.24% | 2.70% | 34,660 | 26,228 | 110 |

Appendix 7: Study of Connection, Episcopacy, and Ecclesiology (the Nature, Identity and Mission) of The United Methodist Church

We recommend (**Recommendations 3 and 4** above), that General Conference make some provision for on-going consideration of concerns which this Task Force has opened but is not equipped or staffed to pursue and which pertain to episcopacy in relation to the structures and work of the Connection as a whole. We earlier considered either (1) a task force to work under the direction of the Connectional Table in conversation with the Council of Bishops and agencies with closely-related mandates, or (2) simply requesting that the Connectional Table broaden its purview and work to sustain such theological endeavor. Should General Conference not adopt GCCUIC's and our recommendation for a Committee on Faith and Order, we believe that the two options above should be considered.

Such an exploration of our connectional unity and of how it should take expression in our system of conferences, in the Council of Bishops, in agency structures, and in our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world undergird the creation of the Connectional Table and, in our judgment, remains its most important and creative charge. We are also mindful of the various other initiatives, studies and policy explorations within the Connectional Table, in the Council of Bishops and elsewhere that point to synthesizing and integrative opportunities. Among the concerns from our own work that we would pass along are the following:

- determination of whether the witness to U.S. society points toward the establishment of a Central Conference and a central COB for the United States:
 - of when and with what frequency such a Central Conference would convene -- for instance, might it convene only quadrennially and immediately preceding the (world-wide) General Conference;
 - of what responsibilities such a Central Conference might assume for the quadrennial review and revision of the *Discipline* for the U.S.;
 - of whether an effective Central Conference would require continuation of jurisdictions or would permit the latter's functions to be assumed by the Central Conference (U.S.) and specifically whether bishops for the U.S. would be elected and assigned by its Central Conference;
 - of how the missional work needed in the U.S. and carried on by general agencies might be best accomplished and organized and how bishops might be appropriately involved, individually and collectively, in any such restructuring;
 - of how a U.S. Central Conference Council of Bishops would relate to the General Council of Bishops, how frequently either would need to meet; when retired bishops would attend, and how duties and expectations currently lodged in the Council of Bishops would be distributed under the new conditions; (might the General Council of Bishops, for instance, meet only in connection with General Conference?)

- assessment of the Council of Bishops, its membership, its work, its relation to the Connectional Table, General Agencies, General Conference and revisitation of such questions as:
 - whether the Council of Bishops should include only active bishops;
 - if so, under what conditions and with what frequency might retired bishops meet with the Council of Bishops;
 - whether the United Methodist Church would profit from even greater permanency in the presidency of the Council of Bishops;
 - what offices of guidance, teaching and preparation the Council of Bishops might exercise for General Conference and the General Agencies;
 - whether in light of the current United Methodist ordering of ministry and in recognition of understandings of episcopacy from our multi-lateral and bi-lateral discussions, our Church should move to consider bishops as constituting an order (a third order of ministry) AND, presuming reaffirmation of bishops as elders, of whether United Methodism functions -- theologically and sacramentally if not politically and organizationally -- with a term episcopacy, albeit with varying terms and, if so,
 - whether upon retirement, resignation or end of term bishops relinquish standing within the Council of Bishops;
 - whether their membership reverts to an Annual Conference and its order of elders;
 - whether then and in consequence the Episcopal Fund should cover only active bishops and their work, with pension, health coverage and other benefits remaining throughout the responsibility of Annual Conferences;
 - under what circumstances and with what frequency the retired bishops should meet with the Council of Bishops (at Council of Bishops gatherings at General Conference and/or on the occasion of the consecration of new bishops);
 - what systems for deployment/appointment of bishops post-term, at retirement, might be put in place, and what ritual or ceremonial acts would best symbolize and effect their assumption of meaningful and useful roles as elders;
 - what processes might be followed to develop a theology or theologies of episcopacy and connection in keeping with our actual or reordered itinerant general superintendency and to lodge those understandings within and appropriately reshape the *Discipline*;

- undertake a systematic examination of the Church's care of its leadership, including specifically the itinerant general and district superintendency, attending to issues that affect the capacity of the Church to fulfill its mission:
 - What stands in the way of true visionary, creative, prophetic and transformative leadership?
 - What further provisions for renewal, wholeness, holiness and health ought to be encouraged? Mandated leaves?
 - What further resources might be more consistently and readily available (legal counsel)?

- What refinements in the tasks of committees on episcopacy might enhance their effectiveness in evaluation, guidance, affirmation and support?
- What changes in practice or policy would make it easier to bishops who do need to resign for other than health reasons to do so without stigma?

Appendix 8: Jurisdictional Election of Bishops at General Conference.

In our **Recommendation 3** we refer to the Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table and the Joint Task Force on the Study of the Global Nature of the Church our explorations of moving the jurisdictional election of bishops to the site of General Conference and that Central Conference bishops as well be consecrated or renew their consecration vows at General Conference. To that end we explored the following interim steps which could be implemented so as to elect bishops by each jurisdiction at the site of General Conference under existing Disciplinary provisions or with minimal changes thereunto.

a) **Recommend** to the Council of and Colleges of Bishops, to General Conference, and to the jurisdictional committees on entertainment (or program and arrangements):

- that in exercising their responsibilities under ¶ 26 (Section IV. Article IV) that they determine that jurisdictional conferences meet at the site of and three days before the convening of General Conference;
- that the Colleges and jurisdictional conferences work with the Secretary and General Commission on the General Conference to establish a time within General Conference for a service of consecration;
- that bishops of Central (or jurisdictional) Conferences consecrated in the interim of General Conferences participate in said service of consecration in renewal of their vows; and, that the Disciplinary provision (¶ 406. 2. c) for participation of representatives from other Christian communities in the consecration service be implemented, insofar as appropriate, by inclusion of bishops from denominations with which the United Methodist Church has Eucharistic or interim eucharistic agreements.

b) **Amend** ¶ 407 so as to prescribe July 1 as the date for assignment for jurisdictionally-elected bishops.

c) **Recommend** that the meetings of the several jurisdictional committees on episcopacy and their conferences with colleges of bishops be coordinated (perhaps during General Conference) such that collectively they may care for the range of the Church's leadership needs and operate with all the flexibility for cross-jurisdictional and connection-wide assignments provided for under ¶ 407.

d) **Recommend that** General Conference revise the protocols for constituting jurisdictional conferences, establish conference allocations, and amend the *Discipline* (as needed throughout) such that jurisdictional membership consist of delegates to General Conference plus alternates and set a timeline for implementation of this recommendation.

Appendix 9: Projected Reductions in Jurisdictional Bishops in 2012 under Proposed Formula

The following will be the new formula for determining the number of Jurisdictional Bishops:

| | <u>Professing Membership</u> | | <u>Number of Bishops</u> |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| from | to | | |
| 300,000 | 449,999 | | 5 |
| 450,001 | 749,999 | | 6 |
| 750,001 | 1,049,999 | | 7 |
| 1,050,001 | 1,349,999 | | 8 |
| 1,350,001 | 1,649,999 | | 9 |
| 1,650,001 | 1,949,999 | | 10 |
| 1,950,001 | 2,249,999 | | 11 |
| 2,250,001 | 2,549,999 | | 12 |
| 2,550,001 | 2,849,999 | | 13 |
| 2,850,001 | 3,149,999 | | 14 |
| 3,150,001 | 3,449,999 | | 15 |
| | | | |

Applying the present professing membership of the Jurisdictions will lead to the following number of Bishops

| | <u>Membership in 2005</u> | | <u>Bishops in 2012</u> |
|-------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| NC | 1,458,582 | | 9 |
| NE | 1,432,188 | | 9 |
| SC | 1,776,222 | | 10 |
| SE | 2,931,045 | | 14 |
| W | 397,392 | | 5 |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | 7,995,429 | | 47 |
| | | | |

Appendix 10: Selected Resources on United Methodist Episcopacy:

Prior Studies of Episcopacy

Report of the Study Commission on Episcopacy and Superintendency, 1972. Available at General Commission on Archives and History.

Books on Methodist Episcopacy:

Coke, Thomas and Francis Asbury, *The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in America. With explanatory notes by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury* (Philadelphia: Henry Tuckniss; 1798)

Frank, Thomas Edward, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006)

Kirby, James E., *The Episcopacy in American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon/Kingswood, 2000)

Mathews, James K., *Set Apart to Serve* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985)

Mathews, James K. and William B. Oden, eds., *Vision and Supervision: A Sourcebook of Significant Documents of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003)

Moede, Gerald F., *The Office of Bishop in the Methodist Church* (Zurich: Publishing House of the Methodist Church, 1964)

Richey, Russell E. and Thomas Edward Frank, *Episcopacy in the Methodist Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004)

Richey, Russell E., *Marks of Methodism: Theology in Ecclesial Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005)

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