

June 4, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a joy to greet you with the certainty that Christ is risen; He is risen indeed. As leaders of this denomination, you live out the spirit of resurrection, affirming always that God lives through us and works through us to transform this world. We want to thank you for your leadership and your commitment to a life of contemplative discipleship in order to continually seek out God's will for Christ's church. In that spirit, we invite you to enter anew into a conversation that has been at the center of our global denomination. For many years, the matter of the worldwide nature of The United Methodist Church, while an impetus for visioning and change, has challenged us to live into new ways of being the church today.

The issue of the worldwide nature of the church is more than just a conversation about structure. Fundamentally, it is about the theology of a global church that seeks to do mission in the different locations of its members and how they structure themselves for effective ministries within their own context. We invite you to prayerfully grapple with this critical issue and allow the Holy Spirit to be your guide. This letter introduces a document that raises a key question about how we organize the church as a series of conferences that lead to missional effectiveness through vital congregations.

We remind you that others have been diligent in their discernment of this critical issue, and a body of work has emerged as reports and recommendations to past General Conferences. In particular, General Conference 2012 affirmed the Covenant for a Worldwide UMC (BOD 2012 ¶ 125) and the core values that give rise to that covenant:

- Deeper connections throughout the church,
- Greater local authority, and
- More equitable sharing of power and representation around the world.

In the spirit of *Christian Conferencing*, we want to invite you to a time of corporate discernment and deliberation on this critical issue, by prayerfully entering into this time with a reading of the **Covenant for Worldwide UMC**. We are hopeful that as you join United Methodists in prayer and contemplation, the Holy Spirit will abound with sufficient grace to guide your thoughts and that the Core Values and the Covenant for Worldwide UMC will inform your discernment as you process the following documents:

- Video Introduction (written transcript where video is not available)
- The United Methodist Church: A Connection for a Worldwide Mission – summary and discussion questions
- PowerPoint presentation on the history and comparison of Central Conferences and Jurisdictions
- Supplemental material from General Conference reports in 2000, 2008 and 2012 that relate to The UMC's worldwide nature

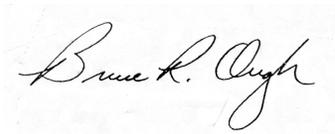
Our desire is that you will join your delegation members in a joint conversation that will lead you to share your collective wisdom with the Connectional Table and the Commission on General Conference through the website for this process. You can access all the documents and send your responses to us at:

www.umc.org/worldwide-nature

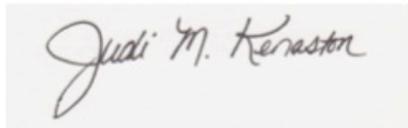
DEADLINE for feedback is August 31, 2014

In closing, may the redeeming and sustaining love of God continue to lead the work of The UMC in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background, reading "Bruce R. Ough".

Bishop Bruce R. Ough,
Chair of The Connectional Table

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background, reading "Judi M. Kenaston".

Judi M. Kenaston,
Chair of the Commission on General Conference