Proposed Amendments to our United Methodist Constitution from our 2008 General Conference
Every 4 Years we Review 1968
our Basic Organizing Principles 1972
Including our Constitution 1976

This is our opportunity 1980
to help us go on to 1984
perfection/wholeness 1988

1992
1996
2000
2004
2008
32 Proposed Amendments are before us

They have passed General Conference by more than 2/3’s vote of United Methodists from around the world
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23 of them are on one subject – United Methodism as a World-Wide Church

We will treat them as a single amendment even though we need to vote on each on separately
United Methodism as a World-Wide Church

This amendment will:

“allow the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our World-Wide Church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference which would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.”
United Methodism as a World-Wide Church

U.S. Jurisdictions & Conferences

Current Central Conferences (aprox)
United Methodism as a World-Wide Church

Questions:

If we are a World-Wide Church by theology ("the world is my parish"), how completely do we live our theology?

Will the church in the U.S. address the matter of "privilege" that accrues to it by way of money and membership?
United Methodism as a World-Wide Church

Regional Conferences
(see approximations below)
Central Conference Language

“The word "central" was first used in the late nineteenth century to facilitate missionary work outside the United States. The meaning of the term is no longer clear to most persons. Further, there are negative connotations with the Central Jurisdiction which existed for purposes of segregation. Thus the word "regional" expresses the idea that all the annual conferences in a particular region engage in common mission together to serve God in that region. The word will easily translate into other languages.”
Regional Conference Implementation

General Conference saw the benefit of providing a vehicle for later General Conferences to restructure to be a more constructive force in today’s world.

There is no immediate change in the way we do business, but, if this passes, next General Conferences will be able to decide about how to practically put this vision into practice.
Amendment Numbers

These 23 proposed amendments do not show up consecutively on your ballot so you will have to pay attention at Annual Conference. Here is a list of the 23 World-Wide Church amendments:

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These petitions arose from the Council of Bishops and our Connectional Table and leadership of the Central Conferences as they engaged the issue of growth of United Methodism. They saw this change as a way forward in better living an image of “the world as our parish” and 72% of General Conference agreed.
Arguments Against

- This is part of a “gay agenda”
- This will divide our church as we will talk less with one another

General Conference considered these perspectives and thought they ought not hold us back from making needed changes to continue growing a World-Wide Church.
Your Delegation believes that Christ's Spirit of Hospitality and Maturity did move through General Conference and consideration of this proposed amendment needs to first be honored as a serious proposal with honorable intentions before jumping into fears of what might be.
We move on to a related, but different proposed amendment that

“emphasizes the wideness of God’s mercy and the availability of the ministry of the church to all.”
Inclusiveness of the Church — The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth and that we are in ministry to all. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status or economic condition who seek relationship in Jesus Christ shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members. All persons, upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.
While this blanket welcome is consistent with our desire for “new birth” for everyone, there are some who will raise questions of opening ourselves to some other agenda.

67% of General Conference delegates saw this as a helpful clarification that follows Bishop Schnase’s book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, that begins with radical hospitality with all people, without singling out specific folks for particular welcome.
Remaining 8 Amendments

2   Ethics
6 - Representation
8 - Protection of Gender
9 - Voting for Bishops
15 Annual Conference Responsibility
17 - Laity on Committee on Investigation
19 - Provisional Pastors Given Vote
22 - Bermuda
“All official organizations, groups, committees, councils, boards, and agencies of The United Methodist Church shall adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies, applicable to both members and employees, which embody and live out our Christian values.”

Passed General Conference by 90%
Proposed Amendment 6 would read:

“General Conference may provide for a transitional period for newly created annual, missionary, or provisional annual conferences, not to exceed two quadrennia, during which time such a conference may be represented at General, jurisdictional, and regional conferences on other than a proportional basis.”
8 - Gender Protection

If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 16.1 and .14 would read:

1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender or status.

14. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender or status.

Passed by 95%
9 – Voting for Bishops

If this passes our *Book of Discipline* would then read:

“The jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of as many representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined by a uniform basis established by the General Conference, provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.”

*Passed by 95%*
The simplified language of our constitution would read:

“If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the Annual Conference, the Annual Conference shall by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the Annual Conference.”

Passed by 86 %
“...lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry and the committee on investigation may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on ordained ministry with vote.”

Passed by 94%
“The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.”

*Passed by 84%*
22 - Bermuda Located

If passed, this would be the alphabetical make up of the Northeastern Jurisdiction:

Bermuda, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Virgin Islands, West Virginia.

Passed by 97%
Thank You
for taking these proposed amendments
seriously enough
to engage the rationale
of General Conference and their work
and
to ground your spirit in prayer
as you prepare for this part
of Annual Conference