

**RESOLUTION REGARDING INCLUSIVENESS IN
GENERAL CHURCH BOARD AND AGENCY REPRESENTATION**

Approved by North Georgia Annual Conference June, 2003

Whereas:

1. Representation on general boards, agencies and commissions in the church is not currently proportionate to the membership of the annual conferences, the basic unit of the church, Book of Discipline ¶31, or the jurisdictions, the body empowered by The Book of Discipline to choose representation on the boards, agencies and commissions of the church (¶25.3); and
2. The formulas for membership on boards and agencies and commissions leaves some of the most populous areas of the church, notably, the Central Conferences in Africa, Europe and the Philippines, the Southeastern Jurisdiction and the North Central Jurisdiction, under-represented; and
3. The two petitions attached hereto collectively speak to the injustice and unfairness of the current disciplinary language. Should the conference secretary determine it to be preferable these petitions may be submitted separately by paragraph number:

Therefore be it resolved: That as a justice issue the North Georgia Annual Conference adopts at its 2003 Annual Conference Session the two petitions presented herewith specifically dealing with ¶¶ 705.5(c), 705.5(e), 705.6(a), 706.1 and 805.1. The Annual Conference hereby instructs the secretary of the annual conference to submit these petitions for consideration by the 2004 General Conference and requests that the General Conference examine and modify the formulas which govern representation on general boards, agencies and commissions so as to guarantee fair and reasonable representation and inclusiveness from all areas of the church.

PETITION #1

¶705.5 (c)

Central Conference Membership – Each general program board shall elect ~~at least four persons~~ **membership** from the central conferences **equal to the proportionate membership of the central conferences based upon combined clergy and lay membership of the church** and one alternate for each who may attend if the elected member cannot attend. In the election of the central conference members, it is recommended that a least one clergy, one layman, and one laywoman be elected as specified in general agency paragraphs.

¶705.5(e)

Additional Membership – (1) Additional members shall be elected by each general program board in order to bring into the board persons with special knowledge or background that will aid in the work of the agency, to consider differing theological perspectives, and to perfect the representation of racial and ethnic persons, youth (¶ 255.2), young adults, older adults, women and men, people with disabilities, and persons from small-membership churches, ~~and distribution by geographic area.~~ **After the election of central conference members as provided in ¶705.5(c) the remaining additional members shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent**

possible that membership of each board reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership. The nominating committee shall give special attention to the recommendations of the members from each jurisdiction for the election of persons to fill the additional membership positions from their jurisdictions. Each general program board shall elect additional members as specified in general program board membership paragraphs. Insofar as possible, no more than one person shall be elected from each Episcopal area. It is recommended that such additional membership shall maintain the one-third laymen, one-third laywomen, and one-third clergy balance.

¶705.6(a)

Other General Agencies – a) Each jurisdictional conference shall elect members from the jurisdictional pool nominated by the annual and missionary conference in the United States (¶ 705.1) in accordance with the specific membership provisions of those agencies as set forth in the *Book of Discipline*: General Council on Ministries (¶ 907), General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (¶ 1502.1a), The United Methodist Publishing House (¶ 1602), General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (¶ 1906), General Commission on Communication (¶ 1807), General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (¶ 2104), and General Commission on Religion and Race (¶ 2003). **Additional members to be elected shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that membership of each agency reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership. The nominating committee shall give special attention to the recommendations of the members from each jurisdiction for the election of person to fill the additional membership positions from their jurisdictions.**

¶706.1

Nomination of Additional Board Members – 1. Giving due consideration to inclusiveness (see ¶¶ 124, 138) each jurisdiction shall designate one clergy, one laywoman, and one layman whom it has elected to a general program agency or to the General Council on Ministries to nominate the additional members of that program agency or council (¶ 705.5). The fifteen members thus designated by the five jurisdictions in each general program agency and in the General Council on Ministries shall constitute a committee to nominate additional members for that agency and shall be convened as provided in ¶ 706.2. **The additional members shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that membership of that program agency or council reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership. The nominating committee shall give special attention to the recommendations of the members from each jurisdiction for the election of persons to fill the additional membership positions from their jurisdictions.**

{Special Note: The four paragraph changes proposed above are presented as one petition because they are closely related. This fair representation petition affects ¶705.5c, ¶ 705.5e, ¶ 705.6a and ¶706.1. The petition calls for the amendment of those paragraphs to make them consistent with one another. }

RATIONALE FOR PETITION #1, ¶705 AND ¶706 PROPOSED CHANGES:

1. The present wording of paragraph 705.5(e), which states, “Additional members shall be elected by each general program board in order ... c) to perfect the representation. and distribution by geographic area” is not working.
2. The present provisions for representation are not fair to Central Conferences, the Southeastern Jurisdiction, or the North Central Jurisdiction. Disproportionate representation is not healthy for our church because it causes a disconnect between the local church and the general church.
3. The Central Conferences are a significant and growing part of the church. Their voices of faith, conviction and commitment in the face of persecution are vital witnesses. They represent the broadest most significant diversity in the church and their inclusion at the table represents our commitment to fairness.
4. Inclusion of Central Conferences in a more proportionate manner will turn the focus of some boards and agencies to important global issues of justice, faith sharing and service, and insure a global perspective.
5. The current system offers no clear guidance regarding fair representation and results in disproportionate representation each quadrennium. Where one jurisdiction is over represented during one quadrennium, that same jurisdiction may be significantly under represented the next quadrennium. The adoption of these petitions will help protect every area from being over or under-represented.
6. The proposed new wording being offered is an uncomplicated way to bring the church closer to fair jurisdictional representation in our councils, boards and agencies. It will not result in complete fairness but will be a giant step in the right direction working within the framework of the already existing recommendations of the various agencies, by leaving undisturbed the paragraphs relating to the individual agencies.
7. The proportional representation on general boards and agencies is as follows:

	12/31/01 Total		2000-2004 Total		Ratio of Representation
	<u>Membership</u>		<u>B & A Membership</u>		
	<u>Members</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>%</u>	
Central Conferences	1,503,132	15.3	53	8.1	1 to 28,361
North Central	1,574,256	16.1	109	16.7	1 to 14,443
Northeastern	1,530,304	15.6	119	18.2	1 to 12,860
South Central	1,821,230	18.6	142	21.8	1 to 12,826
Southeastern	2,938,098	30.0	154	23.6	1 to 19,079
Western	<u>430,552</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>11.6</u>	<u>1 to 5,665</u>
TOTAL UMC	9,797,572	100.0%	653	100.0%	1 to 15,004

PETITION #2

¶ 805.1(a)1, ¶805.1(a)2 and ¶805.1(a)4

Organization – Membership

(1) ~~three~~ **four** bishops **including one from a central conference**, nominated by the Council of Bishops.

(2) ~~six~~ **thirty** persons from ~~each the~~ jurisdictions, nominated by the **college of bishops of that in each** jurisdiction **based upon an allocation by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure that membership of the council reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership**

(4) ~~six~~ **five** members at large, at least one of whom shall be a young pers on between the ages of twelve and seventeen, **one member from Africa, one from Europe and one from the Philippines**, and at least one of whom shall not be over thirty years of age at the time of election, and most of whom shall be elected for special skills. **After the above mentioned election of central conference members the remaining** The members at large shall be nominated by the Council of Bishops ~~without reference to jurisdictions~~ **based upon an allocation by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure, to the extent possible that membership of the council reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership.**

{Special Note: The three paragraph changes proposed above are presented as one petition because they are closely related. This fair representation petition affects ¶805.1(a)1, ¶805.1(a)2 and ¶805.1(a)4. The petition calls for the amendment of those paragraphs to make them consistent with one another. }

RATIONALE FOR PETITION #2. ¶805.1 PROPOSED CHANGES:

GCFA is currently the most disproportionately represented body in the general church. The Central Conferences have one member representing 1,503,132 members, while the Western Jurisdiction has 8 members representing 430,552 members, and the Southeastern Jurisdiction has 9 members representing 2,938,098 members. The North Central Jurisdiction is also under-represented.

This change is being offered to conform GCFA to the language being offered to insure fairness in representation within the other general boards and agencies of the church. Paragraph 706.1 specifically does not reference the General Council on Finance and Administration with regard to the allocation of additional members. Therefore, this recommended change in BOD language would allocate GCFA at-large members under the same fairness formula of allocation being proposed for GCOM and all other general boards and agencies.