

1 **Document 700.10**

2 **Name: Supporting Creating a US Regional Conference**

3 **Authors: NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa**  
4 **Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN, Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators, NIC**  
5 **General/Jurisdictional Delegation, Alka Lyall, chair**

6

7 **Action:**

8 • The Northern Illinois Annual Conference supports the expressed intents of the  
9 Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table (CT) legislation, including the  
10 creation of Regional Conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the U.S.,  
11 respectively; and the NIC recognizes and supports the leadership of our Central  
12 Conferences in the creation and furtherance of the Christmas Covenant as well the  
13 Connectional Table’s future visioning on behalf of our worldwide fellowship.

14

15 • The NIC also urges the Council of Bishops to expedite the process of voting on the  
16 constitutional amendments necessary to enact the regional conferences legislation,  
17 calling special sessions of annual conferences where necessary. In line with the  
18 intent of the non-disciplinary petition submitted by the Connectional Table, the  
19 NIC requests the Council of Bishops to immediately appoint a 20-25-member  
20 Interim Committee on Organization for a US Regional Conference to develop and  
21 propose to the 2024 General Conference the structure and organization of a U.S.  
22 Regional Conference.

23

24 In line with the CT’s legislation, this body would organize and plan for the  
25 establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference  
26 comprising the five jurisdictions of the United States. Committee membership  
27 should have a minimum of 3 members of each U.S. jurisdiction, 3 central  
28 conference members and shall meet standards of racial and gender diversity. The  
29 Committee should recommend a structure for the U.S. Regional Conference  
30 including considerations such as its membership, committee structure, meeting  
31 time, agency, and function.

32

33 • The Northern Illinois Annual Conference secretary shall send copies of this resolution to  
34 all delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, including alternates, to the  
35 Commission on the General Conference, and to the Council of Bishops.

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37

38 **Rationale:**

39 The seven Central Conferences and five U.S. Jurisdictions of The United Methodist  
40 Church engage in mission together in 136 countries; and the connectional ties between the  
41 church in the United States and the Central Conferences are significant and vital to the  
42 continued mission and ministry of the worldwide United Methodist Church. The existing  
43 structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level has historically  
44 impeded each region from effectively tailoring its ministry to its specific contexts and  
45 diminishes our ability to be a vital and effective church and needs to be re-envisioned to  
46 achieve more fair and equitable church governance.

1 The Apostle Paul offered a beautiful example making clear the value of a church  
2 established in diverse places with shared beliefs, alongside local and regional differences  
3 in structure, worship, and style best suited to particular contexts. The creation of a U.S.  
4 Regional Conference and the conversion of the Central Conferences to Regional  
5 Conferences, as outlined in the [Christmas Covenant](#), developed by Central Conference  
6 leaders in Africa and the Philippines, would establish structural parity throughout the  
7 worldwide church and will establish the governance necessary to allow each region to  
8 design ministry for its particular contexts, and thus more effectively make disciples of  
9 Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

10  
11 The NIC aspires to vital, thriving, multicultural, and diverse ministries that are open to all  
12 people and can be a beacon of hope for the worldwide United Methodist Church. In  
13 November of 2022, and in historic fashion, a resolution in support of a U.S. Regional  
14 Conference was adopted at all five Jurisdictional Conferences.

1 **Document 700.11**

2 **Document Name: Supporting the Removal of Discriminatory Policies**

3 **Authors: NIC Church and Society, Elisa Gatz, chair; NIC MFSA Luis F. Reyes and Elisa**  
4 **Gatz, co-chairs; NIC RMN Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, and Elisa Gatz, co-facilitators, NIC**  
5 **General/Jurisdictional Delegation, Alka Lyall, chair**

6

7 **Action:**

8 The Northern Illinois Annual Conference supports the removal of all discriminatory policies  
9 and harmful language related to sexual orientation, and urges delegates to adopt the following  
10 petitions; petitions already submitted and that will be before the voting body of the next  
11 General Conference. Links to documents/petitions can be found in the following rationale.

12

13 The Northern Illinois Annual Conference secretary shall send copies of this resolution to: all  
14 General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates and alternates, the Commission on General  
15 Conference; and the Council of Bishops.

16

17 **Petition No: 20730-CB-¶161-G;**

18 Entitled: Revised Social Principles-161 and 162

19 Summary: Removes the statement that affirms marriage as only between “one man and one  
20 woman.” Removes the statement that only affirms “heterosexual” marriage. Removes, “The  
21 UMC does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible  
22 with Christian teaching.”

23

24 **Petition No: 20177-FO-¶304.3**

25 Entitled: A Simple Plan #3

26 Summary: Removes ¶304.3 which states, “self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be  
27 certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist  
28 Church.” Also removes the corresponding footnote stating that “self-avowed practicing  
29 homosexual is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district  
30 superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy  
31 session that the person is a practicing homosexual; or is living in a same-sex marriage, domestic  
32 partnership or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing  
33 homosexual.”

34

35 **Petition No: 20469-OM-¶341.6**

36 Entitled: A Simple Plan #5

37 Summary: Removes ¶341.6, which states (under unauthorized conduct), “ceremonies that  
38 celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be  
39 conducted in our churches.”

40

41 **Petition No: 20181-FA-¶613-G**

42 Entitled: A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 6 of 8

43 Summary: Removes ¶613.19, which prohibits annual conferences from giving “United  
44 Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the  
45 acceptance of homosexuality. “

46

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2 **Petition No: 20190-FA-¶806-G**  
3 Entitled: A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 7 of 8  
4 Summary: Removes ¶806.9, which tasks GCFA with “ensuring that no board, agency,  
5 committee, commission, or council gives United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group.”  
6

7 **Petition No: 20304-HS-¶415.6-G**  
8 Entitled: Next Generation UMC #11 – Amend Episcopal Responsibilities  
9 Summary: Removes statements prohibiting bishops from commissioning, ordaining, or  
10 consecrating persons determined to be “self-avowed practicing homosexuals.”  
11

12 **Petition No: 20387-JA-¶2711.3-G**  
13 Entitled: Next Generation UMC #22 – Penalties  
14 Summary: Removes predetermined, mandatory minimum penalties for clergy who officiate  
15 same sex weddings.  
16

17 **Petition Number: 20365-JA-¶2702.1-G**  
18 Entitled: Next Generation UMC #21 - Chargeable Offenses  
19 Summary: Removes chargeable offenses that target “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” and  
20 clergy who conduct same-sex weddings.  
21

22 **Petition No: 20420-OM-¶310.2d-G**  
23 Entitled: A Simple Plan #4  
24 Summary: Removes statements from Footnote 3 that repeat phrases being removed from other  
25 paragraphs in the BOD.  
26

27 **Rationale:**  
28 A more diverse and fully welcoming UMC is a testament to a more complete image of God,  
29 which includes persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and  
30 a more diverse and fully welcoming UMC allows all United Methodists to offer their prayers,  
31 presence, gifts, service and witness, as followers of Jesus, to further Christ’s mission. By the  
32 power of the Holy Spirit, God calls and includes all persons into the life and leadership of the  
33 Church, transcending the limitations of human categorization. The current language in the Book  
34 of Discipline places limits on Christ’s teaching and example of God’s universal love, and the  
35 current language in the Book of Discipline falls short of embodying the spirit of John Wesley’s  
36 simple rules to do no harm, do all the good we can, and love God. Legislative changes to the  
37 Book of Discipline would reduce barriers and allow movement toward wider diversity and  
38 inclusion in our United Methodist Church.  
39

40 **Petition No: 20730-CB-¶161-G;**  
41 Entitled: Revised Social Principles-161 and 162  
42 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 1, Page 208](#)  
43

44 **Petition No: 20177-FO-¶304.3**  
45 Entitled: A Simple Plan #3  
46 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 2, Page 624](#)  
47

1 **Petition No: 20469-OM-¶341.6**  
2 Entitled: A Simple Plan #5  
3 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 2, Page 1041](#)  
4  
5 **Petition No: 20181-FA-¶613-G**  
6 Entitled: A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 6 of 8  
7 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 1, Page 504](#)  
8  
9 **Petition No: 20190-FA-¶806-G**  
10 Entitled: A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 7 of 8  
11 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 1, Page 508](#)  
12  
13 **Petition No: 20304-HS-¶415.6-G**  
14 Entitled: Next Generation UMC #11 – Amend Episcopal Responsibilities  
15 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 2, Page 977](#)  
16  
17 **Petition No: 20387-JA-¶2711.3-G**  
18 Entitled: Next Generation UMC #22 – Penalties  
19 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 2, Page 933](#)  
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21 **Petition Number: 20365-JA-¶2702.1-G**  
22 Entitled: Next Generation UMC #21 - Chargeable Offenses  
23 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 2, Page 924](#)  
24  
25 **Petition No: 20420-OM-¶310.2d-G**  
26 Entitled: A Simple Plan #4  
27 [ADCA Vol 2, Sec 2, Page 1022](#)