

PRE-GENERAL CONFERENCE BRIEFING

January 22-24

Nashville, TN



# Connectional Table

The United Methodist Church

*Bringing Missional Adaptation and Focus*



# *The Connectional Table*

## OUR PURPOSE

**The Connectional Table (CT) is “where ministry and money are brought to the same table to coordinate the mission, ministries and resources of the United Methodist Church” (§901, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016 (BOD)).**



WORLDWIDE & CONTEXTUAL

*U.S. Regional  
Conference*

# What is a regional conference?

The U.S. Regional Conference will comprise the current U.S. jurisdictions and the geographical boundaries congruent with the territory of U.S. annual conferences. It will not change the role and authority of U.S. jurisdictional conferences, including the election of bishops.



**US**  
**Regional**  
**Conference**

A map of the United States is shown in the background, with state names and major cities visible. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the left side of the map, containing white text. The text discusses naming a new structure for U.S. governance.

# *What's in a name?*

Naming this new structure for U.S. governance a “regional conference” rather than a “central conference” acknowledges the painful, racist history and still existing wound associated with the former Central Jurisdiction in the U.S.

# What is the goal?

The goal is to ease the burden of U.S. legislation on General Conference and give U.S. churches parity with those in central conferences.

Having a USRC will reduce the amount of time spent on U.S.-centric issues at General Conference.



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# *Why Needed?*

- **General Conference Petitions**
  - Many pertain largely or exclusively to UMC in the U.S.
- **U.S. Church**
  - No venue other than General Conference for U.S.-specific legislation



*Important for  
U.S. Clergy  
Benefit Plans*

- Clergy benefit plans incorporated by reference into *Discipline*
- Plan amendments by General Conference

U.S. clergy plans are designed for...



U.S. Law



U.S. Taxation



U.S. Social  
Security



**Wespath**

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS



*Examples of  
U.S.-Focused  
Petitions from  
2016*

Petition #	¶	Description
60588	1313	Regarding UM Development Fund, which makes loans only in U.S.
60330	Non-Dis	Continue Asian American Language Plan, applies only to Asians in U.S.
60332	Non-Dis	Continue National Plan for Hispanic Ministry, also only for U.S.
60100	533	Regarding Jurisdictional Young People's Ministries
60106	Non-Dis	Revision Committee for U.S. official hymnal, for use primarily in U.S.
60107	Non-Dis	Continue Native American Comprehensive Plan, applies in U.S.
60109	Non-Dis	Strengthening the Black Church for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century, a U.S.-only plan

*Some U.S.-  
Focused Book  
of Resolutions  
Examples*

**#1025:** Environmental Racism in the U.S.

**#3062:** African American Methodist Heritage Center

**#3065:** Observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a U.S. holiday

**#3121:** Affirming Use of Diverse Languages in U.S./  
Opposing Making English the Official U.S. Language

**#3164:** DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act),  
proposed U.S. law

**#3165:** United States Public Education and the Church

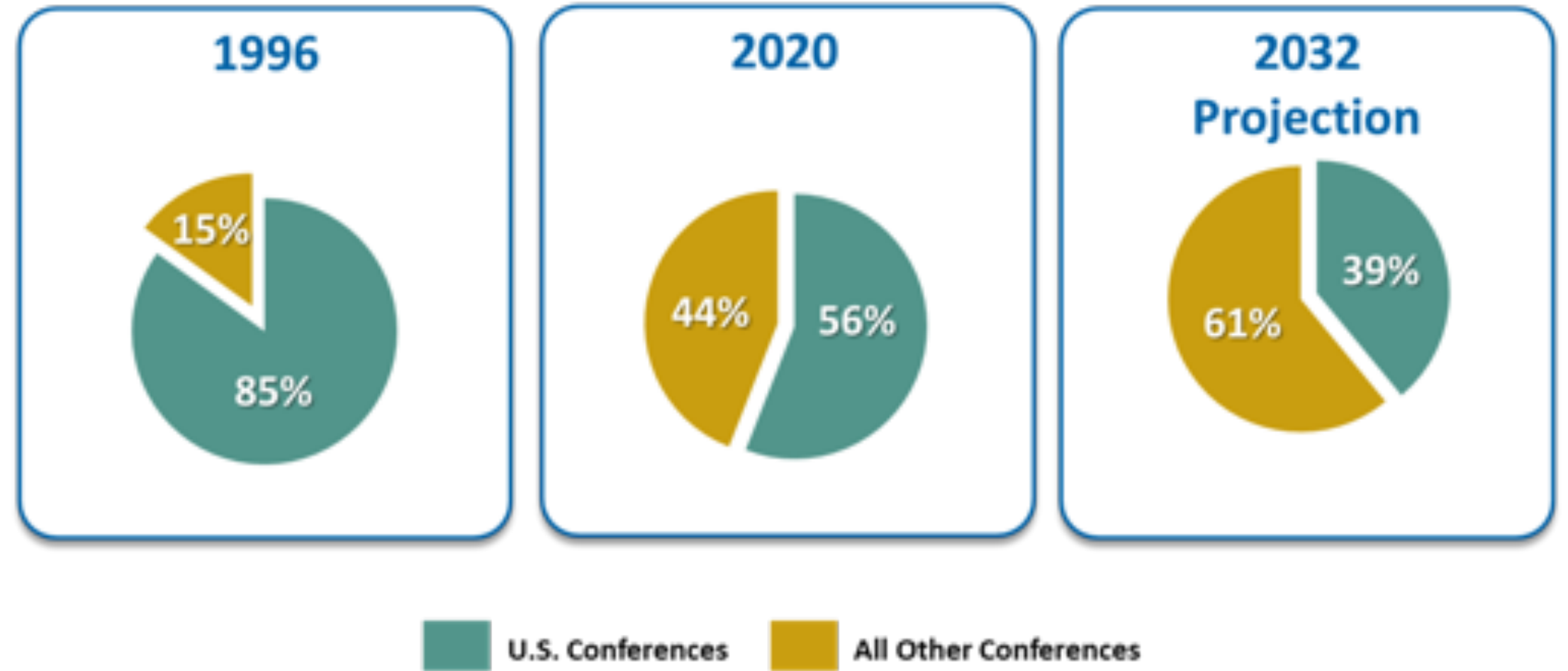
**#3201:** Health Care for all in the United States

**#5037:** Texas Death Penalty

**#5086:** Voting Representation for People in the District of Columbia

**#3022:** Aging in the United States

# *A Changing Church*

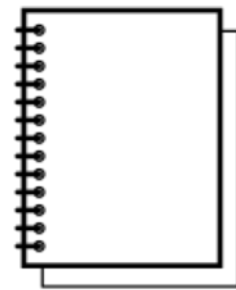


# *About a U.S. Regional Conference*



## **Efficiency**

Because the U.S. church has no venue other than the General Conference to handle legislation, U.S.-specific petitions dominate GC time.



## **Consistency**

This work is consistent with the work on the *General Book of Discipline*, and creating a U.S. regional conference will allow the U.S. to work on adaptable portions.



## **Fairness**

U.S.-specific legislation burdens central conference delegates with issues outside their purview



## **Preservation**

The USRC would NOT change the role or authority of the U.S. jurisdictional conferences.

# *A long history...*

The Connectional Table has been working with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters since 2013 to find a way for U.S. churches to do the adaptable work proposed by a General Book of Discipline.



**US**  
**Regional**  
 **Conference**

The logo is contained within a white circular area. It features the text 'US' in large red letters, followed by 'Regional' in smaller red letters, and 'Conference' in the largest red letters. A blue globe is positioned to the right of 'Regional'. A small red cross icon is located to the left of 'Conference'. The background of the slide is a grayscale map of the United States.

# *A long history...*

**Our work on this legislation pre-dates the 2019 Special Session and is a response to needs expressed by the global church.**



# *A collaborative process...*

We spent the last quadrennium thoroughly vetting the proposal by engaging in conversations with individuals and groups from central conferences and the U.S., as well as:

- Wespeth
- DCM's
- Legal Counsel
- Council of Bishops
- Commission on the General Conference





# Creating a U.S. Regional Conference—2 *STAGES*



**Connectional Table**  
The United Methodist Church



# Stage I

The formation  
of a U.S.  
Regional  
Committee



- **Stage I** would create a committee of the General Conference called the *U.S. Regional Committee*.
- **Stage I** would function as both a contingency and an interim plan.
- **Stage I** *U.S. Regional Committee* would comprise all the GC delegates elected by the annual conferences in the U.S. and one clergy and one lay from each central conference.

# Stage I

## The formation of a U.S. Regional Committee



- This committee would have legislative function and could consider all petitions pertaining to the operation, governance, witness, and ministry of The United Methodist Church in the United States that are adaptable according to ¶¶ 101 and 543.7.
- The committee would process legislation that is U.S. Region – Adaptable in nature. The Committee would not develop any new legislation. All legislation approved by the Committee would also need to be approved by the General Conference plenary.

# Stage II

## US Regional Conference



The formation  
of a *U.S.  
Regional  
Conference*  
(USRC)

- Stage II would create and organize a *U.S. Regional Conference* to convene following the GC2024.
- Again, the *U.S. Regional Conference* would include the U.S. jurisdictions, which would continue with the same jurisdictional powers and duties and the same geographic configurations.
- Stage II requires constitutional amendments.

## Stage II

# US Regional Conference



The formation  
of a U.S.  
Regional  
Conference  
(USRC)

- It is important to note that, if the *U.S. Regional Conference* legislation is passed and the constitutional amendments ratified by annual conferences, the U.S. Regional Committee would be interim and might never need to convene.
- If the U.S. Regional Committee does convene, it would cease its work at the formation of the *U.S. Regional Conference*.

# *Other Proposals...*

- The CT legislation is not a plan for restructuring the church.
- The legislation is not dependent upon other proposals like the Protocol, though the Protocol envisions some sort of regional governance.



**US**  
**Regional**  
**Conference**

*Thank you*

[BIT.LY/USRCLEGISLATION](https://bit.ly/usrclegislation)



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