

In Support of Creating a U.S. Regional Conference

A resolution submitted to the 2023 Rio Texas Annual Conference

Whereas, the seven Central Conferences and five U.S. Jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church engage in mission together in 136 countries; and

Whereas, the connectional ties between the church in the United States and the Central Conferences are significant and vital to the continued mission and ministry of the worldwide United Methodist Church; and

Whereas, the existing structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level has historically impeded each region from effectively tailoring its ministry to its specific contexts; and

Whereas, the existing structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level diminishes our ability to be a vital and effective church and needs to be re-envisioned to achieve more fair and equitable church governance; and

Whereas, the Apostle Paul offered a beautiful example making clear the value of a church established in diverse places with shared beliefs, alongside local and regional differences in structure, worship, and style best suited to particular contexts; and

Whereas, the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference and the conversion of the Central Conferences to Regional Conferences, as outlined in the [Christmas Covenant](#), developed by Central Conference leaders in Africa and the Philippines, would establish structural parity throughout the worldwide church; and

Whereas, the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference, as outlined in legislation put forward by [the Connectional Table](#) will establish the governance necessary to allow each region to design ministry for its particular contexts, and thus more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

Whereas, the Rio Texas Annual Conference aspires to vital, thriving, multicultural, and diverse ministries that are open to all people and can be a beacon of hope for the worldwide United Methodist Church, and

Whereas, in November of 2022, and in historic fashion, a resolution in support of a U.S. Regional Conference was adopted at all five Jurisdictional Conferences.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Rio Texas Annual Conference supports the expressed intents of the Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table legislation, including the creation of Regional Conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the U.S., respectively; and

Be it further resolved that the Rio Texas Annual Conference recognizes and supports the leadership of our Central Conferences in the creation and furtherance of the Christmas Covenant as well the Connectional Table's future visioning on behalf of our worldwide fellowship; and

Be it further resolved that the Rio Texas Annual Conference urges the Council of Bishops to expedite the process of voting on the constitutional amendments necessary to enact the regional conferences legislation, calling special sessions of annual conferences where necessary; and

Be it further resolved that in line with the intent of the non-disciplinary petition submitted by the Connectional Table, the Rio Texas Annual Conference requests the Council of Bishops to immediately appoint a 20-25 member Interim Committee on Organization for a US Regional Conference to develop and propose to the 2024 general conference the structure and organization of a US Regional Conference. In line with the CT's legislation, this body would organize and plan for the establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference comprising the five jurisdictions of the United States. Committee membership should have a minimum of 3 members of each US jurisdiction, 3 central conference members and shall meet standards of racial and gender diversity. The Committee should recommend a structure for the US Regional Conference including considerations such as its membership, committee structure, meeting time, agency, and function; and

Be it further resolved that the Rio Texas Annual Conference secretary shall send copies of this resolution to all delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, including alternates, to the Commission on the General Conference, and to the Council of Bishops.

Submitted by:
Rio Texas Conference Uniting Table

Encouraging Leadership With Integrity

A resolution submitted to the 2023 Rio Texas Annual Conference

Whereas, the vibrant future of The United Methodist Church requires deep commitment and loyal leadership at every level, and

Whereas, grounded in a sense of duty and loyalty to the mission of the church, leaders are counted on and expected to make decisions about the future of The United Methodist Church with the absolute best interest of Christ's church at heart, and

Whereas, the selection, election, and appointment of clergy and lay leaders throughout The United Methodist Church includes the implicit understanding that leaders will ethically serve in each of their leadership roles with the utmost integrity, and

Whereas, leaders who do not intend to remain in The United Methodist Church entangle themselves in a significant conflict of interest, and

Whereas, the service of a leader whose call to discipleship is aligned with The United Methodist Church is prevented by the continued leadership of an individual who has made a private decision and/or public declaration to leave The United Methodist Church, and

Whereas, in November of 2022, and in historic fashion, a resolution in support of leading with integrity was adopted at all five Jurisdictional Conferences.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Rio Texas Annual Conference expresses both respect and gratitude to those who have voluntarily stepped away from positions of leadership as they journey away from membership in The United Methodist Church.

Be it further resolved that, as we continue this period of transition the Rio Texas Annual Conference calls upon every United Methodist, as a disciple of Jesus the Christ, to move forward in fairness and with integrity.

Be it further resolved that the Rio Texas Annual Conference asks all lay and clergy members who intend to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church to recuse themselves from leadership roles in all areas of the church, including the local church, district, conference, jurisdictional, and general church level committees, boards, agencies, delegations, and episcopal leaders.

Be it further resolved that we encourage the Rio Texas Conference Board of Trustees to develop codes of conduct to manage conflicts of interest that may arise around discussions of disaffiliation agreements.

Submitted by,
Rio Texas Uniting Table