



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CALL to ACTION : FOR THE RECORD

We seek to invest in effective leadership and increase accountability through
The UMC NON-RESIDENTIAL PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS.

The Benefits of the Non-Residential President

- *Greater continuity for leadership to maintain focus and complete projects.*
- *Greater and timelier attention to matters needing a churchwide response.*
- *Opportunity to collect and share best leadership practices from across the church.*
- *Opportunity to build stronger alliances with ecumenical partners.*

As The United Methodist Church prepares for the 2012 General Conference, exciting conversations are taking place about how God is leading us to a more faithful and fruitful future. This summary is intended to help United Methodists understand proposed legislation that would allow the Council of Bishops (COB) to elect an active bishop to a full-time position as president. This full-time position is a critical step in helping move the church forward.

Servant Leadership

Considering the primary work of creating and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations, the COB asked: “How can we serve congregations and our annual conferences through improved collaboration as bishops?” “What needs to change for us to improve the ways we help each other effectively support vital congregations in our areas?”

The provision for a non-residential president will assure sustained attention to the work of the council by a designated leader. The president will have the time to help bishops set realistic goals and use measurements to monitor progress. The president will also be available to fully represent the United Methodist Church in ecumenical and other settings.

This proposal was created in consultation with the 60-member Connectional Table. The goal is to assure that the president of the COB will have sufficient time to work collaboratively with bishops and others throughout The UMC to focus on actions that result in an increase in the number of vital congregations making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Preparing for Success

The need for a 10-year focus on vital congregations is important and urgent. Research provided in the Call to Action Report makes it clear that a 21st Century style of leadership – highly adaptive and collaborative – is needed. Past presidents of the COB agree that it is difficult to balance the growing responsibilities for leading the council with the work of overseeing a residential area. The legislation represents one of the first steps to fulfill the Call to Action recommendations to reform leadership and create new systems of measurement and accountability.

Proposed Changes

The proposed constitutional amendment calls for the president of the COB to be relieved of residential responsibilities during the time of holding office; the term would be increased from two to four years. The president would also be designated as the Ecumenical Officer of the COB.

What the legislation does **NOT** do:

- *Change the basic balance of power in The UMC by investing new authority in the non-residential president or in the COB.*
- *Give the COB the authority to change plans for spending general church funds.**
- *Assign to the COB the right to overturn the actions of the governing bodies responsible for general church program ministries.*

**Other legislation calls for the COB to concur with plans originated by, the General Council for Strategy and Oversight and the Center for Connectional Mission & Ministry, to reallocate monies among the general funds in accord with GC endorsed policies during the quadrennium.*

Key Role of the President of the COB

The key responsibilities of the non-residential bishop would be:

- Inspire a greater sense of unity and shared purpose as the chief steward of the vision of The United Methodist Church.
- Help root and express our mission and ministry in Wesleyan theology and values.
- Lead and participate in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in order to grow and strengthen our commitment to justice and reconciliation within the Church and the world community.
- Organize the work of the COB to give priority to helping create more vital congregations.
- Build networks of relationships and exchange ideas and resources that connect the whole church in common mission and witness.
- Promote greater collaboration among the agencies, seminaries, conferences, foundations and other groups.
- Itinerate throughout the connection to be the bearer of hope and messenger of best practices.
- Assist in identifying new mission field opportunities.
- Communicate on behalf of the UMC during times of crisis in the world.

A full list of responsibilities may be found at www.umccalltoaction.org.

Election and Funding

The earliest start date for the president serving as a non-residential bishop is 2014. If the constitutional amendment is ratified and certified, the COB would elect the new president and for the initial transition the College of Bishops in the Area in which the new president is serving would consult with both the Jurisdictional and Area Episcopacy Committees to identify a retired bishop who after approval of the COB would be assigned as Acting Bishop for that Area. Thereafter, the election for the 4-year term could be completed prior to the meetings of the affected Jurisdiction or Central Conference and that body would elect and assign bishops in the usual manner.

The incremental cost of the non-residential president for the 2013-2016 quadrennium would be offset by the late mid-quadrennium start-up date and by changes to be made in existing COB staffing and office operations. The net new costs would be off-set by significant reductions in expenses achieved through adjustments in COB meetings and changes in the arrangements /schedules and other changes in governance costs for the general agencies.

Isn't it time to honestly examine the state of The UMC connection and discern how recommended findings of the Call to Action Report can help us build a vital future? Isn't now the time to act not out of fear but to be hope-filled, passionate and courageous? For more information or to find answers to your questions, we urge you to talk with your bishop and visit www.umccalltoaction.org for clarity on this important legislation.