

VII. PLAN OF ORGANIZATION AND RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE

PART I

PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

A. ORGANIZATION

Pursuant to the action of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church as contained in ¶¶ 601ff of *The Book of Discipline* (2004), the following plan of organization and rules of order and procedure of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference are hereby established.

B. MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of this conference shall be composed of:
 - a. All clergy of the conference in full connection and probationary and associate membership and all local pastors under full-time (¶ 318.1) or part-time (¶ 318.2) appointment to pastoral charges of the conference;
 - b. One lay member from every pastoral charge of the conference, elected as provided in ¶ 32 of the *Discipline*; provided, that each pastoral charge served by more than one clergy member under appointment shall be entitled to as many lay members of the conference as there are clergy members appointed to that charge;
 - c. The diaconal ministers of the conference;
 - d. The active deaconesses under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the conference;
 - e. The conference president of United Methodist Women;
 - f. The conference president of United Methodist Men;
 - g. The conference lay leader;
 - h. The conference president of United Methodist Youth;
 - i. The chairperson of the conference college student organization;
 - j. The district lay leader from each district;
 - k. The president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization;
 - l. Two young persons between the ages of twelve and seventeen and one young person between the ages of eighteen and thirty from each district, elected by the district Program Ministries Council; and
 - m. Such additional lay members as may be necessary to equalize the lay and clergy membership of the conference, as provided below, based on the clergy membership as of January 1 of the year in which the conference session is held.
2. Each district Program Ministries Council, upon nomination by the district Committee on Nominations, shall elect from its district additional lay members of the conference in a number equal to 1/800 of the lay membership of the district or major fraction thereof, based upon membership as recorded in the most recent conference journal. Alternates to such additional lay members may be chosen at the discretion of the district Program Ministries Council and may be seated in place of such members who are unable to be present, provided that such substitutions are certified to the conference secretary by the district superintendent by May 15. Any additional lay members needed to equalize the membership shall be elected by the conference Committee on Nominations, with no alternates being chosen or seated. Should the computations provided for herein result in a greater number of lay members than is required, the conference secretary shall be authorized to adjust the formula so as to equalize the membership.
3. The clergy members in full connection shall have the right to the floor and the right to vote on all matters in the Annual Conference except the election of lay delegates to the General and Jurisdictional conferences and shall have sole responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
4. The lay members shall have the right to the floor and the right to vote on all matters in the Annual Conference except the election of clergy delegates to the General and Jurisdictional conferences and the granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into full conference membership, or any question concerning the character and official conduct of clergy, except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
5. The probationary and associate members and the local pastors under full-time or part-time appointment shall have the right to the floor and the right to vote on all matters in the Annual Conference except constitutional amendments, the election of delegates to the General and Jurisdictional conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
6. Affiliate members as defined in ¶ 344.4, student local pastors, and recognized retired local pastors shall be seated in the Annual Conference and shall have the privilege of the floor without vote.

7. Unless included in the membership under the equalizing formula noted above, the following shall be seated in the Annual Conference and shall have the privilege of the floor without vote: official representatives from other denominations, especially from member churches of Churches Uniting in Christ, invited by the Annual Conference; missionaries regularly assigned by the General Board of Global Ministries and serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference; lay missionaries regularly appointed by the Board of Global Ministries in nations other than the United States; certified lay missionaries from nations other than the United States serving within the bounds of the Annual Conference; and members of conference agencies who are not lay members of the conference.
8. The registration cards signed by the members present shall constitute the official membership roll of the Annual Conference.
9. One third of the total number of voting members registered at the time of the organizational session of the conference shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business throughout the annual session.

C. OFFICERS

1. **The Presiding Officer:** The presiding officer of the conference shall be the resident bishop, who shall preside at all sessions of the conference but who may appoint a presiding officer to preside in the temporary absence of the bishop from the chair.
2. **Conference Secretary:** The secretary of the conference shall be elected quadrennially by the conference at the annual session of the conference following each General Conference on nomination by the Committee on Conference Staff Relations and shall assume full responsibility of the office upon adjournment of the annual session at which he/she is elected, provided that the outgoing secretary shall be responsible for editing and publishing the journal of that session. If a vacancy occurs during the quadrennium, the bishop, after consultation with the district superintendents, shall appoint a person to act until the next annual session, at which time a successor shall be elected as provided herein.
3. **Associate and Assistant Secretaries:** Upon nomination by the conference secretary, the conference shall annually elect an associate secretary and a sufficient number of assistant secretaries to handle the work of the conference.
4. **Conference Treasurer-Director of Administrative Services:** At the first session of the conference following the General Conference, a conference treasurer-director of administrative services shall be elected by the conference for the quadrennium upon nomination by the conference Council on Finance and Administration. If a vacancy occurs during the quadrennium, the Council on Finance and Administration shall fill the vacancy until the next session of the conference, at which time a successor shall be elected as provided herein.
5. **Conference Statistician:** The conference statistician shall be elected quadrennially by the conference upon nomination by the conference Committee on Nominations and/or from the floor at the annual session of the conference following each General Conference. If a vacancy occurs during the quadrennium, the bishop, after consultation with the district superintendents, shall appoint a person to act until the next annual session, at which time a successor shall be elected as provided herein.
6. **Associate and Assistant Statisticians:** Upon nomination by the conference statistician, the conference shall annually elect an associate statistician and a sufficient number of assistant statisticians.
7. **District Statisticians:** There shall be a district statistician for each district, nominated by the respective district superintendents after consultation with the conference statistician and elected annually by the conference.
8. **Conference Chancellor:** Upon nomination by the bishop, the conference may annually elect a layperson who is a member in good standing of one of the local churches of the conference, or a clergy-person who is a member of the annual conference, and who is a member of the bar of the state of North Carolina as conference chancellor to serve as legal advisor to the bishop and to the conference.
9. **Conference Parliamentarian:** A conference parliamentarian may be appointed annually by the bishop after consultation with the district superintendents.
10. **Coordinator of Calendar:** Upon nomination by the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting, the conference shall elect a coordinator of calendar, who shall chair the Committee on Resolutions and shall (a) arrange for agenda items to be presented to the conference in an expeditious manner, making recommendations to each session of the conference concerning agenda items and time allocations for the same; (b) prepare a calendar of forum group reports for each plenary session which is to involve such reports; (c) announce to the conference in advance the forum group reports scheduled for each session; and (d) advise the presiding officer of the priority status of agenda items and the progress of time allotments thereof.
11. **Conference Auditor:** Upon nomination by the conference Council on Finance and Administration, the conference shall annually elect a conference auditor.
12. **Conference Director of Connectional Ministries:** The conference director of connectional ministries shall serve as the executive officer of the conference Ministries Advisory Council, function as a communication link between the conference program agencies and the jurisdictional and general church program agencies, supervise the conference staff persons appointed or employed in program-related roles, give leadership in the implementation of ¶ 607 of the *Discipline*, and relate to directors of conference councils on ministries throughout the connection.

13. **Conference Lay Leader:** The conference lay leader elected in 2004 shall continue in office until the adjournment of the 2008 session of the conference. Beginning in 2008, the conference lay leader shall be elected for a four-year term by the conference upon nomination by the Council on Laity. No person shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms in this office.
14. **Compensation of Conference Officers:** The compensation and office expenses of the associate and assistant secretaries, administrative assistant to the bishop, treasurer-director of administrative services, statistician, associate and assistant statisticians, district statisticians, and auditor shall be fixed by the conference Council on Finance and Administration, subject to the approval of the conference. The compensation and office expenses of the conference secretary, conference director of connectional ministries, and the program staff of the conference shall be fixed by said council and the Committee on Conference Staff Relations, subject to the approval of the conference. Upon certification by the Council on Finance and Administration, the treasurer-director of administrative services shall pay said compensation and expenses from conference administration funds.

D. CONFERENCE AGENCIES

1. Committee on Nominations:

- a. For the purpose of nominations to the conference agencies and of forum group chairpersons, there shall be a conference Committee on Nominations, composed of the bishop, who shall be chairperson; the conference secretary, who shall be secretary; the district superintendents; the conference director of connectional ministries; the administrative assistant to the bishop; the conference lay leader; the conference president of United Methodist Men; the conference president of United Methodist Women; the chairperson of the conference Council on Youth Ministries; four laywomen and four laymen elected quadrennially by the conference upon nomination by this committee; and one clergy woman appointed by the bishop if there is no woman serving as district superintendent. Unless otherwise provided herein or by the *Discipline*, all members of conference agencies prescribed herein shall be elected by the Annual Conference upon nomination by the conference Committee on Nominations.
- b. There shall be in each district a district Committee on Nominations, composed of the district superintendent, who shall be chairperson; the district lay leader, who shall be secretary; the district president of United Methodist Men; the district president of United Methodist Women; the district president of United Methodist Youth; two pastors who have served in the district for at least two years, named by the district superintendent; and two laywomen and two laymen who have been members of The United Methodist Church for at least four years, named by the district Program Ministries Council. This committee shall prepare nominations from the district for consideration by the conference Committee on Nominations and shall care for other necessary nominations within the district and for action by the conference as indicated herein. Nominations for members of conference program ministries commissions and advocacy agencies shall be submitted to the conference Committee on Nominations for its consent. Each district committee shall contact all persons being nominated from the district, inform them of the duties of the offices to which they are being nominated, and secure their consent to serve if elected.
- c. The conference Committee on Nominations shall receive and review the nominations from the district committees and shall then nominate the conference agencies and forum group chairpersons to be elected by the conference unless otherwise specified herein. Quadrennial nominations shall be submitted to the conference secretary by March 20 and shall be printed in the booklet of program and reports, along with the time and place of the convening of said agencies for organization. Each nominated lay person who is not a conference member shall be notified in advance of his or her proposed nomination, of the additional nominees to the same agency, and of the time and place of the organizational meeting of the agency.
- d. The district and conference committees on nominations shall take care that each of the various constituencies of the conference, including churches of few members, is represented throughout the organizational life of the conference insofar as possible. Persons shall be selected for nomination based upon their demonstrated or expressed desire, interest, concern, and/or involvement in the administrative, service, or program areas for which they are chosen.
- e. The foregoing shall not preclude nominations from the floor of the conference at the time of the election of the members of conference agencies.
- f. Laity representatives to the conference Ministries Advisory Council and all members of conference program ministry commissions (Part I.D.6) and advocacy agencies (Part I.D.7) shall be elected for quadrennial terms, in accordance with the maximum tenure guidelines for quadrennial agencies. A district representative who is elected as chairperson or section leader of a program ministry commission or advocacy agency and who moves during the quadrennium from the district from which elected to the commission or agency shall become an additional at-large member of that commission or agency, except that the number of elected members of a program ministry commission or advocacy agency shall not exceed by more than four the number prescribed for it. A district representative vacancy shall be filled as provided in item h. below, provided that the respective district Committee on Nominations shall nominate the person to fill the vacancy.
- g. Included in the membership of each conference administrative, program, or service agency shall be any members of this Annual Conference who are members of corresponding general church and jurisdictional agencies.

- h. Unless otherwise provided by the *Discipline*, the bishop, the district superintendents, the conference director of connectional ministries, the administrative assistant to the bishop, and the conference secretary shall act in committee to fill any vacancies on any of the conference agencies which shall arise in the interim. Persons so appointed shall hold office until the next regular election of the members of the agencies involved.
2. **Terms of Service:** Except as hereinafter provided, no person shall serve simultaneously on more than one of the quadrennial or term election agencies of the conference, except in cases of ex-officio membership, nor for more than eight consecutive years on any one such agency, except in cases of ex-officio membership; provided, however, in the case of membership on a quadrennial agency, that, unless prohibited by the *Discipline*, a person elected to fill an unexpired term of two years or less shall be eligible to serve for a maximum of eight consecutive additional years on the same agency, and a person elected to fill an unexpired term of more than two years shall be eligible for a maximum of four consecutive additional years on the same agency. The Committee on Episcopacy, the Committee on Nominations, and the Committee on Conference Staff Relations shall not be included in the prohibition of simultaneous service. If a member of said agencies is appointed to the district superintendency, his or her agency membership shall terminate, unless the membership be ex officio, and any vacancy thus created shall be filled as heretofore set out. If a member of a conference agency is absent from two consecutive regular meetings of the agency without a reason acceptable to the agency, his or her membership thereon shall cease, and he or she shall be so notified. Such a vacancy shall be filled as heretofore set out.
3. **Convening for Organization:** The terms of service of the members of quadrennial or term agencies of the conference shall begin upon the adjournment of the annual session of the conference at which they are elected. The bishop shall appoint for each such agency a district superintendent to convene the agency for organization no later than sixty days following adjournment of the annual session at which the agency members were elected. Each annual agency shall be convened for organization by a district superintendent appointed by the bishop before the final adjournment of the annual session at which the agency members were elected and shall terminate its functions at the adjournment of the next annual session.
4. **Councils:**
 - a. **Conference Ministries Advisory Council:** There shall be constituted quadrennially a conference Ministries Advisory Council composed of a chairperson and seven at-large members, all of whom shall be laity, and the following ex-officio members: the conference director of connectional ministries, who shall be vice-chairperson; the resident bishop; one district superintendent representing the Cabinet; the chairpersons of the Commission on Nurture Ministries, the Commission on Outreach Ministries, and the Commission on Witness Ministries, each of whom shall be laity; the vice-chairpersons of these commissions; the conference senior program staff; the chairpersons of the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, the Commission on Religion and Race, and the Commission on the Status and Role of Women; the chairpersons of the Committee on Church and Society, the Committee on African American Ministries, the Committee on Asian American Ministries, the Committee on Native American Ministries, and the Committee on Hispanic Ministries; the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the conference Council on Laity and the conference Council on Youth Ministries; the chairperson of the conference Commission on Communications; the presidents of the conference United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women; and one liaison person from the Consortium on Health and Human Services Institutions. The council shall be authorized to organize as needed to care for its responsibilities and to establish such by-laws as are deemed necessary for its operation.
 - b. **Conference Council on Finance and Administration:** There shall be constituted quadrennially a conference Council on Finance and Administration as provided in ¶ 610 of the *Discipline*, composed of six ordained ministers, nine laypersons, and such ex-officio members as the *Discipline* may prescribe, including any member of the General Council on Finance and Administration from this conference. The resident bishop, the administrative assistant to the bishop, the conference director of connectional ministries, the conference treasurer-director of administrative services, and one district superintendent named by the Cabinet shall be ex-officio members without vote.
 - c. **Council on Congregational Development:** This council shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of one person from each district, seven members at large, the resident bishop, a Cabinet representative, and the conference director of congregational development. It shall develop and implement plans for securing funding for congregational development projects, receive applications for funds, make grants, and fulfill other functions as directed by the conference.
 - d. **Council on Higher Education Ministries:** This council shall be constituted quadrennially in fulfillment of ¶ 633.1 of the *Discipline* and shall be composed of the resident bishop; one district superintendent selected by the bishop; the conference director of connectional ministries; one college/university president selected by the Commission on Church Colleges and Universities from among the presidents of Bennett College, Brevard College, Greensboro College, High Point University, and Pfeiffer University; one campus minister from the Western North Carolina Conference selected by the United-Methodist-related campus ministers in North Carolina; five representatives of the Commission on Church Colleges and Universities selected by that commission; and five representatives of the North Carolina State Commission on Campus Ministry selected by that commission. The council shall develop, guide, and serve as advocate for the ministries of the conference in higher education and campus ministry and shall fulfill such duties as are specified in the by-laws of the council as approved by the conference.

- e. **Council on Laity:** This council shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of the conference lay leader, who shall be president; the president of conference United Methodist Men; the president of conference United Methodist Women; the vice-chairperson of the conference Council on Youth Ministries; the district lay leaders; the conference prayer advocate; the chairperson of the Conference Ministries Advisory Council; one district superintendent named by the Cabinet (without vote); twelve lay persons elected to insure that the total membership of the council is representative of the various constituencies of the conference; and other persons deemed by the council as necessary to its work. The council shall foster an awareness of the role of the laity in achieving the mission of the church, and enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision-making process of the conference, the districts, and the local churches.
 - f. **Administrative Council:** This council shall be composed of the bishop, who shall be president, and the administrative assistant to the bishop, the conference secretary, the conference treasurer-director of administrative services, the conference director of connectional ministries, the conference director of congregational development, and the president of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. It shall have an advisory relationship with the bishop in ongoing program and administrative matters.
5. **Boards:**
- a. **Conference Board of Trustees:** As provided in ¶ 2512 of the *Discipline*, there shall be constituted annually an incorporated conference Board of Trustees, which shall be composed of six or dained ministers (one of whom shall be a district superintendent) and six lay persons elected for three-year terms in three classes of four members each. Its membership shall not be subject to the limitations on terms of service set forth above. The conference treasurer-director of administrative services shall be an ex-officio member without vote.
 - b. **Board of Ordained Ministry:** This board shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of thirty-two elders in full connection, including one district superintendent named by the bishop; six deacons in full connection; nine lay persons, including one or more diaconal ministers; and, as members without vote, at least two associate members or local pastors who have completed the Course of Study; elected as provided in ¶ 634 of the *Discipline*.
 - c. **Board of Pension and Health Benefits:** As specified in ¶ 638 of the *Discipline*, an incorporated Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of twelve members, arranged in two classes so that the terms of six shall expire at the end of one quadrennium and the terms of six shall expire at the end of the next quadrennium. The treasurer of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, Inc., shall be an ex-officio member. One district superintendent named by the Cabinet and the conference treasurer-director of administrative services shall be ex-officio members without vote. As a sub-committee within its structure, the board shall quadrennially appoint a Health Benefits Committee, composed of such members of the board and other persons as the board may determine.
 - d. **District Board of Church Location and Building:** This board shall be constituted annually for each district as provided in ¶ 2518 of the *Discipline*.
 - e. **District Board of Trustees:** This board shall be constituted annually for each district as provided in ¶ 2517.2 of the *Discipline*.
6. **Program Ministries Commissions:** There shall be constituted quadrennially the following three program ministries commissions:
- a. **Commission on Nurture Ministries;**
 - b. **Commission on Outreach Ministries;**
 - c. **Commission on Witness Ministries.**
- Each shall be chaired by a lay person elected by the commission and be composed of one lay person and one clergy person from each district, nominated by the district Committee on Nominations, after consultation with conference program staff, and submitted to the conference Committee on Nominations for its consent and elected by the Annual Conference; three at-large members nominated by the conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference; and two youth selected by the conference Council on Youth Ministries; provided, however, that the director of Golden Cross (who shall be appointed by the resident bishop in consultation with the conference director of connectional ministries and the conference director of administrative services) shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission on Outreach Ministries; provided, further, that the bishop's ecumenical liaison officer shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission on Witness Ministries; and provided, further, that the president of the Council on Congregational Development shall be an ex-officio member of the Commission on Witness Ministries. The specific areas of concern of each commission and the principles governing their operation shall be as specified in the by-laws of the conference Ministries Advisory Council.
7. **Advocacy Agencies:** There shall be constituted quadrennially the following advocacy agencies:
- a. **Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns:** This commission shall be composed of four clergy persons and four lay persons, elected by the conference; the bishop's ecumenical liaison officer; and United Methodists residing within the conference boundaries who are members of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, the governing board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the World Methodist Council, the United Methodist delegation to the most recent World Council of Churches Assembly, and the United Methodist delegation to the most recent plenary meeting of Churches Uniting in Christ.

- b. **Commission on Religion and Race:** This commission shall be composed of one person from each district, nominated by the district Committee on Nominations with the consent of the conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference, and three members at large, nominated by the conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. The chairperson of the Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (a sub-committee of the conference Ministries Advisory Council) shall be an ex-officio member.
 - c. **Commission on the Status and Role of Women:** This commission shall be composed of one person from each district, nominated by the district Committee on Nominations with the consent of the conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference; six members at large, nominated by the conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference; and one representative of, and elected by, the conference United Methodist Women.
 - d. **Committee on Church and Society:** This committee shall be composed of seven clergy persons and seven lay persons, elected by the conference; the district director of church and society from each district; the conference peace with justice coordinator; the conference environmental justice coordinator; the social action coordinator of the conference United Methodist Women; and one of the representatives from the conference to the North Carolina Council of Churches, selected by the committee.
 - e. **Committee on African American Ministries:** This committee shall be composed of up to eighteen members, a majority of whom shall be African Americans.
 - f. **Committee on Asian American Ministries:** This committee shall be composed of up to eighteen members, a majority of whom shall be Asian Americans.
 - g. **Committee on Native American Ministries:** This committee shall be composed of up to eighteen members, a majority of whom shall be Native Americans.
 - h. **Committee on Hispanic Ministries:** This committee shall be composed of up to eighteen members, a majority of whom shall be Hispanic Americans.
 - i. **Consortium on Health and Human Services Institutions:** This consortium shall be composed of the chief executive officers of The Children's Home, Inc., Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc., Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc., Givens Estates United Methodist Retirement Community, UMAR, Inc., and other residential service homes, the United Methodist Deaf Ministry of the Western North Carolina Conference, and conference approved counseling ministries, and the conference director of connectional ministries.
- The specific areas of concern of each advocacy agency and the principles governing their operation shall be as specified in the by-laws of the conference Ministries Advisory Council.
- 8. **Administrative Commissions:**
 - a. **Commission on Archives and History:** This commission shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of twelve members at large, the conference secretary, and the president or designated representative of the executive committee of the Conference Historical Society, plus the conference archivist as an ex-officio member without vote. Its membership shall not be subject to the limitations on terms of service set forth above.
 - b. **Commission on Communications:** This commission shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of twelve elected members at large, up to five additional members selected by the commission for expertise in the areas of communication and technology, two youth selected by the conference Council on Youth Ministries, and a representative of the Methodist Board of Publication, Inc., selected by that board from among its members from the Western North Carolina Conference. It shall function as a service agency for the entire conference in the area of communication and interpretation.
 - c. **Commission on Equitable Compensation:** As specified in ¶ 624 of the *Discipline*, this commission shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of fourteen persons, plus one district superintendent, named by the Cabinet, and the administrative assistant to the bishop. The fourteen elected members shall consist of seven lay persons and seven clergy persons, including at least one lay person and one clergy person from charges of fewer than two hundred members which are receiving equitable compensation funds at the time of the election of commission members.
 - 9. **Committees:**
 - a. **Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting:** This committee shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of the bishop, who shall be chairperson; the conference director of connectional ministries, who shall be vice-chairperson; the conference secretary, who shall be secretary; the conference treasurer-director of administrative services, who shall be treasurer; the administrative assistant to the bishop; the conference lay leader; the conference president of United Methodist Women; the district superintendents; the conference director of communication; the coordinator of calendar; and seven lay persons, two of whom shall be youth. It shall plan and administer all responsibilities relating to the annual meeting of the conference, including date, place, program, worship services, financial support, organization and rules, publicity, entertainment, and journal.
 - b. **Committee on Appeals:** This committee shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of two ordained ministers and three lay persons, with one additional ordained minister and one additional lay person elected as reserve members. It shall hear all appeals from Charge Conferences, from decisions of district Boards of Church Location and Building, and from decisions of arbitration committees constituted to make allocations of parsonage assets when a circuit is divided. It shall serve in any other capacity designated by the bishop and shall make an annual report of its recommendations and decisions to the conference.

- c. **Committee on Conference Staff Relations:** This committee shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of the bishop; the conference lay leader; the chairperson of the conference Ministries Advisory Council; the president of the conference Council on Finance and Administration; the president of the Council on Congregational Development; the chairperson of the board of directors of the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc.; the secretary of the Cabinet; and the following members at large: two ordained elders, one deacon in full connection or diaconal minister, and two lay persons. The conference director of connectional ministries shall be an ex-officio member without vote. The chairperson shall be elected by the committee from among the five at-large members. Other officers shall be elected from among the voting membership of the committee as the committee deems necessary. The committee shall serve the personnel responsibilities assigned by the Annual Conference and function as the Staff-Parish Relations Committee for members of the conference staff.
- d. **Committee on Episcopacy:** This committee shall be constituted quadrennially and shall be composed of fifteen persons elected as provided in ¶ 636 of the *Discipline*. The committee is strongly urged to meet quarterly.
- e. **Episcopal Residence Committee:** This committee shall be composed as provided in ¶ 637.2 of the *Discipline*.
- f. **Committees on Investigation:** There shall be two such committees constituted quadrennially, one to deal with matters pertaining to ordained ministers and local pastors and one to deal with matters pertaining to diaconal ministers, composed as provided in ¶¶ 2703.2 and 2703.3, respectively, of the *Discipline*.
- g. **Administrative Review Committee:** This committee shall be constituted quadrennially as provided in ¶ 635 of the *Discipline*.
- h. **District Committee on Ordained Ministry:** This committee shall be constituted annually for each district as provided in ¶ 663 of the *Discipline*.
- i. **Committee on District Superintendency:** This committee shall be constituted annually for each district as provided in ¶ 666 of the *Discipline*. The committee is strongly urged to meet quarterly.
- j. **District Committee on Congregational Development:** This committee shall be constituted quadrennially in each district in accordance with guidelines developed by the conference Council on Congregational Development. It shall have as its purpose the development of congregations by starting new churches and revitalizing existing churches.
- k. **Forum Groups:** At each annual session of the conference, there shall be organized several forum groups, composed as provided in Part III below, and having powers and duties as prescribed therein.
- l. **Committee on Resolutions:** This committee shall be composed of the coordinator of calendar, who shall be chairperson, and the chairpersons of the several forum groups. To this committee shall be referred all resolutions (including motions to print addresses in the conference journal) which are not to be cared for by any other committee. It shall report out every matter referred to it, either agreement or disagreement.

E. LOCAL CHURCH REPORT TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Each pastor shall complete and submit Table I and Table II of the annual statistical report(s) of his or her church(es) to the conference as directed by the conference statistician. Financial data shall be reported in even dollars only. Table I and Table II shall be published in the journal for each local church, with totals for the charges also being given.

F. CONFERENCE JOURNAL

1. The conference secretary shall be the editor of the conference journal, assisted by the conference statistician in the publication of statistical data.
2. The journal shall be edited in keeping with the *Discipline* and other regulations of the General Conference and the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference under the direction of the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting.
3. The annual journal shall be published as one volume and shall contain the proceedings of the most recent conference session and the statistical tables for the calendar year preceding that session. It shall be made available as a printed book by October 1 following the annual session of the conference and shall also be made available by electronic means as soon after the annual session as possible.
4. In the event that the plan of organization and rules of order and procedure of the conference are published apart from the journal, this document shall be considered part of the journal.
5. All orders for the journal must be received within forty-five days after adjournment of the annual session of the conference in order for shipment to be guaranteed.
6. The number of copies of the journal to be printed each year shall be determined by the number ordered by conference officers, pastors, district superintendents, conference staff members, and other institutions, agencies, and individuals.
7. All orders for the journal shall be accompanied by payment for the same.
8. In view of the obvious difficulties and inequities involved in singling out one or more of the deceased clergy members or lay persons for special memorial recognition, and of the impracticality of honoring persons worthy of special recognition, the journal shall not be dedicated to the memory or honor of any person.

G. DISTRICTS, DISTRICT CONFERENCES, AND DISTRICT COUNCILS

1. There shall be a total of fourteen districts in this Annual Conference, the boundaries of which shall be determined by the bishop after consultation with the Cabinet.
2. At the discretion of the district superintendent, a District Conference may be held in each district. The membership of a District Conference shall consist of all clergy appointed to pastoral charges in the district or holding charge conference membership in the district, including those appointed to extension ministries or beyond the local church, retired, on incapacity leave, on sabbatical leave, on leave of absence, and on family leave; diaconal ministers appointed in the district; deaconesses appointed in the district; the chairperson of the District Administrative Council (or equivalent); the chairperson of the District Program Ministries Council (or equivalent); the chairperson of the district trustees; the chairperson of the Committee on District Superintendency; the district lay leader and associate district lay leaders; the president of the district United Methodist Men; the president of the district United Methodist Women; the at-large lay members of the immediately preceding annual conference from the district; and one lay member from and elected by each pastoral charge in the district, provided that each charge served by more than one clergy member of the annual conference shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members; and further provided that multiple-point charges shall be entitled to a lay member from each church.
3. As early in the calendar year as possible, each district superintendent shall furnish the bishop, the conference treasurer, and the conference statistician an official copy of the apportionments to the charges in his or her district for the World Service Fund, conference benevolences, pension funds and other clergy support funds, higher education, and other funds approved by the conference for apportionment to the charges, with the amount accepted by each charge and by each local church also being shown, and a schedule of the salaries of all pastors and associate pastors as set by the Charge Conference of each charge in the district.
4. Each district superintendent, upon request, shall furnish to the conference secretary such vital statistics and information as may be required.
5. The district lay leaders and associate district lay leaders shall be elected upon nomination by the district Committee on Nominations for a two-year term by the district Board of Laity, if such exists, or by the district Program Ministries Council and confirmed by the annual conference. It is preferred that the district lay leader have experience as an associate district lay leader. No person shall serve as district lay leader or associate district lay leader for more than three consecutive terms (six years).
6. District Organization for Program Ministries: Each district shall organize a Program Ministries Council composed of the district superintendent, the district lay leader, the district presidents of United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women, district representatives to the conference program ministries commissions, and such other persons as may be selected by the district Committee on Nominations. At least two youth (fourteen to eighteen years of age) and two young adults (eighteen to twenty-five years of age) shall be included in the membership of the council. The primary purpose of the council is to assist congregations within the district in benefiting from programming/ministries resources available beyond the local church, to be a channel of communication between the local churches and the conference staff and between ministries agencies beyond the district, and to extend the ministry of the local church through appropriate endeavors which normally are not practical to implement by a single church or a small number of churches in concert. It shall have the same year as the Annual Conference. Operating expenses of the council shall be funded through the district expense fund. Specific responsibilities listed within the *Discipline* regarding a district Council on Ministries may be the basis for tasks of a district Program Ministries Council. Nothing in these provisions is intended to override, or be a substitute for, the functions and authority of a District Mission Society, if such exists in a district.
7. The district Board of Church Location and Building, the district Board of Trustees, the district Committee on the Ordained Ministry, and the Committee on District Superintendency shall be organized in each district as provided for above. A district treasurer and other necessary officers and committees shall be elected annually by the District Conference upon nomination by the district Committee on Nominations and/or from the floor; provided, that if no District Conference is held, the district Program Ministries Council, upon nomination by the district Committee on Nominations, shall elect a district treasurer and other necessary officers and committees.

H. ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES

1. All lay members of the conference as designated in section B above and all clergy in full connection in the conference shall be entitled to vote, with laity voting only for laity and clergy voting only for clergy.
2. Lay persons as specified in ¶ 36 of the *Discipline* and clergy members in full connection as specified in ¶ 35 of the *Discipline* shall be eligible for election as delegates.
3. Those voting must vote within the voting bar of the conference and at the time specified by the presiding officer for that ballot. Ballots shall be cast only on the proper forms as provided and designated by the conference.
4. Vote counting procedures shall be the responsibility of the conference secretary, assisted by tellers duly elected by the conference from among the lay members and the clergy members in full connection upon nomination by the conference Committee on Nominations and/or from the floor. From among the tellers the conference shall elect two chief tellers from each order.
5. A simple majority of the valid ballots cast shall be required for election.

6. The results of the ballots shall be announced by the presiding officer as follows:
 - a. First Ballot for General Conference Delegates and First Ballot for Jurisdictional Conference Delegates: The names of all persons receiving five or more votes shall be announced, with the total vote for each, in descending order.
 - b. Second Ballots: The names of all persons receiving twenty or more votes shall be announced.
 - c. Third and All Subsequent Ballots: The names of all persons receiving thirty or more votes shall be announced.

NOTE: A person's name not being announced because his or her vote total was less than the number necessary for announcement does not mean that the person is necessarily ineligible for election.
7. Individual ballots shall be valid only when cast for the prescribed number of eligible persons to be elected on each ballot and cast on the forms and in the manner provided for and designated by the conference. Inclusion of the name of a person already elected, the name of an ineligible person, or an illegible name shall invalidate that entire individual ballot. Adjudication of illegibility shall be the responsibility of the chief tellers.

PART II

RULES OF ORDER

A. PRESIDING OFFICER:

Rule 1. Authority of the Chairman: The resident bishop or president pro-tempore or the presiding officer designated by the bishop to preside in the bishop's temporary absence shall be the chairman of the conference. The chair shall decide points of order raised by the members and shall rule on points of order not raised by the members as the chair deems necessary to conform to these rules of order, subject, in both cases, to an appeal to the conference by any member without debate, except that the chairman and the appellant, in that order, shall each have five minutes for a statement in support of their respective positions. A tie vote in the case of appeal shall sustain the chair. When any member raises a point of order, the member shall cite, by number, the rule alleged to have been violated. The chair shall have the right to recess a session of the conference at any time in the chair's discretion and to reconvene at such a time as the chair shall announce, with only members, authorized personnel, and authorized guests permitted to attend such a session following recess.

Rule 2. Calling the Conference to Order: When the chairman stands in place and calls the conference to order, no member shall speak or address the chair while the chairman stands.

B. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS:

Rule 3. Interrupting the Speaker: No member who has the floor may be interrupted except for a breach of order, or a misrepresentation, or to direct the attention of the conference to the fact that the time has arrived for a special order, or to raise a very urgent question of high privilege.

Rule 4. Frequency and Length of Speeches: No member shall speak a second time on the same question if any member who has not spoken desires the floor, no more than twice on the same subject under the same motion, and no longer than five minutes unless the member's time shall be extended by the conference, except as provided in Rule 37. This five-minute limit may be reduced by a majority vote of the conference at any time and for any period of duration. The provisions of this rule shall likewise apply to the asking of a question or questions by an individual and to answers to that individual by the person or agency to whom the questions are directed.

Rule 5. Total Time for Debate on an Individual Proposal: When a proposal is to be presented as the main motion for debate, the conference may, by majority vote upon motion by any member, set a time limit for the total debate on that question, including any amendments or other secondary motions related thereto, provided that such limitation shall not be construed to conflict with Rule 4 or Rule 37. If such a limitation is set, the chair may direct the coordinator of calendar to allocate the total time among speakers for and against the question by such means as the coordinator deems appropriate, consistent with the provisions of Rule 4, and provided that the previous question may be ordered at any time as specified in Rule 31.

Rule 6. Question of High Privilege: A member claiming the floor for what he or she sees as a very urgent question of high privilege shall be allowed to indicate briefly the nature of the privilege, and if it be adjudged by the chair to be such, the member may proceed at his or her pleasure, or until the chair judges that the member has exhausted the privilege.

Rule 7. Voting Bar of the Conference: At the organizational session of the conference, the voting bar of the plenary sessions of the conference shall be set by vote of the members. No place shall be designated a part of the voting bar which is without public address facilities broadcasting the actual proceedings of the plenary sessions. When a vote is taken on any question, only those members within the voting bar of the conference shall be entitled to vote.

Rule 8. Voting Procedure: Voting shall be by voice or by show of hands or otherwise as ordered by the chair or by the conference. At the discretion of the chair, a count vote may be taken. A count vote may also be ordered at the call of any member supported by one third of the members present and voting, in which case the members shall rise from their seats and be counted. The count shall be made by tellers appointed by the conference secretary and shall include the votes of members in the portions of the voting bar separate from the main assembly. No other business shall be in order when a vote is being taken or when the previous question has been ordered, unless the process is com-

pleted, except such as relates to the vote itself, or that which can be appropriately fitted into the time while waiting for the report of the tellers on a count vote.

Rule 9. Limitation on Making and Seconding Motions: A person seated in the conference without the right to vote may neither make nor second motions.

Rule 10. Division of Question: Before a vote is taken, any member shall have the right to call for a division of any question, if it is subject to such division as the member indicates. If no member objects, the division shall be made. If there is objection, the chair shall put the question of division to vote, not waiting for a second.

Rule 11. Unity of the Orders: Except in the election of delegates to the General and Jurisdictional conferences and as otherwise provided herein, the clergy and lay members shall deliberate and vote as one body.

C. BUSINESS PROCEDURE:

Rule 12. Organizational Session: The opening or organizational session of the conference shall include at least the following:

- a. Devotions.
- b. Roll call of deceased ministers.
- c. Roll call of conference members (see Part I.B.8).
- d. Determination that a quorum is present (see Part I.B.9).
- e. Setting of the voting bar (see Rule 7).
- f. Adoption of conference agenda.
- g. Report of Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting and welcome by hosts.
- h. Election of forum group chairpersons and approval of forum groups and their membership.
- i. Ordering to record of reports of boards and agencies not requiring conference action.
- j. Election of associate and assistant secretaries and associate and assistant statisticians.
- k. Election of coordinator of calendar.
- l. Referral of proposals upon motion by secretary.
- m. Announcement of necessary revisions of printed reports and recommendations.
- n. Reception (and referral, if the conference so chooses) of special study reports ordered by previous annual session.
- o. Setting of recommended moving day.

Rule 13. Booklet of Program and Reports: All annual reports and recommendations of conference agencies shall be typewritten and submitted to the conference secretary by March 20 prior to the convening of the conference; shall be combined together with the official program of the conference, the current edition of the plan of organization and rules of order, and the tentative assignments of the members to forum groups and printed under the direction of the conference secretary; and shall be made available to each member of the conference at least three weeks prior to the convening of the conference. The expenses of printing and mailing shall be paid by the conference treasurer from conference administration funds.

Rule 14. Additional Reports, Recommendations, and Petitions: Any additional reports from conference agencies, as well as petitions and proposals from such agencies, conference members, local church administrative boards and councils on ministries, and district councils on ministries, shall be submitted in writing to the conference secretary and shall conform to the deadlines set forth in Part III below. Any amendment offered to any report or proposal shall be submitted in writing to the secretary when presented to the conference.

Rule 15. Referral of Proposals: All recommendations, proposals, and petitions submitted as provided in Rules 13 and 14 shall be numbered and titled by the conference secretary, who shall then refer them to the forum groups or the Committee on Resolutions as provided in Part III below; provided, however, that the conference secretary may refer to the appropriate agency for its consideration any proposal received from an individual or a local church between the adjournment of an annual session of the conference and January 1 of the year following, and an agency receiving such a proposal shall notify the author of its action concerning it and shall report its action in its report to the next annual session; and provided, further, that any proposal requesting a special offering or financial appeal shall be referred to the conference Council on Finance and Administration, which must offer its recommendations concerning that proposal if it is submitted to a session of the Annual Conference. This rule shall not apply to proper amendments offered from the floor of the plenary sessions of the conference unless the conference so directs.

Rule 16. Recommendations the Property of Conference: All proposals and recommendations printed in the booklet of program and reports or in the additional booklet described in Rule 19, subject to correction of grammatical and editorial errors, shall be the property of the conference at the time of the opening of the conference without formal reading and shall be in order for consideration by the forum groups, or by the conference in case of amendments to the plan of organization and rules of order, at any time thereafter (see Rule 42).

Rule 17. Availability of Conference Actions: No later than ten days after the adjournment of the annual session, the conference secretary shall provide copies of all resolutions, proposals, and recommendations acted upon by the conference to the bishop, the conference director of connectional ministries, and the chairperson of the conference Commission on Communications.

Rule 18. New Proposals: No proposal shall be presented in the plenary sessions of the conference in violation of the deadlines specified in Part III below. Decisions as to what constitutes new proposals lie with the chair. Each forum group and the Committee on Resolutions must report out (as provided in Part III below) all matters submitted to it. Persons submitting proposals which are rejected in forum groups shall have the right to pursue such matters via the plenary sessions. Nothing in this rule shall

restrict the conference in its consideration of proper amendments to any report or recommendation when the report or recommendation is the main question before it.

Rule 19. Distribution of Proposals: All proposals and petitions not appearing in the booklet of program and reports and conforming to the rules for submitting the same shall be combined together in booklet form by the conference secretary and distributed to the members of the conference at the time of registration. In the event that the rules are suspended to permit consideration of other material, the forum group chairperson reporting thereon shall give a brief summary of its contents prior to its consideration; provided, however, that the conference may, by majority vote, require that any such material be distributed prior to its consideration.

Rule 20. Distribution of Unofficial Material: No leaflet, brochure, questionnaire, or other material shall be distributed on the floor of the conference or in the registration area except by prior approval of the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting or by the order of the conference.

Rule 21. Minority Reports: A minority report must be signed by one fourth of the members of a conference agency or a forum group to be deemed in order. A minority report of a conference agency may be printed in the booklet of program and reports, subject to Rule 13. A minority report not so printed, such as one from a forum group, shall be subject to Rule 19. All minority reports shall be further subject to Rule 36.

Rule 22. Adoption of Reports and Recommendations: A report or recommendation of a forum group, signed by the chairperson and secretary thereof, or a proposal or resolution signed by two or more members of the conference, shall be in order for consideration by the conference without the formality of a motion to adopt or a second thereto.

Rule 23. Consent Calendar: As soon as practicable after the forum groups have completed their work, the conference secretary shall prepare and distribute to the members of the conference a consent calendar, listing all petitions and proposals which have been acted upon by the forum groups with no dissenting votes in excess of 10% of the membership of the forum group present and voting. At the request of any member, the conference may, by majority vote, lift any item from the consent calendar for consideration. All items not lifted from the consent calendar shall be acted upon at one time in plenary session at such time as the chair shall direct. Any amendments to petitions by the forum groups which, in the judgment of the respective forum group chairperson, involve substantive rather than editorial changes shall be printed and distributed to the members of the conference or be read to the plenary session by the conference secretary or a member of the secretarial staff before the vote is taken on the consent calendar in plenary session. The provisions of this rule notwithstanding, the proposals of the Council on Finance and Administration related to the budgets and financial programs of the conference shall be presented for adoption in plenary session, at which time the forum group or groups to which such proposals were referred shall offer its/their recommendations and may propose amendments.

Rule 24. Consideration of Motions and Proposals: Immediately following the making of a motion or the presentation of a proposal, the chair shall state the precise question which is before the conference, thus identifying what is subject to debate and amendment(s). Introductory, accompanying, or explanatory material shall not be subject to debate or amendment, nor be considered to have been acted upon by the conference upon adoption of the motion or proposal itself, unless accompanied by a specific motion that such material be included in the action of the conference.

Rule 25. Undebatable Motions: The following motions shall be acted upon without debate:

- a. To adjourn, when unqualified, except to adjourn the conference finally.
- b. To suspend the rules.
- c. To lay on the table, except as provided in Rule 37.
- d. To take from the table.
- e. To call for the previous question.
- f. To reconsider a non-debatable motion.
- g. To limit or extend the limits of debate.
- h. To call for the order of the day.

Rule 26. Rights of the Main Question: The main question may be opened for debate under a motion to adopt, to commit or refer, to substitute, to postpone, or to reconsider. No new motion, resolution, or subject shall be entertained until the one under consideration shall have been disposed of, except as provided in Rule 8. The foregoing shall not apply to secondary motions if otherwise allowable in the existing parliamentary situation.

Rule 27. Precedence of Secondary Motions: If any one or more of the following motions shall be made when one or more other motions are pending, the order of their precedence in relation to one another shall be in the following order:

- a. To fix the time to which the conference shall adjourn, which motion is subject to amendment or may be laid on the table.
- b. To adjourn.
- c. To take recess.
- d. To lay on the table.
- e. To order the previous question.
- f. To limit or extend the limits of debate.
- g. To postpone to a given time.
- h. To commit or refer.
- i. To amend or substitute (one amendment being allowed to an amendment).
- j. To postpone indefinitely.

Rule 28. Tabling Related Motions: No motion which adheres to another motion, or has another motion adhering to it, may be laid on the table by itself. Such motions, if laid on the table, carry with them the motions to which they respectively adhere or which adhere to them.

Rule 29. Referring Reports: The conference may refer any report, recommendation, or resolution, or any part thereof, which is before the conference for consideration, or any amendment offered thereto.

Rule 30. Consideration of Substitutes: When a recommendation, resolution, or report is properly before the conference for consideration and action, even if amendments thereto are pending, a substitute therefor may be offered by any member moving that the same be substituted for the report, recommendation, or resolution under consideration. The conference shall then first perfect the original, including consideration and action upon any amendments which may be offered to it. The same perfecting process shall then be followed with respect to the substitute. The question shall then be put first on the motion to substitute, followed by the motion to adopt the report, recommendation, or resolution; provided, however, that the motion for the previous question shall not be in order on the adoption of the report or recommendation or on making the proposed substitution until opportunity has been given for at least two members to speak on each side of the question of substitution or adoption.

Rule 31. Previous Question: When any member moves the previous question (that is, that the vote now be taken on the motion or motions pending), the member shall indicate to what he or she intends it to apply, if any secondary motion or motions are also pending. If the member does not so indicate, it shall apply only to the immediately pending question. This motion shall be taken without debate and shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting for its adoption. If it is adopted, the vote shall be taken on the motion or motions to which it applies without further debate, except as provided in Rule 37. (See also Rules 25, 30, and 32.)

Rule 32. Unlawful Motion after Speech: No member, immediately after discussing a pending question and before relinquishing the floor, shall make a motion whose adoption would limit or stop debate.

Rule 33. Exceptions to Majority Vote: A majority of those voting shall decide all questions, with the following exceptions:

- a. One third of those present and voting shall sustain a count vote in case the decision of the chair is doubted (see Rule 8); a tie vote sustains the chair (Rule 1).
- b. A two-thirds vote shall be required to sustain a motion to suspend (Rule 41) or amend (Rule 42) the rules; to sustain a motion for the previous question (Rule 31); to set aside a special order; or to consider a special order before the time set therefor.
- c. A two-thirds vote by count shall be required to approve a proposed amendment to the constitution of the church (§§ 59-61 of the *Discipline*).

Rule 34. Reconsideration: A motion to reconsider an action of the conference shall be in order at any time if offered by a member who voted with the prevailing side. If the motion it is proposed to reconsider is non-debatable, the motion to reconsider may not be debated (Rule 25).

Rule 35. Calendar: The conference secretary, in consultation with the coordinator of calendar, shall keep a chronological record of orders of the day, reports, and other business items as recommended by the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting and adopted by the conference as its agenda. Matters of business placed on the agenda by the conference shall be taken up in order, provided that the conference, by two-thirds vote, may take up an item out of order.

Rule 36. Presentation of Report of Minority: A member selected by the signers of a minority report (Rule 21) to present the same shall have the same rights and privileges in relation thereto which belong to the presenter of the majority report, except that the member may not present said minority report until the majority report has been presented, and shall then offer it as a substitute therefor, and except, further, that in closing the debate on the question of substitution, the member presenting the minority report shall speak first and the person presenting the majority report shall speak last. (See Rules 30 and 37).

Rule 37. Speakers For and Against: Except for undebatable motions, a question under consideration shall not be adopted until the presiding officer has given opportunity for at least two speeches for and two speeches against said proposal, alternately, so long as any member desires to speak on the other side thereof, provided that the right is claimed before the person presenting the proposal is recognized to close debate. When all have spoken who desire to do so, or when (and after) the previous question has been ordered, the person presenting the proposal shall be entitled to speak before the vote is taken. This right to close debate shall prevail in like manner to a limit of two minutes when a vote is about to be taken on a motion to amend, to substitute, to postpone, to refer, or to lay on the table or any other motion whose adoption would vitally affect the matter under consideration; provided, however, that this two-minute limit shall not apply to a motion to substitute a minority report for a majority report (Rule 36).

Rule 38. Consideration of Agenda Items: Items on the agenda of the conference shall be taken up on the day scheduled. Any calendar items for a certain day that are not received on that day or are not completed before adjournment shall not take precedence over calendar items for the day to which said item or items have been postponed. After the calendar items for that day have been completed, postponed calendar items shall be considered.

Rule 39. Motion to Adjourn: The motion to adjourn, when unqualified, shall be taken without debate and shall always be in order, except:

- a. When a member has the floor.
- b. When a question is actually being put, or a vote is being taken, and before it is finally decided.
- c. When the previous question has been ordered and action thereunder is pending.
- d. When a motion to adjourn has been lost and no business or debate has intervened.
- e. When a motion to fix the time to which the conference shall adjourn is pending. The foregoing does not apply to a motion for final adjournment of the conference.

D. AUTHORITY, SUSPENDING, AMENDING, AND SUPPLEMENTING:

Rule 40. Authority: The plan of organization and rules of order of the annual session of the conference shall be the plan of organization and rules of order of the preceding annual session until and unless they have been amended or modified by the action of the Annual Conference.

Rule 41. Suspension: The operation of any of the provisions of these rules of order may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds vote of the conference, except as may otherwise be provided by Robert's Rules of Order.

Rule 42. Amendments: The plan of organization and rules of order may be amended or changed by a two-thirds vote of the conference, provided that the proposed change or amendment has originated in the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting and has been presented to the conference in writing or, if from a source other than this committee, has been presented to the conference in writing and referred to this committee. The rule fixing the number of districts may not be amended later than the second morning of the annual session. Changes and amendments printed in the booklet of program and reports shall be in order for consideration by the conference at any time during the annual session, provided that notice of such shall have been given in writing to the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting prior to the opening of conference (see Rule 16). Otherwise, no proposed change or amendment shall be submitted to vote until and unless one day has elapsed from the initial presentation to the conference.

Rule 43. Supplemental Authority: In any parliamentary situation not clearly covered by the plan of organization and rules of order, the conference shall be governed in its actions by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

PART III

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- A. Proposals, recommendations, resolutions, and petitions may be made to the conference by its agencies, the Cabinet, conference members, local church members, local church administrative boards and councils on ministries, and district councils on ministries (see Rules 13 and 14). Each such proposal must be submitted to the conference secretary in writing and must be signed by the maker(s) thereof (understood to mean the chairperson and secretary in the case of a petitioning group). If the proposal is from a local church member or Administrative Board or Council on Ministries, the name of the church, charge, and district must be given.
- B. To be in order for consideration at a given annual session, proposals, recommendations, resolutions, and petitions must be submitted as provided above by May 1 prior to the convening of conference; provided, however, that such materials from conference agencies to be printed in the booklet of program and reports must be submitted by March 20 (see Rule 13).
- C. Special study reports ordered by a previous annual session shall be presented directly to the organizational session of the conference for such disposition as the conference may make, including referral if the conference so chooses.
- D. **Referral of Proposals:**
 1. Unless otherwise referred by the conference or dealt with under the special provisions of Rule 15, all duly submitted proposals, recommendations, resolutions, and petitions requiring conference action and conforming to the rules for submitting the same shall be submitted by the conference secretary to the forum groups or the Committee on Resolutions. Any petition containing personal references or dealing in personalities may be returned to the originator(s) with an explanation.
 2. The secretary shall report at the organizational session of the conference, and at such other times as may be necessary, his/her recommendations concerning referral of petitions and other proposals for the approval of the conference. The report concerning pre-conference proposals shall be published in the booklet of program and reports.
- E. **Forum Groups:**
 1. At the organizational session of the conference each year, there shall be constituted several forum groups, the number, names, and areas of concern of which shall have been tentatively established by the preceding annual session upon the recommendation of the Committee on the Annual Conference Meeting and which shall finally determined at the organizational session.
 2. Each conference member shall be assigned to a forum group, on an annual basis, by the district Committee on Nominations. No later than February 1, the conference secretary shall furnish each member an instrument (card, etc.) on which the member shall indicate his or her preferences for forum group assignment and which the member shall send to the district superintendent by February 20. The district Committee on Nominations shall assign each member from its district (in-

cluding those not indicating a preference) to a forum group no later than March 1, with preferences being honored insofar as possible. A conference member who is also a member of a conference board or agency shall be given priority in the choice of a forum group which corresponds to the agency of which he or she is a member. Each district Committee on Nominations shall assign the voting members of the conference from its district to the forum groups in approximately equal numbers. Other persons granted the privilege of the floor without vote (including affiliate members, student local pastors, and recognized retired local pastors) may be assigned to forum groups without vote. Members of general boards and agencies who reside within the bounds of the conference and staff members of the conference and its agencies shall be invited to attend forum group sessions for consultative purposes and shall have the privilege of the floor but may vote, if conference members, only in the forum group of which each is a member. The tentative memberships of the forum groups shall be printed in the booklet of program and reports. The final authorization of the memberships of the forum groups belongs to the organizational session of the conference.

3. The chairpersons of the forum groups shall be nominated by the conference Committee on Nominations by March 20. Throughout the year, the conference staff shall compile a list of prospective forum group chairperson nominees obtained from the district superintendents and shall channel the list, with recommendations, to the Committee on Nominations through the conference secretary. Those nominated shall be trained prior to the convening of the conference by persons selected by the conference secretary. The election of the chairpersons of the forum groups shall occur at the organizational session of the conference. Each forum group shall elect from its membership a vice-chairperson and a secretary upon nominations arising from the floor of the forum group.
4. The number of members of a forum group present, notice of meeting having been printed in the official program and/or announced in plenary session, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in the forum group.
5. Unless otherwise ordered by two-thirds vote of those present and voting, the agenda of the forum group shall be set by the officers thereof, with the presentation of similar, duplicate, and conflicting proposals to be in logical order. No new material for consideration in the plenary sessions of the conference may be introduced in a forum group; however, proposals of similar content may be combined by the forum group into one composite proposal for presentation to the conference, and any proposal which is a specific amendment to another proposal may be considered at the time the proposal to be amended is debated and need not be reported upon separately. The forum group shall consider and act upon every matter referred to it by the conference and shall report to the conference its recommendations thereon in one of the following ways: agreement with the proposal; agreement, but with amendment(s); disagreement with the proposal; or referral of the proposal to an agency of the conference (with, if specified, instructions for further study and reporting). In the event that the forum group has before it a proposal in direct conflict with a proposal it wishes to endorse, it may include its disagreement with such a proposal in its report of agreement with the proposal it intends to endorse.
6. Debate in the forum group shall conform to the rules of the conference and shall be according to the rules for a committee in Robert's Rules of Order. The initiator of each proposal before the forum group shall have the right to speak at the time of the consideration of the proposal, even if not a member of the forum group or of the conference. Each conference agency shall be responsible for interpreting its proposals in the forum group. As time permits, each forum group shall receive interpretation of program and other matters from conference agencies related to its areas of concern. The leaders of the agencies shall be responsible for initiating arrangements for such presentations with the officers of the forum group. Each forum group may develop new proposals related to its area of concern which, upon approval by a majority of the forum group, shall be referred to the appropriate agency or agencies of the conference for consideration and possible action. Each agency receiving such a referral shall report to the next conference session concerning its disposition of the matter.
7. Upon completion of the work of the forum group, the chairperson or vice-chairperson thereof shall notify the coordinator of calendar of this fact and shall provide an estimate of the time required for the presentation of the report of the forum group to the conference. Said report shall be made by the chairperson of the forum group or his or her designated representative and shall include all actions of the forum group. During consideration of any proposal in plenary session, the person or agency which initiated the proposal shall be present or represented on the platform for the purpose of assisting the forum group chairperson in offering interpretative comments and answering questions. In addition to the majority report, minority reports are permitted (Rule 21).
8. In its consideration of the report of a forum group, the plenary session may, with respect to each proposal reported upon, sustain the forum group, sustain with amendment(s), not sustain, or refer the report or any portion thereof to a conference agency or to the same or another forum group for further consideration.