

Episcopal Supervision



¶ 45. Article I. —There shall be a continuance of an episcopacy in The United Methodist Church of like plan, powers, privileges, and duties as now exist in The Methodist Church and in The Evangelical United Brethren Church in all those matters in which they agree and may be considered identical; and the differences between these historic episcopacies are deemed to be reconciled and harmonized by and in this Plan of Union and Constitution of The United Methodist Church and actions taken pursuant thereto so that a unified superintendency and episcopacy is hereby created and established of, in, and by those who now are and shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church; and the said episcopacy shall further have such powers, privileges, and duties as are herein set forth.⁹⁰

¶ 46. Article II. —The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and central conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each central conference for those elected by such central conference.⁹¹

¶ 47. Article III. —There shall be a Council of Bishops composed of all the bishops of The United Methodist Church. The council shall meet at least once a year and plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire Church and for carrying into effect the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by the General Conference and in accord with the provisions set forth in this Plan of Union.⁹²

¶ 48. Article IV. —The bishops of each jurisdictional and central conference shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary⁹³ conferences, and missions within their respective territories.⁹⁴

¶ 49. Article V. —The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the jurisdictional or central conferences⁹⁵ in which they are elected or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions:

(1)The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases:

(a) a jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that

the number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or

(b) a jurisdiction may receive a bishop from another jurisdiction and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops.

(2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented.

(3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the episcopacy.

(4) All such transfers shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the jurisdictional committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions that are involved.⁹⁶

After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that jurisdictional conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop; provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any jurisdiction or central conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another jurisdiction or central conference to the work of the said jurisdiction or central conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdiction or central conference.

90. See Judicial Council Decisions 4, 114, 127, 363.

91. See Judicial Council Decision 21.

92. See Judicial Council Decision 424.

93. Amended 1976.

94. See Judicial Council Decisions 517, 735.

95. Amended 1980.

96. Amended 1992.

¶ 50. Article VI. —The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined.⁹⁷

The jurisdictional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings

for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference.

¶ 51. Article VII. —A bishop presiding over an annual, central, or jurisdictional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session;⁷⁸ provided that such questions be presented in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference.

Such an episcopal decision shall not be authoritative except for the pending case until it shall have been passed upon by the Judicial Council. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Judicial Council, which shall affirm, modify, or reverse them.

¶ 52. Article VIII. —The bishops of the several jurisdictional and central conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences.⁹⁹

¶ 53. Article IX. —In each annual conference there shall be one or more district superintendents who shall assist the bishop in the administration of the annual conference and shall have such responsibilities and term of office as the General Conference may determine.¹⁰⁰

¶ 54. Article X. —The bishops shall appoint, after consultation with the district superintendents, ministers to the charges; and they shall have such responsibilities and authorities as the General Conference shall prescribe.

97. See *Judicial Council Decisions* 4, 303, 361, 709.

98. See *Judicial Council Decision* 33.

99. See *Judicial Council Decision* 395.

100. See *Judicial Council Decisions* 368, 398.