

Decolonizing the Church

Regionalization for The United Methodist Church

THE CHRISTMAS COVENANT: AN EQUITABLE GLOBAL REGIONAL STRUCTURE

Conceived and promoted by leaders from Central Conferences, and submitted to General Conference by PAC-Cavite, the Christmas Covenant *“envisions a Church that connects globally, engages in mission together, respects contextual ministry settings, celebrates the diversity of God’s creation in its many beautiful expressions, and values mutually empowering relationships in order to strengthen our core mission of evangelism, discipleship, and social witness for the transformation of the world.”*

The Christmas Covenant is an audacious first step to decolonize the polity of The United Methodist Church which is an important part of efforts addressing systemic racism, sexism, economic and environmental justice, and centering the inclusion of marginalized peoples. Creating Regional Conferences rooted in equity, self-determination and sustainability, and contextual missional cooperation is at the heart of structural decolonization in this legislation.

VALUES

- Unity and connectional relationships rooted in mission.
- Understanding diverse contextual ministry settings.
- Legislative equity for regional conferences of the church.

WHAT WILL IT ACCOMPLISH?

- Transforms each central conference into a regional conference, and as proposed by the Connectional Table, creates a U.S. regional conference.
- Creates equity among regional conferences by giving them equitable legislative power to adopt policies, and practice ministry and mission in their own unique contexts.
- Maintains our doctrinal standards (Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith), Social Principles, General Conference, General Agencies, Judicial Council, and Council of Bishops.
- Maintains the unity of the church for global mission.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.CHRISTMASCOVENANT.COM / WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHRISTMASCOVENANT

ENDORSEMENTS (2023)

- Connectional Table
- All 5 U.S. Jurisdictional Conferences
- Cavite Philippines Conference
- South Nueva Ecija Philippines Conference
- Bicol Philippines Provisional Conference
- East Mindanao Philippines Conference
- Mindanao Philippines Conference
- Northwest Mindanao Philippines Conference
- Visayas Philippines Conference
- North Texas Conference
- California-Pacific Conference
- California-Nevada Conference
- Mountain Sky Conference
- Oregon-Idaho Conference
- Baltimore Washington Conference
- Northern Illinois Conference
- Virginia Conference Delegation
- Florida Conference Delegation
- United Women in Faith
- UMC Inter-Ethnic Strategy and Development Group
- Western Methodist Justice Movement
- MARCHA (UMC Hispanic Caucus)
- Love Your Neighbor Coalition
- United Methodist Association of Retired Clergy

"The Christmas Covenant legislation accurately reflects the CT legislation which proposes creating a U.S. Regional Conference...(and) also makes the regional conference structure consistent worldwide."
-- *Connectional Table*

"We need to give priority to the Christmas Covenant petitions coming from our Central Conferences if we truly want to be a Global Church that is connected for mission and at the same time promotes self-determination and equity in each of our different contexts,"
-- *Rev. Lyssette Perez, IESDG Chair and MARCHA President*

The UMC must move out of a U.S.-centric, colonial mentality. Central conference informed and supported plans like 'Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference' and the 'Christmas Covenant' help bring parity in structure and focus to The UMC and allow the church to be truly global.
-- *United Women in Faith Board of Directors GC Taskforce*

WHAT ARE BISHOPS SAYING?

"We are longing for a United Methodist Church that will move towards new forms of being a connectional church, a General Conference focused on global essentials, and **an empowerment of regions** for contextually relevant forms of living our common mission mandate." -- *UMC Council of Bishops*

"We recommend the following for restructuring the United Methodist Church... **The UMC is to be restructured into regional conferences...** [that] have the authority to decide their witness, mission, and ministry, thus, preserving locality and connectionality." -- *Philippines Central Conference College of Bishops*