



**The Connectional Table
Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2020 (9-11am CDT – US)
Online Meeting via Zoom**

Attendance

Present Voting Members:

Aguila Pete (SCJ)
Alsted* Christian (Chair)
Belles Sarah (DMYP) Birch Ole (No. Europe / Eurasia) Bledsoe* Earl (GCORR) Brady Brad (SEJ)
Brown Shareka (SEJ)
Cleaver III Emanuel (SCJ)
Coles Amy (SEJ)
Deere Josephine (SCJ)
DeVine Jerome (NCJ)
Dharmaraj Jacob (NFAAUM) Dyck* Sally (GBCS)
Gatdula Venus Mae (DMYP) Hettmann Michelle (SEJ)
Jen Mike Dio (West Africa) Jones Beverly (SCJ)
Jung Hee-Soo (GBGM) Jung Markus (Germany) Kenaston Judi (NEJ)
Kitete Prosper (Central Congo) Malone* Tracy (GCSRW) McAlilly* William (GBHEM)
Meekins William (NEJ)
Nelson Ken (SEJ)
Niesen Marianne (WJ)
Nuckols Dave (NCJ)
Oglesby Dennis (BMCR)
Park* Jeremiah (GCAH)
Perez Lyssette (MARCHA) Penicela Benedita Nhambiu (Africa) Prudente Karen (NEJ)
Sermonia Jovito (Philippines) Scott Robin (SEJ)
Simpson Kim (CGC)
Slaughter Mike (NCJ)
Swanson* James (GCUMM) Tuitahi Monalisa (PINCUM) Watson* Michael (Ecumenical Officer)

*indicates bishops

1

Wilbourn Miller (SCJ) Zurcher Stefan (Central & Southern Europe)

Non-Voting Members:

Bergquist Greg (GBHEM) Boigegrain Barbara (Wespath) Day Fred (GCAH) Dotson Junius (DM) Graves Gary (CGC) Hanke Gilbert (UMM) Hare Dawn (GCSRW) Hawkins Erin (GCRR) Henry-Crowe Susan (BCS) Kemper Thomas (GBGM) Kumar Moses (GCFA) Milford Brian (UMPH) Olson Harriett (UMW)

Absent:

Evans Cashar (UMCOM) Francisco* Ciriaco (St. CCCM) Kent Cynthia (NAIC) Krause Dan (UMCOM) McKee* Michael (GCFA) Murphy Tonya (SEJ) Postell Lathem (SEJ)

Guests:

Berger, Isabelle (Interpreter) Campbell, Jeff (DM) Gable, Dena (ELCA) Jones, Dale (Wespath) King, Rick (GCFA) Swanney, Doug (British Methodist Church)

Staff:

Belista, Denise Ann (Intern)
Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha (CCMO) Birkhahn-Rommelfanger, Rachel (ACMO) Stricker, Adrienne (Administrator)

Summary of Actions Taken

(included in the minutes below according to Roman numeral indicated.)

II. d. Minutes of previous meeting (November 2019) were approved.

III. b. Beverly Jones was elected to be the CT Secretary.

III c. Michelle Hettman was elected as the at-large, young adult representative member of the CT Executive Committee.

IV. An Addendum to the CT Travel Policy Requirements was approved.

VI. a. Current CT members and officers will continue until the new members and officers are elected after the upcoming General Conference.

VI. b. Bishop Mande Muyombo was approved as an observer of the CT and related committees (including the Executive Committee) with voice and no vote until he becomes the CT chair after General Conference 2021.

VI. c. The October 29, 2020 CT Meeting was changed from an in person meeting to an online meeting via Zoom (9-11am CTD-US).

(Please note that action item decisions reflected in the minutes below are in **bold** print.)

Welcome & Opening Devotional – Bishop Christian Alsted, Chair

Bishop Christian Alsted welcomed all to the meeting and offered a brief devotional based on Psalm 100, beginning at 9:02 am.

I. Call to Order

The regular spring meeting of the Connectional Table (CT) was called to order by Bishop Alsted, chair, at 9:16 am CDT.

II. Opening Business

a) Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum

Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Chief Connectional Ministries Officer (CCMO) took the roll call; reading the names of CT members joining the meeting by computer and by phone. It was determined that 40 voting members were present. Quorum was established at 9:16 am. In addition to the voting members there were 13 non-voting members present and 6 guests.

b) Review of Agenda

The agenda was briefly reviewed. No additions or changes were suggested that required a vote.

2

c) Voting Instructions

Voting instructions were given and reviewed. It was announced that a roll call vote will be used for when votes are close. Participants practiced voting on Zoom by raising hands.

d) Approval of November 2019 Minutes

Bishop Alsted referred the body to the minutes of the previous meeting. No additions or changes to the minutes were requested.

Call for Vote: Bishop Alsted called for a voice vote on the minutes.

Action: Minutes were approved.

III. Leadership Discernment & Community Life (LDCL)

a) New Member Welcome

LDCL Chair Ken Nelson welcomed Greg Bergquist to the CT as the new General Secretary of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM).

b) Election of a CT Secretary

3

The position of secretary was added to the CT by-laws at CT Board meeting in November 2019.

Motion: Chair Nelson that moved on behalf of the Executive Committee the nomination of Beverly Jones for Secretary of the CT.

Call for Vote: Bishop Alsted called for a voice vote.

Action: Motion approved.

c) Replacement of the at-large young person member of the Executive Committee

Motion: Chair Nelson that moved on behalf of the Executive Committee the nomination of Michelle Hettman to serve as at-large young person member of the Executive Committee.

Call for Vote: Bishop Alsted called for a voice vote on the motion.

Action: Motion approved.

IV. Internal Finance & Evaluation (IFE)

a) *Travel Policy Addendum*

Birkhahn-Rommelfanger, Assistant Connectional Ministries Officer (ACMO) provided an overview of the Travel Policy Addendum, which had been approved by the Executive Committee at their March 17, 2020 meeting. This policy addendum is recommended to ensure that the CT Office receives prompt communication to help make accommodations for board members who get delayed while traveling. The CT staff is working with the travel agency to provide travel insurance.

3

Travel Policy Requirements for the Connectional Table Addendum:

1. If there has been a travel delay for any reason during travel to or from a CT meeting, the CT office must be contacted within 48 hours for expense reimbursement consideration if the following documentation is provided:
 - a. Reason for travel delay, including steps taken to honor original travel schedule and explanation of why new arrangements were necessary.
 - b. Official documentation from appropriate transportation company (airline, bus service, etc.) detailing the reason for the change. [SEP]
 - c. Documentation (in writing) of any conversations related to travel or agreements made for accommodations, including the date and time. [SEP]
 - d. Confirmation of form of payment or billing agreement arranged with the airline, hotel, etc. [SEP]
2. Delegates could be encouraged to reach out to their bishop in advance of the CT meeting in case of unexpected delays. In some cases, bishops have accommodation and/or travel requirements for delegates, or other policies related to where and how long delegates can stay while traveling for meetings related to the UMC. [SEP]

3. The CT staff will honor the requests and/or decisions of the bishops. [SEP] 4. Expenses lacking adequate documentation will not be considered for reimbursement. [SEP] [SEP]
5. Members who are unable to contact the CT office within 48 hours should explain the reason for the delay.

Discussion: The floor was then opened for additional information, questions and discussion. ACMO Birkhahn-Rommelfanger clarified that this policy is for all Central Conference, Jurisdictional representatives (here called “delegates”) and those CT members representing agencies and caucuses traveling to and from CT meetings and/or other approved travel for which the CT pays.

Motion: The Internal Finance and Evaluation Committee (IFE) moves that the CT adopt the *Travel Policy Requirements for the Connectional Table Addendum*.

Call for Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote through the raise hand function. **Action:** Motion approved.

V. World Service Contingency Fund Request Updates (Reports attached as appendix)

a) Commission on General Conference (CGC): Think Tank Group

CCMO Bigham-Tsai reported that a request came from CGC to the World Service Contingency Fund (WSCF) asking for funds to constitute a time limited Think Tank Group that would “offer alternatives which may be considered by the CGC in determining if there are prudent deviations from the proposed agenda in regard to processing “The Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation” proposal document. These considerations would also be made available to the Committee on Agenda and Calendar if the committee should find that helpful.

4

Given the urgency, the request was sent directly to the Executive Committee for action.

This request was denied by the Executive Committee, noting that it understood the importance of this work but decided that this request did not fit within the guidelines of programmatic work supported by the WSCF. It was recommended that the request go to the General Conference Contingency Fund.

b) General Secretaries Table (GST): General Agency Hospitality for General Conference

The General Secretaries Table requested WSCF monies to offer hospitality for the Central Conference delegates at the site of the 2020 General Conference through providing breakfasts to Central Conference delegates whose stipends have been reduced and to facilitate networking opportunities at General Conference for the strengthening of the General Conference experience and the Central Conferences.

5

This request has been approved by the Executive Committee and the World Service Contingency Fund committee. The Executive Committee determined that the funds would not be released, but will remain designated if the GC is delayed.

VI. Transition Issues Related to General and Jurisdictional Conferences

Postponements General Conference and U.S. Jurisdictional Conferences have been postponed until 2021.

a) Transition of CT Membership and Officers

Motion: The Executive Committee of the CT moved that, upon recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) legal counsel and review of The Book of Discipline, CT Bylaws, and CT Articles of Incorporation, all current board members, including officers, may continue until a successor is chosen.

Call for Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote through the raise hand function. **Action:** Motion approved.

b) The 2020 General Conference has been postponed until 2021. The current Connectional Table - including the current chair, Bishop Christian Alsted - will remain in place until the new CT is elected in 2021 as indicated by the approval of the above motion. Previous to the postponement of General Conference, the Council of Bishops (COB) named Bishop Mande Muyombo to serve as the next CT chair. In light of this aspect of Connectional Table transition:

Motion: LDCL Chair Ken Nelson moved that during this time of transition, Bishop Mande Muyombo be welcomed onto the Connectional Table as an observer with voice but no vote, and with the ability to serve in the same way on CT committees including the Executive Committee. Bishop Mande will continue in this role until his leadership as incoming chair of the CT is formalized at General Conference in 2021.

Call for Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote through the raise hand function. **Action:** Motion approved.

c) 2020 Fall Meeting Proposed Change

5

CCMO Bigham-Tsai shared that in light COVID-19 and budgetary concerns that the Fall CT the CT Executive Committee approved that the Fall Meeting of the CT take place on-line rather than in person.

6

Motion: The Executive Committee moved that the CT adopt the recommendation that the Fall Meeting (October 29, 2020) be changed from an in-person meeting to an online meeting to take place 9-11am CDT.

Discussion: CCMO clarified the motion by sharing that this will be a regular meeting of the CT and not be an organizing meeting for the new CT as originally planned.

Call for Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote through the raise hand function. **Action:** Approved.

d) *Continuing the Work of the Connectional Table through General Conference (2021)*

CCMO Bigham-Tsai shared that the CT Staff, Committees, Advisory Groups and the Executive Committee will continue works in progress and items requiring updates. These include but are not limited to continuing to:

- promote and educate General Conference delegates about the CT legislation proposing a U.S. Regional Conference (USRC) and develop a compatible budget for the legislation;
- explore a recommended future composition of the CT's membership;
- perform the regular administrative work of all groups and committees of the CT as needed;
 - promote the new Connectional Table website (www.umcct.org);
- planning for the organization meeting and orientation for the incoming the Connectional Table, to be held when the new CT is in place.

VII. U.S. Connectional Ministries Advisory Group Update on U.S. Regional Conference

Judi Kenaston, Chair of U.S. Connectional Ministries Advisory Group (USCM), shared that the group has been working on content and strategies for promoting the U.S. Regional Conference (USRC) legislation. They produced a video that can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVO9j_pCMD0&feature=youtu.be

a) Chair Kenaston reported that the USCM Advisory Group discussed the Christmas Covenant document that was submitted by the Philippines Central Conference at their last meeting. There were a number of questions raised about how this and other legislation will be planned for by the Commission on General Conference (CGC) and handled by the General Conference rules.

Motion: Chair Kenaston on behalf of USCM advisory group moves to the CT that the full board affirm the statement written by CT leadership in March about the Christmas Covenant.

Call for Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote.
Action: Motion approved.

b) Motion: USCM Chair Kenaston moved that the CT affirm the USCM recommendation to initiate conversation between the writing team of US Regional Conference legislation and a group selected by drafters of Christmas Covenant to provide careful review and alignment

6

between the two proposals.

Call for a Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote.

Action: Motion Approved.

VIII. Budget Report

a) 2021 Transitional Budget. CCMO Bigham-Tsai shared information related to the question of what happens to the Connectional Table budget for 2021 with GC postponement. GCFA has determined that it did not have authority to change the decisions of the 2016 General Conference. GCFA recommends that the 2020 Budget serve as the framework for the 2021 CT Budget.

Motion: The Executive Committee moves that the CT affirm GCFA's recommendation that the CT's budgetary allocations actions for 2020-2021 remain consistent with the actions of the
2016

General Conference.

Call for Vote: Chair Alsted called for a vote. **Action:** Motion Approved.

b) CARES Act Report

CCMO Bigham-Tsai informed the CT that the Executive Committee approved application to the Small Business Administration (SBA) loan/grant available through the U.S. CARES Act. The application was made and CT has received a loan/grant in the amount of \$72,000 to provide for

the continuity of the CT office during the COVID-19 pandemic.

c) Budget Allocations Committee (BA) Report

The Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) of the General Commission on Finance and Administration (GCFA) reported at the GCFA's March 9-10, 2020 meeting on budget projections based upon then current information, not including the pandemic. They saw a 16.3

percent reduction in the overall budget and a 16.7 reduction in the funds allocated by the CT. This means that the CT will now have 60 million dollars cut to allocate for our 2021-2024

budget recommendation to 2021 General Conference. CT's Budget Allocations Committee (BAC) will consider this reality as it reviews current allocations.

9. Upcoming CT Meetings

a) The next CT meeting will be October 29, 2020 via Zoom (9-11 am CDT-US)

b) 2021 Meetings: All CT meetings until General Conference 2021 will be held via Zoom.

10. Closing Reflections were offered by Chair Alstead.

11. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:48 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Beverly J. Jones
CT Secretary
August 5, 2020 7