

# Connectional Table Summary Report

## Spring 2009 CT Meeting and Joint Session with GCFA

July 23, 2009

*The purpose of the Connectional Table (CT) is for the discernment and articulation of the vision for the church and the stewardship of the mission, ministries, and resources of The United Methodist Church as determined by the actions of the General Conference and in consultation with the Council of Bishops. As part of the total mission of the church, the CT is to serve as a steward of the vision and resources for mission and ministry, provide fiscal responsibility, and establish policies and procedures to carry out the mission of the church. ¶904*

On May 12-14, 2009, the Connectional Table met at the Sheraton Music City in Nashville, TN to focus on important conversations and work for the 2009-2012 quadrennium.

Members of the Connectional Table participated in:

### **Worship:**

- Each day began and ended with praise, worship, and prayer. The youth and young adult members coordinated the services.
- On May 12<sup>th</sup>, the Table's Executive Secretary Mary Brooke Casad delivered the message.

### **Visioning:**

- The Table reviewed the Call to Action created by the Council of Bishops and discussed ways that the Connectional Table can support the recommended actions.
- Small groups discussed and shared their answers to these questions regarding the Call to Action.  
*1) What's your reaction? 2) How can you make this message stronger? 3) What can we do to help support this team?*
  - A motion was made and approved that five Connectional Table members be added to the proposed Steering Committee.
- Small groups engaged in discussions around visioning, with each group led by a Steering Committee member.

### **Discussing Resources:**

- CT Members shared the ways in which United Methodist boards, agencies, annual conferences, and their local churches are cutting costs and redirecting resources during this economic downturn.

### **Learning:**

- CT Members participated in a learning community with consultant Craig Robertson, concentrating on organization and structure of the Connectional Table and of the Church, and thinking about ways to improve.
- Members committed to participate in a learning community through reading books related to the Four Areas of Focus, as suggested by the United Methodist Publishing House, and come prepared for discussion at the Fall 2009 CT Meeting.

### **Celebration:**

- Celebrated various work being done within The United Methodist Church's Four Areas of Focus. Listened to presentations from two of the focus areas: the Path1 Team, which focuses on new church starts, and the Global Health Initiative.

**Enabling Communication:**

- Reviewed and discussed results from the survey of conversations distributed earlier this year; questions were based on the seven essential functions of the Connectional Table. Small groups discussed and selected the two most important conversations in each function and then all members ranked these conversations by importance.

Other business in the Connectional Table plenary included:

- CT members discussed work plans for the 2009-2012 quadrennium as they relate to the seven essential functions and the Four Areas of Focus.
- CT members embraced the Holy Conferencing Guidelines as a behavioral covenant to guide the work of the Connectional Table.
- Jay Brim, chair of the Table's Legislation Task Group, reported on legislation recommendations and agreed to draft a report for approval by the Connectional Table at the next meeting.
- CT members discussed the feasibility of meeting in a central conference location this quadrennium.
- Ava Berry, chair of the World Service Contingency Funds Task Group, presented recommendations regarding recent applications and processes. CT approved.
- Raul Alegria, chair of the Emerging Ministries Fund Task Group, reported on progress made in developing criteria and processes for communication and distribution of funds. Task Group agreed to add more clarity to criteria and bring back for approval at a later date.
- Debbie McLeod, chair of the Personnel Committee, presented recommendations regarding job descriptions, evaluations and salary. CT approved.
- Judy Benson, chair of the Finance Committee, presented 2008 and Q1 2009 financial reports. CT approved.
- Mary Brooke Casad presented the Executive Secretary's Report.
- Debbie McLeod of the Advisory and Planning Team presented recommendations for new task group assignments as well as representatives on the Budget Process Team (David Wilson, Sally Dyck, and Debbie McLeod), Economic Advisory Council (Neil Alexander), Apportionment Study (Judy Benson and Andy Langford) and Path1 (Bishop Lindsey Davis). All recommendations were approved by the CT.
- Charlene Black reported on the Evaluation and Review process from last quadrennium. Neil Alexander presented a proposal from the General Secretaries Proposal for a rigorous evaluation process that connects goals, methods, outcomes, and disciplined budgeting in the evaluation process.

On Thursday, May 14, 2009, members of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) and the Connectional Table joined together in a session which included:

- Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, reviewed the Call to Action, concerning the work of the church as it relates to the current economic crisis.
- Bishop Hopkins, Chair, made a presentation on the purpose and structure of the Connectional Table.
- Bishop Streiff, chair of the Central Conference Affairs Commission, and Peter Binder, European representative on GCFA, reported on European central conference funds.
- Bishop Lindsey Davis reviewed the general apportioned funds and general overview of budget process.

- Don Brown (GCFA) and Raul Alegria (CT) presented the proposed budget process for the 2013-2016 quadrennium. Received agency presentations from general secretaries.

Respectfully submitted,

Bishop John Hopkins, Chair, The Connectional Table  
Mary Brooke Casad, Executive Secretary, The Connectional Table

The full minutes of the Spring 2009 Connectional Table meeting are available at [www.umc.org/connectionaltable](http://www.umc.org/connectionaltable).

### **Seven Essential Functions of The Connectional Table:**

*(¶ 905 in the Book of Discipline)*

1. *To provide a forum for understanding and implementing the vision, mission and ministries of the global church.*
2. *To enable the flow of information and communication among annual conferences, jurisdictions, central conferences, general agencies, and the Council of Bishops.*
3. *To coordinate the program life of the church with the mandates of the gospel, the mission of the church, and the needs of the global community.*
4. *To review and evaluate the missional effectiveness of the general program-related agencies and connectional structures of the church as they collectively seek to aid annual conferences and local churches.*
5. *To recommend to the General Conference such changes and implementing legislation as may be appropriate to ensure effectiveness of the general agencies.*
6. *To provide leadership in planning and research, assisting all levels of the church to evaluate needs and plan strategies to carry out the mission of the church.*
7. *Accountable with GCFA for the 2013-2016 General Church Budget.*