

Joint
Commission
on
Unification
of the
Methodist
Episcopal
Church

—
Proposed
Plan

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of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

Proposed Plan of Joint Commission on Unification

TRANSMITTAL.

We, the Commissions on the Unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, holding that these two Churches are essentially one Church, one in origin, in belief, in spirit, in purpose, and in polity, and desiring that this essential unity may be made actual in organization and administration throughout the world, do hereby propose and transmit to our respective General Conferences the following plan of unification and recommend its adoption by the two Churches by the processes which they respectively require:

ARTICLE I.

DECLARATION OF UNION.

The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, shall be united in one Church with two jurisdictions under a constitution with a General Conference and two Jurisdictional Conferences.

ARTICLE II.

NAME.

The name of the Church shall be ——. [Name to be selected by the first General Conference of the united Church.]

ARTICLE III. JURISDICTIONS.

Section 1. Jurisdiction number one shall comprise all the Churches, Annual Conferences, Mission Conferences, and Missions now constituting the Methodist Episcopal Church and any other such Conferences and Missions as may hereafter be organized by its Jurisdictional Conference with the approval of the General Conference.

Section 2. Jurisdiction number two shall comprise all the Churches, Annual Conferences, Mission Conferences, and Missions now constituting the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and any other such Conferences and Missions as may hereafter be organized by its Jurisdictional Conference with the approval of the General Conference.

ARTICLE IV.

COMPOSITION OF GENERAL AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES.

The General Conference and the Jurisdictional Conferences shall be composed of the same delegates. Said delegates shall be elected by and from the Annual Conferences, provided said General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall have not more than one ministerial delegate for every forty-five members of each Annual Conference and not less than one ministerial delegate for every one hundred and twenty members of each Annual Conference and an equal number of lay delegates, chosen according to the regulations

of each of the two jurisdictions; but for a fraction of two-thirds or more of the number fixed by the General Conference as the ratio of representation an Annual Conference shall be entitled to an additional ministerial and an additional lay delegate, and provided further that each Annual Conference shall be entitled to at least one ministerial and one lay delegate.

ARTICLE V.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Section 1. Voting.

Every vote in the General Conference shall be by jurisdictions and shall require the accepted majority vote of each jurisdiction to be effective.

Section 2. Powers.

Subject to the limitations and restrictions of the constitution, the General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional and in the exercise of said power shall have authority as follows:

1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership.

2. To define and fix the qualifications and duties of elders, deacons, local preachers, exhorters, and deaconesses.

3. To make provision for such organization of the work of the united Church outside the United States as may promptly consummate the unity of Episcopal Methodism in foreign lands.

4. To define and fix the powers, duties, and privileges of the episcopacy; to fix the

number of bishops to be elected by the respective Jurisdictional Conferences and to provide in harmony with the historic practice of Episcopal Methodism for their consecration as bishops of the whole Church.

5. To alter and change the Hymnal and Ritual of the Church and to regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first Restrictive Rule.

6. To provide for a judicial system and for a method of judicial procedure for the Church, except as herein otherwise provided.

7. To govern any and all enterprises and activities which may be agreed upon as being of a connectional character.

8. To provide for the transfer of members, preachers, Churches, pastoral charges, districts, Annual Conferences, Mission Conferences, and Missions in the United States from one jurisdiction to the other, provided that no transfer shall be made without the consent of the member, preacher, Church, pastoral charge, district, Annual Conference, Mission Conference, or Mission that it is proposed to transfer.

Section 3. Restrictive Rules.

In making rules and regulations for the Church the General Conference shall be under the following limitations and restrictions:

1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of

Religion or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

2. The General Conference shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

3. The General Conference shall not revoke or change the general rules of the United Societies.

4. The General Conference shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee and of an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the Church or by a committee and of an appeal.

5. They shall not appropriate the produce of the Publishing House or of the Chartered Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

ARTICLE VI.

BISHOPS.

The bishops of the two Churches as at present constituted shall be the bishops of the united Church without further action.

Immediately after the union shall have been consummated the bishops shall meet and organize as one body and shall arrange for the superintendence of the work of the Church.

A bishop may be assigned to administer in any part of the Church, provided that when he is assigned to administer within the jurisdiction other than that by which he was elected it shall be with the consent of the majority of the bishops of the jurisdiction involved.

ARTICLE VII.

PRESIDENCY OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The bishops shall select by a majority vote of the bishops of each jurisdiction one or more of their number from each jurisdiction to preside at the session of the General Conference.

ARTICLE VIII.

JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCES.

Each jurisdiction shall have a Jurisdictional Conference, possessing the full powers of the General Conference of the Church now constituting said jurisdiction, except such powers as are herein vested in the General Conference or which may hereafter from time to time be legally delegated to the General Conference by the Jurisdictional Conferences.

Each Jurisdictional Conference shall meet quadrennially where the General Conference is to assemble and immediately prior to its assembling and when desirable may meet during the session of the General Conference and may meet at such other times and places as it may determine.

ARTICLE IX.

THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL.

1. The General Conference shall at its first session provide a Judicial Council, to be composed of an equal number of members elected by each Jurisdictional Conference, and the Judicial Council shall provide its own methods of procedure.

2. The Judicial Council shall be authorized to review upon appeal of one-fifth of the members of the General Conference or of either Jurisdictional Conference or on the appeal of a majority of the bishops on constitutional grounds the acts of the General Conference and of the Jurisdictional Conferences; to hear and to determine all other appeals and matters coming to it in the course of legal procedure.

3. The Judicial Council shall have the right on its own motion, subject to such rules and regulations as shall be determined by the General Conference, to review the legislative acts of the General Conference or of either Jurisdictional Conference and to pass on the constitutionality of said acts.

4. The Judicial Council shall also have power to arrest an action of a connectional board or other connectional body when such action is brought before it by appeal by one-fifth of the members of said body present and voting or by a majority of the bishops.

5. All decisions of the Judicial Council shall be made by a majority of the total membership of the Council.

ARTICLE X.
AMENDMENTS.

The General Conference shall at its first session provide in harmony with the existing procedure of the two Churches a method of amending the constitution, and until such method shall have been adopted amendments shall be effected through the process now prevailing in the Churches, respectively.

ARTICLE XI.
SCHEDULE.

In all matters not specifically set forth in these Articles and until the General Conference by legal process shall otherwise ordain, the rules of government in the Disciplines of the respective Churches shall be of full force and effect and binding upon the jurisdictions, respectively.

RECOMMENDATION.

We recommend that financial support of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church be continued by the jurisdiction with which it is historically related and to such an extent as that jurisdiction may deem wise.

For Commission of Methodist Episcopal Church:

WILLIAM F. MCDOWELL, *Chairman*;
A. W. HARRIS, *Secretary*.

For Commission of Methodist Episcopal Church, South:

EDWIN D. MOUZON, *Chairman*;
H. H. SHERMAN, *Secretary*.

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