

**Minutes of the Connectional Table Meeting
May 17-21, 2017 - Oslo, Norway**

The Connectional Table meeting began with opening worship at 5:30pm at the Scandic Holmenkollen Park Hotel with Connectional Table Chairperson Bishop Christian Alsted preaching.

The plenary began after worship, with Bishop Alsted welcoming the CT members to Oslo. He introduced four staff people from the area who were present to assist Connectional Table staff: Johanna Lundereng, Camilla Gaarn Røed, Tove Odland, Kirsten Hastrup.

He then highlighted the gifts that were distributed to each member upon arrival: a book on Nordic perspectives on Methodism that focuses on social holiness and diaconal ministry; a CD of gospel music; and a copy of the episcopal and laity address from the Northern Europe and Eurasia.

Ole Birch, the CT member representing the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference, welcomed CT members to Oslo, and shared information about the central conference, describing it as a microcosm of The UMC. He noted it is the largest geographic area of the church spanning nine time zones.

Connectional Table Roll call:

Present:

Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, NCJ
Ole Birch, No. Europe/
Eurasia CC
Bishop Earl Bledsoe, GCORR
Brad Brady, SEJ
Kim Cape, GBHEM
Emmanuel Cleaver III, SCJ
Fred Day, GCAH
Josephine Deere, SCJ
Jacob Dharmaraj, NFAAUM
Junius Dotson, GBOD
Kelley Gifford, SEJ
Gary Graves, CoGC
Gil Hanke, GCUMM
Dawn Wiggins Hare, GCSRW
Erin Hawkins, GCORR
Susan Henry Crowe, GBCS
Michelle Hettman, SEJ
Beverly Jones, SCJ
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, GBGM
Markus Jung, Germany CC
Thomas Kemper, GBGM
Judi Kenaston, NEJ
Cynthia Kent, NAIC
Dana Lyles, SEJ
Bishop Tracy Malone,
GCSRW
Bishop William McAllily,

GBHEM

Duncan McMillan, CoGC
William Meekins, NEJ
Tonya Murphy, SEJ
Kenneth Nelson, SEJ
Marianne Niesen, WJ
David Nuckols, NCJ
Miracle Osman, DMYP
Harriett Olson, UMW
Bishop Jeremiah Park, GCAH
Benedita Penicela Nhambiu,
Africa CC
Lyssette Perez, MARCHA
Kitete ka Kemba Prosper,
Congo CC
Jovito Sermonia, Jr.,
Philippines CC
Mike Slaughter, NCJ
Bishop James Swanson,
GCUMM
Monalisa Tuitahi, PINCUM
Miller Wilbourn, SCJ
Stefan Zürcher,
Central/Southern Eur. CC

Guests:

Ray Bailey, GBHEM
Per-Endre Bjoernevik, GCFA
Gary Henderson, UMCom
Dale Jones, Wespath

Regrets:

Pete Aguila, SCJ
Barbara Boige grain, Wespath
Fred Brewington, NEJ
Amy Coles, SEJ
Cashar Evans, UMCom
Bishop Ciraco Francisco,
STCCCM
Mike Dio Jen, West Africa CC
Moses Kumar, GCFA
Bishop Mike McKee, GCFA
Brian Milford, UMPH
Germain Mupasa, DMYP
Latham Postell, SEJ
Robin Scott, SEJ
Bishop Michael Watson,
OCUIR
Bishop Mark Webb, GBOD

Late Arrivals:

Bishop Sally Dyck, GBCS
Dan Krause, UMCom

Announcements

Amy Valdez Barker, Chief Connectional Ministries Officer of the CT, announced that the remainder of the meeting will be upstairs in Saga Hall with round tables. The Worldwide Nature working group will meet in the new room and the Vital Congregations Through Four Areas of Focus will meet in the Auditorium B.

Welcoming New Members

Alsted welcomed a new CT member, Prosper Kitete, representing the Congo Central Conference. Alsted explained the change of membership was an action taken by the Congo Central Conference in March. Motion to approve Prosper Kitete's membership on the Connectional Table. **Seconded. Approved.**

Alsted also welcomed Dennis Oglesby, the new representative from the caucus Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR).

Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from February 2017 meeting. **Seconded. Approved.**

Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda. **Seconded. Approved.**

Meeting objectives:

Valdez Barker gave an overview of the meeting objectives which also are included on the agenda:

- Cultivating our responsibility for our worldwide mission and vision
- Creating shared values around relationships and strategies
- Naming and testing our essential functions
- Telling our whole story: What does it mean to reflect fruitfulness in mission?
- Guiding question for the meeting: How do we build the relationships, connect strategies, and tell the story of the UMC in the world today?

Announcements

- The general secretaries will meet in the board room after dinner.
- The plenary tomorrow will be in Saga Hall.
- Vital Congregations-4 Areas of Focus conveners will meet at breakfast the next day.

The plenary concluded at 7pm with the dinner served in the dining hall.

**Minutes of the Connectional Table
May 18, 2017**

8:30am - Morning worship

The message was given by Miracle Osman.

9:40 am - Plenary

Bishop Alsted introduced Dr. Roar Fotland, a missiologist at the seminary in Norway who has served on the board of Africa University and has worked with Global Ministries. Alsted stated the importance of the missional focus with The United Methodist Church as a disciple-making movement shaped for mission.

Fotland delivered a 30-minute presentation followed by a time for discussion. He emphasized the paradigm shift regarding mission, with the church understanding itself as being God's mission (or *Missio Dei*), rather than the mission of the church (Attachment A). Fotland defined mission as: the participation of the people of God in God's action in the world.

Fotland shared some of the characteristics of a missional church:

- **Humility:** A missional church is one that invites, listens, serves, and cooperates in dialogue.
- **Holistic:** Jesus was holistic integrating spirit, soul, and body. Modernism set up dichotomy, creating fragmentation of theology.
- **Inviting:** We invite people to Jesus, not using fear to join the church. We invite fellowship with God through Jesus. We invite to discipleship, to a meaningful life where people can share with others, to a community of grace. We want to relieve people of the pressure of not living up to the standards of the time.
- **Listening and Serving:** We listen to and serve the local, national, and world community. We do not offer easy solutions, but we accompany and listen

He closed by stating that The UMC is a missional church, BECAUSE it is a church. We are sent by God and represent the possibility to participate in God's mission in order to invite people to share in God's love through the Spirit. The mission of the church is to participate in God's work in the world, inviting people to fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, to fellowship and to the kingdom of God.

He closed his lecture with a song.

CT members engaged in 20 minutes of table discussion. The plenary reconvened and shared table reflections and discussion.

Break

10:45am - Presentation on the UMC in Norway

Bishop Alsted, Rev. Øyvind Helliesen, Dr. Jan Linnsunn, and Anna Forster presented on different aspects of the church and its context in Norway. Bishop Alsted presented as the bishop of the area.

Rev. Øyvind Hellisen, a district superintendent in Norway, showed a video that gave a brief overview of The UMC in Norway. He described it as a small but proud and vital church.

Nordic and Baltic Area

Bishop Alsted presented on the broader context of the Nordic and Baltic Area, explaining that Methodism in the Baltic countries started in the early 20th century but after World War II, the Soviets occupied the Baltic countries and it became an oppressive situation. He shared examples of some of the ministries in Eastern Europe and the challenges of poverty and migration, describing it as a place where people need Christ, yet there are many who do not know Christ, and that they are beginning to see the fruit of ministry in the region.

Church in Context: Healthcare System in Norway

Dr. Jan Magne Linnsund, a senior advisor of the Norwegian Directorate of Health, presented on the vision and practice of the healthcare system in Norway, which creates a different mission field related to health ministries than in other parts of the world. Norway has a national healthcare program established in 1967 that provides healthcare insurance for all of its citizens. After providing an overview of the Norwegian healthcare system, CT members engaged in discussion with Dr. Linnsund.

Norwegian Board of Global Ministries Program

Anna Forster, director of the Norwegian Board of Global Ministries, shared the history and work of the board through slides and stories. It began with a request for assistance in 1907 to build a house for Christ in Africa, and continued to develop since. In 1950, they had their first paid staff person. Today, the emphasis is on development partnerships. They are funded at 90% through the Norwegian tax system with 10% donations from United Methodist congregations. They are independent of the General Board of Global Ministries funding since 1964.

Awareness as United Methodist Identity Exercise

Cynthia Dopke, CT staff, led CT members in an exercise that invited them to reflect on their journey of increasing awareness as United Methodists: as a UM congregation, a UM annual conference, as a UM region or central conference, and as a church that spans four continents.

1pm - 2:30pm: Lunch

2:30 pm - Afternoon Session: Connectional Unity and Local Freedom

Gary Graves opened the plenary with prayer.

Ole Birch, convener of the Chapter 5 Advisory Group, invited CT members to join him in a conversation about the administrative order of The UMC, which is the focus of the work this group is doing with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. He introduced the concept of *subsidiarity* from the draft document “Wonder, Love and Praise,” and the principle of *equity* as named in ¶125 to help guide the conversations. He clarified that this was not a proposal or even a vision, but an opportunity to begin thinking about what it could or should be.

Birch presented his analysis that the current administrative order is a center-periphery model, used primarily in the US. Its purpose having been determined by the perceived needs of the church in the US. It has later expanded to include the central conferences, but they still exist at the periphery. Some churches outside the US have created their own support systems, however, the administrative order we have today is dominated by the church in the US.

He stated what he perceives as the problem: The UMC does not have an administrative order that can be contextually competent in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Questions for consideration:

- What if...there was no center?
- What if a portion of the general funds were available only for collaborative projects?
- What would it mean for...
 - Contextual mission? Connectionalism? Equity? Subsidiarity?
 - What would it mean for a General Church Council? A future U.S. Structure?

Birch instructed the group for the one-hour table discussions to ensure that at least one central conference member was present at each table. He then asked them to frame their discussions using the following three discussion questions:

1. Initial reactions?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities to an administrative order without a center?
3. What does this mean for connectionalism? Contextual mission? Subsidiarity? Equity?

Highlights from the table discussion reports: (Attachment B: Chapter 5 - Table Discussion Notes)

- Discussion started with the question, "How can we exist without a center?" We came to a conclusion that the center is the General Conference and that even as things move around, that is the center.
- Concerns about resources and staffing. How would that occur? Regardless of what happens, we still have to be one UMC.
- Discussions about the center: We do not think we can function without a center. Where would the accountability be? Who would function as that center? We discussed values in regionalized settings. What is the accountability? Is the center power? Can the center be fluid? Can it be there to serve, but not be in power? We need a center, but it could look different?
- Different reactions to Ole's presentation: We have a parent-child relationship as we compare the church in the US with other regions. Surely there are dangers in a church without a center. Ministries might be jeopardized if we do not have ministries from the current agencies.
- Methodism could use more contextualization.
- Interesting conversation around money: The center is defined as money but it should be defined by our DNA as United Methodists.
- The church has to get over the global work being expensive or about the manifestation of the church.
- How do we value individuals in context without venturing into individualism?
- Discussions about the center in relation to the agencies, the COB, GC. If there is no center then we end up talking to ourselves. Tension as what we believe is core. Emergence of agencies is what we believe is important?
- How to avoid operating four different churches?
- Seems artificial to say this is what it is going to be. That denies the organic process.
- We need a center. We cannot function without one, but it cannot be a US center. We need a new way to coordinate the mission work.
- How many local churches are disconnected with the work we do with the global church?
- Feeling that there is an either/or instead of a both/and.

**Connectional Table Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2017 – Oslo, Norway**

8:30am - Opening worship

Amy Valdez Barker delivered the message.

9am - Plenary: Open Space Discussion

Bishop Alsted proposed a change to the agenda which would give CT members an opportunity to process and discuss issues that they found most pressing given what we have heard and discussed thus far, and to consider how best to prioritize and move the CT work forward. He explained that Erin Hawkins, general secretary of GCORR, would lead the plenary in an Open Space process, which is a method of facilitation that allows the discussion topics to emerge from the body.

Hawkins led the body through the process of identifying discussion topics, forming discussion groups and engaging in conversations with a focus on how to prioritize the work of the CT and address any emerging issues that needed to be discussed. Several questions were generated, and fruitful discussions took place at the tables. (Attachment C: Open Space Discussion Notes)

The reports from the discussions focused on the possible need to scale back the overall agenda of the Connectional Table and to re-examine and simplify the priorities. It was reported that the executive committee would meet over lunch and discuss how to proceed with the rest of the meeting agenda in light of these discussions.

11:30 am - 2pm: Lunch

2pm - Plenary

Bishop Alsted reported that the executive committee discussed the following suggestion for an adjustment to the agenda: to invite the working groups to meet and consider the tasks in light of the morning's conversation with an opportunity to adjust or prioritize differently. The plenary would reconvene at 4:45pm to hear reports from the working groups and the plenary could take action on any proposed changes. He also invited them to bring additional agenda items to the plenary for action to include.

He stated that the executive committee will strive to be transparent about the agenda moving forward by reviewing thoroughly the creation of content and process. He also announced that at 5:30pm, there will be a presentation and proposal for an immigration Sunday special offering.

Discussion

It was noted that a report from the Commission on a Way Forward was not on the agenda. Dave Nuckols, a Commission member, offered to hold an informal informational session on the Commission on a Way Forward, which was scheduled for the evening.

4:45pm - Plenary

Working Group Reports:

Alsted reiterated that the working groups were only to report changes.

Vital Congregations

Beverly Jones reported that no changes were recommended to the agendas of the advisory group. They are continuing their work. They became aware that the missional research team will bring a lot of information to contextualize and help the overall assessment and evaluation work.

Worldwide Nature

Benedita Nhambiu reported that the working group agreed to continue working in three advisory groups. U.S. Structure may rename its group (to better reflect its mission). Changes: WWN Working group had considered petitions 60945, 60946, and 60947 and proposed a motion to the full CT.

Motion

We have considered petitions 60945, 60946, and 60947 and have chosen not to act on them. **Approved.**

It was reported that the General Church Council Advisory Group is tasked with implementing petition 60815, approved by GC. The mandate for 60815 is inclusive of the content so it is redundant.

Motion: The General Church Council Advisory Group recommends that one bishop come from a central conference.

Amended motion: The WWN Working Group moves that at least one of the two additional bishops be from a central conference and both be active bishops. **Approved.**

The General Church Council requests some time on the agenda tomorrow to discuss a question from the General Church Council group's vision and principles.

Proposal for Global Migration Sunday Offering

Thomas Kemper presented a proposal for a one-time Global Migration Sunday Offering. He shared statistics about the global crisis, citing that 65.3 million people are not living where they were born or grew up, with 21.3 million recognized as refugees.

He stated that there are many ministries within the agencies serving migrants. Two proposals out of this work are before the CT: 1) a World Service contingency fund proposal for \$200,000; and 2) Global Migration Sunday offering. He recommended reading Resolution #6028 for background information.

The proposal asks for all UM conferences around the world to remember the plight of migrants and contribute an offering on the first Sunday of Advent through the Advance for Migration. This is a cause that unites us as United Methodists, to celebrate the blessing of migration and supporting those refugees in need. A liturgy and prayer are available for church leaders. The general agencies will collaborate on resources to support the promotion of this day. The Council of Bishops executive committee is scheduled to deliberate on this at their July 2017 meeting.

Kemper reiterated that this is a one-time offering, not a designated "Special Sunday" which is annual. This is in response to a global crisis. This would be voluntary participation. When asked if it could become an ongoing offering, he said it could and suggested that the CT take it up, but not until 2018 after the 2017 special offering has passed.

There was a motion to approve the Global Migrant Sunday offering. **Seconded. Approved.**

The plenary concluded.

Connectional Table Minutes
May 20, 2017

8:30am - Morning worship

Worship coordinated by the general secretaries with Junius Dotson preaching.

9:30am - Plenary

Dr. Fotland returned for a second presentation on new paradigms of mission. He focused on The UMC, its history and current structures. He stated that the three challenges in the changing church are: contextualization, partnership, and reversed mission. These challenges point us to the need for new models. (Attachment D)

There was a short discussion before the break.

Break

Four Areas of Focus Updates

Abundant Health – Thomas Kemper

Goal: reaching 1 million children with lifesaving interventions.

Kemper reported on progress toward goal at 109,170, an effort led by Dr. Ige, Director of the Global Health unit at Global Ministries. They partner with several of the general agencies as well as UMC healthcare institutions. He shared examples of partnering with annual conferences on health issues.

New Places for New People – Junius Dotson

Goal: 1 million new disciples. Dotson reported that Discipleship Ministries conducted an organizational assessment to learn how people view the agency and what they can do better. He said that they have been meeting with the congregational vitality group of the COB and the strategic team with the CT, which led to three strategic priorities:

1. New church planting
2. Revitalization
3. Work with the national plans

They will accomplish this through three core strategies:

1. Disciple-making process in every church.
2. Engagement with people outside the church.
3. Cultivating cultural and contextual resources around the globe.

Ministry with the Poor – Susan Henry-Crowe

GBCS is moving to help annual conferences who are accompanying those living in poverty. By the end of the quadrennium, they will have identified three churches/communities in each annual conference in the connection to be in relationship with the poor. Goal is to have 400 new partnerships. GBCS has a new website with a place to share stories.

3 Million Difference Makers: Leadership Development – Kim Cape

GBHEM has begun to identify strategic priorities for developing leaders and created a leadership development tracking map. They also hosted a Colloquy on the Unity of the Church which published a study guide to help the church discuss human sexuality.

As the convener of the General Secretaries, Dr. Cape shared that the program agencies are collaborating on producing a quarterly report of the general agencies work in the Four Areas of Focus.

11:30am - 1 pm: Lunch

1pm - 2:30pm: Working Group Meetings

2:50 pm - Plenary

UMCom presentation on the Four Areas of Focus – Dan Krause and Diane Degnan

Dan Krause presented an overview of the messaging strategy United Methodist Communications developed that is organized for three different audiences in the four areas of focus. The three audiences are: church leaders, people in the pews, and unchurched people. He stated that most of the churches are already doing ministries in the four areas of focus, so this strategy invites them to go a little further to the next level.

Update on the Council of Bishops: Bishop Alsted

Alsted reported that there are 20 new bishops who are taking a new responsibility in these areas. There are four leadership teams in the COB and they are working strongly together with the agencies in equipping the residential bishops to do their work.

United Methodist Indigenous People’s Working Group

Cynthia Kent, the representative of the Native American International Caucus, shared a report on the 100th anniversary celebration that took place in Norway earlier in the year highlighting the history of the Sami indigenous people of Norway. The gathering brought together, for the first time, a global network of indigenous people in The United Methodist Church, with indigenous people from the four continents with UM presence.

Vital Congregations Working Group

Missional Trends Advisory Group report - Miller Wilbourn

Wilbourn reiterated the purpose and goal of the advisory group: to curate research, cultivate curiosity and imagination, and to inspire CT members to continue researching trends that affect the church. They encourage a mindset that is simultaneously global and local. A challenge for the CT is to stay focused on the trends within the local church.

Questions lifted in their video that guide their work:

- How can we shift to a church that moves from a General Conference driven church to a more locally driven church?
- How can the general church help local churches help each other? Role is shifting in the denomination.
- How can we encourage the church to expand its horizons?

Connectional Assessment Tool: Josephine Deere

Deere reported that the group is continuing to refine the assessment tool developed last quadrennium. The tool is designed to gather information across the connection looking at where relationships are strong and to see where there are gaps. She reported that she was able to pilot the tool at her

conference and it was helpful. The plan is to have it completed in 2018 and they plan to receive the information in 2019 for a final report.

Agency Evaluation Update: Brad Brady

Brady stated that the report is posted on OnBoard. He shared highlights in the revised report. The revision expands the evaluation process to include disciplinary mandates and other essential ministries. (Attachment E: Agency Evaluation Draft - Revised Proposal)

Proposing three phases:

- 1) Learning process – receiving information.
- 2) Synthesizing for actionable information.
- 3) Strategic planning and resource allocation.

Brady clarified that agencies are responsible for their own line item budgets but CT is responsible for the allocations of the budget. The evaluation data will be input among other sources of information. The proposal is before the CT for approval as a process that can be adjusted as collaborative conversations unfold. A brief discussion followed.

Motion to approve the revised evaluation proposal. **Approved unanimously.**

Worldwide Nature Working Group

Chapter 5 Revision Advisory group: Ole Birch

Birch reported on the work of the Standing Committee and its timeline. They aim to have a draft in the fall of 2017 and hope to adopt a proposal in February 2018. They will ask the STCCCM leadership if the early draft can be made available to the CT. This will be helpful to the General Church Council. They plan to meet for an additional half day with the STCCCM in February 2018 in Cote d'Ivoire.

US Structure Advisory Group: Judi Kenaston

Kenaston reported that this group has defined its work as the group to find a way for the US to do its adaptable work. After much discussion, it narrowed its focus to two options:

- 1) US Standing Committee that would have US delegates only. This would not need a constitutional amendment but would still need General Conference to approve the legislation.
- 2) US as a central conference while retaining central conferences. This would involve constitutional amendment.

Timeline: they will work for the next several months to have something more concrete.

Discussion:

Clarifying question.

- From the central conference perspective, we would like to see a construction where the U.S. church is a **part** of The UMC (instead of the center).
- Noted that whatever the Standing Committee does, it will always go back to General Conference where it could be rehashed all over again.
- Take into account what the word “central conference” would mean to African Americans in the U.S. church.
- To consider: Should the adaptations be the same for the whole U.S. or can they be different? It could be that items on a national level could be done at the GC.
 - Q: Does the entire central conference make the adaptation?
- Is there a way to give feedback to this advisory group in writing?

General Church Council Advisory Group: Monalisa Tuitahi

GC 2016 passed legislation on a General Church Council. They are planning a face-to-face meeting with the COB in November 2017. The question of the face-to-face meeting will be brought to the finance committee and then to the executive committee. Monalisa shared the vision and principles that guide the work to envision a new leadership body that would replace the CT?

Question: What is Connectional Table's role? For example, is it CT's role to do research on missional trends?

Tuitahi invited the CT plenary to give input to the advisory group. Feedback included:

- Several agencies have robust research work. We need to be in deeper dialogue with Miller.
- Sometimes we think that it is legislation that shapes what we do. We hope that we have certain boundaries within the disciplinary language but we also are empowered to shape the nature of the work.
- Wanting to push us to think differently than we do. A sticky point has been around how we look at the work of the general agencies. It is a hindrance. Difficult for CT members to think about the total church. Hoping we can break out of that box and put together a body that can think about the total church. The spirit of the petition is trying to do this.
- Two thoughts on the principles: Would love a General Church Council to lead. We need leadership. The first principle is "build trust." Do we want this group to be responsible to build trust? It is the responsibility of all of us to build trust.
- Affirming the comments and hopes we can think out of the box.

Budget Advisory Team: Dave Nuckols

Nuckols presented, as a refresher, the roles and responsibilities of the Budget Advisory Team for the CT. He then reported on decisions made by the executive committee regarding the World Service Contingency Fund in April:

- GCUMM request for \$20,000 for a domestic violence program. It was recommended by BAT and approved by the executive committee.
- Global AIDS Fund requested \$58,000. The BAT recommended funding at \$29,000 in order to encourage them to integrate themselves into the work of the agencies. The executive committee approved this recommendation.

Nuckols then presented the recommendations of the BAT regarding the three requests that the CT received in advance of this meeting. (Requests were posted on OnBoard.)

1. Division on Ministries with Young People: \$50,000 racial justice grants

The BAT recommended full funding of this proposal.

The proposal was approved unanimously.

2. General Commission on the Status and Role of Women: \$150,000 for central conference ministries.

The BAT recommended full funding of this proposal.

The proposal was approved unanimously.

3. General Board of Church of Society: Requested \$200,000 to support the work of the jurisdictions in immigration ministries through the immigration task force.

Recommendation from the BAT: to fund the request at \$100,000 with a request to report back to the CT after one year to show some investment from the jurisdictions. The CT would expect a second request after that time if needed.

Discussion/Comments:

Susan Henry Crowe recommends strong support for this task force. There was desire from the jurisdictions for more support. This is also to support resettlement. The request is to support the organizing work in the jurisdictions and to reach out to emergency training and advocacy so that jurisdictions can deal with immigration and migration.

Jacob Dharmaraj stated that he has been involved in the task force since its inception. Some of the best work has been from the immigration task force.

Monalisa Tuitahi reported that she has worked on this since its inception. As an immigration lawyer, she can attest to the immigration crisis. It is in response to the threats of deportation.

Lyssette Perez stated that on behalf of MARCHA, they sent letters to agencies and bishops. The immigration task force came up with the idea to support.

Brad Brady noted strong support for the proposal, and moved that the CT vote. **Approved.**

Motion

The BAT recommends an amendment to the WSCF guidelines that requests be received no later than 30 days in advance of a Connectional Table meeting. **Approved.**

Nuckols then presented the budget timeline proposal, noting that August will be the first joint BAT. He stated that he would like to have input from CT members between now and August. He also reported that in November, the BAT will meet with the general secretaries to talk about budget criteria and the goal is to finalize budget criteria in April 2018.

Discussion:

- A question was raised about how the meeting changes will impact the budget timeline. It was noted to pay attention to this.
- Recommend that the budget be approved at the latest date possible before the General Conference.
- It would be helpful for the last report of the EAC to be received before the budget is finalized.

The budget timeline was before the body for a vote: **Approved.**

Motion: The Budget Advisory Team moves that the Connectional Table name the Budget Advisory Team to serve as the Connectional Table/GCFA group to monitor and analyze any financial fluctuations during the **current** quadrennium that could affect the 2017-2020 apportionments, spending plans and agency budgets. **Approved.**

Discussion about budget criteria:

Nuckols invited the plenary to begin thinking about criteria that would be important in deliberating on allocating the funds to the agencies. This will be a table discussion for the following day.

Announcements: CT was reminded that Dave Nuckols will be in the plenary hall in the evening to share information and answer any questions about the work of the Commission on a Way Forward.

Mistead will be available for online support.

The plenary concluded.

Connectional Table Meeting Minutes May 21, 2017

Sunday Morning: CT members traveled to four local congregations for worship with CT member bishops preaching. The local churches sponsored lunch at each location.

3:35pm - Plenary

A quorum was confirmed for the afternoon plenary.

Announcements

Leadership Discernment and Community Life requested an executive session of the voting members of the CT.

Budget Advisory Team continued

Dave Nuckols resumed his discussion on budgeting criteria.

There are three kinds of helpful input:

- 1) Ideas about allocations of funds to the agencies. We have done it by previous percentage in the past.
- 2) Thoughts about the total bottom line of the general funds.
- 3) State of the financial picture of the denomination.

Ten-minute discussion to share ideas. He collected the written notes from table discussions.

Proposed Meeting Date Changes

The executive committee proposed the following changes to the CT meeting schedule with the rationales that follow:

- 1) 2017: CANCEL the July 2017 full CT meeting for full CT and schedule for the **executive committee only**. Date: July 18, 2017
- 2) 2018: MOVE July full CT online meeting to July 31, 2018
- 3) 2018: NEW - full CT in-person meeting October 31 - November 2, 2018 in Atlanta, GA.
- 4) 2019: CANCEL the February 2019 online meeting.
- 5) 2019: NEW – In-person meeting full CT meeting April 3-6, 2019. Location TBD
- 6) 2019: REQUEST to GCFA to move the joint budget meeting from May to July. See attached letter.
- 7) 2020: CANCEL full CT meeting in January in conjunction with pre-GC briefing and schedule for **executive committee only**. Rationale: The briefing was moved from Minneapolis to Nashville.
- 8) 2020: REQUEST that the BAT meet in person with GCFA while the rest of CT meets online for the February 2020 online meeting with GCFA.
- 9) General Conference 2020: Only CT members who are elected as delegates and the BAT members.
 - The special session of the General Conference is scheduled for February 23-26. Elected CT members will be there, and since we do not have any responsibilities to the special session, we are not planning for the full CT to attend.
 - The executive committee proposes that the elected delegates who are CT members and the Budget Advisory Team represent the Connectional Table to care for budget matters at General Conference.

- Gary Graves reported that the Standing Committee moved their meeting to March 2019. There was a request to communicate the calendar changes very clearly so that CT members can make changes to the calendar.

Motion from the executive committee to approve the calendar changes announced. **Approved.**

Internal Finance and Evaluation: Lysette Perez (Attachment F: Internal Finance and Evaluation)

Perez presented the current internal financial status of the CT. Reports included:

1. Year-end statement of 2016
2. 1st quarter update for 2017
3. Statement of financial position
4. Analysis of reserves

The CT finance reports were received.

Internal Evaluation:

The timeline and outline of the CT evaluation plan was presented as follows:

May 2017:	CT approves evaluation plan.
June-August 2017:	Questions developed for leader survey.
September 2017:	UMC leaders receive first survey about work of CT to be used as a baseline for the full quad.
October 2017:	Report compiled by consultant/independent evaluator.
November 2017:	First report of baseline data shared with CT. (Advisory Group work plans are adjusted based on responses if appropriate.)
January 2018:	Report shared with UMC leaders, participants of survey.
September 2018:	Survey repeated with UMC leaders.
September 2019:	Survey repeated with UMC leaders.

The timeline and process was approved.

The CT went into executive session. Staff, guests and non-voting members vacated the plenary hall.

Other Business

- Judi Kenaston acknowledged the work of the French interpreter who has been helping Prosper Kitete.
- The meeting evaluation form will be sent in the next couple of days. The data is shared with LDCL to support the staff in agenda planning.
- Prayer requests for Kim Cape and Ray Bailey were lifted up to remember Ted Brown. Ted, staff person at GBHEM, passed away suddenly from a heart attack.

The meeting concluded at 4:57pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Dopke. CT staff*