



# Connectional Table

The United Methodist Church

## Fall 2018 Connectional Table Meeting Minutes

*The Mission is Yet Alive!*

October 31-November 2, 2018

### Roll Call (40 voting members)

Aguila	Pete V
Alsted	Christian V
Belles	Sarah V
Birch	Ole V
Boigegrain	Barbara
Brady	Brad V
Cape	Kim
Cleaver III	Emanuel V
Coles	Amy V
Day	Fred
Deere	Josephine V
DeVine	Jerome V
Dharmaraj	Jacob V
Dotson	Junius
Dyck	Sally V
Evans	Cashar V
Francisco	Ciriaco V
Gatdula	Venus Mae V
Graves	Gary
Hanke	Gilbert
Hare	Dawn Wiggins
Hawkins	Erin (Friday)
Henry-Crowe	Susan
Hettmann	Michelle V
Jen	Mike Dio V
Jones	Beverly V
Jung	Hee-Soo V
Jung	Markus V
Kemper	Thomas
Kenaston	Judi V
Kent	Cynthia V
Kitete	Prosper V
Krause	Dan
Malone	Tracy V
McAlilly	William V
McKee	Michael V
Meekins	William V
Milford	Brian
Murphy	Tonya V
Nelson	Ken V
Nhambiu	Benedita Penicela V
Nuckols	Dave V

Oglesby	Dennis V
Olson	Harriett
Park	Jeremiah V
Perez	Lyssette V
Scott	Robin V
Sermonia	Jovito (Jun) V
Slaughter	Mike V
Swanson	James V
Tuitahi	Monalisa V
Watson	Michael V
Zürcher	Stefan V

### Regrets:

Bledsoe	Earl V
Gifford	Kelley V
Kumar	Moses
McMillan	Duncan V
Niesen	Marianne V
Postell	Lathem V
Webb	Mark V
Wilbourn	Miller V

### Special Guests:

Berger	Isabelle (Interpreter)
Foster	Jeanette (Meeting planner)
Harvey	Cynthia Fierro (Friday morning)
Lashley	Karina (Interpreter)
Martin	Eric (Adaptive Change Advisors)
Swanney	Doug (Ecumenical guest, British Methodist Church)
Ward	Hope Morgan (Thursday only)
Wills	Corey (A/V coordinator)

### Agency Representatives:

Bailey	Ray (GBHEM)
Hahn	Heather (UMNS)
Jones	Dale (Wespath)
King	Rick (GCFA)
Rodia	Jennifer (UMCOM)

**CT Staff:**

Bigham-Tsai Kennetha  
Clemons Emily  
Trevathan Adrienne

**Wednesday, October 31**

**2:00 pm: Community worship with Communion**

The meeting began with a worship service open to the community. Christian Alsted offered a sermon entitled “Do You Want to Be Made Well?” Special guests Marcus Briggs-Cloud and Chebon Kernell offered worship leadership.

**3:15 pm: Plenary I: Opening Business Session**

Welcome/Overview

Alsted began with opening remarks at 3:31 pm and offered a brief overview of the agenda items. Bigham-Tsai led the roll call (see above).

*The following persons were not present at the time of the roll call:*

Sarah Belles, Barbara Boigegrain, Cashar Evans, Erin Hawkins, Susan Henry-Crowe, Dan Krause, Brian Milford, Jeremiah Park, Lathem Postell, James Swanson.

Berger noted that Kitete was left out of the roll call in error. Kitete will be added to the roll call.

Alsted offered a welcome to special guests (see roll call for names).

**Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Bigham-Tsai explained brief agenda changes in the plenaries for session 2 and session 4 due to Eric Martin’s travel needs.

**Action: Motion made to approve the agenda as presented. Vote: unanimously approved. Motion passed.**

**Approval of August Minutes**

**Action: Motion made to approve the minutes as circulated. Vote: unanimously approved. Motion passed.**

**A Report from Ken Nelson, chair of Leadership Discernment and Community Life (LDCL):**

Nelson offered an invitation to engage in the prayer stations and engage in community and

conversation. Nelson acknowledged the service of Cynthia Dopke who has left her position as Assistant Connectional Ministries Officer after 12 years with The Connectional Table. The job announcement for the ACMO is in circulation and we are hopeful to have a new staff person in place by the end of the year. Nelson offered a welcome to new staff member Emily Clemmons. Nelson offered thanks for the CT staff.

Nelson acknowledged the departure of Dana Lyles, Germain Mupasa, and Fred Brewington. Nelson also reported the addition of new CT member Sarah Belles.

Finally, Nelson recognized the CT members serving on the allocations team: Alsted, Bigham-Tsai, Nuckols, Coles, Brady, Perez, Kemper. Committee has been presented for approval. Alsted called for a vote to approve the allocations team.

**Action: Motion made by Ken Nelson on behalf LDCL to approve the members of the CT allocations team. Vote: unanimously approved. Motion passed.**

Nelson offered a welcome to Venus Gatdula as this is her first in-person meeting.

### **Executive Committee Report**

Alsted offered an overview of the work of the executive committee. The board will receive more information about the allocations process work. The executive committee will continue its work with Eric Martin. Minutes from the meetings are in OnBoard. A link will be sent to the CT.

### **Welcome of Special Guests and Greeting from the host**

Thomas Kemper offered a welcome to the GBGM building. Kemper also offered an overview of the Methodist missions with the Wyandot people and shared an experience of meeting with Wyandot leaders.

### **4:00 pm - Plenary II: *Threads of Innovation***

Bigham-Tsai offered a presentation entitled *The Mission is Yet Alive!*

(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

Bigham-Tsai offered highlights from experiences with program agencies entitled *Threads of Innovation*.

Examples:

- Discipleship Ministries has taken on a new initiative called *See All The People*, which focuses on forming real relationships and systems of intentional discipleship in local churches. Many annual conferences are working on *See All The People*.
- United Methodist Men is working to help men develop healthy masculinity through a partnership called *Amend Together* which addresses domestic violence and amending behavior through faith. UMM is empowering the men of the church to offer hope.
- GBGM has been engaged in inter-dependent worldwide partnerships, particularly through global round tables. These conversations are addressing questions of what it means to be a worldwide church: how do we do what we do? How do we do contextual ministry? How do we do ministry that comes from engagement with people who know their context? These round tables bring together equal partners and help better develop the indigenous leaders in place and that ministry is guided by people on the ground.
- GCAH offers a Wesleyan pilgrimage in England that provides leadership development and faith formation in a distinctive Wesleyan identity. This pilgrimage offers study, prayer and journey to various important sites in Methodist history.
- GBCS has engaged deeply in civil and human rights. Many agencies are at the forefront of global migration. The CT has provided a World Service Contingency Fund grant to support this work in collaboration with the Council of Bishops' Immigration Task Force. Bigham-Tsai referenced passages from Leviticus 19:34 and Matthew 25:40. This work is in faithfulness to the gospel and crosses boundaries.
- GCORR has been involved in building bridges across tribal lines. This ministry has extended into the Central Conferences. This work begins with humility and being willing to listen and learn. The staff have created open spaces for deep listening throughout worldwide connection.
- UMCOM is involved in a program called *Information & Communications Technology for Development*, which uses communications technology to provide access to technology that can lead to more equitable worldwide connections.
- GBHEM has matched evaluation with strategic planning to see where they are getting the best return on investment and using tools to shape strategy. This data is being shared with agencies and annual conferences to glean learnings about the leadership needs of the connection. GBHEM is developing a hub for leadership development.
- UMPH, GCFA and Wespah continue to expand ministry and innovate in their areas. GCFA continues to expand its shared services department. Wespah is working on changes related to Special Session. UMW is implementing a strategic plan for women and children. UMPH is staying focused on annual conferences and local churches to increase capacity for innovation in annual conferences and local churches to create consistency in teaching and to extend their global reach.
- GCSRW work is largely engaged in addressing the reality of sexual harassment and responding in comprehensive ways. GCSRW recently sponsored an event entitled *Do No Harm* which was supported in part by WSCF funds. Bigham-Tsai shared a video compiled by a Canadian producer which was translated into 8-10 languages. Two videos were shown to the CT: the introduction of the animation, followed by the animation itself.

There are three principles of the creation of the video: the concept is international; the concept is based on abuse of power; we do not communicate well about these matters.

*Attendance note: Cashar Evans and Susan Henry-Crowe joined the group at 4:35 pm.*

Wiggins Hare confirmed the video is available in English, Spanish, French, Swahili, Russian, German, Norwegian and Portuguese. The study guide is still in-process. Alsted affirmed this important work and the importance of having the video translated into many languages.

### **Agency Evaluation Report**

Agency Evaluation convener Brad Brady spoke about the importance of evaluation and offered a presentation.

(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

Brady affirmed the work of the VC-4AF Strategic Team and spoke of its potential. Alsted called for questions about the first part of the presentation. Alsted asked for microphones and opened presentation up for questions.

Discussion from CT Members:

- There was a question about the specific work of each agency in the Four Areas of Focus (4AF). Brady responded that this is to free up agencies to name their creative ministries in the 4AF.
- There was a question about resolution #3 related to the redirecting of agency work. The CT doesn't have power to direct agency work. Decision-making is based on collaborations, which is what Agency Evaluation found in the report.
- What is the process of obtaining this information, and how will it be analyzed? Was this part of the logic model or consultant work?
- The logic model was the first piece of gathering information about each agency's work in the 4AF. Each agency submitted their data to the lead agency. At the learning dialogue held in July of this year, the lead agencies gave us the big picture view as they worked with that data in terms of how ministries were being developed. The CT had a dialogue with all the agencies about their areas of focus, and any other agency that wanted to be in the room could listen. This resulted in increased collaboration between the agencies.
- This collaboration was affirmed.
- Bishop Alsted called the group to review recommendations on pages 8 and 9 of the report.

**Action: Motion to adopt the recommendations from the Agency Evaluation report. Motion approved anonymously.**

Brady noted that the CT group listened to information the agencies wanted to share. Brady highlighted a few key observations (please see the presentation for the details) and offered an overview of transitions for the next quadrennium.

Discussion from CT Members:

- There was a question about the perspectives of agency secretaries.
- There was an affirmation that it would be helpful to be contacted about the results. There was a clarification that this report was not an evaluation review like a job performance.
- There was affirmation expressed for the logic model, which was a helpful tool. The process felt very affirming. The report communicated a feeling of the CT's support of each agency's disciplinary mandates. There was appreciation expressed for the process, as well as for the learning dialogue.
- Bishop Alsted affirmed the conversation and expressed gratitude to Brady.
- Bishop Swanson offered a meal blessing at 5:40 pm.

### **6:45 pm - Plenary III —*Funding Our Mission: Budget Advisory Team***

Presenters: Brad Brady & Dave Nuckols

Prosper Kitete opened the plenary with prayer.

#### **EAC/Apportionment Sustainability Task Force**

Brady presented an orientation to how the budget of the UMC is created.

(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

The presentation offers a thorough overview of the budget process of the UMC, including an Explanation of the seven funds, how apportionments are determined, and the various committees related to finance (Economic Advisory Committee, Apportionment Sustainability Task Force, Budget Advisory Team, GCFA).

There was a discussion.

#### **Recommendation for the Base Rate**

Nuckols spoke to the importance of these presentations and noted that they are available in the meeting preparation folder in OnBoard. Nuckols offered an overview of the BAT Recommendation. There was a discussion regarding the base rate.

The plenary ended at 6:52 pm with a closing prayer by Josephine Deere.

#### **Allocations Process and Timeline (moved to Thursday)**

## **Thursday, November 1**

Morning worship was held from 8:45 am – 9:10 am.

### **9:00 am: Plenary IV: *How Our Mission Lives* (Location: Fellowship Hall)**

Strategy through Experimentation– A Conversation with Eric Martin

Alsted called the plenary to order at 9:17 am and affirmed the importance of our conversations this morning. They will bring the best of our wisdom and insight.

Bigham-Tsai welcomed Eric Martin, who specializes in leadership for adaptive change. Martin shared about the experience of going to Myanmar. “Sometimes you have to look for God’s messages and sometimes those messages are all over.” The UMC has language and organization to help process change. The church is unique because we recognize this is not our organization, it belongs to God. Martin shared some ideas from his presentation, entitled *Adaptive Leadership: Core Concepts*. There is something to be learned from communities of faith about how we do change work. CT members engaged in small group discussions.

Bigham-Tsai offered a prayer at 10:46 am and announced a 15-minute break.

### **10:40 am: Plenary V: *Funding Our Mission: Quadrennial Budget Conversations***

Presenters: Dave Nuckols & Brad Brady

Brady offered instructions for considering reflection questions, which were then discussed in small groups. Alsted affirmed the reflections produced by the group and requested that questions be given to Dave Nuckols. The meeting moved into plenary at 12:00 pm.

Alsted called for the vote about the allocations process and timeline as presented.

**Action: Motion to accept the allocation process and timeline as presented. Vote: 7 in favor, 5 opposed. Motion passed.**

There was no further conversation.

**Action: Motion to delete the phrase “unrestricted reserves” from the amendment (page 3 point 3a1). Vote: 11 in favor, 15 against. Motion defeated.**

### **1:44 pm: Plenary (Allocations Process, continued)**

Oglesby opened with prayer at 1:43 pm. The plenary began at 1:44 pm.

There was continued discussion about the allocations process.

**Action: Motion to adopt the proposal for the process. Vote: Majority approved, none opposed, 2 abstaining. Motion carried.**

**Action: There was a motion to test the body to see if there is a desire to make a statement about the issue of base percentage. If we wish to do so, there is a second motion about how this could be done. Seconded. 10 members expressed interest in preparing a statement.**

**Action: Motion to form a team that will prepare a statement on the issue of the base percentage rate to be adopted by the body before we leave the board meeting. Vote: Majority in favor, no opposed, 1 abstention. Motion passed.**

**Motion for the team to be composed of members:** Harriett Olson, Brian Milford, Judi Kenaston, Bill McAlilly. **Vote to approve team: majority in favor, none opposed, none abstaining. Motion passed.**

Alsted affirmed consulting with other board members as helpful.

Fred Day shared briefly about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary book created by GCAH. This book was made possible in part by a WSCF grant. Day also shared a brief video.

**Plenary VI: *Communicating Our Mission*:** Four Areas of Focus Messaging Strategy

**Presenters:** Jen Rodia, Dan Krause, Emily Clemons

UMCOM has done research about how people feel about the Four Areas of Focus (4AF). Only half of the pastors were familiar with the language of the 4AF. The CT engaged in a discussion regarding language changes given this feedback and research. The recent adjustments to the language were made based on feedback from the CT and Council of Bishops (COB). This language needs to be affirmed by the CT and COB.

**Action: There was a motion to change the language back to “Ministry with The Poor.” Seconded. Vote 15 in favor, 10 opposed. Motion passed.**

Alsted called for further discussion. There was a suggestion to change the tense for consistency. Alsted noted that our feedback will be given to the VC-4AF Strategic Team. Alsted asked for affirmation of changing to “ministering with the poor,” as we need to be clear on our message to the Council of Bishops.

**Action: Motion to change the tense to “Ministering with the poor”. Vote: Majority approved, 3 opposed, none abstaining. Motion passed.**

**UMCOM Campaign**



(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

## **CT Communications Strategy - Emily Clemons**

(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

### **Friday, November 2**

8:30 am: The day began with morning devotions and Communion.

#### **9:00-10:30 am: Plenary VII: *Moving Our Mission Forward***

Commission on A Way Forward Panel Discussion and Process Time

Presenter: Dave Nuckols

Plenary began at 9:16 am. Nuckols provided an overview of the theological framework that guided the Commission on A Way Forward (CWF). This work was done in partnership with the Committee on Faith and Order, as well as missiologists in the church. One of the themes of the work is understanding all that we have in common. Nuckols referred to the outline available in OnBoard:

<https://onboard.passageways.com/App/resources/47f626f50117473991ea7c5c1f025a4b-1101?view=ResourceList>

Highlights:

- Nuckols shared that the CWF experience was meaningful. There were three moderators who guided the work, three bishops, as well as a few consultants. The group consisted of 21 from the U.S., 7 from Africa, 2 from the Philippines, and 2 from Europe. Their task was to help prepare the bishops and delegates of General Conference. The decision belongs to the delegates. There were liberal and conservative caucus groups present. The center was also well-represented, perhaps a bit more centrist, but similar to the overall demographics of the church. The group met 9 times in person at every jurisdiction in the U.S. and once in Europe. There was a strong feeling of holy conferencing.
- Nuckols provided an overview of the spectrum of thought present in the conversation. The bishops worked carefully to discern what to ask the commission to do. The emphasis was on contextual differentiation: allowing different responses based on context. In other words, their task was to “create space.”
- Nuckols offered brief overviews of the various plans, as well as the recent Judicial Council rulings.

9:56 am - Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey offered a presentation that included reflections from a recent Judicial Council meeting in Zurich. Harvey affirmed that the COB has done its work, and our future is now in the hands of the delegates. She encouraged the CT to read paragraph 105 of Our Theological Task, highlighting *individual and communal, contextual and incarnational*, essentially practical. She has relied on Ephesians 4:1-6 that was referenced earlier this morning. Harvey shared examples of how God is still calling us and how she is still experiencing hope. Her prayer is “Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow”.

### **Panel Presentation**

Speakers: Kim Cape, Cynthia Harvey, Beverly Jones, Benedita Penicela Nhambiu, Lyssette Perez

Cape, Harvey, Jones, Nhambiu and Perez offered their perspectives on this work and shared their priorities for the future of the United Methodist Church.

### **10:45 am-12:15 pm: Plenary VIII: *Moving Our Mission Forward***

U.S. Contextual Ministries Report

Presenters: Judi Kenaston, Brian Milford, Barbara Boigegrain, Jerome DeVine

Milford opened in prayer at 10:55 am.

(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

### **Highlights:**

- How will The Book of Discipline apply mission in the Central Conferences? There was a proposal for a new structure of the U.S. church. At that time, Central Conference delegates made up 10% of delegates.
- The USCM advisory group has looked at legislative approaches for the whole church as they embrace the general BOD. There is a subgroup looking at legal and financial implications and its effect on structure. The CT was encouraged to list questions. The group is seeking support.
- Part of the rationale for this proposal is that Central Conference delegates at General Conference are not always able to relate to discussions. There are matters that we have to discuss at General Conference because the U.S. doesn't have a mechanism for discussing them apart from General Conference. We are trying to find a way to address this going forward.
- The scope of Christian mission is always worldwide, multilingual and multi-contextual. The UMC has developed multiple layers of governance to ensure accountability in every

level. We place values on contextual ministries and promote adaptive, missional approaches. The UMC has adapted its structure and processes by means of decentralized governance in multiple settings for decision-making.

- The church in the U.S. requires contextual ways of doing ministry. We seek to proclaim and embody the gospel contextually.
- There are 13 U.S. CM members developing this work. We are developing a two-stage proposal. It was created in two pieces: one as an interim stage while we move through and hopefully approve a final stage.
- The first stage is an interim legislative committee that leads to the creation of a U.S.-governed body in the second stage. This has urgency regardless. The second proposal creates a U.S. Central Conference. This allows us to better facilitate governance of the U.S. Contextual Ministries. The kinds of petitions that would go into this legislative committee would be focused on tax matters, legislation matters, and pension matters.
- Stage 2 might result in savings (see the chart in the presentation). The next step would be to develop a writing team by the end of 2018.
- Point of clarification: The writing team would consist of members of the USCM advisory group with some expansion into the CT itself, as well as a couple outside persons to help with legislation.

Devine raised the below questions for discussion. These questions relate to the entire proposal.

- What is the CT's affirmation of our proposal?
- Which groups should sponsor the legislation?
- Who might be contributors to the Writing Team?
- Who should be engaged in promotion?

There was a discussion of the proposal.

**Action: There was a motion to have the CT endorse the direction of the U.S. Contextual Ministries advisory group to prepare appropriate legislation and communication that enables a U.S. Structure to be presented to GC in 2020. Seconded.**

**Vote: Majority in favor, none opposed or abstaining. Motion passed.**

**Allocations writing proposal (addition to agenda)**

Presenter: Ole Birch

Birch asked the CT staff to add a greeting and add the edited document in proper format. Birch presented the current text for overview.

The CT staff will email the document to all members.

(Link to document included in approved PDF version of minutes)

### **12:15-12:30 pm: General Church Council report**

Highlights:

- The GCC intends to explore different models of composition for the CT that still maintain the CT's purposes and worldwide covenant. There are currently 49 voting members and 12 non-voting members.
- CT members spoke about the need for adequate representation as a global church.
- Alsted asked the advisory team what they need in terms of direction from the CT related to size.
- There was clarification that the group is asking for affirmation and will bring their work to the spring meeting for a vote.

Alsted confirmed that the vote is to affirm our dialogue and expectation to receive more information in April.

**Action: Motion to affirm the General Church Council advisory group in its exploration of a new CT makeup. Vote: unanimously in favor. Motion passed.**

### **1:45-3:00 pm: Plenary IX: *Moving Our Mission Forward***

Beverly Jones led a prayer at 1:52 pm.

The plenary was called to order by Bishop Alsted. During the morning plenary, there was a statement regarding the base percentage rate. Alsted called for comments and adjustments to the statement. An addition was made. **The amendment was seconded.**

**Action: Motion to approve the statement regarding the base rate as amended. Vote: Majority in favor. None abstaining, none opposed. Motion carried.**

### **Spending Plan Review**

Presenter: Kennetha Bigham-Tsai

Our 2019 budget is \$707,816. Bigham-Tsai encouraged the CT to review the document in OnBoard. Some of this increase relates to preparation for General Conference legislation.

**Action: Motion to approve the CT 2019 spending plan. Vote: Unanimous approval. None abstaining, none opposed. Motion carried.**

Alsted asked for other advisory group reports.

### **World Service Contingency Fund Requests**

Presenter: Brad Brady

The updated WSCF chart is available in OnBoard for information. Brady offered an overview.

Discussion:

- The GBGM/GBCS request is a joint request for \$120,000. The request has come from different parts of the Congo. CT member Prosper Kitete would like to provide details about this request.
- Since it became independent, the Congo has never had political stability. The Methodist Church is the most stable organization in the Congo. The UMC is a trustworthy organization for the government. It is important for the church to enhance awareness and be involved in civic activities. There is work in terms of awareness and monitoring the election process. Resources are needed. Kitete thanked the CT for considering the request.
- This request has come to us by way of the General Secretaries Table and the committee for the CT that reviews WSCF funds recommends approval.
- There was a call for questions or comments.

**Action: Motion to approve the GBGM/GBCS request in the amount of \$120,000 from the World Service Contingency Fund. Vote: Unanimous approval. None abstaining, none opposed. Motion carried.**

Kemper offered a prayer.

### **Proposal for CT office**

Presenter: Kennetha Bigham-Tsai

Bigham-Tsai offered a review of the CT office move proposal. Alsted called for questions or discussion.

**Action: Motion to approve the CT office move proposal. Vote: Majority in favor. One opposed. None abstaining. Motion passed.**

Bigham-Tsai explained that the proposal will be taken to GCFA.

Bishop Watson called for a time of silent prayer for Special Session and ended with a prayer.

### **CCMO Report**

Presenter: Kennetha Bigham-Tsai

Bigham-Tsai expressed gratitude to the CT staff.

Alsted reminded group of a statement of John Wesley related to conferencing. Alsted affirmed that the CT has been gracious in our conversations with each other.

The meeting concluded at 2:45 pm and the group moved into closing worship with Communion. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai offered a sermon, and Rev. Amy Valdez-Barker returned to co-preside Communion with Kennetha and Bishop Alsted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Adrienne Stricker, CT Staff  
February 14, 2019

*Minutes approved at February 18, 2019 meeting*