

Report to the Annual Meeting
from the
Board of Directors

BYLAWS OF THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE
OF THE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

- I. Suspension of Article IV of the Bylaws
- II. Establishment of Bylaws Committee
- III. Recommended Changes to Article IV of the Bylaws

The Annual Meeting of the Conference in October 1995 voted to adopt a “Proposal for Restructuring the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.” It was an innovative and bold design that would help conserve the financial resources of the Conference and promote the most appropriate and effective use of Conference facilities, resources, professional staff, and volunteers.

The proposed design provided an inspired vision and architecture for increasing “the sense of connection between our churches and the Conference,” “collaboration between our congregations,” “and clarification of priorities as a Conference.” While the vision remains sound, there is a need to adjust the structure of the design.

Central to the new design was a Conference made up of three Regions, each with five Associations, and each with a Regional Council. New program initiatives would flow up from the Regions to the Conference, with the Conference then serving as a resource; programming and shared mission of local churches would take place regionally, rather than Conference-wide; and Regions/Associations would provide the resources to help churches help each other.

Although the original design was faithfully conceived, deliberated and approved for implementation at the Annual Meetings of 1995 and 1998, during the past seven years we have continued to evolve and change as individuals and as a Conference, in our views, in our needs, and demographically. The decision to suspend Article IV of the Bylaws provided needed time to lift up new ideas and opinions for consideration, and form recommendations.

I. Suspension of Article IV of the Bylaws

Chronology of Suspension

October 1998	Bylaws amended to reflect the new structure of the Connecticut Conference: 3 Regions with a Regional Council in each Region, and 3 Ministry Teams in each Region.
Spring 1999	Evaluation of progress of “new” design with independent assessment offered by Hartford Seminary’s research center staff. Evaluation was supplemented by formal and informal discussions.
October 2000	Article IV of Bylaws was suspended until Annual Meeting of the Conference in 2002

Purpose for Decision to Suspend Article IV

After two years only one Region was fully operational with a Regional Council and 3 Ministry Teams. The other two Regional Councils had met only a few times with no plans for future meetings. The Ministry Teams were not fully formed and functional. .

Action to Suspend Article IV

“Article IV of the Bylaws of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ be suspended until the Annual Meeting of the Conference in 2002; provided, however, that during said period the Conference shall continue to be divided administratively into three Regions and membership on Ministry Teams shall continue to reflect a commitment to diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, age, expertise and status as an ordained or lay person.”

II. Establishment of Bylaws Committee

“The Board of Directors shall appoint a Bylaws Committee to review the Bylaws, which committee shall report to the Board of Directors with respect to any changes to the Bylaws to be presented to the 2002 Annual Meeting and report back to the 2002 Annual Meeting with respect to any proposed action; provided, however, that if no further action is taken with respect to the Bylaws at the 2002 Annual Meeting, Article IV will be in effect as presently in the Bylaws.”

A committee was established with the task of re-working the Bylaws of the Connecticut Conference regarding the suspension of Article IV. Members of the committee include Dorothy Clark (current member of Board of Directors, G. Graham Davidson, and Joseph M. Tobin, Chair.

II. Summary of Recommended Changes

Article IV. Regions and Programs of the Conference

Section A.

- The Conference shall be divided administratively into a minimum of three Regions.
- Eliminate Regional Council from each Region

Section B.

- The Board of Directors shall ensure a Region is represented in composing a search committee for a vacancy in Conference staff serving the Region.

Section C.

- Conference-wide Ministry Teams (3) will be formed to replace Regional Ministry Teams (a total of 9). This is already in place and previously voted by the Annual Meeting.
- Ministry Teams composed of 20 members; one from each Association (15), and five at large members to ensure a commitment to diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, age, expertise and status as an ordained or lay person.
- Ministry Team members serve a maximum of three consecutive years.
- The Nominating Committee of the Conference will recommend the Chairs of the Ministry Teams from the membership on those teams.
- Each Ministry Team will provide a report to the Board of Directors twice yearly.

Section C1.

- Move leadership of Stewardship from Local Church Ministries Team to Wider Church Ministries Team.

Article I. Composition of Membership

- Add item “G” giving members of Conference-wide Ministry Teams a vote at Annual Meeting
- Add item “H” giving one youth delegate, who shall be no more than 22 years of age, from each Local Church a vote at Annual Meeting.

Article III. Board of Directors

- The Associations of a Region shall provide at least three (3) names for consideration in order to create a pool of candidates from which the Conference Nominating Committee shall select candidates for any single vacancy.
- The Nominating Committee of the Conference will ensure that the various Associations of that Region are included in membership on the Board of Directors by rotation among the Associations.

Article V. Committees of the Conference

- Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors shall choose a slate of candidates for Conference Nominating Committee.

Article VII. Meetings of the Conference

- Notice to lay delegates may be addressed to and mailed to Local Church or home address.

The complete text of the Bylaws with recommended revisions is attached, and has been reviewed by the Conference attorney. Words to be deleted are struck-through, and additions are in bold.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bylaws Committee
September 5, 2002

