

## **Statement of the Central Conference College**

„Worldwide Nature of the Church“

Being one church in four continents and in about 45 countries is a unique gift which we celebrate in the United Methodist Church. However, the structure of the church does not sufficiently represent the fellowship which we experience: There is an inequality between the UMC in the US with its five jurisdictions and the seven Central Conferences. A study group established by the Council of Bishops and the Connectional table with representatives from all over the world made suggestions how to move on in building up structures which help the church in all its regions to fulfill the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. In our opinion the results are a good starting point for further consideration and action: The General Conference remains the main body in leading the church by deciding on the constitution, the social principles, the ministry of all baptized and the ordained ministry. It was further proposed to install so called “regional conferences” all over the world in the US as well as in the other continents. When the proposal was discussed in the Council of Bishops, the Central Conference College voted unanimously in favor of the document.

The constitutional amendments, which are before the annual conferences, set the stage for further discussion in the newly built study group as well as in all our conferences. They enable us to become more flexible if the General Conference 2012 decides to establish regional conferences in all parts of the globe. We do not prejudge the future development. We all know that we need further studies and platforms to discern the structural changes in all our conferences all over the world. The voices from outside of the US need to be heard in that important question. We are open to take courageous decisions at General Conference 2012. If we adopt the decision of the General Conference 2008 by voting in favor of the constitutional amendments, we would have the possibility to establish a new structure in the quadrenium 2012-2016, if the General Conference 2012 decides so. By making the constitutional changes we would prove our willingness to reorganize our structure in order to enable all parts of the church to focus on the global vision and mission at General Conference and on the regional matters at the regional conferences.

February 10, 2009

Bishop Leo Soriano, Philippines, Secretary of the Central Conference College

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, Germany, President of the Central Conference College