

Enabling Motion of the 2011 Annual Conference
Kim Dickerson-Oard, Sessions Planning Chair

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4 1. That the written materials covering this Session of the Kansas West Conference that
5 were available at www.kswestumc.org and through the mail and those supplemental
6 documents received at the 2011 Annual Conference Session become the official agenda.
7
- 8 2. That the bar of the Conference will be at the tables on the arena floor of the Meadowlark
9 Building. Visitors are invited to the Conference and are requested to sit in the chairs
10 located at the back of the area.
11
- 12 3. That the Minutes Committee will review each day's minutes and recommend adoption by
13 the Annual Conference
14
- 15 4. That the privilege of the floor be given to the Chief Executive Officer of each
16 Institution/Agency of the Kansas West Annual Conference who is not a member of the
17 Annual conference, to members of other conferences serving churches in Kansas West,
18 to District Superintendent Assignment persons serving in Kansas West and to any person
19 designated by an official body of this Annual Conference in order that agenda items may
20 be presented.
21
- 22 5. That the Conference Secretary, Anita McMillan and Marketing, Communications Director,
23 Lisa Elliott Diehl, and lay members of the Council on Administrative Ministries,
24 Connectional Ministries Council, and Marketing and Communications Council be allowed
25 the privilege of the floor.
26
- 27 6. That Mary Lou Reece, wife of Bishop Jones, be granted honorary membership in the
28 Kansas West Annual Conference.
29
- 30 7. That the rules of order governing floor procedures of the Annual Conference shall be
31 *Roberts Rules of Order* unless modified by action of the Annual Conference. The
32 following modifications were accepted by the Annual Conference in 1992.
33
 - 34 a. The Chairperson shall open each Session at the appointed time. The roll shall
35 be taken at the direction of the Chairperson.
 - 36 b. The Chairperson shall decide all questions of order. In case of an appeal of the
37 Chair's decision, a vote shall be taken without debate.
 - 38 c. Any member who wishes to speak shall rise and address the Chair and be
39 recognized. Any member speaking on the floor shall use a microphone, and
40 identify him/herself by name, local church or appointment. **A member shall not**
41 **speak more than twice on a given subject or speak longer than three (3)**
42 **minutes at a given time without special permission of the Chair.** The Chair
43 and/or a member of the Conference Secretary's office may be designated to call
44 time on a speech or debate. A member shall not be interrupted while speaking
45 unless declared out of order. All members shall have the privilege of explanation
46 when they believe their remarks have been misunderstood or misinterpreted.
47
- 48 8. That all resolutions, motions and reports to be presented to the Conference for
49 consideration shall be given to the **Secretary in writing**.
50
- 51 9. That after the first ballot for General/Jurisdictional voting those persons receiving five or
52 more votes will proceed to the next ballot.
53
- 54 10. That Kansas West will be sending three alternates to the Jurisdictional Conference.
55

- 1 11. That the following persons be elected Associate Secretaries for the 2011 Annual
2 Conference session:
3 Penney Schwab Don McMillan Linda Carpenter
4 Dayna Hauschild Carol Bates Ashlee Alley
5 Marlene Whitaker
6
7 12. That those persons who register their roll call card by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday will be
8 considered to have answered roll call. Those received after that time will be considered
9 tardy or absent.
10
11 13. That appointments shall be effective upon being fixed by the Presiding Bishop, but that
12 the pastors who are moving shall be responsible for their new assignment beginning July
13 1, 2011.
14
15 14. Salary will be paid by the "old appointment" through June 30, 2011. The "new
16 appointment" will pay starting July 1, 2011.
17
18
19

20 **Resolution to Include (DSA) District Superintendents Assignment Leaders**
21 **in the Business of the Annual Conference**
22 **By The Cabinet**

23 Whereas, churches led by a District Superintendent Assignment have only one lay vote
24 at Annual Conference there is an issue is of equality and justice of voting on issues that affect the
25 local church.

26 Whereas, the rule of DSAs voting as laity has been in existence in our sister conference
27 for several years and the Discipline requirements have been monitored by the Conference
28 Secretary without issues.

29 Therefore be it resolved that the Conference Rules number 11 be amended to add
30 number a.18. "Lay persons assigned by the District Superintendents (DSAs) to serve local
31 churches."
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**Great Plans for the Great Plains:
A Vision**

43
44 ***"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper***
45 ***you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."***
46 ***– Jeremiah 29:11***
47

48 What was it that Jeremiah saw?

49
50 Where the exiled community to whom he was writing perceived a tragic turn in their history,
51 Jeremiah saw a **gift**. Where the exiles pulled their beards in grief and wrung their hands over
52 their losses, Jeremiah imagined the hand of God inviting them to put their own hands and
53 shoulders to work blessing their new home. *Search for me with all your heart*, God tells the
54 people through the voice of the prophet, *and I will let you find me. Build houses and pray for the*
55 *city where you are living.* God's blessing is to be found even in the most unlikely places when

1 God's people turn outward from themselves and seek to bring his grace to their time and place in
2 history.

3
4 Could God be telling United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas something similar today? After
5 decades of bewildering change and organizational decline, is it possible that God has plans for a
6 hopeful future for us if we seek to "build new houses" and to "plant new vineyards" to bless this
7 time and place?

8
9 Decisions at the 2008 General Conference and subsequent College of Bishops meetings have
10 placed in front of us an opportunity to ask these questions and search for answers. After nearly
11 two years of prayer, discernment, listening, studying, and working together, the Nebraska-Kansas
12 Area Transition Team believes that it is time for us, like Jeremiah's first hearers, to let go of trying
13 to recreate memories of past fruitfulness as if they would work for the situation we find ourselves
14 in. Instead, let's move toward new possibilities of a working future and remember well those
15 great moments that worked in the past. It is time for us to turn our eyes from institutions and
16 practices that served us better in the past than they do now. It is time to turn, instead, toward
17 God's promises, God's plans, God's vision, and the people God calls us to serve. We believe
18 God is leading us now into a new way of being. It is our responsibility to follow.

19 20 **I. Our Current Reality**

21 Part of the Transition Team's task was to assess the current state of United Methodism in
22 Nebraska and Kansas. We were already aware that our conferences were struggling, but our
23 steady decline has now become much clearer.

24
25 Consider that since 1968 United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas have:

- 26 • Decreased membership by more than 170,000 people, more than 43%
- 27 • Decreased attendance by 52,000 people, more than 36%
- 28 • Decreased the number of local churches by 180, more than 14%

29
30 At the same time the states have increased in population by more than 800,000.

31
32 We have no doubt that God will preserve the Body of Christ. The sustainability of the Church is
33 not at issue. But we also have no doubt that our current way of organizing as a church is
34 unsustainable. There are many reasons for this decline and there are many measures of church
35 health that are not captured in these statistics. No matter how we consider any of these other
36 factors, however, it is simply undeniable that we are headed down a slow but steady path towards
37 death.

38
39 But we should not be afraid of death. In Matthew 16:25 Jesus says, "[T]hose who want to save
40 their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." Perhaps we have been
41 living as much for **Our** church as we have for **Christ's** church. Our faith teaches us that in death
42 we have an opportunity for new life. We should be afraid of comfort, safety, and timidity, not
43 death, for we are a resurrection people! As United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas we have
44 reached a moment in time when we have a clear opportunity to choose between comfort in our
45 old structures or a renewed focus on our reason for being.

46
47 The 2008 General Conference changed the formula for assigning bishops so that beginning in
48 September 2012 each of the five U.S. jurisdictions would have one fewer bishop. The College of
49 Bishops of the South Central Jurisdiction decided to accomplish this by uniting our two states into
50 one episcopal area. As a result, just over one year from now Nebraska and Kansas will share one
51 Bishop. It is important to remember that this is a choice that has been made for us. We cannot
52 undo this decision. This means that the status quo is not an option. There will be change in the
53 organization of our conferences. The question that we must answer together is what kind of
54 change will take place.
55

1 While this may not have been a choice that we would have made on our own, the Transition
2 Team believes that this decision actually opens a new door to God’s plans for the future of
3 ministry in our region. We believe that we have been given an unprecedented opportunity to
4 create a new conference for a new century in a new episcopal area from the ground up. We
5 believe it would be a serious mistake to miss the gift of being able to create a coherent
6 organization for pursuing a unified missional strategy in our region of the country at this moment
7 of history.

8
9 We come to you recommending that our three annual conferences create one annual conference
10 for our one episcopal area because the process of creating a new annual conference will help us
11 better adapt our current and future ministries to the altered landscape of twenty-first century
12 ministry in the Great Plains.

13 14 **II. The Timid Option: Slow Death**

15
16 One new annual conference is not our only option. We could choose to
17 retain our current three-conference structure, combine two
18 conferences, or even explore creating additional conferences. In fact,
19 each of these possibilities came up at some point in our conversation.
20 While each of these arrangements has its own unique advantages and
21 disadvantages, there is one very clear limiting factor that all of the options share. When one
22 bishop presides over multiple conferences, administrative redundancies and ministerial
23 inefficiencies are unavoidable. For example, the Bishop will have to work with three separate
24 staffs, three different budget systems, three conference mission statements, three visions, three
25 sets of goals, and three groups of committees. Any area-wide initiative would have to work
26 through a threefold bureaucracy. Additionally, leadership and resources that could be used for
27 ministry would be used instead to manage this redundancy. It is conceivable that each of our
28 conferences could choose to streamline our structures to some degree, but we already could
29 have done so. The evidence of history is that we would rather choose the timid option of minimal
30 change than make more radical, yet more beneficial, changes. Choices such as these have
31 helped to contribute to the slow but steady march away from relevance. We are making fewer
32 disciples, transforming the world in smaller ways, and showing less fruit than ever before.

“[T]he price of not making deep
change...is the choice of slow
death...”
- Robert Quinn, Deep Change

33
34 The General and Jurisdictional Conferences have mandated that we restructure into one
35 episcopal area. That is the minimal amount of change required. The Transition Team believes
36 that restructuring alone is insufficient. Each of our conferences has restructured in the past and
37 arrived at the same results – continuing down the path of slow death. If we want to be the vital
38 church that we are convinced God wants us to be, then we must refocus on the mission that God
39 has set before us. It is time to die to ourselves and the current form of organizing United
40 Methodist ministries in Nebraska and Kansas so that we can live for the purposes that God calls
41 us to.

42 43 **III. The Bold Option: Deep Change**

44 After two years of work, discernment, study, worship and listening, the Transition Team
45 unanimously believes that God desires that we move past mere reorganization and into deeper
46 change including creating a single, new annual conference in the states of Nebraska and Kansas.
47 We emphasize the need for a new, not merged, conference. Merging existing structures into one
48 annual conference is not deep change and is not what we need. “Merging” language suggests
49 that we do the same things we’ve always done, but do them more efficiently. Doing more
50 efficiently what we should no longer be doing is not a step in the right direction. The language of
51 creating a new annual conference reminds us that our intent is to carefully and prayerfully
52 consider all aspects of ministry so that we can answer the call that we hear from God. God calls
53 us to be bold. God calls us to take ownership again of God’s mission in the Great Plains, to catch
54 God’s creative vision, to be a new people for the people of Nebraska, Kansas, and the world.
55

1 God calls us to look with care at the functions of each of our structures in light of God's mission
2 for us. This will be difficult. We will likely find that some ministries that we deeply love must be
3 put aside. We might be led to create new ministries in previously unfocused areas. To allow
4 God's mission to guide us is bold, uncomfortable as it may be. To allow God's mission to show
5 us when something can be blessed, thanked, and retired is bold.

6
7 The Transition Team believes that such bold change should be guided by values that offer a
8 structure of missional accountability. Such values should imply objective and/or subjective
9 standards by which we can measure the work of the annual conference and hold ourselves
10 accountable. In the creation and living out of a new annual conference, we propose using the
11 following values as our guide:

12
13 **Thriving ... Instead of Surviving**

14 We are a people committed to a future that matters! We are done with getting by and making
15 ends meet. We are ready to live boldly into a world that will be different because of our effort,
16 work and energy empowered by God. Growth and health, wonder and brilliance will be our
17 branding. It will frame our work and offer a benchmark of success.

18
19 God calls us to work with passion to make effective change and to be churches for mission and
20 purpose rather than people content to cover a salary or count the pennies until mission shares
21 are paid. Our mission field requires us to be a people of action, accountable to the work of
22 transformation rather than the work of upkeep and maintenance of buildings, structures and
23 institutions. Our church calls us to be people focused on supporting effective and passionate
24 leaders over systems of tenure. God's call is too important to keep ineffective methods in place
25 for our own institutional comfort at the cost of God's work for the transformation of the world.

26
27 **Risk-taking and Creative ... Instead of Maintaining the Status Quo**

28 We are open to risky and vibrant ministry that is dynamic and fruitful. We will not judge ministry by
29 its nature as inside or outside of the box, but rather we will assess its fruitful growth, its rich
30 connections and its surprising depth. Creative ministry does not mean careless ministry or
31 ministry that is different for the sake of difference. Creative ministry means that we will demand
32 rigorous care and deep preparation to propel real change in our world.

33
34 God calls us to send effective leaders and to connect with the mission field that may reside within
35 the walls of the local church just as much as it does in the communities outside our stained-glass
36 windows. We must consider new models, research our communities with great care and be
37 people with the courage to be flexible and wise in our discernment.

38
39 **Spirit-led ... Instead of Institution-driven**

40 Over the course of time, we have become more focused on preserving the Church as an
41 institution rather than viewing the Church as an instrument of God. John Wesley once said, "I am
42 not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or
43 America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion
44 without the power." In modern terms, many people today are concerned that organized religion
45 has become more about the organization than religion. We will not put our structures, positions
46 and individual power ahead of God's calling. Instead, we will listen closely for the Spirit's leading
47 and follow that leading wherever it takes us.

48
49 Spiritual leaders are those who put the leading of the Spirit first. They put our God-given mission
50 ahead of personal ambition. And at those times when, in their humanness, they and/or the
51 churches they serve cease to follow the Spirit, mutual accountability and support from others will
52 help to bring them back to God's purpose.

53
54 **Diversity ... Instead of Uniformity**

55 We see God's kingdom as one of welcome and wholeness. A whole community is one that
56 welcomes all people, "for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of

1 you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or
2 Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in
3 Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3: 26-28). We recognize that part of God’s call for us is to make
4 disciples “without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition” (*Book of*
5 *Discipline*, 2008, ¶4).

6
7 United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas are mostly Caucasian, European in origin, physically
8 able, older and richer than others in the region. While celebrating those who are part of our
9 Church today, we will be more intentional in reaching the diverse population that makes up the
10 mission field of our two states. This can only be done by simultaneously continuing our
11 commitment to small and large churches in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

12
13 **Wesleyan Identity and Spirit ... Instead of Denominational Confusion**

14 United Methodists share a common heritage with Christians of every age and nation, grounded in
15 and faithful to the apostolic witness, which is the root and standard of all valid Christian teaching.
16 Our distinctiveness stems from an emphasis on “practical divinity” – the implementation of
17 genuine Christianity in the lives of believers. As we teach basic Christian doctrine, we also teach
18 intentional methods for putting faith and love into practice (*Book of Discipline*, 2008, ¶101).

19
20 We go forward as loyal heirs who adapt all that is best from our Wesleyan heritage to the
21 challenges and opportunities of today’s mission field in Nebraska and Kansas. It is the proper
22 role of the annual conference and its episcopal leader to support and hold accountable the
23 leaders and congregations of our conference to our Wesleyan identity and spirit.

24
25 **IV. Four Mission-Focused Reasons for a New Annual Conference:**

26 Taking into consideration the goals stated above, we believe that there are four clear and
27 compelling reasons to create a new annual conference.

28
29 **1. Leadership:**

30 Lay members of our congregations say, “Send me a good pastor.” Pastors say, “Send
31 me to a place with good lay leadership.” Creating one conference creates a critical mass
32 of clergy with particular gifts that can then be better matched with ministry settings.
33 Moving toward one annual conference with a renewed clarity of mission and vision
34 enables us to hold pastors and lay people to higher standards and accompany these
35 expectations with continual training, formation, and accountability.

36
37 **2. Reinventing Connectional Life & Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers**

38 Creating one annual conference with renewed mission and vision invites us to look at
39 current structures and ask of each, “Is this the best way to serve God’s mission in
40 Nebraska and Kansas for the 21st Century?” In listening events, it became clear that
41 people are interested in the kinds of efficiencies one conference can provide. This is a
42 matter of system-wide stewardship: deploying resources and leaders with excellence,
43 nimbleness, and an eye toward the greatest fruitfulness. One conference will reduce
44 neither the number of leaders needed nor the opportunity to lead. Instead, it is a change
45 that allows our leaders to serve in more effective and fruitful ways.

46
47 **3. Bishop Freed for Vision**

48 Creating one annual conference allows us to better utilize the gifts of the Bishop. One
49 conference, rather than three, frees the Bishop from performing internal management
50 tasks in triplicate and allows him/her to provide the visionary, spiritual leadership our
51 churches and pastors need and deserve.

52
53 **4. Technology for a Regional Mission**

54 Creating one conference gives us freedom to better leverage our communication and
55 technological assets to create a larger presence in the mission field and to better
56 resource the communication and technology needs of local churches.

1 **V. Together, Where Do We Go From Here?**

2 The Transition Team brings to you our strong conviction that God desires us to move past mere
3 reorganization and into deeper change including creating a single, new annual conference in the
4 states of Nebraska and Kansas; therefore, we want to gauge your support for creating a single,
5 new conference encompassing the states of Nebraska and Kansas. The Team aims to be both
6 transparent and inclusive of your feelings and wisdom. What our church needs is to discern
7 together the will and direction of God. Holy conferencing will help us to find and pursue God's
8 will.
9

10 **At 2011 Annual Conference Gatherings**

11 Following the presentation of the Transition Team report and a time of conferencing, voting
12 members of each Annual Conference will participate in a "Five-Finger vote" to further the
13 conversation about the recommendation of one annual conference and God's plans for our future
14 (see attached sample ballot). This is a gauge, not an ultimate decision-making device, meant to
15 extend the conversation. All results will be sealed and reported simultaneously to all three annual
16 conferences.
17

18 **After the Annual Conference Meetings**

19 The Transition Team will meet June 13th in Topeka, Kan., to review the results of the Five-Finger
20 vote. This will help form the agenda for this and future Transition Team meetings.
21

22 Over the next year, Technical Teams and Dream Teams will meet to address specific areas of
23 concern. Teams that are already or in the process of being formed are:

24 • **Technical Teams**

25 Technical teams address areas of concern that need analysis and technical solutions.

26 These are matters that must be resolved prior to creating a new conference but that
27 should not require a rethinking of how we do ministry.

- 28 ○ The Joint Distributing Committee is studying compensation, health insurance
29 and pension practices of each of our current conferences.
- 30 ○ The Asset Allocation Team is compiling a comprehensive inventory of properties,
31 holdings and institutional relationships as well as the apportionment formulas and
32 budgets of the three annual conferences.
33

34 • **Dream Teams**

35 Dream teams are groups that will explore how ministry could be as one new conference.
36 These teams could (but do not) exist in our current structure. Creating these teams now
37 will help remind us all that we are envisioning a new way of doing ministry in a new
38 conference. They also will help us keep our purpose at the forefront of our minds as we
39 consider structure and staffing for a new conference.

- 40 ○ The Small Church Dream Team will explore how smaller churches can effectively
41 share the Gospel across rural, suburban, and urban settings in both states.
- 42 ○ The Youth Ministries Dream Team will examine how youth ministry is changing in
43 today's culture and provide ideas for comprehensive youth ministry at the local
44 level and beyond.
45

46 Each technical and dream team will have members from each of our current conferences and a
47 variety of ministry settings. More teams of both types will be created as the need is discerned.
48

49 **Annual Conference 2012**

50 The Transition Team is thoroughly convinced that God is guiding us to move past mere
51 reorganization and into deeper change including creating a single, new annual conference in the
52 states of Nebraska and Kansas. Creating a new, single annual conference will foster an
53 environment more conducive to doing the further work of deep change to which God calls us for
54 missional fruitfulness. Therefore, the Transition Team intends to move that we create a new
55 annual conference in the states of Nebraska and Kansas, which will be voted on at each annual

1 conference meeting in 2012 and, if approved by all three conferences, ratified by the
2 Jurisdictional Conference in July 2012.

3
4 Additional motions of both technical and adaptive nature will also be presented. These motions
5 will provide for some of the logistics for living as one episcopal area (such as area offices,
6 bishop's housing, etc.) and provide guidance for our continued journey towards one conference.

7 8 **After Annual Conference 2012**

9 Regardless of our action this year or next year, we will become one episcopal area in September
10 2012. We anticipate that the process of becoming one conference will not end in 2012. We are
11 committed to creating the new conference as soon as possible but acknowledge that it will still
12 take some time before the birthing process is complete.

13 14 **VI. Concluding Thoughts**

15 The last two years of working together as your Area Transition Team has been a rewarding
16 experience. We have enjoyed learning about each other, discovering commonalities in our lives
17 and ministries, and growing in our understanding of God's will for us. We believe that what we
18 have experienced as individuals also will be true for the annual conferences and states that we
19 represent. Nebraska and Kansas United Methodists have much to learn from each other. We
20 share much in common, both in culture and in ministries. We also share a common need to
21 rediscover the calling that God places on our lives. We affirm that there are United Methodists
22 across our states who are leading ministry as well as they know how. The world is indeed
23 different because of their presence. But we imagine that those ministries could be even more
24 fruitful. We also imagine that in those places where ministry is waning, and unfortunately this is
25 the case in the large majority of our settings, God's work through the United Methodist Church
26 can be renewed, even resurrected, into a better future. We look forward to serving God together
27 as one annual conference until God's greatest plans for us come to pass!

28
29 Report submitted by: The Nebraska-Kansas Episcopal Area Transition Team, Mr. Tom Watson,
30 Chairperson*

31
32 *See following page for a complete list of team members and contact information for each
33 respective member.

34 35 36 **Nebraska-Kansas Transition Team**

37 **Q & A**

38 **Compiled from listening sessions and e-mail feedback.**

39
40 Q1. What is the process for becoming one annual conference? What steps need to be taken?

- 41 A. First, the three existing conferences will be asked to express their support for creating
42 one new conference during the 2011 sessions of the three annual conferences. The
43 transition team will review comments and the will of the three conferences' members at a
44 meeting in mid-June and begin working toward a proposal for the 2012 annual
45 conference sessions.

46
47 During the next year the Nebraska-Kansas Episcopal Transition Team will refine the
48 proposal for the 2012 annual conference that may include permission to move forward
49 with the creation of implementation plans for the new conference. Once the results of the
50 three votes are known, the transition team will move forward with guiding the work of
51 creating an implementation plan and timeline.

52 With a favorable vote, the Nebraska-Kansas Area Episcopal Transition Team will craft a
53 resolution for the 2012 South Central Jurisdictional Conference requesting permission to

1 form a new annual conference. By Discipline, Annual Conference boundaries are set by
2 the Jurisdictional Conference. The Jurisdictional Conference must approve redrawing
3 conference boundaries to create a new annual conference of Kansas and Nebraska.
4

5 Q2. Will all three conferences need to approve the move to one annual conference?
6

A. Yes.

7 Q3. What happens if one or more votes no? How will that affect the relationships between the
8 conferences? Is there a plan "B" if the idea of one annual conference fails? What is it?

9 A. If one annual conference votes against moving to form a new annual conference, then
10 the three conferences would likely not ask the Jurisdictional Conference to re-set
11 conference boundaries in 2012 and the three conferences would continue to be separate
12 under the leadership of a single bishop.
13

14 The three annual conferences will share a bishop beginning in September 2012 no
15 matter the outcome of the vote on becoming a new annual conference. How a "no" vote
16 would affect the relationships between the annual conferences cannot be predicted.

17 Q4. What's the timeline for creating one annual conference?

18 A. A number of factors will contribute to the timeline for creating one annual conference.
19

20 The importance of our mission fields, transparency in decision-making and prayerful
21 discernment will also influence our timeline. At the 2011 Annual Conferences, Transition
22 Team members will report and there will be a time of conferencing. After that, the voting
23 members of each of the three conferences will participate in a "Five-Finger vote" to
24 further the conversation about the recommendation of one annual conference and God's
25 plan for our future. All results will be sealed and reported simultaneously to all three
26 annual conferences later in June.

27 At the 2012 annual conference sessions, the Transition Team will make additional
28 recommendations about shared ministry in the states of Nebraska and Kansas. If
29 Conference members of all three conferences approved one new annual conference in
30 2012, it also require ratification by the Jurisdictional Conference in July 2012.
31

32 Q5. If one conference is approved, what would need to happen to overturn the votes?

33 A. Each year the Annual Conference meeting of any Conference may reconsider the
34 decisions of a previous Annual Conference. However, once the Jurisdictional Conference
35 votes to approve the boundaries of an annual conference, it would take another vote of
36 the Jurisdictional Conference to change them again.
37

38 Q6. Would it be better to move toward one annual conference by merging the two Kansas
39 conferences first?

40 A. The Transition Team recommends the creation of one new Annual Conference with new
41 vision and values. To first merge the two Kansas conferences would take time, funding
42 and attention away from the vision of the new Annual Conference--with more people
43 becoming disciples of Jesus Christ, more diverse disciples and more generations of
44 disciples in more places and in more kinds of ministries in our world.
45

46 Q7. What venues would be large enough to house a combined annual conference?

47 A. This is one of the many technical questions to be addressed at a future date. All three
48 annual conferences have been examining potential locations for the existing conference
49 sessions and have discovered that the number of locations that can accommodate

1 groups of our size are limited and available in all three annual conferences. Limiting
2 factors include hotel accommodations, size of the venue and cost for use of the space.

3 Possible locations include Salina, Kan., Wichita, Kan., Topeka, Kan., Leawood, Kan.,
4 Kearney, Neb., Grand Island, Neb., LaVista, Neb., Lincoln, Neb., and Omaha, Neb.

5

6 Q8. Where did the name Great Plains come from?

7 A. The communications subcommittee of the transition team spent time in thoughtful
8 consideration and developed the Great Plains for the Great Plains theme and logo for the
9 work of the transition team. The name came from the geographic region in which Kansas
10 and Nebraska are located. A name for the new annual conference will be determined as
11 part of the process of implementation.

12

13 Q9. What lessons has the transition team learned from other Annual Conferences going through
14 similar changes?

15 A. The transition team has sought inspiration and reflection from the Susquehanna,
16 Indiana, and Upper New York annual conferences. Lessons include the kinds of technical
17 teams that were created and assigned to work on questions of structure, property
18 distribution and pension and health benefits; the process followed for making
19 recommendations and bringing recommendations to the affected annual conferences for
20 votes, communication strategies, and the results and outcomes the conferences are
21 experiencing.

22 Q10. Why do we have to become one annual conference to share resources across conference
23 lines?

24 A. Resources are already shared across Conference lines. Being one new Annual
25 Conference will put a greater emphasis on utilizing our resources in our areas of priority
26 rather than maintaining three structures.

27 Q11. How do we maintain identity in a large conference?

28 A. Identity begins with a shared vision, purpose and values which the Transition Team is
29 proposing at this Annual Conference. It is through our faithful discipleship in our mission
30 fields that we will come to know others.

31

32 The leaders of our churches and conference will intentionally utilize prayer strategies for
33 our future. There will be intentional events as the Clergy Gathering in January, 2012. A
34 variety of communications will be offered to share information and insights. District
35 Superintendents will continue their significant work with local churches and pastors
36 particularly as it applies to the appointive process.

37 Q12. How will becoming one annual conference enhance leadership development? It seems that
38 the number of leaders needed will be reduced, making fewer opportunities for leaders to serve.

39 A. One Annual Conference will change the number of persons who are serving on the
40 Conference level. However, one conference will reduce neither the number of leaders
41 needed nor the opportunity to lead. Instead, it is a change that allows our leaders to
42 serve in more effective and fruitful ways.

43

44

45

46

1 **Episcopal Office Questions:**
2

3 Q13. Who will be our new bishop?

- 4 A. The assignment of bishops is done by the Jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy.
5 This group meets to assign episcopal leaders every four years during the Jurisdictional
6 Conference once all the new bishops are elected. Who will serve the new episcopal area
7 as bishop will be determined by this committee in July 2012.
8

9 In 2012, the South Central Jurisdiction will have four bishops retiring from Arkansas,
10 Louisiana, Nebraska and Northwest Texas-New Mexico. With the reduction in episcopal
11 areas, only three bishops will be elected at the jurisdictional conference.
12

13 Q14. What will be the role of the bishop?

- 14 A. Leadership, leadership, leadership. Leadership is now and will continue to be a primary
15 focus of bishops all across the denomination. In a new, one-conference configuration, it is
16 a goal to free the bishop of excessive administrative tasks in order to focus on lay and
17 clergy leadership. The development of strong, capable leaders is imperative to the health
18 and vitality of our local churches—large and small—in order to offer our congregations
19 the best hope for developing powerful risk-taking mission and justice ministries. The
20 bishop will remain the chief administrator of the episcopal area, and by moving to a single
21 new conference, we enable the bishop to focus on one Cabinet, one structure, one set of
22 priorities, etc.
23

24 Q15. How will streamlining by reducing bishops by five in the United States serve to meet more
25 overseas needs for leadership?

- 26 A. Support for the bishops of the United Methodist Church is provided through the Episcopal
27 Fund, an apportionment from the General Church. By reducing the number of episcopal
28 areas in the United States, money in the Episcopal Fund will be freed up to support the
29 creation of new episcopal areas in places where the church is growing in the Central
30 Conferences.
31

32 The Committee on Central Conferences has recommended the creation of one new
33 episcopal area in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2012. The current budget
34 proposal from the General Council on Finance and Administration does not include the
35 creation of this episcopal area.

36 Q16. How will a bishop be able to establish and maintain relationships with his or her clergy over
37 such a large area?

- 38 A. The bishop of the new area will face this challenge whether there are three annual
39 conferences or one new annual conference. How the bishop will go about establishing
40 new relationships will be up to the bishop assigned to the Nebraska-Kansas Episcopal
41 Area in 2012.

42 Q17. Are there other episcopal areas which cross state boundaries?

- 43 A. Yes. There are several other episcopal areas that cross state boundaries. Alabama-West
44 Florida (southern portion of Alabama and Florida panhandle), California-Nevada
45 (northern California and northern two-thirds of Nevada), California-Pacific (southern
46 California and Hawaii), Dakotas (North and South Dakota), Desert Southwest (small
47 piece of California, Arizona and southern Nevada), New England (Maine, Vermont, New
48 Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island), New Mexico and Northwest
49 Texas, Oregon-Idaho, Pacific Northwest (Washington and northern Idaho), Peninsula-
50 Delaware (Maryland and Delaware), Rio Grande (New Mexico and Texas), Oklahoma
51 Indian Missionary (Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma), Rocky Mountain (Colorado, Utah

1 and Wyoming), and Yellowstone (Wyoming, Montana and a small piece of Idaho). These
2 episcopal areas all cross state lines, and many include a larger geographic area than that
3 of Nebraska and Kansas.

4 Q18. Have the other episcopal areas in the jurisdiction paid for the transition?

5 A. The unaffected episcopal areas in the South Central Jurisdiction pledged \$10,000 each
6 toward the work of transition for the Nebraska and Kansas areas. Those funds were paid
7 to the three conference offices and expenses for the team and its work are being paid
8 from these funds.

9 Q19. Will there need to be more staff in the bishop's office to help the bishop administer such a
10 large area?

11 A. Certainly the work of the bishop's office will be affected by increasing the number of
12 churches and clergy the bishop oversees. Exactly what those changes might be are not
13 known at this time. Recommendations regarding staffing levels and structure will be
14 made by technical teams that will be appointed to work on these issues.

15 **Clergy Questions:**

16
17 Q20. How will clergy appointments and itinerancy be determined in a one new conference
18 configuration? There is particular concern shared by young clergy regarding how affinities will be
19 addressed.

20 A. Nebraska, Kansas East and Kansas West already practice a modified itinerancy system.
21 Future appointments will be made in a similar way as they have been. Much attention is
22 already paid to affinities, working spouses and other special needs of our clergy. At the
23 same time, the expanded conference offers more opportunity for different kinds of
24 ministries in more places.
25

26 Q21. How will pensions be harmonized?

27 A. Questions related to pensions require comprehensive discussions of our shared values
28 and goals for our pension plans as well as thorough research of all of the technical
29 issues. Our three Conferences provide pensions for our retired pastors in cooperation
30 with the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. There are currently discussions
31 underway in preparation for the 2012 General Conference about the best way to provide
32 benefits in the 21st century United Methodist Church that will affect our future plans.
33

34 A Joint Distributing Committee has been formed to study the compensation, health
35 insurance and pension practices of each conference. In addition to the conference
36 benefits officers for Nebraska, Kansas East and Kansas West, three people from each
37 conference serve on this committee.
38
39

40 Q22. How will clergy supervision occur?

41 A. Currently clergy supervision is achieved through district superintendents consulting and
42 working with a congregation's Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Wholesale revisions of
43 that process are not anticipated in a one conference configuration; however there are
44 sure to be nuances that develop as a byproduct of change. Developing leaders will
45 continue to be a primary focus.
46

47 Q23. How will credentialing be done? How will the Board of Ordained Ministry conduct business?

48 A. The Board of Ordained Ministry will continue to seek exceptional clergy leadership to lead
49 local churches and extension ministries into better effectiveness in the mission field. The
50 composition of the board, meeting times, meeting places, and procedures will be
51 determined by the conference, out of proposals submitted by a technical team of people
52 from the three conferences. This team has not yet been formed.

1
2 A new Area Registrar position to facilitate the work of the three Boards of Ordained
3 Ministry has been created and will begin working July 1. A full-time secretary also will be
4 hired to assist the Registrar with paperwork to facilitate the candidacy process.
5

6 Q24. How will minimum salaries be affected?
7 A. This is also a technical question that will be considered at the appropriate time. Minimum
8 salaries and benefits is one of the principles of the iterancy of the United Methodist
9 Church that will continue.

10 Q25. How will expectations be changed for clergy?
11 A. The clergy who are serving as local church pastors will continue to be involved as
12 spiritual leaders who help make disciples for the transformation of the world. There is
13 and will be more emphasis on developing core competencies and characteristics
14 throughout the clergy's life of service.

15 Q26. Does Nebraska have deacons? If so, how many?
16 A. There is one deacon in full connection, one diaconal minister and three retired deacons.

17 Q27. How will the deployment of clergy be better served by being one annual conference?
18 A. In smaller conferences, there is less opportunity for specialized gifts to be utilized where
19 they are needed or for unique affinity needs in local churches and communities to be met.
20 A larger conference with more churches and more pastors and lay leaders offers
21 opportunities for persons to deployed where their gifts and graces will be more helpful.

22 Q28. As dreams grow larger, what is the potential for lack of training and connection?
23 A. In our world of rapid communication, training and connection can also be done through a
24 variety of media. The need for community and spiritual nurture will continue to be a
25 priority as we use all of the post-modern methods of communicating Christ's love.

26
27 **Local Church Questions:**
28

29 Q29. Churches have a diversity of needs (rural and urban). How would this be handled from one
30 annual conference office?

31 A. There are no specific plans for the number of offices in the new conference. Annual
32 Conference Offices already offer resources and serve as referral agents. This will
33 continue.

34 Q30. How do we maintain identity in a large conference?
35 A. Identity begins with a shared vision, purpose and values which the Transition Team is
36 proposing at this Annual Conference. It is through our faithful discipleship in our mission
37 fields that we will come to know others.

38
39 The leaders of our churches and conference will intentionally utilize prayer strategies for
40 our future. There will be intentional events as the Clergy Gathering in January, 2012. A
41 variety of communications will be offered to share information and insights. District
42 Superintendents will continue their significant work with local churches and pastors
43 particularly as it applies to the appointive process.
44
45

1 Q31. How will becoming one annual conference directly affect the decline in membership and
2 worship attendance?

3 A. It is time for our conferences to be spending less time on survival and more time on
4 discipleship making. Becoming one conference will focus our joint resources on disciple
5 making. We will take the strongest programs and utilize their learnings to help other
6 mission fields.

7 Q32. How will being one annual conference put more focus on the local church?

8 A. The leaders of the new annual conference will spend more of their time focusing on more
9 disciples, more diverse disciples, more generations of disciples in more places in our
10 world rather than working to sustain a system that is not making disciples.

11 Q33. How will the local church benefit by becoming one annual conference?

12 A. The local church will benefit by having unified leaders who want to help them make
13 disciples in their specific mission field. While there are no promised budget reductions,
14 resources can be used more efficiently.
15

16 Q34. What steps will be taken to ensure the small-membership, particularly rural, local churches
17 are connected, resourced and included?

18 A. The heart of the United Methodist Church in Kansas and Nebraska are the small
19 membership churches. Through Districts and Clusters, there will continue to
20 connectional programming and mission for all churches.

21 Q35. What will be the role of the small, rural church in a conference where technology will take a
22 more prominent role?

23 A. In some ways we have allowed our small churches to become technology “have nots” in
24 an era when technology can enable small rural places to be “haves.” In a single
25 conference configuration, the availability of technology in our small rural places will
26 become a priority. At the appropriate time, a committee will be named to develop a
27 strategy that will help even the smallest of congregations be technically connected to the
28 wider church which in turn enhances our ability to be spiritually connected.
29

30 Becoming one annual conference gives us freedom to better leverage our
31 communications and technological assets to create a larger presence in the mission field
32 and to better resource the communication and technology needs of local churches.
33

34 Already new technologies are being used in both Kansas and Nebraska to bring training
35 events to congregations over the Internet, eliminating the need for travel to distant
36 locations.
37

38 Q36. Will we lose connectional ties to existing communities? How will we connect with new
39 communities?

40 A. As it is currently in all of our conferences, our connections and use of resources will be
41 determined by our missional purpose.
42

43 Q37. How will we bridge the distance gaps?

44 A. This is a genuine concern that is being wrestled with even within our current
45 configuration. Even when the leadership of the new conference will be making those
46 determinations, we know now that technology will be a key player in our connection.
47 Currently, web meeting applications similar to Skype are being used for Cabinet meetings
48 and to deliver some training events. The two Kansas conferences have installed video
49 conferencing equipment in three locations across the state and Nebraska has access to

1 an existing state-wide video conferencing system for conducting meeting experiences
2 with a higher quality than available over the web.

3
4 Even though we know the use of technology is not the exclusive way in which we will
5 bridge the distance gaps, is good to know that some of the things we have been
6 experimenting with will be useful in a larger geographical area.
7

8 Q38. How will we keep viable ministries in small communities?

- 9 A. The Great Plains geographic area is mostly composed of small communities. One of the
10 really exciting prospects that we have discovered is that by creating a new annual
11 conference, we are tripling the amount of resources, particularly for small communities
12 and their churches. We have envisioned workshops and cooperative ministries between
13 churches that have great affinity yet are separated by great distances. Through the use of
14 new technologies and efforts, we will find that we can help each other be more effective
15 in ministry in our local settings. Ministries in small communities will have the opportunity
16 not just to be viable, but to thrive under this new missional opportunity.
17

18 Q39. How will we extend ministry to the new generations while still ministering to the needs of the
19 existing church members?

- 20 A. This is a question that we wrestle with today. There are churches of all sizes in the Great
21 Plains geographical area that have thrived striking this balance. These churches will
22 become resources for the churches that are still struggling to find the way to be excellent
23 to both existing members and those that ought to be reached.
24

25 Q40. What will change about the number of lay representatives to Annual Conference if we
26 become one Annual Conference?

- 27 A. The Book of Discipline 2008 paragraph 32 outlines the lay membership of the annual
28 conference, which includes professing lay members elected by each charge. Each
29 charge served by more than one clergyperson may elect as many lay members as there
30 are clergy members. Lay membership also includes diaconal ministers, active
31 deaconesses, home missionaries under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the
32 annual conference, conference United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women
33 presidents, conference and district lay leaders, conference directors of Lay Speaking
34 Ministries, the president of the conference young adult organization, the president of the
35 conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student
36 organization and one young person between the ages of 12 and 17 and one young
37 person between the ages of 18 and 30 from each district.
38

39 If there are fewer lay members than clergy members once paragraph 32 has been
40 followed, then the annual conference can, by its own formula, provide for the election of
41 additional lay members to equalize the lay and clergy membership of the annual
42 conference. If it is determined that there is an inequality between the lay and clergy
43 membership of the new annual conference, a formula will be determined to allow for
44 election of additional laity to equalize the membership.
45
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52

1 **Annual Conference/District Questions:**

2
3 Q41. Will access to the bishop and district superintendents be more restricted?

- 4 A. Certainly with more churches to visit, pre-planning will be key in getting the bishop to
5 attend local church events across the new area. At this time, there are 17 district
6 superintendents serving the 17 districts of the Nebraska, Kansas East and Kansas West
7 annual conferences and their churches and clergy.

8
9 Q42. How will the role of District Superintendent change?

- 10 A. There is no current discussion about the role of the District Superintendents. District
11 Superintendents are vital to the connectional and appointive issues in our local churches.
12 There is ongoing denominational discussion about the role of District Superintendents
13 and Districts.

14
15 Q43. How will annual conference be conducted?

- 16 A. This is another technical question that will be addressed once a single new conference
17 configuration is agreed upon. We do know that the use of technology and regional
18 approaches to being connectional will be a big part of becoming one new area.

19
20 Q44. How many districts will we have?

- 21 A. Among the ongoing vital discussions in the United Methodist Church is the role of
22 Districts and District Superintendents. As the new episcopal area is developed, our
23 shared mission field and needs will be included in the discussion.

24
25 In the current procedures of the United Methodist Church, the Annual Conference
26 decides the number of districts and the resident bishop determines the boundaries in
27 consultation with churches and leaders.

28
29 Q45. What will happen to existing conference staff? Will staff be let go or forced to move?

- 30 A. Technical teams will make recommendations about the staffing levels needed to support
31 a new conference structure and the ministries necessary to send passionate, effective
32 and accountable spiritual leaders into the mission field to make more disciples of Jesus
33 Christ in more places for the transformation of the world. Technical teams also will make
34 recommendations on location of offices.

35 Q46. What will we lose by being one? How will we grieve the sense of loss we will face by
36 becoming one annual conference?

- 37 A. As we move forward with the processes of becoming one episcopal area and possibly
38 one new conference, it will be important for us to dialogue often. Churches and leaders
39 may experience loss of identity or control as they experience ministry in the new
40 conference. While how we do that is a technical matter, the reality is that we will use
41 various means of communication to achieve openness and transparency.

42
43 Congregations will be encouraged to meet together, talk, worship and pray. Strategies
44 such as creating partnerships between congregations across previous conference lines is
45 but one idea that will help create new community out of the former conference areas.

46
47 Q47. Will we lose mission projects?

- 48 A. Rather than thinking of the potential for losing mission projects, the Transition Team has
49 focused on how we can do more effective mission projects. All three conferences already
50 have intentional work going on to evaluate, to streamline and to press for greater
51 accountability across all ministry areas. We understand that regardless of the episcopal
52 and conference configuration, our current economic times and demographics of our
53 collective areas dictate that we do mission and ministry in new and different ways.

1 Q48. How will becoming one conference affect clergy and staff insurance?

- 2 A. Health insurance plans for clergy and lay staff are selected by the conference boards of
3 pension. Both Nebraska and Kansas West currently participate in HealthFlex, the
4 denomination's health care plan administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois.
5 Kansas East contracts with Humana for health insurance. The conference boards
6 regularly put the conference's health insurance out for bid to find the best combination of
7 benefits versus cost for participants and local congregations who foot the bill for clergy
8 health insurance.
9

10 Regardless of how our Episcopal area is organized, there are anticipated changes in
11 health insurance for clergy.

12
13 The Joint Distribution Technical Team will report the comparative technical facts to each
14 Annual Conference but make no recommendations.
15

16 Q49. How will the leaders of the new Annual Conference be intentional about relationship—
17 building across existing conference lines?

- 18 A. Relationships are important for building trust and connection. Conference leaders will
19 continue to look for opportunities to plan events that bring people from the three
20 conferences together to learn and fellowship. In 2012, the three conferences will have a
21 joint clergy orders meeting in Topeka where the clergy will have an opportunity to come
22 together for learning and fellowship.

23 Q50. How will differences in process be ironed out, specifically for Board of Ordained Ministry,
24 sexual ethics, etc.?

- 25 A. Technical Teams will be formed with representatives of the committees responsible for
26 these ministries in each of the three annual conferences to review what is being done in
27 each now and how those policies and procedures may be harmonized for a new annual
28 conference.

29 Q51. What will happen to the Nebraska and Kansas United Methodist Foundations?

- 30 A. This concern has fiscal and legal ramifications that must be fully explored at the
31 appropriate time. Conversations have already started between the foundations' boards of
32 directors about what becoming a single episcopal area will mean for the foundations.
33

34 Q52. What will happen to conference property?

- 35 A. The bishops, with the assistance of the Transition Team members, have already named
36 members to an Asset Allocation Team that is beginning to develop a comprehensive list
37 of conference properties and holdings. In naming members to this team, attention has
38 been given to knowledge and expertise. This group will report directly to the Transition
39 Team when it meets in April.
40

41 Q53. How do the conference's apportionment formulas compare? How will apportionments
42 change?

- 43 A. A technical team has been established that is researching the apportionment formulas of
44 the three conferences. This team will provide a preliminary report prior to the annual
45 conference sessions in May and June.

46 Q54. What is the financial status of the three conferences?

- 47 A. A technical team has been established that is researching the assets of each of the
48 annual conferences. This team will provide a preliminary report prior to the annual
49 conference sessions in May and June.
50

1 Q55. How do we intentionally foster new relationships?

- 2 A. This will be a process that will require personal as well as programmatic effort.
3 Regardless of the final configuration of the new episcopal area, we will be co-workers in
4 the ministry of Christ and His Church in the Great Plains geographic area. Within us there
5 needs to be a desire to love and serve our new found neighbors. That said, we will begin
6 to see how different committees and organizations will begin creating spaces where we
7 will foster these new relationships. One of these events will be next year, in the form of a
8 called meeting of the orders, where clergy from the three conferences will gather for
9 worship, learning, and fellowship.

10
11 Q56. What financial advantages are there for moving to one annual conference?

- 12 A. The financial impact of moving to one annual conference will depend upon a number of
13 factors including number of offices, number of staff members, travel expenses, need for
14 technology infrastructure improvements, pension and health benefits and many others.
15 These issues will be thoroughly reviewed and disclosed once the variables have been
16 worked out.

17 Q57. How can committees be effective over such great distances?

- 18 A. There are other annual conferences that have larger geographic areas than those across
19 Kansas and Nebraska. We will look to them to learn how their committees utilize face-to-
20 face and technology to conduct meetings over great distances.

21 Q58. Will there be regional offices? Where will they be? Where will the bishop's office be? How
22 will these questions be determined?

- 23 A. Once a decision has been made regarding the number of annual conferences, then
24 technical work will begin on determining the structure and configuration of offices. The
25 conferences currently own office buildings in Lincoln, Neb., Topeka, Kan., and Wichita,
26 Kan., and there are episcopal offices in Lincoln and Wichita. A technical team will work
27 on this and make recommendations to the annual conferences for action.

28 Q59. What's the impact for United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, youth ministries and
29 others done on a conference-wide basis?

- 30 A. If the decision to move to one annual conference is favorable, these ministry areas will be
31 invited to begin working on imagining a new ministry in the new annual conference
32 through the creation of technical teams to work on plans for creative and new ways of
33 carrying out their missions.

34 Q60. How will becoming one annual conference enhance leadership development? It seems that
35 the number of leaders needed will be reduced, making fewer opportunities for leaders to serve.

- 36 A. One Annual Conference will change the number of persons who are serving on the
37 Conference level. So another way to consider the change is that others will be able to
38 focus on their local churches and clusters instead of also serving on the Conference
39 level. We live in a time when persons are wanting to be more locally involved while being
40 connected to the world, and this change can help more persons to live their discipleship.

41 Q61. Will there be a freeze on property disposal during the intervening time?

- 42 A. Now is not the time to "wait and see" what will happen. Nebraska, Kansas East and
43 Kansas West should continue to do the best job they can in making disciples of Jesus
44 Christ for the transformation of the world even as great change looms on the horizon.

45 Q62. What's the impact for existing area-wide ministries?

- 46 A. Bishops Jones and Sherer-Simpson have invited area ministries to begin learning more
47 about one another and getting to know one another during this period of transition. While

1 these ministries have been discouraged from making decisions about how things will be
2 structured or carried out in the new area, leaders are being given the opportunity to begin
3 making relationships that will facilitate working together in the future.

4 Q63. How will the role of the Director of Connectional Ministries change?

5 A. As the role of the District Superintendent has changed, so has the role of the Director of
6 Connectional Ministries. Through a dialogue with the Bishop and the Personnel
7 Committee, the role will be reviewed for the new Episcopal area as needed.

8 **General/Jurisdictional Conference Representation:**

9

10 Q64. What about representation within the jurisdiction?

11 A. Representation within the South Central Jurisdiction is determined by *The Book of*
12 *Discipline* (BOD) paragraph 514, "The number of delegates to which an annual
13 conference is entitled shall be twice the number of its General Conference delegates."
14 The number of delegates to the General Conference is determined by the BOD
15 paragraph 502. If we become one annual conference, the number of members to the
16 episcopacy committee will be affected. According to the BOD paragraph 524 each annual
17 conference will have one lay delegate and one clergy delegate. Currently, between the
18 three conferences we have three lay delegates and three clergy delegates.



One New Annual Conference The future's in your hands!

What is a "five-finger vote?"

What our church needs is to discern together the will and direction of God and extend the opportunity for holy dialogue. The five-finger vote is a way for us to understand where we are in the collective acceptance of an idea or process.

This method has been a useful tool of discernment and holy conferencing for the Transition Team. May you also find it useful and fun.

Why a five-finger vote?

The Transition Team wants to gauge your support for creating a single, new conference encompassing the states of Nebraska and Kansas. The Team aims to be both transparent and inclusive of your feelings and wisdom. Please participate in this vote, making any corresponding notes on the reverse side, that together, we might hear God more faithfully.

How to participate in the five-finger vote?

This is a gauge, a meter, not an ultimate decision-making device. Please check the corresponding box of the hand/explanation that most fits with your current level of support for forming a single, new conference. Simply put, do you believe God is leading Nebraska and Kansas in this journey and that God can best use us as one conference?

Please check the box below of the hand that most closely represents your position on becoming one new conference. Pages and tellers will pick up your vote. All votes will be stored until all three annual conference sessions are complete. Votes will be aggregated with an announcement on the results available in mid-to-late June. There is a comment section on the back of this sheet. Your comments are equally important to the process.



"I am in full support of becoming one conference."



"I am supportive of becoming one conference, however I have a few questions."



"I am supportive of becoming one conference, but I have many questions."



"I am opposed to becoming one conference, but am not willing to halt the process."



"I am opposed to becoming one conference as it is currently presented."

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