

GCE 09 CHANGE TO BASIS OF UNION: IV. REGIONAL COUNCILS; SECTION 6.2

Origin: The Executive of the 44th General Council

1. What is the issue?

Before the restructuring in 2019, Presbyteries had the ability to appoint up to 10 lay members at large. The Conferences were also able to increase their membership with representatives of lay organizations the Conference recognized. This ability was lost during the transition to regional council structure.

The ability of a regional council to elect at-large members is important to reflect the diversity within the regional council and have the benefit of these members' input and wisdom.

2. Why is the Issue Important?

At the annual meeting of the 44th General Council held October 21, 2023, the General Council approved Section 5 of *GCE 08 Ministry Leadership to Meet the Need of the Church in the 2020s, Part B Designated Lay Ministry*:

5. *For People who Retired as Designated Lay Ministers*
 - a. strongly encourage regional councils to review their practices under C.2.1 b) and I.2.4.1 b) of *The Manual* to consider, in light of the leadership roles and acquired experience of many lay members who retired as designated lay minister, granting both licences to administer the sacraments, and membership in the regional council to lay members who retired as designated lay ministers and are resident within the regional council; and
 - b. encourage regional councils to review their policies on voluntary associate ministry and eligibility to practice other functions of ministry as may apply to lay members who have retired as designated lay ministers.

In further consultation with the Manual Committee, it was recognized that section (b) and the ability to grant sacramental licence was clearly under the authority of the regional council, but with respect to granting membership, there needed to be a change to the Basis of Union, Section IV, 6.2, to allow regional councils the authority to grant membership to retired Designated Lay Ministers.

The Manual Committee is also aware that Manual C.1.2b is *ultra vires* to the Basis of Union, and that the Basis of Union takes precedence.

3. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The 44th General Council (2022) at its 2024 Annual Meeting authorizes a category 2 remit to make the following changes to Section 6 of the Basis of Union:

6.2.3 lay members elected by the Community of Faith. ~~respecting the balance of lay and ministry personnel where possible.~~

6.2.4 additional lay members elected by the Regional Council ~~to reflect diversity~~; the total number not to exceed 10 percent of the number of lay members elected under section 6.2.3.

4. What will be the impact?

The recommendation will enable regional councils to grant membership to retired DLMS. It would also regularize efforts already made (using C.1.2b) to broaden regional council membership to reflect the equity aspirations of the church as well as authorizing and encouraging further efforts in this regard.

5. How does the proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?

The change, if the General Council is willing to consider it, will enable regional councils to effectively broaden the diversity of its council to add any necessary balances and missing voices.

6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

This is a follow up to GS74 (GCE November 17-18, 2023).