

PETITION TO THE 2016 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

TITLE: THE FUTURE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:

- 1 Therefore, be it resolved that we the people of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference consider
- 2 with great weight the historical parameters used in the 1968 uniting conference while visioning for
- 3 our future and offering recommendations to the Western Jurisdiction Conference concerning
- 4 conference boundaries and mergers.

PETITION DETAILS

This Petition is

- A Legislative Petition (Binding on the Annual Conference)
 A Resolution (Not Binding)

Effective Date: July 1, 2016

Termination Date: Not Applicable

Does this Petition modify the Annual Conference Standing Rules and Operational Procedures (SROP)?

- Yes
 No

If "Yes," please complete the information below.

- This petition will modify Paragraph x.x.x
 This petition will create a new Paragraph x.x.x

Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review:

NOTE: All paragraph numberings within the SROP and the final designation of the Conference Agency responsible for implementation and termination review are subject to review by the Rules Committee.

ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION (individual, church, or organization):

Name Jeffrey R. Babb
Address 3969 W. Grambling Dr.
City, State, Zip Denver, CO 80236
Email babbjk@msn.com
Phone 303-935-1802

PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

Name Jeffrey R. Babb
Address 3969 W. Grambling Dr.
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Email babbjk@msn.com
Phone 303-935-1802
Phone @ Conference 303-815-9268

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Will there be any identifiable financial impact to the Conference?

Yes
 No

If "Yes," please fill in the information below.

To Be Completed by the Originator of the Petition

Cost: \$
Period
 One Time
 One Year
 Multiple Years

To Be Completed by Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA)

Review by CFA mm/dd/yyyy

Included in proposed 2016 budget

Yes
 No

Amount if included \$

May be considered for budgets in future years

Yes
 No

Projected Amount \$

Recommendation by CFA concerning funding

Reason for recommendation

RATIONALE (Not debatable):

1 At the Annual Conference in 1968, with the merger of what had been five separate denominations now combined
 2 into one, it was then noted that the geography had become extensive (Utah, Colorado and Wyoming) and that division
 3 would be needed. Wyoming was then split into two parts, half going to the Yellowstone Conference and half with the
 4 Rocky Mountain Conference.

5 The wisdom of that Conference has proven true in these past 48 years. The geography, roads and distances have
 6 not changed. The cost of transportation and time needed to travel to events and meetings is just manageable *with the*
 7 *present boundaries*. If we send a mixed message of commitment for new geographic boundaries to the
 8 Jurisdictional gathering, it will imply that we are receptive to *a likely* ~~an~~ unmanageable future. With any merger we
 9 would also lose our name, Rocky Mountain Conference, which was first used at the Methodist Episcopal Church
 10 organizational meeting in Denver CO. July 10, 1863. (Templin, J. Alton; Breck, Allen D.; Rist, Martin (Eds). 1997.
 11 *The Methodist, Evangelical, and United Brethren Churches in the Rockies, 1850-1976*. The Rocky Mountain
 12 Conference of the United Church, pp. 7-9.)

13 With the limited resources of volunteer's time and financial means today, the focus of the vision for the future
 14 sustainability of the Rocky Mountain Conference lies within the parameters of those limited historical boundaries.

15 Beyond these boundaries, as provided in the 1968 merger, issues of following may become critical:

Clergy Itineration

16 A change in Conference boundaries would change the area of clergy itineration from a three State area
 17 to a five State area. This would significantly impact the potential tensions on clergy families.

Clergy compensation and pensions

18 There are differences between annual conferences. Reconciling systems would be difficult and costly.
 19 Where would the resources come from for equal minimum pay for all pastors in all conferences areas
 20 after an expansion?
 21
 22

Less participation at Annual Conference

23 Due to the significant travel time involved and the increase in personal financial costs and potential
 24 "away-from-work" employment pressures, a new vast geography will likely result in less laity and
 25 clergy participation in conference matters and leadership, less participation on boards and agencies, less
 26 face-to face-meetings.
 27

Distraction from Ministries

28 The building of Vital Congregations and Congregational Development will be minimized as resources
 29 will be pulled away for years to harmonize differing geographic and historic areas.
 30

Long-term Sustainability

31 Geographic size matters and will result in less focus in individual conference long-term sustainability.
 32
 33

34 **Lessening of General Conference Voice Matters**

35 The “voice of the Western Jurisdiction” in leadership of the General Church will be lessened if we were
36 to lose one of our existing western annual conferences. The western jurisdiction will have less
37 representation and therefore less prophetic voice and leadership on General Boards and Agencies.

38 **Size matters**

39 The Yellowstone Conference currently includes the northern half of Wyoming, Montana and an edge of
40 Idaho. This geographic region is over 196,000 square miles and is larger than the State of California.
41 The Church’s experience in California is instructive however, because the California area is served by
42 two distinct United Methodist Church conferences. If we combined the massive areas of the
43 Yellowstone Conference with the Rocky Mountain Conference which includes the southern half of
44 Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah the resulting “mega-conference” would be so vast, complex, and
45 systemically unmanageable at so many levels that the identity of “Conference” would be diluted as to be
46 virtually meaningless.

47 **Insurance matters**

48 Managing insurance for church buildings and clergy health over a five-state area will be difficult; this is
49 an issue that plagues us today.

50 **Identity matters**

51 The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference has developed its identity over 48 years. That historical
52 identity gives us grounding as people of faith to withstand the significant cultural pressures on the
53 Church today. In today’s world, there is pressure from big banks to get bigger, from big insurance
54 companies to get bigger, from big business of all varieties to get bigger. The myth is that by getting
55 bigger somehow our problems will be solved and people will be served better. That myth is being
56 challenged today by many voices across the land who have been hurt or marginalized by this surge
57 toward “bigness.” The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference is proud of who we have been and who we
58 are now and the push to become bigger is not the solution for our future identity.

59