

Defining Levels of Decision Making

OCTOBER 2021

NEED TO MEET/OR PROBLEM TO SOLVE

When regions make decisions that affect other regions, a transparent process is needed to be developed to provide an acceptable authority for the decisions being made.

PROPOSAL

Although our ICOC family has emerged from a heritage of congregational autonomy, we now have churches that interact and cooperate with each other on a regional, multi-regional, and even a global platform. For this reason, we need to establish a process for decision-making that affects those beyond the local church. Once we get beyond the local church then our pattern for making difficult decisions is as follows:

- **STEP #1:** Empowerment of the Regional Families to make decisions. This is a key component to the 2.1 model embraced in the Panama vote of 2018. We seek to uphold this as a key element supported by all levels of our global leadership structure. The empowerment and trust of decision making at the regional family level is crucial to the current and future health and growth of that geographic area and our overall global unity. With this empowerment also comes the responsibility to grow in the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to manage this responsibility.
- **STEP #2:** Decisions at the Regional Family level, if significant enough, will be brought before multiregional Regional Family Chairs for questioning and ratification. Not all decisions made at the regional family level will need to be presented for consideration at a multi-regional level, but some will. These types of decisions should be brought to the multi-regional RFCs group. Ideally these types of decisions should be presented and deliberated before becoming final. In this process, it would be the role of the multi-regional RFCs to question, advise and ultimately ratify a decision with multi-regional implications.
- **STEP #3:** Decisions ratified multi-regionally, if necessary, may be brought before a to-be-established group of evangelists, elders, and teachers for global consideration. Not

all regional decisions ratified by multi-regional RFCs will be considered at this level. What this step provides is an awareness and an oversight that protects our global family and provides added transparency across the fellowship. Due to the relational nature of our global family, news of decisions in one area can travel quickly across all continents. We believe it is important to have a place of consideration for the global impact of multiregional decisions. The to-be-established group (TBEG) of evangelists, elders, and teachers may decide there are no global implications of a ratified multi-regional decision. In this case, the decision simply stands. In rare cases, however, a multi-regional decision may be questioned, investigated, or even “overturned” by a global consideration in infrequent circumstances. This is especially true with the question of a church being removed from our ICOC family and in particular from our church directory as listed on “Disciples Today.” These are very delicate decisions that have global impact and need to be handled carefully. When considering the potential removal of a church, it is important to redirect this burdensome decision from the regional or multi-regional leadership to our highest level of oversight.

(Note): The Elders Service Committee stands ready to provide shepherding should a party (persons or church) want to appeal a decision.

OLD PROCESS/or STRUCTURE

1. Individual Regions have had no clear process of adding or discipline that would unite them with other ICOC regions.

WHY THIS IS BETTER THAN THE OLD?

1. This process enables our family of churches to move forward rather than being stuck in long standing conflicts without any resolution in sight.