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# Discipline

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**2001–2005**

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Origin, Doctrine, Constitution,  
and Discipline of the Church  
of the United Brethren in Christ, USA

**Edited and published by authority  
of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA**

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# Introduction

The *Discipline* is the basic organizational document for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. It contains our fundamental rules of doctrine, our Constitution, our moral and social standards, and the by-laws which govern how we operate. The *Discipline* is published every four years after meetings of the United States National Conference.

The information falls into five categories.

## **1. Confession of Faith**

The Confession of Faith—a concise, seven-point statement on major doctrines—was adopted in 1815 and has never been changed. Altering the Confession of Faith would first require changing the Constitution, which forbids changing the Confession of Faith.

## **2. Constitution**

The Constitution was adopted in 1841 and cannot be amended without a referendum, in which a majority of the people who elect US National Conference delegates give their consent to the change. There have been only six amendments since 1841.

## **3. By-laws**

Everything from chapters 6-46 falls into this broad category. It includes our stands on moral and social issues, operational procedures for all church levels, boundaries, ministerial requirements, and much more. The information in these chapters can be changed by majority vote of the US National Conference. Numerous changes are made at each session.

## **4. Information**

This introduction, the Origin and History chapters, and the Appendices fall into this category. They are considered information items, and can be changed as needed by the *Discipline* editing committee.

## INTRODUCTION

### **5. International Governing Documents**

The four chapters at the end of this book contain the governing documents for the worldwide United Brethren church, which consists of national conferences in seven countries (the United States being one). All national conferences must agree to follow the requirements in these documents. The first international document, the Confession of Faith, is identical to the Confession of Faith of 1815 (which is the one in the US documents).

The US National Conference has no authority to change anything in these documents. Only the quadrennial General Conference can make changes. Delegates from every national conference comprise the General Conference.

PART I

# Origin and History

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Chapter 1: A New Church Begins

Chapter 2: Our Worldwide Ministries

# Chapter 1

# A New Church Begins

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ began during the latter part of the 1700s. People had become discontent with the dead formalism of the established churches. Then a revival movement swept through Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. It emphasized the idea of a “new birth” and a deeper spiritual experience.

Out of this movement came the first denomination to begin in America, rather than be transplanted from Europe.

## **“We are Brethren!”**

Spearheading the movement were two evangelistic preachers of very different backgrounds.

One was Philip William Otterbein, a German Reformed minister who came from Germany in 1752. He discovered that formal religious practices were the common standard in the American colonies. His training and subsequent heart change prompted him to preach a message based on a deeper, life-transforming spiritual experience.

Martin Boehm was the other man. He came from the Mennonite faith, and had been selected by lot to be a preacher among his people. Initially, Boehm felt that he had no message to present, but that changed when he had a personal experience of God’s saving grace through faith. Then Boehm became a flaming evangelist, proclaiming the salvation experience wherever he had the chance.

Both Otterbein and Boehm did extensive evangelistic preaching in inter-denominational gatherings. However, they didn’t meet until Pentecost Sunday, 1767. A “great meeting” was held that day in the barn of Isaac Long near Lancaster, Pa. These great meetings were usually held over weekends in groves, barns, or wherever a large congregation could assemble. The congregation in Long’s barn included preachers and laypersons from various denominations, including the German Reformed, Lutheran, Moravian, Mennonite, Amish, and Dunker groups.

## A NEW CHURCH BEGINS

Martin Boehm preached that afternoon. Otterbein was so thrilled with Boehm's powerful message that this man of great stature threw his arms around the diminutive Boehm and exclaimed in German, "Wir sind bruder!", which in English translates as, "We are brethren!" They were different in many ways—in background, appearance, and some aspects of theology—but Otterbein realized they were alike in the areas which really counted.

From that enthusiastic greeting came the name "United Brethren."

### **A New Movement Takes Root**

These two leaders were joined by others in attempting to evangelize the German-speaking churches located in the Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland colonies. They cooperated in conducting great meetings where one or more of them would preach. Counseling and guidance were given to other preachers and laypersons who joined the inter-denominational venture. They selected itinerant preachers to conduct services where possible. However, in those early years, no thought was given to organizing a separate denomination.

There are records of organized small group meetings dating from 1774. Otterbein and other Reformed pastors were involved in meetings that sought to awaken the Reformed churches spiritually. Opposition forced Otterbein to proceed along other lines.

The church Otterbein pastored in Baltimore, Maryland, interested in outreach, became the mother church for a number of other churches. These operated under Otterbein's oversight. Preachers and exhorters already in the field looked to Otterbein for direction.

### **The Movement Gets Organized**

A formal conference was held in Baltimore in 1789 to gain a fuller knowledge of the field, to unify the work being done, and to plan for larger and more permanent results. Another conference was held in 1791 to advance the work started two years before.

There are no records of additional conferences until September 23, 1800, when a group of men gathered at the home of Peter Kemp near Frederick, Md. During that meeting, the ministers adopted the name "Church of the United Brethren in Christ," and elected Otterbein and Boehm as bishops. Both men were 74 years old when chosen. Boehm served until his death in 1812, and Otterbein served until his death in 1813.

Between 1800 and 1815, meetings were held annually. However, ministers in Ohio felt that, because of distance, it would be better to hold meetings less often. So beginning in 1815, a "General Conference" was held every two years, with regional "annual conferences" held every year. Since 1821, General Conferences have been held every four years.

That first General Conference in 1815 adopted a Confession of Faith, a concise statement of our key doctrinal beliefs. Not a word of the Confession of Faith has been changed since then, and it remains our central organizing document.

### **The Church Moves West**

Christian Newcomer was elected bishop in 1813. Under his leadership, the loose evangelistic fellowship became a more organized movement. And the church grew rapidly.

As the young nation expanded westward, so did the church, with hundreds of new churches starting. People who had been associated with United Brethren in the east migrated west and settled in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. In the mid-1820s, Newcomer spearheaded the establishment of churches in Canada, taking the church into another country for the first time.

In those early years, services were conducted almost exclusively in the German language. The congregations were led by “circuit-riding” preachers who might have responsibility for a dozen or more churches.

In 1821, the church inserted into the *Discipline* a historic stand against slavery, 40 years before the outbreak of the Civil War. This stand hindered the church’s growth in the South. The church also inherited from the German culture a strong opposition to secret societies.

A tentative constitution for the church was adopted by the General Conference of 1837, followed by the formal adoption of a constitution in 1841. This Constitution included the church’s stands against slavery and membership in secret societies.

### **Early Denominational Ministries**

Denominational departments and other ministries were organized as needs arose. The work of publishing a church paper gave birth to the United Brethren Publishing House, established in 1834 at Circleville, Ohio. It was moved to Dayton, Ohio, in 1853.

In 1853, the denominational mission board was organized under the name of the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society. That year, we launched our first missionary endeavor, sending a 30-wagon caravan of settlers—nearly 100 people—to Oregon, where the church took root and grew. So in less than 100 years, the movement which began in Long’s barn had spread from coast to coast.

Two years later, a mission was established in Sierra Leone, West Africa, extending the church to another continent. An outreach to Germany began in 1869.

The first educational institution was Otterbein University at Westerville, Ohio, established in 1847. The Union Biblical Seminary was founded in 1871. A number of other colleges sprang up.

In 1820, Rev. John George Pfrimmer organized the first known United Brethren Sunday school near Corydon, Ind. The Sunday School Association was organized in 1865, and the Church Erection Society was constituted in 1869 to begin new churches. The Women’s Missionary Association began in 1875 and soon became a major supporter of United Brethren missions.

### **Division**

By 1889, the United Brethren church had grown to over 200,000 members,

## A NEW CHURCH BEGINS

with six bishops and a full-blown denominational structure. But then controversy arose, and eventually a division occurred.

Several General Conferences discussed proposed changes regarding three major issues: allowing proportional representation at General Conference (rather than a set number of delegates for each conference, regardless of size), allowing lay representation at General Conference (instead of ministers only), and permitting church members to also be members of secret societies (previously forbidden). In 1889, the General Conference delegates voted to change the Constitution's requirements concerning these issues. However, they chose to ignore the proper procedures for doing so, as spelled out in the Constitution, which stated that no changes could be made in the Constitution without a majority vote of all United Brethren members.

A segment of the General Conference, led by Bishop Milton Wright (father of the Wright Brothers), left the General Conference meeting and resumed the session in another part of the city. They declared that the other delegates had withdrawn from the denomination by adopting a different Constitution.

This brought into existence two fellowships operating under the name "Church of the United Brethren in Christ."

### **Starting Over**

The majority group became known as the "Church of the United Brethren in Christ (New Constitution)," with headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. They were also known as the "liberal" United Brethren. This group united with the Evangelical Association in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged in 1968 to form the United Methodist Church.

Milton Wright's group, which adhered to the Confession of Faith of 1815 and the Constitution of 1841, became known as the "Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution)." They were also known as the "radical" United Brethren.

Siding with the Old Constitution group proved costly for many congregations. Except in Michigan and Oregon, courts awarded all United Brethren church property to the New Constitution group. Many congregations found themselves without a meeting place.

The same was true at the denominational level. There were no departments, no publishing house, no headquarters, no hierarchy of any kind. But under Bishop Wright's capable leadership, the church reorganized itself.

### **Church Headquarters and College**

When the dust had cleared following the division of 1889, only two of the many United Brethren colleges and seminaries were in the hands of the Old Constitution group: Hartsville College in southeastern Indiana, and Philomath College in Oregon. Hartsville closed in 1897, and fire destroyed its building a year later. Philomath remained open until the 1920s.

In 1897, the church headquarters moved from Dayton, Ohio, to Huntington,

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Ind., where a new college was opening its doors. Today, Huntington College (originally called Central College) is the US National Conference's only college. It includes a liberal arts undergraduate school and the Graduate School of Christian Ministries, which trains many United Brethren ministers.

The UB International Headquarters and publishing house were located in downtown Huntington until 1976, when the operations moved into a new building next to Huntington College. When an international structure was adopted in 2001, it became the headquarters of only the United States National Conference.

### **Christian Education**

The 1897 General Conference started the Young People's Christian Association to minister to youth. The name was changed to United Brethren Christian Endeavor in 1901. Sunday school and Christian Endeavor united in 1921 into the Department of Religious Education, which was later renamed the Department of Christian Education.

In 1977, the Christian Education and Publications departments merged into the Department of Church Ministries. This, in turn, merged in 1981 with the Stewardship department and the Archives to form the Department of Church Services. (The Archives relocated to Huntington College in 1988 and was placed under the Education Department.) Church Services worked in a number of areas, including family and children's ministries, youth, senior citizen's ministries, evangelism and discipleship, singles, Bible quizzing, and camping (though the camps are operated by annual conferences). It also ran a large curriculum and literature marketing operation, supplying Sunday school materials to churches both within and outside of the denomination. The profits helped underwrite the department.

### **Publications**

In 1885, Milton Wright began a weekly publication called *The Christian Conservator*, which served as a counter-balance for the more liberal views represented in the denomination's official publication, *The Religious Telescope*. After the division of 1889, the *Christian Conservator* became our official publication.

The name was changed to *The United Brethren* in 1954. At that time, it became a bi-weekly publication, and later became a monthly publication. The name was shortened to *UB* in 1992.

The magazine ceased publication at the end of 1993 and was replaced by a new denominational communications strategy based on newsletters distributed free of charge to all persons who attend United Brethren churches. The direct successor to the *UB* magazine is the *Connect* newsletter. Another newsletter, *Global Impact*, relates to missions work of the US National Conference.

Until 1982, the denomination published its own Sunday school literature, including materials for children through adults. However, the cost was too great, especially compared to the costs of commercial curriculum. Therefore, the printshop was closed and churches were encouraged to purchase, through the

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Department of Church Services, Sunday school literature from other companies.

A denominational website went online in 1997 at: [www.ub.org](http://www.ub.org).

### **Annual Conferences**

At the local level, churches have always been organized into regional “annual conferences,” so named because they hold an annual business meeting. Annual conferences choose their own superintendents and are responsible for ministerial licensing, the placement of pastors, insurance for ministers, camps, and other issues.

The US National Conference is the only national conference with multiple annual conferences. All national conferences beyond the United States hold one combined national meeting each year, with each church sending clergy and lay representatives. In the United States, each local church is entitled to representation only in the annual conference meetings. In the first and third year of each quadrennium, the annual conferences send representatives (clergy and lay) to the meeting of the US National Board, and the same happens on a larger scale for the quadrennial US National Conference meeting.

Currently, there are ten annual conferences in the United States:

1. Arizona (churches in Arizona).
2. California (churches in California).
3. Central (churches in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky).
4. Michindoh (churches in southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and northwest Ohio).
5. Mid-Atlantic (churches in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts).
6. Midwest (churches in Missouri, Kansas, and South Dakota).
7. Northwest (churches in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho).
8. Rock River (churches in Illinois and Iowa).
9. Sandusky (churches in western Pennsylvania and northern Ohio).
10. Southeast (churches in Florida and Alabama).

### **Toward an International Structure**

During the 1989-1993 quadrennium, Ontario Conference became aware of conflicts between our church structure and the laws of Canada. The issues included charitable status, board representation, and general issues of national sovereignty. Ontario Conference was forced to organize under its own Constitution, separate from the Constitution of 1841 which the rest of the denomination followed. This new entity adopted the name United Brethren Church in Canada. To enable them to continue as a part of the denomination, a new category was established: national conference.

The 1993 General Conference created a United States National Conference, though its duties were limited to matters pertaining to joint ministry agreements with the Canadian church. These agreements allowed Canada and the United States to work together in missions and other areas; they pertained specifically to the transfer of money from Canada to the United States.

## **A NEW CHURCH BEGINS**

The issues surrounding Canada pertained to all other countries, too, though the need for change was not urgent. Realizing this, in 1992 the church began working on developing a structure which would be truly international in nature, recognizing national sovereignty and giving equal representation to all UB people worldwide. Elements were adopted at the 1993 and 1997 General Conferences. Between 1997 and 2001, the leaders in Jamaica, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Nicaragua, and Hong Kong worked on developing their own governing documents (constitution and by-laws). At the same time, the General Board and the Executive Leadership Team worked on developing the documents to which every national conference would need to subscribe.

### **Worldwide Church Structure Since 2001**

The international documents, along with the governing documents developed by each constituent national conference, were all presented at the 2001 General Conference (see pages 172-183 for the final documents). There, the delegates from around the world formally organized the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International, and all seven national groups were, individually, voted into the membership of the international church and their governing documents approved as compatible with the doctrinal beliefs and core values of the worldwide body.

The international structure includes an international executive committee consisting of the highest leader from each national conference, plus the US Director of Global Ministries (who is a United States official, but elected by the international body). The executive committee will hold annual meetings. Every fourth year, a General Conference will be held, with delegates representing all national conferences worldwide.

Although the United States National Conference was organized in 1993, its meetings were limited to approving joint ministry agreements. All other United States business was done during sessions of the General Conference. That changed in 2001, when the first true United States National Conference was held in conjunction with the 2001 General Conference. Business related to the international body was handled by the General Conference, and business related only to the United States was handled solely by delegates from the US conferences. Of the four days of meetings, a little over two days involved only the US National Conference, with delegates from outside the US serving as observers.

### **United States Structure Since 2001**

In 2001, a United States task force appointed in 1997 recommended a new structure which would apply only to the United States church. Most of their proposals were adopted. A significant change was to replace the department structure with “leadership teams,” the members of which would be chosen by the bishop and other leaders, rather than elected (as had always been done before). The new structure features five leadership teams: Healthy Church (the counterpart of Church Services), Global Ministries (the counterpart of Missions), Education (basically the same as the previous Education department), Administration (responsible for the UB Headquarters, equipment, pension,

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insurance, salary, and other issues), and Women's Ministry.

The Women's Ministry team was the result of another major change. The Women's Missionary Fellowship, wanting to broaden its ministry well beyond missions, proposed disbanding the WMF *per se*, and replacing it with an entirely new organization focused on all aspects of United Brethren women's ministries. The proposal was adopted basically as presented. Women's Ministry includes six areas of focus: Missions (the WMF), Evangelism, Care/Support, Prayer, Women's Life, and Discipleship.

The 2001 US National Conference elected a bishop to serve as leader of just the United States church (previously, the bishop was considered the head of the worldwide United Brethren church). The US National Conference also elected a Director of Education. The task force plan was for the US National Conference to also elect a Director of Global Ministries. However, the delegates from outside the United States argued strongly for the right to help elect this United States official, contending that they wanted a voice in choosing the person who would be working most closely with them. So, the entire General Conference helped elect a Director of Global Ministries for the US National Conference.

### Other Matters

**Pension.** The Department of Ministerial Aid was chartered by the 1913 General Conference. A pension plan was established in 1966 and has been revised several times.

**Camps.** Four United Brethren conferences—Michigan, Michindoh, Central, and Pennsylvania—operate year-round camps. Several other conferences own campgrounds.

**Bishops.** In 1969, the number of bishops increased from two to three, with a separate Director of Missions overseeing foreign missions work. In 1973, the latter position was eliminated in favor of a fourth bishop, who was designated as the Overseas Bishop.

In 1989, General Conference reduced the number of bishops to three. However, there was strong interest across the church in having just one bishop. That was done in 1993, when Ray Seilhamer was elected as the first person to be the sole spiritual and administrative head of the United Brethren church. He was also the last bishop with authority over the worldwide United Brethren church.

**Lay Representation.** Over the years, efforts have been made to increase the involvement of laity in conference and denominational affairs. Laypersons once had no voice or vote at annual conferences or at General Conference; now they do. The 1993 General Conference took action to require that laypersons comprise at least 40% of the members on nearly all conference and denominational boards, committees, and commissions. The 1997 General Conference, thanks to a decision made in 1993, was the first at which half of the elected delegates were laypersons.



## Chapter 2

# Our Worldwide Ministries

The United Brethren church has organized national conferences in seven countries, all of which are entitled to representation at General Conference. They are, in the order in which they were founded: the United States, Canada, Sierra Leone, Jamaica, Honduras, Hong Kong, and Nicaragua. These seven national conferences, in 2001, established the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International. Each national conference chooses its own leaders and is totally in charge of its own work.

Several mission districts also operate under the supervision of an established national conference. The United States oversees work in India, Mexico, and Haiti. Hong Kong provides oversight of the work in Thailand and Myanmar. Honduras oversees new churches in El Salvador and Guatemala, and Nicaragua supervises the churches in Costa Rica. When mission districts qualify as national conferences and organize with their own governing documents and meet other requirements, they can be accepted as national conferences by the General Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International.

Prior to 2001, nearly all United Brethren work worldwide was considered to be under the authority of the General Conference, with all ministry outside of North America under the supervision of the Department of Missions. The headquarters in Huntington, Ind., was named the International Headquarters. But this was largely a colonial pattern, with the United States, in effect, supervising the rest of the world. This pattern ended in 2001 with the establishment of a truly international structure. Now, all national conferences are on the same administrative level. And whereas before the bishop was considered the superior of the leaders of other national conferences, the United States bishop is now the peer of—on the same level as—the leaders of all other

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national conferences. The US bishop and the US Global Ministries director have no administrative authority in other national conferences.

The international structure created an international executive committee which includes the highest leader of each national conference, along with the US Global Ministries director. They will meet annually. Each national conference will also choose delegates to the 2005 General Conference; the number of delegates is based on the worship attendance in the national conference.

### **Venturing Beyond North America**

United Brethren mission work began in 1855 with the establishment of mission work in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Over the years, the church has branched into many other countries—sometimes pioneering brand new work, other times adopting congregations in countries which wanted to affiliate with us.

Until 1965, there were two United Brethren missionary groups, each sponsoring its own work: the Women's Missionary Association (renamed Women's Missionary Fellowship in 1989), and the Parent Board of Missions (called the Domestic, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society until 1957). In 1961, a Joint Board of Missions account was established, and the two mission groups began working more closely together. Those two groups merged in 1965 into the Department of Missions. General Conference elected about half of the department's board members, and the WMF appointed the other half. Any US-sponsored missions work is now the responsibility of the Global Ministries Leadership Team.

Here is an overview of some of our worldwide work and how it developed.

### **Sierra Leone**

Through the years, Sierra Leone was our largest and most prominent mission field. Missionaries were first sent in 1855, and the first two churches were organized in 1876. Following the division of 1889, we retained ownership of some work in Sierra Leone and continued ministering there. The WMF and the Parent Board jointly supported the work in Sierra Leone. It grew to include a hospital, dozens of schools, and over 50 churches. The conference also co-sponsored, with several other denominations, the Sierra Leone Bible College, where many of our pastors were trained.

In 1985, under the leadership of Field Director Kyle McQuillen, the work in Sierra Leone was nationalized; missionaries continued serving in Sierra Leone, but under the leadership of Sierra Leoneans. In 1994, all UB missionaries were evacuated from Sierra Leone because of a blossoming rebel war, which continued throughout the 1990s and devastated the country. By 2001, thanks to the intervention of Nigerian, British, and United Nations forces, a high degree of peace had returned to the country. However, rebel activity continued in some areas, particularly in diamond mining regions. The Mattru Hospital was reopened by the group Doctors Without Borders, and church life was resuming and expanding.

### **Germany**

A mission outreach into Germany began in 1869. However, that work remained

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with the other group (now the United Methodists) after the division of 1889.

### **China**

After the division of 1889, the New Constitution group retained control of the WMF's mission school for Chinese people in Oregon. However, they stopped supporting the work in 1898 and we regained sponsorship. The school closed in 1931, but it served as a bridge for opening a school near Canton, China, in 1932. This work was discontinued after the communist takeover of China in 1949. Dr. Y. T. Chiu, the original contact in China, then moved to Hong Kong and started United Brethren mission work there in 1950. The Hong Kong Conference was officially organized in 1962. On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong became part of China (it had been governed by Great Britain).

Hong Kong's leaders have been aggressive in reaching out to neighboring countries. Their initiative led to the establishment of work in Macau (1987), Thailand (1993), and Myanmar (1998). No missionaries have ever served in Hong Kong; it has always operated fully under the leadership of nationals.

### **Kentucky**

The WMF assumed sponsorship of a mission field in Big Laurel, Kentucky, in 1939. Oversight of the two Laurel Mission churches was transferred to Central Conference in 1973.

### **Jamaica**

The Parent Board began mission work in Jamaica in 1945. Originally, Rev. James B. O'Sullivan was recruited to head up new mission work in the Bahamas; an established work there had invited us to assume ownership. While on his way to the Bahamas, he was shipwrecked off of Cuba in a hurricane; several weeks later, he reached Jamaica. By then, the Parent Board, after some on-site investigation, had decided against going into the Bahamas, but they invited O'Sullivan to begin working in Jamaica. That is how Jamaica Conference got started. A conference of eleven churches was organized in 1952. James O'Sullivan died in October 2001.

### **Honduras**

In 1929, Rev. James Elliott left his native Belize to pastor several English-speaking churches for the English Methodist Church on the north coast of Honduras. A year later, the Methodists abandoned their work in that country, but Elliott remained to pastor those now-independent congregations. During the next 15 years, he searched for a group willing to assume supervision of his churches. Finally, around 1944, he came in contact with the United Brethren church, which took a great interest in starting something in Honduras. Beginning in 1947, missionaries were sent to teach in Elliott's school in La Ceiba and to help out in the churches.

The work took a major turn in 1952, after the Archie Cameron family arrived in Honduras. Cameron, along with Honduran coworker Eudaldo Mejia, focused major attention on the largely unevangelized Spanish population. When Elliott's

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three English-speaking churches (against Elliott's wishes) severed their relationship with the United Brethren church in 1953, the Camerons stayed and focused entirely on the Spanish-speaking population.

The first Spanish church was organized in 1953, and Honduras Conference was officially organized in 1956. Over the next 20 years, Cameron helped start numerous churches in villages throughout northern Honduras, the work expanded into the southern part of the country, and the large Bethel School (now 2000 students strong) was established in La Ceiba.

Archie Cameron retired as field director in 1985, and since 1990, the country has been under national supervision. Today, Honduras Conference continues to be a pace-setter for the denomination in church planting.

### **Nicaragua**

In 1965, Honduras Conference sent one of its pastors, Juan Campos, to Nicaragua to start churches there. He was joined a few years later by Rev. Guillermo Martinez, a native of El Salvador who was expelled from Honduras following the Soccer War of 1969. The Sandinista revolution of 1979 started almost in Martinez's back yard in Masaya. The UB churches in Nicaragua weathered the years of Sandinista rule, and since the establishment of democracy and national elections in the 1990s, the church has aggressively expanded from less than 10 churches to over 30 churches. The Nicaragua Conference was established in 1993. No UB missionaries have ever served in Nicaragua.

### **India**

In 1974, the United Brethren church began supporting missionaries Richard and Miriam Prabhakar in India. Richard was chief medical officer at the Narsapur Christian Hospital and also director of the nearby Bethesda Leprosy Hospital. The Prabhakars became involved in various other ministries, including a large Bible correspondence program, radio ministry and, in the mid-1980s, church planting. The statistics for 2000 showed 33 UB churches in India, all located in Hindu "tribal" areas. The US National Conference provides oversight.

### **Macau**

In the late 1980s, Hong Kong Conference approached the Mission board about helping to start mission work in Macau, a peninsula west of Hong Kong off of the Chinese mainland. The United States provided two families, along with funding, while Hong Kong provided a Chinese coworker and additional help. The work focuses on two areas: schools for teaching English, and church planting (mostly using contacts made through teaching). Two churches function in the main part of the city, and a new work began in 2001 on the island of Taipa, which is part of Macau. In 1999, Macau became part of China (it had been governed by Portugal).

### **Thailand**

In 1993, Hong Kong began working among the Akha people high in the mountains of northern Thailand, on the border with Myanmar. The Akha are a

## **OUR WORLDWIDE MINISTRIES**

group of people who migrated from China in the early 1900s. The work now includes churches and schools in two villages.

### **Costa Rica**

The work in Costa Rica began in 1995 as an outreach of Nicaragua Conference. A Nicaraguan pastor who had married a Costa Rican woman spearheaded the work in the capital city of San Jose. Today, we have three churches in Costa Rica which operate under the supervision of Nicaragua Conference.

### **Mexico**

A group of churches in central Mexico affiliated with us in 1997. The initial contacts with Mexico came through members of our Hispanic churches in southern California. The Mexico Mission District operates under the supervision of the US National Conference.

### **El Salvador**

In 1999, the UB churches of Nicaragua, Honduras, and the United States partnered to begin working in El Salvador. Six congregations in El Salvador chose to affiliate with us. Honduras Conference provides the primary oversight.

### **Haiti**

United Brethren work in Haiti began when Rev. Richard Oliam, a Haitian minister then living in Paris, France, learned about the United Brethren church through the UB website. He was supervising a group of churches in Haiti and wanted to find a group for them to affiliate with. Contacts were made. In October 2000, our missions leaders officially decided to launch into Haiti. Richard Oliam has since moved back to Haiti to personally supervise the Haitian churches. There are 20 churches in the southern part of the country and three churches in the western arm. In addition, ten churches in the northern part of the country have connections with our Haitian pastors in Florida. They, too, have decided to affiliate with us, and Oliam is providing oversight of them as well.

### **Ethnic Ministries in the United States**

In its earliest years, United Brethren work began among immigrants from Germany. William Otterbein himself, one of our founders, originally came from Germany as a missionary of the Reformed Church. A ministry to immigrants from China, established in Oregon in the 1800s, became a bridge to ministry in China itself.

Since the 1980s, there has been an explosion in ethnic ministries within the United States. What had been almost entirely a Caucasian church now includes thriving ministries among immigrants from Hispanic countries, China, Haiti, Jamaica, and Africa.

California Conference took the lead in reaching out to immigrants from Hispanic countries. Ministers with Hispanic backgrounds—Victor Aviles, David Medina, Luis Benitez—pastored Hispanic churches which shared facilities with

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Anglo churches in California Conference. Under David Medina, several churches in Mexico, in the Baja region, affiliated with us for a short period of time (until Medina's relationship with the UB church ended). Luis Benitez, pastor of the Burbank Hispanic Church, has helped plant several other Hispanic churches in the southern California area as part of California Conference.

In 1987, the Missions department brought Honduran minister Denis Casco to the States and created Latin American Ministries. Through LAM, several more Hispanic churches have arisen in southern California, and Hispanic churches have also been either started or adopted in other places across the country—in Arizona, Texas, Illinois, and Florida. Contacts through LAM also led to the establishment of the Mexico Mission District.

Various other ethnic churches have arisen since the mid-1980s. Some are part of existing annual conferences in the United States, some remain under the oversight of the Global Ministries Leadership Team. These include:

- Jamaican and Chinese churches in New York City.
- Haitian, Jamaican, and Hispanic churches in Florida.
- African (primarily Sierra Leonean) churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.
- A Hispanic church in Indiana.

The 2001 US National Conference took official action to incorporate ethnic ministries, as soon as practical, into existing annual conferences.

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### United Brethren Worldwide Ministries

*The National Conferences are indicated with bold type.*

*Mission districts are listed in italics under the supervising national conference.*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year Started</b>	<b># Churches in 2000</b>	<b>2000 Attendance</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>1767</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>25,152</b>
<i>India</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>435</i>
<i>Mexico</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>2,157</i>
<i>Haiti</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>NA</i>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1827</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>858</b>
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	<b>1855</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>5,260</b>
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>501</b>
<i>Macau</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Thailand</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Myanmar</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>
<b>Jamaica</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2,496</b>
<b>Honduras</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>3,439</b>
<i>El Salvador</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>166</i>
<b>Nicaragua</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>828</b>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>160</i>

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PART II

# Basic Documents

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Chapter 3: Confession of Faith

Chapter 4: Constitution

Chapter 5: Official Doctrinal Positions

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## Chapter 3

# Confession of Faith

### 1

#### **The Triune God**

In the name of God, we declare and confess before men that we believe in the only true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that these three are one—the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both; that this triune God created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same.

### 2

#### **Jesus Christ, the Son**

We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is very God and man; that He became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary and was born of her; that He is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in Him accept the grace proffered in Jesus; that this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and that He shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

### 3

#### **The Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide**

We believe in the Holy Ghost; that He is equal in being with the Father and the Son, and that He comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

### 4

#### **The Church**

We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

5

**The Holy Bible and Salvation**

We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God as the only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

6

**The Salvation Message**

We also believe that what is contained in the Holy Scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

7

**The Christian Ordinances**

We believe that the ordinances, viz. baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practiced by all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on all the children of God particularly to practice them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. Also, the example of washing feet is left to the judgment of every one to practice or not; but it is not becoming of any of our preachers or members to traduce any of their brethren whose judgment and understanding in these respects is different from their own, either in public or in private. Whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect shall be considered a traducer of his brethren, and shall be answerable for the same.

# Chapter 4

# Constitution

We, the members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America, in the name of God do, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, as well as to produce and secure a uniform mode of action in faith and practice, also to define the powers and the business of local, annual, and national conferences, as recognized by this church, ordain the following articles of Constitution:

## 11

### Article I Personnel

1. All ecclesiastical power herein granted to make or repeal any rule of discipline is vested in a national conference, which shall consist of elders and laymen elected by the members in every conference district throughout the society. Such elders shall have stood in that capacity three years in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ; such laymen shall have been members of a local church within the conference district for six years and shall have served on the administrative board for five years.

2. The national conference is to be held every four years. All officials elected by the national conference shall be members ex officio of the national conference, the bishops to be considered presiding officers.

3. Each annual conference shall place before the society a list of nominees for election as delegates as provided in the *Discipline* of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America.

## 12

### Article II Duties

1. The national conference shall define the boundaries of the annual conferences.

2. The national conference shall at every session elect one or more bishops

from among the elders throughout the church, who have stood six years in that capacity.

3. The national conference has authority to participate in an international United Brethren church structure, and to edit Constitutional language to reflect the same.

4. The business of each annual conference shall be done strictly according to *Discipline*; and any conference acting contrary thereunto shall, by impeachment, be tried by the national conference.

5. No rule or ordinance shall at any time be passed to change or do away with the Confession of Faith as it now stands.

6. There shall no rule be adopted that will infringe upon the rights of any as it relates to the mode of baptism, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or the washing of feet.

7. There shall no rule be made that will deprive local ministers of their votes in the annual conferences to which they severally belong.

8. There shall be no connection with secret combinations, nor shall involuntary servitude be tolerated in any way.

9. The right of appeal shall be inviolate.

### 13

#### Article III Property

The right, title, interest, and claim of all property, whether consisting in lots of ground, meeting houses, legacies, bequests, or donations of any kind, obtained by purchase or otherwise, by any person or persons, for the use, benefit, and behoof of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America, is hereby fully recognized and held to be the property of the Church aforesaid; however, local churches may be granted title to their property as provided in the *Discipline* of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America,

### 14

#### Article IV Amendments

There shall be no alteration of the foregoing Constitution unless by two-thirds vote of the national conference, provided a request of such change has come from the majority of those who elected the national conference.

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## Chapter 5

# Official Doctrinal Positions

### 21

#### **Depravity**

All persons are born, because of the fall of the race in Adam, with an inherent tendency toward evil. This depravity has negatively affected and is operative in every faculty of one's being. Each person, because of the inherited depravity, when confronted by the world, the flesh and the devil, will follow the sinful nature, deliberately choosing to ratify sin, and thus assumes the guilt and condemnation belonging to a sinner.

PART III

# **Standards of the Church**

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Chapter 6: Defining Standards

Chapter 7: Membership Standards

Chapter 8: Family Standards

Chapter 9: Social Standards

## Chapter 6

# Defining Standards

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ recognizes the validity of a collective Christian conscience. Throughout its history, the church has chosen to make specific statements as interpretations of our collective convictions on matters of membership, family, and social issues. These statements are found in chapters 7-9.

We believe the statements in those chapters are consistent with the Word of God and, thus, are to be observed by all members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. Local churches shall seek to instruct, reconcile, and reform members whose lifestyles consistently conflict with these standards. When reasonable attempts at restoration fail, such members shall be removed from the membership roll.

In areas not defined in chapters 7-9, the following statements will serve as a guideline for developing appropriate biblical convictions.

### 101

#### **Corporate Convictions**

The United Brethren church recognizes its responsibility to help members apply biblical commands and principles to contemporary issues.

The Bible gives clear instruction on many issues, but on other issues, it leaves room for Christians of equal spiritual commitment and insight to disagree. The church's historic position has been to stand firm on biblical absolutes, allow freedom where the Bible allows freedom, and maintain unity when disagreements arise.

### 102

#### **Personal Convictions**

The Bible is the primary source of correct guidance and the final authority by which Christians should determine proper conduct regarding moral issues. The

Bible's specific prohibitions must always be obeyed. In areas where Scripture does not give explicit directions or absolutes, the following guidelines will assist members in making wise lifestyle decisions based on biblical principles.

- a. Pray for guidance (James 1:5).
- b. Study all biblical passages related to the issue.
- c. Review the laws of the land regarding the issue (Romans 13:1-7). The Bible instructs believers to obey the laws of the land in which they live, but not to use those laws to justify disobeying biblical principles (Hebrews 13:17).
- d. Seek the counsel of mature Christians (Proverbs 15:22, 27:17).
- e. Carefully weigh and consider current scientific and medical evidence regarding the issue (Proverbs 18:15).
- f. Consider any harmful effect your action may have on others.
- g. Consider any harmful effect on your testimony (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 10:32-33).
- h. If in doubt, act according to your conscience and continue developing your convictions (Romans 14:23).

## Chapter 7

# Membership Standards

### 111

#### **Christian Disciplines**

Every member shall attend to the ordinances of the church—namely, baptism (Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38) and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29); shall be diligent in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and the study of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15). Further, it is the responsibility of all members of the church to serve with time and talent, and to contribute to the financial interests of the church in proportion to their ability, as God has prospered them.

### 112

#### **Love to Others**

All persons should walk as in the presence of God and accustom themselves to a close communion with God in all of their employments (Colossians 2:6; Psalm 1:1,2; Romans 8:1-6). They should never speak evil of their fellow beings (Ephesians 4:25, 29, 31; Titus 3:2; James 3:5-10), but practice love toward others (Mark 12:31), rendering service to others (Luke 10:28-37), Galatians 5:13), and endeavoring to be a follower of Christ in deed (Colossians 3:17, 23), in order that a spirit of unity may exist (Ephesians 4:3).

### 113

#### **Lord's Day Observance**

Following the example of the early disciples and New Testament church, everyone should make provision for exercises of devotion on Sunday, the Lord's Day, and inasmuch as possible shall attend all services for hearing read the Word

of God, singing spiritual songs and hymns, Christian fellowship, and giving of tithes and offerings (John 20:19, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Hebrews 10:25). Members are admonished to neither buy nor sell needlessly on the Lord's Day.

## 114

### An Effective Witness

Since every Christian is called to be a witness to Christ (Acts 8:26-39) in the midst of ungodly people and circumstances (Acts 1:8), and since it is largely through the testimony of believers that others are brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, we urge every member of the church to assume the obligation of seeking the lost and winning them to Christ.

In order that they may be prepared to witness for Christ by life as well as by word, we admonish our members of all ages to maintain a position of nonconformity to the world (Romans 12:2) and to lay aside the evil things of this life (James 1:21); and further, to guard carefully their Christian testimony—

1. By engaging only in such business and social activity which is consistent with the Christian life (Colossians 3:17, 23).
2. By observing modesty in dress, in speech, and in all other personal conduct as becomes a child of God (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 3:3, 4).
3. By renouncing the world and all ungodliness, seeking to lead a life of holiness and devotion to God and his cause (2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 2:19, 21).

## 115

### Necessity of Union

Let us be deeply sensible, from what we have known, of the evil of a division in principle, spirit or practice and of the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we are divided, we shall injure ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people. To secure a closer union among ourselves, let us:

1. Be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of union (Ephesians 4:3).
2. Pray earnestly for and speak truly and freely to each other (James 5:16).
3. When we meet, never part without prayer, if prayer is at all practicable.
4. Take care not to despise each other's gifts (Romans 12:3-8).
5. Never speak lightly of each other (James 4:11).
6. Defend each other's character in everything, so far as is consistent with truth (Ephesians 4:31).
7. Labor in honor, each preferring another before himself (Philippians 2:3).
8. Seriously examine the cause, evils, and cures of heart and church divisions (Galatians 5:26).
9. Observe and follow the principles for reconciliation or excommunication laid down by Jesus in Matthew 5:21-26 and 18:15-17 whenever an offense exists between members of the congregation.

**116****Obedience to Government**

It is the duty of every member to lead a quiet, peaceable, and godly life among mankind, as it becomes a Christian to live in peace and to be subject to the higher or ruling powers, as the Word of God requires (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

**1117****Legal Testimony**

We believe that the mode of testifying to the truth, when required to do so in a legal form, by way of affirmation is on us solemnly, conscientiously and fully binding before God to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (Matthew 5:33-37).

**118****Going to Law**

Any member refusing, in case of debt or dispute, to refer the matter to arbitration, or who shall enter into a lawsuit with another member before these measures are taken, may be expelled, except in criminal and other cases which require and justify a process at law (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Proverbs 25:8-10; Matthew 5:25-26).

**119****Lodges and Other Heretical Groups**

The Bible teaches that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, and that Christians are neither to participate in things done in secret (Eph. 5:10-15) nor to show favoritism (James 2:1). Therefore, United Brethren members must not be members of any other church, group, or organization which teaches a way of salvation incompatible with the United Brethren Confession of Faith, such as a Masonic lodge or the Order of Oddfellows. Members who do, and who refuse to sever the relationship after having been confronted by the pastor and at least one other board member, shall be regarded as having withdrawn their membership from the church. (*John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 6:14-15*)

## Chapter 8

# Family Standards

### 121

#### **Family: Definition**

We recognize that a family can take four forms:

1. A married couple (male husband and female wife) who may or may not have children.
2. A single parent household, in which a male or female parent is charged with the responsibility of raising and nurturing his/her natural or adopted children.
3. A widow or widower who is left without children at home.
4. A single person who has chosen to live on his/her own as a separate household.

### 122

#### **Marriage**

Marriage was instituted by God and is regulated by him. For this reason, the Church must resist all attempts to alter marriage from what the Bible has revealed about it. The purpose of marriage is companionship between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:18) in a permanent relationship which can end only when one of the partners dies.

A Christian should marry only another Christian (1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14). Their relationship is to express God's original intention for marriage: the wife's role alongside her husband as an equal.

### 123

#### **Family Life**

Married couples (husband and wife) should cultivate a relationship of mutual love and respect (Ephesians 5:21, 22, 25, 33). They should remember their unique oneness (Mark 10:6-9), their equality (Genesis 1:27, Galatians 3:28), the complementary nature of their union (Genesis 2:18), and their responsibility to

help bring each other to full Christian maturity in all areas of life (Ephesians 5:22-28).

A husband should follow the Bible's admonition to love his wife in the way Jesus loved the Church (Ephesians 5:25). Such Christian love, as described by the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 13:4-7), demands that the husband respond openly and cooperatively with his wife (Ephesians 5:21, 28-31).

As the head of the Christian home (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:25), the husband and father should exercise his delegated authority without being authoritarian, and should fulfill his responsibility under Christ by providing for the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of each family member (1 Timothy 5:8). In the case of a single parent, he/she will be considered the "head of the house" along with the responsibilities that accompany this position.

The wife should follow the Bible's admonition to be submissive, though not subservient, to the headship of her husband (Ephesians 5:22-24) by cooperating with his efforts to provide the home with authority and stability under Christ.

Together, the husband and wife should exercise proper discipline tempered with love (Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:5-11, Colossians 3:21). They should also create and maintain a Christian atmosphere within the home (Ephesians 6:4, 2 Timothy 3:14-15). Such an atmosphere should consist of the following:

1. Communication with the heavenly Father through spontaneous prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), especially at mealtimes, whether in seeking his aid or giving thanks.

2. Daily, directed worship as a way for the family to express love and trust in God, and to sense his presence in the home (Matthew 18:20).

3. Spontaneous and directed teaching of Bible truths at every opportunity (Deuteronomy 6:20-21a).

4. Christian symbols and works of art in the home (Deuteronomy 6:6, 9).

5. A consistent example in Christian living (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Christian parents are encouraged to present their children to the Lord before the church body for the blessing (or dedication) of children and the affirmation of Christian parenting.

Children and young people should obey their parents in all things in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1, Colossians 3:20). This was the example of Jesus (Luke 2:51).

## 124

### Abuse

We believe that abuse in any form, either inside or outside of the family, destroys the dignity and value God has placed in people.

## 125

### Illicit Sexual Relations

The biblical view of sex firmly establishes it within the framework of marriage and family life. Therefore, the church cannot condone premarital sex, adultery, or any form of homosexual behavior (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). All are clearly contrary

to the expressed will of God concerning the union of man and woman together in this most sacred and binding of human relationships (Romans 1:20-32; Deuteronomy 22:23-27).

## 126

### Divorce

Divorce was never in God's original plan, and is really one of the consequences of the fall of man. According to Jesus in Mark 10:5, the Mosaic directive concerning divorce came only as a concession to man's hardheartedness.

In the New Testament, Jesus indicated that divorce may be granted on the basis of fornication (Matthew 5:32, 19:9). Fornication includes all forms of sexual sin, such as adultery, prostitution, sodomy, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, and lesbianism. Continual and deliberate sexual sin by a marriage partner is a justifiable cause for divorce.

The Apostle Paul cites another exception which applies to the marriage of a believer and an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:12- 15). If an unbelieving partner chooses to dissolve the marriage, the believing partner may yield to the divorce. This same exception also applies when a believer renounces faith in Christ or assumes the position of an unbeliever and chooses to dissolve the marriage. Such persons are considered unbelievers because they place themselves outside the divine directive.

Even though the Bible admonishes Christian spouses not to divorce each other (1 Corinthians 7:10-11b), there may be situations in which a spouse decides a divorce is essential, e.g., when the spouse or children suffer severe physical or emotional abuse. The Bible seems to suggest that the spouse may make the decision to divorce, but must then remain unmarried or be reconciled to the former partner (1 Corinthians 7:11). God does not advocate divorce in such situations, but when it does occur, He regulates it. The principle remains—no divorce—but the Bible recognizes that the ideal is not always observed because of hardheartedness.

In all cases, however, every effort should be made to bring about repentance, restoration and reconciliation. Bringing about reconciliation which leads to harmony and compatibility is always preferable to divorce.

## 127

### Remarriage

We believe the Christian has biblical grounds for remarriage in the following situations:

1. When the spouse dies. In this case, the partner may remarry a believer (1 Corinthians 7:39).
2. When the marriage and divorce occurred prior to salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:1-7).
3. When the spouse is guilty of marital unfaithfulness and will not repent and live faithfully with the partner, and the offended partner is innocent of such conduct. Marital unfaithfulness includes adultery, prostitution, sodomy, incest,

bestiality, homosexuality, and lesbianism.

4. When an unbelieving partner has willfully deserted a believing partner (1 Corinthians 7:12-15).

5. When the spouse has assumed the position of an unbeliever by choosing to divorce the believing partner. In this case, the believing partner may remarry another believer (1 Corinthians 7:12-15).

## 128

### Family Planning

In the Christian view as based in the biblical revelation, it is only within the marriage relationship that children should be conceived, brought into the world as a precious gift in trust from God, and nurtured to full personhood.

As responsible Christians and parents, some couples may for valid reasons determine not to have children, or others may need to determine the number and spacing of children. The church admonishes its members to weigh carefully and prayerfully the responsibilities of family planning and to use those methods which are medically and psychologically suited to their needs. They shall not use methods which conflict with the church's stand on abortion, as stated in ¶129.

For those couples who for physical reasons cannot bear children, the church advises them to consider the adoption of children. Such couples should seek the assistance of reliable placement agencies to avoid possible unfortunate circumstances and to avail themselves of competent counsel.

## 129

### Abortion

Abortion is a major moral problem in our society. We believe that human life is sacred from the moment of conception, and that abortion must not occur anytime after conception. Consequently, abortion cannot be recognized morally and Scripturally as a means of birth control, as a solution to a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, or as a way to prevent or eliminate congenital or hereditary defects.

The church recognizes the possibility of therapeutic abortion. However, it can be performed in Christian conscience only when the mother's life is in imminent danger, as determined by two competent physicians, one of whom has been or would be attending her pregnancy.

## 130

### Genetic Engineering

Genetic engineering, the ability to manipulate the genetic formation of the living cell, is part of our scientific culture. However, the church does not condone sex selection or genetic screening as reasons for abortion, through information obtained by amniocentesis.

The church does not approve of artificial in ovulation (the process by which a fertilized ovum is placed in the fallopian tube or the uterus), except in the case of a married couple whose own sperm and ovum are used. The church also rejects

the process of cloning in the human reproductive system. Neither does the church condone experiments to develop artificial uteruses and placentas with the ultimate goal of developing a full-term fetus without the mother's presence.

Genetic engineering raises legal, medical, ethical, and religious issues. The church is concerned that scientific knowledge, without a moral system, will lead to devastating results.

### 131

#### **Euthanasia**

Because of the commandment, "Thou shalt not murder" (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17), the church cannot condone the taking of life for the purposes of escaping the suffering and difficulties caused by sickness, disease, injury, old age, infirmity, or for any other such reasons.

Because of the dignity of human life and the Christian's privilege of dying and going to be with Christ, the Christian or the Christian's family members, in the event that the person lacks the capacity to do so, should have the privilege of rejecting artificial means for the sustaining of life when the maintenance of life is dependent upon these artificial means.

## Chapter 9

# Social Standards

Christians are to be good citizens within their community, culture, nation, and world. They should be on guard against all destructive actions and vices surrounding them, and raise a proper protest in the most appropriate forum.

### 141

#### Human Relations

The church respects human personality which is inherent in every race, nation and creed. We believe in the Bible's instruction that there is no basis whatsoever for a belief in the superiority or inferiority of any people. Therefore, the church protests against any action or practice that produces discrimination based upon racial, national, creedal or social differences, since God "made from one, every nation of men to live on the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). The church admonishes all members to commit their attitudes, actions and influences in faithful witness to this truth and to oppose every influence, whether it be economic, social, moral or religious which would debase, impair, or bring into bondage those whom God has created in His own likeness.

The church believes that there must be equal rights and justice for all. All members should register their concern and opposition to any form of prejudice that would prevent any individual or ethnic group from free and full participation in the privileges and benefits of our society. We advocate through due process of law and within the framework of the democratic system the elimination of poverty; the abolishment of unemployment; a fair wage in every vocation; fair practices between employer and employees; adequate provisions for the aged and for those who are unemployable; the opportunity for decent housing for all; and a proper concern for total human need in our contemporary world.

The church acknowledges that mankind's basic need is for the saving grace of Jesus Christ and is therefore committed to the telling of the Good News of the gospel to all persons. But the church also recognizes the commandment to love

all men in the name of Christ. Therefore, the church admonishes all members to strive for a society characterized by unselfish compassion and service to all. (*Philippians 2:3; Matthew 25:31-41; Luke 6:31; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 Peter 3:8-12*)

## 142

### Peace/Bearing Arms in War

We positively record our disapproval of engaging in voluntary, national, aggressive warfare; yet we recognize the rightful authority of the civil government and hold it responsible for the preservation and defense of our national compact against treason or invasion by any belligerent force.

We affirm the right of our members to serve and bear arms in the national armed forces. We also support the right of the honest conscientious objector to refuse to bear arms in military service, and to instead choose humanitarian service to his/her nation.

We wish to go on record as a church as being much in favor of national and international peace; and we urge our leaders to always pursue peace.

## 143

### Drug Abuse

Christians are directed in the Bible to be temperate in all things. This implies discipline in all emotions, passions, and appetites. It means the proper use of wholesome food and drink. (*Proverbs 20:1; Isaiah 5:22; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 5:11, 6:10, 6:19; and 1 Thessalonians 5:22*)

### 1. Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic beverages are injurious and at the core of significant social problems. The manufacturing, vending, and use of alcoholic beverages are contrary to the best interests of personal and social morality, economy, and welfare. Therefore, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, stands in opposition to the alcohol industry and advocates abstinence by all people from using alcoholic beverages in any form, except as a medical prescription.

Furthermore, the church believes that even the moderate use of alcohol by believers undermines our efforts to oppose the alcohol industry and may be a stumbling block to others. Members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, are to abstain from the use of beverage alcohol of any kind. They are expected to oppose the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. They are not to be involved as a direct investor, manager, or owner (full or partial) of businesses which engage primarily in manufacturing or selling alcoholic beverages. Neither should members lease or rent property to those who would use it primarily for manufacturing, storing, or selling these harmful beverages.

### 2. Tobacco

The Bible reveals that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and instructs believers to live pure lives. The church believes and experience demonstrates

that the use of tobacco is injurious to the physical body and is a detriment to the best stewardship and witness of our lives. Therefore, all members are urged to abstain from its use in any form.

We urge our leaders to teach about the hazards of tobacco use and that deliverance is available through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

### **3. Narcotic, Hallucinogenic, Mind-Altering, and Mood-Altering Drugs**

The scientific, medical, law enforcement, and welfare segments of our society have given witness to the corrupting and devastating results of narcotic, hallucinogenic, mind-altering, and mood-altering drugs. Members of the church are to exercise abstinence from using these drugs in any form or for any purpose, except under the most strict prescription and observation of skilled members of the medical profession.

#### **144**

#### **Gambling**

The Bible teaches that the love of money is destructive and that productive work fits into God's plan for life. Gambling, on the other hand, stimulates the desire to get something for nothing and it seeks material gain by a fatalistic faith in chance. The church has observed that organized and commercial gambling is a threat to business, breeds crime and poverty, and is destructive to the best interests of good government.

Because gambling is a menace to personal character, social morality, and biblical stewardship, we therefore urge all members to abstain from participating in gambling in any form, including lotteries, and to raise a proper protest against the spread of illegal and legalized gambling. (*Proverbs 28:19-20; I Timothy 6:7-11; Luke 16:10-13; I Corinthians 4:2*)

#### **145**

#### **Pornography**

The distribution of pornographic material in various media is one of the causes of the moral decline of our nation. We encourage our local churches to take an active part in any local movement to eliminate the distribution of pornographic material in their respective communities. In case there is no such movement in their communities, we encourage our local churches to take the initiative in carefully and prayerfully organizing such a movement.

#### **146**

#### **Occult**

The Holy Scriptures teach us to seek supernatural guidance from God only. Therefore, all members are to abstain from any participation in the occult. This includes all types of fortune-telling, astrology, communication with spirits and witchcraft. (*Deuteronomy 18:9-22; Galatians 5:19-21; Acts 19:13- 20*)

PART IV

# The Ministry

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Chapter 10: Ministers

Chapter 11: Lay Ministers

Chapter 12: Specialized Ministers

Chapter 13: Local Conference Ministers

Chapter 14: Annual Conference Ministers

Chapter 15: Ordained Elders

Chapter 16: Ordained Chaplains

Chapter 17: Assigning Ministers

# Chapter 10

# Ministers

## 201

### Introduction

In its broadest sense, the term “minister” can be applied to all Christians who use the gifts God has given them. Within that understanding, all United Brethren members should be “ministers,” actively developing and using the gifts they have received.

In its more restrictive use, “minister” refers to individuals who have been recognized by the church as having received a more specific call from God. This call has been confirmed through a process of study and examination which has also equipped them to perform specific tasks within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

The United Brethren church does not discriminate in granting ministerial credentials on the basis of gender or race.

## 202

### Classifications

Ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, can be classified as follows: local conference ministers, annual conference ministers, ordained elders, lay ministers, and specialized ministers. Specific descriptions for each of these classifications are described in subsequent chapters.

The first three classifications—local conference minister, annual conference minister, and ordained elder—are parts of a three-step process which culminates in ordination. Local conference and annual conference ministers are expected to pursue ordination. Any of these classifications that are actively stationed or hired by a local church, and that meet current Internal Revenue Service requirements for exemption, are considered by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, as eligible for such exemption.

**203****General Qualifications**

No person shall be approved or retained as a licensed minister in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose life is not in harmony with the established moral and social standards of the church as defined in the *Discipline*. In addition, ministers are not permitted to use tobacco, beverage alcohol, and illicit drugs, or to engage in any immoral conduct, and their marriage relationships must be in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as defined in the *Discipline*.

All ministers are required to maintain membership in a local United Brethren church. Failure to do so will render the ministerial license null and void.

**204****Expectations****1. General Statement**

All ministers are expected to model a Christ-centered lifestyle. In so doing, they will confirm the message of the death, resurrection, and return of Christ which they are to proclaim. They are to evangelize the lost, assimilate them into the church, and train those in their churches to be effective disciples of Jesus Christ as they nurture them in the faith.

**2. Spiritual Development and Lifestyle**

All ministers should give priority time to their own spiritual development through the disciplines of prayer, meditation on the Word of God, and fasting. They should be wise managers of their time and careful stewards of their relationships with all people, especially with regard to the opposite sex. They should use their speech judiciously, speaking evil of no one, and should take the initiative in restoring broken relationships.

**3. Pastoral Transitions**

When ministers transition from ministerial positions, the friendships and bonds of affection they have established with their parishioners continue; however, the pastoral relationship does not. Since the primary goal at the time of transition is the development of the new pastoral relationship, ministers are to operate in light of the following expectations. Violation of these provisions shall be considered trespassing, and ministers so accused shall be answerable to their annual conferences.

a. Ministers shall not communicate with members of a previous congregation in such a way that it disrupts the work of the successor.

b. Ministers shall not perform funerals, baptisms or weddings, nor participate in any other pastoral function at their former churches or for members of their former churches, unless specifically invited to do so by the current pastor or conference superintendent.

c. Ministers shall not arbitrarily form a new congregation (regardless of denominational affiliation) within the limits of any conference or church extension district.

# Chapter 11

# Lay Ministers

## 211

### Description

Lay ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who have been called by God and who are not seeking recognition or employment as a professional member of the clergy. Rather, they intend to use the gifts God has given them to perform specific acts of ministry and leadership in the local churches where they are members.

Persons holding this license are not assumed to be pursuing status as an ordained elder or associate member of the annual conference.

This license is granted by the local conference.

## 212

### Qualifications

Candidates for this license must have been members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, for at least two years and members of the local church to which they apply for at least one year. They must have demonstrated faithfulness to the expectations of members (chapter 7), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 8 and 9), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 10).

## 213

### Licensing

The following procedure is established for the licensing of lay ministers:

#### 1. Referral of the Senior Pastor

After consulting with the candidate to determine God's call and the candidate's suitability for ministry, the senior pastor shall refer the candidate to an examining committee.

## 2. Examination

The senior pastor shall arrange for an examining committee composed of the conference superintendent (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local conference. The candidate shall present the following to the committee:

*a. Three Letters of Reference.* These letters are to be obtained from acquaintances of the candidate and should give evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living.

*b. A Written Testimony.* This document should outline the candidate's Christian experience, beliefs, and reason for pursuing the lay minister's license.

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctness, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

## 3. Report to the Local Conference

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the local conference, making any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the local conference may choose to grant a lay ministers license.

## 4. Probationary License

Prior to completion of the course of study (outlined below), the lay minister's license is considered probationary and is subject to annual renewal.

## 5. Permanent License

When the course of study has been completed, the examining committee shall once again examine the candidate. If the committee so recommends, the local conference may grant a permanent lay minister's license to the candidate.

## 6. Transferring the License

When lay ministers, both permanent and probationary, transfer their membership from one United Brethren church to another, the license is automatically transferred once the receiving church has confirmed the transfer of membership.

## 7. Loss of the License

Local conferences have the authority to revoke the licenses of lay ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the *Discipline*. Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

## 8. Unorganized Churches

Candidates who are actively involved in a congregation that is recognized by

the annual conference but is not yet organized as a full member congregation may obtain a lay minister's license. The examining committee in such cases shall consist of the senior pastor (if an annual conference minister), the superintendent, and at least one additional elder and one United Brethren layperson. The process for examination shall follow the same procedures as for other candidates.

Following the examination, the committee shall report its finding to the bishop, making any recommendations it deems consistent with its finding. The bishop may then direct the superintendent to issue a probationary license. This license is subject to annual renewal by the superintendent until it becomes permanent or the congregation is officially organized.

## **9. Service Outside the Local Congregation**

Lay ministers serving as supply pastors or performing ongoing specific acts of ministry outside of the local congregation of which they are members must first meet with and be approved by the ministerial licensing and ordination commission.

### **214**

#### **Course of Study**

All persons who have been granted a probationary lay minister's license shall pursue a course of study in which they shall read and be examined on 16 books. These books shall be chosen from a reading list prepared by the Commission on Ministry. This reading list will identify books in four categories: (1) theology, (2) Bible, (3) church history, (4) and polity, preaching, and worship.

To be eligible for annual renewal, those holding a probationary license must read and pass an examination on one book from each category. Examinations will be administered by the senior pastor with a record of the completed courses filed with the conference superintendent.

When 16 books (four books in each of the four categories) have been read and the examinations passed, the candidate shall be eligible for a permanent lay minister's license (see ¶213).

### **215**

#### **Expectations of Lay Ministers**

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, lay ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following:

#### **1. Annual Reporting**

All lay ministers, both permanent and probationary, are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the local conference of the church to which they belong.

#### **2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the local conference, lay ministers are

accountable to the local conference of the church of which they are members.

### **3. Ministerial Service**

Lay ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors, conference superintendents, and bishop. They may be asked to supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, act as supply pastors, or do specific acts of ministry as part of the overall ministry of their local church, annual conference, or denomination.

When serving as a supply pastor, lay ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and are permitted to conduct weddings. Probationary lay ministers will not be permitted to serve as a supply pastor of any congregation for longer than one year.

# Chapter 12

# Specialized Ministers

## 221

### Description

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, uses the term “specialized minister” to describe all non-ordained paid staff ministers employed by churches of the denomination. Individuals holding this license are not pursuing ordination, and generally are employed to oversee specific areas of ministry in a local church. This designation does not include ministry support positions, such as secretarial or custodial staff.

Specialized ministers are not eligible to serve as ministerial delegates to the US National Conference, nor are they eligible for election to the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission in their conferences, although they may serve on any of the other conference boards and commissions. They are voting members of the annual conference and local conference.

## 222

### Qualifications

Specialized ministers must meet the following qualifications:

#### 1. Education

Persons holding this license must have a minimum of 30 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization from an accredited college, including a minimum of 12 semester hours of college level work in Bible and the course in United Brethren church history.

#### 2. Experience

Persons holding this license must have served for a minimum of 12 months on a professional basis in the field of specialization in a United Brethren church.

### 3. Membership

Persons holding this license must be members of a United Brethren church.

## 223

### Licensing

The following procedure is established for the licensing of specialized ministers:

#### 1. Recommendation from a Local Conference

After consulting with the candidate to determine God's call and the candidate's suitability for ministry, the senior pastor of a local church may recommend that the local conference refer a candidate to annual conference for an specialized minister's license. If the local conference so concurs, the annual conference Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission shall be contacted.

#### 2. Examination

The candidate shall present the following to the commission:

*a. Three letters of reference.* These letters should give evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and are to be obtained from the following:

- (1) The senior pastor of the church where the candidate is a member.
- (2) The lay leader (or a key layperson) of the church where the candidate is a member.
- (3) The chairperson of the Personnel Relations Commission of the church where the candidate is a member.

*b. Copies of educational transcripts which verify the candidate's educational qualifications.*

*c. Written responses to the following:*

- (1) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
- (2) Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way for our salvation? How do you support your belief?
- (3) What is your motive for desiring an specialized minister's license?
- (4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?
- (5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?
- (6) Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.
- (7) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.
- (8) Will you agree to abide by the official actions of your conference and denomination in all matters relating to your ministry?
- (9) Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and with the government of this denomination, and will you seek to maintain them?
- (10) What are your future plans regarding ministry inasmuch as they pertain to this license?

- (11) What current debts do you have?
- (12) Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- (13) Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- (14) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
- (15) Do you use illegal drugs, beverage alcohol, or tobacco in any form?
- (16) Is your marriage in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as interpreted by this denomination?
- (17) What role does your area of ministry play in the overall ministry of the church?
- (18) What is your understanding of staff relationships in the church?
- (19) Explain your philosophy of ministry as it relates to your specific area of specialization. Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### **3. Report to the Annual Conference**

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the annual conference and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the annual conference may choose to grant a specialized minister's license.

### **4. Loss of the License**

The annual conference shall have the authority to revoke the licenses of specialized ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the *Discipline*. Should they desire, specialized ministers shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license. Specialized ministers whose licenses have been revoked or suspended by an annual conference cannot be received by any other conference without the consent of the conference in which they were previously members.

### **5. Transferring to Another Conference**

Specialized ministers may transfer their ministerial credentials to other United Brethren conferences upon the recommendation of the receiving Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission. Both conferences must approve the transfer by vote of the annual conference. These votes must occur within any twelve-month period. The credentials will not be transferred until both conferences have consented.

### **6. Ordination**

If specialized ministers decide to pursue ordination, this license will be deemed the equivalent of a local conference license.

## **7. Unorganized Churches**

Candidates who are actively involved in a congregation that is recognized by the annual conference but is not yet organized as a full member congregation may obtain a specialized minister's license. In such cases the recommendation to the annual conference Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission shall be made by a committee composed of the senior pastor (if an annual conference minister), the superintendent, and at least one additional elder and one United Brethren layperson.

## **224**

### **Expectations of Specialized ministers**

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, specialized ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following requirements:

#### **1. Annual Reporting**

All specialized ministers are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the conference superintendent.

#### **2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the annual conference, specialized ministers are accountable to the annual conference of which they are members.

#### **3. Ministerial Service**

Specialized ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors, conference superintendents or bishop. They may officiate at funerals and weddings and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion only under the supervision of a senior pastor.

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## Chapter 13

# Local Conference Ministers

### 231

#### Description

Local conference ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who have been called by God and are beginning the pursuit of ordination.

The local conference license is granted by a local congregation to affirm a person's call to ministry. The local conference license is the first of three steps toward ordination, which is the goal expected for persons holding this license. Through these steps, the church seeks to develop ministers who give evidence of high moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and pastoral competency.

### 232

#### Qualifications

To become a candidate for local conference license, persons must do the following:

1. Hold membership in the local United Brethren church to which they apply.
2. Verify that they have completed the equivalent of a standard high school education.
3. Demonstrate faithfulness to the expectations of members (chapter 7), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 8 and 9), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 10).

Local conference ministers are not eligible to serve as lay delegates to the annual conference or US National Conference, nor may they serve as ministerial representatives on any conference or general church board or commission. They

may serve in any capacity in the local church and are, by virtue of license, voting members of the local conference. They serve as advisory members of the annual conference.

## 233

### Licensing

The following procedure is established for the licensing of local conference ministers:

#### 1. Referral of the Senior Pastor

After consulting with the candidate to determine God's call and the candidate's suitability for ministry, the senior pastor shall refer the candidate to an examining committee.

#### 2. Examination

The senior pastor shall arrange for an examining committee composed of the conference superintendent (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local conference. The candidate shall present the following to the committee:

*a. Three Letters of Reference.* These letters are to be obtained from acquaintances of the candidate and should give evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and suitability for ministerial licensing.

*b. A copy of his/her high school diploma.*

*c. Written responses to the following:*

- (1) Do you believe our Confession of Faith as set forth in our *Discipline*?
- (2) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
- (3) What is your motive in seeking this local conference license?
- (4) Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and the government of the church, and will you maintain them on all occasions?
- (5) Will you submit yourself to the official counsel of your fellow Christians?
- (6) Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.
- (7) Is it your purpose, if received, to remain permanently with the church?
- (8) Will you pursue the course of study required for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA?
- (9) Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- (10) Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- (11) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
- (12) Are you abstaining from the use of beverage alcohol, illicit drugs, and tobacco?

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### **3. Report to the Local Conference**

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the local conference and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the local conference may choose to grant a local conference license.

### **4. Annual Renewal**

This license must be renewed each year by the local conference, with a notation of the action taken made on the license by the chairman of the local conference. Renewal is subject to the following conditions:

a. An annual report must be made to the local conference. This report may be made in person or in writing.

b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (see below). Should a local conference minister fail to complete the equivalent of two years of academic work within any four-year period, the license shall be considered null and void.

### **5. Referral for Annual Conference License**

Local conference ministers may be referred to the annual conference when the following conditions have been met:

a. The local conference license has been held for a minimum of 12 months.

b. They have completed the equivalent of two years of college.

c. They have completed the course in United Brethren church history.

d. They have demonstrated a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for an annual conference license.

Should a local conference minister be referred and not received as an annual conference minister, the previous status as a local conference minister will be retained.

### **6. Transferring the License**

When local conference ministers transfer their membership from one United Brethren church to another, the license is automatically transferred once the receiving church has confirmed the transfer of membership.

### **7. Loss of the License**

Local conferences have the authority to revoke the licenses of local conference ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the *Discipline*. Should they desire, local conference ministers shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

### **8. Ministers from Other Denominations**

If a minister from another denomination with the equivalent of this local conference license seeks to be licensed by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, the one year membership requirement may be waived. All other

requirements must be met.

## **9. Unorganized Churches**

Candidates who are actively involved in a congregation that is recognized by the annual conference but is not yet organized as a full member congregation may obtain a local conference license. The examining committee in such cases shall consist of the senior pastor (if an annual conference minister), the superintendent, and at least one additional elder and one United Brethren layperson. The process for examination shall follow the same procedures as for other candidates.

Following the examination, the committee shall report its finding to the bishop, making any recommendations it deems consistent with its finding. The bishop may then direct the superintendent to issue a local conference license. This license is subject to annual renewal by the superintendent until the candidate is referred for an annual conference license or the congregation is officially organized.

### **234**

#### **Course of Study**

All local conference ministers are expected to pursue a course of study leading toward a Master of Divinity degree through an approved seminary or the equivalent to the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree through the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries. The criteria for approval and list of approved graduate schools shall be determined by the Commission on Ministry and confirmed by the US National Board.

Candidates who received their local conference licenses at an age of 35 years or older may be permitted to meet this requirement through a Diploma of Pastoral Leadership program or a ministerial training correspondence program approved by the Commission on Ministry.

### **235**

#### **Expectations of Local Conference Ministers**

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, local conference ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following:

##### **1. Annual Reporting**

All local conference ministers are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the local conference of the church to which they belong.

##### **2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the local conference, local conference ministers are accountable to the local conference of the church of which they are members.

##### **3. Ministerial Service**

Local conference ministers shall work under the direction of their senior

pastors, conference superintendents, and bishop. They may be asked to supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, act as supply pastors, or do specific acts of ministry as part of the overall ministry of their local church, annual conference, or denomination.

When serving as a supply pastor, local conference ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion. Local conference ministers will be permitted to serve as supply pastor of any congregation after approval of the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission if they continue pursuing the required course of study.

## Chapter 14

# Annual Conference Ministers

### 241

#### Description

Annual conference ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose call to the ministry has been affirmed by the annual conference and who are continuing the pursuit of ordination. The annual conference license is the second of three steps toward ordination, which is the goal expected of persons holding this license.

Annual conference ministers are not eligible to serve on the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of their respective annual conferences, nor are they eligible to serve as representatives, either clergy or lay, to the US National Conference.

### 242

#### Qualifications

To become a candidate for this license, a person must accomplish the following:

1. Hold a local conference license from a United Brethren church for at least 12 months.
2. Complete two years of college and the course in United Brethren church history.
3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for an annual conference license.
4. Demonstrate faithfulness to the expectations of members (chapter 7), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 8 and 9), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 10).

## 243

**Licensing of Annual Conference Ministers**

The following procedure is established for the licensing of annual conference ministers:

**1. Referral of the Local Conference**

After local conference ministers have held their licenses for a minimum of 12 months, they may request that their local conferences refer them for consideration as annual conference ministers. The local conference shall verify that the local conference ministers have met the qualifications and shall make the appropriate referral should they deem the ministers to be suitable candidates.

**2. Examination**

Candidates shall be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of the annual conference. They shall present the following to the committee:

*a. Five letters of reference.* These letters should give evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and should be obtained from the following individuals:

- (1) A faculty or graduate school member in the candidate's major area of study.
- (2) The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends (or, if the candidate is the pastor, from another United Brethren pastor).
- (3) The lay leader (or a key layperson) of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- (4) The conference superintendent.
- (5) A friend or relative.

*b. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.*

*c. Written responses to the following:*

- (1) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
- (2) Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way for our salvation? How do you support your belief?
- (3) What is your motive for desiring an annual conference license?
- (4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?
- (5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?
- (6) Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.
- (7) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.
- (8) Will you agree to abide by the official actions of your conference and denomination in all matters relating to your ministry?
- (9) Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and with the government of this denomination, and will you seek to maintain them?
- (10) What are your future plans regarding ministry inasmuch as they pertain

to this license?

(11) Will you faithfully pursue the course of study required for you?

(12) Demonstrate your working knowledge of the *Discipline* in the following areas: the reception and duties of members, local church structure, and the classifications and duties of ministers.

(13) What current debts do you have?

(14) Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?

(15) Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?

(16) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?

(17) Do you use illegal drugs, beverage alcohol, or tobacco in any form?

(18) Is your marriage in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as interpreted by this denomination?

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, candidates shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### **3. Report to the Annual Conference**

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the annual conference and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the annual conference may choose to grant an annual conference license.

### **4. Renewal**

The annual conference license is valid for four years. Following this initial four-year period, annual renewal is required. Renewal is subject to the following conditions:

a. An annual report must be made to the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission.

b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (see below).

### **5. Referral for Ordination Status**

Annual conference ministers may be referred for ordination status when the following conditions have been met:

a. The annual conference license has been held for a minimum of two years.

b. They have completed a Master of Divinity degree from an approved seminary or the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries, or have completed the requirements under paragraphs 234 and 244 for those 35 years or older.

c. They have served for one year in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission.

d. They have demonstrated a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for ordination status.

## **6. Loss of the License**

The annual conference shall have the authority to revoke the licenses of annual conference ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the *Discipline*. Should they desire, annual conference ministers shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license. Annual conference ministers whose licenses have been revoked or suspended by an annual conference cannot be received by any other conference without the consent of the conference in which they were previously members.

## **7. Ministers from Other Denominations**

Ministers from other denominations who hold a license equivalent to the annual conference license and who seek to be licensed by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, may have the local conference license requirements waived provided they can demonstrate that their current credentials are in good standing from their previous denominations. All other requirements must be met. These ministers are required to take the examination for the ministerial licensing or ordination track being followed.

## **8. Transferring to Another Conference**

Annual conference ministers may transfer their ministerial credentials to other United Brethren conferences upon the recommendation of the receiving Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission. Both conferences must approve the transfer by vote of the annual conference. These votes must occur within any twelve-month period. The credentials will not be transferred until both conferences have consented.

### **244**

#### **Course of Study**

All annual conference ministers are expected to pursue a course of study leading toward a Master of Divinity degree through an accredited seminary or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree through the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

Candidates who received their local conference licenses at an age of 35 years or older may be permitted to meet this requirement through a Diploma of Pastoral Leadership program or a ministerial training correspondence program approved by the Commission on Ministry.

### **245**

#### **Expectations of Annual Conference Ministers**

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, annual conference ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following requirements:

**1. Annual Reporting**

All annual conference ministers are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of the annual conference.

**2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the annual conference, annual conference ministers are accountable to the annual conference of which they are members.

**3. Ministerial Service**

Annual conference ministers shall work under the direction of their conference superintendents or bishop. They may be asked to supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, act as supply pastors, or do specific acts of ministry as part of the overall ministry of their local church, annual conference, or denomination.

Annual conference ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion. Annual conference ministers will be permitted to serve as a pastor of any congregation after approval of the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission if they continue pursuing the required course of study.

Annual conference ministers pursuing ordination as a chaplain will be permitted to supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, or serve as associates under the direction of the annual conference, but not as the senior pastor of any congregation.

# Chapter 15

# Ordained Elders

## 251

### Description

Elders are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who have been called by God and are pursuing employment as professional members of the clergy. Their call has been confirmed by the church through a process of examination, education, and accountability. Ordination is the third step in a process which began with the local conference license and continued with the annual conference license.

Elders are eligible for service on any annual conference and national conference boards, leadership teams, or commissions. They may also serve as ministerial delegates to the US National Conference, provided they meet the stated requirements for service in that capacity.

## 252

### Qualifications

To become a candidate for ordination, an annual conference minister must accomplish the following:

1. Earn a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.
2. Serve for one year in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission.
3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for licentiate status.

## 253

### Ordination Procedure

The following procedure is established for the ordination of ministers:

## 1. Request of the Annual Conference Minister

After holding an annual conference license for a minimum of two years, individuals may submit a request to the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination commission of the annual conference for consideration for the office of ordained elder in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

## 2. Examination

Applicants shall be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of the annual conference. They shall present the following to the committee:

*a. Five letters of reference.* These letters should give evidence of the applicant's marriage and family relationships, interpersonal relationship and social skills, and faithfulness in Christian living. They should be obtained from the following individuals:

- (1) A faculty or graduate school member in the candidate's major area of study.
- (2) The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends (or, if the candidate is the pastor, from another United Brethren pastor).
- (3) The lay leader (or a key layperson) of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- (4) The conference superintendent.
- (5) A friend or relative.

*b. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.*

*c. Written responses to the following:*

- (1) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
- (2) Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way for our salvation? How do you support your belief?
- (3) What is your motive for desiring to be an ordained elder in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ?
- (4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?
- (5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual's need for salvation?
- (6) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.
- (7) Will you agree to abide by the official actions of your conference and denomination in all matters relating to your ministry?
- (8) Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and with the government of this denomination, and will you seek to maintain them?
- (9) What are your future plans regarding ministry inasmuch as they pertain to ordination?
- (10) What current debts do you have?
- (11) Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- (12) Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- (13) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
- (14) Do you use illegal drugs, beverage alcohol, or tobacco in any form?

(15) Are your marriage and family relationships in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as interpreted by this denomination?

Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### **3. Report to the Annual Conference**

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the annual conference and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the annual conference may choose to grant ordination status.

### **4. Loss of the License**

The annual conference shall have the authority to revoke the credentials of any elders whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the *Discipline*. Should they desire, elders shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken. Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

### **5. Elders from Other Denominations**

Ordained ministers from other denominations who seek to be ordained by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must meet these conditions:

- a. Demonstrate that their ordinations are still considered to be in good standing from their denomination of origin.
- b. Fulfill the service requirement noted in the previous paragraph.
- c. Complete the course in United Brethren church history.
- d. Hold a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

Ministers from other denominations who are over 35 years of age will be permitted to meet the educational requirements for ordination through a Diploma of Pastoral Leadership program or a ministerial training correspondence program approved by the Commission on Ministry.

When they have met all the stated educational and service requirements, their previous ordinations will be recognized at the commissioning service of the annual conference.

### **6. Transferring to Another Conference**

Elders may transfer their ministerial credentials to other United Brethren conferences. To do so, they must notify the conference superintendents of both conferences in writing. Both conferences must then approve the transfer by vote of the annual conference. These votes must occur within any twelve-month period. The credentials will not be transferred until both conferences have consented.

**254****Continuing Education for Elders**

All elders are required to complete two continuing education units (CEUs) and read four ministry-related books during each calendar year. Reports for each are to be filed with the conference superintendent at the time of the annual audit.

**255****Expectations of Elders**

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, elders are expected to faithfully fulfill the following:

**1. Annual Reporting**

All elders must file an annual report of their activities with the conference superintendent.

**2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the annual conference, ordained ministers are accountable to the annual conference of which they are members.

**3. Ministerial Service**

Elders shall work under the direction of their conference superintendents and bishop. They are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion. They will be permitted to serve as a pastor of any congregation so long as they continue to complete the continuing education requirement.

# Chapter 16

# Ordained Chaplains

## 261

### Description

Ordained chaplains are members of the United Brethren church who have been called by God and are pursuing employment as professional members of the chaplaincy. They provide pastoral care for persons of diverse backgrounds in physical, mental, spiritual, and social need in diverse settings. Their call has been confirmed by the church through a process of examination, education, and accountability. Ordination is the third step in a process which began with the local conference license and continued with the annual conference license.

Chaplains are eligible for service on any conference and denominational boards or commissions. They may also serve as ministerial delegates to US National Conference provided they meet the stated requirements for service in that capacity.

## 262

### Qualifications

To become a candidate for ordination as chaplain, an annual conference minister must do the following:

1. Earn a Master of Divinity or a Master of Theology degree from an accredited seminary (ATS approved), or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.
2. Complete four units (1600 hours) of Clinical Pastoral Education in an institution accredited by the American College of Pastoral Education.
3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for licentiate status.

## 263

### Ordination Procedure

The following procedure is established for the ordination of chaplains.

## 1. Request by the Annual Conference Minister

After holding an annual conference license for a minimum of two years, individuals may submit a request to the conference Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission for consideration for the office of ordained chaplain in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

## 2. Examination by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission

Applicants shall be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of the annual conference. The following are required.

a. *Five letters of reference.* These letters should give evidence of the applicant's marriage and family relationships, interpersonal relationships and social skills, and faithfulness in Christian living. They should be obtained from the following individuals:

- (1) Two Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors.
- (2) The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- (3) A layperson serving in leadership at the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
- (4) A friend or relative.

b. *A copy of his/her academic transcripts*

c. *Written responses to the following:*

- (1) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
- (2) Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way for our salvation? How do you support your belief?
- (3) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual's need for salvation?
- (4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?
- (5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual's need for salvation?
- (6) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals you have personally led to Christ.
- (7) Will you agree to abide by the official actions of your conference and denomination in all matter relating to your ministry?
- (8) How will you function as an ordained United Brethren chaplain while working with those of other faith backgrounds?
- (9) What are your future plans for ministry inasmuch as they pertain to ordination?
- (10) Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- (11) Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
- (12) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
- (13) Do you use illegal drugs, beverage alcohol, or tobacco in any form?
- (14) Are your marriage and family relationships in harmony with the teachings of the Scripture as interpreted by this denomination?

### **3. Ordination by the Annual Conference**

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the annual conference and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the annual conference may choose to grant ordination status.

#### **264**

##### **Loss of License**

The annual conference shall have the authority to revoke the credentials of any chaplains whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the *Discipline*. Should they desire, chaplains shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken.

#### **265**

##### **Ordained Chaplains from Other Denominations**

Ordained chaplains from other denominations who seek to be ordained by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must meet these conditions:

1. Demonstrate that their ordinations are still considered to be in good standing from their denomination of origin.
2. Demonstrate a favorable standing with the American College of Chaplains.
3. Complete the course in United Brethren church history.
4. Hold a Master of Divinity or Master of Theology degree from an accredited seminary, or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

When they have met all of the stated requirements, their previous ordinations will be recognized at the commissioning service of the annual conference.

#### **266**

##### **Transferring to Another Conference**

Chaplains may transfer their credentials to other United Brethren conferences. To do so, they must notify the conference superintendents of both conferences in writing. Both conferences must then approve the transfer by vote of the annual conference. These votes must occur within any twelve-month period. The credentials will not be transferred until both conferences have consented.

#### **267**

##### **Continuing Education for Elders**

All chaplains are required to complete CEUs annually as offered by the American College of Chaplains and National Association of Catholic Chaplains.

#### **268**

##### **Expectations of Chaplains**

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, elders are expected to faithfully fulfill the following:

**1. Annual Reporting**

All chaplains must file an annual report of their activities with the conference superintendent.

**2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the annual conference, ordained chaplains are accountable to the annual conference of which they are members.

**3. Ministerial Service**

Chaplains shall work under the direction of their conference superintendents and bishop. They are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion. They may supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation. They may serve as associates, but not as the senior pastor, of any congregation.

# Chapter 17

# Assigning Ministers

271

## Philosophical Statements

The following statements identify the basic philosophy used by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, to make pastoral appointments.

### **1. Pastors are Stationed, Not Called**

In the United Brethren church, authority for pastoral assignments rests solely with the stationing committee of the annual conference. The final decision regarding a pastoral assignment does not belong to the local church or any of its commissions or boards.

### **2. The Assignment Process Involves Dialogue**

The stationing committee of the annual conference will communicate with the pastors and congregations involved in the assignment process and will use all information received as a part of the decision-making process. Both pastor and Personnel Relations Commission or its equivalent are granted the right to consult with the stationing committee.

### **3. The Goal is a Long-term Assignment**

Because long-term assignments provide a better opportunity for qualitative and quantitative growth, the stationing committee will try to match congregational needs with pastoral strengths.

### **4. There are No Guaranteed Appointments**

Since the goal of the stationing committee is to match congregational needs and pastoral strengths, individual ministers may experience periods of time when they are not assigned to a local church. Likewise, local churches may experience periods of time when they are without an assigned pastor.

## **5. Interim Ministers will be Used**

The process of assigning pastors requires a thoroughness which often results in a temporary vacancy at a local congregation. In such instances, the local churches will be assigned an interim minister to provide limited pastoral ministry until a permanent assignment can be made.

### **272**

#### **The Stationing Committee**

Each annual conference shall have a stationing committee to oversee the pastoral assignment process. This committee shall be chaired by the conference superintendent and shall include clergy and laypersons chosen by the annual conference. The bishop shall serve as an ex officio member.

This committee shall make regular reports as required by the annual conference or council of administration.

### **273**

#### **The Assignment Process**

Assigning ministers consists of the following steps.

##### **1. A Vacancy Occurs**

This vacancy may result from a pastoral resignation, death or other incapacitation, or it may be initiated by the stationing committee. Local boards of administration may ask the stationing committee to review its pastoral assignment, but no local board or commission has the authority to terminate a pastor's employment.

##### **2. Meeting with Local Leaders**

When a vacancy has occurred, a representative of the stationing committee shall meet with the leaders of the local church to explain the assignment process and evaluate the needs and vision of the congregation.

##### **3. Completion of a Parish Profile**

Each congregation will complete a "Parish Profile," using the form prepared for this purpose. Responsibility for this rests with the local church Personnel Relations Commission.

##### **4. Communication with the Prospective Pastor**

After receiving the completed "Parish Profile," the stationing committee will approach its choice to fill the vacancy. The prospective pastor will receive a copy of the parish profile and be asked to consider the assignment. If the prospective pastor declines the assignment, another prospective pastor will be approached. When a pastor has indicated interested, the Personnel Relations Commission of the church where he/she is serving will be notified of the potential transition.

### **5. Communication with the Local Church**

When a prospective pastor has expressed interest in filling the vacancy, he/she will prepare a document which provides biographical information and a philosophy of ministry. This document will be presented to the leaders of the local church for review. If the information seems satisfactory, a pastoral interview with the Personnel Relations Commission and the stationing committee or their equivalent will be held in the process toward assignment.

### **6. Introductory Meeting Between the New Pastor and Local Leaders**

The stationing committee shall arrange for an introductory meeting between the new pastor and local leaders. At this meeting, both parties will have the opportunity to clarify expectations and philosophies. An “Agreement of Understanding” will be completed to document the understandings reached.

### **7. Assignment is Announced**

At the earliest possible time following this introductory meeting between the new pastor and local leaders, the assignment will be announced according to the process used by that annual conference. The pastor will be given ample time to inform his/her present church of the new assignment.

## **274**

### **Assignment of Associate Staff Members**

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, recognizes the need for multi-pastoral congregations to create staff relationships which meet their special interpersonal and directional needs. As such, within the framework of the stationing committee process, the denomination grants these congregations the right to request and receive resumes, interview candidates, and designate the person they deem best for associate staff positions, with the following understandings:

1. The final decision for the senior pastor and co-pastor position rests solely with the stationing committee.
2. The final decision for employing and terminating associate staff members rests solely with the local church.
3. The conference superintendent must be informed of any United Brethren ministers under consideration.
4. Prior to a United Brethren minister being interviewed for an associate staff position, the conference superintendent will notify the appropriate contact person at the church where the minister is currently assigned.
5. If a church hires someone who does not hold a United Brethren ministerial license, the annual conference is not obligated to provide licensing.
6. While the primary accountability relationship rests with the senior pastor, ministers licensed by the annual conference are required to participate in all accountability processes within the annual conference.

**275****Cross-Conference Assignments**

Stationing committees may consider candidates from other conferences only after consulting with the conference superintendent of the other conference involved.

Ministers involved in a cross-conference assignment shall have full voting privileges in the conference where they are assigned for three years, provided they waive in writing their voting privileges in the conference of which they are a member. Voting privileges in the conference where they are assigned cease if conference membership has not been transferred within three years.

**276****Special Appointment Assignments**

Stationing committees may appoint annual conference ministers and elders to special appointment assignments such as chaplains, missionaries, and general officials. These appointments are made on the request of the minister or elder called to such service. Such assignments are made on the same basis as other pastoral assignments by conference stationing committees.

**277****Assignment of Non-United Brethren Ministers**

Ordained or licensed clergy in other Christian denominations or independent churches may be appointed to serve churches or other ministries within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, while retaining membership in their own denomination.

**1. Conditions**

a. Such ministers must be in good standing in the church or denomination in which they are licensed.

b. Such ministers must provide valid ministerial credentials.

c. Such ministers shall be examined by the conference Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of and agreement with the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

d. A positive recommendation must be made by the Committee to Station Pastors and the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission.

**2. Rights and Restrictions**

a. Such ministers shall not be granted a vote in the annual conference.

b. Such ministers may serve as voting members of any annual conference commission, with the exception of the Committee to Station Pastors, Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission, or any conference board of trustees.

c. Such ministers are not eligible to serve as a conference superintendent.

d. Such ministers are not permitted to vote in the US National Conference elections (including referenda).

## 278

### Special Considerations

All annual conference ministers and elders are assumed to be available for assignment. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, recognizes that life situations may warrant a time of unavailability and establishes the following exemptions:

#### 1. Leave of Absence

Ministers may seek to be exempted from service for personal reasons, to actively pursue more education, or because of ministry-related service in another position, such as chaplaincy, educational positions, or other positions where ministerial credentials are essential. Those who do may request a leave of absence. This exemption will be granted for one year. Ministerial licenses are considered to be in good standing during this exemption period.

For those who request a leave of absence for personal reasons other than educational or ministry-related service in another position, this exemption may be renewed yearly for three consecutive years, after which the individual shall be considered inactive with cause.

#### 2. Retired Status

At age 65, ministers may request retired status from the annual conference of which they are members. This exemption does not need to be renewed. Ministerial licenses are considered to be in good standing during this exemption period.

#### 3. Medical Leave

This exemption is for ministers who cannot perform their duties because of a physician-certified medical condition. These ministers will be considered to be in good standing with the conference during this exemption period, and will enjoy all rights and privileges of their license. They will report yearly to the annual conference.

#### 4. Inactive with Cause for Personal Reasons

This exemption is for ministers who have requested a leave of absence from any ministry for an extended period of time for personal reasons, except for those who hold positions in chaplaincy, educational positions, or other positions where ministerial credentials are essential. During this period, such ministers shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry except under the direct supervision of the conference superintendent or the individual's pastor. After remaining in this status for two years, ministers shall surrender their credentials to the conference superintendent to be held in trust until such time as they renew ministry. Such individuals will report to the annual conference.

### 5. Inactive without Cause

This exemption is used for ministers who have not reported to the annual conference as required and who are not serving in a ministerial capacity in the church. These ministerial licenses are not considered to be in good standing during this exemption period. The conference shall attempt to contact such individuals to determine their desire for ministry, and the annual conference shall have the authority to determine the future of their license.

During this period, ministers shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry. These ministers shall surrender their credentials to the conference superintendent to be held in trust until such time as they renew ministry or the conference determines the appropriate course of action regarding their license.

### 6. Probation

This exemption is used for ministers who are living inconsistently with the expectations and obligations of ministers as described in the *Discipline* or who are under investigation for such. Ministerial licenses are suspended during this probation period and can only be renewed to good standing after a full restoration process is completed.

## 279

### Removal of Pastors

The bishop or superintendent may remove pastors from assigned pastorates for any of these reasons:

1. Pastors charged with immoral or imprudent conduct, who persist in ignoring the church by refusing to prepare or appear for trial, or who refuse to resign upon the request of the bishop or superintendent, shall be subject to removal.

2. Pastors may be asked to resign if they become so involved in debt or other delinquencies in their business relations in the community of service that they destroy their influence as a Christian minister, and if they also refuse to correct the cause of offense after being admonished to do so. Pastors who refuse to resign shall be subject to removal.

3. Pastors who become officially incompetent through mental or bodily disability or who, being insubordinate, refuse to work in harmony with the church program or the church *Discipline*, may be removed from the pastorate. This shall not be construed so as to deprive the accused of all the rights and privileges of a committee trial as provided in the *Discipline*.

4. Pastors who are disabled, as determined by the bishop or conference superintendent, for an extended period of time may be temporarily relieved of all responsibility of their assigned pastorate until the bishop or superintendent determine that they are capable of resuming full responsibility. Matters pertaining to compensation and benefits shall rest with the bishop, superintendent, local board of administration, and pastor.



PART V

# **Geographic Organization**

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Chapter 18: Division of the Territory

Chapter 19: Conference Boundaries

## Chapter 18

# Division of the Territory

### 301

#### **Purpose**

It is essential within the church as an institution to do all things “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). It is also imperative to structure the organization so as to preserve the freedom of the church to respond to the mandate of Jesus Christ and the need and opportunity for ministry without unnecessary hindrance.

Therefore, the following organizational structure is established on the basic premise of assigning appropriate responsibility for policy and decision making, for review and control. Further, the structure assumes that appropriate and responsible boards will establish the procedure for analysis, planning, determining ministries, and writing personnel policies pertaining to persons under their appointment.

### 302

#### **Administrative Divisions**

The church shall consist of the following administrative entities:

#### **1. Appointment**

A preaching point organized or not organized into a local church.

#### **2. Local Church**

A duly organized group consisting of adult members from ten or more resident families. A resident family must include at least one person who is a member of the church. The family must also meet at least one of these requirements: live within ten miles of the church, regularly contribute financially, or regularly attend

services.

### **3. Affiliate Local Church**

A congregation of adult members from ten or more resident families which is associated with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, under the provision of ¶451.

### **4. Conference Superintendent's District**

Two or more local churches or appointments under the supervision of a conference superintendent.

### **5. Church Extension District**

One or more appointments or local churches which are not part of an established conference.

### **6. Mission District**

One or more appointments or local churches outside of the United States which are administered by the Global Ministries Leadership Team.

### **7. Annual Conference**

Five or more churches as organized by the US National Conference.

### **8. Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America**

All United Brethren churches in the United States comprise the national conference known as the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### **9. Church of the United Brethren in Christ International**

All United Brethren national conferences are part of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International.

## **303**

### **Right to Books and Records**

Any person who has been elected to an office is entitled to immediate possession of all papers, documents, books, records, and minutes pertaining to the past acts and proceedings of said office; and the predecessor shall turn over all such documents and records in his/her possession.

# Chapter 19

# Conference

# Boundaries

The United States national conference includes all territory in the United States of America. Official name: The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America.

## 311

### **Arizona Conference**

Arizona Conference includes the following churches in the state of Arizona, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start: Faith (Phoenix), Fountain Hills (Fountain Hills), Hilltop (Lake Havasu City), Open Bible Fellowship (Safford).

## 312

### **California Conference**

California Conference includes the following churches in the state of California, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start: Faith Christian Fellowship (Sacramento), New Hope (Riverbank), Open Arms (Lakewood), Pixley (Pixley), Victory Celebration Center (Burbank), Victory Hispanic (Burbank), Hermanos Unidos en Cristo (Palmdale), Simi Valley (Simi Valley).

## 313

### **Central Conference**

Central Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Indiana:** Anchor (Fort Wayne), College Park (Huntington), Crestview (Lafayette), Decatur (Decatur), Dillman (Warren), East Side (New Castle), Eagle Quest (Columbia City), Emmanuel (Fort Wayne), Fairview (Hartford City), Good

Shepherd (Huntington), Innisdale (Alexandria), Monroe (Monroe), Morning Star (Kokomo), Mount Victory (Decatur), Mount Zion (Decatur), New Hope (Huntington), Park (Bluffton), Pleasant Hill (Muncie), Rugby (Hope), Zanesville (Zanesville).

**In Kentucky:** Cedar Chapel (Big Laurel), Little Laurel (Big Laurel).

**In Ohio:** Avlon (Bremen), Christ Fellowship (Westerville), Convoy (Convoy), Eagle's Wings (Pickerington), Eden (Reedsville), First Love (Reynoldsburg), First (Columbus), First (Van Wert), Franklin (New Albany), Good Shepherd (Greenfield), Hillsdale (St. Marys), Lancaster (Lancaster), Liberty (Bartlett), Lighthouse Community (Dayton), Living Word (Columbus), Maple Grove (Baltimore), Monticello (Monticello), Mount Hermon (Pomeroy), Mount Union (Spencerville), Mount Zion (Junction City), New Horizons (Rockford), NorthPointe (Columbus), Olive Chapel (Wren), Olivet (New Lebanon), Park Layne (New Carlisle), Prince of Peace (Springfield), Red Bud Chapel (Hillsboro), Salem Chapel (Junction City), Shepherd of the Valley (Logan), Victory Chapel (Celina), West Pleasant Hill (Logan), Willshire (Willshire), Zion (Shade), Zion (Willshire).

### 314

#### Michigan Conference

Michigan Conference includes the following churches in the state of Michigan, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start: Banner of Christ (Byron Center), Calvary (Saginaw), Brown Corners (Clare), Colwood (Caro), Countryside (Breckenridge), Crossroads (Charlotte), DeWitt (DeWitt), East Washington (Ashley), Eden (Mason), First (Lansing), Fowlerville (Fowlerville), Freeport (Freeport), Gaines (Caledonia), Gethsemane (Jackson), Harrison (Harrison), Harvest (Mt. Pleasant), Heart-O-the-Lakes (Brooklyn), Ithaca (Ithaca), Kilpatrick (Woodland), Lighthouse Community (Williamston), Maple Hill (Grandville), Maranatha (Middleton), McCallum (Delton), Mount Hope (Carson City), Mount Morris (Mount Morris), Northland (Traverse City), One Hope (Westland), Pennfield (Battle Creek), Pleasant Valley (Lake Odessa), Pleasant View (Blanchard), Richfield Road (Flint), Sunfield (Sunfield), Warrendale (Detroit), West Windsor (Dimondale), Woodbury (Lake Odessa).

### 315

#### Michindoh Conference

Michindoh Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Indiana:** Clearview (Goshen), Corunna (Corunna), Hopewell (Auburn), Hudson (Hudson), Mount Pleasant (Angola), Olive Branch (Lakeville), South Scipio (Harlan), Union Chapel (Fort Wayne).

**In Michigan:** East Ovid (Coldwater), First (Blissfield), Hillsdale (Hillsdale), Lake View (Camden), Montgomery (Montgomery), Morocco (Temperance), Munson (Waldron), New Hope (Camden), Trenton Hills (Adrian), Zion (Blissfield).

**In Ohio:** Alvordton (Alvordton), Central (Montpelier), Harvest Lane (Toledo), Kunkle (Kunkle), Nettle Lake (Nettle Lake), New Hope (Bryan), Springfield

(Holland), Stryker (Stryker), Victory Chapel (Liberty Center).

### 316

#### Mid-Atlantic Conference

Mid-Atlantic Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Maryland:** Brooklyn Park (Baltimore), Calvary Community (Cumberland), Central (Rohrersville), Crellin (Crellin), Pen Mar (Pen Mar), Underwood (Oakland).

**In Massachusetts:** New Life United African (Dorchester).

**In New Jersey:** Bethel (Somerset), Evangel (Kendall Park).

**In New York:** First Church (Bronx).

**In Pennsylvania:** Bethany Evangelical (Carlisle), Blue Rock (Waynesboro), Cold Springs (Fayetteville), Criders (Chambersburg), Devonshire (Harrisburg), Ebenezer (Greencastle), Franklintown (Franklintown), God's Church by the Faith of Philadelphia (Philadelphia), Grace Now! (Etters), Heidlersburg (Heidlersburg), Idaville (Idaville), International (Allentown), King Street (Chambersburg), Living Hope (State Line), Lurgan (Shippensburg), Macedonia (Greencastle), Mainsville (Mainsville), Mongul (Shippensburg), Mount Olivet (Adams County), Mount Olivet (Franklin County), Mount Pleasant (Chambersburg), Mount Washington (York), Mount Zion (Philadelphia), Orrstown (Orrstown), Otterbein (Greencastle), Otterbein (Waynesboro), Pleasant Hill (Greencastle), Prince Street (Shippensburg), Saint James (Chambersburg), Salem (Chambersburg), South Mountain Union (Dillsburg), Strinestown (Strinestown).

**In Virginia:** Fifth Street (Staunton), Forks of the Water (Monterey), Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg), Jerusalem Chapel (Churchville), Living Waters (Winchester), Metamorphosis (Winchester), Mount Carmel (Fulks Run), Mount Olivet (Mt. Solon).

**In West Virginia:** Fountain (Keyser), Living Water (Clarksburg), Mill Chapel (Reedsville), Solomon's Chapel (Franklin).

### 317

#### Midwest Conference

Midwest Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Kansas:** Abilene (Abilene), Central (El Dorado), Garnett (Garnett), Highland Avenue (Chanute), Leavenworth (Leavenworth), Otterbein (Parsons), Sabetha (Sabetha), Southwest Community (Wichita).

**In Missouri:** Trinity (St. Joseph).

**In South Dakota:** Milltown (Milltown).

### 318

#### Northwest Conference

Northwest Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Idaho:** Cream Ridge (Cream Ridge), Log Cabin (Boise).

**In Oregon:** Philomath (Philomath).

**In Washington:** Dayton (Dayton), Friendship (Vancouver).

**319**

**Rock River**

Rock River Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Illinois:** Center Hill (Mount Carroll), Claytonville (Claytonville), Coleta (Coleta), Grace (Manlius), Kilburn Avenue (Rockford).

**In Iowa:** Garden Prairie (Arlington), McGuire Bend (Lehigh).

**320**

**Sandusky Conference**

Sandusky Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Ohio:** Bethel (Elmore), Covenant Fellowship (Steubenville), Faith (Findlay), First (Findlay), Jerry City (Jerry City), Main Street (Walbridge), Mount Zion (Wayne), Oak Harbor (Oak Harbor), Pleasant Heights (East Liverpool), Trinity (Fostoria).

**In Pennsylvania:** Atlantic Avenue (Franklin), Barton Road (Meadville), Bethel (New Castle), Cochranon (Cochranon), Ellport Chapel (Ellwood City), First (New Castle), Good Samaritan (Greenville), Highland Heights (New Castle), Reash (Cochranon), Victory Heights (Franklin).

**321**

**Southeast Conference**

Southeast Conference includes the following churches, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start.

**In Alabama:** Red Mountain (Birmingham).

**In Florida:** Bradenton Haitian (Bradenton), Eglise Haitian (Orlando), Faith (Daytona Beach), First (Holly Hill), Fort Lauderdale Jamaican (Fort Lauderdale), Lake Brantley (Altamonte Springs), Second Orlando Haitian (Orlando).

**322**

**Churches Not Part of an Annual Conference**

**1. Latin-American Ministries**

**Arizona:** Corona de Gloria (Phoenix), Fiesta de los Tabernaculos (Phoenix), Palabra De Vida (Phoenix).

**California:** Canyon Country (Canyon Country), Glendale (Glendale), Oxnard (Oxnard).

**Florida:** First (Miami).

**Illinois:** Centro de Concejeria Familiar (Aurora).

**Texas:** Centro Christiano de Evangelizacion (El Paso), Centro fe y Vision Cristriana (El Paso), Church of the Living God (Sierra Blanca), El Mesias (Dallas), El Sembrador (El Paso), Espiritu Santo (El Paso), Faro del Evangelio (El Paso),

Manatial de Vida (El Paso), Templo Cristiano San Juan (El Paso), United Brethren in Dallas/Ft. Worth (Dallas).

## **2. Other Churches**

**New York:** Queens (Elmhurst), United Brethren in New York (New York), Upper Room (Mount Vernon).

PART VI

# **The Local Church**

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Chapter 20: Organizing New Churches

Chapter 21: Joining the Church

Chapter 22: Local Church Organization

Chapter 23: Local Conference

Chapter 24: Pastors in Charge

Chapter 25: Affiliate Local Church

Chapter 26: Crisis Intervention

## Chapter 20

# Organizing New Churches

### 401

#### **Congregations Arising from Church Plants**

A congregation may officially organize as a United Brethren church by following these steps:

1. The congregation must average 50 people in weekly worship for 12 months.
2. The congregation must include adults from ten or more resident families.
3. The congregation is willing to carry out the expectations of other full-member churches in the conference.
4. The congregation shows evidence of financial self-sufficiency and an ability and willingness to pay assessments.
5. The congregation notifies the conference council, in writing, of its desire to organize as a church.
6. The annual conference votes to receive the congregation into full membership.

### 402

#### **Adopting Non-United Brethren Congregations**

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, invites existing congregations to be adopted into our fellowship. These steps should be followed when an existing congregation which is not affiliated with the United Brethren church wants to be adopted by an annual conference as a United Brethren congregation.

1. The congregation will notify the conference council, in writing, of its desire to affiliate with the annual conference.
2. The conference superintendent will meet with leaders from the church to

investigate such areas as:

- a. The doctrinal teachings of the church.
  - b. The church's willingness to abide by the Confession of Faith, Core Values, and *Discipline* of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
  - c. The church's willingness to meet the expectations of all other full-member churches in the conference.
  - d. The willingness of the church's members or constituents to individually become members of the United Brethren church, according to the procedures specified in the *Discipline*.
  - e. Evidence of financial self-sufficiency and an ability and willingness to pay assessments.
3. The Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission will meet with the senior pastor to review issues of ministerial credentialing.
  4. The superintendent shall facilitate any other meetings designed to facilitate mutual understanding and familiarization.
  5. A majority of the church's constituents or members must vote in favor of being adopted as a United Brethren congregation.
  6. The conference council will designate the church as a preaching point or a church plant. The church must hold this status for at least twelve months.
  7. The conference council will recommend that the annual conference designate the church as a full-member congregation.
  8. After the twelve-month waiting period has passed, the annual conference may designate the congregation as a full-member church, providing that these conditions have been met:
    - a. At least ten resident member families have been received individually as members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, according to the procedures and requirements specified in the *Discipline*.
    - b. The appropriate conference entity has determined that the congregation meets the basic criteria for a full-member church as stated in Chapter 22, "Local Church Organization."

## Chapter 21

# Joining the Church

411

### **Definition of Membership**

Membership is a process that best marks and maintains a believer's commitment to life transformation, while working to insure the integrity, unity, and building up of the church. Thus, membership is more like discipleship than enlistment. It is more than simply being saved, but less than what a believer becomes in a lifetime of spiritual growth. Membership is not about an organization, but about the living organism of Christ's Body. It is not about privilege, but about becoming more like Christ in the context of a local and worldwide community. *"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness"* (Colossians 2:6-7).

412

### **Historical Underpinnings of United Brethren Membership**

1. A United Brethren church member must have a professed personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Membership includes a believer's voluntary submission to a prescribed set of standards. In choosing to become a member, a Christian chooses to follow those expectations.
3. Doctrinal commitment is important to the unity and stability of church membership.
4. Mutual accountability is essential to the maturity of the church member. Believers who choose membership in a United Brethren church voluntarily accept being held accountable for their Christian faith and practice. The church's expectations for its members are clearly stated and printed.
5. Church discipline is essential in preserving the unity of the church membership. Discipline of members should be corporately understood and

accepted as it protects the integrity and unity of the church.

6. The goal of membership is not accumulation of numbers, but the spiritual development of the Christian constituency.

## 413

### Adult Membership

#### 1. Age

Persons 16 years of age and older may become adult members.

#### 2. Qualifications

The following must be determined to be true before persons can be accepted into membership:

- a. They acknowledge that the Bible is God's Word, and that it alone reveals how to receive eternal life.
- b. They have experienced the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.
- c. They are determined to grow in Christ and live in obedience to Christ.
- d. They have been baptized, or are willing to be baptized as soon as is convenient.
- e. They are willing to be governed by the church *Discipline*.
- f. They are willing to give of their time, abilities, and resources to support the various church interests, according to their ability.

#### 3. Voting Rights

Adult members are eligible to vote in all local elections, on referendum proposals, and in elections of delegates to the annual conference and US National Conference.

## 414

### Student Membership

#### 1. Age

Persons age 9 through 15 may join as student members.

#### 2. Qualifications

The following must be determined to be true before persons can be accepted into membership:

- a. They acknowledge that the Bible is God's Word, and that it alone reveals how to receive eternal life.
- b. They have experienced the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.
- c. They are determined to grow as a Christian and live in obedience to Christ.
- d. They have been baptized, or are willing to be baptized as soon as is convenient.

#### 3. Voting Rights

Student members are not eligible to vote in church elections.

## 415

**Watch-care Membership****1. Age**

Children under the age of nine may be nurtured in the church in its watch-care membership, with the goal of leading them toward a commitment to Christ.

**2. Qualifications**

Before children are accepted into watch-care membership, the following must be determined to be true:

- a. They acknowledge that the Bible is God's Word, and that it alone reveals how a person can receive eternal life.
- b. They are willing to learn what the Bible says about being a Christian.
- c. They will try to meet the requirements for church membership.

**3. Parental Consent**

Children shall not be admitted as watch-care members unless consent has been given by the parents or guardians.

**4. Reporting**

Because watch-care membership does not require a profession of faith, such members shall not be reported as members in full standing. Instead, they will be reported as members in watch-care.

**5. Voting Rights**

Watch-care members are not eligible to vote in church elections.

## 416

**Receiving Members**

Each church may determine the procedure for accepting qualified persons into membership.

It is important that new members and the congregation bond. Thus, the church should find a satisfactory way to communicate to its entire body the favorable answers to the following questions.

**1. Receiving Adult Members**

As a church, we believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the regeneration of the soul, a wholly surrendered and Spirit-filled life, and growth in grace and knowledge of the truth. We believe that there must be perseverance in Christian living and faithfulness in Christian witness to promote harmony in our relationship with the Savior.

Our beliefs are further indicated by the questions which follow:

(The minister shall then ask the prospective member the following questions:)

- a. Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God and that therein only is revealed the knowledge of the way of salvation?

If so, answer, "I do."

b. Have you asked God to forgive you your sins, and do you now believe that he accepts you as his child?

If so, answer, "I so believe."

c. Are you determined by the grace of God to follow Christ, renouncing the world and all ungodliness, seeking to live a life of holiness and devotion to God and his cause?

If so, answer, "I am."

d. Are you willing to be governed by our church *Discipline*, and are you willing to be placed under the authority of the local church?

If so, answer, "I am."

e. Are you willing to give of your time, talent, and means to the support of the various interests of this church according to your ability?

If so, answer, "I am."

f. Have you received water baptism? If not, are you willing to be baptized at your earliest convenience?

**2. Receiving Student Members**

a. Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God and that therein only is revealed the knowledge of the way of salvation?

If so, answer, "I do."

b. Have you asked God to forgive you your sins, and do you now believe that he accepts you as his child?

If so, answer, "I so believe."

c. Do you promise to attend the services of the church and to read the Bible and pray, so that you may become more and more like Jesus?

If so, answer, "I promise."

d. Have you received water baptism? If not, are you willing to be baptized?

**3. Receiving Watch-care Members**

a. Do you believe the Bible to be God's Book through which he speaks to us, and that in the Bible is shown the only way we can be saved from sin?

If so, answer, "I do."

b. Are you willing to be taught the Bible and what it means to be a Christian, and will you faithfully try to meet the requirements for membership in this church?

If so, answer, "I will."

**417**

**Transfer of Members**

The local board may approve a letter of transfer to another United Brethren church. Upon completion of the transfer, the person's name shall be removed from the roll.

**418****Withdrawal of Members**

When members desire to withdraw from the church, they may be given a letter of withdrawal by the local board. When appropriate, this letter may be accompanied by a statement of recommendation to a specific church, regardless of denomination.

**419****Revising the Roll**

1. To insure an active and accurate membership, each local church is encouraged to periodically revise its membership roll. It is recommended that every church revise its membership role in the year prior to the US National Conference.

2. The local board may remove members from the roll with a two-thirds vote in the following situations:

a. The local board has not known the person's location for the past one year, and the local board determines that sufficient attempts have been made to locate the person.

b. A member's lifestyle, conduct, or doctrine violate the commitment agreed to in becoming a member. This action can be taken only if attempts to restore, correct, or reconcile the person do not succeed.

3. *Students.* Upon reaching age 16, youth may be received into adult membership by meeting the qualifications for adult membership. No youth shall remain on the student roll after age 15. The student roll should be corrected annually.

4. *Watch-care.* After the age of nine, children who have made a commitment to Christ and show a continued interest in the church may become student members by complying with the requirements for student church membership. Watch-care members who persistently refuse to seek Christ or to receive religious instruction may be dropped from the roll.

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## Chapter 22

# Local Church Organization

### 421 Organization

#### 1. Size

A group of adults may organize as a local church when they achieve the following:

- a. Adult members from 10 or more resident families.
- b. An average worship attendance of 50 or more over the preceding twelve consecutive months.
- c. Evidence of financial self-sufficiency and an ability and willingness to pay assessments.

#### 2. Structure

Each local church is free to establish the structure that will best suit the needs and ministries of the congregation and community, with the exception of the following requirements with regard to §422, “Local Board of Administration,” and §423, “Lay Delegates,” and §424, “Personnel Relations Commission.” Appendix B provides a number of options and ideas for churches regarding structure.

### 422 Local Board of Administration

#### 1. Purpose

The local board of administration oversees all affairs pertaining to the local church. All commissions, committees, and other groups within the church are subject to the board of administration.

**2. Personnel**

a. The constituency of the board depends on the structure which the local church chooses to adopt. The senior pastor shall be a member of the board. It may include such persons as: lay leader, commission chairpersons, treasurer, pastor(s), lay delegate(s), or others. (See Appendix B for other options regarding board personnel.)

b. The board will elect these officers from its own number: a chairperson and assistant chairperson.

c. The board will appoint a person to serve as secretary.

d. All lay board members must be members of the local church.

**3. Duties**

a. The board shall establish the structure that will best suit the needs and ministries of the congregation and community.

b. The board shall keep its rulings and policies in harmony with the policies and proceedings of the annual conference and the general church.

c. The board shall annually provide for the selection of church leaders and lay delegates.

d. The board shall provide for the responsible handling and accounting of the church's finances.

**423****Lay Delegates****1. Purpose**

Lay delegates represent the local church in the annual conference and other meetings when their presence is requested, and may appear before the stationing committee.

**2. Number**

The number of delegates is determined by each annual conference.

**3. Qualifications**

Persons selected for this position shall have been members of the local church for at least one year, except in new churches which have been organized for less than one year. It is recommended that lay delegates be members of the local board of administration. The church shall not select anyone who holds an annual conference license or is being recommended to the annual conference for license.

**4. Notification**

The local board shall inform the conference superintendent of the delegates and alternates chosen.

**424****Personnel Relations Commission**

Each church shall have a Personnel Relations Committee. Its responsibilities

include:

1. Serve as a conferring and counseling committee to the pastor and other employed personnel.
2. Be sensitive to the relationship between the pastor and congregation.
3. Make recommendations concerning the pastor's salary and benefits.
4. Make recommendations to the local board concerning such things as vacation, pulpit supply, and attendance at conventions and seminars.
5. Cooperate with the conference stationing committee in securing a pastor when the need arises.
6. Make recommendations to the local board concerning job descriptions of other employed personnel.

## Chapter 23

# Local Conference

### 431

#### **Purpose**

The local conference shall be the highest authority in the local church that it represents and shall consider those items of business or concerns which should be cared for under the direction of the bishop or conference superintendent.

### 432

#### **Personnel**

The bishop, the conference superintendent, persons holding a local conference minister's license and who are members of the local church, and all members of the local board of administration shall be members of the local conference.

### 433

#### **Meetings**

The local conference shall meet at the request of the bishop, the conference superintendent, the pastor, or upon the written requests of three members of the local board of administration. Such members as are present at any regularly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

### 434

#### **Officers**

##### **1. Chairperson**

The conference superintendent shall be the chairperson of the local conference (except in the case of a special session called by the bishop). A conference superintendent who calls a session but is not able to be present may appoint an elder of the annual conference, in consultation with the bishop, to preside.

## **2. Secretary**

The secretary of the local board of administration shall act as secretary and shall keep a correct record of the proceedings of the local conference in a book provided for that purpose.

## **435**

### **Duties**

#### **1. To Grant and Renew Licenses**

The local conference shall grant and renew local conference ministers' licenses and shall recommend to the annual conference those ministers who are qualified for annual conference license to preach. The local conference shall be empowered to take all actions necessary to the licensing of lay ministers. The local conference shall have power to remove either local conference ministers or lay ministers from office according to the further provisions of *Discipline*.

#### **2. To Hear Reports and Review the Activities of All Agencies of the Local Church.**

#### **3. To Try Appeals**

The local conference shall receive and try all appeals, references, and complaints that may come regularly before it. No members of the local church shall be denied the right to a trial according to *Discipline*.

#### **4. Receiving the Pastor**

All local churches and affiliate local churches shall receive the pastor appointed by the conference stationing committee (Colossians 4:10; Philippians 2:29; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

#### **5. To Enforce *Discipline***

The local conference shall enforce *Discipline* in the local church under its charge.

#### **6. To Disband a Local Church**

The local conference shall have the power to disband a local church when in its judgment it is found impracticable to provide the necessary organization and support.

## Chapter 24

# Pastors in Charge

441

### Duties of Pastors

#### **1. To be holy in lifestyle.**

- a. By leading a life of prayer.
- b. By spending time devotionally in God's Word.
- c. By setting an example of the Christian life within the church and community.

#### **2. To preach and teach the Word of God.**

- a. By giving priority to study and preparation.
- b. By having a preaching/teaching plan to present the whole Word of God.

#### **3. To provide for the regular observance of the ordinances and ceremonies of the church.**

- a. By celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- b. By providing opportunities for Christian baptism.
- c. By performing weddings and funerals.

#### **4. To equip the believers for works of service.**

- a. By helping them find their spiritual gifts.
- b. By training them to become proficient in the use of God's Word.
- c. By training them in the various aspects of ministry.
- d. By allowing them to be involved in personal ministry within the local church.

#### **5. To do and teach the work of an evangelist.**

- a. By doing consistent personal evangelism in the local church and the community.
- b. By providing for training the believers in personal evangelism in both classroom and real life settings.

**6. To be responsible for local church administration.**

- a. By planning and leading the worship services.
- b. By giving direction for the ministry of the local church.
- c. By doing specific planning and goal-setting.
- d. By making monthly reports to the board of administration and annual reports to the annual conference.
- e. By keeping accurate membership records.
- f. By preparing and keeping an updated passbook.
- g. By presenting the church *Discipline*.
- h. By notifying conference supervision in writing at least 30 days before the effective date of resignation.

**7. To provide pastoral care.****8. To promote conference activities.**

- a. By attending conference activities that are provided for pastors.
- b. By promoting other conference interests including seminars, camps, athletic events, etc.

**9. To promote general church interests.**

- a. By promoting the emphases and ministries of the national church.
- b. By overseeing national church elections.
- c. By presenting the referenda.
- d. By promoting church periodicals and publications.

## Chapter 25

# Affiliate Local Church

### 451

#### Definition

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, invites any congregation of Christians to become an affiliate local church in order that the name of Jesus Christ may be more adequately exalted and that his commission to preach and teach the gospel to all the world may be more completely fulfilled provided that:

1. They subscribe to the Confession of Faith.
2. They individually answer the questions asked of applicants for church membership with the understanding that question four concerning being governed by the *Discipline* (§416.1d) excludes the articles on secret combinations in the Constitution and §119 in “Duties of Members.”
3. They agree to the duties as recorded in the *Discipline*, except §119 concerning secret combinations, and subscribe to the Moral and Social Standards.
4. Ministers of such congregations shall be or shall become members of annual conferences of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, on the same basis as any other minister. They shall become subject to assignment by the annual conference and eligible for all benefits and considerations available to the ministers of the church.
5. An affiliate local church shall accept the pastor assigned by the annual conference and shall contribute to the national and conference funds according to a mutual agreement.
6. An affiliate local church shall be entitled to lay representation in the sessions of the annual conference and the mid-year council but without vote.
7. The property investments of an affiliate local church shall be safeguarded to the local church, and all property investments by the conference or general church shall be safeguarded to the conference or general church.
8. An affiliate local church may become a full member local church in the conference by a two-thirds vote of those members present at a duly announced

meeting for that purpose. Such a vote shall include the purpose of adopting the Constitution and all provisions of membership (Chapter 7) of the *Discipline*.

9. When an affiliate local church votes to become a member local church in the annual conference, they may retain those members who cannot accept the provision concerning secret combinations (§119) on an affiliate membership roll, but shall not receive additional members in this classification following the vote to become a local church in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

10. This provision shall not be construed so as to permit any local church of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, to revert to the status of an affiliate local church.

# Chapter 26

# Churches in Crisis

461

## Crisis Intervention

### 1. Conditions

Any existing full-member congregation shall require annual conference intervention whenever it becomes unhealthy or shows consistent decline, as evidenced by any combination of the following:

- a. An average morning worship attendance of fewer than 50 for two consecutive years or more.
- b. Fewer than ten resident member families.
- c. Lack of financial stability and/or self-reliance.
- d. Lack of clear and common purpose.
- e. Severe and unresolved internal conflict which damages the church's reputation in the community and hurts the cause of Christ.

### 2. Intervention Strategies

Such congregations may initiate their own plans subject to annual conference approval and supervision, or an appropriate conference entity may intervene to explore possible renewal and revitalization strategies. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. *Renewal Plan.* A renewal plan would help the existing congregation revitalize its ministry. Components might include an objective assessment of its spiritual health, the development of a renewed purpose, an addressing of any internal problems or obstacles, etc.
- b. *Restart Plan.* A restart plan would close the existing congregation and use its resources to start a new church in the same community with a new ministry focus, a new location, a new name, and/or a new pastor.
- c. *Maintenance Plan.* A maintenance plan would allow the congregation to decide to continue its present course, but without any further outside intervention

and/or assistance. The church would lose its voice in the conference after five years of no progress toward an agreed plan.

d. *Closure Plan.* A closure plan would close the church in accordance with the procedures below.

## 462

### Closing a Church

#### 1. Initiating a Closure

The process for closing a church can be initiated by:

a. *The local board of administration.* The board will notify the conference superintendent of its desire, and the local board and superintendent will begin discussing the idea.

b. *The conference council.* The conference council may direct the superintendent to meet with a local board about the possibility of closing that church.

c. *The conference superintendent.* The superintendent may call a local conference to discuss the possibility of closing the church.

#### 2. Reasons for Closing

Reasons for closing a church can be based on such factors as:

a. The church is weak in such areas as membership, attendance, finances, and purpose.

b. There is a desire to merge with another congregation.

c. The congregation is unable to carry out a meaningful ministry.

d. The congregation consists of less than ten resident families.

#### 3. Closing the Church

The final decision will be made by the local conference. When that decision is made, the following actions will occur:

a. All property will become the property of the annual conference.

b. A letter will be sent to each member, outlining possible options regarding church attendance and membership in nearby churches, information on what will happen to the church property, and any other relevant information.

c. Members shall transfer their membership to the local church of their choice. If that is not done within six months, the conference superintendent may close the roll by removing the names from United Brethren membership.



PART VII

# The Conference

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Chapter 27: Annual Conference Organization

Chapter 28: Annual Conference Duties

Chapter 29: Conference Council

Chapter 30: Conference Superintendents

Chapter 31: Disbanding an Annual Conference

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## Chapter 27

# Annual Conference Organization

### 501 Organization

#### 1. Size

Annual conferences shall consist of at least five organized churches.

#### 2. Structure

Each conference shall organize with the following:

- a. A conference council of administration.
- b. A stationing committee (or its equivalent).
- c. A Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission (or its equivalent).
- d. At least one conference superintendent.

Beyond those requirements, each conference is free to establish the structure that will best suit its own needs and ministries. Paragraphs 503-532 provide a suggested structure which conferences may use as a guideline, to be followed or adapted as desired.

#### 3. Lay/Clergy Representation

Laypersons and clergy shall each comprise at least 40% of the representation on all conference levels of structure. The only exceptions are the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission and the stationing committee, on which laypersons may serve.

### 502 Purpose

A conference shall oversee all affairs pertaining to its local churches,

organizations, and agencies.

### 503

#### Personnel

The members of an annual conference are the US bishop, elders, and licentiates who have been duly received by the conference, and the lay delegates and laypersons elected to the conference council of administration. Each local church shall be entitled to at least one lay delegate. Furthermore, each conference has the right to determine a proportionate basis of lay representation to its own annual conference. The laypersons thus chosen shall have all rights and privileges of ministers in the annual conference except on decisions otherwise restricted by *Discipline*.

### 504

#### Absentee

The names of members of the conference who absent themselves from the sessions of the conference three years in succession without giving a satisfactory reason for so doing may be erased from the roll of the conference.

### 505

#### Officers

##### 1. Bishop

The bishop or an elder of the church designated by the bishop shall preside over the affairs of the conference and its business sessions.

##### 2. Assistant Chairperson

The conference council of administration shall annually name an assistant chairperson to assist the chair in administering the business sessions.

##### 3. Secretary

a. *Purpose*. The secretary shall record the proceedings of the conference session, the sessions of the conference council and the mid-year session of the conference, and shall provide for the safekeeping of the permanent records and documents of the conference.

b. *Election*. At the time of its annual organization, the conference council of administration shall name from its membership a secretary who shall perform the duties of this office through the session of the next conference.

##### 4. Treasurer

a. *Purpose*. The treasurer shall receive all funds of the conference and shall disburse the same on order of the conference or the conference council of administration.

b. *Election*. The treasurer shall be appointed by the conference council of administration on a fiscal year basis or any time the office becomes vacant.

c. *Handling of Funds*. The treasurer shall keep an accurate account book of all

receipts and disbursements and shall make regular and complete reports as required by the conference and its council of administration. The funds designated for general church benevolences shall be forwarded to the general church treasurer on or before the 20th of each month.

### **5. Conference Superintendent(s)**

a. *Purpose.* Conference superintendents shall work with the bishop in implementing the purposes established for ministry within the conference. They shall especially give oversight to the determination of mission and ministries by the local boards of administration in their district.

b. *Election.* Each conference shall elect by majority ballot one or more elders to serve as conference superintendents. (See chapter 29.)

## Chapter 28

# Annual Conference Duties

511

### **Examine its Members**

The annual conference shall establish procedures for examining all ministerial members of the conference and others serving pastorates within the conference regarding their moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and pastoral competency. To accomplish this, the conference may establish a Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission to assist the conference superintendent in matters of ministerial recruitment, training, licensing, and ordination. Its duties shall include:

1. To report annually to the annual conference regarding the educational status of each licentiate. To keep permanent records on the educational progress of each minister, and to report annually to the conference regarding the educational status of each licentiate.
2. To provide orientation and study resources for candidates for a local conference license, and a continuing record of the licensee's educational progress.
3. To receive annual reports on each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school.
4. To give direction and guidance to the educational program of the ministerial candidate who is not regularly enrolled in a theological school.
5. To examine candidates for annual conference ministerial membership and to make recommendations to the conference.
6. To report to the conference with recommendations when a licentiate has completed the educational requirements for ordination.
7. To cooperate with the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries and/or other conference agencies in providing guidance and

programming for the continuing education of ministers.

### 512

#### **License and Ordain Candidates for the Ministry**

The annual conference shall license candidates for the ministry and ordain elders. (See 213, 223, 233, 243, and 253.)

### 513

#### **Determine the Mission and Ministry of the Conference**

The annual conference shall annually provide for the work of planning necessary for the determination of its response to the mandate of Jesus Christ in ministering through its total effort to support with appropriate resources the mission and ministry of its local churches and other conference agencies.

### 514

#### **Provide Appropriate Committees and Make Necessary Appointments**

The annual conference shall, in keeping with its sense of mission and ministry and the policies of the general church, provide for such committees, commissions, task forces, boards, etc. and provide for any desirable additional offices and appoint the qualified persons necessary to assure the success of its ministry.

### 515

#### **Determine Boundaries**

The annual conference shall annually review the list of its member local churches and take appropriate action to receive new member congregations or to disband those unable to maintain the required organization and ministry at the local level.

The annual conference shall also determine the number and boundaries of superintendents' districts within its boundaries.

### 516

#### **Provide Finances**

The annual conference shall annually adopt a budget and policies which will govern its financial resources. The budget shall show the amount established for the salary and benefits for pastoral service in each local church, the funds needed for the various interests of the conference, the general benevolent budget allocated or accepted by that conference, and the goals for the designated conference and general offerings.

The annual conference shall also determine a suitable means by which each local church may equitably share in the support of the conference and general budgets. A strictly per member basis shall not be used in such a determination.

**517**

**Report to the US National Board**

The annual conference, through its secretary and bishop, shall prepare such reports as are requested by the US National Board from time to time.

**518**

**Fill Vacancies**

The annual conference, through its council of administration, shall provide for the filling of vacancies which may occur in its offices and appointments except those otherwise provided for.

## Chapter 29

# Conference Council

### 521

#### **Purpose**

The conference council of administration shall act as an executive committee of the annual conference and is empowered to enact any necessary interim business pertaining to the affairs of the conference except that of examining ministers, the licensing or ordaining of ministers, or the changing of boundaries.

### 522

#### **Personnel**

##### **1. Ex Officio Members**

The bishop, the superintendent(s), and the treasurer shall be members of the conference council of administration with vote.

##### **2. Members at Large**

The annual conference shall annually by majority ballot elect from its membership three to seven members at large to the conference council of administration, at least half of whom shall be laypersons. Clergy and laity should each comprise at least 40% of the members.

### 523

#### **Officers**

##### **1. Chairperson and Assistant Chairperson**

At its first meeting following the conclusion of the annual conference, the council shall elect by ballot a chairperson and an assistant chairperson from its membership. These persons shall perform the duties usual to their positions.

##### **2. Secretary**

The council shall also name a secretary who shall record the sessions of the

council, the annual conference session, and the mid-year session.

## 524

### Meetings

The council shall determine the time and place of its regular meetings. The council may also meet at the call of the chair or upon the written request of three of its members. All meetings of the council must be duly announced and all members informed by appropriate communication.

## 525

### Duties

#### 1. Elect Chairperson of Superintendents

In case of multiple superintendents, the conference council of administration shall elect by ballot the senior or chairperson of the superintendents.

#### 2. Act as Executive Committee for the Annual Conference

In keeping with its stated purpose, the council of administration shall care for all interim concerns and business.

#### 3. Prepare Recommendations

The council of administration shall provide for an ongoing process of review and evaluation of the total ministry of the conference and its various agencies, and shall prepare appropriate recommendations for the consideration of the annual conference. In particular, the council shall prepare recommendations concerning boundaries, budget and finance, and proposals for growth through enlargement and expansion.

#### 4. Provide for Agenda and Programs

The council of administration shall provide for the preparation of the agenda and program of the various conference meetings, such as the annual and mid-year sessions, ministers' seminars, briefings, etc.

#### 5. Provide for a Mid-Year Session

The council of administration may provide for a mid-year council session. Membership in this session shall be the officers of the conference, ministerial members, lay members of the conference council of administration, and newly-elected delegates to the next annual session. In particular, the mid-year session shall be concerned with the ministries of the annual conference and any major considerations which may be recommended to the next annual conference. All members (except delegates from affiliate congregations) shall have vote, and the session is empowered to care for all necessary business except that which may pertain to the ministry or the changing of boundaries. United Brethren ministers whose credentials are being transferred from one conference to another may be received by mid-year sessions.

# Chapter 30

# Conference Superintendents

531

## Election of Conference Superintendents

### 1. Election

The annual conference shall elect by ballot one or more of the elders who shall serve as conference superintendents. A majority of the whole number of votes shall be necessary for a choice. However, in the case of church extension districts the bishop shall appoint the conference superintendent, subject to approval of the US National Board. (See ¶¶302.5, 602.2)

### 2. Extended Term

If it so desires, an annual conference may elect a conference superintendent for up to four years.

532

## Duties and Powers of Conference Superintendent

The conference superintendent shall be amenable to the annual conference for the faithful performance of the following duties.

### 1. Implement the General Church Program

The superintendent (or board of superintendents in case of multiple districts) shall, under the direction of the bishop, take the program proposed by the US National Conference and the US National Board and the leadership teams and adapt it to the local conditions and needs prevailing in the conference.

The superintendent shall be responsible for placing this program before the annual session of the conference and the conference council of administration,

and for conducting at least one planning session for placing the correlated program before the pastors and delegates from the various local churches.

## **2. Administer the Conference Program**

The conference superintendent shall initiate the promotion and administration of the conference program, and shall periodically review this program with the other superintendents or the conference council.

## **3. Act as Resource Leader**

The superintendent shall work with pastors and local churches as a resource person in conducting seminars, institutes and retreats; in conducting surveys; and in pastor-church relations. The superintendent shall perform these duties as directed by the bishop, the conference council of administration, or as requested by local boards of administration and pastors.

## **4. Serve on the Stationing Committee**

At least one superintendent shall serve on the committee to station pastors.

## **5. Serve on the Conference Council**

The conference superintendent shall be a member of the conference council of administration. If a conference has only one conference superintendent, this person will chair the conference council. If there is more than one conference superintendent, the conference council shall elect a superintendent to serve as chairperson.

## **6. Provide for Local Conferences**

The conference superintendent shall provide for the conducting of local conference sessions.

## **7. Serve as Church Extension Supervisor**

At least one superintendent shall serve as the church extension supervisor under the direction of the conference council of administration, unless the annual conference determines to elect a director of church extension.

## **8. Propose Conference Finances**

The conference superintendent shall make a careful study of the financial needs of the district and also of the general interests of the church. The superintendent shall submit these needs to the conference council of administration and suggest means and methods of assisting the pastors in raising the budget assessed to the various local churches on the district.

## **9. Make Reports**

The conference superintendent shall make a written report to the bishop as requested and annually to the conference.

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## Chapter 31

# Disbanding an Annual Conference

### 541

#### Reasons for Disbanding

An annual conference may choose to disband. The reasons for disbanding an annual conference might include:

1. The churches of the conference lack the desire or the ability to maintain the structure expected of an annual conference, as stated in the *Discipline*.
2. An insufficient supply of qualified elders.
3. The number of churches no longer meets the *Discipline's* requirement for an annual conference.
4. A desire to merge churches of the conference into another conference or conferences.
5. The churches feel that their interests would be effectively served under the supervision of the general church.

### 542

#### Procedure

The disbanding of an annual conference must follow these steps.

1. The board of administration of each constituent church is notified at least 60 days before annual conference of any impending motion to disband the conference.
2. A majority of the delegates vote to disband.
3. The US National Board, or the US National Conference, approve the disbanding of the conference.

**543****Duties of the US National Board**

If the National Board approves the decision to disband the conference, the national board will determine the following:

1. How the local churches are supervised.
2. The status of any annual conference ministers.
3. The disposition of any conference assets, including property and fund balances.
4. Any other matters which might arise.



PART VIII

# **The National Church**

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Chapter 32: US National Conference

Chapter 33: Election of Delegates

Chapter 34: The US Bishop

Chapter 35: US National Board

Chapter 36: Executive Leadership Team

Chapter 37: Property

## Chapter 32

# US National Conference

### 601

#### Purpose

The United States National Conference shall oversee all affairs pertaining to its leadership teams, conferences, churches, church extension districts, and mission districts. The US National Conference shall establish policies pertaining to the ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America.

### 602

#### Personnel

The voting members of the United States National Conference are the US bishop, the US Global Ministries director, the US Education director, and the ministerial and lay delegates elected by each conference according to ¶11 of the Constitution.

#### 1. Elected Delegates

Each conference shall be entitled to at least two delegates: one lay person and one minister. The number of additional delegates for each conference shall be added two at a time—one minister and one layperson—and shall be based on the following formula:

- a. 50% on the average of the main weekly worship service attendance and adult membership.
- b. 50% on the total of all financial contributions to the US National Conference during the last full year prior to the election of US National Conference delegates.

## 2. Church Extension District

A church extension district shall be entitled to one ministerial delegate and one lay delegate if the average of its membership and worship attendance equals at least 250.

An existing conference that decreases to below 250 or has fewer than five churches maintains one ministerial delegate and one lay delegate until such time as it disbands as an annual conference or action is taken by the US National Conference.

## 3. Expenses

The US National Conference shall pay the travel expenses of all delegates.

## 604

### Officers

#### 1. The Bishop

The US bishop shall be chairperson of the US National Conference.

#### 2. The Directors

The elected directors will assist the bishop in administering the affairs of the US National Conference.

#### 3. The Secretary

The Executive Leadership Team shall appoint a secretary to record the proceedings of the US National Conference.

## 605

### Duties and Powers

1. The US National Conference shall determine the mission and ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, and provide appropriate plans and policies for its administration.

2. The US National Conference shall perform all duties assigned in the Constitution and *Discipline*.

3. The US National Conference shall review the work of its elected officers, appointed leadership teams, and committees, and review the work of the Global Ministries director who is elected by the General Conference.

4. The US National Conference shall elect at each quadrennial session a US bishop and Education director.

5. The US National Conference shall approve a slate of candidates for Global Ministries director to be elected by the General Conference.

6. The US National Conference shall consider the revision of the *Discipline*.

7. The US National Conference shall establish financial policies to direct the National Board and its Executive Leadership Team in developing the annual budget for the US national church.

8. The US National Conference shall oversee its relationship with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International and its relationships with other

United Brethren national conferences.

9. The US National Conference shall guard the church's historic position of firmly upholding biblical absolutes, allowing freedom in areas not clearly mandated by Scripture, and encouraging tolerance and unity when differences arise.

10. When practices, teachings, or decisions within a local church, denominational officials and institutions, or an annual conference challenge the doctrinal integrity (as defined by the Confession of Faith), cooperative relationship, and/or ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, the US National Conference shall have the authority to apply whatever disciplinary action it considers appropriate. \*

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\* ¶605.10 was amended twice by the 2001 US National Conference, and the wording above is exactly as amended. The Editing Committee realizes that it doesn't read correctly. But although minor editorial corrections are made with each edition of the *Discipline*, this passage presented a problem. It would read okay if reworded to say "*by* denominational officials and institutions, or *within* an annual conference..." but the Editing Committee felt that inserting the word "by" substantively changes the meaning—that there is a difference between a decision *by* an institution and a decision *within* an institution. And so, the Committee felt it best to leave the wording as is, and let the 2005 US National Conference officially fix the wording.

## Chapter 33

# Election of Delegates

### 611

#### **The Bishop: Determine the Number of Delegates**

The bishop shall, as early as possible, announce the number of delegates to which each conference and church extension district is entitled. This number will be based on the official statistics at the end of the third year of the quadrennium, as compiled from pastors' annual reports.

### 612

#### **The Annual Conference: Prepare the Ballot**

1. In the third year of the quadrennium, each annual conference shall prepare a ballot containing the names of elders and laypersons eligible for election as delegates to the US National Conference. The ballot shall contain at least twice the number of elders and laypersons to be elected.

a. Each local board of administration may nominate an eligible layperson as a candidate for representation to the US National Conference (§11.1).

b. Nominees for ministerial delegates shall be chosen from the total list of eligible elders (§11.1). Only elders who are actively pastoring a church in that conference or serving in an appointed or elected position in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, shall be eligible for nomination, election, and service.

2. Information about each nominee may be included on the ballot or furnished separately. Such information could include the person's address, church, position in the local church, and any service in conference or general church roles.

3. The conference shall deliver to each church enough ballots for each member, along with forms to be used by the local board of tellers.

### 613

#### **The Local Church: Hold the Election**

1. Elections for delegates to the US National Conference shall occur throughout

the month of October preceding the US National Conference.

2. All student and adult members of the local church may vote.

3. Conference superintendents and pastors may cast their ballots at the local church where they are stationed or regularly attend.

4. Members incapacitated by age or other unavoidable circumstances may send their ballots in sealed envelopes with their names written on the outside.

5. Pastors of affiliate local churches, their spouses and their dependents, who are either members of a fully constituted local church or members of the local affiliate congregation and meet all requirements for full United Brethren adult membership, may send their ballots in sealed envelopes with their names written on the outside to the conference board of tellers.

## 614

### **Local Board of Election: Administer the Election**

The local board of administration shall appoint a local board of election to carry out the election. They shall:

1. Provide ballots to all members, including absentee ballots when appropriate.

2. Collect the ballots.

3. Record the names of everyone who votes.

4. Tally the results on forms provided by the conference.

5. Forward the results to the annual conference board of tellers by November 15.

6. Keep the ballots and a copy of the results until the close of the US National Conference.

## 615

### **Conference Board of Tellers: Count the Results**

1. After November 15, the annual conference board of tellers shall count the ballots received from the various churches. They shall list all elders and laypersons nominated, along with the number of votes cast for each person.

2. When a tie occurs, the board of tellers shall determine by lot which person is elected.

3. The elder receiving the highest number of votes shall be the delegation chairperson.

4. Those elected shall be notified by December 1 of their election.

5. The board shall send a complete transcript of the election to the bishop, to the superintendent(s), and to each senior pastor of the conference by December 15.

6. Bills of election postmarked later than November 15 shall not be counted. The delinquent church, along with the conference superintendent, shall be notified of any such reports received.

7. If an elected delegate is unable to attend or becomes ineligible to serve, the board of tellers shall notify the first alternate to take that person's place. They shall report these changes to the bishop and superintendent.

**616****Conference Council: Handle Appeals****1. Delinquent Church Reports**

a. A church whose election results are postmarked after November 15 may appeal to the superintendent. This appeal must be made before December 1.

b. If an appeal is made, the superintendent shall convene a meeting of the conference council. The council shall appoint an investigating committee to determine the following:

(1) Was the election held at the proper time?

(2) Are the ballots being held, along with a record of the persons who cast ballots?

(3) Does the local board of election have a copy of the bill of election?

c. The ballots may be counted if the above questions are answered in the affirmative and if the local church pays the cost of the investigation.

**2. Contested Elections**

a. A nominee may ask the conference superintendent for a recount. This appeal must be made before January 1.

b. If an appeal is made, the superintendent shall convene a meeting of the conference council. The council will appoint a committee of three to make the recount, starting on the local level. If a local church no longer has the original ballots, it will be disqualified from the recount.

c. The recount committee shall report to the conference council of administration, who shall declare the delegates elected.

d. The contestant requesting the recount shall pay the expenses involved.

e. Recount requests cannot be made later than January 15.

**617****The Bishop: Publish the Results**

The bishop shall publish the names of elected delegates and alternates by February 15.

# Chapter 34

# The US Bishop

The US National Conference shall elect an ordained minister to serve as US bishop. This person must have served as a United Brethren elder for at least six years.

## 621

### Election of the US Bishop

#### 1. Nominating Committee

The Executive Leadership Team shall appoint a nominating committee as soon as practicable after the election of delegates to the US National Conference.

#### 2. Duties of the Nominating Committee

a. The nominating committee shall consider all elders eligible for election to the office of bishop. (See ¶12.2.)

b. The nominating committee shall confer with persons they desire to nominate to determine if there are circumstances which would prevent them from serving, if elected.

c. The nominating committee shall, when possible, notify the membership of the US National Conference of its nominations at least 30 days prior to the US National Conference.

#### 3. Amendments to the Report

The nominating committee report may be amended by addition from the floor of the US National Conference. However, before the report can be adopted, those nominated by amendment must be interviewed by the nominating committee to determine if there are circumstances which would prevent them from serving, if elected.

#### 4. Election

The election shall be conducted immediately after the report is adopted.

Persons elected must receive a majority of the votes cast by ballot.

## 622

### Duties of the Bishop

#### 1. Live Near Huntington, Ind.

The bishop shall reside in the area of Huntington, Indiana.

#### 2. Focus on Spiritual and Leadership Development

The bishop shall encourage spiritual and leadership development for the United States churches. He will work with the Executive Leadership Team as they establish the vision and direction for ministries within the United States churches. The bishop will work with the leadership of each annual conference and the national leadership teams, encouraging them to develop and pursue the vision as it relates to their ministries.

#### 3. Oversee Administration

The bishop shall be responsible for the general administration of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. The bishop will oversee the work of the directors, the staff, and the national leadership teams.

#### 4. Serve on National Leadership Teams

The bishop shall be an ex officio member of all national leadership teams.

#### 5. Preside at Meetings

The bishop shall preside at the US National Conference, the US National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team. The bishop may preside at annual conference sessions.

#### 6. Conduct Ordinations

The bishop may conduct ordination services or assign this responsibility to another ordained minister.

#### 7. Ensure Accountability

The bishop shall ensure that accountability procedures are established for all directors, leadership teams, and staff of the US national church. The bishop shall also hold conference leaders accountable for ministry performance and moral and personal conduct.

#### 8. Interpret *Discipline*

The bishop shall interpret the *Discipline*, and this ruling shall stand until the next meeting of the US National Conference or the US National Board.

#### 9. Serve on Conference Committees

The bishop shall serve as an ex officio member of each conference council of administration and stationing committee. However, the bishop will not be

permitted to be chairperson of those groups and will attend meetings at his discretion. The chairpersons of the conference councils and stationing committees shall keep the bishop informed of all proceedings.

### **10. Appoint Superintendents**

The bishop shall be responsible to fill vacancies in the office of annual conference superintendent until the reorganization of the conference.

### **11. Comply with International Agreements**

The bishop shall ensure that US National Conference entities comply with any joint ministry agreements with any other United Brethren national conferences.

### **12. Represent the Denomination**

The bishop shall, at his discretion, participate in or designate someone to represent the US National Conference to parachurch and inter-denominational ministries.

## **623**

### **Accountability**

1. The bishop shall be accountable to the US National Board for ministry performance and moral and personal conduct. An annual evaluation will be conducted according to provisions established by the Executive Leadership Team.

2. If the bishop becomes involved in immoral or imprudent conduct or otherwise proves to be incompetent in that office, the US National Board will request the bishop's resignation or may remove the bishop from office by a two-thirds vote.

## **624**

### **Succession**

If a vacancy occurs in the office of bishop due to death, disability, resignation, or removal, the Executive Leadership Team shall appoint an elder to serve as acting bishop until the next meeting of the US National Board or US National Conference. If the vacancy occurs within the first three years of the quadrennium, the US National Board shall appoint an eligible elder to fill the vacancy.

# Chapter 35

# US National Board

## 631

### Purpose

The United States National Board shall conduct the business of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, between sessions of the US National Conference in accordance with the plans and policies established by the US National Conference.

## 632

### Personnel

The United States National Board shall consist of the following:

1. The US bishop.
2. The US Global Ministries director.
3. The US Education director.
4. Representatives from each of the annual conferences in the United States.
  - a. Annual conferences will determine the process by which clergy and lay representatives are chosen to the US National Board.
  - b. Annual conferences will be eligible for clergy and lay representatives on the US National Board according to the average worship attendance for the year immediately preceding the quadrennial US National Conference using the following formula:

<b>Average Worship Attendance</b>	<b>Number of Representatives</b>
1–2,500	1 lay and 1 clergy
2,501–5,000	2 lay and 2 clergy
5,001–7,500	3 lay and 3 clergy
7,501–10,000	4 lay and 4 clergy
10,001–12,500	5 lay and 5 clergy
12,501–15,000	6 lay and 6 clergy

5. The clergy and lay members of the Executive Leadership Team who are not chosen as representatives to the National Board by their conferences.

### 633

#### Officers

1. *Chairperson.* The US bishop shall be the presiding officer of the US National Board.

2. *Assistant Chairperson.* At the time of its organization, the National Board shall elect one of its members to be the assistant chairperson.

3. *Secretary.* The National Board shall elect one of its members to be the recording secretary.

### 634

#### Duties

1. The US National Board shall carry out the plans and policies established by the US National Conference.

2. When issues arise that are not covered by the policies established by the US National Conference, the National Board shall determine the policy which will be followed until the US National Conference meets and deals with the issue.

3. The National Board shall decide questions of interpretation in the Constitution and the US *Discipline*. Between sessions of the National Board, the US bishop's interpretation will stand until the next meeting of either the National Conference or the National Board.

4. The National Board will adopt the National Conference budget according to the policies established by the National Conference.

5. The National Board shall fill vacancies involving the US bishop, the US Global Ministries director, and the US Education director.

6. The National Board shall approve the establishment of any new annual conferences.

### 635

#### Meetings

The US National Board shall meet every two years, on the first and third years following the US National Conference.

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## Chapter 36

# Executive Leadership Team

### **641**

#### **Purpose**

The Executive Leadership Team shall conduct business between sessions of the National Board in accordance with the plans and policies of the US National Conference and the National Board.

### **642**

#### **Personnel**

The Executive Leadership Team shall consist of the bishop, the Global Ministries director, the Education director, and four lay people and three clergy elected by the US National Conference.

### **643**

#### **Officers**

The bishop shall serve as the chairperson. The Executive Leadership Team shall select an assistant chairperson and a secretary from its membership.

### **644**

#### **Duties**

1. The Executive Leadership Team will receive reports from the bishop, directors, leadership teams, and appropriate staff.
2. The Executive Leadership Team will approve the job descriptions and evaluation procedures for the US bishop, directors, and staff.
3. The Executive Leadership Team will make appropriate appointments upon the recommendation of the US bishop for personnel such as auditor and staff.

4. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint the chairpersons for the leadership teams upon the recommendation of the US bishop.

5. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint the other members of leadership teams, and fill any vacancies which may arise.

6. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint necessary committees to prepare for and conduct the work of the US National Conference and the National Board.

## **645**

### **Meetings**

The Executive Leadership Team will meet at least annually. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members present shall constitute a quorum.

# Chapter 37

# Property

## 651

### Introduction

According to the United Brethren Constitution, all church property, whether owned by a local congregation or by the conference, is held in trust for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. The United Brethren Constitution provides for the possibility that a local church may hold title to their property as outlined in the *Discipline*. The following provision provides the process by which a local church can hold title and ownership of their own property.

The following provisions are not intended as an interpretation of the rights under secular law of either congregations or conferences. Legal ramifications will differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Rather, they are intended as a framework to protect both congregations and conferences in the covenantal relationship they have established with each other.

## 652

### Conference Ownership

If property is held in the name of the conference and/or the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, the following policies apply:

1. Congregations must obtain approval from the conference before selling that property.
2. Congregations that desire to buy property and hold it in the name of the conference and/or the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must obtain approval from the conference before making the purchase or borrowing money to do so.
3. Congregations that disband or sever connections with the conference must surrender all property within 30 days of such action.

**653****Congregational Ownership**

Congregations are permitted to obtain title to their property if so desired. The following policies apply:

1. Transferring title from the name of the conference and/or the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, to that of the congregation requires a vote of two-thirds of adult members of the church. Following a vote for local church property ownership, the board of administration will send a letter to the annual conference notifying them of their action. The annual conference will respond with a letter of acknowledgement that the title belongs to the local conference as long as that local conference remains a member of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. If a local conference that has obtained title and owns property disbands or severs connection with the annual conference, it must surrender the title to all properties to the annual conference within 30 days of such actions, even if titled in the name of the congregation.

2. Congregations do not need conference approval to sell such property.

3. Congregations do not need conference approval to buy property to be titled in the name of the congregation, nor to borrow money to do so.

4. Congregations assume total liability for all debts or claims made against property titled in their name.

5. Any church that has received conference financial support within the past ten years may not obtain title and own property purchased with conference funds unless the conference approves ownership. If the congregation disbands or severs connections with the conference, they must surrender the property within 30 days of such action, even if titled in the name of the congregation.

**654****Property Reverting to the Conference**

When property reverts to the conference, the conference may do any of the following:

1. Donate or sell it back to the congregation, if still in existence, according to a mutual agreement of understanding.

2. Restart the congregation or start a new congregation in the same community.

3. Sell the property to outside interests and use the funds for ministries within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International.

PART IX

# Leadership Teams

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Chapter 38: Leadership Teams

Chapter 39: Administrative Leadership Team

Chapter 40: Education Leadership Team

Chapter 41: Global Ministries Leadership Team

Chapter 42: Healthy Church Leadership Team

Chapter 43: Women's Ministry Leadership Team

# Chapter 38

# Leadership Teams

## 701

### **Purpose**

Leadership Teams are responsible for the oversight and operation of specific areas of ministry. Each leadership team will work with the appropriate staff members as assigned by the job descriptions established by the Executive Leadership Team. Leadership teams may establish smaller ministry teams to work in specific areas, under the supervision of that leadership team.

## 702

### **Personnel**

1. Chairpersons of leadership teams are appointed by the Executive Leadership Team, upon the recommendation of the bishop, with the exception of the Education Leadership Team.

2. Members of leadership teams are appointed by the Executive Leadership Team, with the exception of the Education Leadership Team. The bishop and the team chairpersons will present nominations to the Executive Leadership Team for consideration. Appointments are indefinite and can be changed at any time by the Executive Leadership Team, depending on the needs in the specific team.

3. The voting members of leadership teams shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy.

4. Any staffpersons assigned to work with leadership teams shall be advisory members of the team.

5. The Executive Leadership Team will fill vacancies on the leadership teams.

6. Total membership on each leadership team will be up to ten.

## 703

### **Accountability**

The leadership teams shall submit reports to meetings of the US National

Conference, the National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.

## Chapter 39

# Administrative Leadership Team

**711**

### **Purpose**

The Administrative Leadership Team oversees the financial operations of the US National Conference and the operation of the UB Headquarters building.

**712**

### **Personnel**

#### **1. Members**

The Administrative Leadership Team consists of:

- a. The chairperson appointed by the Executive Leadership Team.
- b. The US bishop.
- c. Up to eight additional members appointed by the Executive Leadership Team. One of these members may come from outside the denomination.
- d. The Finance director as an advisory member.

#### **2. Lay/Clergy Ratio**

The voting members of the Administrative Leadership Team shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy.

**713**

### **Administrative Leadership Team Officers**

The Administrative Leadership Team shall elect an assistant chairperson and recording secretary at its first meeting following its appointment. These officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. All officers shall be United

Brethren members.

**714****Meetings**

The Administrative Leadership Team shall meet at least annually. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**715****Executive Committee**

The executive committee shall consist of the officers and the US bishop. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson. A majority of its members shall constitute a quorum.

**716****Duties and Powers**

1. The Administrative Leadership Team shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of US National Conference financial operations—the pension and ministerial aid programs, insurance, investments, etc.

2. The Administrative Leadership Team shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the UB Headquarters Building—staff, payroll, equipment, maintenance, etc.

3. The Administrative Leadership Team shall report to the meetings of the US National Conference, the National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.

4. The Administrative Leadership Team may establish ministry teams to work in specific areas.

**717****Vacancies**

The Executive Leadership Team will fill vacancies on the Administrative Leadership Team. The Administrative Leadership Team may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the Executive Leadership Team.

**718****Funds**

The Finance director shall hold all Administrative Leadership Team funds subject to the direction of the Administrative Leadership Team. No funds shall be distributed by the Finance director unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the Administrative Leadership Team to do so.

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## Chapter 40

# Education Leadership Team

721

### **The Director of Education**

The US National Conference shall elect a Director of Education.

#### **1. Election of the Director of Education**

a. *Nominating Committee.* The nominating committee appointed by the Executive Leadership Team to nominate candidates for US bishop shall also serve as the Nominating Committee for the Director of Education.

b. The nominating committee shall present its nominee(s) to the US National Conference.

c. *Amendments to the Report.* The nominating committee report may be amended by addition from the floor of the US National Conference. However, before the report can be adopted, those nominated by amendment must be interviewed by the nominating committee to determine if there are circumstances that would prevent them from serving, if elected.

d. *Election.* The election shall be conducted immediately after the report is adopted. Persons elected must receive a majority of the votes cast by ballot.

#### **2. Duties of the Director of Education**

The Director of Education creates and promotes interest in Christian higher education throughout the US National Conference

722

### **Personnel**

#### **1. Members**

The Education Leadership Team shall consist of the following:

142

- a. The US bishop.
- b. Seven members elected by the US National Board.
- c. The Education Director elected by the US National Conference and any associate staff shall be advisory members.

**2. Terms**

Team members shall serve terms of four years, and shall be eligible to serve no more than three consecutive terms without one year off the team. However, the US National Board may elect a team member to serve additional terms without regard to the three consecutive term limit. Such exceptions would be considered:

- a. To allow a commission member to serve as chair or vice chair of the board of Huntington College.
- b. To fill a need for specific expertise or unique perspective on the team.

**3. Lay/Clergy Ration**

The voting members of the Education Leadership Team shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy.

**723****Team Officers**

The Education Leadership Team shall elect a chairperson, assistant chairperson, and recording secretary at its first meeting following its appointment. These officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. All officers shall be United Brethren members.

**724****Meetings**

The Education Leadership Team shall meet at least annually. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**725****Executive Committee**

The executive committee shall consist of the officers and the US bishop. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of two of its members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**726****Duties and Powers**

1. The Education Leadership Team is responsible for policies which effect the work of higher education in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
2. The Education Leadership Team shall report to the meetings of the US National Conference, the National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.
3. The Education Leadership Team is responsible for the oversight of Huntington College in Huntington, Indiana.

4. The Education Leadership Team is responsible for ministerial education for the US National Conference.

5. The Education Leadership Team is responsible for the oversight of the United Brethren Historical Society.

**727****Vacancies**

The Executive Leadership Team will fill vacancies on the Education Leadership Team. The Education Leadership Team may suggest persons to be considered for appointment.

**728****Funds**

The Finance director shall hold Education Leadership Team funds subject to the direction of the Education Leadership Team. No funds shall be distributed by the Finance director unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the Education Leadership Team to do so.

# Chapter 41

# Global Ministries Leadership Team

731

## **Purpose**

The Global Ministries Leadership Team is established in compliance with Christ's Commission to go into all the world as His witnesses and to carry out the missionary program of the United States National Conference.

732

## **The Director of Global Ministries**

The US National Conference Global Ministries Leadership Team will be led by a Director of Global Ministries.

### **1. Election of the Director of Global Ministries**

a. *Nominating Committee.* The nominating committee appointed by the Executive Leadership Team to nominate candidates for US bishop shall also serve as the nominating committee for the Director of Global Ministries.

b. *The Nominating Committee shall present its nominee(s) to the US National Conference.*

c. *Amendments to the Report.* The nominating committee report may be amended by addition from the floor of the US National Conference. However, before the report can be adopted, those nominated by amendment must be interviewed by the nominating committee to determine if there are circumstances that would prevent them from serving, if elected.

d. *Adoption of the Report.* The US National Conference will adopt the report of the nominating committee (with possible amendments) and submit this slate to the General Conference of the United Brethren Church International for election of

the US Director of Global Ministries.

## **2. Duties of the Director of Global Ministries**

a. The Global Ministries director will be responsible to oversee all the responsibilities assigned to Global Ministries.

b. The Global Ministries Director will be responsible to the US bishop for the performance of the assigned duties and regular evaluation.

c. The Global Ministries director will be responsible to provide a written annual report to the US National Board, Executive Leadership Team, and the Global Ministries Leadership Team, as well as a quadrennial report for the US National Conference.

d. The Global Ministries director will be a member of the US National Conference, the US National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.

## **733**

### **Personnel**

#### **1. Members**

The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall consist of the following:

a. Chairperson of the Global Ministries Leadership Team.

b. The US bishop.

c. The Women's Ministry Missions Coordinator, as appointed by the Executive Leadership Team.

d. Up to seven additional members appointed by the Executive Leadership Team. One member may come from outside the denomination. Joint ministry agreements may impact the appointments of some of these members.

e. The Global Ministries director and any associate directors shall be advisory members.

#### **2. Lay/Clergy Ratio**

The voting members of the Global Ministries Leadership Team shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy.

## **734**

### **Global Ministries Leadership Team Officers**

The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall elect an assistant chairperson and secretary at its first regular meeting following its appointment. These officers shall hold office until their successors are selected. All officers shall be United Brethren members.

## **735**

### **Meetings**

The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall meet at least annually. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**736****Executive Committee**

The executive committee shall consist of the officers, the US bishop, and any other persons as required by any joint ministry agreements. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**737****Duties and Powers**

1. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of mission-related ministries.

2. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall report to the US National Conference, the National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.

3. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to missionaries—recruitment, training, appointment, support, travel, duties, supervision, etc.

4. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall help other United Brethren national conferences be effective in their ministries.

5. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall supervise any new ethnic ministries in the United States that are not a part of an annual conference ministry.

6. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall help local churches in the United States promote missions awareness and interest.

7. The Global Ministries Leadership Team shall promote the missionary program of the US National Conference in annual conferences and local churches, encouraging a priority commitment to funding United Brethren missions.

**738****Vacancies**

The Executive Leadership Team will fill vacancies on the Global Ministries Leadership Team. The Global Ministries Leadership Team may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the Executive Leadership Team.

**739****Funds**

The Finance director shall hold all Global Ministries Leadership Team funds subject to the direction of the Global Ministries Leadership Team. No funds shall be distributed by the Finance director unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the Global Ministries Leadership Team to do so.

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## Chapter 42

# Healthy Church Leadership Team

**741**

### **Purpose**

The Healthy Church Leadership Team exists to serve by helping our pastors and laity build a quality ministry for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

**742**

### **Personnel**

#### **1. Members**

The Healthy Church Leadership Team shall consist of the following:

- a. Chairperson of the Healthy Church Leadership Team.
- b. The US bishop.
- c. Up to eight members appointed by the Executive Leadership Team. One of these members may be from outside the denomination.
- d. Any staff assigned to work with the Healthy Church Leadership Team shall be advisory members.

#### **2. Lay/Clergy Ratio**

The voting members of the Healthy Church Leadership Team shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy.

**743**

### **Healthy Church Leadership Team Officers**

The Healthy Church Leadership Team shall elect an assistant chairperson and

**148**

secretary at its first meeting following its appointment. These officers shall hold office until their successors are appointed. All officers shall be United Brethren members.

**744****Meetings**

The Healthy Church Leadership Team shall meet at least annually. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**745****Executive Committee**

The executive committee shall consist of the officers and the US bishop. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of two of its members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**746****Duties and Powers**

1. The Healthy Church Leadership Team shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of ministries and services to help develop healthy local churches.

2. The Healthy Church Leadership Team shall report to the US National Conference, the National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.

3. The Healthy Church Leadership Team shall help congregations improve their abilities to develop healthy congregations. This will include a wide range of areas, such as evangelism, discipleship, Christian education, youth, family, stewardship, women's ministries, etc.

4. The Healthy Church Leadership Team will aid in the equipping of the church multiplication efforts of the US National Conference.

5. The Healthy Church Leadership Team is responsible for the US National Conference's marketing services.

**747****Vacancies**

The Executive Leadership Team will fill vacancies on the Healthy Church Leadership Team. The Healthy Church Leadership Team may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the Executive Leadership Team.

**748****Funds**

The Finance director shall hold Healthy Church Leadership Team funds subject to the direction of the Healthy Church Leadership Team. No funds shall be distributed by the Finance director unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the Healthy Church Leadership Team to do so.

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## Chapter 43

# Women's Ministry Leadership Team

**751**

### **Purpose**

The Women's Ministry Leadership Team exists to equip women for greater service:

1. To engage women in missions.
2. To equip women in evangelism.
3. To encourage women to provide care/support.
4. To exhort women to seize ministry in all seasons of a woman's life.
5. To excite women in prayer.

**752**

### **Personnel**

#### **1. Members**

- a. Chairperson of the Women's Ministry Leadership Team.
- b. The coordinators of each ministry area appointed by the Executive Leadership Team:
  - (1) Missions
  - (2) Care/Support
  - (3) Women's Life
  - (4) Evangelism
  - (5) Discipleship
  - (6) Prayer
- c. Up to three more members appointed by the Executive Leadership Team.
- d. The US bishop to be an ex officio member.

e. Any staff assigned to work with the Women's Ministry Leadership Team shall be advisory members.

**2. Lay /Clergy Ratio**

The lay/clergy ratio does not apply to the Women's Ministry Leadership Team.

**753****Women's Ministry Officers**

The Women's Ministry Leadership Team shall elect an assistant chairperson and secretary at its first meeting following its appointment.

**754****Meetings**

The Women's Ministry Leadership Team shall meet at least annually. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**755****Executive Committee**

The executive committee shall consist of the officers. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of two of its members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

**756****Duties and Powers**

1. The Women's Ministry Leadership Team shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of ministries and services to help develop healthy women's ministry in local churches.

2. The Executive Leadership Team shall appoint a National Women's Director, who is to be an advisory member of the Executive Leadership Team. The Women's Ministry Leadership Team shall establish the job description for the Women's Ministry director and its coordinators with the Executive Leadership Team's approval.

3. The Women's Ministry Leadership Team Chairperson shall report to the US National Conference, the National Board, and the Executive Leadership Team.

4. The missions coordinator will be a voting member of the Global Ministries Leadership Team.

5. The Women's Ministry Leadership Team shall help congregations improve their abilities to develop healthy Women's ministry in the local church. This will include areas such as missions, evangelism, care/support, women's life, discipleship, and prayer.

**757****Vacancies**

The Executive Leadership Team will fill vacancies on the Women's Ministry

Leadership Team. The Women's Ministry Leadership Team may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the Executive Leadership Team.

**758****Funds**

The Finance director of the National Conference shall hold Women's Ministry Leadership Team funds subject to direction of the Women's Ministry Leadership Team. No funds shall be distributed by the Finance director unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the Women's Ministry Leadership Team.

PART X

# Church Conflict and Resolution

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Chapter 44: Local Church Conflict Resolution

Chapter 45: Discipline of Church Members

Chapter 46: Discipline of Church Bodies

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## Chapter 44

# Local Church Conflict Resolution

The following guidelines and procedures are designed to help congregations, pastors, and conference leaders deal with local church conflict. The goal is to resolve the conflict and restore any damaged relationships. This process requires that the parties involved be willing to work through their differences in a spirit of Christian unity, and that they understand the principles of biblical conflict resolution taught in Matthew 18:15-17.

### **801**

#### **Negotiation Phase**

Individuals in conflict should first attempt to resolve their differences privately, without congregational or conference intervention. If this fails to bring a satisfactory resolution—either the accused party denies any wrong-doing, or they are unable to settle matters between themselves—one or two witnesses may be asked to assist.

### **802**

#### **Mediation Phase**

Conflicts that cannot be settled privately should be resolved within the congregation. Local church boards and commissions may be asked to deal with the conflict.

### **803**

#### **Arbitration Phase**

A local church is responsible for resolving conflict involving its own members. However, conflicts not resolved within the congregation may be referred to

conference leadership. If efforts at the negotiation and mediation phases fail, the local church may deem it necessary to refer the conflict to the conference. As a general rule, this should occur only at the invitation of the board of administration or Personnel Relations Commission.

The conference superintendent will determine the appropriate arbiter(s) to deal with the conflict. These arbiters will make a final report with appropriate recommendations. Their decisions will be considered final.

### **804**

#### **Termination Phase**

Any party refusing to adhere to the church's ruling may be removed from church membership and from all ministry and leadership positions. The conference has the authority to remove guilty parties from church membership and leadership positions.

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## Chapter 45

# Discipline of Church Members

811

### Introduction

All United Brethren members are expected to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in Scripture. Their conduct should demonstrate moral purity, personal honesty, faithfulness to the Bible, and unity in the body of Christ. The church is commanded to discipline its members when they continue in open and habitual sin.

Every Christian is ultimately accountable to God. But Christians who agree to become members of the United Brethren church also voluntarily submit themselves to the authority of its governing authorities. Likewise, church leaders have an obligation to discipline its members when necessary.

812

### Offenses Requiring Church Discipline

Any member or minister of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, may be subject to church discipline for any of the following offenses:

1. Teaching doctrines contrary to the doctrines of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
2. Disobeying the provisions of the *Discipline*, or tolerating such disobedience.
3. Insubordination or willful refusal to recognize church authority, whether at the local, conference, or general church level.
4. Conduct unbecoming a member of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
5. Serious or persistent neglect of duty.

**813****Purposes of Church Discipline**

Church discipline has several purposes:

1. Encourage the sinning member to repent.
2. Restore the sinning member to fellowship with Christ and the church.
3. Warn other members against such sin.
4. Uphold and maintain the integrity, purity, and testimony of the church.

**814****Process of Church Discipline**

Every situation requiring church discipline is different. Therefore, church leaders need flexibility in how they handle such situations. Any or all of the following actions might be appropriate:

1. Private rebuke of the sinning member.
2. Rebuke before two or three witnesses.
3. Public rebuke before the church.
4. Removal from leadership positions and other forms of involvement in the local church.
5. Removal of ministerial credentials.
6. Termination of membership by the local board.
7. Disassociation and severance of fellowship by the local congregation.

Regardless of the process used, leaders shall carry out the discipline in a spirit of Christian love, care, and sensitivity.

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## Chapter 46

# Discipline of Church Bodies

### 821

#### Introduction

All organizational entities of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, are expected to follow and uphold the standards set forth in the *Discipline*. When individuals and organizational entities disagree with those standards, the proper recourse is to submit proposals for change to the US National Conference. Non-compliance with the standards agreed upon by the broader church is not a valid option.

### 822

#### Offenses Requiring Church Discipline

Any local church, conference, or other body or agency of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, may be subject to church discipline for any of these offenses:

1. Disseminating or tolerating the teaching of doctrines contrary to the doctrines of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, as stated in the *Discipline*.
2. Disobeying the provisions of the *Discipline*, or tolerating such disobedience.
3. Infringing on the rights of United Brethren members, as stated in the *Discipline*.
4. Insubordination or willful refusal to recognize church authority, whether at the local, conference, or general church level.

### 823

#### Jurisdiction

1. *Annual Conferences*. Annual conferences are responsible for discipline

involving the actions or decisions of:

- a. Local churches in that conference.
- b. Pastors and licensed ministers in the conference.
- c. Camps, organizations, and other entities which report to the annual conference.

2. *US National Board*. The US National Board is responsible for discipline involving the actions or decisions of:

- a. Annual conferences.
- b. Huntington College.
- c. Leadership teams, officials, and other entities which report to the US National Board.

d. Churches, organizations, and United Brethren personnel not under the direct authority of an annual conference.

3. *US National Conference*. The US National Conference is responsible for discipline involving the actions or decisions of the US National Board. During the year of the US National Conference, it shall have responsibility for areas normally under the jurisdiction of the US National Board.

## 824

### Process of Discipline

1. Situations of a corporate nature which require discipline must be handled on an individual basis. The principles of conflict resolution outlined in chapter 44 should be followed as much as applicable. The persons involved in dealing with the situations will vary, depending on the level—local, conference, national—and the specific bodies or persons involved. Therefore, it is impractical to outline specific procedures intended to address all possible situations. Rather, the relevant governing body shall have discretion in how it proceeds.

2. Depending on the situation, such actions as the following might be appropriate:

- a. Private rebuke of the group in question, or its leader(s), by a conference or national leader.
- b. Rebuke of the group in question, or its leader(s), before two or three witnesses.
- c. Rebuke before the appropriate governing body.
- d. Removal of group members from their positions.
- e. Disbanding of the group.



PART XI

# Appendix

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Appendix A: A Model for Membership as a Process

Appendix B: A Sample Local Church Structure

Appendix C: US National Conference Personnel

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## Appendix A

# A Model for Membership as a Process

This appendix presents a membership process with three components. Several key facts must be understood:

1. This process is totally optional. Churches may stay with their current method for handling membership, or they may choose part or all of the elements of this process as described below.

2. This does not present three levels of membership. Rather, it offers two preliminary steps which enable persons to voluntarily make a connection to a church and feel part of the church. Only the third component is actual United Brethren membership.

3. This does not change what it means to be a United Brethren member. All of the requirements stated in the *Discipline* still apply.

4. Material in the Appendix is intended as information. It is not part of the by-laws, and churches are not required to follow methods stated in the Appendix.

With that in mind, this appendix outlines a three-step process which leads to church membership. Each step involves an agreement—a covenant—on the person's part. This could be a signed covenant, or a verbalized covenant. Local churches can mold or shape the number of steps and what happens at each step. Each step is intended to lead the person deeper in spiritual maturity and local church involvement.

This is simply a model. Churches may adapt it to fit their situation and needs, as long as their practices and teachings concerning membership do not conflict with the statements on membership in the *Discipline* (see especially chapters 6-

9 and 21).

It should be emphasized that becoming a member of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, is not a pinnacle of spiritual maturity. Instead, our membership process would reflect a mature and studied approach to life transformation while connecting the believer with both the local church and its broader fellowship. This three-step process is strongly tooled to bring about this life-transformation—steadily increasing devotion, fellowship and service, and familiarizing prospective members with UB distinctives and convictions.

### **Step 1: A Believer in Christ Covenant**

#### **Purpose**

This step lets new believers choose to connect themselves to the local church as they begin their new life in Christ. It familiarizes new believers with United Brethren heritage and teachings. The covenant statements help describe the requirements and obligations involved at this point of growth and involvement. This step is essential to maintain our evangelical heritage.

#### **Covenant Statements**

Confirmation of salvation: “I have trusted Christ to be my Savior and Lord.”

Affirmation through baptism: “I have been baptized, or am so willing.”

Agreement to Confession of Faith: “I agree with the Confession of Faith.”

Covenant to spiritual growth: “I am committed to growing in my relationship with Christ, and understand that my attendance in and support of this church provides a foundation for that growth.”

Covenant to submit to the local church leadership: “I will submit to the leadership of this church as they lovingly lead and guide me.”

### **Step 2: A Learner in Christ Covenant**

#### **Purpose**

This step deepens the life transformation occurring in a new believer’s life, and more substantively connects the believer through fellowship and service. It lays the foundation for true membership in the UB church. The covenant statements help describe the requirements and obligations involved at this point in the person’s spiritual development.

#### **Covenant Statements**

Covenant to deepening personal devotional life (prayer/Word): “I have examined ways to deepen my walk with Christ, and will work to enhance my time in prayer and the Word.”

Covenant to nurture and protect my family (when applicable): “I have studied my role in my family from a Scriptural perspective, and will continue to safeguard and strengthen that role for God’s glory and for my family’s best health.”

Covenant to measure my lifestyle against the Word of God: “I have deepened my understanding of holiness as taught in the Bible, and will seek to increasingly bring my behavior into line with those teachings.”

Covenant to deepen my commitment as a steward: “I have examined the Scripture’s teachings about stewardship and giving, and will apply those teachings in my own life.”

Covenant to deepen my relationship with believers: “I realize that my relationships with other Christians are a key part of my spiritual life, and I will continue building and nurturing those relationships.”

Covenant to serve: “I have made a strong effort to understand my uniqueness in Christ, and will use my gifts and abilities to actively serve in the church.”

Covenant to become equipped in evangelism and missions: “I will seek to win people to Christ both through my own contacts with non-Christians and by supporting local and worldwide evangelistic efforts.”

Covenant to affirm the Church of the United Brethren in Christ: “I have examined in depth the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and will support our denomination’s leaders in their worldwide ministry.”

### **Step 3: A United Brethren in Christ Membership Covenant**

#### **Purpose**

At this step, the person becomes a United Brethren member as traditionally understood and practiced in the United Brethren church. The person understands local church polity and the connection with the UB denomination, and is eligible to vote in matters pertaining to United Brethren polity and policy, to serve on the administrative board or personnel relations commission (or their equivalent), to hold offices or places of service within the broader UB church, and to apply for ministry licensing.

#### **Covenant Statements**

Covenant to participate in my local church polity: “I have studied and understood the organizational and administrative dynamics of my local church, and will support my church’s processes to the best of my ability.”

Covenant to submit to United Brethren standards: “I have studied and understood what it means to be a member of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ; I have answered the membership questions contained in the *Discipline*, and I covenant to live accordingly.”

Covenant to support United Brethren processes: “I will do my best to understand broader denominational issues and vote to the best of my ability regarding elections or issues that shape and support my local church and our denomination.”

## Appendix B

# A Sample Structure

*The local church structure presented here is purely optional. Your church has no obligation to follow it. Chapter 22 states clearly that churches are free to develop the structure that best fits their needs and situation.*

*Many UB churches use a commission structure similar to the one presented here. This sample structure is provided only as a source of ideas as your church formulates a structure best suited for your church and community. The number of commissions, their titles, the personnel, the position titles, the areas of responsibility—you don't have to follow any of it. But perhaps this will help get you started.*

### **Evangelism and Discipleship Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, and four persons appointed by the board.

**Areas of Responsibility.** Any evangelism and/or discipleship ministry, any spiritual renewal emphasis, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

### **Missions Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, president of the WMF, president of Masters Men International, and two persons appointed by the board. (If the elected chairperson is president of either the WMF or Master's Men International, the board will appoint three persons.)

**Areas of Responsibility.** Missions conferences, self-denial emphases, thank offerings, mission work teams, and other areas of ministry assigned by the board.

### **Worship and Music Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, pastor, and three persons appointed by the local board.

**Areas of Responsibility.** Ushers, greeters, children's worship, choir, organist, pianist, special music, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the local board.

### **Christian Education Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, Sunday school superintendent/director of Christian education, youth sponsor, and two persons appointed by the local board. (If the elected chairperson is either the Sunday school superintendent/director of Christian education or the youth sponsor, the board will appoint three persons.)

**Areas of Responsibility.** Sunday school, youth, VBS, singles, camping, senior adults, family, children's ministries, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

### **Spiritual Care Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, lay leader, pastor, and two persons appointed by the board.

**Areas of Responsibility.** Visitation, deacons' work, social concerns, food pantry, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

This commission also oversees areas related to membership. This may include interviewing and recommending persons for membership, conducting membership classes, correcting the membership roll, and the discipline and restoration of members.

### **Property Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, and four persons appointed by the board. These people are the trustees of all church property.

**Areas of Responsibility.** Care for all physical property needs—including the insuring, maintaining, and protection of all property—and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

### **Finance Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, church treasurer, and three persons appointed by the board.

**Areas of Responsibility.** All financial policies and procedures, pastor's salary and benefits, annual budget, the annual audit of church records, stewardship emphasis, and other areas of responsibility as assigned by the board.

The Finance Commission will name a financial secretary from the church membership. This person will receive and record all offerings received for the support of the local and benevolent budget, provide for the counting of these funds by two or more persons, and keep a confidential record of individual contributions given by envelope or check.

### **Personnel Relations Commission**

**Personnel.** The elected chairperson, the chairman of the delegates, and three persons appointed by the board.

**Areas of Responsibility.**

a. Serve as a conferring and counseling committee to the pastor and other employed personnel.

- b. Be sensitive to the relationship between the pastor and the local church.
- c. Cultivate the pastor-church relationship.
- d. Interpret to the congregation the nature and function of the pastoral office.
- e. Make recommendations to the Finance Commission concerning the pastor's salary and benefits.
- f. Make recommendations to the board concerning vacation, pulpit supply, and attendance at conventions and seminars.
- g. Cooperate with the conference stationing committee in securing a pastor when the need arises.
- h. Make recommendations to the board concerning job descriptions of other employed personnel.

---

## Appendix C

# US National Conference Personnel

### **Elected Officials for 2001-2005**

- Rev. Paul Hirschy, Bishop
- Rev. Gary Dilley, Director of Global Ministries
- Dr. G. Blair Dowden, Director of Education

### **Associated Personnel**

- Marda Hoffman, Finance Director
- Steve Dennie, Communications Director
- Donna Hollopeter, Associate Director of Global Ministries

### **Leadership Teams**

*Leadership team appointments are not four-year appointments, but can be changed at any time (except for the Education Team members, who are elected by the US National Conference).*

#### **Executive Leadership Team**

Paul Hirschy (chairperson), Gary Dilley, G. Blair Dowden, Patrick Jones, Brent Birdsall, Dennis Miller, Dave Rahn, Paul Michelson, Russ Baker, Dan Paternoster. *Advisory:* Marda Hoffman, Steve Dennie, Donna Hollopeter.

#### **Administrative Leadership Team**

Ed Souers (chairperson), Paul Hirschy (bishop), Skip Savage, Tom Ayers, Carol Morehead, Dale Hauptert, Dirk Small, Lester Smith. *Advisory:* Marda Hoffman.

**Education Leadership Team**

Don Duff (chairperson), Paul Hirschy (bishop), Gary Dilley, Daryl Elliott, Pat Jones, Bernard Hull, Paul Lehman, Tom Ponsot. *Advisory:* G. Blair Dowden (president of Huntington College).

**Global Ministries Leadership Team**

Luke Fetters (chairperson), Paul Hirschy (bishop), Brent Birdsall, Dave Datema, Cliff Miller, Jeff Sherlock, Lois Mason, Michael Newman, Toby Lazo, Randy Fennig. *Representing Canada:* Brian Magnus, Ruth Benner. *Advisory:* Gary Dilley, Donna Hollopeter, Denis Casco, Ron Webb.

**Healthy Church Leadership Team**

Dennis Miller (chairperson), Paul Hirschy (bishop), Dennis Sites, David Riddle, Randy Carpenter, Phil Whipple, Paul Hammel, Ruth Ralph, Barb Furry, Jim Hittler.

**Women's Ministry Leadership Team**

Kathy Bruce (chairperson), Valerie Reynolds (Evangelism coordinator), Donna Hollopeter (Missions coordinator), Donelle Raab (Care/Support coordinator), Cathy Grill (Women's Life coordinator), Annette Sites (Discipleship coordinator), Nancy Fritz (Prayer coordinator), Jeanie Helman (member at large).

**Bishops Emeriti**

George E. Weaver, 9191 Round Top Road, #315, Cincinnati, OH 45251.  
Bishop 1969-1977.

Raymond A. Waldfoegel, 1537 Guilford St., Huntington, IN 46750.  
Bishop 1969-1981.

C. Ray Miller, 2260 Dieringer Dr., Huntington, IN 46750.  
Bishop 1973-1993.

Wilber L. Sites, Jr., 2719 Fillmore Drive, Chambersburg, PA 17201.  
Bishop 1977-1989.

Clarence A. Kopp, Jr., 2038 College Ave., Huntington, IN 46750.  
Bishop 1981-1993.

Ray A. Seilhamer, 3442 E 722 N, Huntington, IN 46750. Bishop 1993-2001.

**US Conference personnel may be contacted at:**

United Brethren Headquarters  
302 Lake Street  
Huntington, Ind. 46750  
Phone: (260) 356-2312  
FAX: (260) 356-4730

**Website**

The website for the US National Conference is: [www.ub.org](http://www.ub.org)



# The International Church

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Chapter 1: Confession of Faith

Chapter 2: Core Values

Chapter 3: International Constitution

Chapter 4: International Bylaws

All United Brethren national conferences, including the US National Conference, comprise the worldwide Church of the United Brethren in Christ International. The following pages contain the governing documents of the international church. These can only be changed by the quadrennial General Conference, which consists of delegates from all national conferences.

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# Part 1

# Confession of Faith

## 1

### **The Triune God**

In the name of God, we declare and confess before men that we believe in the only true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that these three are one—the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both; that this triune God created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same.

## 2

### **Jesus Christ, the Son**

We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is very God and man; that He became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary and was born of her; that He is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in Him accept the grace proffered in Jesus; that this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God to intercede for us; and that He shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

## 3

### **The Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide**

We believe in the Holy Ghost; that He is equal in being with the Father and the Son, and that He comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

## 4

### **The Church**

We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

**5****The Holy Bible and Salvation**

We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God as the only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

**6****The Salvation Message**

We also believe that what is contained in the Holy Scriptures, to wit: the fall in Adam and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

**7****The Christian Ordinances**

We believe that the ordinances, viz. baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use and practiced by all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on all the children of God particularly to practice them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. Also, the example of washing feet is left to the judgment of every one to practice or not; but it is not becoming of any of our preachers or members to traduce any of their brethren whose judgment and understanding in these respects is different from their own, either in public or in private. Whosoever shall make himself guilty in this respect shall be considered a traducer of his brethren, and shall be answerable for the same.

## Part 2

# Core Values

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International, is characterized by these core values:

### 11

#### **We Adhere to the Confession of Faith**

The United Brethren Confession of Faith, adopted in 1815, states the core doctrinal beliefs to which all United Brethren conferences, churches, and members must adhere. On many theological and social issues, people of equal Christian commitment and insight may interpret the Bible differently, and we allow room for that. But when it comes to the simple statements contained in the Confession of Faith—on God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Bible, salvation, and the ordinances—we do not allow diversity. As such, it is our denomination's key unifying document, our line in the sand which must not be crossed.

### 12

#### **We Respect Unity Amidst Diversity**

The United Brethren church began with two very different men, Martin Boehm and William Otterbein, who realized that on the essentials of the faith, they were alike—that they were brothers in Christ. They differed in church background, in temperament, in stature, and in the finer points of theology. But when it came to the core of what it meant to be a Christian, they found unity.

This spirit has characterized the United Brethren church over the years. We prefer to allow diversity when it comes to worship style, Bible versions, military service, social and political action, church programs, method of baptism, end times scenarios, and other issues, as long as the positions taken do not clearly conflict with God's Word or our Confession of Faith.

In the same way, we let churches and national conferences organize in the

way they think will best fit their vision, needs, and culture. We don't want our mission to be hindered by man-made structures. We also realize that a persecuted, underground United Brethren church will look much different from a United Brethren church in a free society, and that various cultural issues will cause further diversity. Our mission must take precedence over methods.

Yet amidst this diversity, we expect unity. We stand firm on biblical absolutes, allow freedom where the Bible allows freedom, and seek to maintain unity when disagreements arise.

### 13

#### **We Seek the Lost**

The United Brethren church began as a movement of people with a passion to reach lost people. They were willing to do whatever would bring people to Christ. As people accept Christ as Savior, we then lead them further down the road of discipleship, which includes baptism, training in righteousness, the use of spiritual gifts, and holy living.

We believe in a radical conversion which results in a transformed life. This goes beyond head knowledge, beyond church attendance, beyond practicing the sacraments. Christ's presence in a Christian's life is demonstrated by a lifestyle of faithfulness and obedience to God.

### 14

#### **We Demonstrate Social Concern**

We must not only seek the salvation of our fellow human beings, but show genuine concern for their total well-being. We recognize our responsibility to victims of poverty, prejudice, injustice, and other forms of human suffering.

The poor will always be among us, and we cannot ignore their plight; the Bible clearly states our obligation to those living in poverty. But there are many others, whether they are poor or not, whose situation requires our aid. They include persons in prison, immigrants, widows, orphans, the unborn, the handicapped, the homeless, the elderly, and victims of abuse. We also respond corporately to large-scale tragedies, giving sacrificially to help victims of natural disasters or social strife.

Demonstrating social concern also involves raising our voice against injustice and prejudice. We stand against discrimination, slavery, and injustice, insisting that equal rights be granted to everyone. We advocate fairness in the workplace, in the courts, and in all other settings, and seek the end of any discrimination based upon racial, national, economic, or social differences.

### 15

#### **We Preserve Our Christian Witness**

We believe that our lifestyles need to reflect God to other people. For that reason, we will make choices, sometimes stated through national conference moral and social standards, to behave in certain ways which identify us as Christians and protect the integrity of Christ's church. These choices will vary

from culture to culture, and may involve participating or not participating in certain activities. While we resist legalistic rules, we value a lifestyle which clearly honors Christ in the eyes of others, both Christians and nonChristians.

**16****We Protect the Family**

God instituted the family as our main social unit, and it is within the family that children are to be created, nurtured, and trained. Families come in many forms, but all need to be regulated by God's Word. A husband and wife must remain faithful and loving to each other, and faithful and loving to the children God has entrusted to them. We realize we must constantly resist the forces attempting to undermine the strength and integrity of marriages and families, and the design outlined for them in God's Word: a married husband and wife, and any children they might have.

**17****We Esteem Each Other**

We are a connectional church. As United Brethren people across the world, we recognize that what happens in any of our churches matters to each of us. We are concerned about the welfare of sister churches not only in the next town, but in other countries. From Central America to West Africa to the Far East to North America, we are part of each other. We help each other, we learn from each other, we esteem each other, and we cooperate with each other to accomplish more for the Kingdom than we could by ourselves.

In the same vein, we value "the counsel of the brethren," meaning the collective wisdom and advice of our fellow believers. While individuals may not agree with the decision of a committee, commission or conference, or with a stand taken by the conference or denomination, unity demands that we respect that corporate view as the counsel of the brethren and follow it. We believe in holding each other accountable to the standards set corporately.

**18****We Link with the Larger Church**

We value connections with Christians outside of the United Brethren family. We are not separatist in mentality or practice. Rather, we intentionally develop connections with other Christian denominations and groups which are similar in purpose and spirit, so that we can more broadly advance the work of the Great Commission and impact our world.

# Part 3

# Constitution

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ International consists of national conferences and missions outreaches around the world. We are part of each other, and cooperate to more effectively carry out the Great Commission. The following Constitution is intended to ensure doctrinal unity, encourage cooperation among the national conferences, and extend the worldwide ministry of United Brethren churches.

## 21

### **Name**

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ International.

## 22

### **General Conference**

#### **1. Meetings**

The General Conference meets every four years to oversee and coordinate United Brethren ministry worldwide.

#### **2. Personnel**

a. The General Conference consists of ordained ministers and laypersons from each national conference.

b. Each national conference shall determine the method for selecting its own delegates.

c. All officials elected by the international General Conference are members ex officio of that Conference.

d. All delegates have full and equal rights of participation.

#### **3. Duties**

a. The General Conference guards the church's historic position of firmly

upholding biblical absolutes, allowing freedom in areas not clearly mandated by Scripture, and encouraging tolerance and unity when differences arise.

b. When practices, teachings, or decisions within a national conference challenge the doctrinal integrity, cooperative relationship, and/or international ministry of United Brethren churches, the General Conference has the authority to apply disciplinary action. National conferences can appeal such actions.

c. The General Conference accepts national conferences into the membership of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International.

d. The General Conference considers amendments to the international Constitution, Core Values, and Bylaws.

e. The General Conference determines the way in which any international ministries it establishes and the expenses it incurs are to be funded.

f. General Conference must not pass any rule which changes or eliminates the Confession of Faith.

## **23**

### **Amendments**

This Constitution and the Core Values can be amended by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference, followed by ratification by at least one-half of the national conferences. The national conferences shall act on the proposed amendment during their first meeting following General Conference. If and when one-half of the national conferences ratify the amendment, the amendment shall be declared to be in effect, according to the procedure established by the General Conference.

# Part 4

# By-Laws

## 31

### Introduction

These By-laws provide further guidance for governing the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International. The Bylaws can be changed by a majority vote of the General Conference.

## 32

### Membership

Local churches in a country may become a national conference in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

#### 1. Qualifications

A national conference must meet and maintain the following:

- a. It consists of at least five churches within that country.
- b. It is a legally recognized entity within that country.
- c. No other United Brethren national conference exists in that country.
- d. It is organized with a constitution and other governing documents.
- e. Its governing documents, teachings, and practices do not conflict with the Confession of Faith, Core Values, Constitution, and Bylaws of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

#### 2. Procedure

The following procedure will be used for bringing new national conferences into membership.

- a. The national conference votes to seek membership in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.
- b. The national conference sends a letter to the Executive Committee which includes:

(1) Its willingness to be bound by the Confession of Faith, Constitution, and Core Values of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

(2) An official request to be considered for membership.

c. The governing documents (constitution, by-laws, etc.) of the national conference are submitted to the Executive Committee.

d. The Executive Committee appoints a membership committee to examine whether that national conference meets the requirements for membership, and to consider any other relevant information and criteria.

e. The membership committee makes a report to the Executive Committee or General Conference concerning the request for membership.

f. The General Conference approves, by a two-thirds vote, the request for membership.

### **3. Rights of Membership**

National conference membership shall carry the following rights and duties:

a. Upon approval of the General Conference, a national conference will have full privileges of participation at General Conference.

b. National conferences shall be notified of all meetings of the General Conference and Executive Committee, and shall receive minutes of those meetings.

c. National conferences may withdraw from membership in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International. When this happens, churches within that national conference may maintain their identify as United Brethren churches if they do the following:

(1) Sever their relationship with the departing national conference.

(2) Ask the Executive Committee to determine their status within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

### **4. Discipline and Termination of Membership**

a. The Executive Committee may investigate allegations that a national conference is not complying with the membership qualifications of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

b. If the Executive Committee determines that the allegations are true, it may place the national conference under discipline and establish a course of action which:

(1) Protects the integrity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

(2) Details the conditions needed to bring the national conference back into fellowship.

c. The national conference has the right to send representatives to appear before the Executive Committee prior to any disciplinary action being imposed. The national conference must be notified of any potential disciplinary action at least 60 days before the Executive Committee meets.

d. If the Executive Committee decides to terminate the national conference's membership in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International, the

membership shall end only after a two-thirds vote of the next General Conference.

### 33

#### General Conference

##### 1. Representation

a. General Conference is responsible for establishing a formula to determine the number of delegates each national conference may send to the next General Conference. Although national conferences must choose their own representatives, the preference is that half of the delegates be ministers and half be laypersons.

b. The formula is based on average attendance at the main worship service during the most recent year possible preceding General Conference.

(1) National conferences with an average attendance of 250-5000 are entitled to two delegates.

(2) National conferences with an average attendance of 5001-10,000 are entitled to four delegates.

(3) For each additional 5000 in average attendance, a national conference is entitled to two additional delegates.

c. National conferences shall be responsible for the expenses of their own General Conference delegates. This is not to preclude expenses being raised by one national conference and offered for the expenses of those representatives from another national conference.

##### 2. Director of Global Ministries

The General Conference elects an ordained elder as the US Director of Global Ministries to serve as an ambassador of unity among national conferences and mission fields, in addition to other duties assigned by the US National Conference.

### 34

#### Executive Committee

##### 1. Membership

a. The members of the Executive Committee are the bishop or equivalent of each national conference. The General Conference shall name the convener.

b. If a member is unable to attend, an alternate from that country may attend as a full voting member.

c. The US Director of Global Ministries will be an advisory member of the Executive Committee. Additional advisory members may be appointed at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

##### 2. Meetings

a. The Executive Committee will meet annually, except during the year of General Conference. The meeting may occur by remote technology.

b. Each national conference shall be responsible for the expense of its own representatives on the Executive Committee. This is not to preclude expenses being raised by one national conference and offered for the expenses of those

representatives from another national conference.

### **3. Duties**

- a. Oversee the ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International, during the period between meetings of the General Conference.
- b. Provide for the bookkeeping and other finance-related needs of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.
- c. Elect from its membership a chairman and secretary.
- d. Investigate and approve requests for national conference membership.
- e. Determine the date and location for the next General Conference, and notify national conferences at least a year in advance.
- f. Be responsible for the program and other organizational aspects of General Conference.
- g. Promote and facilitate relationships and ministry partnerships among the various national conferences.
- h. Monitor changes in national conference governing documents, considering how they conform to the governing documents of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

## **35**

### **Finances**

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International, is not responsible for the financial operations or liabilities of any national conference.

## **36**

### **Guiding Principles**

1. All groups created as part of the international structure will be truly international in scope and membership.
2. National conferences are strongly encouraged to develop partnerships to advance the Great Commission, promote interaction between national conferences, and link resources to pursue common goals. Any ministry partnerships between national conferences need to be worked out between those national conferences.
3. National sovereignty shall be respected. No national conference has the authority to tell another national conference what to do. At the same time, a national conference may decide to discontinue its involvement in a cooperative venture.
4. National conferences should have an international vision, and should consider ways in which they can serve the international church.
5. Representation at the international level shall focus on people, not on monetary resources.
6. Vision needs to be set at the national conference level.
7. We value the connections between United Brethren national conferences, and want to ensure that communication, resource-sharing, and mutual ministry occurs among them.

## 37

**Decision-Making Foundations**

Historically, the United Brethren church has not avoided taking stands on important moral and social issues, whether relating to personal holiness or society as a whole. The United Brethren church recognizes its responsibility to help members apply biblical commands and principles to contemporary issues. The national conferences may wish to address issues specific to their culture, issues which may or may not have relevance in other United Brethren conferences.

The Bible is the primary source of correct guidance and the final authority by which Christians should determine proper conduct regarding social and moral issues. The Bible's specific prohibitions must always be obeyed. In areas where Scripture does not give explicit directions or absolutes, the following guidelines will help national conferences be thoughtful and use biblical principles in taking stands within their culture.

1. Pray for guidance (James 1:5).
2. Study all biblical passages related to the issue.
3. Review the laws of the land regarding the issue (Romans 13:1-7). The Bible instructs believers to obey the laws of the land in which they live, but not to use those laws to justify disobeying biblical principles (Hebrews 13:17).
4. Seek the counsel of mature Christians (Proverbs 15:22, 27:17). This might include seeking advice from other national conferences which have already dealt with the issue.
5. If relevant, carefully weigh and consider current scientific and medical evidence regarding the issue (Proverbs 18:15).
6. Consider any harmful effect on others.
7. Consider any harmful effect on the testimony of the members and churches of the national conference (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 10:32-33).
8. Consider the ways in which other national conferences may have dealt with this issue or with a similar issue.
9. Consider how to deal with the issue while remaining consistent with the denominational Core Values.
10. Give weight to the historical position of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ on this issue or on issues which have parallels.



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