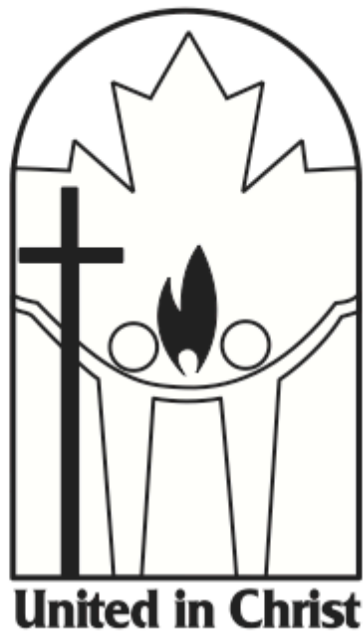


The United Brethren Church in Canada



Constitution, Confession of Faith, And Church Discipline

November 2019
Kitchener, Ontario

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Chapter 1

Origin and History of the United Brethren Church in Canada

The United Brethren Church in Canada is a part of the worldwide Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It is the first denomination in North America that was not transplanted from Europe. While there were European antecedents, the church originated in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia under the earnest evangelistic preaching of two men.

One of these leaders was Philip William Otterbein, who was born in Dillenberg, Germany, and was originally a minister of the German Reformed Church. When he came to America in 1752, he found formal religious practices the common standard among church people. His training and subsequent heart change prompted him to present a dynamic spiritual experience based on a faith relationship which permitted God to release His power through the indwelling Holy Spirit to a continuing transformation of the believer's life.

Martin Boehm was the other associate. He came from the Mennonite faith, and had been selected by lot to be a preacher among his people. He felt that he had no message to present until he had a personal experience of God's saving grace through faith. Then he was anxious to present the good news and became a flaming evangelist, proclaiming the salvation experience wherever he had the opportunity.

These two men, who had done extensive evangelistic preaching in interdenominational gatherings, met for the first time on Pentecost Sunday, 1767. A "great meeting" was held in the barn of Isaac Long near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. These great meetings were usually held over weekends in groves, barns, or wherever a large congregation could assemble. The congregation included preachers and laymen from various denominations, including the German Reformed, Lutheran, Moravian, Mennonite, Amish, and Dunker groups. The preacher for the afternoon service was Martin Boehm. On a high tide of spiritual peace and power at the close of the sermon, Otterbein, who was of greater stature than Boehm, threw his arms around the small man and exclaimed, "We are brethren," using the German language. From that greeting came the corporate name of the church, "United Brethren" to which was added "in Christ" at a later date.

These two leaders were joined by George A. Geeting from Maryland and other God-called leaders in attempting to evangelize the German-speaking churches located in the Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland colonies. There was no thought of organizing a separate fellowship, and no effort was made to do so until they were forced to it by circumstances. They cooperated in the appointment of great meetings where one or more of them would preach. Counseling and guidance were given to other preachers and laymen who joined the interdenominational venture. Itinerant preachers were selected to conduct services where possible.

There are records of organized small group meetings dating from 1774. Otterbein and other Reformed pastors were involved in class meetings that sought to awaken the Reformed churches spiritually. Opposition forced Otterbein to proceed along other lines. The church at Baltimore, Maryland, of which Otterbein was the pastor, became interested in an outreach and became the mother church for a number of societies. Articles for the operation of the Baltimore church program, adopted in 1785, made reference to societies under the superintendence of Rev. Otterbein. Preachers and exhorters were already in the field and looked to Otterbein for direction.

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 1800. From that point, sessions were held annually until 1815, when a General Conference was held. Since 1821, the general conferences have been held every four years.

The conference of 1800 adopted the name "Church of the United Brethren in Christ," and elected Otterbein and Boehm as bishops. They served in this capacity until their death. Christian Newcomer was

elected bishop for one year in 1813, and according to the church rules of 1814, he was again elected this time for a three-year period. The Discipline was formally accepted by the first General Conference in 1815, which provided for quadrennial sessions and the election of bishops. Since Newcomer had been elected in 1814 for three years, it was decided to hold the next conference in 1817. It was Newcomer who bridged the gap, from the loose evangelistic fellowship to a more organized movement. He was also the connecting link between the early leaders and the later itinerants.

People who had been associated with United Brethren in the east migrated west and settled in Ohio and Indiana. Societies were organized and services conducted by itinerant preachers. Christian Newcomer visited an area in Ohio in 1810 and held a meeting which was of the nature of an annual conference. Because of distance, the brethren in the west felt that annual meetings for all ministers were impossible; so the plan for a General Conference was adopted as reported above.

Services were conducted almost exclusively in the German language. The group inherited from the German culture the standard of opposition to secret societies. It was not until English-speaking people associated with the revival movement in Ohio that a pronouncement was necessary by the Miami Annual Conference of 1826. This moral reform standard became a part of the Constitution of 1841. The Discipline of the church in 1821 took an historic stand against slavery, which hindered the growth of the church in the South. This stand was also included in the Constitution of 1841.

A tentative constitution for the church was adopted by the General Conference of 1837, followed by a formal adoption of a constitution in 1841. General departments for the church were organized as needs arose. The work of publishing a church paper gave birth to the United Brethren Publishing House, established at Circleville, Ohio, in 1834. It was moved to Dayton, Ohio, in 1853. The first missionary activity was to send a caravan under the leadership of Rev. T.J. Conner and Dr. Jeremiah Kenoyer to the far west where they settled in Oregon. In 1853, the mission board was reorganized under the name of the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society. A mission in Africa was established in 1855.

Various educational institutions were founded over the years, and in 1865, the Sunday School Association was organized. The Women's Missionary Association (Reorganized as the Women's Missionary Fellowship in 1989) was started in 1875.

After discussion for a number of general conferences over three problems--pro-rata representation, lay delegation in the General Conference and membership in secret societies--a division in the denomination occurred in the General Conference of 1889 which brought into existence two United Brethren fellowships. A new constitution and confession of faith accepting the above principles was adopted by the majority group, who termed themselves "liberals." They became known as the United Brethren in Christ, New Constitution, with headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. In the United States, this group united with the Evangelical Association in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church merged in the United States to form the United Methodist Church in 1968. In Canada the more "liberal" branch joined with the Congregationalists in 1906, and has been a part of the United Church of Canada since 1925.

The group that adhered to the Confession of Faith of 1815 and the Constitution of 1841 under the leadership of Bishop Milton Wright (father of Orville and Wilbur Wright of aviation fame) adopted the name "Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution)." Church headquarters were moved from Dayton, Ohio, to Huntington, Indiana, in 1897. The local church buildings in Michigan and Oregon were awarded to the Old Constitution group, but properties in other states and in Ontario were lost, and all departments had to be reestablished. Educational activities centred in Hartsville College at Hartsville, Indiana, which was in sympathy with the Old Constitution fellowship.

The twentieth General Conference of 1889 reorganized the general departments--board of education, trustees for the United Brethren Publishing Establishment, and a board and secretary for the Domestic, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society. The Women's Missionary Association was reorganized during the quadrennium.

Huntington (then Central) College was chartered in 1897 and has operated at Huntington, Indiana, since that time. Huntington University currently has charitable status within Canada, and many Canadian students have graduated from the University over the years. A "School of Christian Ministries" was opened there during the 1970s, and the "Master of Arts in Christian Ministries" degree (or its equivalent) is required of all ministers as a prerequisite to their ordination.

The first known Sunday school to be organized was near Corydon, Indiana, by Rev. John Pfrimmer in 1820. Various departments of the General Church have been organized over the years to oversee Sunday Schools, youth ministries and publications. The *Christian Conservator*, which had been published since 1885, became the official publication of the United Brethren Publishing Establishment in 1889. The name was changed to *The United Brethren* in 1954. The newest denominational headquarters building was completed in Huntington, Indiana in May of 1976.

A reorganization plan adopted by the 1981 General Conference resulted in the consolidation of some general departments. The departments of Church Ministries and Stewardship ceased to exist, and these responsibilities, along with the denominational Archives, were placed under the newly-created Department of Church Services. With the relocation of the Archives at Huntington College in 1988, oversight of the Archives was transferred to the Board of Education.

Over the years, the Parent Board of Missions (Domestic, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society until 1957) and the Women's Missionary Association have had oversight of the mission fields. Until 1961, these boards worked separately, but in that year the first step was taken to begin working more closely together—a Joint Board of Missions account was established. Action was taken at the 1965 General Conference to merge the two mission groups into one department to be known as the Department of Missions.

Mission fields served at that time included: Sierra Leone, West Africa; Hong Kong; Jamaica; and Honduras. Laurel Mission in Kentucky was a home mission station until 1973, when administration was transferred to Central Conference. A new field was established in Nicaragua in 1969, and the department became involved in medical work in India in 1974. In 1986, the board began overseeing several congregations in Mexico which affiliated with the United Brethren church. The board also opened a new work in Macau in 1987. The 1989 General Conference added the Mexico Mission District and the Macau Mission District to the Overseas District.

Mexico and the Philippines were granted National Conference status by the General Conference of 2005, and Guatemala became a National Conference at the 2009 General Conference in La Ceiba, Honduras.

In 1889, the majority of the churches organized were rural. Through a program of church extension, the annual conferences have established churches in industrial and metropolitan areas. Consolidation of some of the smaller churches in relocated areas has proved advantageous.

Through referendums, the church constitution was amended in 1957 and 1961, resulting in lay representation in the General Conference; in 1973, resulting in a provision for local churches to hold title to their own property and for the use of a nomination slate in electing elders to the General Conference; and in 1977, changing the eligibility for election to General Conference from three years in the conference district to three years' standing as an elder and substituting the term "ministers" for "preachers."

The United Brethren Church in Canada

The United Brethren presence in Canada initially came from three sources. While some UB families had moved into Canada in the migrations of the early 1800s, and certainly many were won to the Lord in evangelistic outreaches when UB ministers came, the initial foundation was laid by a non-United Brethren man, John A. Cornell.

Rev. Cornell was born in New York in 1782, and was of the same family as Ezra Cornell, the founder of Cornell University at Ithaca, New York. He moved to what is now Sheffield, Ontario in 1800, and was converted "the old fashioned way, while reading the Bible on his own." There seem to have been no other preachers in his neighbourhood when he began sharing his testimony in 1812, and people drove for miles to hear him. He preached for forty-two years at a dozen preaching points from Waterloo to Rockton, Ontario. In 1854, at the age of 72, he began to consider retirement.

The family of Jacob Erb (a United Brethren minister and later Bishop) lived in nearby Preston, and Cornell decided to find out more about these United Brethren the next time Rev. Erb came for a visit.

As early as 1825 Jacob Erb had come to Canada with another minister, Christian Smith. Erb had a cousin who was a minister in Erie Co., New York, and an uncle, Christian Hersey, who ministered in Williamsville, N.Y. His grandfather and other relatives lived in Preston and Berlin, Ontario (now Cambridge and Kitchener).

In 1826 Christian Newcomer himself traveled to New York and picked up Christian Smith, and the two of them crossed into Canada at Fort Erie to preach. There were certainly some UBs here already, for Newcomer records that he “met many acquaintances whom I had not seen for many years.” A year later Erb and Smith “formed some societies, but they were neglected, and as a consequence, were disbanded, although some excellent members, gathered into the fold by Mr. Erb, remain unto this day.”

When John Cornell and Jacob Erb met in Preston in 1854, Erb explained the history, doctrine and government of the United Brethren Church favourably, and Cornell proposed a connection with the UB Church. Erb reported to the newly established “Home, Frontier and Foreign Mission Society” in July, and by October Rev. Israel Sloane of Ohio was in the pulpit of Cornell’s Beverly Chapel at Sheffield. The grandson of John Cornell writes that there was some concern at the church that this was only their second minister in 42 years, that he was an American, and that it all seemed far too Methodistic, but that old “Uncle Johnny Cornell” encouraged the people. They were especially reassured when Bishop J.J. Glossbrenner spoke there, and many later considered him “the best preacher they had ever heard.”

While Israel Sloane was following up on Cornell’s work in Waterloo and Oxford Counties, Charles E. Price came to the Niagara area in April, 1855 to follow up on Jacob Erb’s earlier work. He soon established a number of preaching points. Peter Flack of Sandusky Conference had come to Sheffield to help Sloane two months before. Rudolph Light transferred from the “Old Conference” in Pennsylvania to “Canada West” in April of 1856 and began a “German Mission” in Berlin (now Kitchener).

On April 19, 1856, Bishop Glossbrenner organized the four above-named ministers with membership in American conferences, along with four new Canadian ministers (John A. Cornell, his son William, and C. Moore of the Beverly Church, and Abram B. Sherk of the Niagara area), into the Canada Mission Conference. The minutes show 18 appointments, seven organized societies, and 152 members.

The membership doubled each of the next two years, and Israel Sloane moved on to more “church planting” in California. Jacob Erb, quite fittingly, was called up to replace him as the Presiding Elder (Conference Superintendent) in 1858 and 1859. The 1861 minutes talk of 50 appointments, 33 classes, and 636 members. The membership hit 1000 in 1863 and stayed around that figure for the next twenty years. The churches were still located in the Niagara area and along Lake Erie, and around Kitchener and through to Port Elgin.

The debates that finally brought a split to the UB church in the States were also divisive in Canada. The older and most respected ministers were generally conservative (called Radicals), while the younger men labeled themselves as Liberals. C.W. Backus and his two brothers joined the Conference in 1880, and their father in 1885. C.W. was the only conservative of his family, and in reference to the vote for Presiding Elder in 1888 and again in 1889 he says it was “a straight fight, conservative or liberal.” Of the 26 names on the conference roll on March 28, 1889, twelve stayed with the Radical United Brethren at the next Annual conference in March of 1890. The Liberal group, thinking to get the advantage after the division in May 1889, called their Ontario Conference of 1890 into session four months early; November 14, 1889. They expelled the “Radical” ministers and assigned their own men to all the fields, locking the doors on many churches. C.W. Backus writes that “my own father and two brothers almost disowned me. All three wrote me some most abusive letters.” The liberal United Brethren branch joined with the Congregationalists in 1906 and then with the United Church of Canada in 1925.

While the March 1889 conference (prior to the division) had 14 circuits and 1635 members, the 1890 Radical sessions of the Ontario Conference had just six circuits and 703 members. The ownership of the Port Elgin church building proved to be the test case regarding property in Ontario. When the Appeals court judge in Toronto reversed an earlier decision which had awarded ownership to the Radicals, all church properties were taken by the Liberals. Other than at the Garrison Road Church in Fort Erie, where the Radicals bought the building back in 1901, all other Radical congregations were forced to build new church buildings all over again.

In 1915 Lloyd Eby of Kitchener planted two churches in Toronto, and was very well received. He often commented that the Toronto people were very gracious in accepting a minister of German descent during the war years. Later, he went on to plant other UB churches in the U.S. and then became a Bishop in the denomination. Another church was started in Guelph, Ontario by Ray Zimmerman in 1976. Current and future Church planting endeavours will target growing urban areas and significant ethnic populations within Ontario.

There was an Alberta Mission District active between 1906 and 1917, headed by Rev. & Mrs. E.A. Olmstead of Michigan and James Cotton of Nebraska. Some UBs from Oregon and Ontario had moved there earlier, and Bishop Barkley organized them into a Conference in 1909. F.G. Matthews joined them from the Free Methodists, and two young men were soon granted local conference licenses. "Difficult times" rapidly erased all of the ministers from the scene except Matthews, as Cotton died of blood poisoning, two joined the Canadian Armed Forces for World War I, the Olmsteads returned to Michigan, and several families returned to Oregon. Bishop Alwood thought no one was left, so F.G. Matthews was the sole member of the 1917 Alberta Annual Conference, without even a Bishop. During the 1920s Rev. Matthews pastored the Bloem Avenue UB Church in Toronto and Paul Olmstead (son of E.A. Olmstead) pastored the UB Church in New Dundee, Ontario.

In 1991 it was discovered that the Charities Sections of the Canadian Income Tax Act had changed to the point that the United Brethren Church in Canada was by law a completely separate body from the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in the United States. It was necessary for the Canadian Church to adopt its own Constitution and administrative structure, and to elect its own leadership. Committees were set up to fashion the new Constitution and to negotiate a joint ministry agreement concerning international ministries in conjunction with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in the United States. A Constitutional Convention was held, and at noon on June 7, 1992 Bishop C. Ray Miller officially proclaimed into existence the United Brethren Church in Canada.

In 2001 the delegates to the General Conference from the seven United Brethren National Conferences (including Canada) voted into existence "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International." It is a genuinely international entity by which international decisions can be made. Part of that new structure included the requirement that each National Conference elect its own top leader (bishop, superintendent, etc.), and the United Brethren Church in Canada elected its first national bishop in 2002.

The focus of the church has most recently been on church planting, with church plants started in Port Colborne, Port Elgin, Cambridge, Guelph and a Vietnamese Church in Guelph.

Certainly we must concur with the Prophet Samuel, "Thus far has the Lord helped us..." (1 Samuel 7:12) and with Paul when he said, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13,14).

Chapter 2

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 Saviour 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 of 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 3

Constitution

We, the members of The United Brethren Church in Canada, 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 churches and the National Conference, and to participate in joint international ventures as recognized by this church, ordain the following articles of Constitution of The United Brethren Church in Canada:

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Article I Name and Address

- .1 The official name of the organization shall be The United Brethren Church in Canada.
- .2 The official address of the organization shall be 501 Whitelaw Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1E7

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Article II Purposes and Charitable Objects

- .1 To advance, preach, teach and serve according to The United Brethren Church in Canada's Confession of Faith, Constitution, Christian tenets, discipline, doctrines, observances and historical culture associated with The United Brethren Church in Canada.
- .2 To establish, maintain and support places of worship with services conducted in accordance with the Confession of Faith and the tenets, discipline, doctrines, observances and culture of The United Brethren Church in Canada.
- .3 To establish, support and maintain missions and/or train missionaries to serve others in local communities, nationally and abroad, demonstrate social concern and provide support through various actions in keeping with the faith, tenets, values and practices of The United Brethren Church in Canada.
- .4 To establish, support, contribute to, provide and/or maintain faith based education and training opportunities for children, youth and adults in faith based schools, colleges, universities, and other faith based environments of instruction and training in keeping with the beliefs, tenets and historical culture of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

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Article III Personnel

.1 Voting and Non-Voting Denominational Members (Members and Adherents)

Voting Denominational Members are those persons who have been baptized and subsequently applied for and received membership status in a Local Church within The United Brethren Church in Canada. They regularly attend worship and church sponsored activities, contribute financially and actively support their local church.

Only Voting Denominational Members are allowed to participate in any referendum or hold official elected/appointed positions within in The United Brethren Church in Canada

Adherents are persons who attend regularly, contribute financially and/or donate time and service to a local church. He/she has not met voting membership requirements and may consider ones-self as an adherent of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

.2 Canadian National Conference Members

A voting Canadian National Conference Member is an official representative to the National Conference as defined in The United Brethren Church in Canada Discipline or Bylaw. An Official Member is recognized at National Conference meetings by the official roll call. Official Members may include recognized local church members who are delegates, lay leaders, active and retired pastors, chaplains, missionaries, as well as elected or appointed National Conference leaders and officials.

.3 Meetings

The Canadian National Conference meets annually for its “National Conference” at a time and place determined by schedule that is ratified annually. The Bishop and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) may hold a “Mid-Year Conference” or other National Conference meetings at any time as determined by need. The ELT meets as scheduled

.4 Appointments and Meetings

The United Brethren Church in Canada will make appointments and schedule its major meetings for the following fiscal year at its National Conference (annual general meeting). Appointments and scheduling between National Conferences are the responsibility of the E.L.T.

.5 Rights of Members (Local Church and National Church)

All rights of members are defined according to the current officially adopted version of The United Brethren Church in Canada Discipline.

.6 Directors and Officers

Include Bishop, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Leadership Team.

.7 Voting

Acceptable methods of voting shall be reviewed and determined by Bylaw from time to time as

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Article IV Duties

.1 Governance and Business Operations

The Canadian National Conference is the governing body of The United Brethren Church in Canada. The membership, structure and purpose of the Canadian National Conference are defined by The United Brethren Church in Canada Discipline or Bylaw. The United Brethren Church in Canada Discipline or Bylaw may only be amended by action of Canadian National Conference.

Business and operations of the Canadian National Conference is delegated to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT is made up of the Bishop and Executive Team Leaders appointed by the Bishop and ratified by the Canadian National Conference. The ELT conducts business on behalf of the Conference in accordance with the Discipline, Bylaw and policies of the Canadian National Conference. ELT acts as trustees on behalf of the Conference as required. The ELT and its members report annually to Conference.

.2 Bylaws

The Canadian National Conference allows Conference voting members to vote on any bylaw (Discipline item). A bylaw goes into effect when sanctioned by a majority of the votes cast at this meeting. Repealing a bylaw also requires majority support for the action.

.3 Borrowing, Selling and Other Corporate Powers

No Restrictions. Borrowing, investing, selling, issuance of bonds and all other corporate powers and limitations are determined by bylaw.

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Article V Property and Dissolution

.1 Assets:

All church property of member local churches is owned by The United Brethren Church in Canada and registered in trust to the appointed trustees of the local executive or to the board of each local church that acts as trustee. Each local church is responsible for maintenance, upkeep and debt/mortgage reduction of each property. Any property mortgage, sale, purchase or major renovation requires prior approval of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

Other assets include furniture, fixtures, equipment, and all remaining monetary assets held by the local church after all outstanding debts and obligations are resolved.

.2 Dissolution of a Local Church

Upon dissolution, all remaining assets of a local church are transferred to The United Brethren Church in Canada.

.3 Dissolution of The United Brethren Church in Canada

Upon dissolution of The United Brethren Church in Canada all assets are distributed among the current active local churches. Liquid assets are divided among the remaining local member churches in accordance with the portion of the total official membership on each church roll at the time of dissolution. Each local church assumes ownership of the church property that it occupies, holds in trust, uses and maintains.

16

Article VI Not For Profit

- .1** This organization shall be carried on without the purpose of gain for its members, and any profit or other gains to the organization shall be used in promoting its objects.

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Article VII Amendments

- .1** There shall be no alteration of the foregoing Constitution unless by two-thirds vote of the National Conference, provided the alteration is also ratified by a two-thirds majority of the ballots cast in a ratification by the adult members of The United Brethren Church in Canada. The Confession of Faith may be changed in the same manner, but only with the permission of the General Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International.

Chapter 4

Joining the Church

401

Adult Membership

1. Age

Persons eighteen 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 National Conference and International General Conference.

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Youth Membership

1. Age

Persons age twelve through eighteen may join as youth 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

Youth members have voice in local church matters but are ineligible to vote.

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Watch-care Membership

1. Age

Children under the age of twelve 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.

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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 favourable 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 Saviour.

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? (Those who have not received believer's baptism will be encouraged to do so.)

2. Receiving Youth 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."

405

Transfer of Members

The Spiritual Care Commission 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.

406

Withdrawal of Members

When members desire to withdraw from the church, they may be given a letter of withdrawal by the local church leadership (possibly a Spiritual Care Commission). When appropriate, this letter may be accompanied by a statement of recommendation to a specific church, regardless of denomination.

407

Revising the Roll

1. The local board may remove members from the roll with a two-thirds vote in the following situations:
 - a. The church leadership (Spiritual Care Team) has not known the person's location for the past three years, 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.
2. Youth—Upon reaching age 18, youth may be received into adult membership by meeting the qualifications for adult membership. No youth shall remain on the youth roll after age 19. The youth roll should be corrected annually.
3. Watch-care—At the age of twelve, children who have made a commitment to Christ and show a continued interest in the church may become youth members by complying with the requirements for youth church membership. Watch-care members who persistently refuse to seek Christ or to receive religious instruction may be dropped from the roll.

Chapter 5

Duties of Members

The church recognizes the validity of a collective Christian conscience. For that reason, the church has taken stands on various issues in an attempt to provide guidelines for Christian conduct. They are stated in paragraphs 113-115.

The following duties of members and standards of conduct are drawn up for the better regulation of our church and we believe they are founded on the Word of God and incumbent on all who are members to observe, both ministers and laypersons (Hebrews 13:7,17). Anyone who violates or habitually neglects these rules shall be referred to the local church's membership committee for appropriate attempts to instruct, reconcile, and reform. If all attempts for reformation fail, persons in violation of these duties and standards may be removed from the roll through the due process of notification and revision.

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

Family Piety

Heads of families should observe daily family worship including grace at the table, Bible reading and prayers, and encourage other worship opportunities. They should set a good example in all Christian virtues.

113

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).

114

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.

115

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 that 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).

116

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 Labour in honour, 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.

117

Receiving the Pastor

All local churches shall receive the senior pastor appointed by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team of the National Conference (Colossians 4:10; Philippians 2:29; Hebrews 13:7, 17). (See 334.11)

118

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).

119

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).

120

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).

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 (Ephesians 5:10-15) nor to show favouritism (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). *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” “Therefore come out from them, and be separate, says the Lord, Touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you. I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”* (2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 17-18).

Chapter 6

Family Standards

131

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.

132

Singleness

Scripture affirms singleness. Some people experience singleness as a calling. Others experience singleness as a result of the circumstances of life. From Scripture, we understand the following:

1. Neither marriage nor sexual intimacy is essential for wholeness. All persons find wholeness in Christ alone (Galatians 2:20).
2. Jesus and Paul, both single adults, spoke of the advantages of singleness in order to serve God without distraction (Matthew 19:12, I Corinthians 7:32ff).
3. It is not good for humans to be alone (Genesis 2:18, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Psalm 68:6a, Hebrews 10:25). Therefore, the Church must function as the family of God, providing space for all people, especially singles, to find community and to pursue their calling (Matthew 12:48-50, Ephesians 2:19-22).

133

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.

God ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself. The purpose of marriage is companionship between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:18) in a permanent relationship which ends when one of the partners dies. The marriage relationship reflects the relationship between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:22ff). It is out of the marriage relationship that God intended for children to be produced and nurtured.

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

United Brethren licensed ministers classified with the authority to conduct weddings shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one genetic, biological man and one genetic, biological woman.

Facilities and property of churches within the United Brethren Church in Canada shall only host weddings between one genetic, biological man and one genetic, biological woman.

134

Illicit Sexual Relations

The Bible firmly establishes sex within the framework of marriage. This design must not be:

1. Substituted (e.g. pornography).
2. Duplicated (e.g. adultery, polygamy).
3. Pre-empted (e.g. premarital sex, cohabitation).
4. Altered (e.g. same-sex relations).

5. Coerced (e.g. sexual assault, abuse).
6. Exploited (e.g. pedophilia, sex trafficking).
7. Corrupted (e.g. non-human sexual relations).

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 (I Corinthians 6:9-10; Romans 1:20-32; Deuteronomy 22:23-27)

135

Sex and Gender Distinctions

1. Created in the Image of God

a. All human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). The imbuing of the image of God within a human person is not dependent upon that person's sex; God created male and female in His image.

b. Because of the fall, God's perfect created order for humans has become disordered in various ways (Genesis 3, Romans 6:12-18). This affects every aspect of human experience: sexual, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual.

c. Even in the midst of sexual or biological disorder, all humans bear the image of their Creator.

d. Each person should strive to glorify God as one made in His image and according to His design. Such a commitment will lead to eternal rewards, but may also involve temporary suffering.

2. Intersex Persons

a. Individuals whose biological sex is unclear (because at birth their genetic sex does not match their physical sex-related characteristics or they possess physical characteristics of both male and female) are known as intersex persons.

b. It is being created in God's image that defines humanity. This reaches far beyond sexuality to encompass every aspect of the human person. Neither maleness nor femaleness is equivalent to the image of God.

c. The Church should affirm all persons equally as image bearers of God. This does not mean abandoning the idea of sexual distinctiveness among humans, but recognizes that even in the midst of sexual or biological disorder, all humans bear the image of their Creator.

d. The Church should support and encourage intersex persons as co-image bearers to live in holiness and to follow Christ in a way that brings honour and glory to God.

3. Transgender Persons

a. Persons who struggle with gender identity experience within themselves the suffering that comes when God's good work of creating the human mind and body is disordered as the result of the Fall.

b. A person may not experience perfect reconciliation between mind and body in this life. However, God may work through an individual's gender identity struggle for His glory (II Corinthians 12:7-9).

c. Those who struggle with gender identity suffer along with all believers while waiting for our glorified bodies (I Corinthians 15:42-44). The Church needs to come alongside them and collectively strive to be oriented toward the triune God, in whose image each person is created.

d. The Church must guard against any attempt to demean or trivialize individual suffering related to struggle with gender identity.

e. The Church cannot celebrate the choice to alter one's sex or gender, because this harms individual identity.

f. God created humankind male and female. A distinction between the sexes needs to be honoured and maintained, even as specific gendered behaviour and characteristics may vary from one culture to another.

g. Gender dysphoria is experienced when a person struggles with gender identity. It may exist at different levels of severity in different persons. Those suffering from gender dysphoria need to confide in their brothers and sisters in Christ and seek competent Christian counseling when appropriate. Persons

addressing their own gender dysphoria need to understand the importance of God's order and design for human sexuality and exercise discretion and care when deciding how to live faithfully in the midst of a very real inner struggle.

g. Believers who may not experience this particular hardship need to take care to manifest the fruit of the Spirit when interacting with persons who do, both within and outside of the Church, encouraging them to find their ultimate identity in Christ.

i. The Church must compassionately minister to those struggling with sexual identity issues by becoming a place of understanding, healing, and hope. The Church must affirm the value of individuals who are struggling while pointing them to Christ, the healer of all brokenness.

136

The Local Congregation and Human Sexuality

1. All persons, irrespective of physicality, gender, or sexual orientation, are made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, a congregation should focus on:
 - a. Honouring all persons as created human beings who are deeply loved by God.
 - b. Extending hospitality to all persons who are drawn to its public gatherings.
2. All persons have been wounded in their sexuality and are in need of the full redemption of Christ. God desires that human beings live in loving, committed, life-giving, healing relationships in all aspects of life. Therefore, a congregation should focus on:
 - a. The redemption and wholeness of all persons.
 - b. The healing of relationships.
3. All persons can be tempted to use other people for their own sexual desires, contrary to the loving will of God. Therefore, out of honor for God and each other, a congregation should focus on:
 - a. Encouraging the creation and maintenance of healthy, biblical sexual boundaries.
 - b. Recognizing that celibacy can be a more radical, sacrificial expression of love than sexual intimacy.
4. All persons need opportunity for safety and authenticity. As redeemed persons, we are called to humbly address sin and seek reconciliation and redemption when it occurs, whether in our lives or in the lives of others. Therefore, a congregation should focus on:
 - a. Protecting each other from harm, particularly when we are in each other's care.
 - b. Healing those who have been abused.
 - c. Redeeming perpetrators of abuse.

137

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).
- .6 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).
- .7 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.

138 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.

139 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.

140 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).

141

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 ¶139.

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.

142

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.

143

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.

144

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 7

Social Standards

151

Human Relations

The United Brethren 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 "*from one man he (God) made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole 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*)

152

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.

153

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

The use of alcoholic beverages is often personally injurious to its users and is often at the core of significant family and social problems. The use of alcoholic beverages is often found to be contrary to the best interest of personal and social morality, economy, and welfare. Holy Scripture teaches us to exercise

good stewardship of our bodies. Scripture also teaches us to avoid abusive indulgence of alcoholic beverages (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35).

The United Brethren Church in Canada believes, and experience demonstrates, that the abuse of alcoholic beverages is harmful to our physical bodies and is a detriment to the best stewardship and witness of our lives. Therefore, we urge all of our members to avoid using alcoholic beverages. We also urge our leaders to teach as well as counsel about the hazards of abusing alcoholic beverages and that deliverance is possible through the ministry of the Spirit.

2. Tobacco & Cannabis

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 recreational cannabis and from using tobacco 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.

154

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*)

155

Pornography

1. Pornography is a sin that is deeply damaging to individuals, relationships, and society. All members are to abstain from using pornography.

2. We oppose the use of pornography for these reasons:

a. Sex is a unique and wonderful gift from God that is to be experienced, expressed, and enjoyed within the context of a lifelong marriage covenant (Genesis 2:22-24, Matthew 19:4-6).

b. Sexual nakedness was never meant to be observed except within the context of marriage (Genesis 9:22-23, Exodus 28:42, Leviticus 18:6-18, Habakkuk 2:15).

c. Pornography removes sex from its proper context by creating arousal apart from marriage.

d. Pornography fuels the sin of lust (Matthew 5:27-28, Job 31:1).

e. Pornography substitutes self-gratification for the relational intimacy and self-giving inherent in the sexual act.

f. Pornography is destructive to marriages and families.

g. Pornography contributes to such systemic social ills as the abuse and objectification of people made in the image of God.

h. Pornography funds and encourages the sex trade industry.

3. Those struggling with pornography or an addiction to sexually explicit materials should seek help from God through the counsel of Christian therapists as well as the support and accountability of fellow followers of Christ (James 5:16).

4. Church leaders are urged to teach on the dangers of pornography and to create avenues to help Christians who are struggling with pornography (Galatians 6:1-3).

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The 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*)

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Decision-Making Foundations

.1 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 (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- 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 (Luke 17:1-2).
- 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).

.2 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.

Chapter 8

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 United Brethren Church in Canada.

The United Brethren church does not discriminate in granting ministerial credentials on the basis of gender or race. The use of masculine pronouns is not to be understood as exclusive to the masculine gender.

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Classifications

Ministers in The United Brethren Church can be classified as follows: local church ministers, national 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 church minister, national conference minister, and ordained elder—are parts of a three-step process which culminates in ordination. Local church and national 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 Revenue Canada requirements for exemptions, are considered by The United Brethren Church in Canada as eligible for such exemptions.

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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.

No person shall be approved or retained as a licensed minister in The United Brethren Church in Canada whose life is not in harmony with the established moral and social standards of the church as defined in the Discipline [chapters 6 and 7].

Pastors, in particular, must be extra vigilant in the lifestyle and values they embrace, given their position of spiritual leadership in the congregation and community and the potential impact especially on the young and impressionable. They are strongly encouraged to abstain from the use of tobacco, recreational cannabis or alcoholic beverages and their social media must not in any way glorify the use of such.

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.

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 national conference.

- 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 the bishop.
- c. Ministers shall not arbitrarily form a new congregation (regardless of denominational affiliation) within the limits of any conference church or church planting area.

Chapter 9

Lay Ministers

211

Description

Lay ministers are those members of The United Brethren Church in Canada 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 specialized minister of the national conference.

This license is granted by the local church (the local board chaired by the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada).

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Qualifications

Candidates for this license must have been members of the United Brethren Church 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 5), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 6 and 7), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 8).

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 Bishop (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local board. 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 distinctives, history, and polity of the United Brethren Church.

3. Report to the Local Conference

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the local church board, making any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favourable recommendation from the examining committee, the local church board may choose to grant a lay minister's 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 church board 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 church boards 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.

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 Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team . 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 Bishop.

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 ¶213.5).

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In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the United Brethren Church, 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 board of the church to which they belong.

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

Lay ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors and the 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 or national conference.

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 10

Specialized Ministers

221

Description

The United Brethren Church 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 International General Conference, nor are they eligible for inclusion on the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team, although they may serve on any of the other conference leadership teams and committees. They are voting members of the national conference and advisory members of the local church board.

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 greater than half-time 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 church board (chaired by the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada) refer a candidate to national conference for a specialized minister’s license. If the local church board so concurs, the national conference Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall be contacted.

2. Examination

The candidate shall present the following to the PMLT:

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 Committee 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 a 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 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 United Brethren Church.

3. Report to the National Conference

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

4. Loss of the License

The national 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 the national 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

National conference ministers may transfer their ministerial credentials to other United Brethren conferences. To do so, they must notify the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada and the Bishop or conference superintendent of the other conference in writing. Both conferences must approve the transfer by vote of the national 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 church license.

Expectations of Specialized Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the United Brethren Church, 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 Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

Specialized ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors or the U.B. Canada Bishop. They may officiate at funerals and weddings and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion only under the supervision of a senior pastor

Chapter 11

Local Church Ministers

231

Description

Local church ministers are those members of the United Brethren Church who have been called by God and are beginning the pursuit of ordination. The local church license is granted by a local congregation to affirm a person's call to ministry. The local church 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.

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Qualifications

To become a candidate for local church 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 5), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 6 and 7), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 8).

Local church ministers are not eligible to serve as lay delegates to the national conference or General Conferences, nor may they serve as ministerial representatives on any conference or general church board or leadership team. They may serve in any capacity in the local church and are, by virtue of license, advisory members of the local church board. They serve as advisory members of the national conference.

233

Licensing

The following procedure is established for the licensing of local church 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 Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local church board. 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. Alternatively, a petition to the local board of administration signed by a majority of the church members may be substituted for the letters of reference.
- 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 church 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 United Brethren Church?
- (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 United Brethren Church.

3. Report to the Local Church Board

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the local church board (chaired by the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada or his appointee), and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favourable recommendation from the examining committee, the local church board may choose to grant a local church license.

4. Annual Renewal

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

- a. An annual report must be made to the local church board. 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 church 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 National Conference License

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

- a. The local church 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 that warrants consideration for a national conference license.

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

6. Transferring the License

When local church 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 church boards have the authority to revoke the licenses of local church ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline. Should they desire, local church 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 church license seeks to be licensed by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the one-year membership requirement may be waived. All other requirements must be met.

234

Course of Study

All local church ministers are expected to pursue a course of study leading toward a Bachelor of Theology degree in Pastoral Ministries through an approved college, or the equivalent to the Master's in Pastoral Leadership degree through Huntington University. The criteria for approval and list of approved graduate schools shall be determined by the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.

Candidates who received their local church 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 Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

235

Expectations of Local Church Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in The United Brethren Church in Canada, local church ministers are expected to faithfully fulfill the following:

1. Annual Reporting

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

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

Local church ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors and the U.B. Canada 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, national conference, or denomination.

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

Chapter 12

National Conference Ministers

241

Description

National Conference ministers are those members of the United Brethren Church whose call to the ministry has been affirmed by the National Conference and who are continuing the pursuit of ordination. The National Conference license is the second of three steps toward ordination, which is the goal expected of persons holding this license. National Conference ministers are not eligible to serve on the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team of the National Conference, nor are they eligible to serve as representatives, either clergy or lay, to the International General Conference.

242

Qualifications

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

1. Hold a local church 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 National Conference license.
4. Demonstrate faithfulness to the expectations of members (chapter 5), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 6 and 7), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 8).

243

Licensing of National Conference Ministers

The following procedure is established for the licensing of National Conference ministers:

1. Referral of the Local Conference

After local church ministers have held their licenses for a minimum of 12 months, they may request that their local church boards refer them for consideration as National Conference ministers. The local church boards shall verify that the local church 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 Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team of the National 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 Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada.
 - (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 National 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 United Brethren Church.

3. Report to the National Conference

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

4. Renewal

The National 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 Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.
- b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (see below).

5. Referral for Ordination Status

National Conference ministers may be referred for ordination status when the following conditions have been met:

- a. The National Conference license has been held for a minimum of two years.
- b. They have completed a Bachelor of Theology degree or Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the equivalent of the Master's in Pastoral Leadership degree from Huntington University <<https://www.huntington.edu/graduate/ministry/graduate-programs/masters-in-pastoral-leadership/>>.
- c. They have served for one year in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.
- d. They have demonstrated a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for ordination status.

6. Loss of the License

The National Conference shall have the authority to revoke the licenses of National Conference ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline. Should they desire, National Conference ministers shall be granted an opportunity for a hearing before final action is taken. Failure to retain active membership in a United Brethren church will also result in

loss of license. National Conference ministers whose licenses have been revoked or suspended by the National Conference cannot be received by any other U.B. 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 National Conference license and who seek to be licensed by the United Brethren Church may have the local church 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

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

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Course of Study

All National Conference ministers are expected to pursue a course of study leading toward a Bachelor of Theology degree in Pastoral Ministries or Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the equivalent of the Master's in Pastoral Leadership degree from Huntington University. 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 Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

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Expectations of National Conference Ministers

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

1. Annual Reporting

All National Conference ministers are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team of the National Conference.

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

National Conference ministers shall work under the direction of the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada. 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, National Conference, or denomination.

National Conference ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion. National Conference ministers will be permitted to serve as a pastor of any congregation upon appointment of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team if they continue pursuing the required course of study.

Chapter 13

Ordained Elders

251

Description

Ordained elders are those members of the United Brethren Church 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 church license and continued with the National Conference License. Elders are eligible for service on any conference and denominational leadership team or committee. They may also serve as ministerial delegates to the International General Conference, provided they meet the stated requirements for service in that capacity.

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Qualifications

To become a candidate for ordination, a National Conference minister must accomplish the following:

1. Earn a Bachelor of Theology degree or Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the equivalent of the Master's in Pastoral Leadership degree from Huntington University
<<https://www.huntington.edu/graduate/ministry/graduate-programs/masters-in-pastoral-leadership/>>.
2. Serve for one year in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the National Conference.
3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for licentiate status.

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Ordination Procedure

The following procedure is established for the ordination of ministers:

1. Request of the National Conference Minister

After holding a National Conference License for a minimum of two years, individuals may submit a request to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team of the National Conference for consideration for the office of ordained elder in The United Brethren Church in Canada.

2. Examination

Applicants shall be examined by the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team of the National 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 Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada.
 - (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 United Brethren Church.

3. Report to the National Conference

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

4. Loss of the License

The National 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 active 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 United Brethren Church 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 Bachelor of Theology degree in Pastoral Ministries or Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the equivalent of the Master's in Pastoral Leadership degree from Huntington University.

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 Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team. When they have met all the stated educational and service requirements, their previous ordinations will be recognized at the commissioning service of the National Conference.

6. Transferring to Another Conference

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

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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 Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada at the time of the annual audit.

255

Expectations of Elders

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

1. Annual Reporting

All elders must file an annual report of their activities with the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

Elders shall work under the direction of the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada. 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 14

Pastors in Charge

431

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 national 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 United Brethren Church in Canada activities.

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

9. To promote United Brethren International interests.

- a. By promoting the departments of the general church including United Brethren Missions (domestic and international), Church Services and Huntington University.
- b. By overseeing general church elections.
- c. By presenting referenda or any ratification votes.
- d. By promoting church periodicals and publications.

432

Removal of Pastors

The bishop 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 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, for an extended period of time may be temporarily relieved of all responsibility of their assigned pastorate until the bishop determines that they are capable of resuming full responsibility. Matters pertaining to compensation and benefits shall rest with the bishop, local board of administration, and pastor.

Chapter 15

Bishop

251

The Office of the Bishop

1. Overall Mandate

The Bishop is the God-ordained visionary and leader of that part of the body of Christ that is The United Brethren Church in Canada. The Bishop will provide the inspirational and organization necessary to see God's kingdom flourish through the local churches (Acts 2) and their combined ministries in the Conference. The Bishop will gather an Executive Leadership Team around him to plan for the future and to organize and mobilize the various efforts of the denomination.

2. Term

The term of office for the bishop shall be three years.

3. Key Accountabilities

A. Key Qualifications:

- The Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada must above all be a Godly person, a person of integrity, and mature in the faith {1 Timothy 3: 1-13}.
- The Bishop should possess a pastor's heart, be approachable, and demonstrate a genuine love for people {2 Timothy 4: 1-6}.
- The Bishop must share the goal of seeing God's kingdom go forward primarily through the ministries of the local churches, and secondarily through the combined efforts of those churches through the ministries of the Conference. The Bishop must understand that the purpose of the Conference is to assist local churches in making disciples of Jesus Christ {1 Corinthians 2:2}.
- A thorough understanding of the demands and responsibilities of church leadership is crucial, for the Bishop to encourage and ensure Godly, effective ministry in each of the local United Brethren Churches and Conference ministries. The Bishop must be capable in the area of administration {1 Corinthians 12:28}.
- The Bishop must have been ordained in the United Brethren Church and successfully served as a United Brethren pastor/minister for at least four years.
- Demonstrates proven servant leadership, a shepherd's heart {Acts 20:28}, ability to teach and minister, and a successful administrative track record.

B. Lead Responsibilities:

- Chairs the National Conference, Executive Leadership Team and Pastoral Ministries Team.
- Appoints E.L.T. members and, along with them, will appoint members of the various Conference Leadership Teams.
- Appoints and Chairs the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team, which oversees ministerial licensing and pastoral accountability and provides pastoral support. The P.M.L.T. serves as the Bishop's resource for working with local churches in achieving their Godgiven visions.
- Ensures that the United Brethren Church In Canada is officially represented and fulfills all its obligations at United Brethren international events and other national and international forums.

C. Competencies:

- Utilizing the key qualities, the Bishop will manifest an ability to work with the diverse community of United Brethren stakeholders (pastors, local church leaders, Conference leaders) to develop their vision for ministry and implement the same.
- Strong leadership ability is essential, taking a team approach to achieve goals and fulfill the mission of the Conference. The Bishop will develop leadership potential within the United Brethren Church in Canada by being an example and a mentor. Churches, leaders and members of the Conference must find in the Bishop one who sets standards to be met yet allows them the freedom required to use their spiritual gifts and personal strengths and supports them in their areas of need.
- The Bishop will be a faithful steward of Conference resources.
- Effective, articulate communication is a key ability in the Bishop role.

D. Expected Outcomes:

Successful and measurable outcomes will include:

- Healthy and growing local churches
- New churches being planted and developed
- New lay and clergy leaders raised up and current leaders trained and empowered
- Effective outreach to the spiritually and physically needy around and in our churches and around the world.
- Valuable common ministries and administrative services helping churches become more effective.

E. Accountability:

- The Bishop is elected by The National Conference every three (3) years and is accountable to this body.
- The Bishop's job performance will be evaluated during the last half of the second year of each term served.
- The National Conference may recall the Bishop with a voted mandate consisting of 2/3 of voting members at a duly called National Conference session.

F. Values: {to be maintained at all times}:

- **Morality:** Life must be lived in keeping with the social and moral standards of the church, as found in the book of Discipline of The United Brethren Church in Canada.
- **Church Involvement:** Will be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the denomination as an active member. Will be in agreement with the denomination's goals and mission.

Chapter 16

Courses of Study

(for Local Church Ministers and National Conference Ministers)

271

How Provided

A three year course of training by correspondence shall be arranged by the Executive Leadership Team with the Huntington University Graduate School. The curriculum shall include the usual studies for the preparation of the ministry.

272

Credits on the Course of Study

A Bachelor of Theology degree in Pastoral Ministries or Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the equivalent of the Master's in Pastoral Leadership degree from Huntington University <https://www.huntington.edu/graduate/ministry/graduate-programs/masters-in-pastoral-leadership/> shall be the normal course of education for a National Conference minister. Credits from other approved colleges, universities or seminaries may be credited to the licentiate towards his qualification for ordination. Such work must be fully parallel with the approved course and include studies in United Brethren history and the Discipline. Credits from other institutions of learning must be approved by the Executive Leadership Team or Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team. A Bachelor of Theology degree in Pastoral Ministries from an approved Bible College, if it includes the necessary courses on bible, theology and pastoral ministry, may also be accepted as sufficient for ordination.

273

Examinations

All examinations on the course of training taken by correspondence should be in writing and proctored by a member of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team. Examination papers shall be forwarded to the Huntington University Graduate School for grading and the grades reported to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

Chapter 17

The Organization

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

Division of the Territory

Territory occupied by The United Brethren Church in Canada may be divided into appointments, local churches, and church extension districts.

1. Appointments

An appointment is 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, except where it shall consist of ten or more adult members. 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. When chaired by the bishop of the National Conference, the local board of administration may confer lay and local church licenses.

3. Church Extension District

A church extension district is one or more appointments or local churches administered by the New Church Development Leadership Team. If the district has three or more churches, it shall be known as a church extension conference.

4. National Conference

The National Conference shall consist of the Bishop, the designated officers elected by the National Conference, the National Conference elders and licentiates, and the lay delegates elected in accordance with the Constitution and Discipline.

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 his predecessor shall turn over to him/her all such documents and records which he/she may have in his/her possession.

Chapter 18

Local Church Organization

311

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.

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 ¶312, “Local Board of Administration,” and ¶313, “Lay Delegates.”

Appendix B provides a number of options and ideas for churches regarding structure.

312

Local Board of Administration

1. Purpose

The local board of administration or its equivalent oversees all affairs pertaining to the local church. All commissions, committees, leadership teams 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. It may include such persons as: lay leader, commission chairpersons, treasurer, pastor(s), lay delegate(s), or others. Members of the pastoral staff are expected to attend board meetings and impart vision and direction to the board. Although not voting members of the board, they are recognized as the God-ordained leaders of the church. (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.
- e. No board member can serve more than six consecutive one-year terms. However, a person can be reelected to the board after a one -year absence.

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 national 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.

313

Lay Delegates

1. Purpose

The lay delegate(s) represent the local church in the National Conference, any mid-year council session, and other meetings when their presence is requested, and may appear before the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team.

2. Number

The number of delegates from a church is determined by the National Conference.

3. Qualifications

Persons selected for this position shall have been members of the local church for at least one year prior to the election, 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 as its lay delegate anyone who holds a national conference license or is being recommended to the national conference for licensing.

4. Notification

The local board shall inform the Bishop of The United Brethren Church in Canada of the delegates and alternates chosen.

Chapter 19

Local Church Property

321

Acquisition of Real Estate or Building of Structures

No appointment or local church shall purchase real estate nor commence the building of a meeting house, parsonage, parish hall or any other structure to be used for any other purpose whatever, without first being incorporated where the laws of the province require it or unless in compliance with those provisions of the laws of the province or other governmental authority with regard to the ownership of real estate or real property when the laws of the province or other governmental authority do not require an incorporation.

322

Approval for Building

No appointment or local church nor any entity of an appointment or local church, nor any official or officials of an appointment or local church shall purchase any real estate, nor shall they commence any building, structure or addition to an existing building or structure for any purpose whatever, without first obtaining the approval of the National Conference, or Executive Leadership Team acting in its stead, having jurisdiction over such appointment or local church.

323

Sale, Rent, or Pledging as Security of Property of Local Churches

Appointments and local churches shall not authorize the leasing, renting, mortgaging or sale of the property of local churches without obtaining the express written approval of the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team acting in its stead. No appointment or local church shall borrow monies from any source in excess of 20% of its annual income, as recorded in the last printed annual minutes of the National Conference, without the express written approval of the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team acting in its stead. Appointments and local churches shall not pledge their real property, personal property, monies or future income or contributions as security for bonds or other evidences of indebtedness issued by such appointments or local churches or by any other entity without the express written approval of the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team acting in its stead.

324

Repair, Maintenance and Upkeep

The approval of the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team acting in its stead, shall not be required for making ordinary expenditures for the repair, maintenance and upkeep of appointment and local church facilities.

325

Closing a Church

In the event a board of administration should vote to close an appointment or local church or should terminate its existence but should for any reason fail to convey the property to the National Conference's Board of Trustees (the E.L.T.) within 30 days of said closing, such property, personal and real, shall revert to the National Conference's board of trustees with authority to dispose of the same as provided for herein.

326

Property of Closed Churches

Local church property, both personal and real, of appointments and local churches closed, without action of its board of administration, for more than one year shall revert to the National Conference's board of trustees to be held in trust for The United Brethren Church in Canada. Such board shall stand in the place of local church board of trustees and shall have the authority to dispose of said property, providing such sale is approved by the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team acting in its stead.

327

Selling Church Buildings

No church house or meeting place shall be sold without the consent of the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team within the bounds of which said property is located if this transaction would result in the disbanding of a local church.

328

Announcement of Liability

Appointments and local churches shall not in any prospectus, advertising or announcement released for the purpose of selling bonds, or in the course of incurring any other indebtedness, hold forth that The United Brethren Church in Canada or the National Conference is responsible for the payment of such indebtedness, and shall in such prospecti, advertisements or announcements state that the local church is solely responsible for the payment and interest and principal of such indebtedness.

329

Minutes of Property Decisions

All appointments and local churches shall cause all actions relating to the purchase of property, personal or real, the building of any meeting house, parsonage, parish hall or other structure; the leasing, renting, mortgaging, or sale of property, personal or real; the borrowing of funds, the pledging of real estate, personal property, monies of future income or contributions as security, to be carefully recorded in the minutes of the board of administration of the appointment or local church. Such minutes shall describe the property involved, the terms of the transaction, the limitations of the transaction contemplated and all other information pertinent to the authority being exercised.

330

Vacant Parsonages

1. Rental

When a pastor refuses to reside in the parsonage, the disposition of the proceeds arising therefrom (rent, etc.) shall be determined by the local board of administration.

2. Disposition of Parsonage

In cases where pastorates having parsonages upon them are divided, the disposition of said parsonages shall be submitted to a board of arbiters consisting of three members of the church, one to be chosen by each local church board of administration and a third by these two, to whom the whole matter shall be referred. From their decision an appeal may be taken to the National Conference. In cases where more than two local conferences are interested, the same plan shall be pursued.

Chapter 20

National Conference

331

Purpose

The National Conference shall administer all the affairs pertaining to leadership teams, committees, agencies, local churches, and church extension districts under its direction and shall establish policies pertaining to the mission and ministry of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

332

Personnel

The members of the National Conference are the Bishop, the designated team leaders affirmed by the National Conference, the National Conference elders and licentiates, laypersons elected to the Executive Leadership Team, and the lay delegates elected in accordance with the Constitution and Discipline as follows:

.1 Basis of Representation

All of the elders and licentiates who have been duly received by the National Conference shall be voting members of the National Conference. Every organized church within Canada shall also be entitled to at least one lay delegate. Churches shall average their adult membership and morning attendance for the previous year, and shall be allowed one additional lay delegate for each average of 50 [i.e. 51-100, one additional delegate; 101-150, two delegates, etc.] Each local church shall be responsible for paying the expenses of its minister(s) and delegate(s) attending the National Conference.

.2 Election of Lay Delegates

At the annual election, the church membership shall elect by ballot the lay delegate(s). The ballots shall be counted by a board of tellers, consisting of the secretary and two other persons appointed by the local board. In cases of sickness or other unavoidable absence, a member may seal his signed ballot in an envelope and send it to a member of the board of tellers (see 312.4b).

.3 Absentee

Should any member of the National Conference absent himself from the sessions of the National Conference three years in succession without giving a satisfactory reason for so doing, his name may be erased from the roll of the Conference.

333

Officers

1. Bishop

The Bishop shall be the spiritual leader and chairperson for the business sessions of the National Conference.

2. Leadership Team Leaders 5 1:46 AM

The team leaders of the various leadership teams of the National Conference as established by Discipline shall assist the Bishop in administering the affairs of the National Conference.

3. Secretary

a. Purpose--The secretary shall record the proceedings of the National Conference, the sessions of the Executive Leadership Team, and any mid-year conference, and shall provide for the safekeeping of the permanent records and documents of the Conference. (See 221.8.)

- b. Election-- At the time of its annual organization, the Executive Leadership Team shall name a secretary who shall perform the duties of this office up to and including the session of the next National Conference.

4. Parliamentarian

The Executive Leadership Team may appoint a parliamentarian to assist the chairperson in questions of procedures and rules of order.

5. Treasurer

- a. Purpose--The treasurer shall receive all assessments, gifts, annuities and legacies of the National Conference and shall disburse the same on order of the Conference or the Executive Leadership Team . Missions funds of the National Conference shall be disbursed on the order of the Global Outreach Leadership Team.
- b. Election--The treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive Leadership Team on a fiscal year basis or any time the office becomes vacant, for a term of one to three years.
- 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 National Conference and its Executive Leadership Team . The funds designated for National Conference ministries or United Brethren joint international ministries shall be forwarded to their respective treasurers by the end of each quarter.

334

Duties

1. Constitutional

The National Conference shall perform all the duties assigned it in the Constitution. (See 11, 12.)

2. Receive and Evaluate Reports

The National Conference shall receive reports and recommendations from the officials, leadership teams, agencies, and the various districts of the church. The National Conference shall cause these reports to be evaluated and act on any recommendations submitted with them.

3. Elect Officials and General Boards

The National Conference shall elect a bishop and such officers as may be required by Discipline. The National Conference shall determine the order and time of elections. However, said elections shall not be scheduled to precede the consideration of the reports of the corresponding officers reporting to the National Conference .

4. Revise Discipline

The National Conference shall consider the revision of Discipline in accordance with its established rules and procedures.

5. Determine the Mission and Ministry of the Church

The National Conference shall provide for the guidelines and planning necessary for the church to respond to the mandate of Jesus Christ in ministering through its total effort to support with appropriate resources the mission and ministry of its agencies, departments and local churches. Effort should be made to establish the needs within the local churches and their spheres of influence, and to plan accordingly, including long range planning.

6. Provide Appropriate Committees and Make Appointments

The National Conference shall, in keeping with its sense of mission and ministry, provide for such leadership teams, committees, task forces, boards, etc., as may facilitate the planning and implementation necessary to the fulfillment of its objectives for the church.

7. Provide Finances

The National Conference shall annually adopt a budget and policies which will govern its financial resources. It shall receive requests for funds from the various leadership teams, or shall receive and approve their projected budgets. The budget shall also show the minimum amount established for the salary and benefits for full-time pastoral service in each local church, the funds needed for the various interests of the National Conference, the joint international ministries budgets, and the goals for the designated (and approved) general and special offerings.

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

8. Examine its Members-

A committee of the Bishop and one member of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall examine all ministerial members of the United Brethren Church in Canada and others serving pastorates within the church regarding their moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and pastoral competency. Should any minister feel he has been unfairly dealt with in the recommendations of the leadership team, he/she shall be privileged to bring his/her case before the National Conference. (See 221.3c.)

9. To Provide a Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team

The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall be comprised of the Bishop, and two to four other members of the National Conference appointed by the Bishop. The Bishop will serve as chairman. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team may total a maximum of five persons.

The P.M.L.T, through its secretary, shall report annually to the National Conference on all of its work during the previous year. This report shall include the pastoral assignments, the status of both assigned and unassigned pastors, and the educational status of each licentiate. Permanent records shall be kept of the individual minister's educational progress, and such records shall remain the property of the leadership team and the National Conference.

10. License and Ordain Candidates for the Ministry

The National Conference shall license candidates for the ministry and ordain elders. (See 214, 215, 221, 222) The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall be responsible for the following:

- a. To provide orientation and study resources for candidates for a local church license, and a continuing record of the licensee's educational progress.
- b. To encourage and urge all ministerial candidates and prospects to attend Huntington University, and to keep a viable communication with them while pursuing their theological studies.
- c. To receive annual reports on each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school.
- d. To give direction and guidance to the educational program of the ministerial candidate who is not regularly enrolled in a theological school.
- e. To examine candidates for National Conference ministerial membership and to make recommendations to the National Conference.
- f. To report to the National Conference with recommendations when a licentiate has completed his educational requirements for ordination.
- g. To cooperate with Huntington University and/or other United Brethren agencies in providing guidance and programming for the continuing education of ministers.
- h. To approve of correspondence courses for study of ministerial candidates.
- i. To approve of Bible Colleges, Universities and seminaries acceptable for enrollment by ministerial candidates, and of the courses offered.

11. Assign Pastors

- a. Philosophy--The United Brethren Church in Canada assigns its pastors through the cooperation of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team, the pastor, and the local church personnel relations commission

(subject to the local church board). The goal of this cooperation is to come to a consensus on these assignments, however, the authority and final decision belong to the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team (subject to the National Conference or its Executive Leadership Team).

- b. Procedure for Assignment--The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team shall supply appointments and local churches with licensed ministers whose gifts and talents match the needs of the church and as the need arises, giving preference to ministers on the National Conference roll. A minister shall be assigned to a congregation according to a signed contract.
- c. Creating a Circuit--Upon advice from the lay delegate(s), personnel relations committee or Executive Leadership Team, the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team may appoint one minister to serve two or more congregations.
- d. Cross-Conference Assignments--The Bishop may consider cross-conference assignments after first consulting with the stationing committees or pastoral ministry leadership teams of the United Brethren Church in Canada and the other national conference involved. Any minister coming from another United Brethren national conference shall have full voting privileges for three years in the National Conference, but only if he waives, in writing, his voting privileges in the national conference of which he is a member. If he does not transfer his membership within three years, the voting privileges shall cease. Upon the minister's request, the National Conference may vote to extend the minister's voting privileges for an additional period of time.

12. Appoint a Director of Evangelism

The National Conference may, when practicable, appoint a director of evangelism who shall assume the responsibility of organizing and directing in each church under his conference a suitable program of training for the pastor, laymen and young people in the basic fundamentals of evangelism.

- a. Qualifications--He shall have a minimum of five years of preaching and teaching experience, unless otherwise determined by the Executive Leadership Team. A compassion for people and a calling to be a teacher must be in evidence. He shall be experienced in one of the proven methods of presenting the gospel and should be prepared to stay at a given church until at least the pastor and two lay persons are trained.
- b. Duties--He shall use a plan of evangelism which is suitable for fulfilling our evangelism objectives. The program shall include instruction in the presentation of the gospel, memorization of scripture verses relating to the subject, on the job training and sharing of results for the edification of the body of believers.

13 To Determine Boundaries

The National 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.

14 Fill Vacancies

The National Conference, through its Executive Leadership Team, shall provide for the filling of vacancies which may occur in its offices and appointments, except as otherwise provided for.

Chapter 21

Executive Leadership Team

341

Purpose

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) assists the Bishop in providing leadership for The United Brethren Church in Canada under the governance of the National Conference. The ELT seeks ways to enable God's kingdom to go forward primarily through the ministries of the local churches, and secondarily through the combined efforts of those churches through the ministries of the Conference. The ELT plans and directs the implementation of the programs and policies of the National Conference through the various leadership teams. It conducts the business of the church between the sessions of the National Conference.

342

Personnel

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) consists of the Bishop (as chairperson) plus the Team Leader of each Leadership Team appointed by the Bishop and approved by the National Conference. The Bishop has authority to remove any team leader that in the Bishop's judgment is not accomplishing the task, in consultation with the rest of the ELT. In case of a vacancy on the ELT for any reason, the Bishop may appoint a replacement, to be approved at next National Conference session.

343

Officers

For official reporting purposes, the Bishop is designated as Chief Executive Officer (CEO or President). The members of the ELT are regarded as governors or board members. The ELT will appoint a Secretary and/or Conference Treasurer (or Chief Financial Officer) upon the recommendation of the Bishop or to declare the office vacant. If a vacancy should occur, the ELT has power to act. The ELT may appoint a financial administrator to oversee various financial programs, as assigned by the National Conference, the Bishop or the Executive Leadership Team. The Bishop has authority to appoint an Assistant Bishop, who may function as his designate in any situation. The titles of Conference Secretary, Treasurer, or Assistant Bishop shall in no way alter the function or composition of the Executive Team personnel as defined in this bylaw.

344

Meetings

The Executive Leadership Team must meet within thirty days after the adjournment of the National Conference. It also meets at times as called by the Bishop. It is recommended that the ELT meet once per quarter.

345

Duties and Powers

The Executive Leadership Team shall have the essential function of assisting the Bishop in providing leadership for The United Brethren Church in Canada by developing plans, programs and policies to help the church accomplish its goals. It shall also act as the National Conference's executive committee in carrying out its interim concerns and business. The ELT carries authority in all actions and over all departments and agencies of the church.

.1 Review and Evaluation

The Executive Leadership Team provides an ongoing process of review and evaluation of mission and ministry of the church and gives appropriate recommendations and directives to the officers, leadership teams and various districts of the church. In particular, the ELT prepares recommendations for the

leadership teams and the National Conference concerning boundaries, budget and finance, and proposals for growth through enlargement and expansion.

.2 Reports

The ELT shall receive and review reports.

.3 Salary Policies and Schedules

The ELT shall set any necessary honoraria or salary policies and schedules for the Bishop, chairpersons or other staff members.

.4 Approve Policies

The ELT may suggest to the National Conference changes in policy that relate to the work of the Bishop. The Bishop and the ELT determines and approves policies for other officers that are in addition to those already contained in the *Discipline*. The ELT may also receive recommendations for policy change from leadership teams.

.5 Serve as the National Board of Trustees

The Executive Leadership Team also serves as the National Board of Trustees. As such, the ELT shall authorize the acquisition and disposition of all real estate properties and physical properties for the National church.

.6 Review Budget and Offerings

The ELT annually reviews the budget and schedule of services and offerings established by the National Conference and sets conditions and provisions for adjustments to sharing in the benevolent budget and joint international committees budgets as necessary.

.7 Interpret *Discipline*—

The ELT shall decide by majority vote questions of *Discipline* arising between National Conferences. Between sessions of the Executive Leadership Team or the National Conference, the Bishop's ruling will be accepted as the interpretation of *Discipline*. This ruling stands until modified by the Executive Leadership Team or National Conference.

.8 Fill Vacancies

The ELT shall be empowered to fill vacancies occurring in the office of the Bishop until the next meeting of the National Conference and also to fill vacancies occurring in any other office. The Bishop shall be empowered to fill vacancies occurring in the ELT.

.9 Make Recommendations

The ELT shall provide recommendations concerning the amendment and the revision of *Discipline*, as appropriate.

.10 Appoint members to Joint International Committees

The Executive Leadership Team shall appoint all representatives to positions reserved for Canadians on management committees and/or sub-committees of any joint national and/or international ministries.

.11 Provide for Agenda and Programs

The Bishop, through the Executive Leadership Team, shall provide for the preparation of the agenda and program of the various meetings such as the annual and mid-year sessions, ministers' seminars, briefings, etc.

.12 Provide for a Mid-Year Council

The Executive Leadership Team may provide for a mid-year council session for official voting members of the National Conference. Mid-year council is held to care for all necessary business except that which

may pertain to the ministry or the changing of boundaries. Ministers whose credentials are being transferred to or from another United Brethren national church or conference may be received by mid-year sessions.

Chapter 22

Property

351

Security of Property

.1 Documents

All church property shall be secured by a legal document recognized by the province or other governmental authority in which the property is located and held in trust for The United Brethren Church in Canada by a board of trustees, and their successors in office, of local churches and other entities authorized to hold property pursuant to the *Discipline* of The United Brethren Church in Canada. Churches or other legal entities of The United Brethren Church in Canada holding property shall be incorporated if required by the law of the province or other governmental authority in which it is located.

.2 Local Church Title

Recognizing that local church property is held in trust for The United Brethren Church in Canada, local churches desiring to hold title to property in the name of the local congregation may do so when the following procedure has been followed:

a. The local board of administration of said church shall prepare a recommendation concerning the acquiring of the title to be presented to a special called local conference session (the local board of administration, chaired by the Bishop).

b. The local board of administration shall apprise the National Conference of the recommendation by submitting copies to the bishop.

c. The Executive Leadership Team shall determine the capital funds invested in the property by The United Brethren Church in Canada that would need to be repaid.

d. The local board of administration shall make an announcement to the congregation about the meeting of the local board (including the Bishop) stating the date and purpose of the meeting. This announcement shall be made at least one month before the meeting.

e. The local board (including the Bishop) shall require a two-thirds favourable vote to pass the resolution.

f. The Bishop or his appointee shall chair a meeting of the adult members of the congregation. Each member shall be informed by a certified letter three months in advance of the meeting. The letter shall explain the purpose of the meeting. It will require a two-thirds favourable vote to pass the resolution.

g. After all of the above conditions have been met, a duly organized meeting of the National Conference or the Executive Leadership Team shall be held and a motion shall be passed whereby that organization sells, conveys or releases, in the form of a deed, the property to the local church. The chairman and secretary shall sign a resolution in the form of a certified copy indicating that the property is so conveyed. This shall be signed before a notary public. This certified copy and the deed are both necessary to convey property title to the local church. The vote by the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team shall be by ballot and shall require a two-thirds favourable vote. Expenses incurred shall be assumed by the local church.

h. If any local church shall pursue the above course to gain title to the property of that local church, and shall choose to no longer be a part of The United Brethren Church in Canada, it shall immediately cease from using the names "United Brethren," "United Brethren in Christ," or "The United Brethren Church in Canada." The United Brethren Church in Canada or the National Conference shall not be responsible for any debts or liabilities of any kind incurred from that point.

i. Any congregation desiring to join The United Brethren Church in Canada shall indicate in the deed to any property that such property shall be held in trust for The United Brethren Church in Canada before being allowed use of The United Brethren name or benefiting from the privileges of participation in the denomination.

Boards of Trustees**.1 Local Church Trustees**

(See 314.6, 321-330)

.2 National Conference Trustees

The National Conference may elect a board of trustees to acquire, control and dispose of property in trust for The United Brethren Church in Canada who shall hold office for three years, providing at the first election under this provision one or more shall be elected for three years, one or more for two years, and one or more for one year, and at the expiration of their terms their successors shall be elected for three years. The National Conference may appoint the Executive Leadership Team as its board of trustees, if it so desires. If the Conference has a board of trustees other than the Executive Leadership Team, the chairman of the board of trustees shall be a member ex officio of the Executive Leadership Team.

.3 Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs in the foregoing board of trustees, the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team shall fill such vacancy. In all cases the board shall see that the records required by the civil law governing such cases shall correspond to the facts.

.4 Vacant Church Property

When any of our churches close and cease their ministry, houses or vacant pastorates cease to be used by our people for religious purposes and for that or other reasons are left without a properly constituted board of trustees, the Bishop shall notify the board of trustees appointed by the National Conference or Executive Leadership Team for the purpose of taking charge of such property, which shall hold the property in trust to control, rent or sell as the Executive Leadership Team may direct. In the event of sale, all money derived from the sale shall be held in trust by the National Conference board of trustees for a period of one year. If within that time another local church is organized in the same locality the money derived from said sale may be used by the new local church; otherwise it may become a part of funds of the National Conference to be used as the trustees shall determine.

Chapter 23

New Church Development

401

Chair, New Church Development Leadership Team

.1 Overall Mandate

TO LEAD AND DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE TEAM OF SELECT PERSONS WHO HAVE A VISION FOR AND EXPERTISE IN THE AREA OF NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT. TO FOCUS ON NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHURCH PLANTING AS WELL AS BE A RESOURCE TO GROWING CHURCHES THAT HAVE A VISION FOR NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT.

.2 Term and Reporting

The term of office shall be three years. Reports to the Bishop.

.3 Key Accountabilities:

A. Key Qualifications:

- A leader who has experience in developing vision and clear goals
- Has been a leader in a healthy growing church
- Experience in a leadership role promoting successful growth and change would be an asset.
- Has the skills to clearly articulate and deliver a vision
- Has the capability to chair effective meetings
- Understands UB History, its heritage and its doctrinal distinctives

B. Lead Responsibilities

- Head a team that promotes and supports New Church Development
- Develop a long-range plan of implementation for new church development.
- Seeks creative church development opportunities.
- Develop criteria to be in place to ensure the greatest possibility of success for a new church development project.
- Motivates existing churches to consider and plan for church multiplication.
- Find and/or develop the resources to assist successful Church Development efforts
- Shepherds new churches under development to self-sufficiency.

C. Competencies

- **Understanding others:** Picks up on the needs and sense of groups, what they value and how to deliver solutions.
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** relates well to all kinds of people, with different temperaments and styles. Builds rapport and handles situations with diplomacy and tact.
- **Functional/Technical Skills:** has the functional and technical knowledge skill to do the job at a high level of accomplishment.
- **Managing Diversity:** is comfortable managing a variety of tasks, often in parallel. Is open and flexible in his/her thinking enough to realize the value of diverse opinions and treats fairly a diversity of people.

D. Expected outcomes

- To see new churches developed every three years.

- Lead a team of skilled individuals whose responsibility it is to ensure that time and money invested in each project bears fruit.
- Existing churches are inspired to plant new churches that are committed to continue to grow and prosper.
- Develop and carry out a ministry that excites others and develop churches that are effectively growing and fulfilling the Great Commission
- New churches are successfully guided toward self sufficiency

E. Expectation of team members

- Possess a passion for church growth and change and have the ability to pass this on to others
- Bring a variety of skills to the team that will foster and enhance church growth and multiplication.
- Have a learning spirit and be willing to attend seminars and courses as necessary that will enhance their ability to be part of an effective church development team.

F. Values {to be maintained at all times}:

Morality: Life must be lived in keeping with the social and moral standards of the church, as found in the book of Discipline of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

Church Involvement: Will be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church as an active member. Will be in agreement with the church goals and mission

Chapter 24

Common Ministries

501

Chair, Common Ministries Leadership Team

.1 Overall Mandate

The purpose of the chair of Common Ministries is to assemble a team(s) of individuals, who share a common view of strengthening local church ministry and the identity of The United Brethren Denomination. The team will assess, develop, and implement ministry events for spiritual growth and humanitarian projects in which all local United Brethren Churches in Canada will be motivated to participate and be drawn together.

.2 Term and Reporting

The term of office shall be three years. Reports to the Bishop.

.3 Key Accountabilities:

A. Key Qualifications –

- Have excellent communication and leadership skills.
- A proven leader – who gets things done and will bring about measurable results that are beneficial to the denomination.
- Has a full understanding of the United Brethren denomination, its heritage, its history, and its identity, its doctrinal distinctive.
- Has participated in and led common ministry activities.
- Has a vision for the future and the wisdom to assess current programs.
- Has passion for the Common Ministry Initiatives and is a gifted promoter and motivator.
- Has exhibited creativity in developing programs.
- Has the ability to nurture interchurch cooperation.

B. Lead Responsibilities –

- Evaluate the effectiveness of current common ministry initiatives.
- Regularly seek input from local churches on meaningful common ministry initiatives and survey effectiveness of existing Common Ministry initiatives.
- Discern areas in which common ministry initiatives would be meaningful/helpful to the denomination.
- Assemble the broad based teams to support common ministry initiatives.
- Develop, maintain, oversee committees that plan and facilitate common ministry initiatives.
- Develop and execute an annual communication plan of common ministry initiatives to all local churches.
- Explore strategic opportunities with other commissions.

C. Competencies:

Functional/Technical Skills: has the functional and technical knowledge skill to do the job at a high level of accomplishment.

Managing Diversity: is comfortable managing a variety of tasks, often in parallel. Is flexible and treats fairly a diversity of people.

Integrity and Trust: is widely trusted and is skilled at maintaining confidences. Helpful manner and discernment are essential.

Interpersonal Relationships: relates well to all kinds of people, with different temperaments and styles. Builds rapport and handles situations with diplomacy and tact.

Organizing: uses resources effectively, efficiently and arranges information and files in a useful manner.

Understanding others: Picks up on the needs and sense of groups, what they value and how to deliver solutions.

D. Expected Outcomes:

- Active participation in common ministries by local churches and the creation of a bond between them.
- Common Ministry initiatives are having an impact on changing lives.
- Individuals and churches mobilized for action on social issues.
- The creation of a stronger UB identity amongst the churches and our communities.
- Long term common initiatives are having an impact on growing our churches.

E. Expectation of Team Members:

- Team players that have the passion for common ministries initiatives.

F. Values: {to be maintained at all times}:

Morality: Life must be lived in keeping with the social and moral standards of the church, as found in the book of Discipline of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

Church Involvement: Will be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church as an active member. Will be in agreement with the church goals and mission.

Will participate actively and responsibly on committees.

Chapter 25

Global Outreach

601

Purpose

The Global Outreach Leadership Team (GOLT) is established in compliance with Christ's commission to go into the uttermost part of the earth as His witnesses and to carry out the missionary program of The United Brethren Church in Canada. The mandate of the Chair of the Global Outreach Leadership Team is to set the mission priorities, locations and processes for engaging Canadian United Brethren missionaries and mission projects. Attention is given not only to UB mission projects, but also to empowering congregations in initiatives that reach into the community (Micah 6:8). The leader and team seek out opportunities and resources that may exist with UB Global Ministries and strives to set a strong Canadian agenda. The scope includes mission and compassion outreach.

602

Name

Missions endeavours of the church shall be facilitated through a group known as the "Global Outreach Leadership Team of The United Brethren Church in Canada."

603

Leadership Team

The team leader is appointed by the Bishop to function as the Chair of the Global Outreach Leadership team. In consultation with the Bishop and local churches, the Team Leader will build/assign a team made up of competent, experienced, growth oriented members.

604

Meetings

The Global Outreach Leadership Team shall meet as required, in person or electronically to fulfill the mandate of the Leadership Team.

605

Team Leader

The Global Outreach Leadership Team is chaired by the Team Leader, who is appointed by the Bishop. This position automatically makes the Team Leader a part of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

1 Values {to be maintained at all times):

2 Morality: Life must be lived in keeping with the social and moral standards of the church, as found in the book of Discipline of the United Brethren Church in Canada.

3 Church Involvement: Will be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church as an active member. Will be in agreement with the church goals and mission.

606

Expected Outcomes

- .1 Strong, vibrant mission focus in each of the denominational churches.
- .2 Strong local church support for overall denominational objectives and priorities with room for innovation

- and creativity at the local church level.
- .3 Denominational unity in the raising and disbursement of mission funds.
 - .4 Empowered intergenerational interest and passion for missions in the denomination.
 - .5 Measurable impact of efforts in the denomination's chosen initiatives – ongoing evaluation and feedback.
 - .6 Regular stream of individuals interested in pursuing a ministry in the mission field or Micah Challenge type of approach.
 - .7 The commission shall report annually to the National Conference.

607

Expectation of the Team

- .1 Team members are responsible to lead certain key responsibilities such as planning, finance, development curriculum, prayer and support, communications, fundraising. The team members report to the team leader regarding their on-going projects and delegated responsibilities.
- .2 Directs denomination communication initiatives related to missions that can be utilized in local churches, communities and institutions being able to relay the objectives, strategies and aspirations of the denominational team.
- .3 Function as strategic advisors to the team leader on all aspects of the affairs of the denomination mission effort.
- .4 Participate in short-term mission work, when available.

608

Executive Decisions

In the cases where a rapid decision or action needs to be taken, this can be done at the discretion of the Team Leader in consultation with the Bishop and possibly the U.B. Global Board (see below). Other members of GOLT may be consulted if required.

609

Funds

- .1 All funds are kept with the Conference Treasurer. A yearly budget is set for the leadership team.

610

Vacancies

Vacancies that may occur among those members elected by the National Conference shall be filled by the Team Leader as required. Team Leader vacancy will be filled by the Bishop.

611

Related Agencies Within the Field of Missions

U.B. Global is a joint US-Canada organization that gives leadership to the world-wide works of the United Brethren denomination. The United Brethren Church in Canada is a member partner of this team. Canada has representation which is composed of the Canadian Bishop and team leader of the Global Outreach Leadership Team. Additional Canadian representatives may be appointed.

Chapter 26

Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team

261

Purpose

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team of The United Brethren Church in Canada shall oversee the ministry of the pastors within the Church, including examination and licensing, pastoral assignments, and ongoing accountability.

642

Personnel

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team shall be comprised of the Bishop and two to four others he appoints, totaling a maximum of five persons.

643

Duties

.1 Examine Candidates for the Ministry

The National Conference shall license candidates for the ministry and ordain elders (see 214, 215, 221, 222).

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team shall be responsible for the following:

- a. To provide orientation and study resources for candidates for a local church license, and a continuing record of the licensee's educational progress.
- b. To encourage and urge all ministerial candidates and prospects to attend the Huntington University Graduate School, and to keep a viable communication with them while pursuing their theological studies.
- c. To receive annual reports on each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school.
- d. To give direction and guidance to the educational program of the ministerial candidate who is not regularly enrolled in a theological school.
- e. To examine candidates for National Conference ministerial membership and to make recommendations to the Conference.
- f. To report to the Conference with recommendations when a licentiate has completed his educational requirements for ordination.
- g. To cooperate with the Huntington University Graduate School of Christian Ministries and/or other United Brethren agencies in providing guidance and programming for the continuing education of ministers.
- h. To approve of correspondence courses for study of ministerial candidates.
- i. To approve of Bible Colleges, Universities and seminaries acceptable for enrollment by ministerial candidates, and of the courses offered.
- j. To ensure that all ministerial candidates have their ministerial and educational qualifications reviewed by Huntington University and returned to the candidate and the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team, with recommendations, prior to being licensed or ordained.

.2 Assign Pastors

a. *Philosophy*—The United Brethren Church in Canada assigns its pastors through the cooperation of the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team, the pastor, and the local church personnel relations commission (subject to the local church board). The goal of this cooperation is to come to a consensus on these assignments, however, the authority and final decision belongs to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team (subject to the National Conference or its Executive Leadership Team). The

final decision regarding a pastoral assignment does not belong to the local church or any of its commissions or boards.

b. *Procedure for Assignment*—The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team shall supply appointments and local churches with licensed ministers whose gifts and talents match the needs of the church and as the need arises, giving preference to ministers on the National Conference roll. A minister shall be assigned to a congregation according to a signed contract.

c. *Special Appointment Assignments*—The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team may appoint national conference ministers and ordained 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 the conference Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.

d. *Creating a Circuit*—After consultation with the churches' administrative boards, the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team may appoint one minister to serve two or more congregations.

e. *Cross-Conference Assignments*—The Bishop may consider cross-conference assignments after first consulting with the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team of The United Brethren Church in Canada and the equivalent body of the other national conference involved. Any minister coming from another United Brethren national conference shall have full voting privileges for three years in the National Conference, upon waiving, in writing, his/her voting privileges in the national church of which he/she is a member. Additionally, if he/she does not transfer his membership within three years, the voting privileges shall cease.

f. *Additional Staff Pastors*—Churches wishing to hire additional staff pastors (not on the Conference Roll) must have those candidates approved by the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team prior to hiring.

.3 Examine Ministers

A committee of the Bishop and one member of the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team shall examine all ministerial members of The United Brethren Church in Canada and others serving pastorates within the church regarding their moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and pastoral competency. Should any minister feel he has been unfairly dealt with in the recommendations of the Pastoral Services Leadership Team, he/she shall be privileged to bring his/her case before the Conference. (See 221.3c.)

.4 To Report to the National Conference

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team, through its secretary, shall report annually to the National Conference on its work during the previous year. This report shall include the pastoral assignments, the status of both assigned and unassigned pastors, and the educational status of each licentiate. Permanent records shall be kept of the individual minister's educational progress, and such records shall remain the property of the leadership team and the Conference.

Chapter 27

Leadership Development

621

Chair, Leadership Development Leadership Team

.1 Overall Mandate

The Chair will lead the key leadership development initiatives and training for pastoral and lay leaders within the denomination. Emphasis will be placed on success driven skills intended to take leaders to optimal levels of performance in key areas such as planning, goal setting, relationship management, priority setting and conflict management. The Chair will work in close association with the Bishop and will assemble a working team.

.2 Term and Reporting

The term of office shall be three years. Reports to the Bishop.

.3 Key Accountabilities:

A. Key Qualifications:

- Familiar with the leadership competencies exhibited by Jesus, as well as the New Testament leadership principles outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-10 and Titus 1:5-9.
- Familiar with the key aspects of discipleship {Lk. 14:27}.
- Is competent in the key principles of strategic planning, coaching and mentoring, performance evaluation and professional development.
- Has demonstrated strong interpersonal and communication skills and is a strong team player and motivator.
- Direct people management experience would be an asset.
- Has an experience in planning and goal setting.
- Has a demonstrated track record of board/pastoral relations management, including experience on boards, as a deacon, and other committees and teams.
- Has a passion for planning and for ensuring results.

B. Lead Responsibilities:

- Will form a team whose responsibility will be to plan and facilitate leadership development programs, including succession-planning processes.
- Will work closely and collaboratively with pastors and congregations and the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team to assess and develop leadership objectives and development needs.
- Will formulate specific training programs that can be drawn on to ensure optimal training and development of pastors, boards, and committees.
- Will devise and implement the processes for role descriptions, performance review and professional development.
- With the direction of the team, build a toolbox of resources that will teach church leaders to:
 - Plan future strategy
 - Set priorities and goals
 - Set measurable targets and evaluate results through sound evaluation processes
 - Develop spiritual gifts as well as current management skills in order to manage a variety of situations and opportunities within congregations.

C. Job related Competencies:

- Managerial courage – provides current, actionable and positive direction and feedback on key leadership initiatives and works to develop processes and leadership assessment.

- Motivating others – creates a positive climate, inviting input and looking for flexible and creative ways to motivate and develop others.
- Knows how to build effective teams –teaches team management, running meetings, problem solving processes for groups.

D. Expected outcomes:

- Pastors, board and committee members understand their roles and the criteria by which performance will be assessed and developed.
- Creative and proactive development of plans, strategies and ministry programs. These initiatives will be assessed and improved.
- Church leaders will be motivated and continually develop their skills and approaches to challenges.
- Adoption of annual performance reviews will provide specific direction on individual development and performance improvement.
- Nurturing leaders, succession planning, identifying the next generation of lay and clergy leaders.

E. Expectation of team members:

- Management experience an asset.
- Demonstrated competency in key leadership skill areas.
- Willing and able to assume teaching and facilitating responsibilities.
- Solid communicators.
- Strong team players.

F. General Key Competencies

Functional/Technical Skills: has the functional and technical knowledge skill to do the job at a high level of accomplishment.

Managing Diversity: is comfortable managing a variety of tasks, often in parallel. Is flexible and treats fairly a diversity of people.

Integrity and Trust: is widely trusted and is skilled at maintaining confidences. Helpful manner and discernment are essential.

Interpersonal Relationships: relates well to all kinds of people, with different temperaments and styles. Builds rapport and handles situations with diplomacy and tact.

Organizing: uses resources effectively, efficiently and arranges information and files in a useful manner.

Understanding others: Picks up on the needs and sense of groups, what they value and how to deliver solutions.

G. Values {to be maintained at all times}:

Morality: Life must be lived in keeping with the social and moral standards of the church, as found in the book of Discipline of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

Church Involvement: Will be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church as an active member. Will be in agreement with the church goals and mission.

Chapter 28

Essential Services

651

Chair, Essential Services Leadership Team

.1 Overall Mandate

The Chair of the Essential Services Leadership Team, along with the Bishop, will assemble a team with the appropriate abilities to provide and oversee the services necessary for the smooth operation of The United Brethren Church in Canada, in support of the work of the Local Churches.

.2 Term and Reporting

The term of office shall be three years. Reports to the Bishop.

.3 Key Accountabilities:

A. Key Qualifications –

- Administrative skills to oversee the legal, financial and communications needs of the Conference.
- Team-building skills to work with other members of the Leadership Team.
- A proven leader – who gets things done and will bring about measurable results that are beneficial to the denomination.
- Has a full understanding of the United Brethren denomination, its heritage, its history, and its identity, as well as its doctrinal distinctive.
- Has participated actively in the Conference.
- Has the ability to nurture interchurch cooperation.

B. Lead Responsibilities

The Chair of this Leadership Team will serve as the administrative overseer of the Conference, overseeing the legal, financial and communications needs of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

C. Competencies

Functional/Technical Skills: has the functional and technical knowledge skill to do the job at a high level of accomplishment.

Managing Diversity: is comfortable managing a variety of tasks, often in parallel. Is flexible and treats fairly a diversity of people.

Integrity and Trust: is widely trusted and is skilled at maintaining confidences. Helpful manner and discernment are essential.

Interpersonal Relationships: relates well to all kinds of people, with different temperaments and styles. Builds rapport and handles situations with diplomacy and tact.

Organizing: uses resources effectively, efficiently and arranges information and files in a useful manner.

Understanding others and picks up on the needs and sense of groups, what they value, and how to deliver solutions.

D. Expected outcomes:

Expected outcomes will include:

- Legal and proper meetings and procedures on all levels
- Compliance with all legal and ecclesiastical regulations

- Accurate and effective budgeting and financial management
- Effective communication both within and without the denomination, via website, newsletters, etc.

F. Expectation of team members:

Essential Services Leadership Team members will include a Treasurer, a Financial Administrator, a Communications Director, and others who can help fulfill the mandate of this Leadership Team. They will work with the Chairman to see that the organizational needs of the denomination and its churches are met in a proper and efficient manner.

G. Values {to be maintained at all times}:

Morality: Life must be lived in keeping with the social and moral standards of the church, as found in the book of Discipline of The United Brethren Church in Canada.

Church Involvement: Will be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church as an active member. Will be in agreement with the church goals and mission.

Chapter 29

Christian Higher Education Committee

701 Constitution

.1 Purpose

The Christian Higher Education Committee is established to create and promote a general interest in Christian higher education in general and Huntington University and Emmanuel Bible College in particular throughout our denomination in Canada, to lay the foundation for Christian character and culture, to promote the distinctive standards and teachings of The United Brethren Church in Canada, and to prepare members for more effective Christian service in the various vocations of life.

.2 National Conference

The National Conference is the final authority in the management of the Christian Higher Education Committee in all matters of policy, procedure and function not otherwise provided herein.

.3 Executive Leadership Team

This group shall be the interim authority between sessions of the National Conference in the management of the Christian Higher Education Committee in all matters of policy, procedure, and function not otherwise provided herein. It shall fill vacancies on the Christian Higher Education Committee by appointment.

702 Organization

.1 Name

There shall be a Christian Higher Education Committee known by the name of "The Christian Higher Education Committee of The United Brethren Church in Canada."

.2 Personnel

The Committee shall be made up of the Bishop, the Chair of Christian Higher Education, and up to three members to be selected by the Executive Leadership Team. The Chair shall serve a four year term, and the other members shall serve three year terms (all terms not to expire the same year).

.3 Meetings

This committee shall meet at least annually. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or the Bishop.

.4 Duties

- a. The committee shall determine the criteria for the distribution of monies from the Huntington University Scholarship Fund and the Christian Higher Education Fund.
- b. The committee shall evaluate applications according to the published criteria.
- c. Distribute the funds accordingly.
- d. Promote the funds and their availability in all of the local churches.
- e. Report annually to the National Conference and to the Executive Leadership Team upon request.

703 Director of Christian Higher Education

.1 Director of Christian Higher Education

The National Conference may, at its discretion, elect a director of Christian higher education whose duty it shall be to promote the interests of the Christian Higher Education Committee within The United Brethren Church in Canada. The director shall cooperate with Huntington University and Emmanuel Bible College in securing students and providing special financial support specifically for Huntington University and Emmanuel Bible College, and aid in general of promotion of Christian higher education.

Chapter 30

Trial Of Members

801

Preliminary to Trial

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matthew 18:15-17); that is, he shall be expelled. But no member shall be denied the regular committee trial if he requests it.

802

Method of Procedure

In case a member is accused of immoral conduct, the local church board of administration shall appoint a committee of two from its own number to visit the accused and determine the validity of the accusation. If necessary, they should seek to reclaim him, if possible; but if such a visit is unsuccessful, he shall be tried by the church to which he belongs, or by a committee thereof, chosen by the parties concerned in the following manner: the accuser shall choose one committeeperson, the accused a second committeeperson, and these two a third committeeperson; but if these two fail to agree upon the third committeeperson within fifteen days, the local church board shall appoint the third committeeperson. The pastor in charge of the appointment or local church shall be chairperson. If the accused be found guilty, he shall be suspended or expelled. If the accused refuse to choose his committeeperson, he may be suspended or expelled by a vote of the church to which he belongs. Yet cases may happen where it would be expedient to choose a committee from other churches than those to which the parties belong; the Bishop of the National Conference may be chosen as chairperson should the pastor in charge deem it best to do so. Should any member be dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal may be had to the local church board by giving notice thereof to the pastor in charge or to the secretary of the trial, within thirty days after said trial, together with his reasons for such appeal; and it shall be the duty of the secretary to furnish the local church board with a certified copy of the proceedings of the trial and of the notice of appeal. In such case, however, the same person shall not sit in judgment on the same case.

803

Disobedience to the Order of the Church

In case of neglect of duty of any kind, imprudent conduct, indulgence in sinful tempers or words, or disobedience to the order and discipline of the church, let private reproof be given by the pastor or leader. If there be an acknowledgment of the fault, proper humiliation and a promise to reform, the person may be borne with. On the second offense, the pastor or lay leader shall take with him one or two faithful members. However, if the accused deny guilt he may not be expelled without a regular trial as provided in 702. On a third offense, let the case be brought before the local church or before a select committee thereof, and if there be no satisfactory humility, the offender shall be expelled.

In case of trial under this clause, the lay leader shall act in behalf of the church, or if the lay leader be the offender, the secretary of the local board of administration shall act as prosecutor. No charges shall be entertained unless given in writing and duly subscribed.

804

Disputes

In case of a dispute between members, the pastor shall inquire into the circumstances of the case and, if necessary, shall recommend to the contending parties a reference to an arbitrating committee consisting of one arbitrator chosen by the plaintiff, another by the defendant, and a third by these two; if these two fail

to agree upon the third arbitrator within fifteen days, the local conference shall appoint the third arbitrator; these three shall hear the case and decide. But if the pastor shall refuse or neglect to act, the local church board shall appoint one to carry out the rule; and if either or both disputants refuse to choose an arbitrator, the local church board shall appoint the first and second, and these two a third, but if these two fail to agree upon the third arbitrator within fifteen days the local church board shall appoint the third arbitrator. These three shall hear the case and decide.

805

Right of Appeal

Should either be dissatisfied with the decision, such may have a right to an appeal to the next local church board meeting for a second arbitration where each party shall choose two arbitrators, and these four shall choose a fifth, a decision of a majority of whom shall be final. Any person refusing to abide by this decision shall be expelled without further trial.

806

Records of Trials

The administrative board shall be responsible for keeping a record of the proceedings of church trials in a book provided for that purpose and it shall be his duty in case of an appeal to furnish his record to the local church board of administration.

807

Order in Trials

All church trials shall be conducted in a Christian manner, without the employment of magistrates or attorneys to administer oaths and conduct investigations. The accused shall have the right to be represented by counsel who shall be a member of the church.

Chapter 31

Trial Of Local Church Ministers

811

Method of Procedure

When a local church licensed minister is accused of any misdemeanour, the lay leader or the secretary of the local board of administration, to whom the charges with specifications shall be presented in writing, shall prosecute the case and shall inquire into the nature of the complaints. If there be ground for charges, he shall present to the accused a copy of the charges and notify him to choose a committeeperson; the prosecutor shall choose a second committeeperson; and these two a third; but if these two fail to agree upon a third committeeperson within fifteen days, the local church board shall appoint a third committeeperson. This committee shall try the case, the pastor in charge being chairperson. If the accused fails to choose a committeeperson within fifteen days, the local church board shall choose the first and second committeeperson, and these two a third; but if these two fail to agree upon the third committeeperson within fifteen days, the local church board shall appoint the third committeeperson, and this committee shall hear the case and decide. If the accused is found guilty, he shall be silenced; provided, however, that either party shall have the right of appeal to the next local church board meeting for a new trial.

812

Appeal from the Decision of a Local Church Administrative Board

Any local church minister dissatisfied with the decision of a local church administrative board may appeal to the ensuing National Conference by giving notice to the local church secretary in writing of his intention to appeal together with his reason for so doing; and it shall be the duty of the secretary to furnish a certified copy of the proceedings, the notifications and reasons assigned to the National Conference.

Chapter 32

Trial of National Conference Ministers

821

Preliminary Considerations of Trial

Accusations limited to personal trespass require a preliminary compliance with Matthew 18:15-17. Should a National Conference minister who is guilty of immorality, trespass, imprudent conduct or disobedience to the order and discipline of the church make confession of the fact prior to the trial, he shall cease to preach, except by permission of the Bishop, until the meeting of his National Conference. The National Conference shall then consider his case and dispose of it as, in view of all the circumstances, may seem just and right.

822

Method of Procedure

.1 Plan for the Trial

In case a National Conference minister is accused of any of the aforementioned offenses, which accusation must be in writing, and does not make confession of his guilt, the local church board to which he is amenable shall appoint another National Conference minister who shall take with him another minister or a lay leader and investigate the accusation. The procedure in all investigations preliminary to trial shall be as follows:

Where at all possible the accused and accuser shall be brought face to face in the presence of the committee.

To avoid irresponsible gossip in such investigations and to prevent repudiation of testimony in case of trial, all complaints against the accused shall be presented in writing and signed by the accuser in the presence of two disinterested elders in good standing. No complaints shall be considered valid or taken by the committee as grounds for charges against the accused unless they are brought into harmony with this rule.

The accused shall be permitted to present to the committee in writing an answer full and complete covering all phases of the complaints then under investigation by the committee in session.

In addition to the above named rules, the committee in charge of the investigation of any of the above named offenses shall have power to question all parties concerned in such a manner as they deem proper to bring out the evidence in the case. In case the committee finds that the complaints are not of such a nature as to warrant the preferring of charges, they shall report to the next local church board meeting that they find no cause for action.

If in the judgment of the committee the complaints are of such a nature as to warrant action, the investigators shall prefer charges against the accused at the ensuing local church board meeting. Such charges shall in all cases be carefully formulated in writing with definite specifications showing the nature of the offense and the times and places where the offense occurred. They shall also present to the local church board a carefully prepared record of their proceedings in making the investigation, together with the written evidence upon which the charges are preferred.

.2 Order of Trial

If the charges are preferred, the local church board then in session shall appoint a prosecutor to prosecute the case in behalf of the church. The prosecutor shall be an elder in good standing in the National Conference.

.3 Duties of the Prosecutors

It shall be the duty of the prosecutor to notify the accused in writing, setting forth all the charges which have been preferred against him. He shall also notify the accused to choose an elder as his committeeperson to represent the church. These two committeemen shall choose a third elder or minister; but if these two fail to agree upon a third committeeperson within fifteen days, the local church board shall

appoint the third member of the committee, before which the case shall be tried. The prosecutor and the accused shall have the right to challenge any committeeperson.

The prosecutor shall also notify the Bishop. The Bishop shall act as chairperson of the trial, unless rendered ineligible because of relationship or interest or because of his being a witness in the case, in which event the prosecutor shall notify the Vice Chair of the National Conference, who shall appoint a chairperson. If the offender or prosecutor be the Bishop, the Vice Chair of the National Conference shall appoint a chairperson in the case. It shall be the duty of the chairperson to appoint the time and place of the trial, giving not less than twenty nor more than forty days' notice to the parties concerned in said trial.

.4 Taking of Testimony

Every witness shall be asked to declare, upon his honour as a follower of Jesus Christ, that the testimony which he is about to give is true to the best of his knowledge and belief. The question of admissibility of testimony will be decided by the chairperson of the trial. All testimony which may be founded upon rumour or hearsay, without definite personal knowledge, shall be ruled out. Testimony which has no bearing upon the case on trial shall not be admitted. Witnesses should never be permitted to confuse the evidence in the minds of the committee by putting forward personal opinion as testimony. The chairperson shall require the witness to testify specifically to facts within his own knowledge. It should be the purpose of the court to bring out the facts in all their relations and bearing upon the issue pending, in such a manner as will make them clear for the consideration of the committee.

Care shall be taken in the selection of a committee, that only such persons are chosen as may be capable of weighing the testimony and giving it its proper value. It is the prerogative of the committee to decide upon the credibility of a witness. If the testimony comes from an intelligent witness of high Christian character, they should know it and give it added weight because of that fact. If it comes from one who is honest but ill-informed, that fact should be considered. If one of doubtful reputation is before them, they should know and weigh that fact in its bearing upon his testimony. If the witness is biased or prejudiced toward the accused, his testimony should be evaluated accordingly.

.5 Result of Trial

Should a majority of the committee before whom the case is tried be satisfied that the accusation is sustained and that the evidence proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty of serious offense, they shall require him to hold his peace until the National Conference where he shall be accountable.

.6 Record of Trial

It shall be the duty of the committee to transmit in writing the entire proceedings of said trial to the National Conference, where the accused shall have a hearing before the Conference or a select committee thereof. If the findings of the trial in the local church are sustained, the accused shall be suspended or expelled as the Conference may determine, unless because of repentance or restitution the Conference shall be satisfied that he should be pardoned.

.7 Refusal to Prepare or Appear for Trial

Should the accused ignore the church after being duly notified to prepare for trial, or should he refuse or neglect to choose his committeeperson or to notify the prosecutor of his choice within fifteen days, he shall in accordance with *Discipline* be removed from his pastorate, and the bishop shall provide for the supply of the vacancy until the National Conference. Should the accused refuse or fail to appear at the ensuing National Conference, that body shall review the evidence presented from the local church board and deal with the case according to its best judgment.

.8 Right of Counsel

Nothing in the above named procedure shall be construed as to deny the accused the right of counsel in preparing and maintaining his defense. The counsel thus chosen shall be an elder in good standing in The United Brethren Church in Canada. Provided, however, that if the National Conference to which the accused belongs does not possess members with the required qualifications, the accused, with the consent

of the bishop, may make choice of an elder from a conference within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (international).

.9 Expense of Trial

In cases where the investigation of complaints and trial of National Conference members involves expense, or in cases where the accused takes recourse to the civil courts to contest the decision of the church, the National Conference shall provide the funds necessary to defray the expense of those making the investigation and conducting the trial, or defending the church in the civil courts. Should the presence of the Bishop or other general officials become necessary to the defense of the church, their expense shall be paid out of the administrative fund.

823

National Conference Trial Course

Whenever a written accusation of any of the said aforementioned offenses shall be first lodged with the National Conference against one of its ministers and that Conference shall deem it best to place the accusation upon a trial course, the foregoing course shall be pursued, except that the National Conference shall appoint a committee to act, instead of a local church board, in the appointment of a minister to lead in the investigation, to hear the report on the investigation, to appoint a prosecutor if the accusation appears to be well founded and to appoint a third committeeperson when the two committeepersons chosen fail to agree on the choice of the third.