

Part 10: Church Conflict

Chapter 44, Local Church Conflict Resolution

44-1

801 Negotiation Phase

Individuals in conflict should first attempt to resolve their differences privately, without congregational or **national** conference intervention. If this fails to bring a satisfactory resolution--either the accused party denies any wrong-doing, or they are unable to settle matters between themselves--one or two witnesses may be asked to assist.

44-2

803 Arbitration Phase

A local church is responsible for resolving conflict involving its own members. However, conflicts not resolved within the congregation may be referred to **national** conference leadership. If efforts at the negotiation and mediation phases fail, the local church may deem it necessary to refer the conflict to the **national** conference. As a general rule, this should occur only at the invitation of the board of administration or Personnel Relations Commission.

The ~~conference superintendent~~ **US bishop and cluster leader** will determine the appropriate arbiter(s) to deal with the conflict. These arbiters will make a final report with appropriate recommendations. Their decisions will be considered final.

44-3

804 Termination Phase

Any party refusing to adhere to the church's ruling may be removed from church membership and from all ministry and leadership positions. The ~~conference~~ **Executive Leadership Team** has the authority to remove guilty parties from church membership and leadership positions.

Chapter 45, Discipline of Church Members

45-1

812 Offenses Requiring Church Discipline

Any member or minister of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, may be subject to church discipline for any of the following offenses:

1. Teaching doctrines contrary to the doctrines of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
2. Disobeying the provisions of the *Discipline*, or tolerating such disobedience.
3. Insubordination or willful refusal to recognize church authority, whether at the local, ~~conference,~~ or **general or national** church level.
4. Conduct unbecoming a member of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
5. Serious or persistent neglect of duty.

Chapter 46, Discipline of Church Bodies

46-1

822 Offenses Requiring Church Discipline

Any local church, ~~conference,~~ or other body or agency of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, may be subject to church discipline for any of these offenses:

1. Disseminating or tolerating the teaching of doctrines contrary to the doctrines of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, as stated in the *Discipline*.
2. Disobeying the provisions of the *Discipline*, or tolerating such disobedience.
3. Infringing on the rights of United Brethren members, as stated in the *Discipline*.
4. Insubordination or willful refusal to recognize church authority, whether at the local ~~, conference, or general~~ **or national** church level.

46-2

823 Jurisdiction

1. ~~Annual Conferences.~~ **The US National Conference is** ~~Annual conferences are responsible for~~ discipline involving the actions or decisions of:

- a. Local churches in ~~that conference~~ **the US National Conference**.
 - b. Pastors and licensed ministers in the **US National Conference** ~~conference~~.
 - c. The Executive Leadership Team.**
 - ~~c. Camps, organizations, and other entities which report to the annual conference.~~
2. ~~US National Board.~~ ~~The US National Board is responsible for discipline involving the actions or decisions of:~~
- ~~a. Annual conferences.~~
 - ~~b. Huntington College.~~
 - ~~c. Leadership teams, officials, and other entities which report to the US National Board.~~
 - ~~d. Churches, organizations, and United Brethren personnel not under the direct authority of an annual conference.~~
3. ~~US National Conference.~~ ~~The US National Conference is responsible for discipline involving the actions or decisions of the US National Board. During the year of the US National Conference, it shall have responsibility for areas normally under the jurisdiction of the US National Board.~~

46-3

824 Process of Discipline

1. Situations of a corporate nature which require discipline must be handled on an individual basis. The principles of conflict resolution outlined in chapter 44 should be followed as much as applicable. The persons involved in dealing with the situations will vary, depending on the level--local, ~~conference,~~ or national--and the specific bodies or persons involved. Therefore, it is impractical to outline specific procedures intended to address all possible situations. Rather, the relevant governing body shall have discretion in how it proceeds.

2. Depending on the situation, such actions as the following might be appropriate:

- a. Private rebuke of the group in question, or its leader(s), by a ~~conference~~ or national leader.
- b. Rebuke of the group in question, or its leader(s), before two or three witnesses.
- c. Rebuke before the appropriate governing body.
- d. Removal of group members from their positions.
- e. Disbanding of the group.