

Church of the United Brethren in Christ  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# **Pastoral Ministry**

HANDBOOK

2007-2009

**Revised October 2008**

# About the Pastoral Ministry Handbook

Most of the Pastoral Ministry Handbook outlines policies, requirements, and procedures related to the various categories of United Brethren ministers. Two additional chapters deal with the stationing of ministers. All of this material is the responsibility of the Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team. They can revise it at any time.

Chapter 11, "Official Doctrinal Positions," contains various statements passed over the years by the Church. Most of these statements were made to address an issue which had risen to prominence in the Church at that particular time.

## Contents

1. Introduction

## Categories of Ministers

2. Lay Ministers

3. Local Church Ministers

4. Specialized Ministers

5. National Church Ministers

6. Ordained Elders

7. Ordained Chaplains

8. Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination

## Stationing of Ministers

9. Assigning Ministers

10. Requests for Exemption from Service

## Doctrinal Statements

11. Official Doctrinal Positions

## CHAPTER 1

## 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 pastoral responsibilities within the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

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

### Classifications

Ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, 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 may culminate in ordination. Local church ministers are expected to pursue either a national conference license or a specialized ministry license. 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 Internal Revenue Service requirements for exemption, are considered by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, as eligible for such exemption.

### General Qualifications

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

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

### Expectations

#### 1. General Statement

All ministers are expected to model a Christ-centered lifestyle. In so doing, they will confirm the message of

the death, resurrection, and return of Christ which they are to proclaim. They are to evangelize the lost, assimilate them into the church, and train those in their churches to be effective disciples of Jesus Christ as they nurture them in the faith.

#### 2. Spiritual Development and Lifestyle

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

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 bishop.

c. Ministers shall not form a new congregation (regardless of denominational affiliation) without the approval of the Church Multiplication Leadership Team.

## CHAPTER 2

## Lay Ministers

### Description

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

This license is granted by the local church. Persons holding this license are not assumed to be pursuing status as a national conference minister or ordained elder.

### Qualifications

Candidates for this license must have been members

of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, for at least two years and members of the local church to which they apply for at least one year. They must have demonstrated faithfulness to the expectations of members, adherence to the moral and social standards of the church, and conformity to the general expectations of ministers.

## 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 cluster coach (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local church. The candidate shall present the following to the committee:

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

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

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

### 3. Report to the Local Church

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

### 4. Probationary License

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

### 5. Permanent License

When the course of study has been completed, the examining committee shall once again examine the candidate. If the committee so recommends, the local church 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 churches have the authority to revoke the licenses of lay ministers whose lives and ministries are inconsistent with the expectations detailed in the Discipline. Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

### 8. Unorganized Churches

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

Following the examination, the committee shall report its finding to the bishop, making any recommendations it deems consistent with its finding. The bishop may then issue a probationary license.

### 9. Service Outside the Local Congregation

Lay ministers may serve as supply pastors and perform ongoing specific acts of ministry outside of the local congregation of which they are members; however, they must first be approved for service by the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.

### 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 Ministries Licensing Team.

To be eligible for annual renewal, those holding a probationary license must read and pass an examination on four books. The examination will be administered by the senior pastor. When 16 books have been read and the examinations passed, the candidate shall be eligible for a permanent lay minister's license.

### Expectations of Lay Ministers

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

#### 1. Annual Reporting

All lay ministers, both permanent and probationary,

are expected to file an annual report of their activities with the local church to which they belong. If they are serving as a supply pastor, lay ministers will also file an annual report with the bishop and cluster coach.

## 2. Accountability

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

## 3. Ministerial Service

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

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

## CHAPTER 3

# Local Church Ministers

## Description

The local church license is granted by a local congregation to affirm a person's call to ministry. Through these steps, the church seeks to develop ministers who give evidence of high moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and pastoral competency.

This license is granted as the entry level for two distinct tracks of ministerial pursuit. For those seeking ordination, the local church license is the first of three steps toward ordination. For those desiring to serve in a specialized ministry area for a local church, but not in an ordained capacity, the local church license serves as the first of two steps in order to receive a Specialized Ministry License.

## 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 7), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 8 and 9), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 10).

Local church ministers are not eligible to serve as lay delegates to the national conference nor may they serve as ministerial representatives on any national conference

board or commission. They serve as advisory members of the national conference.

## Licensing of Local Church Ministers

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 cluster coach (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local conference. The cluster coach will serve as chairman of the examining committee. 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. They should be obtained from the following:

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

b. *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 and any additional requirements needed for ordination or a specialized ministry license in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA?
- (9) Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any crime?
- (10) Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?

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

(12) Are you abstaining from the use of beverage alcohol, illicit drugs, and tobacco?

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

### 3. Report to the Local Church

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

### 4. Notify the Bishop

The cluster coach shall file a report of the examination and action taken with the bishop. This report should include copies of all documentation presented to the committee.

### 5. Annual Renewal

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

- a. An annual report must be made to the local church. 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.

### 6. Referral for National Conference License

Local conference ministers seeking ordination 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 which 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.

### 7. Referral for Specialized Ministry License

Local conference ministers not seeking ordination

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 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.
- c. They have completed the course in United Brethren church history.
- d. They have demonstrated a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for a Specialized Ministry license.

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

### 8. 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.

### 9. Loss of the License

Local churches 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.

### 10. 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, USA, a license will be granted providing that all other requirements for a local church license have been met.

### 11. Unorganized Churches

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

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

## Course of Study

All local church ministers are expected to pursue a course of study leading toward a Master of Divinity degree through an approved seminary or the equivalent to the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree through the Huntington University Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

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 Ministries Leadership Team.

## Expectations of Local Church Ministers

In addition to the general expectations of all ministers and members in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, 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 church to which they belong. When serving as a supply pastor, local church ministers will also file an annual report with the bishop and cluster coach.

### 2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the local church, local church ministers are accountable to the local church of which they are members. If they are serving as a supply pastor, they are also required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

### 3. Ministerial Service

Local church ministers shall work under the direction of their senior pastors and bishop. They may be asked to supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation, act as supply pastors, or do specific acts of ministry as part of the overall ministry of their local church or denomination. If they are asked to serve as a supply pastor, they must first be approved for service by the Pastoral Ministries Licensing Team. When serving as a supply pastor, local conference ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.

## CHAPTER 4

# Specialized Ministers

## Description

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

## Qualifications

Specialized ministers must meet the following qualifications:

### 1. Education

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

### 2. Experience

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

### 3. Membership

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

## Licensing of Specialized Ministers

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

### 1. Recommendation from a Local Church

After reviewing his or her conduct as a local church minister and their suitability for ministry, the senior pastor of a local church may recommend that the local church refer a candidate to the national conference for a specialized minister’s license. If the local church so concurs, the senior pastor will notify the bishop, and the bishop will forward the candidate’s file to the appropriate Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team, consisting of at least 3 ordained elders, for examination.

### 2. Examination

The candidate shall present the following to the examining committee:

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

(1) The senior pastor of the church where the candidate is a member.

(2) The lay leader (or a key layperson) of the church where the candidate is a member.

(3) The chairperson of the Personnel Relations Commission of the church where the candidate is a member.

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

c. *Written responses to the following:*

(1) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.

(2) Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way for our salvation? How do you support your belief?

(3) What is your motive for desiring 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 proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.

(8) Will you agree to abide by the official actions of your conference and denomination in all matters relating to your ministry?

(9) Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and with the government of this denomination, and will you seek to maintain them?

(10) What are your future plans regarding ministry inasmuch as they pertain to this license?

(11) What current debts do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

(17) What role does your area of ministry play in the overall ministry of the church?

(18) What is your understanding of staff relationships in the church?

(19) Explain your philosophy of ministry as it relates to your specific area of specialization. Based on the above documents and any others the committee may require, the candidate shall be examined to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### **3. Recommendation to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team**

Following the examination, the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team will report its findings to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team may choose to grant a specialized minister's license.

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

The bishop and/or Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team 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.

### **5. Ordination**

If specialized ministers decide to pursue ordination, this license will be deemed the equivalent of a National Church license, pending the completion of all additional requirements for National license.

## **Expectations of Specialized Ministers**

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

### **1. Annual Reporting**

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

### **2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the national conference, specialized ministers are accountable to the national conference in addition to the normal accountability procedures in the local church where they serve.

### **3. Ministerial Service**

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

## CHAPTER 5

# National Conference Ministers

## Description

National conference ministers are those members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, whose call to the ministry has been affirmed by the 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.

## Qualifications

To become a candidate for this license, a person must fulfill 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 7), adherence to the moral and social standards of the church (chapters 8 and 9), and conformity to the general expectations of ministers (chapter 10).

## Licensing of National Conference Ministers

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

### 1. Referral of the Local Church

After local church ministers have held their licenses for a minimum of 12 months, they may request that their local churches refer them for consideration as national conference ministers. The local church 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 Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team, consisting of at least 3 ordained elders. 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 cluster coach.

(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 a 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 Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### 3. Report to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team 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 Ministerial Licensing and Ordination 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 Master of Divinity degree from an approved seminary or the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree from the Huntington University Graduate School of Christian Ministries, or have completed the requirements for those 35 years or older.
- c. They have served for one year in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.
- d. They have demonstrated a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for ordination status.

### 6. Loss of the License

The Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team 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 membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

### 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 Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, 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.

### Course of Study

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

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 Ministries Leadership Team.

### Expectations of National Conference Ministers

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

#### 1. Annual Reporting

All national conference ministers will file an annual report with the bishop and cluster coach. In addition, they are expected to file a separate annual report of their activities with the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team.

#### 2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the national conference, national conference ministers are accountable to the national conference. They are also required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster

#### 3. Ministerial Service

National conference ministers shall work under the direction of the bishop. They may be asked to supply pulpits when ministers are ill or on vacation or be assigned as the senior pastor of a local church. National conference ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.

## CHAPTER 6

# Ordained Elders

### Description

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

### Qualifications

To become a candidate for ordination, a national con-

ference minister must accomplish the following:

1. Earn a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree from the Huntington University Graduate School of Christian Ministries.
2. Serve for one year in a recognized ministry appointment approved by the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team.
3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for the status of ordained elder.

## 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 Ministries Leadership Team for consideration for the office of ordained elder in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

### 2. Examination

Applicants shall be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team, consisting of at least 3 ordained elders. 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 cluster coach.
- (5) A friend or relative.

b. *A copy of his/her academic transcripts.*  
 c. *Written responses to the questions in Chapter 8, "Examination of Candidates for Ordination."*

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

### 3. Report to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team

Following the examination, the examining committee shall report its findings to the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team and make any recommendations it deems

consistent with its findings. Pending a favorable recommendation from the examining committee, the Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team may choose to grant ordination status.

### 4. Loss of the License

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

### 5. Elders from Other Denominations

Ordained ministers from other denominations who seek to be ordained by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must demonstrate that their ordinations are still considered to be in good standing from their denomination of origin, and provide documentation that verifies they meet the educational requirements for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

These elders will be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team. Once that examination has occurred and a favorable recommendation has been approved by Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team, these elders will be granted a national conference license. Upon completion of the one year of service requirement and the course in United Brethren church history their prior ordination will be recognized.

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 Ministries Leadership Team.

### Continuing Education for Elders

All elders who are actively serving in a local church are required to complete two continuing education units (CEUs) and read four ministry-related books during each calendar year. (Each CEU is the equivalent of 10 hours classroom contact time.) Reports for each are to be filed with the bishop and cluster coach at the time of the annual audit.

### Expectations of Elders

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

#### 1. Annual Reporting

All elders must file an annual report of their activities with the bishop and cluster coach.

## 2. Accountability

Since this license is granted by the national conference, ordained ministers are accountable to the national conference. They are also required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

## 3. Ministerial Service

Elders shall work under the direction of the bishop. They are authorized to officiate at funerals and weddings and to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion. If they consistently fail to meet the continuing education requirements described above, they will no longer be eligible to serve as a pastor in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. No ordained elder is guaranteed a pastoral assignment in the denomination.

## CHAPTER 7

# Ordained Chaplains

## Description

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

## Qualifications

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

1. Earn a Master of Divinity or a Master of Theology degree from an accredited seminary (ATS approved), or the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree from the Huntington University Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

2. Complete four units (1600 hours) of Clinical Pastoral Education in an institution accredited by the American College of Pastoral Education.

3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for licentiate status.

## Procedure

The following procedure is established for the ordination of chaplains.

### 1. Request by the National Conference Minister

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

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

Applicants shall be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team. The following are required.

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

- (1) Two Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors.

- (2) The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.

- (3) A layperson serving in leadership at the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.

- (4) A friend or relative.

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

- c. *Written responses to the questions in Chapter 8, "Examination of Candidates for Ordination."*

### 3. Ordination by the National Conference

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

## Loss of License

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

## Ordained Chaplains from Other Denominations

Ordained chaplains from other denominations who seek to be ordained by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, must demonstrate that their ordinations are still considered to be in good standing from their denomination of origin, demonstrate a favorable standing with the American College of Chaplains and provide documentation that verifies they meet the educational requirements for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

These elders will be examined by the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team. Once that examination has occurred and a favorable recommendation has been approved by Pastoral Ministries Leadership Team, these elders will be granted a national conference license. Upon completion of the one year of service requirement and the course in United Brethren church history their prior ordination will be recognized.

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 Ministries Leadership Team.

### **Continuing Education for Elders**

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

### **Expectations of Chaplains**

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

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

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

#### **2. Accountability**

Since this license is granted by the national conference, ordained chaplains are accountable to the national conference of which they are members. They are also required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

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

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

## CHAPTER 8

# Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination

### **Section 1: Commitment to the Christian Faith and Call to Ministry**

a. *Outcome:* Ministers should be able to clearly and confidently articulate their journey of faith and offer a convincing testimony of God's current activity and direction. Because the United Brethren Church believes strongly in a ministerial call, ministers should further be able to clearly articulate their reasons for seeking a ministerial license.

b. *Questions:*

1. Describe your conversion experience and journey of faith.
2. Describe your call to ministry, including your reason for desiring ordination and your future plans regarding ministry.
3. Describe the spiritual walks of your spouse and

children. How have they demonstrated support for your call to ministry?

### **Section 2: Theology**

a. *Outcome:* Ministers should be able to articulate the uniqueness (in polity and history) of the United Brethren Church.

b. *Questions:*

We believe that the issues contained in our Confession of Faith are the fundamental issues of Christian orthodoxy which are consistent across theological perspectives in the evangelical church. Thus, for each section of the Confession of Faith and the Official Doctrinal Positions, the candidate should be asked the following questions:

1. Do you agree with this position of the United Brethren Church?
2. From your own Biblical and theological perspective, how would you defend this position?
3. Summary Question (to be asked at the conclusion of the review of the Confession of Faith): How will you respond to those whose theological positions may differ from yours in any of these areas?

### **Section 3: Membership, Family, and Social Standards**

a. *Outcome:* Ministers should be able to articulate the uniqueness (in polity and history) of the United Brethren Church.

b. *Questions:*

For each of the membership, family and social standards of the United Brethren Church (Discipline, chapters 7, 8 and 9), the candidate should be asked the following questions:

1. Do you agree with this position of the United Brethren Church?
2. From a Biblical and theological perspective, how would you defend this position?
3. Will you support, teach and model the position of the Church in your ministry?

### **Section 4: Spiritual Maturity**

a. *Outcome:* Scripture teaches that the responsibilities of the ministry are not to be entrusted to those whose faith is still new. Thus, ministers should be able to demonstrate spiritual maturity.

b. *Questions:*

1. Describe your personal practice with regard to the spiritual disciplines.
2. What are your spiritual gifts, and how do you see them being used in your ministry?
3. Demonstrate proficiency with a plan of salvation and identify individuals with whom you have intentionally shared your faith.

### **Section 5: Relationships with Others**

a. *Outcome:* Because effective ministry is relational in

nature, ministers must have a history of healthy relationships with people, including those of the opposite sex.

b. *Questions:*

1. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of your personality.
2. Describe your leadership style.
3. Describe your conflict management style.
4. Describe how you build relationships with unbelievers.
5. Do you currently have broken relationships with any other individual, and what steps are you taking (or have you taken) to restore these?

### Section 6: Personal Integrity

a. *Outcome:* Ministers are expected to be persons of the highest integrity. Their names and reputations are to generate respect and admiration from those inside and outside their congregations.

b. *Questions:*

1. What current debts do you have? Are you managing this debt responsibly?
2. Do you tell the truth?
3. Do you manage your time well?
4. Have you ever pled guilty to or have been convicted of any crime?
5. Have you ever been charged with child neglect or abuse?
6. Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?
7. Do you use illegal drugs, beverage alcohol or tobacco in any form?
8. What is your accountability system?
9. Describe your work ethic.
10. Are your marriage and family relationships in harmony with the teachings of Scripture as interpreted by this denomination?

## CHAPTER 9

# Assigning Ministers

### Philosophical Statements

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

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

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

#### 2. The Assignment Process Involves Dialogue

The stationing committee will communicate with the pastors and congregations involved in the assignment

process and will use all information received as a part of the decision-making process. Both pastor and Personnel Relations Commission or its equivalent are granted the right to consult with the stationing committee.

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

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

#### 4. There are No Guaranteed Appointments

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

#### 5. Interim Ministers will be Used

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

### The Assignment Process

Assigning ministers consists of the following steps.

#### 1. A Vacancy Occurs

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

#### 2. Formation of a Stationing Committee

Once a vacancy has occurred, the bishop will form a stationing committee to process this assignment. The stationing committee will be composed of the bishop, a member of the Pastoral Ministries Leadership team appointed by the bishop, the local church's cluster coach and the chairman of the local church's Personnel Relations Commission. The bishop will serve as chairman of the stationing committee.

#### 3. Meeting with Local Leaders

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

#### 4. Completion of a Parish Profile

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **8. Assignment is Announced**

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

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

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

1. The final decision for the senior pastor and co-pastor position rests solely with the stationing committee.
2. The final decision for employing and terminating associate staff members rests solely with the local church.
3. The bishop must be informed of any United Brethren ministers under consideration.

4. If a church hires someone who does not hold a United Brethren ministerial license, the national conference is not obligated to provide licensing.

5. While the primary accountability relationship rests with the senior pastor, ministers licensed by the national conference are required to participate in all accountability processes within the national conference.

### **Special Appointment Assignments**

Stationing committees may appoint national conference ministers and elders to special appointment assignments, such as chaplains, missionaries, and general officials. These appointments are made on the request of the minister or elder called to such service.

### **Temporary Assignment of Non-United Brethren Ministers**

Ordained or licensed clergy in other Christian denominations or independent churches may be appointed to serve as a supply pastor at a United Brethren church under the following requirements:

#### **1. Conditions**

- a. Such ministers must be in good standing in the church or denomination in which they are licensed.
- b. Such ministers must provide valid ministerial credentials.
- c. Such ministers shall be examined by the regional Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team to determine matters of personal integrity, commitment to the Christian faith, ministerial call, relationships with others, spiritual maturity, and understanding of and agreement with the doctrinal distinctives, history, and polity of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
- d. A positive recommendation must be made by a stationing committee and the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Team.
- e. Such ministers shall not be granted a vote in the national conference or in national conference elections, including any referenda.

#### **2. Reporting**

Such ministers will file an annual report with the bishop and cluster coach.

#### **3. Accountability**

They will be required to participate in and be accountable to a cluster.

## CHAPTER 10

## Requests for Exemption from Service

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

### 1. Leave of Absence

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

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

### 2. Retired Status

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

### 3. Medical Leave

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

### 4. Inactive with Cause for Personal Reasons

This exemption is for ministers who have requested a leave of absence from any ministry for an extended period of time for personal reasons, except for those who hold positions in chaplaincy, educational positions, or other positions where ministerial credentials are essential.

During this period, such ministers shall not perform any of the duties of the ministry except under the direct supervision of the bishop or the individual's pastor. After remaining in this status for two years, ministers shall surrender their credentials to the bishop to be held in trust until such time as they renew ministry. Such individuals will report to the national conference.

### 5. Inactive without Cause

This exemption is used for ministers who have not

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

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

### 6. Probation

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

## CHAPTER 11

## Official Doctrinal Positions

### Depravity

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

*(Adopted by the 1981 General Conference)*

### Divine Foreknowledge

Our Confession of Faith states: "We believe in the only true God that this triune God created the heavens and earth and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible, and furthermore sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same."

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA affirms that God's knowledge of all past, present and future events is exhaustive and infallible. God's knowledge includes all future decisions and actions of free moral agents. The openness view denies that God's knowledge is this comprehensive. Thus, the "openness" view of God's foreknowledge is contrary to our denomination's historic understanding.

### Destiny of the Unevangelized

Our Confession of Faith states: "We believe in Jesus

Christ that He is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race, if they with full faith in Him accept the grace proffered in Jesus. We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God as the only rule and guide; and that without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.”

The heart of the United Brethren movement is evangelism. We believe in a transformed life made possible through an experiential faith in Jesus Christ. The church believes that God wants all people to come to salvation by hearing the gospel proclaimed and responding to it with personal faith. Salvation is possible only through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

We recognize that some in our church believe that God may, if He so chooses, save some to whom the gospel message has never been specifically proclaimed, namely, those whose deaths occur prior to an age of accountability, the mentally impaired, or those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even with this understanding, the church has always insisted that salvation is a gift of God, given solely on the basis of the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

### **The Gift Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

In a study of the gift ministry of the Holy Spirit, one becomes deeply impressed with the thought that any doctrine of the church, though right in itself can be wrongly elevated to a position it does not deserve. There must be a balanced message. At its center is man's salvation in Jesus Christ.

We must place equal emphasis upon the importance of the Spirit and the Word. The Church must be open to whatever God wants her to do. The Church must discover a professed openness to the fullness of the Spirit

which reconciles negative attitudes. Those of the Church who disagree on the gift ministry must remember love is the cord that never breaks. The Church must seek to have everything done under the guidance of the Spirit, in obedience to the Word, so that it exalts Jesus Christ, ministers to the Church and witnesses to the world. The deepest intention of members of the Church should be a spiritual fullness that we so desperately need.

*(This statement is a summary of a much larger study on this topic. The complete study is included as an appendix in "Theological Perspectives" by Dr. Paul R. Fetters, ed.)*

### **The Authority and Infallibility of Scripture**

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ reaffirms unequivocally the Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be sole authority for the believer and the church and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; that sincere and full acceptance of the Bible as final authority is an indispensable condition of true Christian unity and further the Church of the United Brethren in Christ calls upon all churches to restore the Word of God to rightful preeminence in teaching, preaching and practice.

As the result of a contemporary resurgence of the issues of authority and infallibility we believe it is important to again declare our belief in the Holy Bible, the Word of God written, as the infallible Word of God to man, wholly trustworthy in the fullness of its message of God's redemptive grace and His acts in history.

Further, we dedicate ourselves to the proclamation of the word through teaching, preaching and personal witness, calling upon God's people everywhere to join us in this noble task, so that others may find in the sure, dependable Word of God what we have found—an infallible guide.

*(Adopted by the 1977 General Conference)*