

2007 Referenda Items

The 2005 US National Conference approved five proposed changes to the United Brethren Constitution. These are called referenda. To become official, a Constitutional change requires a majority vote from United Brethren members across the United States, followed by a two-thirds ratification vote of the US National Conference. These five referenda will be voted upon in all UB churches in February 2007, in conjunction with elections of lay delegates from those churches.

Following is the wording of the referenda as they will be presented to United Brethren members.

Church

Referendum 1: Preamble

Intent

Remove from the Constitution a clause which refers to local, annual, and national conferences. The words in *italics* below would be removed.

Current Wording

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

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Revised Wording

We, the members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America, in the name of God do, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, as well as to produce and secure a uniform mode of action in faith and practice, ordain the following articles of Constitution:

UBIC Referendum 2: Delegates

Intent

Remove the restriction that only "active" ministers be voting members of the US National Conference, and remove restrictions on the qualifications of lay delegates and how they are elected. The main content changes are indicated in *italics* below.

Current Wording:

1. All ecclesiastical power herein granted to make or repeal any rule of discipline is vested in a national conference, which shall consist of *active* licensed ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, and lay people *elected* by the members of every congregation throughout the national conference. *The laypersons shall be members of a local church within the national conference for a minimum of five years immediately prior to their election.*

Church

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Revised Wording

1. All ecclesiastical power herein granted to make or repeal any rule of discipline is vested in a national conference, which shall consist of all conference licensed ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, and laypersons chosen by the congregations in which they are members, according to a formula provided in the Discipline.

Referendum 3: Duties**Intent**

Remove three duties of the national conference which present conflicts with the current structure, which involves just one conference for the entire United States. This would remove points 1, 4, and 7, "Article II Duties in the US Constitution," and renumber the remaining duties.

Current Wording

1. *The national conference shall define the boundaries of the annual conferences.*
2. The national conference shall at every session elect one or more bishops from among the elders throughout the church who have stood six years in that capacity.
3. The national conference has authority to participate in an international United Brethren church structure, and to edit Constitutional language to reflect the same.
4. *The business of each annual conference shall be done strictly according to Discipline; and any conference acting contrary thereunto shall, by impeachment, be tried by the national conference.*
5. No rule or ordinance shall at any time be passed to change or do away with the Confession of Faith as it now stands.
6. There shall no rule be adopted that will infringe upon the rights of any as it relates to the mode of baptism, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or the washing of feet.
7. *There shall no rule be made that will deprive local ministers of their votes in the annual conferences to which they severally belong.*
8. There shall be no connection with secret combinations, nor shall involuntary servitude be tolerated in any way.
9. The right of appeal shall be inviolate.

Revised Wording

The three points in italics above would be removed, and all of the other items would be renumbered.

Referendum 4: Election of Bishop**Intent**

Remove the requirement in "Article II Duties," that a bishop be elected at every session of the National Conference (which now meets every two years instead of every four years). The words to be removed are in *italics*.

Current Wording

2. The national conference shall *at every session* elect one or more bishops from among the elders throughout the church who have stood six years in that capacity.

Revised Wording

2. The national conference shall elect one or more bishops from among the elders throughout the church who have stood six years in that capacity.

Referendum 5: Amendments**Intent**

Change the method for amending the Constitution in “Article IV Amendments” to fit a structure in which delegates are not elected.

Current Wording

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

Revised Wording

Amendments to the Constitution shall follow this procedure:

1. A referendum stating the proposed change will be placed before all members of US National Conference churches. If a majority of the members voting approve the referendum, it will be passed along for consideration by the next meeting of the US National Conference.

2. A two-thirds vote of the US National Conference is required to make the amendment official.

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