

CHURCH OF THE UNITED
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

DISCIPLINE

1997 - 2001

Revised and Published by Authority
of the 1997 General Conference

Huntington, Ind.



**United
Brethren**
ALL FOR CHRIST

Contents

	Paragraph	Page
Introduction		6
Part I: Basic Documents		7
1. Origin and History		8
2. Confession of Faith	¶1-7	16
3. Constitution	¶11-14	18
4. Official Doctrinal Positions	¶21	20
Part II: Standards of the Church		21
5. Duties of Members	¶101-111	22
6. Family Standards	¶121-131	26
7. Social Standards	¶141-147	31
Part III: The Ministry		35
8. Ministers	¶201-204	36
9. Lay Ministers	¶211-215	39
10. Specialized Ministers	¶221-224	42
11. Local Conference Ministers	¶231-235	45
12. Annual Conference Ministers	¶241-245	49
13. Ordained Elders	¶251-255	52
14. Assigning Ministers	¶261-267	56
Part IV: Geographic Organization		59
15. Division of the Territory	¶301-303	60
16. Conference Boundaries	¶311-312	62
Part V: The Local Church		67
17. Joining the Church	¶401-407	68
18. Local Church Organization	¶411-413	72
19. Local Conference	¶421-425	79
20. Pastors	¶431-432	81
21. Local Church Property	¶441-450	84
22. Affiliate Local Church	¶461	87
Part VI: The Conference		89
23. Conference Organization	¶501-505	90
24. U. S. National Conference	¶511-514	
25. Annual Conference Duties	¶521-531	93
26. Conference Council	¶541-545	98
27. Conference Superintendents	¶551-552	100
Part VII: The General Church		103
28. General Conference	¶601-604	104
29. Election of Delegates	¶611-623	106
30. The Bishop	¶631-634	110
31. General Board of Administration	¶641-645	113
32. Executive Leadership Team	¶651-655	115
33. Church Services Department	¶661-668	117
34. Education Department	¶671-678	120
35. Missions Department	¶681-688	123
36. Property	¶691-692	126
Part VIII: Law on Trials		129
37. Trial of Members	¶701-707	130
38. Trial of Local Conference Ministers	¶711-712	133
39. Trial of Annual Conference Ministers	¶721-724	134

Part IX: Appendix	141
A. Glossary of UB Terms	142
B. Pension Policies	147
C. Denominational Officials	151
D. Boards and Commissions	153
E. Index	
	154

INTRODUCTION

The Discipline is the basic organizational document for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It contains our fundamental rules of doctrine, our Constitution, our moral and social standards, and the by-laws which govern how we operate. The Discipline is published every four years following General Conference. The information falls into four categories.

1. Confession of Faith

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

2. Constitution

The Constitution was adopted in 1841, and cannot be amended without a referendum, in which a majority of the people who elect General Conference delegates give their consent to the change.

There have been only five amendments since 1841. In 1957, the requirement for changing the Constitution was itself changed. Amendments in 1961 and 1977 allowed lay representation at General Conference and changed the eligibility requirement for ministers. In 1993, an amendment allowed General Conference to establish and participate in an international structure. The latest change, in 1997, removed a reference to the itinerant system.

3. By-laws

Everything from chapter 4 to chapter 40 falls into this broad category. It includes our stands on moral and social issues, operational procedures for all church levels, boundaries, trial and appeal procedures, ministerial qualifications and requirements, and much more. The information in these chapters can be changed by majority vote of General Conference. Numerous changes are made at every General Conference.

4. Information

This introduction, Chapter 1—“Origin and History,” and the Appendices fall into this category. They are considered information items, and can be changed as needed by the Discipline editing committee.

CHAPTER 1

Origin and History

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

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

“We are Brethren!”

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

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

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

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

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

From that enthusiastic greeting came the name “United Brethren.”

A New Movement Takes Root

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

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

The church Otterbein pastored in Baltimore, Maryland, inter-

ested in outreach, became the mother church for a number of other churches. These operated with the oversight of Otterbein. Preachers and exhorters already in the field looked to Otterbein for direction.

The Movement Gets Organized

A formal conference was held in Baltimore in 1789 to gain a fuller knowledge of the field, to unify the work being done, and to plan for larger and more permanent results. Another conference was held in 1791 to advance the work started two years before. There are no records of additional conferences until 1800.

The conference of 1800 adopted the name “Church of the United Brethren in Christ,” and elected Otterbein and Boehm as bishops. Both men were 74 years old when chosen. Boehm served until his death in 1812, and Otterbein served until his death in 1813.

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

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

The Church Moves West

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

As the young nation expanded westward, so did the church. People who had been associated with United Brethren in the east migrated west and settled in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. Hundreds of churches began, with services conducted by itinerant, “circuit-riding” preachers who might have responsibility for a dozen or more churches. In 1820, Rev. John George Pfrimmer organized the first known United Brethren Sunday school near Corydon, Ind. In those early years, services were conducted almost exclusively in the German language.

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

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

Early Denominational Ministries

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

In 1853, the denominational mission board was organized under the name of the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society. That year, we launched our first missionary endeavor, sending a 30-wagon caravan of settlers—nearly 100 people—to

Oregon, where the church took root and grew. So in less than 100 years, the movement which began in Long’s barn had spread from coast to coast.

Two years later, a mission was established in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

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

In 1865, the Sunday School Association was organized, and the Church Erection Society was constituted in 1869 to begin new churches. The Women’s Missionary Association began in 1875, and soon became a major supporter of United Brethren missions.

Division

By 1889, the United Brethren church had grown to over 200,000 members, with six bishops and a full-blown denominational structure. But then controversy arose, and eventually a division occurred.

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

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

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

Starting Over

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

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

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

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

Church Headquarters

The church headquarters was moved from Dayton, Ohio, to

Huntington, Indiana, in 1897. A new building was dedicated in 1917 and was enlarged by the purchase of adjacent structures in 1957. All of these holdings were disposed of in 1973.

A new international headquarters building was completed next to Huntington College in May 1976.

Higher Education

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

Huntington College (originally named Central College) was chartered in 1897, the same year the church headquarters moved to Huntington, Ind. Today, Huntington College is the denomination's only college. The college is accountable to the Education Commission, one of three commissions appointed by General Conference. It includes a liberal arts undergraduate school and the Graduate School of Christian Ministries, which trains most United Brethren ministers.

Christian Education

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

In 1977, the Christian Education and Publications departments merged into the Department of Church Ministries. This, in turn, merged in 1981 with the Stewardship department and the Archives to form the current Department of Church Services. (The Archives relocated to Huntington College in 1988 and is now under the Education Department.) The non-cross-cultural church planting work of the Department of Church Extension was folded into the Church Services department in 1993.

The Church Services department works in a number of areas, including family and children's ministries, youth (headed by a Youth Task Force), senior citizen's ministries, evangelism and discipleship, singles, Bible quizzing, and camping. The department sponsors the two annual youth conventions held at Huntington College: Jubilee for junior high and Impact for senior high. It also runs a large curriculum and literature marketing operation, which supplies Sunday school materials to churches both within and outside of the denomination. The profits help underwrite the department.

General Conference elects a fulltime director and a commission to oversee the department.

Missions: Background

Until 1965, there were two United Brethren missionary groups, each sponsoring its own mission work: the Women's Missionary Association (renamed Women's Missionary Fellowship in 1989), and the Parent Board of Missions (called the Domestic, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society until 1957).

WMF Mission Work. After the division of 1889, the New Constitution group retained control of the WMF's mission school for Chinese people in Oregon. However, they stopped supporting the work in 1898, and sponsorship returned to the

Old Constitution group.

The school closed in 1931, but it served as a bridge for opening a school near Canton, China, in 1932. This work was discontinued after the communist takeover of China in 1949. However, Dr. Y. T. Chiu, the original contact in China, moved to Hong Kong and started United Brethren mission work there in 1950. After teaching at Huntington College for six years, he returned to Hong Kong in 1960, and the Hong Kong Conference was officially organized in 1962.

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

Parent Board Mission Work. The Parent Board began mission work in Jamaica in 1944. Jamaica Conference was organized in 1951, with eleven churches. Mission work began in Honduras in 1953.

Through the years, the WMF and the Parent Board jointly supported the work in Sierra Leone.

In 1961, a Joint Board of Missions account was established, and the two mission groups began working more closely together. The two mission boards merged into one Department of Missions at the 1965 General Conference.

In 1969, Ruth Ann Price became the first missionary working with another mission agency (in her case, Wycliffe Bible Translators) to receive support from the Department of Missions. Now, a growing number of missionaries working with parachurch groups in various countries receive support from the church. The board also cooperates with the Evangelical Congregational and Primitive Methodist denominations in jointly supporting several missionaries.

General Conference elects a Director of Missions, and provides for a Missions Commission to oversee the work in this area. The Women's Missionary Fellowship elects an Executive Director, who serves as an associate director in the department. The WMF holds a business meeting every two years. The Master's Men International (formerly called the Men's Brotherhood), led entirely by laity, is the parallel organization for men.

Missions: the Fields

The United Brethren church has organized conferences in five countries, all of which are entitled to representation at General Conference: Sierra Leone, Jamaica, Hong Kong, Honduras, and Nicaragua. All of these fields have been nationalized. North American missionaries serve only in Macau and India.

Through the years, Sierra Leone has been the most prominent mission field. Missionaries were first sent there in 1855, and the first two churches were organized in 1876. Today, we have over 50 churches in Sierra Leone, with about 3300 weekly worshippers. The conference has operated several dozen schools there, ran a large hospital in the town of Mattru until the rebel war forced it to close in January 1995, and has helped sponsor the Sierra Leone Bible College. Because of the rebel war, all missionaries were pulled out of Sierra Leone in 1994.

In the mid-1940s, five English-speaking churches in northern Honduras affiliated with us. Work began among the country's Spanish-speaking people in 1952, and the conference was organized in 1961. Today, Honduras Conference, a pace-setter in church planting, has 45 churches with 2500 people attending.

In 1965, mission work began in Nicaragua, largely as an extension of the work in Honduras. A strong conference has

formed there, with over 600 people attending nearly 20 churches. General Conference recognized Nicaragua as a full-fledged conference in 1993.

We opened a mission in Jamaica by divine accident. Rev. James O'Sullivan was headed to the Bahamas in 1944 to start a new work there, but a hurricane shipwrecked him on Jamaica. He began ministering there, and today, Jamaica Conference has 24 churches and over 2000 people.

As already mentioned, Hong Kong Conference was organized in 1962, and now consists of eight churches. The conference has always operated fully under the leadership of nationals; no missionaries have ever served in Hong Kong. The vision of the Hong Kong Conference led to the opening of a new work in Macau, a Portuguese colony, in 1987. This work focuses on two areas: a school for teaching English, and church planting (mostly using contacts made through the school). In 1994, Hong Kong Conference began work in northern Thailand among the Akha people. On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong Conference became part of China.

The Missions department became involved in medical work in India in 1974. This ministry now includes supporting several evangelists who have started six churches in various villages.

In 1997, the Missions Department ventured into Mexico to start churches. This is being done as an extension of Denis Casco's work with Latin American Ministries.

Cross-Cultural Ministries

In 1993, General Conference gave the Missions department responsibility for cross-cultural church planting in the United States (which the department had already been helping to support). This now includes Hispanic churches in Southern California and Arizona, Chinese and Jamaican churches in New York City, and Sierra Leonean churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania (which are now part of Mid-Atlantic Conference).

In addition, two conferences started their own cross-cultural work. A Chinese church began in Toronto, Ontario, as an outreach of the Bloem Avenue UB church in Toronto. Meanwhile, the Victory Hispanic Church in Burbank, Calif., has branched out, and four other Hispanic churches are in the process of forming.

Publications

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

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

The magazine ceased publication at the end of 1993, and was replaced by a new denominational communications strategy based on newsletters distributed free of charge to all persons who attend United Brethren churches. The direct successor to the *UB* magazine was the *UB* newsletter.

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

Other Matters

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

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

Canada. During the 1989-1993 quadrennium, Ontario Conference became aware of conflicts between our church structure and the laws of Canada. The issues included charitable status, board representation, and general issues of national sovereignty. Ontario Conference was forced to organize under its own Constitution, separate from the Constitution of 1841 which the rest of the denomination followed. This new entity adopted the name United Brethren Church in Canada. To enable them to continue as a part of the denomination, a new category was established: national conference. The 1997 General Conference created a United States National Conference, though its duties were limited to matters pertaining to Joint Ministry Agreements with the Canadian church.

Bishops. In 1969, the number of bishops doubled, from two to four. Each of them had responsibility for a geographic district of the church, with one of them overseeing mission work.

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

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

CHAPTER 2

Confession of Faith

1 The Triune God

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

2 Jesus Christ, the Son

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

3 The Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide

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

4 The Church

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

5 The Holy Bible and Salvation

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

6 The Salvation Message

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

7 The Christian Ordinances

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

CHAPTER 3

Constitution

We, the members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 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 general conferences, as recognized by this church, ordain the following articles of Constitution:

11 Article I Personnel

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

2. General conference is to be held every four years.

All officials elected by the general conference shall be mem-

bers ex officio of the general conference, the bishops to be considered presiding officers.

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

12 Article II Duties

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

2. The general 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 General Conference has authority to establish and 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 general conference.

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

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

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

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

9. The right of appeal shall be inviolate.

13 Article III Property

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

14 Article IV Amendments

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

CHAPTER 4

Official Doctrinal Positions

21 Depravity

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

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 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.

101 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.

102 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.

103 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).

104 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.

105 An Effective Witness

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

the lost and winning them to Christ.

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

1. By engaging only in such business and social activity which is consistent with the Christian life (Colossians 3:17, 23).

2. By observing modesty in dress, in speech, and in all other personal conduct as becomes a child of God (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 3:3, 4).

3. By renouncing the world and all ungodliness, seeking to lead a life of holiness and devotion to God and His cause (2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 2:19, 21).

106 Necessity of Union

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

1. Be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of union (Ephesians 4:3).

2. Pray earnestly for and speak truly and freely to each other (James 5:16).

3. When we meet, never part without prayer, if prayer is at all practicable.

4. Take care not to despise each other's gifts (Romans 12:3-8).

5. Never speak lightly of each other (James 4:11).

6. Defend each other's character in everything, so far as is consistent with truth (Ephesians 4:31).

7. Labor in honor, each preferring another before himself (Philippians 2:3).

8. Seriously examine the cause, evils, and cures of heart and church divisions (Galatians 5:26).

9. Observe and follow the principles for reconciliation or excommunication laid down by Jesus in Matthew 5:21-26 and 18:15-17 whenever an offense exists between members of the congregation.

107 Receiving the Pastor

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

108 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).

109 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).

110 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).

111 Lodges and Other Heretical Groups

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

CHAPTER 6

Family Standards

121 Family: Definition

We recognize that a family can take four forms:

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

122 Marriage

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

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

123 Family Life

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

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

As the head of the Christian home (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:25), the husband and father should exercise his delegated

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

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

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

1. Communication with the heavenly Father through spontaneous prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), especially at mealtimes, whether in seeking His aid or giving thanks.
2. Daily, directed worship as a way for the family to express love and trust in God, and to sense His presence in the home (Matthew 18:20).
3. Spontaneous and directed teaching of Bible truths at every opportunity (Deuteronomy 6:20-21a).
4. Christian symbols and works of art in the home (Deuteronomy 6:6, 9).
5. A consistent example in Christian living (1 Corinthians 11:1). 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).
6. 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.

124 Abuse

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

125 Illicit Sexual Relations

The biblical view of sex firmly establishes it within the framework of marriage and family life. Therefore, the church cannot condone premarital sex, adultery, or any form of homosexual behavior (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). All are clearly contrary to the expressed will of God concerning the union of man and woman together in this most sacred and binding of human relationships (Romans 1:20-32; Deuteronomy 22:23-27).

126 Divorce

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

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

The Apostle Paul cites another exception which applies to the marriage of a believer and an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:12-15). If an unbelieving partner chooses to dissolve the marriage,

the believing partner may yield to the divorce. This same exception also applies when a believer renounces faith in Christ or assumes the position of an unbeliever and chooses to dissolve the marriage. Such persons are considered unbelievers because they place themselves outside the divine directive.

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

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

127 Remarriage

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

1. When the spouse dies. In this case, the partner may remarry a believer (1 Corinthians 7:39).
2. When the marriage and divorce occurred prior to salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:1-7).
3. When the spouse is guilty of marital unfaithfulness and will not repent and live faithfully with the partner, and the offended partner is innocent of such conduct. Marital unfaithfulness includes adultery, prostitution, sodomy, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, and lesbianism.
4. When an unbelieving partner has willfully deserted a believing partner (1 Corinthians 7:12-15).
5. When the spouse has assumed the position of an unbeliever by choosing to divorce the believing partner. In this case, the believing partner may remarry another believer (1 Corinthians 7:12-15).

128 Family Planning

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

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

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

129 Abortion

Abortion is a major moral problem in our society. We believe that human life is sacred from the moment of conception, and

that abortion must not occur anytime after conception. Consequently, abortion cannot be recognized morally and Scripturally as a means of birth control, as a solution to a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, or as a way to prevent or eliminate congenital or hereditary defects.

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

130 Genetic Engineering

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

The church does not approve of artificial in ovulation (the process by which a fertilized ovum is placed in the fallopian tube or the uterus), except in the case of a married couple whose own sperm and ovum are used. The church also rejects the process of cloning in the human reproductive system. Neither does the church condone experiments to develop artificial uteruses and placentas with the ultimate goal of developing a full-term fetus without the mother's presence.

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

131 Euthanasia

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

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

CHAPTER 7

Social Standards

Christians are to be good citizens within their community, culture, nation, and world. They should be on guard against all destructive actions and vices surrounding them, and raise a proper protest in the most appropriate forum. Each national conference should consider taking stands against the evils that plague the culture of its own country.

141 Human Relations

The church respects human personality which is inherent in every race, nation and creed. We believe in the Bible's instruction that there is no basis whatsoever for a belief in the superiority or inferiority of any people. Therefore, the church protests against any action or practice that produces discrimination based upon racial, national, creedal or social differences, since God "made from one, every nation of men to live on the face of the earth"

(Acts 17:26). The church admonishes all members to commit their attitudes, actions and influences in faithful witness to this truth and to oppose every influence, whether it be economic, social, moral or religious which would debase, impair, or bring into bondage those whom God has created in His own likeness.

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

The church acknowledges that mankind's basic need is for the saving grace of Jesus Christ and is therefore committed to the telling of the Good News of the gospel to all persons. But the church also recognizes the commandment to love all men in the name of Christ. Therefore, the church admonishes all members to strive for a society characterized by unselfish compassion and service to all. (Philippians 2:3; Matthew 25:31-41; Luke 6:31; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 Peter 3:8-12)

142 Peace/Bearing Arms in War

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

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

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

143 Drug Abuse

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

1. Alcoholic Beverages

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

Furthermore, the church believes that even the moderate use of alcohol by believers undermines our efforts to oppose the alcohol industry and may be a stumbling block to others. Members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ are to abstain from the use of beverage alcohol of any kind. They are expected to oppose the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

They are not to be involved as a direct investor, manager, or owner (full or partial) of businesses which engage primarily in manufacturing or selling alcoholic beverages. Neither should members lease or rent property to those who would use it primarily for manufacturing, storing, or selling these harmful beverages.

2. Tobacco

The Bible reveals that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and instructs believers to live pure lives. The church believes and experience demonstrates that the use of tobacco is injurious to the physical body and is a detriment to the best stewardship and witness of our lives. Therefore, all members are urged to abstain from its use in any form.

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

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

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

144 Gambling

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

Because gambling is a menace to personal character, social morality, and biblical stewardship, we therefore urge all members to abstain from participating in gambling in any form, including lotteries, and to raise a proper protest against the spread of illegal and legalized gambling. (Proverbs 28:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:7-11; Luke 16:10-13; 1 Corinthians 4:2)

145 Pornography

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

146 Occult

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

147 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.
- c. Review the laws of the land regarding the issue (Romans 13:1-7). The Bible instructs believers to obey the laws of the land in which they live, but not to use those laws to justify disobeying biblical principles (Hebrews 13:17).
- d. Seek the counsel of mature Christians (Proverbs 15:22, 27:17).
- e. Carefully weigh and consider current scientific and medical evidence regarding the issue (Proverbs 18:15).
- f. Consider any harmful effect your action may have on others.
- g. Consider any harmful effect on your testimony (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 10:32-33).
- h. If in doubt, act according to your conscience and continue developing your convictions (Romans 14:23).

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 Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

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

202 Classifications

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

The first three classifications--local conference minister, annual conference minister, and ordained elder--are parts of a three-step

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

203 General Qualifications

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

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

204 Expectations

1. General Statement

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

2. Spiritual Development and Lifestyle

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

3. Pastoral Transitions

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 9

Lay Ministers

211 Description

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

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

This license is granted by the local conference.

212 Qualifications

Candidates for this license must have been members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ 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 conference superintendent (or his appointee), the senior pastor, and one other member of the local conference. The candidate shall present the following to the committee:

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

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

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

3. Report to the Local Conference

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

4. Probationary License

Prior to completion of the course of study (outlined below),

the lay minister's license is considered probationary and is subject to annual renewal.

5. Permanent License

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

6. Transferring the License

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

7. Loss of the License

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

214 Course of Study

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

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

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

215 Expectations of Lay Ministers

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

1. Annual Reporting

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

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

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

When serving as a supply pastor, lay ministers are authorized to officiate at funerals and administer the ordinances of baptism

and communion, and are permitted to conduct weddings. Probationary lay ministers will not be permitted to serve as a supply pastor of any congregation for longer than one year.

CHAPTER 10

Specialized Ministers

221 Description

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ 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 General Conference, nor are they eligible for election to the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission in their conferences, although they may serve on any of the other conference boards and commissions. They are voting members of the annual conference and local conference.

222 Qualifications

Specialized ministers must meet the following qualifications:

1. Education

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

2. Experience

Persons holding this license must have served for a minimum of 12 months on a 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 conference refer a candidate to annual conference for an specialized minister’s license. If the local conference so concurs, the annual conference Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission shall be contacted.

2. Examination

The candidate shall present the following to the commission:

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

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

member.

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

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

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

c. Written responses to the following:

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

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

(3) What is your motive for desiring an specialized minister’s license?

(4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?

(5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?

(6) Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.

(7) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.

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

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

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

(11) What current debts do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Report to the Annual Conference

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

4. Loss of the License

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

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

5. Transferring to Another Conference

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

6. Ordination

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

224 Expectations of Specialized ministers

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

1. Annual Reporting

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

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

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

CHAPTER 11

Local Conference Ministers

231 Description

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

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

and pastoral competency.

232 Qualifications

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

1. Hold membership in the local United Brethren church to which they apply.
2. Verify that they have completed the equivalent of a standard high school education.
3. Demonstrate faithfulness to the expectations of members (chapter 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 conference ministers are not eligible to serve as lay delegates to the annual conference or General Conferences, nor may they serve as ministerial representatives on any conference or general church board or commission. They may serve in any capacity in the local church and are, by virtue of license, voting members of the local conference. They serve as advisory members of the annual conference.

233 Licensing

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

1. Referral of the Senior Pastor

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

2. Examination

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

- a. Three Letters of Reference. These letters are to be obtained from acquaintances of the candidate and should give evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and suitability for ministerial licensing.
- b. A copy of his/her high school diploma.
- c. Written responses to the following:
 - (1) Do you believe our Confession of Faith as set forth in our Discipline?
 - (2) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
 - (3) What is your motive in seeking this local conference license?
 - (4) Are you satisfied with the moral and social standards and the government of the church, and will you maintain them on all occasions?
 - (5) Will you submit yourself to the official counsel of your fellow Christians?
 - (6) Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith, repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.
 - (7) Is it your purpose, if received, to remain permanently with the church?
 - (8) Will you pursue the course of study required for ordination in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ?
 - (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.

3. Report to the Local Conference

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

4. Annual Renewal

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

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

5. Referral for Annual Conference License

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

- a. The local conference license has been held for a minimum of 12 months.
- b. They have completed the equivalent of two years of college.
- c. They have completed the course in United Brethren church history.
- d. They have demonstrated a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for an annual conference license.

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

6. Transferring the License

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

7. Loss of the License

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

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

8. Ministers from Other Denominations

If a minister from another denomination with the equivalent

of this local conference license seeks to be licensed by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the one year membership requirement may be waived. All other requirements must be met.

234 Course of Study

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

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

235 Expectations of Local Conference Ministers

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

1. Annual Reporting

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

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

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

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

CHAPTER 12

Annual Conference Ministers

241 Description

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

Annual conference ministers are not eligible to serve on the

Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of their respective annual conferences, nor are they eligible to serve as representatives, either clergy or lay, to the General Conference.

242 Qualifications

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

1. Hold a local conference license from a United Brethren church for at least 12 months.
2. Complete two years of college and the course in United Brethren church history.
3. Demonstrate a level of faithfulness and competency which warrants consideration for an annual conference license.
4. Demonstrate faithfulness to the expectations of members (chapter 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 Annual Conference Ministers

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

1. Referral of the Local Conference

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

2. Examination

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

- a. Five letters of reference. These letters should give evidence of the candidate's faithfulness in Christian living and should be obtained from the following individuals:
 - (1) A faculty or graduate school member in the candidate's major area of study.
 - (2) The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends (or, if the candidate is the pastor, from another United Brethren pastor).
 - (3) The lay leader (or a key layperson) of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.
 - (4) The conference superintendent.
 - (5) A friend or relative.
- b. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.
- c. Written responses to the following:
 - (1) Describe your conversion experience, journey of faith, and call to ministry.
 - (2) Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God and that it reveals the only way for our salvation? How do you support your belief?
 - (3) What is your motive for desiring an annual conference license?
 - (4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?
 - (5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual need for salvation?
 - (6) Define the following terms: depravity, redemption, faith,

repentance, justification, regeneration, and sanctification.

(7) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

(13) What current debts do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Report to the Annual Conference

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

4. Renewal

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

a. An annual report must be made to the Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission. b. Progress is being made in the required course of study (see below).

5. Referral for Ordination Status

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

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

b. They have completed a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

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

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

6. Loss of the License

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

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

7. Ministers from Other Denominations

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

8. Transferring to Another Conference

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

244 Course of Study

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

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

245 Expectations of Annual Conference Ministers

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

1. Annual Reporting

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

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

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

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

CHAPTER 13

Ordained Elders

251 Description

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

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

252 Qualifications

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

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

253 Ordination Procedure

The following procedure is established for the ordination of ministers:

1. Request of the Annual Conference Minister

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

2. Examination

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

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

(1) A faculty or graduate school member in the candidate's major area of study.

(2) The pastor of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends (or, if the candidate is the pastor, from another United Brethren pastor).

(3) The lay leader (or a key layperson) of the local United Brethren church the candidate attends.

(4) The conference superintendent.

(5) A friend or relative.

b. A copy of his/her academic transcripts.

c. Written responses to the following:

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

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

(3) What is your motive for desiring to be an ordained elder in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ?

(4) What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? How is this demonstrated in your life?

(5) What do you believe regarding the nature of humanity and the individual's need for salvation?

(6) Demonstrate a proficiency with a plan of salvation, and identify individuals you personally have led to Christ.

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

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

(9) What are your future plans regarding ministry inasmuch as they pertain to ordination?

(10) What current debts do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Report to the Annual Conference

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

4. Loss of the License

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

before final action is taken. Failure to retain membership in a United Brethren church will also result in loss of license.

5. Elders from Other Denominations

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

a. Demonstrate that their ordinations are still considered to be in good standing from their denomination of origin.

b. Fulfill the service requirement noted in the previous paragraph.

c. Complete the course in United Brethren church history.

d. Hold a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries.

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

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

6. Transferring to Another Conference

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

254 Continuing Education for Elders

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

255 Expectations of Elders

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

1. Annual Reporting

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

2. Accountability

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

3. Ministerial Service

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

Assigning Ministers

261 Philosophical Statements

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

1. Pastors are Stationed, Not Called

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

2. The Assignment Process Involves Dialogue

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

3. The Goal is a Long-term Assignment

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

4. There are No Guaranteed Appointments

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

5. Interim Ministers will be Used

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

262 The Stationing Committee

Each annual conference shall have a Stationing Committee to oversee the pastoral assignment process. This committee shall be chaired by the conference superintendent and shall include clergy and laypersons chosen by the annual conference. The bishop shall serve as an ex officio member. In the overseas conferences, the Director of Missions will serve as an ex officio member.

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

263 The Assignment Process

Assigning ministers consists of the following steps.

1. A Vacancy Occurs

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

2. Meeting with Local Leaders

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

3. Completion of a Parish Profile

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

4. Communication with the Prospective Pastor

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

5. Communication with the Local Church

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

6. Introductory Meeting Between the New Pastor and Local Leaders

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

7. Assignment is Announced

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

264 Assignment of Associate Staff Members

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

1. The final decision for the senior pastor and co-pastor position rests solely with the Stationing Committee.
2. The final decision for employing and terminating associate staff members rests solely with the local church.
3. The conference superintendent must be informed of any

United Brethren ministers under consideration.

4. Prior to a United Brethren minister being interviewed for an associate staff position, the conference superintendent will notify the appropriate contact person at the church where the minister is currently assigned.

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

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

265 Cross-Conference Assignments

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

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

266 Special Appointment Assignments

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

267 Special Considerations

All annual conference ministers and elders are assumed to be available for assignment. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ 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 or because of ministry-related service in another position. 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.

2. Retired Status

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

3. Inactive without Cause

This exemption is used for ministers who have not reported to the annual conference as required and who are not serving in a ministerial capacity in the church. These ministerial licenses are not considered to be in good standing during this exemption period.

4. 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 15

Division of the Territory

301 Purpose

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

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

302 Administrative Divisions

The church shall consist of the following administrative entities:

1. Appointment

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

2. Local Church

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

3. Affiliate Local Church

A congregation of adult members from ten or more resident families which is associated with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ under the provision of ¶371.

4. Conference Superintendent's District

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

5. Church Extension District

One or more appointments or local churches outside the boundaries of an established conference.

6. Mission District

One or more appointments or local churches not organized as a conference which are administered by the Missions Commission.

7. National Conference

Five or more churches within a single country. The national conference consists of the bishop, conference ministers, and lay delegates elected by the conference churches.

It is recognized that some national conferences may be unable to fully subscribe to the international United Brethren Constitution and Discipline for legal or other reasons. All national conference

constitutions and by-laws must be approved by the General Board.

8. Annual Conference

Five or more churches within such regional boundary lines as the General Conference may establish. A conference's highest governing body, called the annual conference, consists of the bishop, conference ministers, and lay delegates elected by the conference churches.

9. Church of the United Brethren in Christ

All United Brethren churches worldwide comprise the denomination known as the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Its highest governing body is the General Conference, which meets every four years. Members include the bishop, elected directors, and lay and ministerial delegates elected by the constituent conferences.

303 Right to Books and Records

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

CHAPTER 16

Conference Boundaries

311 National Conferences

1. Canada

The Canadian national conference includes all of the Dominion of Canada. Official name: The United Brethren Church in Canada.

2. Honduras

The Honduras national conference includes all territory in the Republic of Honduras. Official name: The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Honduras Conference.

3. Hong Kong

The Hong Kong national conference includes all territory in the former Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Official name: The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Hong Kong Limited.

4. Jamaica

The Jamaica national conference includes all of the island of Jamaica. Official name: The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Jamaica Conference.

5. Nicaragua

The Nicaragua national conference includes all territory in the Republic of Nicaragua. Official name: The Association of Evangelical Churches of the United Brethren in Christ of Nicaragua.

6. Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone national conference includes all territory in the Republic of Sierra Leone, West Africa. Official name: The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Sierra Leone Limited.

7. United States

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

United Brethren in Christ, United States of America.

312 United States Annual Conferences

1. Arizona

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

2. California

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

3. Central

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

In Indiana: College Park (Huntington), Crestview (Lafayette), Dillman (Warren), Eagle Quest (Columbus City), Emmanuel Community (Fort Wayne), Fairview (Hartford City), First (Decatur), Good Shepherd (Huntington), Innisdale (Alexandria), Monroe (Monroe), Morning Star (Kokomo), Mount Victory (Decatur), Mount Zion (Decatur), East Side (New Castle), New Hope (Huntington), Park (Bluffton), Pleasant Hill (Muncie), Rugby (Hope), Third Street (Fort Wayne), Welcome Chapel (Van Buren), Zanesville (Zanesville).

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

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

4. Michigan

Michigan Conference includes the following churches in the state of Michigan, in addition to any new churches which the conference may start: Banner of Christ (Byron Center), Bridgeport (Saginaw), Brown Corners (Clare), Chicora (Pullman), Colwood (Caro), Countryside (Breckenridge), DeWitt (DeWitt), East Washington (Ashley), Eden (Mason), Faith (Alpena), First (Lansing), Fowlerville (Fowlerville), Freeport (Freeport), Fresh Breeze (Walker), Gaines (Caledonia), Gethsemane (Jackson), Harrison (Harrison), Harvest (Mt. Pleasant), Heart-O-the-Lakes (Brooklyn), Ithaca (Ithaca), Kilpatrick (Woodland), Lake-O-Woodbury (Woodbury), Maple Hill (Grandville), Maranatha (Middleton), McCallum (Delton), Mount Hope (Carson City), Mount Morris (Mount Morris), Northland (Traverse City), Pennfield (Battle

Creek), Pleasant Valley (Lake Odessa), Pleasant View (Blanchard), Richfield Road (Flint), Shepherd Street (Charlotte), Sunfield (Sunfield), Warrendale (Detroit), West Windsor (Dimondale).

5. Michindoh

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

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

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

In Ohio: Alvordton (Alvordton), Central (Montpelier), Emmanuel (Toledo), Harvest Lane (Toledo), Kunkle (Kunkle), Nettle Lake (Nettle Lake), New Hope Community (Bryan), Springfield (Holland), Stryker (Stryker), Victory Chapel (Liberty Center).

6. Midwest

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

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

In Missouri: Trinity (St. Joseph).

In South Dakota: Milltown (Milltown).

7. Northwest

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

In Idaho: Cream Ridge (Cream Ridge), Log Cabin (Boise), Rock Creek Community (Twin Falls).

In Oregon: Philomath (Philomath).

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

8. Pennsylvania

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

In Maryland: Brooklyn Park (Baltimore), Central (Rohrersville), Crellin (Crellin), Underwood (Oakland).

In New Jersey: Bethel (Somerset).

In Pennsylvania: Blue Rock (Waynesboro), Cold Springs (Fayetteville), Criders (Chambersburg), Devonshire Memorial (Harrisburg), Ebenezer (Greencastle), Fifth Street (Staunton), Franklintown (Franklintown), Heidlersburg (Heidlersburg), Idaville (Idaville), Immanuel (Carlisle), King Street (Chambersburg), Lurgan (Shippensburg), Macedonia (Greencastle), Mainsville (Mainsville), Mongul (Shippensburg), Mount Olivet (Biglerville), Mount Olivet (Edenville), Mount Pleasant (Chambersburg), Mount Washington (York), Mount Zion (Philadelphia), Orrstown (Orrstown), Otterbein (Greencastle), Otterbein (Waynesboro), Pen Mar (Waynesboro), Pleasant Hill (Greencastle), Prince Street (Shippensburg), Saint James (Chambersburg), Salem (Chambersburg), South Mountain Union (Dillsburg), Strinestown (Strinestown), Trinity (State Line).

In Virginia: Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg), Jerusalem Chapel (Churchville), Mount Carmel (Fulks Run), Mount Olivet (Mt. Solon).

In West Virginia: Fountain (Keyser), Mill Chapel (Reedsville).

9. Rock River

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

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

In Iowa: Garden Prairie (Arlington), McGuire Bend (Lehigh), Patricia Park (Des Moines).

10. Sandusky

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

In Ohio: Bethel (Elmore), Faith Community (Findlay), Family Life Community (Bowling Green), First (Findlay), Jerry City (Jerry City), Main Street (Walbridge), Mount Zion (Wayne), Oak Harbor (Oak Harbor), Pleasant Heights (East Liverpool), Steubenville (Steubenville), Trinity (Fostoria).

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

11. Southeast

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

In Alabama: Red Mountain (Birmingham).

In Florida: Bradenton (Bradenton), Faith (Daytona Beach), First (Holly Hill), Lake Brantley (Altamonte Springs).

CHAPTER 17

Joining the Church

401 Adult Membership

1. Age

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

2. Qualifications

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

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

3. Voting Rights

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

402 Youth Membership

1. Age

Persons age nine through thirteen 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 are not eligible to vote in church elections.

403 Watch-care Membership

1. Age

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

2. Qualifications

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

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

3. Parental Consent

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

4. Reporting

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

5. Voting Rights

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

404 Receiving Members

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

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

1. Receiving Adult Members

As a church, we believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the regeneration of the soul, a wholly surrendered and Spirit-filled life, and growth in grace and knowledge of the truth. We believe that

there must be perseverance in Christian living and faithfulness in Christian witness to promote harmony in our relationship with the Savior.

Our beliefs are further indicated by the questions which follow:

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

a. Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God and that therein only is revealed the knowledge of the way of salvation? If so, answer, "I do."

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

If so, answer, "I so believe."

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

If so, answer, "I am."

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

If so, answer, "I am."

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

If so, answer, "I am."

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

2. Receiving 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 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 Spiritual Care Commission 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 14, youth may be received into adult membership by meeting the qualifications for adult membership. No youth shall remain on the youth roll after age 15. The youth roll should be corrected annually.

3. Watch-care—After the age of nine, children who have made a commitment to Christ and show a continued interest in the church may become 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 18

Local Church Organization

411 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 ¶412, "Local Board of Administration," and ¶413, "Lay Delegates." Appendix B provides a number of options and ideas for churches regarding structure.

412 Local Board of Administration

1. Purpose

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

2. Personnel

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

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

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

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

3. Duties

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

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

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

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

413 Lay Delegates

1. Purpose

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

2. Number

The number of delegates is determined by each annual conference.

3. Qualifications

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

4. Notification

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

CHAPTER 19

Local Conference

421 Purpose

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

422 Personnel

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

423 Meetings

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

424 Officers

1. Chairperson

The conference superintendent shall be the chairperson of the

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

2. Secretary

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

425 Duties

1. To Grant and Renew Licenses

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

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

3. To Try Appeals

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

4. To Enforce Discipline

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

5. To Disband a Local Church

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

When a local church is disbanded, members shall transfer their membership to the local church of their choice. If that is not done within six months, the conference superintendent shall close the roll by removing the names by revision, or by transferring them to other United Brethren congregations in the area.

CHAPTER 20

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 annual conference.
- e. By keeping accurate membership records.
- f. By preparing and keeping an updated passbook.
- g. By presenting the church Discipline.
- h. By notifying conference supervision in writing at least 30 days before the effective date of resignation.

7. To provide pastoral care.

8. To promote conference activities.

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

9. To promote general church interests.

- a. By promoting the departments of the general church including Huntington College, UB Missions, and Church Services.
- b. By overseeing general church elections.
- c. By presenting the referenda.
- d. By promoting church periodicals and publications.

432 Removal of Pastors

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

1. Pastors charged with immoral or imprudent conduct, who persist in ignoring the church by refusing to prepare or appear for trial, or who refuse to resign upon the request of the bishop or superintendent, shall be subject to removal.
2. Pastors may be asked to resign if they become so involved in debt or other delinquencies in their business relations in the community of service that they destroy their influence as a Christian minister, and if they also refuse to correct the cause of offense after being admonished to do so. Pastors who refuse to resign shall be subject to removal.

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

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

CHAPTER 21

Local Church Property

441 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 state or province require it or unless in compliance with those provisions of the laws of the state or province or other governmental authority with regard to the ownership of real estate or real property when the laws of the state, province, or other governmental authority do not require an incorporation.

442 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 annual conference or the conference council of administration acting in its stead, having jurisdiction over such appointment or local church.

443 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 annual conference or the conference council of administration 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 annual conference, without the express written approval of the annual conference, or the conference council of administration 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 annual conference or the conference council of administration acting in its stead.

444 Repair, Maintenance, and Upkeep

The approval of the annual conference, or the conference council of administration acting in its stead, shall not be re-

quired for making ordinary expenditures for the repair, maintenance, and upkeep of appointments and local church facilities.

445 Closing a Church

In the event a board of administration should close an appointment or local church or should terminate its existence but should for any reason fail to convey the property to the annual conference board of trustees within 30 days of said closing, such property, personal and real, shall revert to the conference board of trustees with authority to dispose of the same as provided for herein.

446 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 conference board of trustees to be held in trust for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Such board shall stand in the place of the local church board of trustees and shall have the authority to dispose of said property, providing such sale is approved by the annual conference or the conference council of administration acting in its stead.

447 Selling Church Buildings

No church house or meeting place shall be sold without the consent of the annual conference or the conference council of administration within the bounds of which said property is located if this transaction would result in the disbanding of a local church.

448 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 general church or the annual conference is responsible for the payment of such indebtedness, and shall in such prospectus, advertisements, or announcements state that the local church is solely responsible for the payment and interest and principal of such indebtedness.

449 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.

450 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 conference and a third by these two, to whom the whole matter shall be referred. From their decision an appeal may be taken to annual conference. In cases where more than two local conferences are interested, the same plan shall be pursued.

CHAPTER 22

Affiliate Local Church

461 Definition

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

1. They subscribe to the Confession of Faith.
2. They individually answer the questions asked of applicants for church membership with the understanding that question four concerning being governed by the Discipline excludes the articles on secret combinations in the Constitution and ¶111 in "Duties of Members."
3. They agree to the duties as recorded in the Discipline, except ¶111 concerning secret combinations, and subscribe to the Moral and Social Standards.
4. Ministers of such congregations shall be or shall become members of annual conferences of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ on the same basis as any other minister. They shall become subject to assignment by the annual conference and eligible for all benefits and considerations available to the ministers of the church.
5. An affiliate local church shall accept the pastor assigned by the annual conference and shall contribute to the general and conference funds according to a mutual agreement.
6. An affiliate local church shall be entitled to lay representation in the sessions of the annual conference and the mid-year council but without vote.
7. The property investments of an affiliate local church shall be safeguarded to the local church, and all property investments by the conference or general church shall be safeguarded to the conference or general church.
8. An affiliate local church may become a full member local church in the conference by a two-thirds vote of those members present at a duly announced meeting for that purpose. Such a vote shall include the purpose of adopting the Constitution and all provisions of membership (Chapter 5) of the Discipline.
9. When an affiliate local church votes to become a member local church in the annual conference, they may retain those members who cannot accept the provision concerning secret combinations (¶111) on an affiliate membership roll, but shall not receive additional members in this classification following the vote to become a local church in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.
10. This provision shall not be construed so as to permit any local church of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ to revert to the status of an affiliate local church.

CHAPTER 23

Conference Organization

501 Organization

1. Size

National and annual conferences shall consist of at least five organized churches.

2. Structure

Each conference shall organize with the following:

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

Beyond those requirements, each conference is free to establish the structure that will best suit its own needs and ministries. Paragraphs 503-535 provide a suggested structure which conferences may use as a guideline, to be followed or adapted as desired.

3. Lay/Clergy Representation

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

502 Purpose

A conference shall administer all affairs pertaining to local churches, organizations, and agencies within its established boundaries, except those local churches and preaching appointments which are under the direction of the denominational Church Services or Missions commissions.

503 Personnel

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

2. The members of the United States national conference are those persons from the United States annual conferences elected as representatives to the General Conference. The Bishop and any directors elected by the General Conference with membership in a United States national conference shall also be members of the United States national conference.

504 Absentee

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

505 Officers

1. Bishop

The bishop or an elder of the church designated by the bishop

shall preside over the affairs of the conference and its business sessions.

2. Assistant Chairperson

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

3. Secretary

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

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

4. Treasurer

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

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

c. Handling of Funds—The treasurer shall keep an accurate account book of all receipts and disbursements and shall make regular and complete reports as required by the conference and its council of administration. The funds designated for general church benevolences shall be forwarded to the general church treasurer on or before the twentieth of each month.

5. Conference Superintendent(s)

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

b. Election—Each conference shall elect by majority ballot one or more elders to serve as conference superintendents. (See chapter 27.)

CHAPTER 24

United States National Conference

511 Purpose

The United States national conference exists to provide a national body which can enter into joint ministry agreements with other United Brethren national conferences.

512 Personnel

The members of the United States national conference are the persons from the United States annual conferences elected as representatives to the General Conference. The Bishop and any directors elected by the General Conference with membership in a United States annual conference shall also be members of the

United States national conference.

513 Officers

1. Bishop. The bishop or an elder designated by the bishop shall preside over meetings of the United States national conference.

2. Assistant Chairperson. The national conference shall name an assistant chairperson to assist the bishop in administering the business sessions.

3. Secretary. The national conference shall appoint from its membership a secretary to record proceedings of the national conference session.

514 Duties and Powers

1. Enter into any desirable joint ministry agreements with other United Brethren national conferences.

2. Appoint members to the management committees of the various joint ministry agreements in accordance with the terms of the agreements.

CHAPTER 25

Annual Conference Duties

521 Examine its Members

The annual conference shall establish procedures for examining all ministerial members of the conference and others serving pastorates within the conference regarding their moral character, doctrinal soundness, administrative integrity, and pastoral competency.

522 License and Ordain Candidates for the Ministry

The annual conference shall license candidates for the ministry and ordain elders. (See 224-225, and 231-243.)

523 Provide a Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission

The annual conference may elect a Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission of three or five elders to assist the conference superintendent and/or the conference in matters of ministerial recruitment, training, licensing, and ordination. Members of the commission shall be elected for a term of three years with no more than two members serving concurrent terms. The commission shall elect one of its members to serve as its chairperson and another to serve as the secretary, both officers to be charged with the customary responsibilities of their offices. Other responsibilities of the commission may be delegated to other members of the commission.

The commission, through its secretary, shall report annually to the annual conference regarding the educational status of each licentiate. Permanent records shall be kept of the individual minister's progress, and such records shall remain the property of the commission and conference.

The conference Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission shall have responsibility in the following areas:

1. To provide orientation and study resources for candidates for a local conference license, and a continuing record of the licensee's educational progress.

2. To encourage and urge all ministerial candidates and prospects to attend the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries, and to keep a viable communication with

them while pursuing their theological studies.

3. To receive annual reports on each ministerial student enrolled in a theological school.

4. To give direction and guidance to the educational program of the ministerial candidate who is not regularly enrolled in a theological school.

5. To examine candidates for annual conference ministerial membership and to make recommendations to the conference.

6. To report to the conference with recommendations when a licentiate has completed the educational requirements for ordination.

7. To cooperate with the Huntington College Graduate School of Christian Ministries and/or other conference agencies in providing guidance and programming for the continuing education of ministers.

524 Determine the Mission and Ministry of the Conference

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

525 Provide Appropriate Committees and Make Necessary Appointments

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

526 Determine Boundaries

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

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

527 Assign Pastors

1. The Itinerant Plan

The itinerant plan is the church's method for doing the following:

- a. Using a stationing committee to assign all licensed ministers employed by local churches.
- b. Electing or appointing ministers to annual conference or general church offices.

In all of these assignments, the authority and final decision belongs to the stationing committee, the annual conferences and the General Conferences. The authority and final decision does not belong to the local church or any of its committees.

2. Stationing Committee

The stationing committee shall consist of the conference superintendent(s), and up to two additional conference elders currently serving pastorates, and may include one to four laypersons from conference churches. These elders and laypersons must be elected to the committee by ballot. The bishop shall be an ex officio member. In the overseas conferences, the Director of Missions will serve on the stationing committee.

The stationing committee shall supply appointments and local churches with licensed ministers when the need arises, giving preference to ministers on the annual conference roll. Upon advice from the lay delegate(s), personnel relations commission or conference council of administration, the committee may appoint one minister to serve two or more congregations.

3. Procedure for Assignment

A minister shall be assigned indefinitely to a congregation. When the need for a change arises, a change may be suggested by the bishop, the conference superintendent, the minister, or the lay delegates(s) or personnel relations commission acting on behalf of the board of administration.

4. Consultation Privileges

A personnel relations commission or the lay delegate(s) acting on behalf of the board of administration may appear before its conference stationing committee to make any statement. Ministers may also appear before the stationing committee to state their opinions and wishes. The stationing committee shall be sensitive and consider this information before making a final decision regarding assignments. An assignment shall be made only after consulting with the minister and personnel relations commission or the delegate(s) of the church(es) involved.

5. Cross-Conference Assignments

The bishop may consider cross-conference assignments after first consulting with the stationing committees of the annual conferences involved. Assignments shall be made after consultation with the personnel relations commission of the church(es) and pastor(s) involved.

Ministers assigned to another conference shall have full voting privileges for three years in that conference, but only if they waive, in writing, their voting privileges in the conference of which they were a member. If they do not transfer their conference membership within three years, the voting privileges shall cease.

6. Appointment of Local Conference Ministers

If necessary, a local conference minister may be appointed as pastor. However, the person must have successfully completed at least one year of the study course.

7. Report of the Stationing Committee

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

8. Filling Vacancies

The bishop shall provide interim ministers to fill vacancies in conference churches, and shall make such appointments with the consent of the conference superintendent. The appointment of a minister for continuing assignment shall be referred to the stationing committee.

528 Station Superintendents

Conference superintendents shall be stationed by the bishop and two elders from each conference superintendent's district.

529 Provide Finances

The annual conference shall annually adopt a budget and policies which will govern its financial resources. The budget

shall show the amount established for the salary and benefits for pastoral service in each local church, the funds needed for the various interests of the conference, the general benevolent budget allocated or accepted by that conference, and the goals for the designated conference and general offerings.

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

530 Report to the General Board of Administration

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

531 Fill Vacancies

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

CHAPTER 26

Conference Council

541 Purpose

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

542 Personnel

1. Ex Officio Members

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

2. Members at Large

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

543 Officers

1. Chairperson and Assistant Chairperson

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

2. Secretary

The council shall also name from its membership a secretary who shall record the sessions of the council, the annual conference sessions, and the mid-year session.

544 Meetings

The council shall determine the time and place of its regular meetings. The council may also meet at the call of the chair or upon the written request of three of its members. All meetings of

the council must be duly announced and all members informed by appropriate communication.

545 Duties

1. Elect Chairperson of Superintendents

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

2. Act as Executive Committee for the Annual Conference

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

3. Prepare Recommendations

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

4. Provide for Agenda and Programs

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

5. Provide for a Mid-Year Session

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

CHAPTER 27

Conference Superintendents

551 Election and Stationing of Conference Superintendents

1. Election

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

2. Extended Term

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

3. Stationing

Conference superintendents shall be stationed by the bishop and two elders from each conference superintendent district.

552 Duties and Powers of Conference Superintendent

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

1. Implement the General Church Program

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

The superintendent shall be responsible for placing this program before the annual session of the conference and the conference council of administration, and for conducting at least one planning session for placing the correlated program before the pastors and delegates from the various local churches.

2. Administer the Conference Program

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

3. Act as Resource Leader

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

4. Serve on the Stationing Committee

The conference superintendent(s) shall serve on the committee to station pastors. If a conference has only one conference superintendent, that person will chair the stationing committee. If there is more than one conference superintendent, the committee to station pastors shall elect a superintendent to serve as chairperson.

5. Serve on the Conference Council

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

6. Provide for Local Conferences

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

7. Serve as Church Extension Supervisor

The conference superintendent shall be the church extension supervisor of that district under the direction of the conference council of administration, unless the annual conference determines to elect a director of church extension.

8. Propose Conference Finances

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

9. Propose Pastors' Salaries

The conference superintendent shall propose to the annual conference finance committee the pastor's salary for each field on that district for the coming year. It shall be the superintendent's duty to determine if the pastor has received the salary due and, in case of a deficiency, to assist the local church in securing the balance due.

10. Make Reports

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

CHAPTER 28

General Conference

601 Purpose

The General Conference shall administer all affairs pertaining to the commissions, agencies, conferences, churches, church extension districts and mission fields, and shall establish policies pertaining to the mission and ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

602 Personnel

The members of the General Conference are the bishop, the directors elected by the General Conference, and the delegates elected by the conferences.

1. Elected Delegates

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

a. 50% on the average of the main weekly worship service attendance and adult membership.

b. 50% on the total of all financial contributions to the general church during the last full year prior to the election of General Conference delegates.

2. Church Extension District

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

3. Expenses

General Conference shall pay the travel expenses of all delegates from conferences which do not receive financial support from the General Conference or its agencies for day-to-day operations (for example, pastors' salaries and general administration). General Conference shall pay the travel expenses of two delegates from all other conferences.

603 Officers

1. The Bishop

The bishop shall be chairperson of the General Conference.

2. The Directors

The Directors of the various departments shall assist the bishop in administering the affairs of the General Conference.

3. The Secretary

The Executive Leadership Team shall appoint a secretary to record the proceedings of the General Conference. This appointment does not make the person a voting member of General Conference.

604 Duties and Powers

1. The General Conference shall determine the mission and ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and provide plans and policies appropriate for the denomination.

2. The General Conference shall perform all duties assigned in the Constitution and Discipline.

3. The General Conference shall review the work of its own officers, commissions, and committees.

4. The General Conference shall elect at each quadrennial session a bishop, directors, General Board of Administration members, members of the Church Services and Education commissions, and members of the Missions Commission as determined in the Joint Ministry Agreement.

5. The General Conference shall consider the revision of the Discipline.

6. The General Conference shall establish financial policies to direct the General Board and its Executive Leadership Team in developing the annual budget for the general church.

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

8. When practices, teachings, or decisions within a conference or national conference challenge the doctrinal integrity, cooperative relationship, and/or international ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the General Conference shall have the authority to apply whatever disciplinary action it considers appropriate.

CHAPTER 29

Election of Delegates

611 Duties of the Bishop

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

2. The bishop will circulate the list of elected delegates and alternates no later than February prior to the General Conference. This circulated list shall be sufficient credentials for all delegates.

612 Duty of Annual Conferences

1. Nomination of Elders

It shall be the duty of each annual conference in session

preceding the General Conference delegate election to place in nomination a list of nominees equal to at least double the number of ministerial delegates to be elected, providing there are a sufficient number available. The nominees shall be chosen by ballot containing the names of all eligible elders.

2. Eligibility of Elders

Only elders who are actively pastoring a church in that conference or serving in an appointed or elected position in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ shall be eligible for nomination, election, and service.

3. Nomination of Laity

In the third year of the quadrennium, the local board of administration may nominate an eligible layperson as a candidate for lay representation in the General Conference who has agreed to serve if elected.

From this number of nominees, the annual conference preceding the General Conference shall place in nomination a list of nominees equal to at least double the number of lay delegates to be elected. These nominated laypersons and nominated elders of the conference shall constitute the ballot for the election of delegates to General Conference.

4. Identification

In connection with each name (ministerial and lay) placed on the ballot for election of delegates to the General Conference, the following information shall be added or furnished separately: the address, church to which the person belongs, and the person's position in the local church or annual conference.

5. Board of Tellers

It shall be the duty of each annual conference at the annual session preceding the General Conference delegate election to elect a board of tellers consisting of three members and three alternates, whose duty it shall be to receive and count the ballots cast for delegates and alternates.

613 Duty of the Conference Council of Administration

The council shall delegate the responsibility for and provide for the expense of printing the ballots and the bills of election. The ballots and bills of election are to be printed and in the hands of the pastors by September 15 preceding the election.

614 Duty of the Pastors

It shall be the duty of the pastors to place the ballots and bills of election in the hands of the local board of election and to faithfully announce the election and to fully explain the procedure of the balloting and any referendum which may be presented at the time of election.

615 Duty of Local Board of Election

The lay leader (serving as chairperson), the secretary of the local board of administration, and one or two more members of the local board of administration who have been appointed by the board for that purpose shall receive the ballots cast by the members of their local church.

It shall be the duty of the local board of election—

1. To be present and to receive ballots at any and all meetings of the local church during the month of October.

2. To record the name of each voter.
3. To record, after the last service in which ballots can be received, the name of each elder and layperson voted for, together with the number of ballots received.
4. To sign, seal, and forward the bill of election by November 15 to the annual conference board of tellers.
5. The local board of election shall keep the list of names of the voters, together with the ballots and a copy of the bill of election, until the close of the General Conference.

616 Time of Election

The election shall be held in the month of October preceding the sitting of the General Conference.

617 Absentee Voters

Members incapacitated by age or other unavoidable circumstances may send their ballots in sealed envelopes with their names written on the outside. Conference superintendents and pastors may cast their ballots at the local church where they are stationed or regularly attend. Voters may designate their choice on the ballots by the cross sign X.

618 Pastors of Affiliate Local Churches and Their Spouses and Dependents

Pastors of affiliate local churches, their spouses and their dependents, who are either members of a fully constituted local church or members of the local affiliate congregation and meet all requirements for full United Brethren adult membership, may send their ballots in sealed envelopes with their names written on the outside to the conference board of tellers.

619 Duty of Annual Conference Board of Tellers

The duties of the annual conference board of tellers shall be as follows:

1. To make a list of all elders and laypersons on the ballot, along with the number of votes cast for each. This shall be completed after November 15 as soon as possible.
2. When a tie occurs, the board of tellers shall determine by lot which of them is elected.
3. The elder receiving the highest number of votes shall be the delegation chairperson.
4. Those elected shall be notified by December 1.
5. The board shall send a complete transcript of the election to the bishop and to each local church and pastor by December 15.
6. The conference superintendent shall be notified if local church reports are received with a postmark later than November 15.

620 Delinquent Local Church Reports

If a delinquent local church wants to have its votes counted, the following procedure shall be used:

1. The conference superintendent shall convene a meeting of the conference council of administration. The council shall appoint an investigating committee.
2. The committee shall investigate the following:
 - a. Was the election held at the proper time?
 - b. Are the ballots being held, along with a record of the persons who cast ballots?
 - c. Does the local board of election have a copy of the bill of election?

3. The ballots may be counted if the above questions are answered in the affirmative and if the local church pays the cost of the investigation.

621 Publication

The bishop shall publish the names of those elected delegates and alternates in the denominational periodical no later than the February issue, and furnish a copy to the secretary of the General Conference. The published list, as certified by the bishop, shall be sufficient credentials for all delegates in the General Conference.

622 Vacancies

If one or more of the delegates elected should be prevented from attending, it shall be the duty of the annual conference board of tellers to notify the first alternate to take that person's place and to descend to the last alternate.

623 Contested Elections

In case of contest of election, the annual conference board of tellers shall furnish each contestant with an exact copy of the election returns, when requested.

A contestant who feels that a recount is necessary should notify the conference superintendent, who in turn shall call a meeting of the conference council of administration. The council shall appoint a committee of three to make the recount, first on the local level. Any local boards who do not have the ballots together with the list of votes and bills of election will be disqualified. The recount committee shall report to the conference council of administration, who shall declare the delegates elected. The contestant requesting the recount shall pay the expense involved.

CHAPTER 30

The Bishop

The General Conference shall elect an ordained minister to serve as bishop. This person must have served as a United Brethren elder for at least six years.

631 Election of the Bishop

1. Nominating Committee

The executive committee of the General Board of Administration, as soon as practicable following the election of delegates to the General Conference, shall appoint a bishops' nominating committee composed of seven members selected from the total membership of the General Conference.

2. Duties of the Committee

- a. The committee shall give consideration to the whole number of elders eligible for election to the office of bishop. (See 12.2.)
- b. The committee shall confer with those whom they desire to nominate and determine if there are circumstances which would prevent them from serving, if elected.
- c. The committee shall meet at least twice, and a twenty-four hour period must have elapsed between the time of their first meeting and the report to the General Conference.

3. Amendments to the Report

The report of the committee may be amended by additions from the floor of the conference. However, before the report can

be finally adopted, those thus nominated must be interviewed by the committee in order to determine if there are circumstances which would prevent them from serving if elected.

4. Election

The election shall be conducted immediately following the adoption of the report, and those elected must receive a majority of the votes cast by ballot.

632 Duties of the Bishop

1. Live Near Huntington, Ind.

The bishop shall reside in the area of Huntington, Indiana.

2. Set Vision and Direction

The bishop shall encourage spiritual development, and help establish the vision and direction of the General Conference ministries and of its constituent churches. The bishop will be responsible to work with conference and national conference leaders, encouraging them to develop and pursue the vision for their ministries.

3. Oversee Administration

The bishop shall be responsible for the general administration of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. The bishop will oversee the work of the Office Manager/Treasurer, the Communications Manager, and the Commission on Ministry.

4. Serve on Commissions

The bishop shall be an ex officio member of all commissions of the General Conference.

5. Preside at Meetings

The bishop shall preside at the General Conference, the General Board of Administration, the Executive Leadership Team, and conference sessions. The bishop may preside at national conference sessions, if invited. When unable to attend any of these meetings, the bishop shall designate another elder to preside.

6. Conduct Ordinations

The bishop may conduct ordination services or assign this responsibility to another ordained minister.

7. Ensure Accountability

The bishop shall ensure that accountability procedures are established for all officers, committees, commissions, and employees of the general church. The bishop shall also hold conference leaders accountable for ministry performance and moral and personal conduct.

8. Interpret Discipline

The bishop shall interpret the Discipline, and this ruling shall stand until the next meeting of the General Board or General Conference.

9. Serve on Conference Committees

The bishop shall serve as an ex officio member of each conference council of administration and stationing committee. However, the bishop will not be permitted to be chairperson of those groups and will attend meetings at his discretion.

10. Appoint Superintendents

The bishop shall be responsible to fill vacancies in the office of conference superintendent until the reorganization of the conference.

11. Comply with International Agreements

The bishop shall ensure that United Brethren entities comply with any joint ministry agreements.

12. Represent the Denomination

The bishop shall, at his discretion, participate in or designate someone to represent the denomination to parachurch and inter-denominational ministries.

633 Accountability

1. The bishop shall be accountable to the General Board of Administration for ministry performance and moral and personal conduct.

2. If the bishop becomes involved in immoral or imprudent conduct or otherwise proves to be incompetent in that office, the General Board will request the bishop's resignation or may remove the bishop from office by a two-thirds vote.

634 Succession

If a vacancy occurs in the office of bishop due to death, disability, resignation, or removal, the Executive Leadership Team shall appoint an elder from their number to serve as acting bishop until the next meeting of the General Board or General Conference. If the vacancy occurs within the first three years of the quadrennium, the General Board shall appoint an eligible elder to fill the vacancy.

CHAPTER 31

General Board of Administration

641 Purpose

The General Board of Administration shall conduct the business of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ between sessions of the General Conference in accordance with the plans and policies established by the General Conference.

642 Personnel

The General Board shall consist of the following:

1. The bishop.
2. The directors elected by the General Conference.
3. The highest elected leader of each conference which does not receive financial support from the General Conference or its agencies for day-to-day operations (for example, pastors' salaries and general administration).
4. Twelve lay persons and four pastoring elders elected by General Conference.
5. Additional persons as specified in any Joint Ministry Agreement.

643 Officers

1. Chairperson—The bishop shall be the presiding officer of the General Board of Administration.
2. Assistant Chairperson—At the time of its organization, the

General Board shall elect one of its members to be the assistant chairperson.

3. Secretary—The General Board shall elect one of its members to be the recording secretary.

644 Duties

1. The General Board of Administration shall carry out the plans and policies established by the General Conference.

2. When issues arise that are not covered by policies established by the General Conference, the General Board shall determine the policy which will be followed until General Conference meets and deals with the issue.

3. The General Board shall decide questions of interpretation in the Constitution and Discipline. Between sessions of the General Board, the bishop's interpretation will stand until the next meeting of either the General Conference or the General Board.

4. The General Board will adopt the general budget according to the policies established by the General Conference.

5. The General Board shall fill vacancies involving the bishop, any director elected by the General Conference, its own members, and commission members elected by the General Conference.

6. The General Board shall provide for the annual evaluation of the bishop.

645 Meetings

The General Board of Administration shall meet annually.

CHAPTER 32

Executive Leadership Team

651 Purpose

The Executive Leadership Team shall conduct business between sessions of the General Board in accordance with the plans and policies of the General Conference and General Board.

652 Personnel

The Executive Leadership Team shall consist of the bishop, the directors elected by General Conference, and four lay people and two clergy selected by the General Board.

653 Officers

The bishop shall serve as the chairperson. The Executive Leadership Team shall select an assistant chairperson and a secretary from its membership.

654 Duties

1. The Executive Leadership Team will receive reports from the bishop, directors, and General Treasurer.

2. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint necessary committees to prepare for and conduct the work of the General Conference and the General Board (i.e. Finance, Nominations, etc.).

3. The Executive Leadership Team will recommend to the General Board personnel for General Treasurer/Office Manager, Communications Manager, Certified Public Accountant to conduct the annual audit, committees dealing with pension and insurance matters, and other personnel recommendations as directed by the General Board.

655 Meetings

The Executive Leadership Team will meet at least annually. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

CHAPTER 33

Church Services Department

661 Purpose

The Church Services Commission exists to serve by helping our pastors and laity build a quality ministry for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

662 Personnel

1. Members

The commission shall consist of the following:

- a. The bishop.
- b. Seven members elected by the General Conference.
- c. Up to six additional members appointed by the commission.

2. Lay/Clergy Ratio

The total commission membership shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy. The director elected by General Conference and any associate directors shall be advisory members.

3. Term Limit

Commission members shall be limited to three four-year terms, or 12 years in succession.

663 Commission Officers

1. Election

The commission shall elect a chairperson, assistant chairperson, and recording secretary at its first regular meeting after General Conference. These officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. All officers shall be United Brethren members.

2. Chairperson

The chairperson will preside at commission meetings. Neither the bishop nor the director of the department may chair the commission.

664 Meetings

The Church Services Commission shall meet at least annually. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

665 Executive Committee

The executive committee shall consist of the officers. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of two of its members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

The executive committee will cooperate with the bishop in conducting the director's regular evaluation.

666 Duties and Powers

1. The commission shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of the Depart-

ment of Church Services.

2. The commission shall report to the meetings of the General Conference, the General Board of Administration, and the Executive Leadership Team.

3. The commission may suggest to the General Conference nominating committee persons it would like to be considered as candidates for director.

4. The Church Services Commission will help congregations improve their effectiveness in Christian education, youth ministry, family ministry, and other local church ministries.

5. The commission will oversee non-cross-cultural church extension.

6. The commission is responsible for the denomination's marketing services.

667 Vacancies

The Church Services Commission may fill vacancies among members appointed by itself. When vacancies occur among members elected by the General Conference, the commission may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the General Board or the Executive Leadership Team.

668 Funds

The General Treasurer shall hold commission funds subject to the direction of the commission. No funds shall be distributed by this treasurer unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the commission to do so.

CHAPTER 34

Education Department

671 Purpose

The Education Commission exists to create and promote interest in Christian higher education throughout the denomination.

672 Personnel

1. Members

The Education Commission shall consist of the following:

- a. The bishop.
- b. Seven members elected by the General Conference.
- c. Up to six additional members appointed by the commission.

2. Lay/Clergy Ratio

The total commission membership shall include at least 40% laypersons and 40% clergy. The director elected by General Conference and any associate directors shall be advisory members.

3. Term Limit

Commission members shall be limited to three four-year terms, or 12 years in succession.

673 Commission Officers

1. Election

The commission shall elect a chairperson, assistant chairperson, and recording secretary at its first regular meeting after General Conference. These officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. All officers shall be United Brethren members.

2. Chairperson

The chairperson will preside at commission meetings. Neither the bishop nor the director of the department may chair the commission.

674 Meetings

The Education Commission shall meet at least annually. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

675 Executive Committee

The executive committee shall consist of the officers. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of two of its members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

The executive committee will cooperate with the bishop in conducting the director's regular evaluation.

676 Duties and Powers

1. The Education Commission shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of the Department of Education.

2. The commission shall report to the meetings of the General Conference, the General Board of Administration, and the Executive Leadership Team.

3. The commission may suggest to the General Conference nominating committee persons it would like to be considered as candidates for director.

4. The commission is responsible for policies which affect the work of higher education in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

5. The commission is responsible for the oversight of Huntington College in Huntington, Indiana.

6. The commission is responsible for the development and direction of international higher education interests.

7. The commission is responsible for ministerial education.

677 Vacancies

The Education Commission may fill vacancies among members appointed by itself. When vacancies occur among members elected by the General Conference, the commission may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the General Board or the Executive Leadership Team.

678 Funds

The General Treasurer shall hold commission funds subject to the direction of the commission. No funds shall be distributed by this treasurer unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the commission to do so.

CHAPTER 35

Missions Department

681 Purpose

The Missions Commission is established in compliance with Christ's commission to go into the uttermost parts of the world as His witnesses and to carry out the missionary program of the General Conference.

682 Personnel

1. Members

The Missions Commission shall consist of the following:

- a. The bishop.
- b. The WMF president.
- c. Three men elected by General Conference.
- d. Three women appointed by the Women's Missionary Fellowship.
- e. A person from one of the United Brethren international fields, appointed by the General Board.
- f. One person from outside the denomination, named by the Missions Commission.
- g. Up to three members appointed by the General Board of Administration or the United Brethren Church in Canada, according to Joint Ministry Agreement specifications.

2. Lay/Clergy Ratio

The total commission membership shall include at least 40% laypersons. The director elected by General Conference and any associate directors shall be advisory members.

3. Term Limit

Commission members shall be limited to three four-year terms, or 12 years in succession.

683 Commission Officers

1. Election

The Missions Commission shall elect a chairperson, assistant chairperson, and recording secretary at its first regular meeting after General Conference. These officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. All officers shall be United Brethren members.

2. Chairperson

The chairperson will preside at commission meetings. Neither the bishop nor the director of the department may chair the commission.

684 Meetings

The commission shall meet at least annually. Special meetings shall be called by the chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

685 Executive Committee

The executive committee shall consist of the officers and any other persons as required in the Joint Ministry Agreement. This committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of two of its members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

The executive committee will cooperate with the bishop in conducting the director's regular evaluation.

686 Duties and Powers

1. The Missions Commissions shall be responsible for the direction, policies, administration, and general management of the Department of Missions.
2. The commission shall report to the meetings of the General Conference, the General Board of Administration, and the Executive Leadership Team.
3. The commission may suggest to the General Conference

nominating committee persons it would like to be considered as candidates for director.

4. The commission shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to missionaries—recruitment, training, appointment, support, travel, duties, supervision, etc.

5. The commission shall help churches in United Brethren mission conferences and districts be effective in their ministries.

6. The commission shall oversee the work of Women's Missionary Fellowship and Master's Men International, and approve changes to the WMF and MMI constitutions.

7. The commission shall oversee cross-cultural church extension work in the United States.

687 Vacancies

When vacancies occur among members elected by the General Conference, the commission may suggest persons to be considered for appointment by the General Board or the Executive Leadership Team. Other vacancies shall be filled by the group that originally appointed the person.

688 Funds

The General Treasurer shall hold commission funds subject to the direction of the commission. No funds shall be distributed by this treasurer unless duly authorized by the person or persons designated by the commission to do so.

CHAPTER 36

Property

691 General

1. Security of Property

All church property shall be secured by a legal document recognized by the state or province or other governmental authority in which the property is located and held in trust for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ 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 Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Churches or other legal entities of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ holding property shall be incorporated if required by the law of the state or 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 Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 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.

b. The local board of administration shall apprise the annual conference of the recommendation by submitting copies to the bishop and conference superintendent.

c. The annual conference council of administration shall determine the capital funds invested in the property by the annual conference and/or the general church 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 conference stating the date and purpose of the meeting. This announce-

ment shall be made at least one month before the meeting.

e. The local conference shall require a two-thirds favorable vote to pass the resolution.

f. The bishop or the bishop's 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 favorable vote to pass the resolution.

g. After all of the above conditions have been met, a duly organized meeting of the annual conference or the conference council 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 chairperson 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 annual conference or the conference council shall be by ballot and shall require a two-thirds favorable vote. Expenses incurred shall be assumed by the local church.

692 Boards of Trustees

1. Local Church Trustees (See ¶426 and ¶451-460)

2. Annual Conference Trustees

The annual conferences may elect boards of trustees to acquire, control, and dispose of property in trust for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ 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. If the annual conference has a board of trustees other than the conference council of administration, the chairman of the board of trustees shall be a member ex officio of the conference council of administration.

3. General Board of Trustees

The executive committee of the General Board of Administration shall act as the general board of trustees of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. This board shall hold and control all church property and funds not otherwise provided for, subject to the direction of the General Conference or the General Board of Administration. It shall report annually to the General Board of Administration and quadrennially to the General Conference. The general church treasurer is the treasurer of this board of trustees.

4. Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs in any of the foregoing boards of trustees, the conference or governing body to which it is amenable 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.

5. Vacant Church Property

When any of our houses on 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 conference superintendent of the district on which the vacancy occurs shall notify the board of trustees appointed by the annual conference for the purpose of taking charge of such property, which shall hold the property in trust to control, rent, or sell

as the annual conference may direct; provided, however, that should the district be without a conference superintendent, the bishop shall notify said board of trustees. In the event of sale, all money derived from the sale shall be held in trust by the annual 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 annual conference to be used as the trustees shall determine.

CHAPTER 37

Trial of Members

701 Preliminary to Trial

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Matthew 8:15-17); that is, he shall be expelled. But no member who requests the regular committee trial shall be denied it.

702 Method of Procedure

In case a member is accused of immoral conduct, the local church shall appoint a committee of two from its own number to visit the accused and, if possible, reclaim that person. But if such a visit is unsuccessful, the accused shall be tried by the church in which membership is held, or by a committee thereof chosen by the parties concerned in the following manner: the accuser shall choose one committee member; the accused a second committee member, and these two a third committee member. But if these two fail to agree upon the third committeeman within fifteen days, the local conference shall appoint the third committee member.

The pastor in charge of the appointment or local church shall be chairperson. If found guilty, the accused shall be suspended or expelled. An accused member who refuses to choose a committee member may be suspended or expelled by a vote of the church in which membership is held.

Yet cases may happen where it would be expedient to choose a committee from other churches than those to which the parties belong. A conference superintendent 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 conference by giving notice thereof to the pastor in charge or to the secretary of the trial, within thirty days after said trial, together with the reasons for such appeal. And it shall be the duty of the secretary to furnish the local conference 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.

703 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 along one or two faithful members. However, if the accused denies guilt, that person 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 humiliation, 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.

704 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 conference shall appoint one to carry out the rule; and if either or both disputants refuse to choose an arbitrator, the local conference 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 conference shall appoint the third arbitrator. These three shall hear the case and decide.

705 Right of Appeal

Should either be dissatisfied with the decision, such may have a right to an appeal to the next local conference 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.

706 Records of Trials

Every lay leader shall keep a record of the proceedings of church trials in a book provided for that purpose, and it shall be the lay leader's duty in case of an appeal to furnish this record to the local conference.

707 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 38

Trial of Local Conference Ministers

711 Method of Procedure

When a local conference minister is accused of any misdemeanor, 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 committeeman; the prosecutor shall choose a second committeeman; and these two a third; but if these two fail to agree upon a third committeeman within fifteen days, the local conference shall appoint a third committeeman. This committee shall try the case, the pastor in charge being chairman. If the accused fail to choose a committeeman within fifteen days, the local conference shall choose the first and second committeeman, and these two a third; but if these two fail to agree upon the third committeeman within fifteen days, the local conference shall appoint the third committeeman, 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 conference for a new trial.

712 Appeal from the Decision of a Local Conference

Any minister dissatisfied with the decision of a local conference may appeal to the ensuing annual conference by giving notice to the local conference 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 annual conference.

CHAPTER 39

Trial of Annual Conference Ministers

721 Preliminary Considerations of Trial

Accusations limited to personal trespass require a preliminary compliance with Matthew 18:15-17.

An annual conference minister who is guilty of immorality, trespassing, imprudent conduct, or disobedience to the order and discipline of the church, and who makes confession of the fact prior to the trial, shall cease to preach, except by permission of the conference superintendent of the district, until the meeting of the annual conference. The annual conference shall then consider the case and dispose of it as, in view of all the circumstances, may seem just and right.

722 Method of Procedure

1. Plan for the Trial

In case an annual conference minister is accused of any of the aforementioned offenses, which accusation must be in writing, and does not make confession of guilt, the local conference to which the minister is amenable shall appoint another annual conference minister who shall take along 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 conference 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 conference. 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 conference 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 conference 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 conference to which the accused belongs, or in the conference where the offense was committed.

3. Duties of the Prosecutor

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

The prosecutor shall also notify the conference superintendent of the district wherein said cause of accusation occurred. The conference superintendent shall act as chairperson of the trial, unless rendered ineligible because of relationship or interest or because of being a witness in the case, in which event the prosecutor shall notify the bishop who shall appoint a chairperson. If the offender or prosecutor be a conference superintendent, the bishop shall appoint a chairperson in the case. If the accused be the bishop, one of the directors shall be appointed as chairperson.

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

Witnesses shall be asked to declare, upon their honor as followers of Jesus Christ, that the testimony they are about to give is true to the best of their 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 rumor or hearsay, without definite personal knowledge, shall be ruled out. Testimony which has no bearing upon the case on trial should 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 should require witnesses to testify specifically to facts within their 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 should 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 the testimony. If the witness is biased or prejudiced toward the accused, the 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 the accused to hold his peace until the annual conference to which the accused 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 annual 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 conference 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 the accused 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 the accused refuse or neglect to choose a committee member or to notify the prosecutor of the choice within fifteen days, the accused shall in accordance with Discipline be removed from the pastorate, and the bishop, with the consent of the conference superintendent, shall provide for the supply of the vacancy until the annual conference.

Should the accused refuse or fail to appear at the ensuing annual conference, that body shall review the evidence presented from the local conference 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 a defense. The counsel thus chosen shall be an elder in good standing in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and a member of the annual conference to which the accused belongs. Provided, however, that if the annual 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 another conference.

9. Expense of Trial

In cases where the investigation of complaints and trial of annual conference members involves expense, or in cases where the accused takes recourse to the civil courts to contest the decision of the church, the annual conference involved 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.

723 Annual Conference Trial Course

Whenever a written accusation of any of the said aforementioned offenses shall be first lodged with the annual 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 annual conference shall appoint a committee to act, instead of a local conference, 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 committee member when the two committee members chosen fail to agree on the choice of the third.

724 Appeal from the Decision of Annual Conference

Members of an annual conference who may be dissatisfied with the decision of the conference shall, within thirty days after the session of the annual conference, notify the secretary of said conference of their intention to appeal to the General Conference, together with their reasons for so doing; and it shall be the duty of the secretary to furnish the General Conference with a certified copy of the notice, and the reason thereof, and of the proceedings of the annual conference in the case.

CHAPTER 40

Impeachment of an Annual Conference

731 Method of Impeachment

1. Ground of Impeachment

In case complaints or rumors as to maladministration or disobedience to the Constitution or Discipline of the church in any annual conference or bounds thereof should be considered sufficiently grave to one-fifth of the members of the General Conference to warrant a trial for impeachment, they may order such trial by filing a written request with their names signed thereto to the bishop, who shall appoint a committee of seven members of the General Conference who shall constitute a trial committee. The bishop shall notify the delegates of the accused conference of their right to appear in defense of their conference; an equal number of the first signers of the order shall present themselves as prosecutors.

2. Committee Regulations

The committee shall adopt such rules to govern its sittings and deliberations as it deems best, in harmony with our customs and usages, and shall adjudge as to the guilt or innocence of the conference accused. In case innocence is established, they shall so report to the General Conference. In case guilt is established,

they shall so report with recommendations fixing the penalty or penalties adjudged due the offender. The General Conference may adopt these recommendations or modify them as in its wisdom it sees fit and impose the penalty or penalties agreed upon.

APPENDIX A

Local Church Structure

Throughout most of its 220 year history, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ prescribed a specific administrative structure to be used by each church. Complete with such offices as Class Leader and Church Literature Secretary, this uniformity served the church well in an age when its churches were of similar size (mostly small) and were located in similar settings (mostly rural).

More recently, the denomination has recognized that a “one size fits all” structure is no longer the most effective way for all United Brethren churches to organize their ministries. Hence, the Discipline now grants churches congregations the flexibility to create their own administrative processes.

Structure Flows from Vision

Key to the development of an effective local administrative framework is the understanding that “structure flows from vision.” The beginning point is always a vision of the ending point. Churches need to be very pragmatic at this point, asking themselves three primary questions:

1. What has God called us to do? While every Christian church shares the common Great Commission to “make disciples,” the specific harvest field may differ greatly. For one church, the emphasis may be on families with small children; for another, it may be small group ministries that target various special needs. Knowing what God wants you to do is a necessary first step in determining the right organizational structure for your church.

2. What do we have the resources to do? Identifying the available people, facilities, finances and time elements also shapes the church’s structure. As a church focuses on its vision, it may well determine that some long-standing committees and offices no longer fit or that qualified people are needed in other meaningful capacities.

3. How can we most efficiently and effectively accomplish it? In other words, what do we need in order to accomplish our vision? What don’t we need? What simply uses up valuable time and accomplishes very little? Churches cannot afford to waste their people resources on activities that bear no kingdom fruit.

The Necessities

Even within the freedom now allowed by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, two administrative components remain necessary. Each church needs to have a local board of administration and the appropriate number of lay delegates (as determined by its annual conference). These two components are part of the channel through which the local church maintains its connection to the whole denomination, and they help provide overall accountability and leadership to the church itself.

Committees or Commissions

One of the more significant changes the denomination attempted in recent years was to encourage local churches to switch from a “committee” format to “commissions.” Mere se-

mantics? Not really.

In a committee structure, all decisions are made by the church board. Committees research, plan, and carry out the assignments given to them by those in leadership. They do not set policy or make decisions.

Commissions, however, have been entrusted with an area of ministry. They have been given a job description which details their responsibilities and authority. As such, they do not need to seek the board's approval for each decision. They can establish policies within the parameters of their job descriptions. For many churches, one of the products of a commission structure has been the need for less frequent board meetings—for instance, bi-monthly or even quarterly, rather than monthly—since decisions are being handled by commissions.

Some Suggestions

United Brethren churches have taken advantage of this structural flexibility to organize themselves in a variety of ways. Many have retained elements of previous structures and many others have designed totally new models for their ministries.

In some churches, a pastor supervises “ministry” dimensions of church life while lay people oversee “maintenance” activities. Others have hired several part-time staff members to focus on distinct areas. The use of elders is becoming more common. Specific qualifications, including “term limits,” are being developed. Each of these is appropriate within the vision of the local church and meets the current criterion of the Discipline.

The paragraphs below offer a brief description of some of the commissions you might find within local church structures:

Worship. This commission focuses on the corporate gatherings of the congregation. It might also give oversight to the music ministry of the church. Key people to include would be the pastor, musicians, and other individuals who regularly participate in a worship service.

Property. This commission cares for the physical property needs of the church, including matters of insurance and maintenance. Custodial staff are among those who should be given consideration for service on this commission.

Missions. This commission plans the outreach emphasis of the church. Often this commission focuses only on “overseas” efforts, but the scope of its ministry could easily be expanded to encompass all outreach efforts, including evangelism training. WMF and MMI officers might be among those to serve in this area.

Discipleship. This commission concentrates on the spiritual growth of the believer, and could be combined with the education commission. A key dimension of the discipleship process is leadership development, helping believers discover their spiritual gifts and equipping them to use those gifts. Members of this commission would need to demonstrate spiritual maturity and an ability to teach others.

Education. This commission provides for the overall training of the congregation. Special ministries like Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and small groups often are overseen by this commission. You might want to include such officers as Sunday school superintendent on this commission.

Personnel. This commission works with the church's staff. It serves as an advocate on the staff's behalf to the congregation, making recommendations regarding salary, vacation, and other benefits. It also works as the liaison between the conference and church during pastoral transitions. The constituency of this com-

mission should reflect the overall characteristics of the church.

Spiritual Care. This commission concentrates on visitation, membership, and other areas of concern for those who are a part of the congregation. Whereas the Missions Commission focuses on those who do not attend, this commission ministers to those who do. Such offices as lay leader and deacons would be among those enlisted for this commission.

Vision. This commission might also be known as the Long Range Planning Commission. It helps to determine the church's mission statement and set short- and long-term goals. Creative thinking and visionary faith are necessary requirements for those serving in this area.

Stewardship (or Finance). This commission establishes financial policies and procedures, sets the annual budget, regularly audits the financial records, and provides for the accurate reporting of the receipts and expenditures for the church. Among those to serve on this commission would be the treasurer and financial secretary.

Churches are free to use or not use these commissions, to combine them in various ways, and to add new ones which fit their own needs. Some churches have established a Prayer Commission, others a Hospitality Commission. Small churches may want to organize with very few commissions. Larger churches may want to establish commissions for more specialized areas—a Children and Youth Commission, for example.

In addition, commissions might want to establish committees to manage specific areas of ministry. For example, there could be a Children's Church Committee working under the Education or Worship Commission. There are many other possibilities.

Summary

In summary, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ encourages each church to design and develop a local church administrative structure which is both efficient and effective. That structure should flow from the church's vision and should allow those responsible for the ministry to have direct input into the decisions related to that ministry. The goal is that people should be released from endless committee and board meetings to do the work of ministry.

APPENDIX B

Glossary of UB Terms

Adult Membership. The membership category for anyone ages 14 and older who has made a commitment to Christ and agreed to other requirements. (See ¶401)

Affiliate Local Church. A congregation which doesn't need to meet the requirements for full-member churches, particularly regarding property ownership and membership in secret societies. All affiliate churches joined us because they didn't want to be part of the merger which created the United Methodist Church. These churches are not entitled to a vote in the annual conference. (See chapter 23)

Annual Conference. The highest governing body of a conference. It meets annually, and consists of all ministers of that conference and laypersons from each church. (See chapters 24-25)

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

Bishop. The highest elected leader in the denomination, chosen for a four-year term. A bishop must have been a United

Brethren elder for at least six years. (See chapter 30)

Board of Administration. A local church body which typically meets monthly to oversee the various affairs of the church. Only the local conference has more authority. (See ¶413)

Board of Tellers. A group of people, either at the local church or conference level, who count and record the ballots cast in elections. (See ¶612.5, ¶615, and ¶619)

Church Extension District. One or more appointments or local churches outside the boundaries of an established conference.

Church of the United Brethren in Christ. The denomination's official name.

Church Services Department. The denominational department which seeks to help churches improve their effectiveness in youth ministry, Christian education, family ministry, leadership development, and other local church ministries. The department sponsors the denominational youth conventions, oversees non-cross-cultural church planting, and runs the denomination's marketing operation. A commission consisting of the bishop, seven members elected by General Conference, and up to six other members appointed by the commission oversees the department. (See chapter 33)

Commissions. Churches typically organize with various commissions to oversee specific aspects of the church's ministry. The Discipline suggests eight different commissions. (See chapter 19)

Conference. Five or more churches within boundary lines set by General Conference. A conference must organize with a conference council, a stationing committee, a Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission, and at least one superintendent. (See chapters 24-25)

Conference Council. The executive committee of the annual conference, which handles business between sessions of the annual conference. It consists of the bishop, superintendent(s), treasurer, and 3-7 other persons elected by the conference. (See chapter 26)

Confession of Faith. A concise statement of seven fundamental doctrines. This document was adopted in 1815 and has never been changed. (See chapter 2)

Constitution. A statement adopted in 1841 which details basic organizational procedures and stands on several issues. It can't be changed without a referendum, followed by approval by General Conference. (See chapter 3)

Deacon/Deaconess. A person elected to give spiritual leadership in the church, especially to develop and nurture the spiritual lives of members and preserve the church's witness. The Spiritual Care Commission oversees the work of the deacons/deaconesses. (See ¶413.3e)

Departments. There are three denominational departments: Missions, Church Services, and Education. General Conference elects a director to oversee each department. (See chapters 33-35)

Director. A person elected by General Conference to oversee one of the general church departments (Missions, Church Services, and Education).

Discipline. The entire book you are holding in your hands. It consists of the Confession of Faith, Constitution, by-laws, and various information items.

Education Department. The denominational department which exists to promote interest in Christian higher education. Its primary focus is Huntington College. Oversight comes from a commission consisting of the bishop, seven members elected by General Conference, and up to six other members appointed by the commission. (See chapter 34)

Elder. An ordained minister. (See ¶241)

Executive Leadership Team. The executive committee of the General Board. It handles business between General Board meetings. Members include the bishop (chairperson), departmental directors, and four laypersons and two clergy selected by the General Board. (See chapter 32)

Financial Secretary. A person appointed by the church's Finance Commission to receive and record all offerings. (See ¶427)

General Benevolence. The system for financially supporting denominational ministries. Each conference (except for the missions conferences) is asked to contribute a percentage of the denomination's budget, based on a formula which considers that conference's total membership, attendance, and past giving. The various departments also engage in other fundraising.

General Board of Administration. The highest governing body between General Conferences. It meets annually. The members are the bishop (chairperson), the departmental directors, the highest elected leader of each self-supporting conference, 12 laypersons and four pastoring elders elected by General Conference, and any other persons required by joint ministry agreements. (See chapter 31)

General Conference. Our highest governing body, which meets every four years. Members elect their own lay and clergy delegates. (See chapter 28)

Graduate School of Christian Ministries. Huntington College's graduate school offers masters degree in Christian Ministries and Educational Ministries. (See chapter 14)

Huntington College. The denomination's only college, located in Huntington, Ind. It operates under the authority of the Education Commission, and ultimately, of General Conference.

Itinerant Plan. The church's method for assigning ministers to churches.

Itinerant. A minister who has made a commitment to be subject to the counsel of other ministers and to serve wherever the church places him or her. All annual conference licentiates and ordained elders are itinerants. (See ¶243)

Joint Ministry Agreement. An agreement which helps the general church and a conference located outside of the United States to legally work together.

Lay Delegate. A person elected by the congregation to represent them to the conference. Churches may have multiple lay delegates, depending on the church's size. (See ¶412.4)

Lay Leader. A non-ministerial member elected by a congregation to give active leadership. (See ¶412.1)

Lay Minister. A layperson called by God and licensed to perform specified acts of ministry. Must have been a UB member for at least two years. (See chapter 9)

Licentiate. A minister who is not yet ordained.

Local Church. A group of adults from ten or more resident families that, prior to its official organization, had an average worship attendance of 50 or more during the preceding year. (See chapter 18)

Local Conference. The highest governing body of a church. Its members include the bishop, the conference superintendent, all church members who hold a local conference license, and all members of the board of administration. Only the local conference can grant and renew local conference licenses, try appeals, and disband the church. (See chapter 20)

Local Conference Minister. The first step toward ordination. A local conference license to preach is granted by a church's local

conference to one of its members. It is typically followed by an annual conference license, and then ordination. (See chapter 10)

Master's Men International. The denominational men's organization which focuses on supporting missions and various service projects.

Ministerial Licensing and Ordination Commission. A conference committee of 3-5 elders that deals with various issues relating to the recruiting, training, examining, and ordination of ministers. (See ¶513)

Mission District. One or more appointments or local churches not organized as a conference which are administered by the Missions Commission.

Missions Department. The department responsible for the denomination's missions work. Oversight is given by a commission consisting of the bishop, the WMF president, an elected MMI representative, five members elected by General Conference, three members appointed by the WMF, and up to three other members. (See chapter 35)

National Conference. A conference which, for any of various reasons, may not be able to fully subscribe to the UB Constitution and Discipline. Currently, only the UB Church in Canada falls into this classification. (See ¶506)

Nominating Committee. A group of persons who prepare a ballot for a church election, whether at the local, conference, or denominational level.

Ordination. A recognition that a minister has been set apart for the gospel ministry.

Overseas Conferences. Normally, this refers to the conferences outside of North America—Jamaica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, and Hong Kong—which are under the authority of the Missions Commission.

Pastor. The minister assigned to lead a church. When there is a church staff with more than one minister, this person is known as the senior pastor. (See ¶441)

Personnel Relations Commission. The local church commission which deals with salaries, benefits, and various other matters pertaining to church staff. (See ¶428)

Referendum. When the entire UB constituency is invited to vote on an issue, such as an amendment to the Constitution. This voting is done during the October before General Conference in conjunction with the election of General Conference delegates.

Secret Combination (or Society). A fraternal benefit society, such as the Masons and Oddfellows, as defined in ¶111. UB members are forbidden to belong to secret societies.

Specialized Ministries Licentiate. A layperson on a church staff who serves in and is trained for a specific area of ministry, such as youth or music ministry. (See chapter 13)

Stationing Committee. A conference committee consisting of the bishop, superintendent(s), up to two other pastoring elders, and up to four laypersons. This committee assigns ministers to churches. (See ¶517.2)

Superintendent. One of more persons elected as the highest officials of an annual conference. (See chapter 27)

Superintendent's District. Two or more local churches or appointments under the supervision of a conference superintendent.

Trustees. Local church members charged with responsibility for property matters. The Property Commission members serve as the trustees.

Watchcare Membership. A category of membership for children up through age 9. A personal commitment to Christ is not

required. Watchcare members may not vote in church elections. (See ¶403)

Women's Missionary Fellowship. A women's organization which focuses on raising support, financial and otherwise, for mission work. The WMF has its own organizational structure, a biennial convention, and a fulltime executive director. Most UB churches have a local chapter.

Youth Membership. A category of membership for children ages 9-13. A personal commitment to Christ is required. Youth members may not vote in church elections. (See ¶402)

APPENDIX C

Pension Policies

The following information concerning the Ministerial Aid and Pension programs is not part of the official Discipline, which can be revised only by General Conference. These programs may be amended by the General Board of Administration. This material is published within the Discipline only as a means to communicate the information.

Ministerial Aid Purpose

The Ministerial Aid Fund is designed to provide financial assistance to ministers who were not eligible to enter the denominational pension program when it began in 1966.

Supervision

The General Board of Administration is responsible to appoint personnel to supervise the Ministerial Aid program.

Eligibility

1. Individuals who were serving or who had service before the denominational pension program began in 1966, but were not eligible to enter.
2. Ministers, missionaries, and general church officials who have served at least 10 years with the denomination.
3. When an eligible recipient dies, the spouse will receive benefits according to the number of years they served the church together, if they served at least 10 years.
4. Individuals must have been granted a retired status by their annual conference. Missionaries must be recommended by the Director of Missions.
5. Ministerial Aid application forms must be filed with the conference and approved by the general church Ministerial Aid committee.

Payments

1. The General Board of Administration will establish the amount to be paid per service year.
2. The amount to be received will be divided into four payments and mailed in January, April, July, and October.
3. Payment begins with the first quarterly payment immediately after approval.

Pension Program Purpose

The pension program of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ provides retirement funds for participants.

Structure

The pension program is composed of two parts:

1. A "Defined Benefit Plan" funded entirely by the denomination.
2. A "Tax Deferred Annuity Plan" chosen by the denomination and funded by the individual participant.

Supervision

The General Board of Administration is responsible for appointing personnel to supervise the pension program. The Bishop, Director of Missions, and Director of Church Services serve as pension trustees.

Eligibility

1. Licensed ministers and missionaries are eligible to participate January 1 following their hire date and reaching an insurance age of 21. Persons licensed after having been hired will be eligible January 1 after the license date.
2. Participants must contribute a minimum amount of their salary package into the designated TDA each year. Persons who fail to make the minimum contribution during the calendar year will forfeit service credit for that year (service credit is used to calculate benefits under the Defined Benefit Plan). Persons who fail to make this contribution for three successive years will be automatically terminated from the Defined Benefit Plan.
3. Participants must maintain active employment in the denomination to continue being eligible.

Funding

1. The contributions to the Defined Benefit Plan are actuarially determined and paid by the denomination.
2. The contributions to the Tax Deferred Annuity Plan are funded by the individual participant.

Benefits Provisions

1. The normal retirement date is the first of the month following the participant's 65th birthday.
2. Benefits are in addition to Social Security benefits.
3. Benefits from the Defined Benefit Plan are determined by a formula which includes a certain percentage of the average monthly compensation for each service year.
4. Benefits from the Tax Deferred Annuity Plan are determined by the amount of contribution, interest rate, and number of years invested.
5. Participants may choose early retirement benefits at age 62.
6. The Defined Benefit Plan does not include an insured disability benefit. Any participant who suffers a total, permanent disability is immediately 100% vested and may choose to receive benefits under one of the following:
 - a. Receive an immediate benefit equal to the actuarial equivalent of his accrued benefit. In this case, the group term life benefit ends.
 - b. Be carried to retirement as an "active" participant at the projected benefit level in effect when the disability occurred. In this case, the group term life benefit remains in force.
7. Death benefits prior to the normal retirement date are not provided by the Defined Benefit Plan. However, a death benefit is provided by a Group Term Life Insurance policy. The death benefit will be equal to 100 times the projected monthly retirement benefit.

Break in Service

Former participants will become participants immediately upon returning to the employ of the employer, regardless of whether they had a nonforfeitable right to all or part of their accrued benefit when they were terminated. Reinstatement in the plan will be processed under one of the following:

1. Former participants who did not take a distribution upon leaving the plan, (i.e., they deferred their benefit or had no vested interest) will be given credit for benefit purposes for previous years of service.
2. Former participants who took a distribution upon leaving the plan could reimburse the plan funds received in excess of personal contributions plus interest at the rate of 5% per year, and be given credit for benefit purposes for previous years of service. Persons who choose not to reimburse the plan forfeit any credit for benefit purposes for previous years of service. Reimbursement to the Defined Benefit fund must be done within the first year of eligibility.
3. Former employees who are not former participants will be given credit for any previous eligibility service they have completed. Therefore, they become eligible to participate on the January 1 after the total of their service before and after their break-in-service equals one year.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence will automatically be authorized for up to six months after active employment ends. The leave of absence will end if the person becomes actively employed outside the church. Group life insurance benefits being provided under the Defined Benefit Plan will be continued during the leave of absence.

Early Withdrawal or Cancellation of TDA

Participants are not permitted to withdraw funds or cancel TDA accounts established with the minimum required contributions. However, participants who have contributed more than the minimum requirement may be permitted to withdraw excess contributions.

Termination Provision

When participants end their employment before reaching their normal retirement date, their vested accrued benefit is held for distribution until that time. However, when the vested accrued benefit at the termination date is less than \$3500, the participant must take an immediate lump sum distribution.

Optional Forms of Receiving Benefits

Participants will be able to choose how they receive benefits from a variety of options. Personal consultation with the pension agent will be helpful in making the best choice.

Vesting Schedule

Years of Participation	Vested %
1	0%
2	0%
3	20%
4	40%
5	60%
6	80%
7	100%

APPENDIX D

Local Church Commissions

The following is not part of the current Discipline. Rather, most of it was found in chapter 19 of the 1993-1997 Discipline. It was removed, and replaced with Appendix B, which describes the many options available to churches as they design a structure which best fits their needs and situation. However, the following descriptions are included as a reference. Your church may want to use some or all of the commissions described below (in fact, you may already be doing so), but there is no obligation. This is only intended as a source of ideas as your church formulates a structure best suited for your church and community.

Evangelism and Discipleship Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, and four persons appointed by the board.

Areas of Responsibility. Any evangelism and/or discipleship ministry, any spiritual renewal emphasis, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

Missions Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, president of the WMF, president of Masters Men International, and two persons appointed by the board. (If the elected chairperson is president of either the WMF or Master's Men International, the board will appoint three persons.)

Areas of Responsibility. Missions conferences, self-denial emphases, thank offerings, mission work teams, and other areas of ministry assigned by the board.

Worship and Music Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, pastor, and three persons appointed by the local board.

Areas of Responsibility. Ushers, greeters, children's worship, choir, organist, pianist, special music, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the local board.

Christian Education Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, Sunday school superintendent/director of Christian education, youth sponsor, and two persons appointed by the local board. (If the elected chairperson is either the Sunday school superintendent/director of Christian education or the youth sponsor, the board will appoint three persons.)

Areas of Responsibility. Sunday school, youth, VBS, singles, camping, senior adults, family, children's ministries, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

Spiritual Care Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, lay leader, pastor, and two persons appointed by the board.

Areas of Responsibility. Visitation, deacons' work, social concerns, food pantry, and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

This commission also oversees areas related to membership. This may include interviewing and recommending persons for membership, conducting membership classes, correcting the membership roll, and the discipline and restoration of members.

Property Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, and four persons appointed

by the board. These people are the trustees of all church property.

Areas of Responsibility. Care for all physical property needs—including the insuring, maintaining, and protection of all property—and other areas of ministry as assigned by the board.

Finance Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, church treasurer, and three persons appointed by the board.

Areas of Responsibility. All financial policies and procedures, pastor's salary and benefits, annual budget, the annual audit of church records, stewardship emphasis, and other areas of responsibility as assigned by the board.

The Finance Commission will name a financial secretary from the church membership. This person will receive and record all offerings received for the support of the local and benevolent budget, provide for the counting of these funds by two or more persons, and keep a confidential record of individual contributions given by envelope or check.

Personnel Relations Commission

Personnel. The elected chairperson, the chairman of the delegates, and three persons appointed by the board.

Areas of Responsibility.

- a. Serve as a conferring and counseling committee to the pastor and other employed personnel.
- b. Be sensitive to the relationship between the pastor and the local church.
- c. Cultivate the pastor-church relationship.
- d. Interpret to the congregation the nature and function of the pastoral office.
- e. Make recommendations to the Finance Commission concerning the pastor's salary and benefits.
- f. Make recommendations to the board concerning vacation, pulpit supply, and attendance at conventions and seminars.
- g. Cooperate with the conference stationing committee in securing a pastor when the need arises.
- h. Make recommendations to the board concerning job descriptions of other employed personnel.

APPENDIX E

Denominational Officials

Elected Officers for 1993-1997

Bishop

Dr. Ray A. Seilhamer

Directors

Department of Church Services: Rev. Paul E. Hirschy

Department of Education: Dr. G. Blair Dowden

Department of Missions: Rev. Kyle W. McQuillen, Jr.

Associated Personnel

Administration

General Treasurer/Office Manager: Marda Hoffman

Communications Manager: Steve Dennie

Executive Secretary: Phyllis Lahr

Payroll Clerk: Janet Bilyew

Receptionist: Sue Cherry

Missions

Executive Secretary of WMF: Donna Holloper
Executive Secretary of Missions Department: Mabel Mundy
Secretary: Linda Kreger.

Education

Archivist: Jane Mason

Church Services

Literature Secretary: Marilyn Waters
Secretary: Phylis Stouder

Officers and department personnel may be contacted at:

United Brethren Headquarters
302 Lake Street
Huntington, IN 46750
Phone: (219) 356-2312
FAX: 356-4730

Bishops Emeriti

Clyde W. Meadows, 23 Midcliff Drive, Columbus, OH 43213.
Bishop 1961-1969.

Wilber L. Sites, Jr., 2719 Fillmore Drive, Chambersburg, PA 17201. Bishop 1977-1989.

Raymond A. Waldfoegel, 1537 Guilford St., Huntington, IN 46750. Bishop 1969-1981.

George E. Weaver, 2620 Westmoor Road, Findlay, OH 45840.
Bishop 1969-1977.

C. Ray Miller, 2260 Dieringer Dr., Huntington, IN 46750.
Bishop 1973-1993.

Clarence A. Kopp, Jr., 2038 College Ave., Huntington, IN 46750.
Bishop 1981-1993.

Jerry F. Datema, 1537 Himes St., Huntington, IN 46750.
Bishop 1981-1993.

APPENDIX F

Boards and Commissions

General Board of Administration

Chairperson: Bishop Ray A. Seilhamer.

Directors: G. Blair Dowden, Paul E. Hirschy, Kyle W. McQuillen, Jr.

Laypersons. Ray Ankerbrand (Mid-Atlantic), Jeff Heffelfinger (Central), Jim Hotchkiss (Central), Dean Hoobler (Rock River), Brian Hughes (Sandusky), Paul Lehman (Mid-Atlantic), Paul Michelson (Central), Jennie Osgood (Michigan), Grace Ann Price (Central), Dave Rahn (Central), Sam Rupp (Michindoh), Ed Souers (Michindoh).

Ministers. Gary Dilley (Michindoh), Dan Kopp (Central), Pat Jones, Mike Newman (Mid-Atlantic). In addition, the senior superintendent from each conference is a member of the General Board.

Executive Leadership Team

Chairperson: Ray A. Seilhamer.

Directors: Dr. G. Blair Dowden, Paul E. Hirschy, Kyle W. McQuillen, Jr.

Laypersons: Brian Hughes (Sandusky), Paul Michelson (Central), Dave Rahn (Central), Ed Souers (Michindoh).

Ministers: Gary Dilley (Michindoh), Patrick B. Jones (Mid-At-

lantic), Brian Magnus (Canada).

Education Commission

Laypersons: Donald Duff (Central), Bernard Hull (Michigan), Paul Lehman (Mid-Atlantic), J. Edward Roush (Central).

Ministers: Daryl Elliott (Mid-Atlantic), Pat Jones (Mid-Atlantic), Gary Dilley (Michindoh), Ray A. Seilhamer (Bishop), Robert Simmons (Arizona).

Still to be named: up to six persons appointed by the Commission.

Missions Commission

Chairperson: Brent Birdsall.

Laypersons: Eleanore Datama (Central), June Brown (Mid-Atlantic), Robert Eberly (Mid-Atlantic), Joan Sider (Canada), Vicki Snider (Canada).

Ministers: Brent Birdsall (Central), David Burkett (Michigan), Ray A. Seilhamer (Bishop).

Still to be named: one person from an overseas field, appointed by the General Board; one person from outside the denomination, appointed by the Commission; up to two persons appointed by the UB Church in Canada, in conformity with the Joint Ministry Agreement.

Church Services Commission

Ministers: Craig Burkholder (Michindoh), Dan Kopp (Central), Willy Ng (New York church planter), Ray A. Seilhamer (Bishop), Dirk Small (Mid-Atlantic), Roger Vezeau (Central).

Laypersons: Olinda Barnes (Michigan), Twyla Lee (Central).

Still to be named: up to six persons appointed by the Commission.

APPENDIX G

Resources

The following publications are available through the Department of Church Services. The costs are approximate.

Publications

Trials and Triumphs. A comprehensive history of the United Brethren denomination. Hardcover, 465 pages, 1984. Cost: \$15.

Theological Perspectives: Arminian-Wesleyan Reflections on Theology. A look at the theological doctrines which have characterized the UB church. Hardcover, 740 pages, 1992. Cost: \$30.

Alive Unto God. A membership training manual. Cost: \$4.

United Brethren Discipline. This book, updated every four years, is available in paperback and loose-leaf editions.

UB Booklet. This 65-page booklet gives a good overview of the United Brethren denomination. Cost: 60 cents each, with quantity discounts.

Other Materials

Certificates for the various types of membership (adult, youth, and watchcare), as well as for membership dismissals and transfers.

Certificates for baptisms and weddings.

Denominational Web Site

Go to www.ub.org to find news and much other information about the United Brethren church.

