

*Manual of*  
**DOCTRINE &  
GOVERNMENT**  
*of the Brethren in Christ Church*

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**2010 EDITION**

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**General Conference for the Brethren in Christ Church**

431 Grantham Road • PO Box A • Grantham PA 17027

717.697.2634 • [bic@bic-church.org](mailto:bic@bic-church.org)

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This 2010 edition was compiled by the General Secretary's office.

Due to legal requirements in Canada and the United States, this *Manual of Doctrine and Government* is the governing document for Brethren in Christ churches in the U.S. The corresponding Canadian document is the *Articles of Government*. See the *Canadian-U.S. Covenant Agreement* (pg. 99) for more information.

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<b>PREFACE</b>	1
<b>PART ONE: CONSTITUTION</b>	
Article I: <i>Name</i>	3
Article II: <i>Statement of Purpose</i>	3
Article III: <i>Membership</i>	3
Article IV: <i>Doctrine</i>	3
Article V: <i>Government</i>	4
Article VI: <i>Amendments</i>	4
<b>PART TWO: ARTICLES OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE</b>	
Introduction	7
Article I: <i>Revelation and Scripture</i>	8
Article II: <i>God and Creation</i>	9
Article III: <i>Humanity and Sin</i>	11
Article IV: <i>Jesus Christ and Salvation</i>	12
Article V: <i>The Holy Spirit and the Church</i>	15
Article VI: <i>Eternal Hope and Judgment</i>	18
Scripture References	19
<b>PART THREE: BYLAWS</b>	
<b>DIVISION ONE: GOVERNMENT AND PROPERTY</b>	
Article I: <i>General Conference</i>	23
Article II: <i>Regional Conferences</i>	27
Article III: <i>Congregations</i>	30
Article IV: <i>Real Estate, Property Control and Church Incorporation</i>	30
Article V: <i>General Church Offices</i>	36

## **DIVISION TWO: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

Article VI: <i>General Conference Board</i>	37
Article VII: <i>Leadership Council</i>	40
Article VIII: <i>General Church Administrators</i>	42
Article IX: <i>General Church Boards</i>	45
Article X: <i>Brethren in Christ Foundation, Inc.</i>	48
Article XI: <i>Board of Appeals</i>	51
Article XII: <i>Board for World Missions</i>	52
Article XIII: <i>General Church Institutions</i>	54

## **DIVISION THREE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRACTICE**

Article XIV: <i>Local Congregation</i>	56
Article XV: <i>Church Board</i>	58
Article XVI: <i>Pastoral Committee</i>	60
Article XVII: <i>Membership</i>	61
Article XVIII: <i>Christian Life and Practice</i>	63
Article XIX: <i>Worship and Congregational Life</i>	66

## **DIVISION FOUR: CHURCH OFFICIALS**

Article XX: <i>Ministers</i>	67
Article XXI: <i>Active Ministers</i>	69
Article XXII: <i>Ordained Ministers</i>	69
Article XXIII: <i>Licensed Ministers</i>	70
Article XXIV: <i>Commissioned Ministers</i>	72
Article XXV: <i>Pastors</i>	72
Article XXVI: <i>Pastoral Relationships</i>	74
Article XXVII: <i>Pastoral Staff Relationships</i>	75
Article XXVIII: <i>Evangelists</i>	77
Article XXIX: <i>Institutional Chaplains</i>	78
Article XXX: <i>Deacons</i>	79

## **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

General Conference Directory	81
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## **DENOMINATIONAL DOCUMENTS**

Certificates of Incorporation	88
Record of Regional Conference Incorporations	98
Canadian-U.S. Covenant Agreement	99

# PREFACE

Since the beginnings of our church family (about 1778), the Brethren in Christ have produced numerous statements on doctrine, a constitution, and bylaws. In the preparation and approval of each successive statement, the desire of the church has been to have our life and practice based on the Word of God.

This 2010 edition of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church* follows the revisions of previous editions and incorporates the bylaw changes approved by the 2010 meeting of the General Conference.

The Constitution presents the basic outline of our purpose, belief, structure, and function. The Articles of Faith and Doctrine express our doctrinal stance.

The Bylaws provide guidelines for our life together in the Church.

This *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church* is intended to promote spirituality, unity, and cooperation in our quest for piety and obedience. United in our common purpose, we seek to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church.

We shall continue to keep this manual relevant as we fulfill our purpose: “to foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God and to proclaim His gospel to all people.”

Changes to the bylaws in this edition include the addition of *Section 5: Commission on Ministry and Doctrine* to *Article VII: Leadership Council* and an amendment of *Article I, Section 1, B*.

Warren Hoffman  
*Moderator*

Don McNiven  
*General Secretary*



# PART ONE: CONSTITUTION

## **Article I: Name**

The name of the organization shall be the Brethren in Christ Church.

## **Article II: Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the Brethren in Christ Church is to foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God and to proclaim His gospel to all people.

## **Article III: Membership**

The membership shall consist of ordained, licensed, and lay members.

## **Article IV: Doctrine**

### **Section 1. Creed**

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Savior and Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell, the third day rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the everlasting life. Amen.

### **Section 2. Confession of Faith**

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and the final authority for faith and practice.

## **Part One: Constitution**

We believe that the Scriptures reveal the triune God whose person, nature, and character forever is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the source and foundation of all that is. God has established order and relationships within creation.

We believe that God created man and woman in His image. Because human beings chose to disobey God, their nature became sinful, resulting in alienation from God, from one another, from themselves, and from the rest of creation.

We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, came to earth to reveal the Father and to provide God's only plan of salvation for sinful humanity. New life in Christ is given to all who turn from evil through faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to make full surrender to the work of Christ and to walk in the fullness of the Spirit's power.

We believe that the Holy Spirit works in the world, intercedes for the believer, and is present in the life of the church, gifting persons for witness and service. The church is God's primary means for worship, fellowship, evangelism, and discipleship.

The final destiny of all things lies in God's hands. We believe that the return of Christ in power and glory is certain and may occur at any time. God will judge righteously at the close of the age. All created things will be brought to their proper order in the eternal Kingdom.

### **Article V: Government**

The ultimate authority of the organization in policy and doctrine shall be vested in a General Conference composed of representatives from the church.

The basic unit of local government shall be the congregation, with self-governing privileges in harmony with the authority of General Conference.

As a means to facilitate the accomplishment of its objective, the church shall be divided into regional conferences, through which congregations shall approach General Conference.

### **Article VI: Amendments**

#### **Section 1: Constitution**

No amendment or repeal can be made to the Constitution of the Brethren in Christ Church as adopted, except by the following procedure:

## *Manual of Doctrine and Government*

The petition to amend or repeal shall be presented to General Conference. In the event of General Conference approval by a two-thirds majority, the petition shall then be considered and acted upon by the congregational councils throughout the United States and Canada. If the petition is ratified by two-thirds of all the congregations, it shall then be presented to the next General Conference for confirmation.

### **Section 2. *Articles of Faith and Doctrine***

The Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church can be amended only by a two-thirds vote of General Conference.

### **Section 3. *Bylaws***

The Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ Church can be amended or repealed only by a two-thirds vote of General Conference.

By approval of a two-thirds vote of General Conference, the Bylaws may be suspended for one (1) biennium. This suspension may be continued by such votes of succeeding General Conferences.



# PART TWO: ARTICLES OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE

## **Introduction**

As Brethren in Christ, we trace our beginnings from a group known as the River Brethren, which originated about 1778 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Our forbearers bore witness to the beliefs that set them apart by formulating a Confession of Faith. The first confessional statement of about 1780 and others that followed reflect the Pietistic and Anabaptist influences that have shaped our doctrinal understandings. Some 100 years later the Brethren in Christ adopted aspects of Wesleyan thought, which were incorporated into subsequent doctrinal statements.

Through the years we have reaffirmed and redefined our essential beliefs. In the 20th century, new doctrinal statements were adopted by General Conferences in 1937 and again in 1961. In 1986 we decided to give written expression to our current beliefs and life. This was done with sensitivity to and respect for our doctrinal heritage. We regard each previous doctrinal statement of the church as having its own integrity.

In preparing the doctrinal statement we affirm an understanding of scriptural interpretation that recognizes (1) the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit; (2) the centrality of Christ in divine revelation; (3) the New Testament as interpreter of the Old Testament; (4) the scriptural focus on piety and obedience; and (5) the essential value of community consensus in the interpretive process. One must read the doctrinal statement as a whole, since each of the sections is closely related to the others. Moreover, this is a summary statement of our beliefs; the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church* together with other publications of the church explain more fully our understanding of biblical faith and the Christian life.

Following the doctrinal statement is a listing of selected Scripture references. Since the statement grows out of the totality of the biblical message, these references are only illustrative of the scriptural truths identified in each section. Study of these and other related Scripture passages is important for a clearer understanding of God and His will for humanity.

## **Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine**

Here then, in summary, is what we, the Brethren in Christ, believe about revelation and Scripture, God and creation, humanity and sin, Jesus Christ and salvation, the Holy Spirit and the church, eternal hope and judgment.

### **Article I: *Revelation and Scripture***

We believe that it is the nature of God to make Himself known. God reveals Himself to humanity in various ways, most clearly in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. We accept these divinely inspired writings as the authoritative Word of God.

#### **Revelation in nature, history, and the Son**

The world of nature and God's sustaining care of it speak of His existence and power. In addition, God has placed a sense of right and wrong in human hearts. This revelation through nature and conscience is partial and incomplete.

Therefore God has acted in history to reveal Himself to humanity. Through Abraham, God began to form a covenant community that would reveal God and His will to all humanity. Through His words, acts, and relationship with the people of Israel, God has made His person and purposes known in order to provide salvation to all who respond in faith and obedience.

In all of this, God was preparing for the time when He would reveal Himself preeminently through His Son, Jesus Christ—the “Word made flesh.”

#### **Scripture, the record of revelation**

The Christian Scriptures complete the revelation of God. They recount and interpret God's action in creation, in human events, in God's saving acts for Israel, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in the life of the New Testament church.

The Scriptures are God's message, written by people in their own language and settings, as inspired by the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit guided the processes of selection and transcription through which the Scriptures were passed on to us. Therefore the Bible is the authoritative and reliable Word of God.

We believe that the Bible, composed of the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books), is God's written Word. The Old Testament is the record of God's saving acts for Israel and of His redemptive purpose for all people. It contains numerous prophecies, many of which are fulfilled in the New Testament. The New Testament clearly reveals God in the person and work of Jesus Christ, whom God sent to be the Savior of the world and to establish His church.

The Old Testament prepares the way for the New, while the New Testament fulfills and clarifies the Old. They complement each other in a unified message.

## **Scripture and the Church**

We believe that the Bible is God's message of salvation for all people. As believers, we accept the Bible as the final authority for faith and practice.

The Holy Spirit continues to work in the church today in teaching us how to understand, interpret, and apply the Scriptures through faith and diligent study. As believers open the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit helps them to discern God's truth and will from the Word. As the church gathers around the Word, the Holy Spirit leads God's people into all truth.

The Scriptures themselves are the primary standard for understanding and interpreting the Bible. The person, teaching, and work of Jesus Christ best clarify God's written revelation.

Christians are called to read and obey the Bible. Therefore the church needs to provide faithful preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. Individuals and families should practice Bible reading and study. As we read and respond obediently to the counsel of God's Word, our statements of belief have integrity.

## **Article II: God and Creation**

The Bible opens with the words, "In the beginning God created. . . ." This dramatic statement declares God to be the eternal source and foundation of all that is. The Bible proceeds to reveal the person, nature, and character of the triune God who forever is—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Nature of God**

We believe in one sovereign, true, and living God, creator and preserver of all things. God knows all things, is all-powerful, and transcends time and space. God is a personal being, revealing His righteousness, truth, and grace to all people. He calls everyone to respond to Him in reverence and obedience. God is perfect, just, and good. God is holy, calling us to righteousness. God is love, bridging the distance between Himself and us, reaching out in redemption to draw us to Himself.

God's self-disclosure has been progressive. Even though God transcends human perception and language, He has revealed Himself in Scripture, entered human history in the person of Jesus Christ, and comes to live in us by the Holy Spirit. As God opens our

## **Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine**

understanding by the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit, we gain knowledge of Him. Thus, as believers, we bow before Him in worship.

### **Creation and providence**

God created all things, visible and invisible, including all spiritual beings. All creation is finite and dependent upon the Creator, who was before all things and will continue forever.

God's work of creation was good, both physically and morally. God blessed creation with His loving-kindness. Although God upholds and governs creation by the power of His will, God has given humanity the role of caretaker of the earth. Therefore we are responsible for its cultivation and preservation, and our use of its resources.

Creation was marred as a result of human disobedience. However, evidence of creation's original order remains, and the earth now awaits restoration in God's redemptive plan.

### **Relationships in creation**

God established order and relationships within His creation, uniting it in all its parts. God created and sustains all things, yet remains distinct from what is created. God does not depend on the creation for His being.

A moral order exists in the universe. The human conscience senses this order, which is more fully revealed in the Scriptures. The moral principles set forth in the Scriptures provide direction for our conduct and relationships.

The Creator has built a cycle of work and rest into the creation, one day in seven being designated by God for worship and renewal. By observing Sunday as the Lord's Day, we honor this divinely-ordained cycle, testify of our trust in God's provision, and witness to the Lord's resurrection.

Made in God's image, each human being is of infinite value and is to be cared for and nurtured. We should relate to others in love and justice—opposing that which destroys, oppresses, demeans, or manipulates, and fostering that which restores, upbuilds, and affirms. God's plan for the human family calls for wholesome, growing relationships among all persons; it forbids abusive and destructive behavior.

God gave human sexuality a good place in creation. Being either male or female is integral to who we are and in a complementary way provides for the full expression of our humanity. God has given standards for expression of our sexuality that are necessary for proper relationships among people. Human sexuality is affirmed within the chaste single life or a lifelong marriage between a man and a woman.

## **Article III: Humanity and Sin**

God created man and woman in His image. Humans are distinct from all other forms of creation, having spiritual as well as physical characteristics. Physically, each person has a body made from the elements of earth—a body that grows, matures, and eventually returns to the earth in death. People also reflect certain moral and spiritual aspects of God’s nature—intelligence, creativity, moral discernment, spiritual awareness, and freedom of choice. As spiritual beings, humans are created to be in fellowship with God. We cannot find peace apart from a right relationship with God.

### **Freedom of choice**

The image of God in each person includes the capacity to make moral choices. We can choose good or evil, to obey or disobey God. The freedom to choose makes us responsible for our decisions and liable for their consequences.

We understand from Scripture that while God grants humanity this freedom of choice, God also knows the end from the beginning and in His wisdom and grace is working out His eternal purposes within human history.

### **Source of sin**

Man and woman were created sinless and innocent, living in harmony with God and creation. But evil entered the human family when Adam and Eve yielded to Satan’s temptation. As they chose to disobey God, their nature became sinful. This sinful nature has been transmitted to all their descendants. Thus sin, moral depravity, and death became an inherent part of the human experience.

Satan, also called the devil, is the personal embodiment of evil and the original source of sin. His evil rule constantly rebels against the authority of God. We live in the arena of the resulting conflict, and must choose between the rule of Satan and the reign of God.

### **Effects of sin**

Corrupted by a sinful nature, humans are unholy, self-centered, self-willed, and rebellious toward God. In character and conduct, all humanity stands guilty before God. On our own, we cannot achieve any righteousness acceptable to God. Humanity’s inclination toward evil is universal, and the accompanying guilt or shame is common to all people.

Through the fallen human family, sin permeates the social order, alienating persons from God, from one another, from themselves, and from the rest of creation. Sinful-

## **Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine**

ness is evident in the breakdown of human relationships and family structures, in social and economic systems that violate God's order and ignore human dignity, in philosophical systems that deny God and deify humans, and in religious systems that distort truth and create illusions of reality.

In a world system permeated by satanic influence, sin is spread by human wickedness and the powers of evil. At the personal level, sin arises from the inner inclination toward disobedience and rebellion.

### **Personal Accountability**

Creation shows God's glory and nature to all people; therefore, all are responsible to honor and glorify Him. While sin permeates the social order, accountability for sin remains personal. Each of us is accountable to God based on his or her personal ability to know and to choose good from evil. We believe that persons developmentally unable to discern right from wrong are accepted by God through His mercy, covered by the atonement of Christ.

With the fall of the human race into sin, the image of God in humanity was seriously flawed, but not totally destroyed. In spite of a bent toward evil, aspects of God's likeness remain in humankind, glimpsed in such characteristics as creativity, generosity, and compassion. Nevertheless, it is only by God's grace that people can respond to God's gift of salvation.

### **Article IV: *Jesus Christ and Salvation***

God's plan of salvation for sinful humanity is central to God's eternal purpose and is fully revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, chosen by God before creation to be the Savior. We affirm that Jesus Christ is truly divine and truly human.

#### **Life and ministry of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ, God the Son, is a distinct person of the Trinity, in perfect equality and unity with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is eternally existent and is fully God. He created all things and is the source and sustainer of life.

In the fullness of time God the Son took on human likeness, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. He was God incarnate—God in the flesh—and lived on earth as a man, fully human, yet without sin. He grew physically and mentally, and experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue, rejection, and the range of human emotions. He was tempted in every way, but remained sinless. He was perfectly obedient and submis-

sive to the Father. He took on the role of a servant and responded in compassion to those in need. Jesus modeled perfect humanity and called people to follow Him.

The divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth was shown clearly during His life on earth. At infancy He was announced as Immanuel, God with us. At His baptism He was acknowledged to be God's Son. His ministry was marked by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. He taught with divine authority and commissioned His disciples to proclaim His gospel. He said that anyone who had seen Him had seen the Father. He was the Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Jesus came to earth as the promised Messiah revealed in the Scriptures. He inaugurated the Kingdom of God and demonstrated its presence by healing the sick and casting out demons. His miracles were signs of God's Kingdom. In His teaching, Jesus set God's rule over against the kingdoms of this world. He called those who followed Him into the church, the new covenant community based on the values of the Kingdom of God. He came to destroy the works of the devil and to redeem the human family from sin.

## **Death and resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Christ's work of redemption was accomplished in His death and resurrection. God purposed in Christ to redeem us from the guilt and power of sin and to free us from the rule of Satan, so that all who believe would be restored to divine favor and fellowship.

By His suffering and sacrificial death for us, Jesus Christ provided complete atonement for sin. His death and resurrection opened the only way for reconciliation between a holy, just God and sinful humanity. His life-blood freely given on the cross provided pardon and ratified the New Covenant.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus testifies decisively of His deity and His victory over Satan, sin, and death. The risen Christ ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for us.

Jesus Christ is now our risen, exalted, and reigning Lord. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. He is the Head of the church and the Lord of human history. At the end of time, all things in heaven and on earth will be brought under His rule. Every person will bow before Him and He will reign forever. With joy we confess that Jesus is Lord and acknowledge His authority in our lives. We honor Him with our worship and obedience.

## **Coming to faith**

The salvation graciously provided by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes effective in our lives by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who

## **Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine**

prepares us for faith in Jesus Christ. He awakens us to our need, enables us to acknowledge our guilt, and calls us to respond to God in faith and obedience.

The response of faith is a personal reliance on God's grace and a turning from sin to righteousness. Repentance involves an acknowledgement of sin. It is expressed in genuine sorrow, forsaking sin, and a change in attitude toward God, preparing for the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Repentance includes a willingness for reconciliation and restitution.

### **New life in Christ**

All who come to faith in Christ are born again, receive the Holy Spirit, and become children of God. They are acquitted of all guilt for sin, are granted the righteousness of Christ, and are reconciled to God. Persons thus justified by grace through faith enjoy peace with God, are adopted into God's family, become part of the church, and receive the assurance of eternal life. We become new creatures in Christ, regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This change of heart becomes evident in the development of Christlike character and a walk of obedience to God. Conversion is expressed in a changed life with new direction, purposes, interests, and values.

The new life in Christ is developed through Christian spiritual disciplines such as prayer, study of Scripture, fasting, self-denial, stewardship, and fellowship. While these strengthen the Christian, they do not make the believer immune from temptation. Persistent disobedience impairs fellowship with God and can destroy one's new life in Christ. When there is sin in the Christian's life, it needs to be confessed and forsaken in the confidence of God's willingness to pardon and His power to cleanse from evil.

### **Life in the Spirit**

We believe that God's grace provides for more than forgiveness of sin. As the Spirit works in the life of the believer, he or she is led forward in sanctification to a full surrender and commitment of the motives and will to Christ. This results in freedom from the control of sin and in empowerment to live the holy life. The Holy Spirit fills persons yielded to God and equips them for effective witness and service.

Sanctification is also an ongoing journey of yielding to God and growing in grace. The quality of the surrendered life corresponds to the believer's responsiveness to the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God. The Spirit-filled life results in a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, inner strength in times of temptation, godly living and wholehearted service to the Lord. The Holy Spirit produces virtuous character—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These virtues characterize the believer's walk in the Spirit.

## **Hope of life everlasting**

The salvation provided by our Lord Jesus Christ will be consummated for the believer in the joy of heaven and the full realization of the Kingdom of God. In our glorified bodies we will be free from all the effects of sin. Restored in the likeness of Christ, we will worship God and reign with Christ throughout eternity.

## **Article V: *The Holy Spirit and the Church***

The Holy Spirit is a divine person who eternally coexists with the Father and the Son. The Spirit was present and active in creation, is seen throughout the Old Testament, and is revealed more explicitly in the New Testament. Life in the Spirit was reflected most clearly in the earthly life of Jesus. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came from God to continue the work of the ascended Christ, as Jesus had promised His followers.

### **Work of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit works in the world, convincing persons of sin and bringing them to repentance and faith, guiding them to fullness of life in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the Counselor who is always present with God's people and reminds us of all that Jesus said and did. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who guides the believer, and serves as the guarantee of the eternal inheritance promised in Christ.

The Holy Spirit intercedes for the believers in agreement with God's will. He helps the children of God in their need, cleanses and sets them apart for holy living, and empowers them for service.

The Holy Spirit is also present in the corporate life of the church, inspiring unity, worship, and service. His presence is realized as the church is open and responsive to the Spirit's leadership.

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all believers according to His sovereign will and purposes. Scripture identifies a variety of gifts, given for the building up of the church and for ministry in the world. The Holy Spirit guides the church in setting apart persons for leadership. The church is responsible to discern and encourage the use of the gifts of the Spirit in its life and ministry.

### **Nature of the Church**

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ established the church to be God's new community, which has its roots in the people of God in the Old Testament and testifies to the

## **Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine**

presence of the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, the redeemed community. His Word and will are authoritative among us.

The church consists of all those who trust Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord. We become part of God's family, loving the Lord Jesus and learning to love and care for one another. We are a covenant community vowing before God and fellow members to live a holy life, to remain loyal to the church, and to foster oneness within the body of Christ. Our understanding of this covenant is expressed in a commitment to the local congregation, where the integrity of our discipleship is lived; to the denomination, where relationships with a wider fellowship of God's people are realized; and to the body of Christ throughout the world, by which we fulfill the prayer of Jesus that we all may be one.

The essential functions of the church are worship, fellowship, discipleship, and mission. In worship, we bring our wholehearted devotion to the Lord God. In fellowship, we live out our deep commitment to love one another. In discipleship, we follow the call of the Lord Jesus to obey and to teach all things commanded by Him. In mission, we proclaim the gospel to all people and minister to human need as Jesus did.

As a covenant community we practice mutual accountability among our members. We accept the steps outlined by Jesus: first, going privately to the one who sins against us; then, if necessary, returning with one (1) or more witnesses; and finally, if needed, involving the congregation. When the church deals with sin, we seek to respond with compassion and concern. The objective of church discipline is to restore the erring church member and to maintain the integrity and purity of the church's fellowship and witness.

### **Life of the Church: ordinances and practices**

The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are to be observed in obedience to our Lord's command.

The baptism of believers is a public witness that they have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and are becoming part of the community of faith. We believe that baptism by immersion symbolizes the believer's submission to Jesus Christ and identification with His death and resurrection. We expect baptized believers to commit themselves to the membership covenant, thereby affirming their loyalty to the church.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus and is celebrated by His followers in remembrance of the Lord's death and resurrection and in anticipation of His return. The bread and the cup represent the body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Participating in the communion service symbolizes our unity with believers of all times and places. We are to examine ourselves in the light of Scripture before approaching the Lord's Table. Reconciliation with God and with brothers and sisters in Christ is an essential preparation for participation.

In addition to the ordinances, other practices are important aspects of life and worship in the Christian community.

We regard the practice of washing one another's feet as modeled and taught by Jesus to be a demonstration of love, humility, and service to one another, pointing beyond itself to a way of life. In the life of the church, the foot washing service is an occasion for reconciliation, affirmation of one another, and testimony of God's grace.

The Christian marriage ceremony witnesses to God's order and design for the union of a man and a woman in a lifelong commitment of love and fidelity. Vows are affirmed and the marriage is celebrated in the context of the congregation, which is called to support the couple in their life together. Christ's covenantal, self-sacrificing love for the church and the church's loving response is the model that husband and wife are to follow.

The practice of dedicating children affirms their place in the midst of the congregation. The service of dedication provides an opportunity for parents to commit themselves to the Lord in the care and training of their children. Members of the congregation join with the parents in pledging to pray for and to nurture the children.

The gospel includes healing for the ill and deliverance for the oppressed. The church follows scriptural practices in praying for the sick, laying on hands, and anointing with oil in the name of the Lord. The service of divine healing affirms that God responds to the brokenness of the human condition with healing or with grace to endure suffering.

When death comes to the community of believers, the funeral provides an opportunity to focus on the risen Lord. The congregation responds compassionately with the bereaved. Death reminds us of our mortality and the hope of the resurrection.

## **Mission of the Church: in relation to the world**

Jesus Christ commissions the church to make disciples of all the world's peoples. The church is called to share the gospel in every culture and stratum of society. Evangelism includes bringing people to a saving faith in Christ and to responsible membership in the church. The people of God are also called to be a redemptive influence in the world, confronting corporate sin and seeking to overcome evil with good. They are to be a voice for righteousness, peace, and justice.

The church recognizes the place God ordains for government in society. As Christians, we pray for the state and those who are in authority. At the same time, we believe loyalty to Christ and the church, which is transnational, takes precedence over loyalty to the state. Selective involvements in the affairs of government are appropriate for believers if loyalty to Christ and the principles of His Kingdom are carefully guarded, and if such participation will enhance one's Christian witness and service.

## **Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine**

Christ loved His enemies and He calls us as His disciples to love our enemies. We follow our Lord in being a people of peace and reconciliation, called to suffer and not to fight. While respecting those who hold other interpretations, we believe that preparation for or participation in war is inconsistent with the teachings of Christ. Similarly, we reject all other acts of violence which devalue human life. Rather, we affirm active peacemaking, sacrificial service to others, as well as the pursuit of justice for the poor and the oppressed in the name of Christ.

Those who follow Christ are strangers and pilgrims in the world, called to share the light of Christ. In the renewing of our minds by God's grace, we resist conformity to our fallen, broken world. Nonconformity calls us to reject the world's unrestrained materialism, its sensualism, and its self-centeredness. Rather we seek to express the values of God's Kingdom by a lifestyle of modesty and simplicity.

### **Article VI: *Eternal Hope and Judgment***

The final destiny of all things lies in God's hands. In God's time, creation will be renewed in Christ. The kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord, and He shall reign forever.

#### **End of the age and return of Christ**

The return of Christ in power and glory is certain and may occur at any time. We accept the Lord's teaching that no one knows when He will come. We understand Scripture to teach that the conflict between God and Satan, good and evil, will intensify as we approach the end of this age. At Christ's return, the enemies of God will be conquered and the reign of God will be established forever.

The promise of our Lord that we shall live eternally in His presence brings great encouragement to the people of God. Our response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, and diligence.

#### **Death, judgment, and the consummation of all things**

Death in the Christian community is a time of both sorrow and hope. Human ties that are broken bring grief, but our belief in Christ's second coming is an affirmation of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

We believe that following death, the believer's spirit is present with the Lord. Scripture promises the bodily resurrection of the dead, both believers and unbelievers. Those who die in Christ, along with the faithful believers alive at His return, will rise and

will receive a new, glorified body, which will be free from infirmity and death. The lost, however, await a resurrection unto condemnation.

God will judge righteously at the close of the age. Those who have trusted Him and obediently followed Jesus as Lord will not be condemned. God will reward them according to their faithfulness. The unsaved, however, will be punished with everlasting destruction in hell, eternally shut out from the presence of God because they have rejected His offer of salvation.

The people of God anticipate God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth under the rule of Christ. Evil will be destroyed and ultimately Christ will deliver all things to the Father.

## **Exhortation to faithfulness**

Hear the Word of the Lord: "What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." Jesus' last recorded words, "Yes, I am coming soon," cause us to live in joyful anticipation. Because of this hope, we persevere and spread the good news of Christ, knowing that when the gospel of the Kingdom has been preached to all nations, the end will come. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

## **Scripture References**

### **Article I: Revelation And Scripture**

John 1:1–2, 18; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1–2; 11:6

#### **Revelation in nature, history, and the Son**

Genesis 1:1–2:2; 12:1–3; Deuteronomy 7:17–8:2; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 46:9; Matthew 1:23; John 1:3–5, 14; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 11:3

#### **Scripture, the record of revelation**

Isaiah 55:10–11; Jeremiah 36:1–3; John 5:39; Romans 15:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1–2

#### **Scripture and the Church**

John 14:23–24; 16:13–15; Acts 2:41–42; 2 Timothy 2:1–2; James 1:22–25

### **Article II: God and Creation**

Genesis 1–2; Psalm 24:1–2; Hebrews 11:3

#### **Nature of God**

Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:3–4; 33:27; Psalm 45:6; 48:14; 100:5; Daniel 6:26–27; Matthew 3:16–17; John 14:16–17, 26; Acts 14:15–17; 1 Corinthians 2:11–16; Ephesians 2:8–10; 1 Timothy 1:17; James 1:17; Revelation 16:7

## Part Two: Articles of Faith and Doctrine

### **Creation and providence**

Genesis 1–3; 1 Chronicles 29:11–12; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 26:7–11; Psalm 19; 102:25; Romans 5:12–19; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 19:6

### **Relationships in creation**

Genesis 1–2; Exodus 20:1–17; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 16:20; Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 58:13–14; Micah 6:8; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 12:8; 19:1–12; 25:40; Mark 2:27; Romans 2:13–15; 14:5–6; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 18–20; 13; Ephesians 4:29–5:2; 5:21–6:4; Colossians 1:16–17; 1 John 3:14

## **Article III: Humanity and Sin**

Genesis 1:26–28; 2:7–9, 15–20; 9:1–6; Psalm 8:3–8; 90:1–6; 139:13–16; Ecclesiastes 12:1–7; Acts 17:26–28

### **Freedom of choice**

Genesis 2:16–17; Deuteronomy 30:15–20; Matthew 7:13–14, John 1:11–12; Romans 12:1–2; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17

### **Source of sin**

Genesis 3:1–19; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 14:12–15; John 8:44; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1–3; 6:10–12

### **Effects of sin**

Psalm 53:1–3; Isaiah 59:1–8; 64:6–7; Romans 1:18–32; 3:9–20, 23; 5:12; 6:23

### **Personal accountability**

Genesis 1:27–30; 2:7–9, 16–17; 3:1–19; Leviticus 4:27–35; Ezekiel 18; Mark 10:13–16; Romans 1:18–20; 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 2:8–9

## **Article IV: Jesus Christ and Salvation**

Ephesians 1:3–14; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 1:1–3; 1 Peter 1:3–5

### **Life and ministry of Jesus Christ**

Matthew 1:20–23; 3:13–17; 6:33; 7:28–29, 9:35–36; 12:25–28; 26:26–29; 28:18–20; Mark 1:14–15; 14:61–62; Luke 1:26–2:33, 52; 4:1–21; 22:44; John 1:1–14; 3:16; 13:1–17; 14:8–11; Galatians 4:4–5; Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:15–20; Hebrews 4:14–15

### **Death and resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Psalm 22:1–18; Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Matthew 27:27–28:20; John 3:16–17; Acts 1:9–11; Romans 5:1–11; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:9–10; Philippians 2:9–11; Colossians 1:21–22; Hebrews 1:3; 7:24–25; 9:11–28; 12:2; Revelation 11:15

### **Coming to faith**

Luke 3:7–9; 5:31–32; 18:9–14; 19:8–9; John 16:5–15

### **New life in Christ**

John 3:1–17; Acts 2:41–47; Romans 5:1–11; 8:14–17; 10:9–10, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 4:6–7; Ephesians 2:1–10; Colossians 1:22–23; Hebrews 3:14; 1 Peter 1:3–5; 1 John 2:24–25

### **Life in the Spirit**

Luke 11:11–13; John 20:21–22; Acts 1:8; Romans 6:1–14; 8:1–17; 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 5:16–25; Ephesians 1:13–14; 3:14–21; 1 John 1:9

**Hope of life everlasting**

Matthew 24:13; John 14:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:35–58; 2 Corinthians 5:1–10; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Revelation 5:9–10; 21:1–4

**Article V: The Holy Spirit and the Church**

Genesis 1:2; John 3:34; 14:16–17, 15:26; Acts 2; 10:38; Hebrews 9:14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 3:24

**Work of the Holy Spirit**

John 14:26; 16:7–15; Acts 1:8; 13:2–4; Romans 8:26; 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:1–12; 2 Corinthians 6:16–7:1; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:3–12; 5:18; 1 Peter 4:10–11; Revelation 2–3

**Nature of the Church**

Matthew 5:13–16; 18:15–35; 20:26–28; 28:20; John 1:12–13; Acts 2:41–47; 15; Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 2:5–11; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 2:19, 22; Philippians 2:2–16; Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 John 3:16–19

**Life of the Church: ordinances and practices**

Matthew 28:16–17; 28:19–20; Mark 10:1–12; 16:16; Luke 2:22; John 13:1–17; Acts 2:38–39; Romans 6:3–6; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:1–16; 23–34; 15; 2 Corinthians 5:1–8; Ephesians 5:21–33; 1 Timothy 5:10; James 5:13–18; 1 Peter 3:21

**Mission of the Church: in relation to the world**

Proverbs 29:7; 31:9; Daniel 6:1–3, 10; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:13–14, 44; 26:52; 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; John 18:36; Acts 4:18–21; 5:29; Romans 1:14–15; 12:2; 13:1–4; 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31; 2 Corinthians 5:16–20; 1 Peter 2:9–17, 21–23; 1 John 2:15–17

**Article VI: Eternal Hope and Judgment**

Psalms 110:1; Ephesians 1:20–23; Colossians 1:19–20; Revelation 11:15

**End of the age and return of Christ**

Matthew 24:36–51; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Thessalonians 2; 2 Peter 3:11–18; Revelation 19

**Death, judgment, and consummation of all things**

Psalms 92:7; John 3:18; 5:25–29; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 15:27–28; 2 Thessalonians 1:5–9; Revelation 20:10, 14; 21:22–27; 22:3

**Exhortation to faithfulness**

Matthew 24:14; 2 Peter 3:11–12; Revelation 22:20



# PART THREE: BYLAWS

## DIVISION ONE: GOVERNMENT AND PROPERTY

### **Article I: *General Conference***

#### **Section 1. *Function and meetings***

- A. The General Conference is a representative body through which the denomination acts to carry out its objectives. Supervisory, legislative, and policy-making powers are vested in the General Conference.
- B. There will be a biennial meeting of the General Conference, which will convene in the month of July.
- C. Conference will meet in three (3) respective areas of the church; namely, east of the Mississippi River, west of the Mississippi River, and Canada, rotating on the following order: Canada, east of the Mississippi, west of the Mississippi, east of the Mississippi, Canada, etc., so that it meets east of the Mississippi every other time.
- D. The General Conference Board will have the responsibility for recommending the location of General Conference within the designated areas.
- E. General Conference will seek to foster the unity of the church and the “family” emphasis of the denomination through appropriate means. To expedite conference business, there will be a voting membership.

#### **Section 2. *Membership***

- A. Voting membership of General Conference will consist of:
  - 1. Elected delegates.
  - 2. Active ministers.

## Part Three: Bylaws » Division One: Government and Property

3. Members of general boards, including their executive directors and directors/administrators.
  4. General Conference Institutions and Agencies and those that are covenantally related may have their chief executive officer or appointee as a member of General Conference.
  5. One (1) deacon or church board member from each congregation.
  6. Regional conference secretaries.
  7. General Conference clerical staff.
  8. Persons who have given a minimum of twenty (20) years of service in the church and are retired as active ministers.
- B. Any other person holding membership in the Brethren in Christ Church may address General Conference in session after stating in writing his or her purpose and receiving permission from the moderator and general secretary.

### Section 3. *General Conference officers*

#### A. **Personnel**

The General Conference officers are the moderator, assistant moderator, general secretary, and treasurer.

#### B. **Election**

The moderator and general secretary will be selected as indicated in Article VIII. The treasurer will be confirmed through the nominating committee process.

#### C. **Accountability**

The moderator will be accountable to the General Conference Board through its chair. The general secretary and treasurer are accountable by way of the moderator.

#### D. **Duties**

The officers will serve the General Conference consonant with their duties as church leaders.

#### E. **Assistant moderator**

1. The assistant moderator will be chosen from the regional bishops. The election by the General Conference will precede the biennium in which the person will serve as assistant moderator. The assistant moderator will be elected by the majority method, and will not be eligible to be the assistant moderator again for two (2) conferences.
2. A duty of the assistant moderator is to assist in the chair of General Conference.

3. In the event of a vacancy in the office of assistant moderator during the biennium, the General Conference Board will appoint another regional bishop.

#### **Section 4. *Delegates***

Assigned pastors will automatically serve as delegates. In addition, each congregation is entitled to one (1) delegate for each 100 members or fraction thereof. Congregations are encouraged to elect delegates from their church boards. Delegates shall be members of the Brethren in Christ Church.

#### **Section 5. *Registration***

The general secretary will make necessary provision for registration of all qualified members in attendance at General Conference. To be a voting member requires registration and attendance at all sessions. Except for emergency reasons, no members of General Conference are to be excused before the close of General Conference.

#### **Section 6. *Nominating committee***

- A. The members of the General Conference Board will serve as the Nominating Committee of General Conference. The chair of the General Conference Board will serve as the chair of the Nominating Committee. The general secretary is responsible for the recording of the minutes. The general secretary, in cooperation with appropriate boards and administrators, will expedite the work of personnel recruitment following the work of the Nominating Committee.
- B. Duties of the Nominating Committee will be:
  1. To present to the General Conference nominations to supply vacancies created by the expiration of terms, by resignations, death, or other causes, on General Church boards and commissions.
  2. To inform the regional conferences and the congregations of the potential input these groups may give to the nominating process, and to publicize in advance the date of meeting of the Nominating Committee.
  3. To discern the qualifications and gifts of the Spirit in persons under consideration for board or commission membership.
  4. To be sensitive to maintaining balance on denominational boards through giving attention to such various factors as gifts, representation, age, gender, race, region, and vocation.

## Part Three: Bylaws » Division One: Government and Property

5. To receive resignations and to recognize other vacancies, and to make interim appointments for such unexpired terms until the next General Conference convenes.

### Section 7. *Installations*

- A. An installation service will be conducted at the beginning of each term of the General Church leaders. The current chair of the General Conference Board will preside.
- B. Following the confirmation by the General Conference Board and the regional conferences, an installation service will be held for the bishops elected. The moderator will preside.
- C. Following the approval of the Nominating Committee's report, a consecration will be held for all newly appointed board and commission members, which will be conducted by the moderator.

### Section 8. *Agenda*

- A. Reports of committees, general questions, and materials directed to the General Conference will be sent to the general secretary in ample time for the agenda of the biennial General Conference. Materials will be tabulated, reproduced, and distributed to officials and delegates not later than four (4) weeks preceding the convening of General Conference.
- B. Materials received too late to be included in the General Conference agenda require special consent of General Conference to be presented.

### Section 9. *Program committee*

#### A. **Personnel**

The Program Committee will be composed of the Leadership Council. Additional task forces may be named for functional purposes.

#### B. **Duties**

1. To supervise and/or plan for all General Conference programming other than the business sessions of General Conference.
2. To maintain a balance in program planning from biennium to biennium.
3. To select the persons who will provide sermons and other services.

4. To plan for the Sunday morning worship period, when applicable.
5. To coordinate with the general secretary the allocation of time to the various agencies of the church to present their general and financial reports for the biennium, promotional emphases, and recommendations to General Conference.
6. To keep under review the programming of General Conference and related events and to alter the pattern through recommendation to the General Conference Board.
7. To receive and review promotional programs as planned by the church agencies.

## **Article II: *Regional Conferences***

### **Section 1. *Conference areas***

The number of regional conference areas and their boundaries will be established by the General Conference upon recommendation by the General Conference Board.

### **Section 2. *The annual meeting of regional conference***

- A. An annual meeting of the regional conference will be convened for the purpose of conducting business necessary to the functioning of the conference. It will function within the framework and policy of the General Conference. It will also be the medium through which congregations will approach the General Conference.
- B. The Board of Directors will recommend the time and place of the annual meeting to the regional conference.
- C. The bishop will give a report to the annual meeting.
- D. The annual meeting will receive reports, conduct such business as is necessary to promote the interests of the regional conference, and provide for inspirational and promotional periods as deemed advisable.

### **Section 3. *Incorporation***

Regional conferences will incorporate in order to execute the work within the conference. The charter will be written so as to be subsidiary to the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. Said charter must then be approved by the General Conference Board.

### **Section 4. *Membership***

The voting membership of meetings of the regional conference will consist of at least the bishop, pastors, ordained and licensed ministers, active deacons, duly elected delegates, the clerical staff, and members of boards, committees and commissions serving either General Conference or the regional conference.

### **Section 5. *Delegate system***

Each regional conference will implement a delegate system for the annual meeting.

### **Section 6. *Regional conference officers***

- A. Meetings of the regional conference will be presided over by the bishop and one (1) elected assistant moderator.
- B. Other officers may be chosen as deemed advisable.

### **Section 7. *Organization***

- A. The moderator and the secretary will appoint the clerical staff.
- B. The secretary-treasurer, or the secretary and the treasurer, will be chosen by a method and for a term of office as determined by the regional conference.
- C. The assistant moderator may not serve a second consecutive term.

### **Section 8. *Boards and committees***

Each regional conference will provide boards and committees as deemed necessary for the development of the conference. Where there are corresponding General Conference boards within a region, members of the General Conference board will serve as ex officio members on their regional conference boards.

### **Section 9. *Directors***

The regional conference Board of Directors will be composed of the bishop, assistant moderator, secretary and treasurer of the regional conference, the regional conference member to the General Conference Board, and no less than three (3) others chosen by the regional conference. They will serve as the Board of Directors of the regional conference corporation. The bishop and secretary of the regional conference will serve as chair and secretary of the Board of Directors. Regional conference

## ***Manual of Doctrine and Government***

property and proceeds from the sale of church property will be held in trust by or by order of this board.

The duties of the Board of Directors will be:

- A. The Board of Directors will function in legal matters on behalf of the regional conference and will have custody of the corporation seal, with authorization for its proper use.
- B. The Board of Directors will hold in trust, or by its order, the proceeds from the sale of local church property.
- C. When congregations have disbanded or church property is no longer in use, the Board of Directors will appoint trustees for the care of, or for the conveyance of title of such property, with the approval of the Board of Directors. These trustees are to be confirmed by the regional conference.
- D. The regional Board of Directors will serve in an advisory capacity to the bishop.
- E. The Board of Directors will serve as or provide for the program committee for the annual meeting.

### ***Section 10. Nominating committee***

The Nominating Committee will be composed of the bishop, the assistant moderator, the regional conference secretary, and at least five (5) other persons.

### ***Section 11. Relation of bishop to boards and committees***

The bishop will be considered an ex officio member of all regional conference boards and committees. With the exception of the regional conference Board of Directors and the nominating committee, the bishop will not be eligible for executive office on regional conference boards and standing committees. The bishop will keep open the regular channels of communication with regional conference boards.

### ***Section 12. Relation of regional conference to General Conference Board***

Each regional conference will elect one (1) person for membership on the General Conference Board.

### **Section 13. *Finance***

Each regional conference will provide stewardship structures and programs that encourage stewardship in support of congregational and cooperative ministries.

## **Article III: *Congregations***

### **Section 1. *Definition***

A congregation represents a self-governing unit, functioning with the oversight of the bishop and under the direction of the pastor and church board and with such other organizations and agencies as will promote an effective congregational program.

### **Section 2. *New congregations***

A church will be recognized as a new congregation when it has been officially launched or adopted. The initial organization of a congregation will be the responsibility of the bishop assigned to the regional conference.

### **Section 3. *Membership***

The membership will consist of all who have met the membership requirements of the Brethren in Christ Church as described in Article XVII.

### **Section 4. *Government***

A minimum of one (1) annual business meeting will be conducted. All actions will be in harmony with the rulings of General Conference. Access to General Conference will be through the annual meeting of the regional conference.

### **Section 5. *Charters***

The charters of congregations which incorporate will be approved by the regional conference Board of Directors.

## **Article IV: Real Estate, Property Control and Church Incorporation**

### **Section 1. Ownership and control of property**

All church property within the borders of the United States of America shall be subject to the control and direction of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church, Inc. (herein referred to as “General Conference”). Such control shall be manifested by the provisions contained in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*. Title to such property shall be taken in accordance with the provisions of this Article IV.

### **Section 2. Classification**

The term “all church property” shall be defined to include, and the classifications of church property shall generally be, as follows:

- A. Local church property—property used by congregations for worship and related religious purposes or titled in the name of a congregation or its trustees
- B. Regional conference property—property used and administered by the regional conference or titled in its name
- C. General church property—property held in the name of or in connection with the work of the church-at-large and administered, directly or indirectly, by the church-at-large
- D. World mission church property—General Church property located in countries other than the United States of America but not owned by autonomous incorporated Brethren in Christ entities and which is administered by the Board for World Missions

### **Section 3. Trustees**

- A. All real estate belonging to the church or any of its institutions or agencies shall be held in trust by not less than three (3) persons known as trustees as hereinafter provided, unless the entity which owns the real estate is incorporated.
- B. Trustees for local church property must be members of the Brethren in Christ Church and at least eighteen (18) years of age. Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the Brethren in Christ Church or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion.

## **Part Three: Bylaws » Division One: Government and Property**

- C. Trustees for local church property shall be elected by the congregation for a three-year term, and are eligible for three successive terms. They shall be accountable to the congregation by way of the church board. They shall be confirmed by the regional conference. If the congregation is incorporated, the directors shall be confirmed by the regional conference instead of the trustees. Trustees take office at the time of their appointment by the congregation.
- D. Trustees for property held by fellowships not yet organized as congregations shall be appointed by the regional conference board or committee responsible for real property within that conference and shall be confirmed by the regional conference.
- E. All trustees for General Church property held in connection with the work of the church-at-large in publication, educational, charitable, and any other general activity of the church shall be elected or chosen according to the terms of the institutional charter or the method approved by the General Conference, and the trustees shall be confirmed by the General Conference.
- F. All trustees for world mission church property shall be chosen according to the method approved by the Board for World Missions and confirmed by the General Conference Board of the General Conference.

### **Section 4. *Duties of trustees***

- A. The boards of trustees shall organize by electing a chair and a secretary. The secretary shall be responsible for the safekeeping of legal papers if the entity is unincorporated. All records of the trustees shall pass to their successors in office.
- B. The trustees, or directors in the case of an incorporated entity, shall adequately insure, care for, and keep in necessary repair all church property. In no case shall the trustees be privileged to expend money for extensive repairs or alterations without the consent of the group(s) whom they serve.
- C. They shall give an annual report to the group(s) whom they serve.
- D. Trustees of General Church institutions shall perform such duties as their respective governing regulations demand and General Conference may severally assign.

### **Section 5. *Control***

- A. As provided in Section 1 of this Article, all church property shall be under the control of the General Conference and shall be subject to the bylaws of the denomination. No local church property may be sold without the approval of the regional conference in which the property is located. The sale or transfer of regional

conference property, General Church property, and world mission church property requires the approval of the Board of Directors and the General Conference Board of the General Conference, and shall be reported to the General Conference.

- B. The proceeds from the sale of local church property shall be at the disposal of the congregation to invest in other church property for the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church, Inc., subject to the approval of the board or committee of the regional conference responsible for control of real property within the conference. Such proceeds shall be held in trust by, or by order of, the appropriate regional conference board or committee. In the event that the work of any congregation has been terminated, the property assets of such congregation shall be available for church extension or other appropriate programs in the regional conference within which said congregation is situated.
- C. In the event of a question arising as to the group rightfully entitled to the possession of any specific church property or the proceeds of its sale—local, regional, general, world mission, or other church property—such question shall be decided by the General Conference.
- D. The proceeds from the sale of General Church property shall be held in trust by, or by order of, the General Conference Board of the General Conference. The disposition of the proceeds from the sale of such property shall be made by the General Conference.
- E. The provisions of this Section 5 shall not apply to the sale of property given as a gift in kind to the General Conference or its constituent entities, including but not limited to colleges, local congregations, and regional conferences; nor shall said provision control the disposition of the gift in a manner contrary to the intention of the donor.

### **Section 6. *Title to property***

- A. All church property must be given a clear unencumbered and merchantable title. It is the policy of the church not to accept real estate that contains a clause by which the land conveyed may revert to the original grantor, his heirs, or assigns. Any such real estate that is offered to the church shall not be accepted by the church unless said offer has been approved by the Board of Directors of the General Conference.
- B. Title to local church property shall be taken in the name of the local church, if the congregation is incorporated. If title was previously held by trustees, the same shall be transferred to the local corporation. If the local church is not

## Part Three: Bylaws » Division One: Government and Property

incorporated, then title to property shall be taken in the name of the trustees of the local church and their successors.

- C. Title to other church property shall be taken in the name of the institution, corporation, or conference that is directly responsible for the general operation, maintenance, management, and day-to-day control of such property. If such grantee is a corporation, the name in which title is given shall be the name of the corporation. If such grantee is not incorporated, then title to such property shall be taken in the name of the appropriate board of trustees designated for that purpose.
- D. Competent legal advice should always be sought before a deed is written; the laws of the state shall be carefully followed.
- E. All deeds shall be properly recorded. Copies of local church and regional conference property titles/deeds shall be filed with the regional conference secretary. General church property titles/deeds shall be filed with the Brethren in Christ Foundation, with copies being filed with the general secretary. World mission church property titles/deeds shall be filed with the administrative office of the Board for World Missions.

### Section 7. *Form of deeds*

- A. For all title deeds covering houses of worship, whether written in the names of the local church trustees and their successors or in the name of a corporation, the following trust clause shall be inserted in the proper place:

In trust that said premises shall be kept and maintained as a place of worship for the use of the (name) Brethren in Christ Church, subject to the doctrines, laws, and usages as from time to time established, interpreted, and promulgated by the lawful authority of the Brethren in Christ Church. The right of sale or encumbrance likewise to be subject to the provisions as recorded in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.

- B. In case the property is to be used exclusively for a parsonage, then the following clause shall be inserted in the title deed:

In trust that said premises shall be kept and maintained as a place of residence for the use and occupancy of the ministers of the Brethren in Christ Church who shall from time to time be appointed to said place subject to the rules and usages as from time to time established by the lawful authority of the Brethren in Christ Church. The right of sale or encumbrance likewise to be subject to the provisions as recorded in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.

- C. For all title deeds for General Church property or regional conference property, whether written in the names of individual trustees or a corporation, the following trust clause shall be inserted in the proper place:

In trust that said premises shall be kept and maintained for the use and benefit of the grantee and the Brethren in Christ Church and subject to the doctrines, laws, and usages as from time to time established, interpreted, and promulgated by the lawful authority of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. The right of sale or encumbrance shall be subject to the provisions as recorded in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.

### **Section 8. Property restrictions**

- A. The real estate of the local church shall not be mortgaged to meet current expenses.
- B. The local church contemplating the purchase of real estate, or erection of a church building or parsonage, shall submit the proposition to the regional bishop for consideration, advice, and approval.
- C. Before the regional conference or General Conference officers shall comply with request for approval of loan funds, the local congregation must certify assumption of responsibility for the designated amount by council action and the request be endorsed by the regional bishop.
- D. All real estate transactions shall be reported to the regional conference.

### **Section 9. Church incorporation**

The primary governing document of either a local church or a regional conference (which may be known as its Articles of Incorporation or by another name depending on applicable law) shall include the following provisions:

- A. A statement that the corporation and the church property are subject to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*, and that the governing document can be modified (other than registering a change of address) only with the approval of the regional conference Board of Directors, or the General Conference Board if the corporation is a regional conference. This is sample language which may be included:

The corporation and all church property including real property are subject to the provisions of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*. This governing document may be amended (other than

**Part Three: Bylaws » Division One: Government and Property**

registering a change of address) only with the approval of two-thirds of the total membership of the Board of Directors of the regional conference of the Brethren in Christ Church in which the corporation is located.

If the corporation is a regional conference, the second sentence should read as follows:

This governing document may be amended only with the approval of two-thirds of the total membership of the General Conference Board of the Brethren in Christ Church.

- B. A clause providing that upon dissolution the assets of the corporation will be distributed to the regional conference if the assets are local church property or regional conference property, and to the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church if the assets are General Church property or if the dissolving corporation is a regional conference.
- C. Any other provisions required or recommended for a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization which do not conflict with the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*. Obtaining the advice of legal counsel and the guidance of regional or General Conference is recommended. Pursuant to Article II, Section 3, the approval of General Conference Board must be obtained when a regional conference incorporates. Pursuant to Article III, Section 5, the approval of the regional conference Board of Directors must be obtained when a congregation incorporates.

**Article V: General Church Offices**

The General Church Offices of the Brethren in Christ Church will be located at 431 Grantham Road, Grantham, Pennsylvania. Communications should be addressed: Attention: General Secretary, P.O. Box A, Grantham, PA 17027-0901.

# DIVISION TWO: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

## **Article VI: General Conference Board**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

The General Conference Board will serve as the policy-making board between meetings of the General Conference and within the will of the General Conference.

### **Section 2. Personnel**

A. The General Conference Board will be composed of the General Church leaders, the treasurer, a member from each regional conference, six (6) persons that reflect the diversity of our community (at least three [3] of whom are laypersons), and any other persons approved by General Conference. All appointments to the General Conference Board will be confirmed by General Conference.

#### **B. Qualifications**

1. One whose life gives evidence of Spirit-directed growth and maturity
2. One who has demonstrated a commitment to the Brethren in Christ Church, its doctrine, its mission, and its program
3. One who is a faithful member of a Brethren in Christ congregation and knowledgeable about General Church life
4. One who has demonstrated leadership gifts with prior experience in congregational, regional, or General Church life
5. One who can respond to the challenges of decision-making and problem-solving in a constructive manner

#### **C. Selection of personnel**

1. Each regional conference will elect one (1) member for membership on the General Conference Board for a term of four (4) years. Such members may not serve for more than three (3) terms consecutively. The General Conference Board will provide regional conferences with information on qualifications, skills, and gifts needed for membership on the Board. In light of these needs,

## Part Three: Bylaws » Division Two: General Administration

the regional conference Board of Directors will forward three (3) appropriate candidates to the General Conference Nominating Committee for consideration. The Nominating Committee will select one (1) nominee for subsequent confirmation by the regional conference.

2. Six (6) persons will be named by the Nominating Committee for the selection of the six (6) members-at-large. At least three (3) of these will be laypersons. These six (6) nominees will be presented to General Conference as a part of the Nominating Committee report.
3. A person elected to the General Conference Board by a regional conference who has membership on another General Conference board or commission may not serve on both but will have a choice as to which position will be retained.

### Section 3. *Duties*

The duties of the General Conference Board will be:

- A. To study, coordinate, and promote the total program of the church as expressed through the Leadership Council;
- B. To keep under review the overall functioning of the church program and to bring such recommendations to General Conference from time to time as will provide for the increased effectiveness of the life of the church;
- C. To carry responsibility for the regular business of the church between meetings of General Conference. (In the event of an emergency situation arising within the denomination, the General Conference Board may take such action as deemed necessary and present it for review at the next General Conference.);
- D. To receive from each regional conference an annual report of the activities of the churches in that area, including statistical information regarding each congregation, and to make proper release of that information;
- E. To provide supervision until the convening of the next General Conference for any regional conference area in which a vacancy in the bishop's office may occur;
- F. To review recommendations for the financial compensation of administrators serving under the General Conference Board for incorporation in the budget;
- G. To receive from the Leadership Council the recommended budget projections for General Church operations and to review, approve, and submit the same to General Conference for approval;

- H. To give supervision or oversight to institutions and agencies not directly accountable to a regional conference or to another General Conference board on behalf of General Conference. (When an agency's program, promotion, constituency, and/or funding begin to cross any regional conference boundary line, the General Conference Board may initiate dialogue with that agency.);
- I. To act to approve the appointment of the Director of the Historical Library and Archives and to receive through the general secretary the annual report of the Director.

#### **Section 4. Structure**

- A. One of the members who is not employed by the church will serve as chair. The assistant chairperson will be elected from the membership excluding the General Conference officers. The general secretary serves as the executive secretary of the General Conference Board.
- B. The General Conference Board will meet at least annually and will carry out its work through the Leadership Council, which is responsible for the administrative functions of the General Church.
- C. The General Conference Board will authorize and oversee the work of the General Church through the Leadership Council.
- D. The General Conference Board will establish policies and ratify the work of the Leadership Council that involves any legal matters and other corporate issues.
- E. The General Conference Board will serve as the Board of Directors, and as such will:
  - 1. Function in legal matters on behalf of the corporation and will authorize the general secretary's use of the corporate seal in legal matters to which the seal pertains.
  - 2. Be responsible to General Conference for disposition of funds resulting from the sale of General Church property.
  - 3. Receive in trust, gifts, or bequests of personal property or monies as given to the Brethren in Christ that are not designated for any particular project or given to any stated board and will invest the same in the Brethren in Christ Foundation, Inc.
  - 4. Be responsible for ownership and disposition of those archival and historical items pertaining to the church. In the event that the college and denomination would separate and/or the covenant was no longer upheld by either of the parties, a five-member severance committee would be responsible to recommend the ownership and disposition of all material in the Historical Library and Archives.

## Part Three: Bylaws » Division Two: General Administration

5. Establish a Finance Committee to serve as a standing subcommittee of the General Conference Board.

### Section 5: *Finance Committee*

#### A. **Purpose**

The Finance Committee is to oversee the total scope of finance for the Brethren in Christ Church.

#### B. **Personnel**

The Finance Committee will be chaired by the General Conference Treasurer. Other members appointed annually by the General Conference Board will be a minimum of two (2) members of the General Conference Board, and two (2) other members. The Chief Financial Officer and the general secretary shall be invited to attend all meetings in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

#### C. **Duties**

1. Recommend to the General Conference Board budget projections of the Co-operative Ministries.
2. Ensure that the loan, pension, and endowment funds of the denomination are properly managed and coordinated.
3. Recommend to the General Conference Board appropriate financial policies for various levels and ministries of the General Church.
4. Develop auditing procedures for the ministries of the church.

## Article VII: *Leadership Council*

### Section 1. *Purpose*

The Leadership Council will be the leadership and management group for the General Conference Board. It will be responsible for the administrative duties of the General Conference, coordinate all General Church boards, and implement the policies of the General Church to serve the regions and congregations.

### Section 2. *Personnel*

It will be composed of the General Church Leaders, regional bishops, and Executive Directors. They will serve as the composite leadership group for the denomination.

### **Section 3. Duties**

- A. Discerns the vision for the denomination and its leadership.
- B. Proposes to the General Conference Board denominational ministry priorities and establishes goals for implementation.
- C. Recommends to the General Conference Board the establishment of departmental teams and task forces from time to time as deemed necessary for the effective functioning and growth of the church. Corporately administers personnel and funding within approved budgets.
- D. Serves as Personnel Committee and oversees pastoral placements.
- E. Coordinates the evangelism and church planting strategies for North America.
- F. Assigns to its personnel responsibility for the ministries of brotherhood concerns, congregational life, evangelism, and church planting.
- G. Initiates a regular overview and evaluation of the various programs of the General Church.
- H. Ensures the review of the doctrinal stance of the denomination and the facilitating of the discernment, equipping, and credentialing of its ministry servants.
- I. Serves as the General Conference Program Committee.

### **Section 4. Structure**

- A. The moderator will serve as the chairperson and the general secretary will serve as the secretary.
- B. As the executives, the General church leaders will be responsible to initiate vision, priorities, and plans.
- C. The Leadership Council will meet at least once a quarter and attend the sessions of the General Conference Board.
- D. The Leadership Council will be accountable in its ministry of leadership to the General Conference Board and other pertinent provisions of the General Conference Board Policy Manual.

## Section 5: *Commission on Ministry and Doctrine*

### A. **Purpose**

The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine will administer the credentialing process and facilitate the equipping of the denomination's ministers. It will preserve doctrinal integrity in the life of the Church.

### B. **Personnel**

The Commission will be composed of a minimum of five (5) persons nominated by the Leadership Council and approved by the General Conference Board. These persons must be spiritually mature and experienced in ministry. They are to be ordained, qualified in theology and leadership, and attuned to the doctrinal distinctives of the denomination. The Moderator is an ex-officio member of this Commission.

### C. **Duties**

The Commission shall:

1. Implement the credentialing functions outlined in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*.
2. Develop and supervise a program of equipping ministers for service to the Church.
3. Disburse financial aid to qualifying ministerial students.
4. Review and, from time to time, speak to critical issues of doctrine and practice in the life of the Church.

### D. **Accountability**

The Commission is accountable to the Leadership Council.

## Article VIII: *General Church Administrators*

### Part 1. *General*

#### Section 1. **Personnel**

General Church Administrators are persons employed by the General Church to provide denominational leadership. They serve in three (3) roles as follows: General Church leaders, regional bishops, and Executive Directors.

#### Section 2. **Qualifications**

Scriptural qualifications for church leaders are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-16. General Church Administrators will be chosen with due consideration being

## *Manual of Doctrine and Government*

given to experience, gifts, and administrative leadership ability. They will be persons of spiritual maturity, wisdom, and good judgment.

General Church Administrators will model relationships that evidence support, care and love, and that communicate biblical values and a Christian lifestyle to the immediate family, the church, and the world. General Church Administrators must be able to respond in an exemplary way to criticism, conflict, and stress, modeling behavior expected in others.

### **Section 3. Terms**

The terms for General Church Administrators are six (6) years, subject to evaluation every two (2) years.

### **Section 4. Evaluations**

A personal, professional growth plan will be implemented annually by each General Church Administrator. A performance evaluation designed to assess each leader's effectiveness based on personal and denominational goals will be conducted biennially by the person to whom the leader is accountable, and reported to the General Conference Board.

### **Section 5. Administration**

General Church Administrators will be voting members of the Leadership Council. The General Church Administrators will be responsible to attend the General Conference Board meetings.

### **Section 6. Duties**

The duties of the General Church Administrators are listed under the job descriptions found in a policy manual.

### **Section 7. Vacancy**

In the event of a vacancy during any of the General Church Administrators' terms, the General Conference Board, in consultation with the appropriate board, team, or General Church leader, will make provision for interim leadership until due process can be followed.

### **Section 8. Documentation**

General Church Administrators will have on file with the general secretary the following:

1. A full resume, including a ten-year work history, a statement of faith and status of church membership
2. Letters of reference
3. Credit check

## Part 2. *Selection and accountability*

### Section 1. General Church leaders

#### A. Selection

The moderator and general secretary will be nominated by a Search Committee appointed by the General Conference Board, elected by the General Conference Board, and confirmed by General Conference.

#### B. Accountability

The moderator will be accountable to the chairperson of the General Conference Board. The general secretary will be accountable to the moderator.

### Section 2. Regional bishops

#### A. Selection

The bishop's selection committee will be composed of the moderator, as Chair; the general secretary; and four (4) regional members (one of whom is the regional conference member of the General Conference Board) from and named by each regional conference selecting a bishop during the biennium.

The method for choosing the other three (3) regional members is for the regional conference Board of Directors, without the bishop, to nominate them to serve on the bishop's selection committee. The regional conference member on the General Conference Board shall chair that process.

1. These three (3) persons shall be confirmed by the regional conference in the annual meeting of the calendar year prior to General Conference.
2. Members of the selection committee normally shall meet at least eight (8) months prior to the time the bishop is to be confirmed by the respective regional conference. The bishop's selection committee will present its nominee for each region to the General Conference Board for confirmation. The General Conference Board will present the nominee to each regional conference for confirmation. These two (2) confirmations constitute the election of the bishop. Bishop installation will occur at General Conference.

#### B. Accountability

The regional bishops will be accountable to the moderator.

### Section 3. Executive Directors

#### A. Selection

The Executive Directors will be nominated by a committee composed of the General Church leaders (one of whom as chair) and four (4) members of the

appropriate board. The nominee will be confirmed by the respective board and subsequently confirmed by the General Conference Board. Both confirmations constitute the appointment. In the case that an Executive Director relates directly to one of the General Church leaders, the selection process will be managed by the General Conference Board.

**B. Accountability**

The Executive Directors will be administratively accountable to one of the General Church Leaders.

## **Article IX: General Church Boards**

### **Section 1. Functions**

Some aspects of the work of the church will be carried on under the direction of General Church boards, as decided by General Conference.

### **Section 2. Membership**

- A. General church boards will have a minimum of five (5) members and a maximum of twelve (12), with the exception of the General Conference Board.
- B. The general secretary will serve ex officio on each General Church board. If the General Church board or agency establishes an executive committee, the general secretary will meet with them for liaison purposes.
- C. Members are nominated and then confirmed by General Conference. The qualifications for serving on General Church boards are:
  - 1. One whose life gives evidence of Spirit-directed growth and maturity
  - 2. One who has demonstrated a commitment to the Brethren in Christ Church, its doctrine, its mission, and its program
  - 3. One who is a faithful member of a Brethren in Christ congregation and knowledgeable about General Church life
  - 4. One who has demonstrated leadership gifts with prior experience in congregational, regional or General Church life
  - 5. One who can respond to the challenges of decision-making and problem-solving in a constructive manner

### **Section 3. *Terms***

- A. The term of office for members of General Church boards will be four (4) years unless otherwise determined by General Conference.
- B. General Church board members will serve no more than three (3) terms consecutively.
- C. In the event of a vacancy by death or resignation, the nominating committee will choose a substitute to serve until the next convening of General Conference.
- D. No person may serve on more than one General Church board at the same time except as required by provisions of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church* or as may be approved by General Conference. A General Church board member whose term has not expired must be released by the General Conference Board before appointment or election to another board may be effected, except as may otherwise be determined by the General Conference Board.

### **Section 4. *Organization of General Church boards***

- A. Unless otherwise provided for, each General Church board will organize biennially by ballot, electing officers as may be considered necessary.
- B. In the event an executive committee is established by a General Church board, it will have the authority to act on behalf of the General Church board on all matters that cannot be delayed until the meeting of the entire General Church board. The executive committee will have general oversight of administrative personnel. Additional responsibilities may be assigned to the executive committee by the General Church board.

### **Section 5. *Duties of officers***

- A. The duties of the officers of the General Church boards will be such as usually pertain to such offices.
- B. Upon conclusion of service, officers will pass to their successors all records in their custody.

### **Section 6. *Meetings***

- A. Each General Church board will have at least one regular meeting each biennium and such other meetings as may be necessary in the discharge of its duties.
- B. Meetings are open to the members of the denomination.

## **Section 7. Relationships**

- A. Each General Church board will be accountable to the General Conference Board. Each General Church board will present to the General Conference Board an annual general report, annual financial reports (where applicable), and, in consultation with the Leadership Council, appropriate recommendations. Due to the nature of the Board of Appeals, it is not subject to the provisions of this paragraph.
- B. Each General Church board will seek to foster harmonious relationships and to minister in a spirit of cooperation with other boards and agencies within the church to fulfill denominational purposes.
- C. Each General Church board will relate to the Leadership Council, through its Executive Director, as a means of coordinating denominational life.
- D. No remuneration of any kind will be given to any General Church board member for services rendered as a General Church board member.
- E. The General Church board will present the name of the person being recommended for executive director or other administrative assignment to the Leadership Council for review before finalizing negotiations of employment. The presentation of the name will include the full financial agreement, including all fringe benefits. The Leadership Council will respond within 30 days regarding a mutually satisfactory agreement.

## **Section 8. Fiscal policies**

- A. All General Church boards will be funded in a manner approved by General Conference.
- B. Each General Church board will develop policies to ensure wise stewardship in the use of financial resources.
- C. Each General Church board will establish budgetary requests and administer funds received.
- D. Each General Church board will submit to Leadership Council annual operational and capital budgetary requests, according to the schedule and guidelines established by the General Conference Board. The finance committee of the General Conference Board will present a proposed bottom-line budget to the Leadership Council.
- E. Leadership Council will assist in the raising of Cooperative Ministries funding, in conjunction with other appropriate personnel.

## **Part Three: Bylaws » Division Two: General Administration**

- F. Investment of all General Church board funds under Cooperative Ministries will be made under the guidance of the Leadership Council, in consultation with the finance committee of the General Conference Board.
- G. All financial statements will be examined as directed by the Finance Committee of the General Conference Board.
- H. General church board members will be entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties as approved by the General Church board or authorized by the General Conference Board.
- I. When a General Church board member is named as delegate to General Conference, travel and other authorized costs may be shared by the congregation or regional conference represented and the General Church board served.

### **Section 9. *Administrative staff***

- A. Prior to the creating of an administrative assignment or replacing any director, associate, or assistant, the General Church board or administrator will present the job description and plan to the Leadership Council for approval.
- B. Persons holding administrative positions are not to be considered members of the General Church board by which they are employed, nor are they eligible for membership on any other General Church board except as required by the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.

## **Article X: *Brethren in Christ Foundation, Inc.***

### **Section 1. *Purpose***

The primary purpose of the Brethren in Christ Foundation will be to receive, hold, invest, and distribute monies and other assets on behalf of and for the benefit of the Brethren in Christ Church, its institutions, agencies, congregations, and members. The details of this purpose are reflected more fully in the charter of the Foundation.

### **Section 2. *Incorporation***

The Foundation will be incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation, known as “The Brethren in Christ Foundation, Inc.” and organized under the laws of the State of Indiana.

### **Section 3. Membership**

Membership in the Foundation will consist of those who are members of the General Conference Board of the Brethren in Christ Church and those who are elected as directors of the Foundation. The term of membership in the Foundation for members of the General Conference Board will be the same as the term of membership on the General Conference Board.

### **Section 4. Directors**

- A. The Foundation will be governed by a Board of Directors of up to fifteen (15) members elected by the members of the Foundation and confirmed by the General Conference Board and the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. The directors will be elected for terms of up to four (4) years and are eligible for re-election for two (2) additional terms consecutively. The Board of Directors may be increased or decreased within the limits of the charter. Vacancies on the Board of Directors will be filled by the General Conference Board for the unexpired term, subject to the confirmation of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.
- B. The corporate powers of the Foundation will be vested in the Board of Directors who will have the management and control of the Foundation to carry out the purposes of the Foundation.
- C. The Board of Directors will be accountable to the General Conference Board.

### **Section 5. Membership meetings**

The annual meeting of the membership will be held at such time and place as the directors may decide within six (6) months of the close of the fiscal year.

### **Section 6. Directors meetings**

There will be at least two (2) meetings of the Board of Directors each year, one of which will be held at the time of the annual meeting of the Foundation membership.

### **Section 7. Administration**

The board will be authorized to employ such agents and administrators as are required to fulfill the purposes of the Foundation, subject to confirmation by the General Conference Board. The board will prescribe their duties and accountability and fix their compensation. Such agents and administrators will not be members of the Board of Directors.

## **Section 8. *Organization***

In order to conform to corporation rulings, the organization of the Board of Directors will consist of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

## **Section 9. *Executive committee***

An executive committee elected by the Board of Directors will be composed of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and such other members as determined by the directors. The executive committee will serve as the advisor to the administrator(s) and will meet at the call of the president to handle matters calling for decision or counsel at the board level.

## **Section 10. *Committees***

The Board of Directors may provide for such other committees, permanent or temporary, as they deem advisable for carrying on their responsibilities. They may delegate to these committees such authority as resides with the Board of Directors. Committees will be by appointment of the president with confirmation by the Board of Directors. Committee appointments will be for a one-year term, and members may be eligible for reappointment.

## **Section 11. *Legal documents***

Unless otherwise provided for by the Board of Directors, all contracts, leases, commercial paper, and other instruments in writing and legal documents will be signed by the president and attested by the secretary. All bonds, deeds, and mortgages will be signed by the president and attested by the secretary. All checks, drafts, notes, and orders for the payment of money will be signed by those officers or employees of the Foundation as the directors may from time to time designate.

## **Section 12. *Undesignated gifts***

Gifts, annuities, trusts, and other assets, either undesignated or designated in favor of the Brethren in Christ Church, will upon the time for their distribution be distributed by the Foundation at the direction and as determined by the General Conference Board of the Brethren in Christ Church.

## **Section 13. *Relationships to other agencies***

- A. The Brethren in Christ Foundation will be the denominational organization authorized to issue securities and to receive and to invest contributions for charitable gift

annuities, annuity trusts, unitrusts, pooled income funds, other gifts of a deferred nature, or securities on behalf of the Brethren in Christ Church, its agencies, institutions, and congregations in the United States of America. Where other Brethren in Christ organizations are authorized by law to engage in the foregoing activities, those organizations will report to and counsel with the Brethren in Christ Foundation with regard to such activities. The Foundation will provide for the execution of appropriate legal documents and assistance in the liquidation of contributed assets and estates.

B. The Foundation will also maintain liaison with other boards and agencies.

## **Article XI: Board Of Appeals**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

A Board of Appeals will hear complaints of alleged brotherhood infractions, including matters of congregational, regional, or General Conference concern.

### **Section 2. Function**

A Board of Appeals provides a process whereby any person or group may bring a case to a body representing church concerns. This could include members of a congregation; persons in an institution or regional conference; or personnel on boards of the church who are not satisfied with a decision rendered by a pastor, church board, bishop, institution, regional conference entity, general board, or General Church leader.

### **Section 3. Personnel**

Five (5) persons not involved in the dispute shall constitute a Board of Appeals. The General Conference Board shall name three (3) persons and designate one as the chair. Each of the parties involved in the dispute shall name one (1) person.

### **Section 4. Initiation of Appeals**

#### **A. Congregational issues**

The person or persons making an appeal will have it duly signed by at least two-thirds of the church board or five (5) members of the congregation.

#### **B. Regional, institutional, or general issues**

The person or persons making an appeal will have it duly signed by at least two (2) members of the board or agency involved, or by three (3) persons, administrative personnel on either the regional or General Church level and/or duly-assigned pastors.

## **Section 5. Procedure**

- A. When a conflict between two (2) parties/groups cannot be resolved, an appeal may be submitted to the General Conference Board. The General Conference Board will clarify the issues and seek mediation. The General Conference Board will determine whether all appropriate channels have been pursued in an effort to resolve the issue.
- B. When resolution is not achieved, either party may request the constituting of a Board of Appeals to bring resolution to the dispute.
- C. In the event either party involved is not satisfied with the decision of that Board of Appeals, an appeal may be lodged with the General Conference Board within one month of the announcement of the decision. Acceptance of the appeal for a further review is at the discretion of the General Conference Board. When such a review is allowed, the General Conference Board may permit personal appearances by the parties involved in the appeal. Such appeal is final.

## **Article XII: Board for World Missions**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Brethren in Christ Board for World Missions is to extend the Kingdom of God as we labor cross-culturally with other believers to evangelize, disciple, serve and plant churches, and to challenge the Brethren in Christ Church to accomplish the Great Commission with prayers, personnel, and finances.

### **Section 2. Organization and structure**

The board will function under the provisions of Article IX, “General Church Boards,” as well as under other pertinent provisions of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.

### **Section 3. Duties**

- A. To supervise, promote, and coordinate the areas of activity as stated in Section 1 and defined in the *Missions Operations Manual*.
- B. To provide for the recruitment, counseling, orientation, and assigning of personnel. Such assignees will be reported to General Conference.
- C. To establish policy regarding terms of service, furloughs, aid, remuneration, and other related matters for all personnel serving with the board.

## *Manual of Doctrine and Government*

- D. To obtain approval from General Conference for the opening of missions in additional countries and to establish churches that become indigenous and outreach-oriented.
- E. To designate, when appropriate, fraternal delegates or representatives to General Conference.

### **Section 4. *Missions operations manual***

- A. The board will publish a manual setting forth the operational structure of the board, its policies, and procedures of operation.
- B. Provisions will be made for revision of this manual to keep it current and to make it available upon request.

### **Section 5. *Auxiliaries***

The board will select committees to function under its guidance in correlating activities of the Missions Prayer Fellowship, Missions Auxiliary, and other auxiliaries approved by General Conference. The functions of such auxiliaries will be described in the *Missions Operations Manual*.

### **Section 6. *Development of and program for inter-church relationships***

The board will be responsible to initiate and develop programs for inter-church relationships between autonomous general conferences and emerging church fellowships of the Brethren in Christ in the world setting. Such development will be in coordination with the General Conference Board.

### **Section 7. *Legal provisions***

For legal purposes in the United States and Canada, such as the trusteeship of property or the holding of bequests, the board will serve the General Conference under the name “Board for World Missions, Brethren in Christ Church.” This provision, however, will not limit the board from conducting its ministries or entering into legal arrangements in various other countries under other names that the board may choose to adopt.

## **Article XIII: General Church Institutions**

### **Section 1. Definition**

General church institutions are those institutions and agencies administratively related to the Brethren in Christ Church by approval of General Conference which provide a vital ministry consistent with the purpose and core values of the Brethren in Christ Church, and maintain a mutually supportive relationship with the Church.

### **Section 2. Accountability**

Institutions and agencies relate to General Conference through the General Conference Board and the General Church leaders.

### **Section 3. Incorporation**

When deemed advisable, such institutions may be incorporated. Charters will be approved by the General Conference Board and will be ratified by the General Conference. The primary governing document of the institution (such as the Articles of Incorporation) shall include the following provisions:

- A. Any sale or other conveyance of assets which have a value greater than half the value of all the assets of the institution shall not be effective until approved by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference Board.
- B. Upon dissolution or cessation of the organization's ministry, the assets of the institution shall be distributed to the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.
- C. Initial adoption of the governing document and any amendments (including any merger, division, or conversion) are not effective until approved by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference Board.
- D. A majority of the members of the board shall be members of the Brethren in Christ Church.
- E. The general secretary shall be the liaison to the General Church institutions and may attend their board meetings and events as deemed appropriate.
- F. The institution and the General Conference Board may mutually agree to adopt additional requirements or modify these requirements when appropriate.

#### **Section 4. Reports**

- A. Such institutions will present a general report and a financial statement annually to the General Conference Board and biennially to the General Conference. These reports are made by way of the General Church leader.
- B. All financial statements will be certified by an auditor and submitted to the General Conference Board.

#### **Section 5. Election of trustees/directors**

The General Conference will approve the method by which trustees/directors of General Church institutions will be elected or appointed and will likewise confirm those elections or appointments.

#### **Section 6. Liability**

The General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church is not liable or responsible for the operations of the institution. The institution shall maintain adequate liability insurance.

# DIVISION THREE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PRACTICE

## **Article XIV: Local Congregation**

### **Section 1. Membership**

The membership of the congregation shall consist of those who have been received into the church on the basis of their personal knowledge and testimony of God's saving grace and their acceptance of the obligations as presented in the membership covenant.

### **Section 2. Purpose**

The congregation should recognize the vital part it plays in accomplishing the purpose of the Brethren in Christ: "...to foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God, and to proclaim His gospel to all people." It should strive to carry out its responsibility in this endeavor by an active and effective local program and by giving its loyal support to the general program of the church.

### **Section 3. Organization**

- A. The congregational business meeting shall be held at least once a year.
- B. The secretary of the church board shall serve as secretary of the congregation and shall record all actions of congregational business meetings; forward all material intended for regional or General Conference; provide statistical data required by the bishop and General Conference Board; and keep an accurate record of the congregational membership, showing net gain or loss in number, and recording baptisms, elections, ordinations, and other valuable information of interest to the congregation. All records shall be preserved and shall be given to the secretary's successor in office.
- C. The treasurer of the church board shall serve as the treasurer of the congregation and shall discharge the duties connected with handling the congregation's finances, keep accurate records using a bookkeeping system approved by the board, and report annually to the congregation and to the church board as directed.

## **Section 4. Government**

- A. The pastor shall preside at the congregational business meeting unless other provision is made in consultation with the bishop.
- B. Members in fellowship with the congregation, sixteen (16) years of age and older, shall be entitled to a vote in the business meeting.
- C. No special congregational business meeting may be called without the consent of the church board and a public notice being given in at least one regularly scheduled service prior to the special business meeting.
- D. All items for the congregational business meeting shall be presented to the church board, which shall be responsible to prepare the agenda for release in a regular service prior to council.
- E. Should a matter of business be presented to the church board for the congregational business meeting and the church board refuses to place the item on the agenda, then the person who presented the request, if unwilling to accept the decision of the church board, may bring the request to the congregational business meeting upon securing the signatures of ten (10) percent of the members in good standing who are sixteen (16) years of age or above, with a minimum of five (5) signatures.
- F. Delegates shall be elected biennially to the General Conference. The assigned pastor and one deacon or church board member shall automatically serve as delegates. In addition, each congregation shall be entitled to one delegate for every 100 members or fraction thereof. No congregation may exempt itself from delegate representation to General Conference without the consent of the bishop. Travel and other authorized costs shall become a part of the congregational budget.
- G. Delegates shall be elected to represent the congregation at regular and special meetings of regional conference in accordance with regional conference directives. Expenses for these delegates shall be met by the congregation.
- H. Congregations should not transact business with less than one-fifth of the membership of voting age present.
- I. All group activities carried on within the congregation shall be subject to the approval of the pastor and the church board and shall be correlated with the total program of the congregation.
- J. In instances of congregational distress that, in the judgment of the bishop, compromise the ability of the pastor and/or church board to serve the congregation, the bishop in consultation with the moderator and general secretary may select and

convene a review board consisting of the bishop and four (4) persons from outside the congregation. The review board shall apply biblical principles in its resolution of the situation. The review board shall have authority to appoint a mediation team, mandate arbitration, prescribe changes in congregational life and practice, suspend or remove a pastor, church board member(s) or other member(s), and make provision for interim leadership. Any action shall be reported to the Leadership Council.

## **Article XV: Church Board**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

Each local congregation shall be organized with a church board. The duties of the church board shall be to provide for the administration of the local congregation in all its phases consistent with the congregational council and General Conference rulings.

### **Section 2. Organization**

- A. The board shall organize annually. The pastor shall serve as chair unless the pastor requests the board to elect another chair.
- B. The board shall not meet without the pastor or bishop. Exceptions must be cleared with the bishop, with the knowledge of the pastor.
- C. The secretary and treasurer of the church board shall also serve as secretary and treasurer of the congregation.
- D. The secretary and treasurer shall be elected by the church board from the board or from the congregation-at-large. If chosen from the congregation-at-large, these officers become members of the church board.
- E. The board may have additional officers as needed.

### **Section 3. Personnel**

- A. All members of the board shall be able to give a personal testimony of salvation, should manifest a concern for congregational growth, and should demonstrate responsibility with evidence of being in agreement with the purposes and goals of the Brethren in Christ Church, the congregation, and the pastor. Membership in the local congregation shall be a prerequisite for membership on the church board.
- B. The board shall ordinarily consist of a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of twelve (12) members.

## ***Manual of Doctrine and Government***

- C. Members elected to the board by the congregation should serve three-year (3) terms. They should not serve more than three (3) terms consecutively. Variations from this pattern are to be made in consultation with the bishop.
- D. The board shall be composed of the aforementioned officers and such other congregational representatives as are elected by the congregational council. Ex officio representation from such areas as deacons, trustees, and Christian education is deemed appropriate.
- E. When a conflict of interest may exist, a board member shall declare the conflict, withdraw from discussion, and abstain from voting.

### **Section 4. *Functions***

The functions of the church board shall be:

- A. To serve as a support and counseling group for the pastor.
- B. To determine matters of policy within the scope of congregational council authorization and to assist the pastor in the planning of the congregational life.
- C. To receive and review questions for congregational council and, when advisable, to make recommendations to the council.
- D. To call special congregational councils.
- E. To make provision for or serve as the budget committee.
- F. To make provision for or serve as the nominating committee.
- G. To maintain communication with the congregation.
- H. To be responsible, in consultation with the bishop, for questions of membership and discipline. Any decision relative to the disciplinary termination of membership shall be made only with approval of the bishop.
- I. To insure that no one will preach or present any cause or interest in the church without the consent of the duly assigned pastor.
- J. To forward the required annual premium to the denominational ministers' pension fund.

### **Section 5. *Discipline***

- A. In case of variance between church members, private reconciliation shall be sought (Matt. 5:23, 26; 18:15, 16). In cases of immoral conduct, indulging in unholy

attitudes and actions, or sowing of dissensions, the person(s) shall first be counseled by the pastor. If there is acknowledgment of fault and evidence of repentance, the person(s) shall be forgiven.

- B. Pastors should be alert to evidence of undue stress developing in marriage relationships and seek to develop a supportive ministry to homes so affected. Should a marriage breakdown occur, the pastor and church board shall endeavor to affect reconciliation through a restorative ministry. In the event of divorce (or divorce and remarriage) involving a member of the church, in a situation requiring discipline, there shall be evidence of repentance.
- C. When repentance is not evident in disciplinary matters, the pastor shall seek the counsel of the church board and be in consultation with the bishop. Redemptive discipline may include suspension and/or termination of membership. The final decision regarding discipline or membership rests primarily with the pastor and church board. At times, the board may desire the congregational council to advise them in this decision.
- D. Implementation of discipline decisions by the board shall be facilitated through the pastor or board chair along with one (1) or more persons not compensated by the congregation.

## **Article XVI: Pastoral Committee**

### **Section 1. Personnel**

- A. The church board (except the pastor and staff) and the bishop shall constitute the pastoral committee, with the bishop serving as chair.
- B. When functioning as a pastoral search committee, other persons may be added as agreed upon by the bishop and church board.

### **Section 2. Duties**

- A. The pastoral committee shall represent the congregation in the securing or reappointment of a pastor.
- B. The General Conference Personnel Committee, the pastoral committee, and the pastor under consideration negotiate the assignment of a pastor, who is to be credentialed through the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine prior to installation. A written agreement shall be provided. The pastoral committee negotiates the terms of the agreement. If the compensation amount is larger than budgeted, the congregational council approves additional funding.

- C. The pastoral committee shall negotiate the term of service with the pastor. The initial term of service may be five (5) years, unless the parties involved agree for a shorter term of service.
- D. The continuance of a pastor's service following the initial term of service shall become a joint consideration of the General Conference Personnel Committee, the pastoral committee, the pastor, and the congregation. Further terms of service shall be for five (5) years unless a shorter term is mutually agreed upon. A five-year term shall be considered the maximum for any one (1) period of assignment.
- E. The pastoral committee shall seek to provide for the pastor's welfare, including remuneration.

## **Article XVII: Membership**

### **Section 1. Requirements for membership**

- A. Persons considered for membership shall testify to a personal experience of God's saving grace in their hearts and to confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and shall give evidence of the new life in Christ.
- B. They shall be open to the teaching of the Scripture, to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and to the counsel of the church in questions of life and practice.
- C. Applicants shall be baptized as a witness of faith and discipleship. We affirm our practice of believer's baptism in which the candidate kneels and is immersed three (3) times forward in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in humble submission to Christ and the church. Re-baptism is not required for those who have been baptized by another mode of believer's baptism subsequent to their rebirth.
- D. Applicants shall express a desire to enter into a relationship of Christian love, fellowship, and brotherhood with the members of the congregation and to cooperate with the polity of the Brethren in Christ Church.
- E. Applicants shall affirm their acceptance of the foregoing through the following membership covenant:

#### **Membership covenant**

As a member of the Brethren in Christ Church, I accept the Bible as the Word of God in which is revealed the way of salvation and the guide for faith and conduct. I witness to a personal experience of God's saving grace in my heart and express desire and purpose to live a holy life, apart from sin and separated unto Christ. I covenant as a member of the Brethren in Christ

Church to be loyal to this congregation, to consent to instruction in Bible doctrine, to support and sustain the services of the congregation by my regular attendance and prayers, to contribute to the program of the church as the Lord prospers me, and to foster a spirit of Christian fellowship and oneness within the church.

### **Section 2. *Reception of members***

- A. The growth of the church should be the concern of each congregation and pastor.
- B. Pastors shall conduct membership classes for candidates.
- C. Candidates for church membership shall be approved by the church board. Their names shall be publicized in advance of the reception service. (Should any member of the congregation know a good reason why a candidate should not be received into church membership, the reason should be presented to the pastor or a member of the church board during the intervening period.)
- D. At or before the reception service, candidates shall give public testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and shall pledge their allegiance to God's Word and their loyalty to the church.
- E. A member from another denomination who has a personal knowledge of God's saving grace and agrees to the covenant of church membership may be accepted into the church upon presentation of a letter from the church with which he or she has been affiliated.

### **Section 3. *Transfer of members***

- A. Members who change their places of residence or plan to worship in a congregation other than the one in which membership is held should be encouraged to request letters of transfer from the former congregation.
- B. Letters of transfer shall be issued by the church board, duly signed by the pastor and secretary of the board.
- C. No membership may be transferred from one (1) congregation to another without personal contact between receiving and sending congregations to ascertain the status of the candidate. Persons under discipline in one (1) Brethren in Christ congregation shall not be received into membership in another Brethren in Christ congregation.

- D. A question of eligibility for a letter of transfer may be decided by a congregational council if the church board sees fit.
- E. A congregation may have non-transferable associate memberships.

#### **Section 4. *Dual membership***

- A. A person in good standing in a Brethren in Christ congregation may be granted a certificate of recommendation to become a member of another Christian fellowship in an area where there is no Brethren in Christ congregation. This will maintain membership standing in the home Brethren in Christ congregation, providing he or she is prepared to continue in the beliefs involved in Brethren in Christ membership, to have some appropriate ongoing relationship to the home Brethren in Christ congregation, which may include stewardship responsibilities.
- B. A person in good standing in another Christian fellowship may be granted membership in a Brethren in Christ Church without relinquishing former membership standing, provided he or she is in agreement with our *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church* on the basis of the regular approach to church membership and is prepared to share proportionately in stewardship responsibilities.

#### **Section 5. *Withdrawal of membership***

A member of the church may withdraw from membership by submitting a letter of withdrawal to the congregational secretary. In cases where the person is under congregational discipline at the time of request, withdrawal from membership will be strongly discouraged. If insisted upon, the fact of being under discipline will be noted in the congregational records with such a withdrawal.

### **Article XVIII: *Christian Life and Practice***

#### **Section 1. *The Christian and personal life***

- A. Believers are called to use their resources (time, ability, finances) as faithful stewards of the Lord Jesus Christ; to resist materialism in its various expressions; and to give generously, sacrificially, and proportionately.
- B. Stewardship of life includes care for creation and the management of earth's resources for the glory of God and the good of all people.

- C. God created men and women with the capacity for sexual intimacy, which is to be expressed only within the bonds of marriage. The practices of premarital sex, extramarital sex, adultery, lesbianism, or homosexuality have no place in the life in Christ.
- D. God is honored when a Christian gives attention to the proper care and development of his or her body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The body is dishonored, and the witness of the Christian is hindered, by intemperance in the use of that which is good. Any form of substance abuse (i.e., drugs, including alcohol and tobacco) is an inappropriate expression of the life in Christ.
- E. A disciplined Christian life is exemplified in things such as a gentle and quiet spirit, personal devotions, humility, and modesty.

### ***Section 2. The Christian and home life***

- A. Marriage is ordained by God as a lifelong union between husband and wife. The church bears responsibility to assist in building Christ-like relationships within the marriage. The church is called to minister to persons involved in adultery, divorce, and remarriage. When marriage vows are broken, the essential processes of repentance, forgiveness, discipline, reconciliation and restoration, inasmuch as possible, will need to be a part of personal and congregational life.
- B. Christians seek to develop a home life marked by love, understanding, and nurture. All forms of domestic violence and abuse are inconsistent with Christian living. Each member of the family should practice mutual submission as taught in Ephesians 5:21–6:4.
- C. Loving discipline of children and a cooperative spirit in the economic, social, and spiritual planning of the home are of vital importance.

### ***Section 3. The Christian and the Church***

- A. Believers should promote Christian community and fellowship in openness and concern for one another and in sharing one another's burdens. Consideration should be given for those having differing opinions. Schismatic activities should be avoided, but when conflicts do arise, Christians should seek reconciliation as outlined in Matthew 18:15–22. It is inappropriate for Christians to involve a fellow believer in litigation (I Cor. 6:1).
- B. Christians accept the responsibility to cooperate with and promote the ministry of their congregations and should faithfully attend church services, actively serve by using their talents and abilities, and systematically give tithes and offerings for

the ministry of the church program, both local and church-wide. Involvement in organizations that divide their loyalty to, or are in conflict with, Jesus Christ and the church should be avoided, including, but not limited to, membership in any such lodge or secret order.

- C. Certain historic practices in the life of our church are based on illustrations of Scriptural principles. While the mode of expression in these illustrations may not apply worldwide, the principles are valid in the life of the church. Two examples are:
  - 1. I Corinthians 11:1–16 enunciates the principles of divine/human relationships within the redeemed community. This calls for mutual respect between those who believe the prayer covering is a continuing mode of expressing this principle and those who exemplify the principle in other ways.
  - 2. The holy kiss is a symbol of the biblical principles commended by the Apostles Peter and Paul. We encourage Christians to seek ways to express this love and fellowship.

#### **Section 4. *The Christian and society***

- A. Believers shall witness to their faith in Christ by word and deed. Materialism, unwholesome entertainment, and careless business practices are not consistent with the Christian witness. Occupational activities should harmonize with Scripture teaching. The practice of taking one day in seven for corporate worship and renewal is affirmed.
- B. Christians should build a positive peace witness that permeates their daily lives, and should testify against violence and war, consistently showing love and concern for all. Since the body of Christ is international, love of nation is secondary to fellowship in the body of Christ and mission to people everywhere.
- C. The Bible teaches the equality of all humanity and that Christ loves all equally. God is displeased with all forms of prejudice.
- D. The New Testament teaches the privilege and responsibility of sharing with the needs of mankind. Self-centered affluence is contrary to God's will. Christians will regularly re-examine their lifestyles in light of world poverty and New Testament principles such as those in II Corinthians 8:8–15.

## **Article XIX: *Worship and Congregational Life***

### **Section 1. *Purpose***

God calls his people to corporate worship (Hebrews 10:25, Psalm 92:1-3). Worship honors and adores the Lord. It brings encouragement and hope to the people of God.

### **Section 2. *Aspects of worship***

- A. The Bible portrays a wide variety of forms of worship. The primary focus is on the Lord through praise, prayer, music, preaching, and communion.
- B. Worship also brings Christians together for fellowship. It provides an ideal opportunity for people to express their love to God and concern for the world through the generous sharing of financial resources and to affirm and encourage one another in the faith. These expressions of sincere love become a powerful testimony of God's grace.

### **Section 3. *Worship within the congregation***

- A. The church is enriched as people come together in different settings.
- B. Weekly meetings of the corporate body give occasion for celebration, teaching, and evangelism. Smaller group meetings are especially essential for nurture and fellowship. These include such activities as cell groups, Sunday school classes, prayer groups, and youth groups.
- C. The pastor, with the support of the church board or others designated by the board, is responsible for order and propriety in the worship experiences. Persons leading worship services should always be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

# DIVISION FOUR: CHURCH OFFICIALS

## **Article XX: Ministers**

### **Section 1. Qualifications**

The scriptural qualifications for ministers are given in I Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:7–16. Candidates must give clear testimony to the new birth and evidence of the anointing of God. The scriptural directives relating to the choice of ministers speak to the importance of exemplary godly living. As a testimony to the importance of the home, attention must be given to the scriptural qualifications of wholesome marital and family relationships, which include commitment to the lifelong bond of marriage. They should be able to teach and lead others and give evidence of divine call to this sacred office. They must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine, as adopted by the church, and be willing to be directed by the decisions of General Conference.

### **Section 2. Duties and privileges**

- A. It shall be the duty of ministers to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, prayerfully strive to lead sinners to the Savior and believers into the Spirit-filled life, and earnestly endeavor to edify the body of Christ.
- B. They are eligible to perform official duties within the limits of their credentials.
- C. It is the privilege of the minister to officiate at the marriage of persons who, after adequate instruction and counsel, can affirm the principles of Christian marriage, including a lifelong commitment to the marriage relationship. Ministers are not obligated to officiate at marriages that violate their consciences or otherwise are not in harmony with their understanding of scriptural principles. In keeping with our biblical and theological understanding, ministers (or other authorized persons) shall not officiate at or recognize same-sex marriages or unions, nor shall such marriages or unions be performed in a Brethren in Christ facility. When there is a question regarding the minister's credentialing a marriage, it is advisable for the minister to consult with the bishop and the church board.

### Section 3. *Credentialing for ministry*

#### A. **Doctrinal examination**

1. The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine will process all applications for credentialing in the denomination.
2. The Commission will formulate all examination forms and establish procedures to be used in their work.
3. The Commission will provide the standards and requirements for ministerial ordination and continuation therein and will approve the meeting of such requirements by candidates before ordination.
4. The Commission will conduct a doctrinal examination of all persons to be credentialed by them. Such persons will be examined at the time of their respective elections and for appointments, and subsequently as deemed necessary.

#### B. **Exemption from examination**

Exemptions may be granted by the Commission to anyone who, in the judgment of the Commission, is deserving because of length of service, age, or other legitimate reason.

#### C. **Ministerial licenses**

A ministerial license will be issued by the moderator to all persons of the Brethren in Christ Church who are properly recommended, have filed the forms required by the Commission, and have passed the doctrinal examination.

#### D. **Ordination**

1. Ordination is the church's endorsement of a person to specific ministry in the life of the denomination and the setting apart for particular service. It is a recognition of God's gifting and empowerment and of one's renewed dedication and commitment.
2. The Commission shall establish requirements and procedures for ordination and administer the same.

### Section 4. *Ordained minister's spouse*

The wife or husband shall share in the ordination service. She or he should share wholeheartedly in the spiritual interests, burdens, and sacrifices connected with the ministerial office and should recognize the privilege and responsibility for sharing in a life and spirit of service and ministry.

## **Article XXI: Active Ministers**

For purposes of clarity in classifications and designation, the term “active ministers” of the Brethren in Christ Church shall be construed to mean such persons who are included in the following categories:

- A. Pastors
- B. Associate or assistant pastors (duly assigned)
- C. Ministers under assignment as missionaries
- D. Ministers under contract with General Church institutions or agencies
- E. Ministers in process of appointment by the General Conference personnel committee
- F. Ministers on leave to pursue further studies
- G. Ministers serving inter-church organizations
- H. Ministers under special designations recognized by the General Conference personnel committee (e.g., evangelists, counselors, chaplains)

Questions covering eligibility shall be decided by the General Conference personnel committee.

## **Article XXII: Ordained Ministers**

### **Section 1. Description**

Ordained ministers are those who have completed the credentialing process and have demonstrated their being equipped for ministry. Ordination reflects the concurrence of the minister and the church, relative to gifts and calling for ministry.

### **Section 2. How ordained**

When a candidate for ordination has completed the credentialing process and has given effective service in an assigned ministry, the bishop invites the candidate to apply for ordination. Applications for ordination are reviewed and approved by the Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. When the application is approved, the bishop plans a public occasion for ordination.

### **Section 3. *The act of ordination***

For the candidate, ordination is a time of affirmation of God's gifting and empowerment and of renewed dedication and commitment to ministry. For the congregation and the denomination, it is a time of thanksgiving and praise for God's provision of a minister prepared to equip the saints.

### **Section 4. *Continuity in ordination***

Ordination sets one apart for the function of ministry. It remains in effect as long as one continues to function in ministry, affirms theological and doctrinal compatibility with the Brethren in Christ, exemplifies godly living, and is faithful in one's commitment to the church. It is regarded as continuous even upon attaining retirement status.

### **Section 5. *Release from ordination***

Whenever there is clear evidence of change in vocational direction, the ministerial status may cease. The process of withdrawal from the list of ordained ministers will be under the supervision of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine in coordination with the Leadership Council.

## **Article XXIII: *Licensed Ministers***

### **Section 1. *Description***

Licensed ministers are persons who are granted formal licenses as ministerial credentials. Candidates for license shall prove themselves effective in the work of the Lord. They shall be deemed worthy of this status by holding a burden for the ministry of the Word and by showing concern in this regard through activity, study, and zeal in pursuit of adequate training for the work of the ministry.

### **Section 2. *How licensed***

Applicants for ministerial license shall make application to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine through their bishops and church boards. To qualify for ministerial license, satisfactory recommendations must be supplied by their home congregations, and their doctrinal positions must be approved by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. A renewal of license is conditional upon proper recommendation.

### **Section 3. *Subject to congregation***

The services of licensed ministers residing in congregations that they do not pastor shall be subject to the discretion of the congregation.

### **Section 4. *Administrative privileges***

When assigned as pastors, licensed ministers may exercise such administrative functions as are authorized by the bishop of the regional conference or by the board under which they minister.

### **Section 5. *Term of license***

A ministerial license shall be granted for a period of four (4) years. It is renewable as long as the one licensed continues to serve in an approved ministry, affirms theological and doctrinal compatibility with the Brethren in Christ, exemplifies godly living, and is faithful in one's commitment to the church.

### **Section 6. *Ordination***

When a licensed minister has completed the credentialing process and has given effective service in an assigned ministry, the bishop invites the candidate to apply for ordination. Applications for ordination are reviewed and approved by the Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. When the application is approved, the bishop plans a public occasion for ordination.

## **Article XXIV: *Commissioned Ministers***

### **Section 1. *Description***

Commissioned ministers are persons called by a congregation to serve in a supportive staff position with one or more ordained or licensed ministers who carry the primary responsibility for preaching, teaching, and discipling in the congregation. They serve under the authority of the senior pastor with the knowledge and consent of the bishop. Those who serve as commissioned ministers shall affirm their allegiance to Christ and fidelity to the church. In character and conduct they are to model godliness and spiritual leadership. They shall give evidence of a call to Christian ministry in their area of service and demonstrate the gifts, skills, and training required for their ministry assignment.

## **Section 2. *How commissioned***

An applicant for commissioning shall make application to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine through the senior pastor and with the approval of the bishop. To be certified as a commissioned minister, the applicant must present a satisfactory endorsement from the church board of the congregation being served, and meet the criteria of certification established by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. A certificate will be issued signed by the secretary of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine and the senior pastor.

## **Section 3. *Ministerial privileges***

Commissioned ministers may qualify to officiate at weddings and funerals if permitted by applicable law and may administer the ordinances at the discretion of the senior pastor.

## **Section 4. *Tenure***

A ministerial commission is contingent upon and shall coincide with a pastoral staff assignment with the endorsing congregation. It is transferable to a comparable staff position with another congregation.

## **Section 5. *Ministerial license***

A commissioned minister, when called to a pastoral position which has preaching, teaching, and discipling as primary responsibilities, is required to obtain a full ministerial license by applying to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine.

# **Article XXV: *Pastors***

## **Section 1. *Purpose***

The pastor will be responsible for directing the life and ministries of the congregation and will carry out duties as agreed upon with the church board.

## **Section 2. *Accountability***

The pastor is accountable administratively to the regional bishop and accountable functionally to the congregation by way of the church board.

### **Section 3. *Term of service***

The initial term of service may be five (5) years, unless the parties involved agree for a shorter term of service. The length of each additional term of service will be reviewed as noted in Article XVI, Pastoral Committee, Section 2. D.

### **Section 4. *Membership***

The pastor shall become a member of the local congregation being served.

### **Section 5. *Compensation***

- A. Pastors should receive remuneration on the basis of service rendered and in accordance with the guidelines provided by the General Conference Board.
- B. Any pastor who is salaried by the congregation shall not vote on any matter that may directly or indirectly relate to a financial benefit for such person, whether such benefit be in the nature of salary or other payment; however, this shall not restrict such person from accepting such financial benefit.
- C. The local church should make provision for traveling and moving expenses necessitated by the bringing of the pastor to the congregation.

### **Section 6. *Duties of pastors***

- A. To lead the church board and congregation, in partnership with the bishop, in developing vision, establishing short and long range goals, and a plan to realize such goals
- B. To stimulate spiritual maturity in the congregation through a well-balanced program of biblical preaching and doctrinal teaching
- C. To model for and lead the congregation in a vital prayer ministry and a life of godliness
- D. To administer believer's baptism, officiate at the reception of members, and supervise the commemoration of the Lord's Supper
- E. To give priority to the training and deployment of congregational leadership for ministry within and beyond the congregation
- F. To establish and oversee a system of evangelism, discipleship, and caregiving for an effective ministry
- G. To continually prepare for effective service by following the counsel given by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine

## **Part Three: Bylaws » Division Four: Church Officials**

- H. To oversee the administration of congregational resources and to lead in the implementation of its strategic plan under the direction and counsel of the bishop and in cooperation with the church board and congregational council. (Financial obligations for the local church shall be duly authorized by the pastor and church board or congregation.)
- I. To give monthly reports to the church board and annual reports to the congregation
- J. To promote the total ministry and programs of the denomination by keeping the congregation informed about its vision, ministries, and heritage. (The pastor shall periodically acquaint the congregation with General Conference actions and the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.)
- K. To submit all reports required by the regional bishop and General Conference
- L. To work with the congregation to mobilize funding for Cooperative Ministries and channel those funds to the appropriate treasurer

### **Section 7. *Disagreement or removal of pastor***

In case of serious disagreement between the church board and pastor, the matter shall be submitted to the bishop having jurisdiction. If satisfaction is not gained, the General Conference personnel committee shall make disposition of the matter.

## **Article XXVI: *Pastoral Relationships***

### **Section 1. *Steps in selection***

Upon the beginning of a new congregation or at the time of a resignation or death of a pastor, the regional bishop shall assume responsibility to guide the pastoral committee in their search for a pastor. In the event of a new church planting, the pastoral assignment will be made by the bishop and the moderator in consultation with the Leadership Council.

### **Section 2. *Salary***

The General Conference personnel committee shall set guidelines on salaries. The bishop negotiates salary with the pastor and pastoral committee.

### **Section 3. *Job description and relationships***

- A. There should be a clear job description that is written with approval of both pastoral committee and the pastor with consideration of personality and gifts of the pastor and congregation.
- B. The pastor shall be accountable to the bishop of the regional conference and shall keep in communication as often as desired by either the pastor or the bishop.
- C. The pastor shall relate responsibly to the church board as outlined in the duties of pastors in Article XXV of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church*.

### **Section 4. *Resignations or unavailability***

Pastoral resignations should be submitted to the bishop. The bishops shall inform the pastoral committee and arrange for an appropriate announcement to the congregation. After a resignation is submitted, the pastor shall avoid involvement with the negotiations for a new pastor except as directed by the bishop in connection with the pastoral committee.

### **Section 5. *Evaluation and congregational involvement***

The bishop shall give counsel to the pastoral committee prior to the completion of a pastor's term and work through an evaluation process with the pastoral committee which may lead to a continuation of the pastor's service. The pastoral committee, in consultation with the pastor, shall decide how best to involve the congregation in this review. Pastoral committees should not meet without the bishop except under the bishop's direction.

### **Section 6. *Pastoral interviews***

In the event a congregation desires a pastoral interview, it shall pay travel costs for the candidate and spouse. It is suggested that pastoral committees work with one (1) candidate at a time and avoid trial sermons.

## **Article XXVII: *Pastoral Staff Relationships***

### **Section 1. *Steps in selection***

- A. The process of selecting additional pastoral staff (hereafter referred to as "staff") shall involve the senior pastor, the church board, and the bishop. The adding of a new staff position needs affirmation by the appropriate congregational group.

## Part Three: Bylaws » Division Four: Church Officials

- B. In the selection of additional staff, the senior pastor has the primary responsibility. The first step in the selection process is for the senior pastor to discuss “call procedures” with the bishop.
- C. If the person being considered is new to the denomination, the bishop shall interview the applicant regarding identification with the Brethren in Christ Church and the process of credentialing.
- D. The senior pastor and the church board serve as the selection committee. Together they conduct the interviews. Whenever possible, the bishop should meet with this committee prior to any interviews to discuss role expectations, the relation of staff to the church board, and the person’s involvement in the congregation.

### **Section 2. *Accountability and responsibility***

- A. The associate pastor and other staff shall be accountable to the senior pastor. It is suggested that staff meetings for prayer and planning be held at least once a week for communication, creativity, and relational growth.
- B. The bishop is available to the associate pastor and other full-time staff as a resource person. Associate pastors are considered part of the regional conference pastoral team.
- C. Associate pastors and other staff may be members of the church board upon recommendation of the pastor except when the church board is functioning as the pastoral committee.
- D. It is recommended that for spiritual and social growth, the pastor should plan for sessions with staff members and spouses at least quarterly.
- E. The senior pastor shall be responsible to build the pastoral team and keep lines of communication open between the team and the bishop. The senior pastor shall keep the bishop aware of staff relationships and their needs. The bishop shall inform the pastor of communication relating to administrative procedure between bishop and staff.

### **Section 3. *Conditions of service***

#### **A. *Length of term***

The pastoral agreement form used for pastors may be used for associates. The terms shall be negotiated by the pastor and local church board. When the senior pastor terminates service, the term of the associate pastor may be reviewed by the newly assigned pastor in consultation with the bishop.

**B. Salary**

The basic salary guidelines for a pastor should be applied for associates; however, the senior pastor should receive a higher salary due to function.

**C. Job description**

There shall be clear job descriptions for all associate pastors and staff. These job descriptions need to be adapted to the personality and gifts of persons involved.

**Section 4. *Evaluation and congregational involvement***

The senior pastor in consultation with the associate pastor and other staff shall work through an evaluation process with the church board. The pastor and church board may involve the congregation in this review.

**Section 5. *Associate pastoral interviews***

In the event a congregation desires an associate pastoral interview, it shall pay travel costs for the candidate and spouse. It is recommended that pastoral committees work with one (1) candidate at a time.

**Article XXVIII: *Evangelists***

**Section 1. *Qualifications***

The qualifications of evangelists are much the same as those of ministers. In fact, they are ministers who go from place to place endeavoring to lead sinners to the Savior, to build up the church of Jesus Christ, and to stir up the church to holy living and faithful service.

**Section 2. *Relations with pastors***

When serving in a congregational setting, the evangelist shall work in helpful harmony with the pastor in charge.

**Section 3. *Serving in new fields***

When serving in areas where there are no organized Brethren in Christ churches or in an international context, the evangelist shall work in close cooperation with the regional bishop or the Board for World Missions.

## **Section 4. *Credential certificate***

Those other than pastors who serve as evangelists, either full or part time, shall be in possession of a credential certificate as provided by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. The basis for receiving this certificate shall be the satisfactory answers to a questionnaire pertaining to doctrine, church polity and practice, and loyalty to the Brethren in Christ Church.

## **Article XXIX: *Institutional Chaplains***

### **Section 1. *Designation***

A chaplain may be a pastor to the people involved in an institution. The “congregation” may be staff as well as individuals and families served by the institution. The chaplain may be employed by the institution while relating to the denomination through the bishop of the regional conference where the institution is located.

### **Section 2. *Qualifications***

Qualifications for chaplains are the same as those set forth in Article XX, Section 1 for ministers.

### **Section 3. *Accountability***

- A. The chaplain shall maintain active membership in a Brethren in Christ congregation.
- B. The chaplain shall provide quarterly reports to the regional bishop and receive from the bishop at least one (1) annual visit in the institution.
- C. Ministerial credentials for chaplains will follow the same procedure as those for other ministers in the denomination.
- D. The chaplain will be expected to be involved in Brethren in Christ ministerial functions of the regional conference where the institution is located.
- E. The chaplain shall remain free of institutional requirements that conflict with Brethren in Christ doctrine and practice.

## **Article XXX: Deacons**

### **Section 1. Qualifications**

The scriptural qualifications for a deacon are outlined in I Timothy 3:8–12 and Acts 6:3. The deacon must give clear evidence of a Christian experience. The scriptural directives relating to the choice of deacons speak to the importance of exemplary godly living. As a testimony to the importance of the home, special attention should be given to the qualifications of wholesome marital and family relationships, including commitment to the lifelong bond of marriage. Deacons should be sufficiently mature to qualify them to advise others and to share in the responsibility of the local administration. They must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith adopted by the church. Deacons must be members of the local congregation being served.

### **Section 2. Election**

A recommendation for election of deacon(s) may be made to the congregation by the church board. If the recommendation is approved, the election may be carried out in the manner decided upon by the church board.

### **Section 3. Term of service**

Deacons shall serve for a three (3) to five (5) year period at the discretion of the local congregation, and they are eligible for additional terms of service.

### **Section 4. Installation**

- A. Deacons shall be installed by a consecration service at the beginning of each term of service. Such consecrated deacons shall be considered active deacons during their terms of service.
- B. Spouses of deacons may share in the consecration service, for they share with the deacon in the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs within the local congregation.

### **Section 5. Duties**

- A. Ordinarily there shall be a maximum of two (2) deacons serving on the church board and pastoral committee.
- B. They shall share in the ministries of the congregation as directed by the pastor.

**Part Three: Bylaws » Division Four: Church Officials**

- C. They shall carry a vital concern for the needy of the congregation and report findings to the church board.
- D. They shall assume responsibility for the material aspects of the church program so that the pastor may devote more time and energy to pastoral responsibilities.
- E. They shall have charge of the preparation for communion services and supervise the practice of washing the saints' feet. They may help serve the sacred emblems during communion service under the direction of the pastor.
- F. In the absence of the pastor, they may officiate at the public services as directed by the church board or by the person responsible for filling the vacancy caused by the pastor's absence.

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

## GENERAL CONFERENCE DIRECTORY

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1890	West Milton, Ohio	D.V. Heise	Samuel Zook H. Davidson Jesse Engle
1891	Mastersonville, Pennsylvania	T.A. Long	M.H. Oberholser Samuel Zook H. Davidson
1892	Stevensville, Ontario, Canada	John H. Engle	Samuel Baker Samuel Zook M.H. Oberholser
1893	Chadwick, Illinois	J.R. Zook	M.H. Oberholser Samuel Zook H. Davidson
1894	Dickinson County, Kansas	J.H. Eshelman	J.M. Engle Samuel Zook H. Davidson
1895	Nottawasaga, Ontario, Canada	Asa Bearss	Jesse Engle Samuel Zook
1896	Greencastle, Pennsylvania	J.R. Zook	M.H. Oberholser Samuel Zook Isaac Trump
1897	Stark County, Ohio	H.L. Trump	H. Davidson Samuel Zook M.H. Oberholser
1898	Gormley, Ontario, Canada	George Detweiler	M.H. Oberholser H. Davidson Samuel Zook
1899	Mastersonville, Pennsylvania	S.R. Smith	H. Davidson B.F. Hoover Samuel Zook
1900	Donnelsville, Ohio	George Detweiler	M.H. Oberholser Samuel Zook Charles Baker
1901	Stevensville, Ontario, Canada	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser B.F. Hoover H. Davidson

## Supplementary Material

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1902	Belle Springs, Kansas	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser H. Davidson Aaron Martin
1903	Florin, Pennsylvania	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser Samuel Zook W.O. Baker
1904	Stayner, Ontario, Canada	S.R. Smith	W.O. Baker M.H. Oberholser B.F. Hoover
1905	Smithville, Ohio	S.R. Smith	W.O. Baker J.N. Engle B.F. Hoover
1906	Des Moines, Iowa	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser J.N. Engle W.O. Baker
1907	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle M.H. Oberholser W.O. Baker
1908	Gormley, Ontario, Canada	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle M.H. Oberholser J.R. Zook
1909	Abilene, Kansas	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser J.N. Engle J.R. Zook
1910	Air Hill, Franklin County, Pennsylvania	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle M.H. Oberholser J.R. Zook
1911	West Milton, Ohio	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle M.H. Oberholser J.R. Zook
1912	Stevensville, Ontario	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle J.R. Zook M.H. Oberholser
1913	Thomas, Oklahoma	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser J.N. Engle J.R. Zook
1914	Fairland, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle M.H. Oberholser C.N. Hostetter

*Manual of Doctrine and Government*

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1915	Home of B.F. Hershey, Pavonia, Ohio	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle C.N. Hostetter C.C. Burkholder
1916	Florin, Pennsylvania	S.R. Smith	J.N. Engle C.N. Hostetter H.B. Hoffer
1917	Detroit, Kansas	C.N. Hostetter	C.C. Burkholder J.R. Zook H.K. Kreider
1918	New Paris, Elkhart County, Indiana	C.N. Hostetter	J.N. Engle J.R. Zook H.K. Kreider
1919	Greencastle, Franklin County, Pennsylvania	C.N. Hostetter	C.C. Burkholder H.K. Kreider J.N. Hoover
1920	Duntroon, Ontario, Canada	C.N. Hostetter	J.N. Hoover J.N. Engle H.K. Kreider
1921	Upland, California	C.N. Hostetter	J.N. Engle M.G. Engle H.K. Kreider
1922	Grantham, Pennsylvania	C.N. Hostetter, Jr.	C.N. Hostetter C.C. Burkholder M.G. Engle
1923	Gormley, Ontario, Canada	C.N. Hostetter	C.C. Burkholder J.N. Engle H.K. Kreider
1924	Navarre, Kansas	C.N. Hostetter	H.K. Kreider M.G. Engle O.B. Ulery
1925	West Milton, Ohio	C.N. Hostetter	C.C. Burkholder J.N. Engle L.O. Musser
1926	Cleona, Pennsylvania	C.N. Hostetter	O.B. Ulery J.N. Engle L.O. Musser
1927	Stevensville, Ontario	C.N. Hostetter	C.C. Burkholder H.K. Kreider L.O. Musser

## Supplementary Material

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1928	Thomas, Oklahoma	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter Bert Sherk M.G. Engle
1929	Merrill, Michigan	O.B. Ulery	C.C. Burkholder H.K. Kreider L.O. Musser
1930	Chambersburg, Pennsylvania (Air Hill)	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter M.G. Engle L.O. Musser
1931	Duntroon, Ontario, Canada	O.B. Ulery	C.C. Burkholder H.K. Kreider M.G. Engle
1932	Upland, California	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter H.K. Kreider M.G. Engle
1933	Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania (Mt. Pleasant)	O.B. Ulery	E.J. Swalm H.K. Kreider M.G. Engle
1934	Ludlow Falls, Ohio	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter R.I. Witter H.K. Kreider
1935	Gormely, Ontario, Canada	O.B. Ulery	E.J. Swalm R.I. Witter L.O. Musser
1936	Detroit, Kansas	O.B. Ulery	A.D.M. Dick C.N. Hostetter R.I. Witter
1937	Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania (Cross Roads)	O.B. Ulery	E.J. Swalm C.N. Hostetter, Sr. C.N. Hostetter, Jr.
1938	Wainfleet, Ontario, Canada	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter, Sr. R.I. Witter Bert Sherk
1939	Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania	O.B. Ulery	R.I. Witter C.N. Hostetter, Jr. Charlie B. Byers
1940	Thomas, Oklahoma	O.B. Ulery	E.J. Swalm C.N. Hostetter, Jr. Charlie B. Byers
1941	Camp Alexander Mack Milford, Indiana	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter, Jr. H.H. Brubaker Charlie B. Byers

*Manual of Doctrine and Government*

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1942	Bertie Church Stevensville, Ontario Canada	O .B. Ulery	H.H. Brubaker R.I. Witter Charlie B. Byers
1943	Messiah Bible College Grantham, Pennsylvania	O.B. Ulery	E.J. Swalm R.I. Witter Charlie B. Byers
1944	Messiah Bible College Grantham, Pennsylvania	H.G. Brubaker	O.B. Ulery R.I. Witter H.N. Hostetter
1945	Messiah Bible College Grantham, Pennsylvania	H.G. Brubaker	R.I. Witter Charlie B. Byers J.T. Ginder
1946	Mt. Pleasant Church Mount Joy, Pennsylvania	H.G. Brubaker	E.J. Swalm C.N. Hostetter, Jr. Luke L. Keefer
1947	Beulah College Upland, California	H.G. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers A.D.M. Dick H.N. Hostetter
1948	Memorial Holiness Camp Grounds, West Milton, Ohio	H.G. Brubaker	C.N. Hostetter, Jr. R.I. Witter Luke L. Keefer
1949	Stayner Camp Ground Stayner, Ontario, Canada	H.G. Brubaker	E.J. Swalm Henry N. Hostetter Jesse F. Lady
1950	Roxbury Holiness Camp Grounds, Roxbury, Pennsylvania	H.G. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers Luke L. Keefer Henry A. Ginder
1951	The Free Methodist Camp Grounds, Manhattan, Kansas	H.G. Brubaker	Luke. L. Keefer C.N. Hostetter, Jr. H.H. Brubaker
1952	Memorial Holiness Camp Grounds, West Milton, Ohio	H.G. Brubaker	C.N. Hostetter, Jr. E.J. Swalm J.F. Lady
1953	Niagara Christian College, Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada	H.G. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers A.M. Climenhaga Henry Ginder
1954	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	H.H. Brubaker	Luke L. Keefer H.G. Brubaker E.J. Swalm
1955	Upland College Upland, California	H.H. Brubaker	C.N. Hostetter, Jr. Henry A. Ginder Samuel F. Wolgemuth

## Supplementary Material

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1956	Roxbury Camp Grounds Roxbury, Pennsylvania	H.H. Brubaker	E.J. Swalm Charlie B. Byers H.G. Brubaker
1957	Memorial Holiness Camp Grounds, West Milton, Ohio	H.H. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers Henry A. Ginder Luke L. Keefer
1958	Niagara Christian College, Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada	H.H. Brubaker (Honorary)	Henry A. Ginder C.N. Hostetter, Jr. A.M. Climenhaga
1959	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	H.H. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers Luke L. Keefer
1960	Brethren in Christ Church Upland, California	H.H. Brubaker	E.J. Swalm C.N. Hostetter, Jr.
1961	Roxbury Camp Grounds Roxbury, Pennsylvania	H.H. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers A.M. Climenhaga
1962	Memorial Holiness Camp Grounds, West Milton, Ohio	H.H. Brubaker	Henry A. Ginder C.N. Hostetter, Jr.
1963	Niagara Christian College Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada	H.H. Brubaker	Charlie B. Byers A.M. Climenhaga
1964	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	O.H. Alderfer	Henry A. Ginder C.N. Hostetter, Jr.
1965	Brethren in Christ Church Upland, California	O.H. Alderfer	Charlie B. Byers A.M. Climenhaga
1966	Roxbury Camp Grounds Roxbury, Pennsylvania	O.H. Alderfer	A.C. Burkholder Luke L. Keefer
1967	Memorial Holiness Camp Grounds, West Milton, Ohio	O.H. Alderfer	Henry A. Ginder C.J. Ulery
1968	Niagara Christian College Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada	O.H. Alderfer	J.N. Hostetter Simon Lehman, Jr.
1969	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	O.H. Alderfer	Roy V. Sider C.N. Hostetter, Jr.
1970	Brethren in Christ Church Upland, California	O.H. Alderfer	Charlie B. Byers John E. Zercher
1971	Roxbury Camp Grounds Roxbury, Pennsylvania	O.H. Alderfer	Arthur M. Climenhaga William R. Hoke
1972	Memorial Holiness Camp Grounds, West Milton, Ohio	O.H. Alderfer	Henry A. Ginder David E. Climenhaga
1974	Niagara Christian College Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada	A.M. Climenhaga	Charlie B. Byers Simon Lehman, Jr.

*Manual of Doctrine and Government*

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1976	Azusa Pacific College Azusa, California	A.M. Climenhaga	Roy V. Sider Alvin J. Book
1978	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	A.M. Climenhaga	R. Donald Shafer Glenn A. Ginder
1980	McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	A.M. Climenhaga	Alvin J. Book Walter Winger
1982	Azusa Pacific University Azusa, California	A.M. Climenhaga	Harvey R. Sider Luke L. Keefer, Jr.
1984	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	A.M. Climenhaga	R. Donald Shafer H. Frank Kipe
1986	McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	R. Donald Shafer	Owen H. Alderfer Douglas P. Sider
1988	Azusa Pacific University Azusa, California	R. Donald Shafer	Glenn A. Ginder E. Morris Sider
1990	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	R. Donald Shafer	John A. Byers Robert B. Ives
1992	McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	R. Donald Shafer	Harvey R. Sider Douglas P. Sider
1994	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	R. Donald Shafer	Harvey R. Sider Kenneth Hoke
1996	Azusa Pacific University Azusa California	R. Donald Shafer	Harvey R. Sider John Hawbaker
1998	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	Warren L Hoffman	Harvey R. Sider John A. Byers
2000	Wilfrid Laurier University Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, Canada	Kenneth O. Hoke	Warren L. Hoffman Craig E. Sider
2002	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	Kenneth O. Hoke	Warren L. Hoffman Darrell S. Winger
2004	DoubleTree Convention Center Ontario, California	Kenneth O. Hoke	Warren L. Hoffman John A. Byers
2006	Hilton Miami Airport Miami, Florida	Darrell S. Winger	Warren L. Hoffman Perry Engle
2008	Sheraton Parkway Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada	Donald F. McNiven	Warren L. Hoffman Craig E. Sider
2010	Messiah College Grantham, Pennsylvania	Donald F. McNiven	Warren L. Hoffman Rob Patterson

# CERTIFICATES OF INCORPORATION

**Note:** These documents have had some text (such as notary statements) removed for space and legibility. Copies of the complete documents are available from the BIC Archives at Messiah College.

## **The Brethren in Christ Charter** (1904)

Be it known that the subscribers having associated themselves together for the purpose of worshipping Almighty God under the rules, faith and tenets of the church of “The Brethren in Christ” formerly known as “The River Brethren” and being desirous of becoming incorporated under the provisions of the Act of General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled “An Act to provide for the incorporation and regulation of certain corporations” approved the 29th day of April A.D. 1874, and its supplements, do hereby declare, set forth and certify that the following are the purposes, objects, articles and conditions of the said association for and upon which they desire to be incorporated.

- I. The name of the corporation shall be “The Brethren in Christ.”
- II. The purpose for which the corporation is formed is for worshipping Almighty God, under the rules, regulations and tenets of the church which was formerly known as “The River Brethren” and for doing evangelistic and missionary work in the United States and foreign countries.
- III. The place where the business of the said corporation is to be transacted is in the city of Harrisburg.
- IV. The Corporation is to exist perpetually.
- V. The names and residences of the subscribers are as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
Martin H. Oberholser	Culbertson, Pa.
Jacob K. Kreider	Lebanon, Pa.
Eli M. Engle	Columbia, Pa.
George Detweiler	Harrisburg, Pa.
S. R. Smith	Harrisburg, Pa.
- VI. The corporation is to be managed by a Board of Trustees, known as an Executive Committee, consisting of five (5) members. The names and residences of those chosen trustees for the first year are as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Residences</b>
Martin H. Oberholser	Culbertson, Pa.
Jacob K. Kreider	Lebanon, Pa.
Eli M. Engle	Columbia, Pa.

*Manual of Doctrine and Government*

George Detweiler  
S. R. Smith

Harrisburg, Pa.  
Harrisburg, Pa.

VII. The yearly income of the corporation other than that derived from real estate shall not exceed the sum of fifteen thousand (\$15,000) dollars.

VIII. All property whether real or personal, acquired either by bequest or purchases, shall be taken and held to ensure to it subject to the control and disposition of the lay members of the said corporation, or such constituted officers or representatives thereof as shall be composed of a majority of lay members citizens of Pennsylvania and any disposition made of either real or personal property shall be made by virtue of the majority of the laity either by popular or representative consent.

Witness our hands and seals this second day of May A.D. 1904.

Martin H. Oberholser  
Jacob K. Kreider  
Eli M. Engle

George Detweiler  
S. R. Smith

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
*County Of Dauphin*

Before me, the Deputy Recorder of Deeds of the County of Dauphin, personally appeared Jacob K. Kreider, George Detweiler and S. R. Smith, three (3) of the subscribers to the above and foregoing certificate of incorporation of "The Brethren in Christ" and in due form of law acknowledged the same to be their act and deed and desired the same might be recorded as such.

Witness my hand and official seal, this second day of May A.D. 1904.

WILLIAM A. McILHENNY  
*Deputy Recorder of Deeds*

**In the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County  
Of March Term, 1904, No. 206**

And now this 2nd day of May A.D. 1904, the within Charter and Certificate of Incorporation having been presented to me, a Law Judge of said County, accompanied by due proof of publication of the notice of this application as required by The Act of Assembly, I certify that I have examined and perused the said writing, and have found the same to be in proper form, and within the purposes named in the first class specified in Section Second of The Act of The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled "An Act to provide for the Incorporation and Regulation of certain Corporations" approved April 29th, 1874, and the supplements thereto, and the same appearing to be lawful and not

## Supplementary Material

injurious to the community, I do hereby on motion of John C. Nissley, Esquire, on behalf of the petitioners, order and direct that the said Charter of “The Brethren in Christ” aforesaid be and the same is hereby approved, and that upon the recording of the same and of this order, the subscribers thereto and their associates shall be a corporation by the name of “The Brethren in Christ” for the purposes and upon the terms therein stated.

BY THE COURT

George Kunkel

*J.*

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## Certificate of Incorporation (1940)

In the Matter of the Incorporation  
of GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In the Court of Common Pleas  
of Dauphin County.  
No. 374 June Term, 1940

To the Honorable, the Judges of said Court:

BE IT KNOWN that the subscribers hereto, having associated themselves together for the purpose hereinafter more particularly set forth, and being desirous of becoming incorporated agreeably to the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled the “Non-profit Corporation Law,” approved the fifth day of May, 1933, and the amendments thereto, do hereby declare, set forth, and certify that the following are the purposes, objects, articles and conditions of the said Association, for and upon which they desire to be incorporated:

FIRST: The name of the corporation shall be “GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST.”

SECOND: The location and Post Office address of its initial registered office in this Commonwealth is Messiah Rescue and Benevolent Home, 2001 Paxton Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

THIRD: The purpose for which the corporation is formed is for worshipping Almighty God, under the rules, regulations and tenets of the Brethren in Christ Church and for doing evangelistic and missionary work in the United States and foreign countries, and that said corporation does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise to its members. Said corporation may, without limitations as to value, take, receive and hold real and personal property, including the principal or interest of any money or other fund, as may be given, granted, conveyed, bequeathed, devised to, or otherwise vested in such corporation in trust for the purpose or purposes herein set forth.

FOURTH: The corporation is to exist perpetually.

**Manual of Doctrine and Government**

FIFTH: The names, places of residence, and Post Office addresses of each of the incorporators, at least three (3) of who are citizens of Pennsylvania, are as follows:

<b>Names</b>	<b>Residences</b>
E. J. Swalm	Duntroon, Ontario, Canada
Jacob T. Ginder	Manheim, Pa.
John H. Martin	Lancaster, Pa.
Henry K. Kreider	Campbelltown, Pa.
Harvey W. Hoke	West Milton, Ohio
J. H. Wagaman	Upland, California
O. L. Heise	Gormley, Ontario, Canada
O. B. Ulery	Springfield, Ohio

SIXTH: The names and residences of the Board of Directors of the corporation, until the election of their successors, shall be as follows:

<b>Names</b>	<b>Residences</b>	<b>Term</b>
C. N. Hostetter, Jr.	Grantham, Pa.	1 year
Jacob T. Ginder	Manheim, Pa.	1 year
J. H. Wagaman	Upland, Calif.	1 year
O. B. Ulery	Springfield, Ohio	2 years
John H. Martin	Lancaster, Pa.	2 years
O. L. Heise	Gormley, Ont., Can.	2 years
E. J. Swalm	Duntroon, Ont., Can.	3 years
Henry K. Kreider	Campbelltown, Pa.	3 years
Harvey W. Hoke	West Milton, O.	3 years

SEVENTH: The corporation is to be organized upon a non-stock basis.

EIGHTH: The assets which the corporation will have to start its corporate functions are:

- Real Estate - None.
- Personal Property - None.
- Organization to be supported by membership dues and contributions.

NINTH: Admission to membership, and the requirements thereof, shall be as prescribed by the by-laws, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ.

TENTH: There is attached hereto a Certificate of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, evidencing the approval and registration of the name of this corporation, to wit: "GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST."

WITNESS our hands and seals this 18th day of June, A. D. 1940.

E. J. Swalm	J. H. Wagaman
Jacob T. Ginder	O. L. Heise

## Supplementary Material

John H. Martin  
Henry K. Kreider  
Stanley R. Geib

Orville B. Ulery  
Harvey W. Hoke  
Agnes M. Geib

### Decree

AND NOW, July 29, 1940, the foregoing Charter or Certificate of Incorporation having been duly affirmed, acknowledged and filed in the Office of the Prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on July 18th, 1940, and having attached thereto a Certificate from the Secretary of the Commonwealth showing that the name adopted by the petitioners for the proposed corporation has been filed and recorded in his office, and that a search of his records fails to disclose any conflict between the name of the proposed corporation and any other name, title, or designation; that the name of the proposed corporation is available and that the same has been duly registered on July 10th, 1940; as required by the Act of Assembly; and the said Charter or Certificate of Incorporation having been duly presented to me, the undersigned, a Law Judge of said County, accompanied by due proof of publication of the notice of this application in the Harrisburg Telegraph, a newspaper of general circulation, published in the said County of Dauphin, and in the Dauphin County Reporter, the legal periodical published in the said County of Dauphin, on the 24th of July, 1940, respectively, and at least three (3) days prior to the presentation of this application, as required by the Act of Assembly and Rule of Court, I hereby certify that I have perused and examined the said writing, and that I find the same to be in proper form, and within the purposes set forth in the Act of General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled the "Non Profit Corporation Law," approved the 5th day of May, 1933, effective as of the 3rd day of July, 1933, and its amendments; and that the same appears to be lawful and not injurious to the community.

Wherefore, it is ordered and decreed, that the said Charter or Certificate of Incorporation be and the same is hereby approved, and that upon the recording of the same and this Order, the subscribers thereto and their associates and the successors of them and their associates shall be a corporation by the name of "GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST," for the purpose and upon the terms therein stated.

BY THE COURT, FRANK B. WICKERSHAM, A.L.J.

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## **Petition For Merger of General Conference of Brethren in Christ and Brethren in Christ**

To the Honorable, the Judges of the said Court:

The petition of General Conference of Brethren in Christ and Brethren in Christ respectfully represents:



## Supplementary Material

1. The name of the surviving corporation is “GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST,” and the location and post office address of the registered office of the said surviving corporation is Messiah Rescue and Benevolent Home, 2001 Paxton Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
2. The times and places of meetings of the members of the two (2) merging corporations, at which the joint plan of merger was adopted, the kinds and periods of notices given to the members of each, respectively, and the total votes by which the joint plan of merger was adopted, respectively, are as follows, to wit:

*Brethren in Christ meeting convened Thursday, April 3, 1941, at 9:30 o'clock, A. M., at Antrim Church near Greencastle, Pennsylvania, pursuant to notice published in the Evangelical Visitor, the official organ of the Brethren in Christ, and by letter mailed to each member ten (10) days prior to the aforesaid meeting. The joint plan of merger was unanimously adopted.*

*General Conference of the Brethren in Christ meeting convened Wednesday, June 4, 1941, at 9:15 o'clock, A. M., at Milford, Indiana, pursuant to notice published in the Evangelical Visitor, the official organ of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ, and by letter mailed to each member ten (10) days prior to the aforesaid meeting. The joint plan of merger was unanimously adopted.*

3. The names and addresses of the directors of the surviving corporation, who shall act as such until the first regular meeting of its members, are as follows:

<b>Names</b>	<b>Addresses</b>
Henry H. Brubaker,	Mechanicsburg, Pa.
Orville B. Ulery,	Springfield, Ohio
E. J. Swalm,	Duntroon, Ont., Canada
Jacob T. Ginder,	Manheim, Pa.
John H. Martin,	Lancaster, Pa.
Henry K. Kreider,	Campbelltown, Pa.
J. H. Wagaman,	Upland, California
Harvey W. Hoke,	West Milton, Ohio
Orla L. Heise,	Gormley, Ont., Canada

4. The plan of merger is set forth in Exhibit “A” hereto attached and made a part hereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said corporations have hereunto signed these Articles of Merger by their respective Presidents or Moderators, with the common and corporate seals attached, attested by the respective Secretaries, this 9th day of June, 1941.

**GENERAL CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN IN CHRIST**

Attest: By C. N. HOSTETTER, JR.  
*President*  
ORVILLE B. ULERY  
*Secretary*

**BRETHREN IN CHRIST**

Attest: By CHARLIE B. BYERS  
*President or Moderator*  
J. L. MYERS  
*Secretary*

**Joint Plan of Merger of General Conference of the Brethren in Christ and Brethren in Christ**

The General Conference of the Brethren in Christ, a Pennsylvania corporation, incorporated under the Non-profit Corporation Law by the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on July 29, 1940, and the Brethren in Christ, a Pennsylvania corporation, incorporated by the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on May 2, 1904, shall be merged into the GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST, the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ to be the surviving corporation, for the purposes and upon the terms hereinafter stated:

1. The name of the surviving corporation shall be "GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST."
2. The location and post office address of the surviving corporation in this Commonwealth shall be Messiah Rescue and Benevolent Home, 2001 Paxton Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
3. The surviving corporation is to exist perpetually.
4. The purposes, objects, articles and conditions as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation of General Conference of the Brethren in Christ shall be the same in and made a part of the joint plan of merger.
5. Application for merger shall be made by the merging corporations to the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.
6. All property, real, personal and mixed, shall be under the supervision and control of the surviving corporation, the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ, and all

## Supplementary Material

the debts and obligations shall be assumed by the surviving corporation in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the said surviving corporation.

### GENERAL CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Attest: By C. N. HOSTETTER, JR.  
*President*  
ORVILLE B. ULERY  
*Secretary*

### BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Attest: By CHARLIE B. BYERS  
*President or Moderator*  
J. L. MYERS  
*Secretary*

This is to certify that the foregoing plan of merger of General Conference of the Brethren in Christ and Brethren in Christ was unanimously adopted at a meeting convened on Thursday, April 3, 1941, at 9:30 o'clock, A. M., at the Antrim Church near Greencastle, Pennsylvania, pursuant to notice published in the *Evangelical Visitor*, the official organ of the Brethren in Christ, and by letter mailed to each member ten (10) days prior to the aforesaid meeting. The joint plan of merger was unanimously adopted.

BRETHREN IN CHRIST  
By J. L. MYERS  
*Secretary*

This is to certify that the foregoing plan of merger of General Conference of the Brethren in Christ and Brethren in Christ was unanimously adopted at a meeting convened on Wednesday, June 4, 1941, at 9:15 o'clock, A. M., at Milford, Indiana, pursuant to written notice published in the *Evangelical Visitor*, the official organ of General Conference of the Brethren in Christ, and by written notice mailed to each member ten (10) days prior to the aforesaid meeting. The joint plan of merger was unanimously adopted.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST  
By ORVILLE B. ULERY  
*Secretary*

**Decree**

AND NOW, to wit, this 30th day of June, 1941, the Articles of Merger of General Conference of Brethren in Christ, a non-profit corporation, having been duly affirmed, acknowledged, and filed in the Office of the Prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on the 24th day of June, 1941, and having attached thereto a certified copy of the joint plan of merger, properly executed by the constituent corporations; and the said Articles of Merger having been duly presented to me, the undersigned, a law judge of the said County and State, said Articles having been accompanied by due proof of publication of the notice of an application for merger in the Harrisburg Telegraph, a newspaper of general circulation, published in the said County of Dauphin, and in the Dauphin County Reporter, the legal periodical published in the said County of Dauphin, on the 25th day of June, 1941, respectively, and at least three (3) days prior to the presentation of this application for merger as required by the Act of Assembly and Rule of Court, I hereby certify that I have perused and examined the said Articles of Merger and application for approval thereof, and that I find the same to be in proper form and within the purposes set forth in the Act of General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled "The Non-profit Corporation Law," approved the fifth day of May, 1933, and its amendments, and that the Articles of Merger appear to be lawful and not injurious to the community.

WHEREFORE, upon motion of William H. Earnest, Esquire, and upon consideration of the foregoing, IT IS ORDERED AND DECREED that the said Articles of Merger be and the same are hereby approved, and that upon the recording of the said Articles of Merger and this order, the subscribers thereto and their associates, and the successors of them and their associates, shall be merged into one surviving corporation by the name of General Conference of Brethren in Christ for the purposes and upon the terms set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation of the said General Conference of Brethren in Christ.

BY THE COURT

*WM. M. Hargett, P.J.*

July 22, 1941

# RECORD OF REGIONAL CONFERENCE INCORPORATIONS

CONFERENCE	WHERE INCORPORATED	DATE OF INCORPORATION	WHERE RECORDED
<b>Allegheny</b>	Court of Common Pleas Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA No. 1097 March Term 1960	June 16, 1960	Charter Book Z, P. 441. Office for Recording of Deeds, etc., County of Dauphin, PA
<b>Atlantic</b>	Court of Common Pleas Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA No. 1096 March Term 1960	June 16, 1990	Charter Book Z, P. 453, Office for Recording of Deeds, etc., County of Dauphin PA
<b>Canadian</b>	City of Toronto, Ontario	Sept. 12, 1935	
<b>Great Lakes</b> (formerly Central)	Columbus, Ohio Articles of Incorporation of Central Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church, Inc. No. 288585	March 1, 1960	Recorded in the office of the Secretary of State, on Roll B. 145, at Frame 314 of the records of Incorporation and Miscellaneous Filings.
<b>Midwest</b>	Court: Dickinson County, Abilene, Kansas		Book 139, Page 582, Of- fice of Register of Deeds, Dickinson County, KS
<b>Pacific</b>	Court: San Bernardino County	Sept. 8, 1960	File # 10, 448, County of San Bernardino, CA, September 29, 1960 Filed, Sacramento, CA, Sep- tember 26, 1960, under Corporation # 402 896.
<b>Southeast</b>	Commonwealth of Virginia Richmond, VA	April 30, 1991	Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the State Corpo- ration Commission.
<b>Susquehanna</b>	Department of State Harrisburg PA	March 25, 1991	In the Minute Book of the Department of State of PA

# CANADIAN-U.S. COVENANT AGREEMENT

## **The General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church And The Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church**

The Brethren in Christ Church in the United States and the Brethren in Christ Church in Canada have enjoyed a very close relationship for well over 200 years. Throughout these years we have embraced common theological distinctives, church practices and traditions, leaders and persons of influence, endeavors, experiences, and many other aspects of a shared history. We rejoice in the harmony that has existed. It is our desire to continue united in purpose and effort.

There have been some differences and distinctives arising out of two different nations. Especially during the past several years, differing aspects of our national laws needed to be addressed. The Brethren in Christ in Canada and the USA desire to respect the laws of our countries and follow these as they touch on areas of church polity and government. We have been in dialogue concerning these issues. This Covenant Agreement comes out of this process of communication.

The following principles are designed to provide a harmonious working relationship:

1. It is our desire and intent to operate in spirit and practice as one church (a binational General Conference) within the laws of each nation. The Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church intends to continue being a part of the Brethren in Christ General Conference and the General Conference welcomes and desires the participation of the Canadian Conference. The Canadian Conference is committed to continuing participation in the biennial meetings and the other functions of the Brethren in Christ General Conference.
2. The Canadian Conference, functioning within the laws of Canada, has crafted its methods and documents of operation to conform to Canadian law. The Articles of Government for the Canadian Conference and the Joint Ministry Agreement between Canadian Conference and the North American General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Churches have been created for this purpose.
3. The General Conference Manual of Doctrine and Government, conforming to U.S. law, is a legal document for Brethren in Christ Churches in the United States. The Canadian Conference will approach it from a covenant relationship. Thus, any

## Supplementary Material

changes to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* approved by General Conference will be reviewed by the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church with the desire and intent to adopt these changes if they are not at variance with Canadian law.

We give thanks to God for the special relationship that exists between Brethren in Christ in Canada and the United States. We anticipate continued cooperation so that together, with God's help, we will foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God and proclaim His gospel to all people.