

## DISCIPLINE REVISION

# REFERENDA

## Referenda 1 : Criteria for Ministerial Delegates

**DR-01**

We used referenda in both 2001 and 2005 to change “Article I Personnel” of the Constitution to fit our changing structure. Knowing that structure and ministerial titles will no doubt change again in the future, it makes sense to put the criteria for ministerial delegates in the Discipline, where it can be changed without requiring a referenda (we’ve already done this with lay delegates).

### 11 Article I Personnel

#### Current Wording

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

**Replace with the following (the only content change is in 1.a). This cannot be revised. It must be voted upon as approved by the membership.**

1. All ecclesiastical power herein granted to make or repeal any rule of discipline is vested in a national conference, which shall consist of:

- a. Licensed ministers in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, who meet the criteria set forth in the Discipline.
- b. Laypersons chosen by the congregations in which they are members, according to a formula provided in the Discipline.

## Referenda 2 : Annual Conference Property

**DR-02**

Remove Paragraph 13.2, “Annual Conference Property,” and Paragraph 13.4, “Camp/Conference Center Property.” We no longer have annual conferences as part of our structure, nor do we have any camps or conference centers. Only points 2 and 4 below would be removed.

### 2. Annual Conference Property

The right, title, interest, and claim of any conference property, legacies, bequests, or donations of any kind, obtained by purchase or otherwise, by any person or persons, for the use and benefit of the said annual conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, is hereby fully recognized and held to be the property of the annual conference.

### 4. Camp/Conference Center Property

The right, title, interest, and claim of all property, whether consisting in lots of ground, buildings and other improvements, legacies, bequests, or donations of any kind, obtained by purchase or otherwise, by any person or persons, for the use and benefit of the Camp/Conference Center, is hereby fully recognized and held to be the property of the aforesaid as long as they are self incorporated.



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**LOCAL CHURCH****¶420, Dual Membership for Missionaries****DR-11**

The United Brethren denomination does not allow dual membership—membership in a United Brethren church, plus membership in a different church. As a result, some endorsed missionaries have had their names removed from their home church's membership role when they became members of the church they serve on the field. This creates an awkward situation. For instance:

- Our staff in Macau cannot be members of the UB churches in Macau. Going further back, Luke Fetters and Phil Burkett couldn't be members of the church they started and pastored.
- Endorsed missionaries Roger Skinner and David Datema live in parts of the United States that don't have a United Brethren church, yet are unable to join the churches where they attend and minister.
- Endorsed missionaries involved in church planting can't be members of the churches they are planting.
- Because endorsed missionaries can't be members of the churches where they live and serve, they may be excluded from leadership positions for which they are gifted and needed.

This proposal would permit dual membership for this specific situation, and only this situation.

**Add the following as a new ¶420**

Applicants to Global Ministries must be current members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. In the case of married couples applying for endorsed status, at least one must be a current member. All are expected to maintain their membership. However, dual membership is permitted should missionaries find church membership in their place of ministry to be either necessary or advantageous.

**For information purposes only:**

The Global Ministries handbook will include a statement which expands on what is adopted for the Discipline. It would read something like this:

“Applicants to Global Ministries must be current members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. In the case of married couples applying for endorsed status, at least one must be a current member. All are expected to maintain their membership. However, dual membership is permitted should missionaries find church membership in their place of ministry to be either necessary or advantageous.

“Both fulltime and endorsed missionaries are required to provide Global Ministries with regular newsletters, annual reports, and evidence they continue to receive support from United Brethren churches. Individuals retiring or resigning from service will be automatically removed from the list of Global Ministries missionaries.”

*In many cases, entire sections are printed so you can see the context of a proposed change. However, that doesn't mean the entire section is subject to revision.*

*Only the part indicated is subject to revision, unless an amendment from the floor would affect other parts.*

## ¶422.1, Local Board of Administration

DR-12

Add the parenthetical below:

### 1. Purpose

The local board of administration (**or its equivalent**) oversees all affairs pertaining to the local church. All commissions, committees, and other groups within the church are subject to the board of administration.

## ¶422.2, Local Board of Administration, Personnel

DR-13

Delete the last sentence, as indicated, and change the word “shall” to “may.”

- a. The constituency of the board depends on the structure which the local church chooses to adopt.

The senior pastor shall **may** be a member of the board. ~~It may include such persons as: lay leader, commission chairpersons, treasurer, pastor(s), lay delegate(s), or others.~~

## ¶422.3c, Local Board of Administration, Duties

DR-14

Delete the word “annually”

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

## ¶423, Lay Delegates

DR-15

Replace the current two paragraphs with a new section:

**Current:** ¶423, Lay Delegates

### 1. Qualifications

It is recommended that lay delegates be recognized leaders within the local church body. The church shall not select anyone who holds a National Conference license or is being recommended to the National Conference for license. All lay delegates must be adult members of the local church they are representing.

### 2. Notification

The local board shall inform the US bishop of the delegates and alternates chosen.

**Replace with:**

### 1. Responsibilities

Lay delegates represent the local church to the national conference, and also serve as voting delegates at the US National Conference.

### 2. Qualifications

All lay delegates must be adult members of the local church they represent. The church shall not

select anyone who holds a National Conference license or is being recommended to the National Conference for license.

### 3. Selection

Each local church may determine the method for selecting lay delegates.

### 4. Notification

The local board shall inform the US bishop of the delegates and alternates chosen, according to the timeline specified by the bishop

## ¶432, Local Conference, Personnel

**DR-16**

Add the words in bold.

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

## ¶435.1, Duties of the Local Conference

**DR-17**

Remove the underlined words and replace with the words in bold:

### 435 Duties

1. *To Grant and Renew Licenses.* The local conference shall grant and renew local church ministers' licenses and shall recommend to the ~~national conference~~ **bishop** those ministers who are qualified for national conference license to preach....

## ¶435.6, Duties of the Local Conference

**DR-18**

Add the line in bold.

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

**It is recommended that money from the sale of closed churches be given to the US National Conference to start new churches.**

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Make the changes as indicated in points 6a and 6d, and remove point 6f. The entire section is given for context.

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**6. To be responsible for local church administration.**

- a. By ~~planning and leading~~ **overseeing** the worship services.
- b. By giving direction for the ministry of the local church.
- c. By doing specific planning and goal-setting.
- d. By ~~making monthly reports~~ reporting to the board of administration and submitting annual reports to the ~~national conference~~ bishop.
- e. By keeping accurate membership records.
- f. By ~~preparing and keeping an updated passbook.~~
- g. By presenting the church Discipline.
- h. By notifying the US bishop in writing at least 30 days before the effective date of resignation.

## DISCIPLINE REVISION

# NATIONAL CONFERENCE

## ¶501, US National Conference

DR-21

Remove the words as indicated, and insert “various ministries”

### 501 Purpose

The United States National Conference shall oversee all affairs pertaining to its **various ministries**. ~~leadership teams, conferences, churches, church extension districts, and mission districts, and national office.~~ The US National Conference shall establish policies pertaining to the ministry of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, United States of America.

## ¶502.2, National Conference Covenant

DR-22

Replace the current four paragraphs with a shorter, more flexible section. It deals with the process to follow when churches don't sign the covenant.

### Current:

#### 2. Responsibilities of the US National Conference

- a. If a church does not sign and submit the covenant to the national office 90 days prior to the National Conference session, the cluster coach (or another elder designated by the bishop) shall hold a specially called congregational meeting of the church membership at least 60 days prior to the National Conference. The purpose of this meeting would be to determine if it is the desire of the membership to sign and continue in a covenant relationship with the Church of the Brethren in Christ, USA, or to withdraw from said relationship. If a majority of the church's members at a duly called meeting determine not to sign the covenant, then the church shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.
- b. Churches that hold title to their property and do not sign the covenant shall be considered to have withdrawn from the denomination.
- c. If a church does not keep its commitment to the standards of the national conference covenant, the ELT may, with a majority, decline to offer a new covenant.
- d. The ELT shall handle any situations which may arise concerning the status of churches, but which are not already covered in the Discipline.

**Replace with the following, which gives much more flexibility. The main changes are in points a and b.**

- a. If a church does not sign and submit the covenant to the national office 90 days prior to the National Conference session, the bishop shall establish a procedure for determining whether or not

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the church desires to remain part of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

b. The bishop shall give churches opportunity to comply with the covenant. If they fail to comply, the bishop may call a special local conference to determine if they desire to sign and continue in a covenant relationship with the Church of the Brethren in Christ, USA, or to withdraw from said relationship. If a majority of the church's members at a duly called meeting determine not to sign the covenant, then the church shall be considered to have withdrawn from the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

c. Having followed the above procedure, churches that hold title to their property and do not sign the covenant shall be considered to have withdrawn from the denomination.

d. If a church does not keep its commitment to the standards of the national conference covenant, and has been advised by the Bishop, the ELT may, with a majority vote, revoke the covenant.

e. The ELT shall handle any situations which may arise concerning the status of churches, but which are not already covered in the Discipline.

## **¶503, Delegates to the National Conference**

**DR-23**

Revise as indicated, adding the national directors as voting members of the National Conference, replacing "elected" with "chosen,"

### **503 Delegates to the National Conference**

The voting members of the United States National Conference are the US bishop, **national directors**, the ministerial delegate(s) from each congregation, and the lay delegates ~~elected~~ **chosen** by each congregation according to [insert paragraph reference from the new Discipline].

## **¶503.1, Clergy Representation**

**DR-24**

Referendum 1 says ministerial representatives are those who meet the criteria set forth in the Discipline. This is where we set forth that criteria. This follows the direction set forth by the 2007 US National Conference.

### **Current wording**

Conference ministers who are actively pastoring a United Brethren church or serving in an appointed or elected position in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA, are eligible to serve as voting members of the National Conference. Retired ministers will be advisory members (without vote) of the US National Conference.

### **Replace with the following:**

#### **503.1 Clergy Representation**

a. *Voting members.* Ministers are eligible to serve as voting members if they meet all of these

conditions:

(1) They hold a national conference license.

(2) At the time of the National Conference meeting, they are employed by a United Brethren church in the US National Conference, or serve the national conference in an appointed or elected position.

b. *Advisory members.* All other national conference ministers are eligible to serve as advisory members of the national conference.

## **¶521.1, Nominating Committee**

**DR-25**

Make the revisions as indicated, giving some flexibility and not restrict the nominating committee to delegates, so the nominating committee could be selected anytime.

### **1. Nominating Committee**

The Executive Leadership Team shall appoint a nominating committee ~~as soon as practicable after the election of delegates to the US National Conference~~ **and approve the ballot for submission to the US National Conference.**

## **¶522, Duties of the Bishop**

**DR-26**

Delete point 2, add the points in bold (15-18), and renumber as needed. Only points 2 and 15-18 are open for revision. However, the entire section is printed here for context.

1. Develop and communicate the vision of the church in cooperation with the Executive Leadership Team.
2. ~~Serve as an ex officio member of all national conference leadership teams.~~
3. Preside at meetings of the US National Conference and the Executive Leadership Team. The bishop shall be responsible for the general administration of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA. The bishop will oversee the work of the directors, the staff, and the national leadership teams.
4. Conduct ordination services or assign this responsibility to another ordained minister.
5. Ensure that accountability procedures are established for all directors, leadership teams, cluster coaches, and staff of the US national church
6. Interpret Discipline. The bishop shall interpret the Discipline, and this ruling shall stand until the next meeting of the US National Conference or the ELT.
7. Appoint Cluster Coaches. The bishop shall be responsible to appoint cluster coaches. Local churches that do not voluntarily join a cluster will be assigned a cluster relationship by the bishop.
8. Comply with International Agreements. The bishop shall ensure that US National Conference entities comply with any joint ministry agreements with any other United Brethren national conferences.

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9. Represent the US National Conference. The bishop shall, at his discretion, participate in or designate someone to represent the US National Conference to parachurch and inter-denominational ministries, and to other evangelical denominations.

10. Develop and implement a strategy for recruiting future pastors and churches.

11. Station pastors in conjunction with others assigned to that task.

12. Promote and communicate the Core Values of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, International, and the Standards of the Church as stated in Part 2 of the Discipline.

13. Encourage and promote continuing relationship with the international conferences.

14. The bishop is an ex-officio ministerial member to the General Conference.

**15. Create any leadership teams, beyond those specified in the Discipline, needed to better serve the churches and ministries of the US National Conference.**

**16. Maintain a manual stating job descriptions and operating procedures of the national office, staff, and leadership teams.**

**17. Fill vacancies on leadership teams.**

**18. Appoint the appropriate number of delegates to represent the US National Conference to the General Conference.**

## **¶1544, Duties of the Executive Leadership Team**

**DR-27**

Revise the duties of the ELT to conform to the governance structure. This involves deleting a lot of content, with those duties now assumed by the bishop. The last three points, in bold, are new. Items would then be renumbered as needed.

1. The Executive Leadership Team shall carry out the plans and policies established by the US National Conference. When issues arise that are not covered by the policies established by the US National Conference, the Executive Leadership Team shall determine the policy which will be followed until the US National Conference meets and deals with the issue.

2. The Executive Leadership Team shall decide questions of interpretation in the Constitution and the US Discipline. Between sessions, the US bishop's interpretation will stand until the next meeting of either the National Conference or the Executive Leadership Team.

3. The Executive Leadership Team shall fill vacancies involving the US bishop ~~and appointed directors.~~

4. The Executive Leadership Team will receive reports from the bishop, ~~directors, leadership teams,~~ and appropriate staff., **and from other persons as directed by the bishop, including information**

**about finances, churches, ministries, and strategic direction.**

5. The ELT shall develop and approve evaluation procedures for the US bishop, and shall approve job descriptions and evaluation procedures for the directors and staff.

6. The Executive Leadership Team will make appropriate appointments upon the recommendation of the US bishop for personnel such as auditor and staff.

7. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint the chairpersons for the leadership teams upon the recommendation of the US bishop.

8. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint the other members of leadership teams and fill any vacancies which may arise.

9. The Executive Leadership Team will appoint necessary committees to prepare for and conduct the work of the US National Conference.

**10. Approve new appointments to the Higher Education Leadership Team.**

**11. New duty of the ELT: Approve job descriptions and operating procedures of leadership for inclusion in the manual of operations.**

**12. Determine the procedure for selecting delegates to the General Conference.**

**¶552.1, Clusters**

**DR-28**

**Current ¶552.1, Purpose**

**1. Purpose**

All National Conference ministers, nonlicensed senior pastors, and United Brethren congregations are required to participate in a cluster of their choice for the purpose of maintaining and developing pastoral and congregational health through mutual friendships, coaching, and accountability. Clusters are the entities to which all local congregations, preaching points, and ministers are primarily accountable.

**Replace with the following:**

a. All National Conference ministers and senior pastors of United Brethren congregations are required to participate in a cluster of their choice for the purpose of maintaining and developing pastoral and congregational health through mutual friendships, coaching, and accountability.

b. Clusters are the entities to which all local congregations, preaching points, and ministers are primarily accountable.

c. The cluster to which the local church is accountable shall be the cluster in which the senior pastor is a member.

## **¶552.2, Formation of Clusters**

**DR-29**

### **Current wording:**

Groups wishing to form a cluster will present a formal request, including admissions standards, to the Executive Leadership Team, which possesses the authority to approve, disapprove, or request modifications. A cluster typically consists of five to ten (ideally not more than seven) United Brethren ministers and their congregations. Non-United Brethren participants may be included in approved clusters.

### **Replace with the following:**

#### **2. Formation of Clusters**

a. A cluster typically consists of five to ten (ideally not more than seven) United Brethren ministers and their congregations.

b. Groups wishing to form a cluster will present a formal request, including admissions standards, to the Bishop, who possesses the authority to approve, disapprove, or request modifications.

c. Non-United Brethren participants may be included in approved clusters.

## **¶561, Property**

**DR-30**

Remove the reference to annual conferences.

### **561 Introduction**

According to the UB Constitution, all church property titled by the local church is considered as belonging to the local church. All real property owned by ~~an annual conference~~ or the national conference is considered to be held in trust for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, USA.

## **Part VII, Leadership Teams**

**DR-31**

In the past, bishops have been required to have certain leadership teams, whether or not they fit that bishop's vision, and whether or not a full leadership team was needed for that area. This proposal would provide flexibility by removing the requirement that the bishop use certain leadership teams, thereby enabling the bishop to apply his own vision for how to best carry out the work of the US National Conference. The bishop could use any of these leadership teams, or create entirely new ones, and could make changes in mid-term without requiring a vote of the national conference.

In the case of Global Ministries, they have their own handbook spelling out policies and procedures. In addition, Global Ministries is not specifically a ministry or entity of the US National Conference, but a joint venture of the United States and Canadian churches.

Any leadership teams the bishop desires would become part of the operations manual of the national office. A new duty of the bishop gives him responsibility for maintaining such a manual, which contains staff job descriptions, operating procedures, and information about the work of any leadership teams.

**Remove the following chapters:**

1. Chapter 21, "Leadership Teams."
2. Chapter 22, "Administrative."
3. Chapter 24, "Global Ministries."
4. Chapter 25, "Healthy Church."
5. Chapter 27, "Church Multiplication."

**Reconstitute the section with the following chapters:**

- a. Executive Leadership Team (currently in Part VI, The National Church).
- b. The Higher Education Leadership Team (needed to coordinate with Huntington University bylaws).
- c. The Pastoral Ministry Leadership Team (needed to oversee the licensing and ordination process).

**¶505.4, Responsibilities of the National Conference DR-32**

If the above proposal passes, thereby removing the Administrative Leadership Team, the following paragraph will need to be revised.

4. The US National Conference shall establish financial policies ~~to direct the Administrative Leadership Team in~~ **for** developing the annual budget for the US national church. The Executive Leadership Team will adopt the budget the years that the US National Conference does not meet.

**Editorial Changes DR-33**

Editorially change the terminology throughout the Discipline from "cluster coach" to "cluster leader."

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## DISCIPLINE REVISION

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

## 33.3, General Conference Representation

DR-41

**Rationale**

Changes in recent years to the international structure of the United Brethren in Christ have resulted in the development of a peer relationship among national conferences. As such, our missional focus is better served if equal partners in the Great Commission task gather to encourage, strengthen, and join with each other to expand Christ's kingdom and Church, rather than delegations based on size.

This change will permit us to:

1. Emphasize our shared ministry interests in expanding the work of God, rather than maintaining or protecting individual interests.
2. Significantly reduce the expenses associated with conducting a General Conference, a cost that has often been born by one or two conferences.

Here is the current and proposed wording for a change to the International By-laws. The change would be made by the General Conference delegates. A vote here would only affirm that the US National Conference is on board.

**Current wording:**

- a. National conferences with an average attendance of 250-5000 are entitled to two delegates.
- b. National conferences with an average attendance of 5001-10,000 are entitled to four delegates.
- c. For each additional 5000 in average attendance, a national conference is entitled to two additional delegates.

**Replace with the following:**

Each national conference is entitled to two delegates—the conference's highest leader, and his or her designee. Observers and advisors may attend General Conference at their own expense or the expense of the national conference.

**Recommendation DR-41:**

That the US National Conference affirm a change to the bylaws of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ International which would do the following:

1. Give each member national conference two voting delegates—the conference's highest leader, and his or her designee (not a spouse).
2. Allow observers and advisors to attend at their own expense or the expense of their national conference.