

## CHAPTER VIII

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This chapter is like an appendix to the previous polity. *Policies* and *procedures* do not fit the definition of polity, but are generally accepted by the denomination as standards by which we abide and operate. This listing is not meant to be exhaustive. As additional policies are identified, they will be added to the chapter.

#### **Annual Conference Nominating and Election Procedures**

Annual Conference delegates elect persons to significant leadership positions in the denomination, including moderator-elect, Annual Conference secretary, one-third of the members of the boards of Annual Conference agencies, and significant denominational committees. Nominations are received in the Annual Conference office between August 1 and December 1 for the positions that are open at the next Conference. Any member or group in the denomination can submit names for nominees. For each name submitted there must also be a signed form of consent by the nominee.

The Nominating Committee of Standing Committee reviews the nominee information forms in January and chooses four names for each vacant position. This preliminary ballot is distributed to current Standing Committee members, who then pare the ballot to two persons for each vacancy.

That ballot becomes the one submitted to Annual Conference delegates during the business session at the following Conference.

#### **Brethren Tag Line and Logo**

The Brethren “tag line”: *Doing the Work of Jesus: Simply, Peacefully, Together* and the Church of the Brethren logo are copyright items that are to be used only by Church of the Brethren congregations and recognized denominational groups. For more information about these identifying marks, contact the Church of the Brethren, Office of Interpretation, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

#### **Controversial Issues**

Annual Conference in 1988 adopted a procedure for dealing with “highly controversial issues” when such matters come before the Conference delegate body. That plan was revised in 2008 and adopted by the 2008 Annual Conference. When Standing Committee determines that an issue before Conference is potentially controversial, the SC can recommend that Conference use the procedure. The plan essentially calls for two years of dialogue and study of the issue before Annual Conference takes an action on the question. <sup>1</sup>

#### **Council of District Executives**

The Council of District Executives is an informal organization consisting of all of the district executives, both executives and associate executives, who meet twice or more a year to discuss common tasks and approaches, and to share concerns and joys about the denomination.

#### **Funding Parity**

The Annual Conference agencies and the denominational districts work together to coordinate

funding efforts among mutual constituents in the denomination. The emphasis is focused on how the church can be about its whole task. Congregations and individuals are encouraged to see all of the program agencies as being vital parts of the denominational ministry.

### **Honor Designated Giving**

The Annual Conference agencies are all committed to honor the wishes of the individual donor or congregation in the designation of gifts for specific ministries.

### **Homosexuals and Ministry**

The 2002 Annual Conference responded to a query regarding whether it is appropriate for districts to license and ordain persons to the ministry who have homosexual orientation by answering that “we consider it inappropriate to license or ordain to the Christian ministry any persons who are known to be engaging in homosexual practices, and will not recognize the licensing and ordaining of such persons in the Church of the Brethren.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Location of Denominational Facilities**

While the denominational office facilities in Elgin, Ill., and the Brethren Service Center facilities in New Windsor are operated by the Church of the Brethren, Inc., and while the Bethany Theological Seminary facilities in Richmond, Ind., are maintained by the Bethany Board of Trustees, decisions to dispose of or relocate these facilities are brought to Annual Conference for ratification.

### **Moderator/Staff Honoraria Policy**

The officers of Annual Conference and the staff members of Annual Conference agencies are available to districts and congregations in the denomination for workshops, information sharing, and other tasks related to their areas of responsibility, subject to mutual scheduling. Check with the appropriate agency, or the Annual Conference Office in the case of Annual Conference officers, regarding expectations related to the expenses of the leader’s transportation, meals and lodging.

### **Outdoor Education**

The Church of the Brethren has long had a commitment to providing outdoor education to its members. This responsibility is designated as that of the individual districts that maintain and staff outdoor education facilities and camps. Most of the Brethren camps have separate incorporation and management teams. However, the denomination encourages support of outdoor education as part of its total ministry.

### **Pastors Salary Scale and Benefits**

Annual Conference in 1985 formally organized the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee to recommend to congregations a pastors salary table and other benefits that would be standard for the compensation of pastors in the denomination. It is understood that all congregations should be endeavoring to meet the annual recommendations of this committee to have all pastors adequately employed.

### **Relationship of Colleges and Homes**

The six Brethren colleges and universities and the numerous retirement and nursing homes of the denomination are independently governed but are considered very much a part of denominational mission and focus. Both the higher education institutions and the homes and hospital have a network of communication and collaboration that keeps them in contact with the denomination and with one another. The Association of Brethren Caregivers also facilitates the communication among the homes.

### **Relationship to Other Brethren Denominations**

The Church of the Brethren continues to relate to the denominations who share a common history through Alexander Mack and the original Schwarzenau group. Many of those efforts have been extended by Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., a group not organically related to denominational structure, but assured of the support of Annual Conference and its agencies. In 2002 Annual Conference adopted a resolution on the Brethren Church (Ashland) calling for forgiveness for actions that have divided the churches and expressing the desire to work with the Ashland Brethren “in Christ’s service wherever possible.” Subsequently, the Church of the Brethren and the Brethren Church (Ashland) held simultaneous annual conferences in Richmond, Va., July 12-16, 2008, in celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Brethren baptisms in Schwarzenau.

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<sup>1</sup> 1988 Minutes (1985-1989), “A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues,” 674-681. 2009 Minutes, “A Structural Framework for Dealing with Strongly Controversial Issues,” 231-240.

<sup>2</sup> 2002 Minutes (2000-2004), “Query: Licensing/Ordination of Homosexual Persons to the Ministry in the Church of the Brethren,” 744-745.