



Brethren in Christ U.S.

MANUAL OF
**DOCTRINE &
GOVERNMENT**

2020 EDITION





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PREFACE

Since the beginnings of our Church family (about 1778), the Brethren in Christ has produced numerous statements on doctrine and government. In the preparation and approval of each successive version of these statements, the Church desires to base our life and practice on the Word of God.

This 2020 *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) of the Brethren in Christ U.S. incorporates several changes from the 2018 edition. These changes were approved at the 2020 General Assembly, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Additions were made to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine, placing the Brethren in Christ in the context of broader Church history.
- An introduction was added to the Core Values to provide context for how they were first developed.
- Amendments were made to the introduction to the Statements of Christian Life and Practice.
- Amendments were made to the Bylaws to ensure that they remain current and relevant.

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

Alan Robinson
National Director

PART ONE: DOCTRINE

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 stood in the stream of historic Christianity mediated through the Protestant Reformation, especially the Radical Reformation. They 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 U.S.* 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.

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 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. Sinfulness 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 submissive 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 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 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.

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

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

Psalms 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

Psalm 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

Psalm 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

CORE VALUES

The Core Values of the Brethren in Christ Church were developed in May of 1999 by a group of 51 representatives gathered from throughout North America. Their goal was to distill our essential beliefs, stated in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine, and communicate them in a contemporary way using clear and accessible language. Ten concise statements were articulated and later adopted by the 2000 General Conference. In broad strokes, these ten statements convey the core convictions of our faith community—the values that touch our hearts, inspire our minds, and move us to action.

In recognition of their deep resonance among our national and international church family since their inception, these values were added to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* by a vote of the 2016 BIC U.S. General Conference.

Experiencing God's Love and Grace

We value the free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

Believing the Bible

We value the Bible as God's authoritative Word, study it together, and build our lives on its truth.

Worshipping God

We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.

Following Jesus

We value whole hearted obedience to Christ Jesus through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

Belonging to the Community of Faith

We value integrity in relationships and mutual accountability in an atmosphere of grace, love, and acceptance.

Witnessing to the World

We value an active and loving witness for Christ to all people.

Serving Compassionately

We value serving others at their point of need, following the example of our Lord Jesus.

Pursuing Peace

We value all human life and promote forgiveness, understanding, reconciliation, and non-violent resolution of conflict.

Living Simply

We value uncluttered lives, which free us to love boldly, give generously, and serve joyfully.

Relying on God

We confess our dependence on God for everything, and seek to deepen our intimacy with Him by living prayerfully.

STATEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND PRACTICE

Statements of Christian Life and Practice included in the BIC U.S. MDG are written positions approved by the General Assembly to provide clarity and guidance regarding specific concerns, topics, or issues, often for a particular time or context. Statements may focus on issues related to faithful discipleship within the Christian community, or issues related to the wider societal context.

A Statement may be revised or deleted upon the recommendation of the GCB and upon approval by the General Assembly.

Article 1: *The Christian and Personal Life*

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 A disciplined Christian life is exemplified in things such as a gentle and quiet spirit, personal devotions, humility, and modesty.

Article 2: *The Christian and Home Life*

- 2.1 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.

- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Loving discipline of children and a cooperative spirit in the economic, social, and spiritual planning of the home are of vital importance.

Article 3: *The Christian and the Church*

- 3.1 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 (1 Corinthians 6:1).
- 3.2 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 churchwide. 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.
- 3.3 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 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.*
 - *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.*

Article 4: *The Christian and Society*

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 The Bible teaches the equality of all humanity and that Christ loves all equally. God is displeased with all forms of prejudice.
- 4.4 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 2 Corinthians 8:8-15.

Article 5: *Worship and Congregational Life*

- 5.1 God calls his people to corporate worship (Hebrews 10:25; Psalm 92:13). Worship honors and adores the Lord. It brings encouragement and hope to the people of God.
- 5.2 The Bible portrays a wide variety of forms of worship. The primary focus is on the Lord through praise, prayer, music, preaching, and communion.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Church is enriched as people come together in different settings. 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.
- 5.5 The pastor, with the support of the governing 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.

PART TWO: GOVERNMENT

ARTICLES 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 (Mechanicsburg, Pa.).

The Brethren in Christ Charter (1904)

Be it known that the subscribers having associated themselves together for the purpose of worshiping 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 worshiping 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:

Name	Address
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:

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Name	Residences
Martin H. Oberholser	Culbertson, Pa.
Jacob K. Kreider	Lebanon, Pa.
Eli M. Engle	Columbia, Pa.
George Detweiler	Harrisburg, Pa.
S. R. Smith	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	George Detweiler
Jacob K. Kreider	S. R. Smith
Eli M. Engle	

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 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
Judge

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 worshiping 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.

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FOURTH: The corporation is to exist perpetually.

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:

Names	Residences
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, Calif.
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:

Names	Residences	Term
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., Canada	2 years
E. J. Swalm	Duntroon, Ont., Canada	3 years
Henry K. Kreider	Campbelltown, Pa.	3 years
Harvey W. Hoke	West Milton, Ohio	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

Jacob T. Ginder

John H. Martin

Henry K. Kreider

Stanley R. Geib

J. H. Wagaman

O. L. Heise

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 BRETHERN IN CHRIST," for the purpose and upon the terms therein stated.

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

Petition For Merger of General Conference of Brethren in Christ and Brethren in Christ (1941)

To the Honorable, the Judges of the said Court:

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

1. That your petitioners have executed, under the seal of each corporation, Articles of Merger for the purpose of merging into one surviving corporation under the name of General Conference of Brethren in Christ.
2. That your petitioners are corporations organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as more particularly described in the aforesaid Articles of Merger.
3. That the Articles of Merger herein mentioned have been filed in the Office of the Prothonotary of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on the 24th day of June, 1941, and there remained on file at least three (3) days prior to the date of the within petition or application for merger.
4. That your petitioners have jointly advertised their intention to apply to your Honorable Court for permission to merge in the Dauphin County Reporter and in Harrisburg Telegraph newspaper, proofs of which publication are hereto attached and made a part hereof.

WHEREFORE, your petitioners pray your Honorable Court to approve the said Articles of Merger and to enter a decree in accordance with such approval.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF BRETHERN IN CHRIST

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

BRETHERN IN CHRIST

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

Articles of Merger

Be it known that the subscribers, 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 Brethren in Christ, a Pennsylvania corporation, incorporated under an Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, approved April 29, 1874, and supplements thereto, by the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, are desirous of merging into a non-profit corporation to be known as the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ, agreeably to the provisions of the Non-profit Corporation Law and the supplements thereto, and do hereby set forth as follows, to wit:

1. The name of the surviving corporation is “GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BROTHERS 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:

Names	Addresses
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, Calif.

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Harvey W. Hoke,
Orla L. Heise,

West Milton, Ohio
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 the debts and obligations shall be assumed by the surviving corporation in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the said surviving corporation.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF BRETHERN IN CHRIST

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

BRETHERN 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.

BRETHERN 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 BRETHERN 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
Allegheny	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
Atlantic	Court of Common Pleas Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA No. 1096 March Term 1960	June 16, 1960	Charter Book Z, P. 453, Office for Recording of Deeds, etc., County of Dauphin PA
Great Lakes (formerly Central)	Columbus, OH 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 Mis- cellaneous Filings.
Midwest	Court: Dickinson County Abilene, KS	March 31, 1960	Book 139, Page 582, Of- fice of Register of Deeds, Dickinson County, KS
Pacific	Court: San Bernardino County	Sept. 8, 1960	File # 10, 448, County of San Bernardino, CA, September 29, 1960 Filed, Sacramento, CA, September 26, 1960, under Corporation # 402 896.
Southeast	Commonwealth of Virginia Richmond, VA	April 30, 1991	Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the State Cor- poration Commission.
Susquehanna	Department of State Harrisburg, PA	March 25, 1991	In the Minute Book of the Department of State of PA

BYLAWS

Article 1: Name, Purpose, Doctrine and Governance, and Office

1.1 Name

These are the Bylaws of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ (“BIC U.S.” or “Organization”), a Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation. The Organization also operates under the registered names of Brethren in Christ U.S. and BIC U.S. The Organization has been recognized as a tax exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the BIC U.S. is to foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God and to proclaim the gospel to all people.

1.3 Doctrine and Governance

The doctrine and governance of the BIC U.S., its Regional Conferences, and its congregations are stated in a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (“MDG” or “the Manual”). The provisions in the MDG shall be construed in accordance with the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, without giving effect to conflict of law principles.

1.3.1 Doctrine

- 1.3.1.1 The *Manual of Doctrine and Government* includes the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the BIC U.S. The Articles of Faith and Doctrine may be amended or repealed only by a two-thirds majority vote at two successive biennial meetings of the General Assembly of the BIC U.S. (“General Assembly”).
- 1.3.1.2 Other sections related to the doctrine of the BIC U.S. may be included in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly, and may be amended or repealed by the same.

1.3.2 Governance

- 1.3.2.1 The *Manual of Doctrine and Government* contains the Articles of Incorporation of BIC U.S., which may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly.
- 1.3.2.2 The *Manual of Doctrine and Government* also contains these Bylaws, which may be amended as prescribed in Article 14.

- 1.3.2.3 Other sections related to the governance of the BIC U.S. may be included in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly, and may be amended, suspended, or repealed by the same.

1.4 Office

The registered office of the BIC U.S. is at 431 Grantham Road, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055-5812. Communications may be sent to that address or by email to bic@bicus.org. This Organization may maintain additional offices at places that General Conference Board determines by resolution.

Article 2: General Assembly

2.1 Purpose

Pastors and delegates from Brethren in Christ congregations in the United States gather in a General Assembly to celebrate and facilitate the work of God through the BIC U.S.

2.2 Powers

The General Assembly is authorized to:

- 2.2.1 Share and celebrate the work of God through the BIC U.S.
- 2.2.2 Dialogue about issues related to the ministry of the BIC U.S.
- 2.2.3 Amend, repeal, or suspend any part of the MDG
- 2.2.4 Set the number and boundaries of Regional Conferences of the BIC U.S. (“Regional Conferences”)
- 2.2.5 Appoint members of General Conference Board
- 2.2.6 Appoint the National Director of the BIC U.S.

2.3 Meetings

- 2.3.1 General Assembly shall meet biennially.
- 2.3.2 Leadership Council shall determine the day, hour, and geographic location of each General Assembly meeting and, at least 180 days before the Assembly, in lieu of any other notice required by these Bylaws but consistent with Article 8.1, shall cause the National Director to give notice of the day, hour, and geographic location of the meeting to BIC U.S. pastors and congregations through the appropriate media designated by Leadership Council.

- 2.3.3 Leadership Council, in consultation with General Conference Board, shall plan the program and agenda for the General Assembly.
- 2.3.4 The National Director or the National Director's appointee shall chair meetings of the General Assembly.
- 2.3.5 Leadership Council shall appoint an assistant chairperson or chairpersons to serve at meetings of the General Assembly.
- 2.3.6 Members present at any duly-called meeting shall constitute a quorum.

2.4 Voting Members

Voting members of the General Assembly shall be:

- 2.4.1 **Delegates.** Each congregation may designate as delegates the following:
 - 2.4.1.1 One member of the congregation's governing board
 - 2.4.1.2 Two members of the congregation for the first 100 members or fraction thereof
 - 2.4.1.3 One additional member of the congregation for each additional 100 members or fraction thereof
- 2.4.2 **Assigned Ministers.** An Assigned Minister has been assigned by action of Leadership Council to serve in one of these categories:
 - 2.4.2.1 Minister serving as pastor
 - 2.4.2.2 Minister serving as associate or assistant pastor
 - 2.4.2.3 Minister under assignment as missionary
 - 2.4.2.4 Minister on leave to pursue further study
 - 2.4.2.5 Minister serving an inter-church organization
 - 2.4.2.6 Minister under a special designation recognized by Leadership Council (e.g., evangelist, counselor, chaplain)
- 2.4.3 **Members of General Conference Board, Leadership Council, and BIC U.S. Commissions.**
- 2.4.4 **Persons with a Retired Minister credential.**
- 2.4.5 **Executive Director of the Brethren in Christ Foundation** or the Executive Director's appointee.
- 2.4.6 **Chief Executive Officers.** Each organization that has a Covenant Relationship with the BIC U.S. may designate its chief executive officer or the CEO's appointee as a member.

- 2.4.7 **Honorary Members.** The General Assembly, by consent of members voting, may confer honorary membership upon others.

Article 3: General Conference Board

3.1 Purpose

General Conference Board (the “Board” composed of “Board Members”) is the board of directors of the BIC U.S. The Board shall oversee the mission and ministry of the BIC U.S. and shall have full power to establish and direct the policies governing the affairs of the BIC U.S.

3.2 Powers

- 3.2.1 All powers of the BIC U.S. shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Board, except for the powers that are reserved to the General Assembly which are the power to amend, repeal, or suspend any part of the MDG, and the power to set the number and boundaries of Regional Conferences of the BIC U.S.
- 3.2.2 The Board may appoint agents of the Organization with powers to perform acts or duties on behalf of the Corporation as the Board may see fit, consistent with these Bylaws, and to the extent authorized by law.
- 3.2.3 Except as these Bylaws otherwise provide, the Board may authorize any officer or agent to negotiate any contract, enter into any contract, and to execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of this Organization. Such authority may be general or confined to a specific instance; and unless so authorized by the Board or pursuant to Article 3.2, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind this Organization by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit, or render it financially liable for any purpose or to any amount outside of the budgeted funds under the responsibility of that employee.
- 3.2.4 Any officer, committee member, employee or other agent of the Organization may be removed, either with or without cause, by the Board, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of a person so removed.

3.3 Duties of the Board

The Board is responsible to:

- 3.3.1 Approve the nomination for the National Director according to Article 3.5.2.2 and oversee the work of the National Director.
- 3.3.2 Approve nominations for Regional Bishops according to Article 4.2.3.

- 3.3.3 Appoint the Director of World Missions and the Director of Finance according to Article 4.2.4.
- 3.3.4 Bring recommendations for action to the General Assembly.
- 3.3.5 Oversee the finances and the real and personal property of the BIC U.S.
- 3.3.6 Relate to organizations that are not directly accountable to a Regional Conference.

3.4 Board Members

- 3.4.1 **Number and Qualification.** The Board shall have no fewer than ten Board Members, all at least 18 years old and members of a BIC U.S. congregation. At least half of the Board Members shall not be employed by the BIC U.S. or a BIC U.S. congregation. The Bishop of each Regional Conference, in consultation with the Regional Conference Board of Directors, shall recommend to General Conference Board a person from a congregation in that Regional Conference to serve on General Conference Board who, when appointed, shall be identified as “the board member from the (named) Regional Conference.”
- 3.4.2 **Nomination.** The Board shall nominate all new Board Members. From those nominees the General Assembly shall appoint Board Members. The appointment of a Board Member designated as “the member from the (named) Regional Conference” shall also be subject to confirmation by the named Regional Conference.
- 3.4.3 **Resignations.** Any Board Member may resign at any time by giving notice in record form to the Chair or the Secretary of this Organization. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. “Record form” indicates inscription on a tangible medium or stored in an electronic or other medium and retrievable in perceivable form.
- 3.4.4 **Vacancies.** Any vacancy or vacancies on the Board because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, may be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Board Members, and each person so appointed shall begin serving as a Board Member immediately and shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term, but not beyond the conclusion of the next meeting of the General Assembly unless the appointment is confirmed at the next General Assembly.
- 3.4.5 **Removal.** A Board Member may be removed from office at any time, with or without cause, by a majority vote of the Board. A Board Member who is so removed shall not be granted any rights to a hearing or the right to appeal the removal. Notice of the decision shall be given to the removed Board Member and the Board in record form.

- 3.4.6 **Term of Office.** Each Board Member (other than the National Director) shall serve for a term of four years and may not serve for more than three consecutive four-year terms. For the purpose of staggering terms, the Board may also institute a term of two years for particular Board Members. A Board Member who completes an unexpired portion of a vacated term or serves one or more two-year terms may not serve for more than 14 years consecutively. Unless a Board Member has been appointed to fill a vacancy, terms begin and end immediately at the conclusion of General Assembly.
- 3.4.7 **Ex-officio Board Member.** The National Director shall be an ex-officio, non-voting Board Member.

3.5 Corporate Officers

- 3.5.1 **Board Officers.** The officers of the Board shall be a chair, assistant chair, treasurer, and secretary. The office of treasurer and secretary may be held by the same person. These officers shall also be corporate officers and shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Board.
- 3.5.1.1 *Qualification.* Only members of General Conference Board who are not employed by the BIC U.S. or a BIC U.S. congregation may be appointed as officers of the Board.
- 3.5.1.2 *Appointment and Term of Office.* The officers of the Board shall be appointed biennially by majority vote of General Conference Board at the last regularly scheduled Board meeting prior to the General Assembly, taking office at the conclusion of General Assembly. Each such officer shall hold office until the conclusion of the next General Assembly. In the event of a vacancy, the Board shall appoint by majority vote a new officer to serve until the conclusion of the next General Assembly.
- 3.5.1.3 *Resignations.* Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board, or to the Chair or the Secretary of this Organization. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.
- 3.5.1.4 *Vacancies.* A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board.
- 3.5.1.5 *Chair of the Board.* The Chair of the Board shall preside at meetings of the Board, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board.

- 3.5.1.6 *The Assistant Chair.* The Assistant Chair shall serve in the absence of the Chair of the Board and shall assist the Chair as requested.
- 3.5.1.7 *The Secretary.* The Secretary shall attend meetings of the Board and shall cause the outcome of all the votes of the Board to be recorded in the minutes of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose; and shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Board or the Chair.
- 3.5.1.8 *The Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Organization and shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Board or the Chair.
- 3.5.2 **Administrators who are corporate officers.** The National Director and the Director of Finance shall be corporate officers of the BIC U.S.
 - 3.5.2.1 The National Director is the chief executive officer of the BIC U.S., is accountable to the Board through the Chair, and is responsible to:
 - 3.5.2.1.1 Lead the staff team of the BIC U.S.
 - 3.5.2.1.2 Serve as the primary spokesperson for the BIC U.S.
 - 3.5.2.1.3 Communicate vision and direction for the BIC U.S.
 - 3.5.2.2 The National Director shall be nominated by a search committee designated by General Conference Board, approved by General Conference Board, and appointed by the voting members of the General Assembly.
 - 3.5.2.3 The National Director, who is given responsibility as chief executive officer for the management of this Organization, shall have such authority to sign agreements and contracts, open bank and savings accounts, and negotiate employment as the Board by resolution determines is needed for the Organization to be effective. The National Director is charged with using good judgment to determine which issues are major issues needing specific Board action.
 - 3.5.2.4 The Director of Finance is the chief financial officer of the BIC U.S., is accountable to the National Director, and is responsible to:
 - 3.5.2.4.1 Oversee the financial operations of the BIC U.S.
 - 3.5.2.4.2 Ensure appropriate financial reporting for the BIC U.S.
 - 3.5.2.5 The Director of Finance shall be nominated and appointed according to the process in Article 4.2.4.

- 3.5.3 **General Powers.** All officers of the BIC U.S., as between themselves and the Organization, shall respectively have such authority and perform such actions in the management of the business and affairs of this Organization as may be determined by resolutions of the Board, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions of the Board, as may be provided in these Bylaws.
- 3.5.4 **Compensation.** Except for the National Director and the Director of Finance, Corporate Officers generally will serve without compensation.

3.6 Meetings of the Board

- 3.6.1 **Regular Meetings.** General Conference Board shall hold at least two regularly scheduled meetings in each calendar year. The Chair of the Board and the National Director shall determine the date, time, and geographic location of each meeting and notice of such shall be given a minimum of 120 days before the meetings.
- 3.6.2 **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chair, with a minimum notice of five days given before such meeting.
- 3.6.3 **Notice of Meetings.** Notice of meetings shall be given in the manner described in Article 8.
- 3.6.4 **Agenda.** The agenda for each Board meeting will be determined by the Chair of the Board in consultation with the National Director.
- 3.6.5 **Meeting by Electronic Technology.** Persons may participate in a meeting of the Board by means of electronic technology as described in Article 8.5.
- 3.6.6 **Voting.** Each Board Member shall be entitled to one vote. A majority vote of the Board Members present and entitled to vote shall be required to take action.
- 3.6.7 **Quorum.** A majority of the Board Members shall be present in each meeting in order to constitute a quorum. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Board Members present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present.

3.7 Committees of the Board

- 3.7.1 **Authority of Committees.** The Board may form committees to effectively accomplish its responsibilities and to address matters such as governance, finance, and personnel. All committees shall be advisory except to the extent that the Board by resolution delegates specific authority to take action.
- 3.7.2 **Composition of Committees.** Each committee shall have a minimum of three members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Board.

- 3.7.3 **Executive Committee.** There shall be an Executive Committee, consisting of the officers of the Board.
- 3.7.4 **Appointment of Committee Members.** Except for the Executive Committee, the Chair of the Board shall nominate and the Board shall appoint all committee members.

3.8 Liability of Board Members and Officers

- 3.8.1 **Limitation of Personal Liability of Board Members and Officers.** A Board Member or officer of this Organization shall not be personally liable, as such, for monetary damages for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless: he or she has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as defined in Article 3.8.2 below and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness. The provisions of this section shall not apply to (a) the responsibility or liability of a Board Member or officer pursuant to any criminal statute; or (b) the liability of a Board Member or officer for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state, or federal law.
- 3.8.2 **Standard of Care and Justifiable Reliance.** A Board Member or officer of this Organization shall stand in a fiduciary relationship to the Organization, and shall perform his or her duties, including his or her duties as a member of any committee of the Board upon which he or she may serve, in good faith, in a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Organization, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill, and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances. In performing his or her duties, a Board Member or officer shall be entitled to rely in good faith on information, opinions, reports or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, in each case prepared or presented by any of the following: One or more officers or employees of the Organization whom he or she reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented; counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters which he or she reasonably believes to be within the professional or expert competence of such person; a committee of the Board upon which he or she does not serve, duly designated in accordance with law, as to matters within its designated authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence. A Board Member or officer shall not be considered to be acting in good faith if he or she has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause his or her reliance to be unwarranted.

Article 4: Leadership Council

4.1 Purpose

Leadership Council shall provide leadership of the BIC U.S., subject to General Conference Board.

4.2 Organization

- 4.2.1 Leadership Council shall be composed of the National Director (who serves as chair); all Regional Bishops; the Director of World Missions; and the Director of Finance. Scriptural qualifications for church leaders are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-16. Leadership Council members will be chosen with due consideration being given to experience, gifts, and administrative leadership ability. They will be persons of spiritual maturity, wisdom, and good judgement. They 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. They must be able to respond in an exemplary way to criticism, conflict, and stress, modeling behavior expected in others.
- 4.2.2 The National Director shall be appointed according to the process described in Article 3.5.2.2. The National Director shall be accountable to General Conference Board through its Chair.
- 4.2.3 Each Regional Bishop shall be nominated by a search committee composed of the National Director (who serves as chair), the Regional Conference board of directors for the Regional Conference in which the Regional Bishop will serve, and any appointees by that board. The search committee shall present its nominee to General Conference Board. Upon approval by General Conference Board, the nominee will be appointed by the voting members of the annual business meeting of the Regional Conference. Each Regional Bishop shall be accountable to the National Director.
- 4.2.4 The Director of World Missions and the Director of Finance shall be nominated by Leadership Council, exercised after consultation with the appropriate Commission or Committee, and shall be appointed by General Conference Board. These directors shall be accountable to the National Director.
- 4.2.5 Members of Leadership Council serve at the will of General Conference Board, exercised after consultation with the National Director. At least every two years, the National Director shall arrange for and give to General Conference Board an evaluation of the performance of each member of Leadership Council.
- 4.2.6 When there is a vacancy in Leadership Council, General Conference Board may appoint an interim member to serve until a replacement Council member is appointed according to the process described in this article.

4.3 Duties

- 4.3.1 Discern and communicate the purpose and strategic priorities of the BIC U.S., and encourage congregations and Regional Conferences to pursue them.
- 4.3.2 Make provision for meetings of the General Assembly as described in Article 2.3.
- 4.3.3 Oversee the work of commissions as described in Article 5.
- 4.3.4 Assign ministers to their roles within the BIC U.S.
- 4.3.5 Establish departmental teams and task forces as deemed necessary for the effective functioning and growth of the BIC U.S.

4.4 Accountability

The Leadership Council is accountable to the General Conference Board through the National Director.

Article 5: Commissions

Commissions advise and oversee specific areas of ministry for the BIC U.S. The Commission for World Missions and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine are standing commissions. Additional commissions with specified purposes may be formed by Leadership Council.

5.1 Commission for World Missions

- 5.1.1 **Purpose.** The Commission for World Missions shall serve under the authority of and on behalf of Leadership Council by overseeing the cross-cultural outreach of the BIC U.S.
- 5.1.2 **Organization.** The Commission shall be led by the Director of World Missions and shall have a minimum of five members. Members shall be nominated by the Director of World Missions, after consultation with the Commission and with Leadership Council, and appointed by General Conference Board. The National Director shall be an ex-officio, nonvoting member of this Commission.
- 5.1.3 **Duties.** The Commission shall:
 - 5.1.3.1 Recommend cross-cultural mission posts to Leadership Council for approval and approve strategic plans for these posts
 - 5.1.3.2 Review and provide accountability for existing cross-cultural work
 - 5.1.3.3 Assist the Director of World Missions to assess current missiological trends and opportunities

- 5.1.3.4 Assist the Director of World Missions and Leadership Council in exhorting the Church to support cross-cultural outreach
- 5.1.3.5 Make recommendations to the World Mission's staff that will assist in recruitment, deployment, and support of global and cross-cultural staff
- 5.1.4 **Accountability.** The Commission is accountable to Leadership Council through the Director of World Missions.

5.2. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine

- 5.2.1 **Purpose.** The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine shall serve under the authority of and on behalf of Leadership Council by overseeing the equipping and credentialing of ministers of the BIC U.S. and by seeking to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the Church.
- 5.2.2 **Organization.** The Commission shall be led by the National Director or the National Director's appointee. The Bishop of each Regional Conference, in consultation with the Regional Conference Board of Directors, shall recommend to General Conference Board a person from that Regional Conference to serve on the Commission. These persons must be spiritually mature and experienced in ministry. They shall be ordained, qualified in theology and leadership, and attuned to the doctrinal distinctives of the denomination. The National Director shall be an ex-officio, nonvoting member of this Commission.
- 5.2.3 **Duties.** The Commission shall:
 - 5.2.3.1 Develop and supervise a program of equipping ministers for service in the BIC U.S.
 - 5.2.3.2 Administer the ministerial credentialing functions of the BIC U.S. on behalf of Leadership Council, which has authority to credential.
 - 5.2.3.3 Review and address critical issues of doctrine and practice in the BIC U.S.
- 5.2.4 **Accountability.** The Commission is accountable to Leadership Council.

Article 6: Regional Conferences

6.1 Purpose

Regional Conferences are the geographic units of the BIC U.S. and shall function in a manner consistent with the MDG. The number and geographic boundaries of each Regional Conference shall be established by the General Assembly upon recommendation by General Conference Board.

6.2 Organization

Regional Conferences shall be accountable to the BIC U.S. as follows:

- 6.2.1 A Regional Bishop shall provide administrative leadership to each Regional Conference.
- 6.2.2 A Regional Conference Board of Directors (“BOD”) shall advise the Bishop, function as the legal board of directors for the Regional Conference under the Bishop’s leadership, and perform other functions described in its Regional Conference bylaws.

6.3 Government

- 6.3.1 At least one business meeting of the Regional Conference (“Annual Meeting”) shall be conducted in each calendar year. Pastors and delegates from the congregations in the Regional Conference gather to:
 - 6.3.1.1 Share and celebrate the work of God through the Regional Conference.
 - 6.3.1.2 Dialogue about issues related to the ministry of the Regional Conference.
 - 6.3.1.3 Amend, repeal, or suspend any part of the Regional Conference bylaws, subject to the approval of General Conference Board as stated in Article 6.4.
 - 6.3.1.4 Appoint members of the Regional Conference BOD.
 - 6.3.1.5 Take action on any other recommendations deemed necessary by the BOD for the functioning of the Regional Conference.
- 6.3.2 All Regional Conference actions shall be in harmony with the MDG.

6.4 Governing Documents

The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and any amendments thereto, of each Regional Conference shall:

- 6.4.1 Be effective upon approval by General Conference Board.
- 6.4.2 Use one of the names of the Organization listed in Article 1.1 for all references to the BIC U.S.
- 6.4.3 Include the following statements:
 - 6.4.3.1 “Other than registering a change of address, the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and any amendments thereto, of this Regional Conference may be amended only with the approval of two-thirds of the total membership of General Conference Board (or its successors) of the BIC U.S., a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation (or its successors).”

- 6.4.3.2 “This Regional Conference and all its property including real property are subject to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of the BIC U.S.”
- 6.4.3.3 “Upon dissolution, after payment of all obligations, the assets of the Regional Conference shall be distributed to the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ or its successors.”

Article 7: Congregations

7.1 Purpose

A congregation shall function in a manner consistent with the MDG; subject to the authority, oversight, and direction of the Regional Bishop; and under the direction of the congregation’s pastor and governing board.

7.2 New Congregations

A congregation that is functioning will be recognized by the BIC U.S. as a new congregation when its governing documents have been approved by its Regional Conference and have been adopted by the congregation. The Bishop assigned to that Regional Conference is responsible to coordinate the initial organization of the congregation.

7.3 Membership

Members of a congregation shall be those who have met the membership requirements of the BIC U.S. and of that congregation.

7.4 Government

- 7.4.1 At least one business meeting of members of a congregation shall be conducted in each calendar year. Pastors and members of the congregation gather at congregational business meetings to:
 - 7.4.1.1 Share and celebrate the work of God through the congregation.
 - 7.4.1.2 Dialogue about issues related to the ministry of the congregation.
 - 7.4.1.3 Amend, repeal, or suspend any part of the congregational bylaws, subject to the approval of the Regional Conference BOD as stated in Articles 7.5 and 7.6.
 - 7.4.1.4 Appoint members of the governing board of the congregation.
 - 7.4.1.5 Take action on any other recommendations deemed necessary by the governing board for the functioning of the congregation.
- 7.4.2 All actions taken by a congregation shall be in harmony with the MDG.

7.5 Incorporated Congregations

The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and any amendments thereto, of congregations which incorporate:

- 7.5.1 Shall be effective upon approval by the Board of Directors of the Regional Conference.
- 7.5.2 Should adhere to the following recommendations:
 - 7.5.2.1 Use one of the names of the Organization listed in Article 1.1 for all references to the BIC U.S.
 - 7.5.2.2 State that “The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of this organization may be changed only with the approval of two-thirds of the total membership of the Board of Directors of the Regional Conference of the BIC U.S. in which the congregation is located.”
 - 7.5.2.3 Further state that “This organization and all its property including real property are subject to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of the BIC U.S.”
 - 7.5.2.4 Further state that “Upon dissolution, after payment of all obligations, the assets of this organization shall be distributed to the Regional Conference of the BIC U.S. in which this organization or its successors is located.”

7.6 Unincorporated Congregations

A congregation that has not incorporated under the laws of the state in which it is located shall not be recognized by the BIC U.S. until the Board of Directors of the Regional Conference has approved such congregation’s organizational documents including any unfiled Articles of Organization and Bylaws. The organizational documents of such an unincorporated entity should adhere to the following recommendations:

- 7.6.1 Use one of the names of the Organization listed in Article 1.1 for all references to the BIC U.S.
- 7.6.2 State that “Other than registering a change of address, the Articles of Organization, Bylaws, any other organizational documents and any amendments thereto of this congregation may be amended only with the approval of two-thirds of the total membership of the Board of Directors of the Regional Conference of the BIC U.S. in which the congregation is located.”
- 7.6.3 Further state that “This congregation and all its property including real property are subject to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of the BIC U.S.”
- 7.6.4 Further state that “Upon dissolution, after payment of all obligations, the assets of this congregation shall be distributed to the Regional Conference in which the congregation is located or its successors.”

Article 8: Notices, Waivers, and Meetings

8.1 Required Notices

Whenever notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the Articles, Bylaws, or the law, notice may be given in any of the following means: hand delivery, first class mail (postage prepaid), fax, email, or other electronic communication. Notice shall be delivered to the person's address, email, or fax number supplied by the person to this Organization for the purpose of notice. If notice is mailed, it shall be deemed given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the U.S. mail or, in the case of fax, email, or other electronic communication, when sent. Notice of a meeting shall specify the location, day and hour of the meeting, and any other information required by law or these Bylaws.

8.2 Adjourned Meeting

When a meeting is adjourned, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at the adjourned meeting other than an announcement at the suspended meeting of the location, day, and hour of the continued meeting to which the adjournment is taken.

8.3 Waivers of Notice

Whenever any notice is required to be given under the provisions of the Articles, these Bylaws, or the Nonprofit Corporation Law, a waiver thereof that is filed with the Secretary in record form, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section or by Article 8.1, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. In the case of a special meeting of the Board, such waiver of notice shall specify the general nature of the business to be transacted. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except when a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

8.4 Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice

Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is included in a notice of a meeting, the meeting members considering the resolution may, without further notice, adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

8.5 Meetings by Conference Telephone or Other Electronic Technology

One or more persons may participate in a meeting of General Conference Board, Leadership Council, any commission or committee by means of conference telephone or other electronic technology by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in a meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

Article 9: Conflicts of Interest

- 9.1** No contract or transaction between this Organization and one or more of its Board Members or officers; or between this Organization and any other corporation, partnership, association, or other organization in which one or more of its Board Members are trustees, directors, or officers, or have a financial interest; or in which any Board Member or officer has any other conflict of interest; shall be void or voidable solely for such reason. Nor shall such contract or transaction be void or voidable solely because the Board Member or officer is present at or participates in the meeting of General Conference Board which authorizes the contract or transaction, or solely because his, her, or their votes are counted for such purpose. Such contract or transaction shall not be void or voidable, if (1) the material facts as to the relationship or interest and as to the contract or transaction are disclosed or are known to General Conference Board and the Board in good faith authorizes the contract or transaction by the affirmative votes of majority of the disinterested Board Members even though the disinterested Board Members are less than a quorum; or (2) the contract or transaction is fair to this Organization as of the time it is authorized, approved, or ratified by General Conference Board. Interested Board Members may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of General Conference Board which authorizes the contract or transactions.
- 9.2** Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, General Conference Board shall at any time have the right to adopt a formal Conflict of Interest Policy for this Organization. If the terms of this section and the terms of the Conflict of Interest Policy conflict, the terms of the Conflict of Interest Policy shall govern.

Article 10: Brethren in Christ Foundation, Inc.

The Brethren in Christ Foundation, Inc., serves the BIC U.S. and its institutions, agencies, congregations, and members. The details of the Foundation's purpose, and of its governance, are described in its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, which may be modified only with the approval of General Conference Board.

Article 11: Church Property

11.1 Definition

- 11.1.1 All Church Property shall be subject to the control and direction of the BIC U.S. The term Church Property includes but is not limited to any real estate, improvements, tangible and intangible property, personal property, and any interests or rights therein, that are used in, donated for, or dedicated to the operations and activities of the BIC U.S., its Regional Conferences, congregations, World Missions ministry, and any other ministry programs.
- 11.1.2 The term “All Church Property” shall be defined to include, and the classifications of church property shall generally be, as follows:
 - 11.1.2.1 Congregational Property—property used by congregations for worship and related religious purposes or titled in the name of a congregation or its trustees
 - 11.1.2.2 Regional Conference Property—property used and administered by the Regional Conference or titled in its name
 - 11.1.2.3 BIC U.S. Property—property held in the name of or in connection with the work of the BIC U.S. and administered, directly or indirectly, by the BIC U.S., including BIC U.S. World Missions.

11.2 Trustees

- 11.2.1 All real estate belonging to a BIC U.S. congregation, institution, or agency that is unincorporated shall be held in trust by not less than three persons known as trustees as hereinafter provided.
 - 11.2.1.1 **Terms of Service**
 - 11.2.1.1.1 Trustees for Congregational Property must be members of the BIC U.S. and at least 18 years of age. Should a trustee withdraw from membership of the BIC U.S. or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion.
 - 11.2.1.1.2 Trustees for Congregational 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 governing board and shall be confirmed by the Regional Conference Annual Meeting. Trustees take office at the time of their appointment by the congregation.

- 11.2.1.1.3 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 Annual Meeting.
- 11.2.1.1.4 Trustees for other Church Property shall be appointed by the entity or entities whose consent would be required for sale under Article 11.3.

11.2.1.2 Organization

- 11.2.1.2.1 The boards of trustees shall organize by electing a chair and a secretary. The secretary shall be responsible for the safekeeping of legal papers. All records of the trustees shall pass to their successors in office.
- 11.2.1.2.2 Congregational Property trustees shall give an annual report to the governing board.
- 11.2.1.2.3 Trustees for other Church Property shall give an annual report to the group(s) whom they serve.

11.2.1.3 Responsibilities

- 11.2.1.3.1 The trustees shall adequately insure, care for, and keep in necessary repair all Church Property.
 - 11.2.1.3.2 In no case shall Congregational Property trustees be privileged to expend money for extensive repairs or alterations without the consent of the governing board.
 - 11.2.1.3.3 Trustees for other Church Property shall not expend money for extensive repairs or alterations without the consent of the entity or entities whose consent would be required for sale under Article 11.3.
- 11.2.2 For real estate belonging to congregations that are incorporated, the governing board functions as the trustees; shall be confirmed as such by the Regional Conference Annual Meeting; and shall adequately insure, care for, and keep in necessary repair all Congregational Property.

11.3 Purchase, Sale, or Transfer and Use of Funds

11.3.1 Congregational Property

- 11.3.1.1 The purchase, sale, or transfer of Congregational Property, as well as mortgages and loans secured on property, require the approval of the Regional Conference Board of Directors in which the property is located.

- 11.3.1.2 The proceeds from the sale of Congregational Property shall be at the disposal of the congregation to invest in the work of the BIC U.S. subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of the Regional Conference. Such proceeds shall be held in trust by, or by order of, the Regional Conference Board of Directors.
 - 11.3.1.3 In the event that the work of any congregation has been terminated or dissociated from the BIC U.S. the property assets of such congregation shall be at the disposal of the Board of Directors of the Regional Conference within which the congregation was located to invest in work consistent with the purpose of the BIC U.S. The determination whether a congregation has terminated or dissociated shall be made by General Conference Board after receiving the recommendation of Leadership Council. If the Regional Conference BOD resolves to invest such assets in a project or organization that is not a ministry of the BIC U.S., the General Conference Board must approve such action.
- 11.3.2 Regional Conference Property**
- 11.3.2.1 The purchase, sale, or transfer of Regional Conference Property requires the approval of the Regional Conference Board of Directors and General Conference Board.
 - 11.3.2.2 The proceeds from the sale of Regional Conference Property shall be held in trust by, or by order of, the Regional Conference BOD. The use of the proceeds from the sale of such property shall be made by the Regional Conference BOD. If the Regional Conference BOD resolves to invest such assets in a project or organization that is not a ministry of the BIC U.S., the General Conference Board must approve such action.
- 11.3.3 BIC U.S. Property**
- 11.3.3.1 The purchase, sale, or transfer of BIC U.S. Property requires the approval of General Conference Board.
 - 11.3.3.2 The proceeds from the sale of BIC U.S. Property shall be held in trust by, or by order of, General Conference Board. The use of the proceeds from the sale of such property shall be made by General Conference Board.
- 11.3.4 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, such question shall be decided by General Conference Board.

11.4 Title to Property

- 11.4.1 All Church Property must be given a good and marketable title. It is the policy of the BIC U.S. 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 the offer has been approved by General Conference Board.
- 11.4.2 Title to Congregational Property shall be taken in the name of the congregation, if the congregation is incorporated. If title was previously held by trustees, the same shall be transferred to the local corporation. If the congregation is not incorporated, then title to property shall be taken in the name of the trustees of the congregation and their successors.
- 11.4.3 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 a board of trustees designated for that purpose.
- 11.4.4 Competent legal advice should always be sought before a deed is written; the laws of the state shall be carefully followed.
- 11.4.5 All deeds shall be properly recorded. Copies of Congregational and Regional Conference Property titles/deeds shall be filed with the Regional Conference secretary. BIC U.S. Property titles/deeds shall be filed with the office of the National Director.
- 11.4.6 Deeds of all Church Property shall include this statement: “The right of sale, transfer, use, or encumbrance is subject to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of the BIC U.S.”

11.5 Property Restrictions

- 11.5.1 The real estate of the congregation shall not be mortgaged to meet current expenses.
- 11.5.2 The congregation contemplating the lease, purchase, or building of real property or the borrowing of money for such purposes shall submit the proposition to the Regional Bishop for consideration, advice, and approval by the Regional Conference Board of Directors. Before this approval may be granted, the governing board of the congregation must certify the congregation’s assumption of responsibility for the designated amount, and the request must be endorsed by the Regional Bishop.

- 11.5.3 All real estate transactions shall be reported to the appropriate Regional Conference Board of Directors.

Article 12: Private Inurement Prohibited

No Board Member, officer, employee or person connected with the BIC U.S. shall personally receive at any time any of the receipts or revenues or other assets of the BIC U.S., nor shall the BIC U.S. receipts or revenues inure in whole or in part to the benefit of private persons, provided that this section shall not prevent the payment to any such person of reasonable compensation for services rendered to the BIC U.S.

Article 13: Miscellaneous

13.1 Diversity

- 13.1.1 The BIC U.S. fully affirms women in ministry at all levels of Church life. Women are ordained and commissioned as pastors, bishops, deacons, denominational leaders, and members of congregational, regional, and national BIC U.S. governing boards.
- 13.1.2 The BIC U.S. shall strive to reflect geographic, cultural, and ethnic diversity in the membership of its Board, committees, and commissions.

13.2 Records

The BIC U.S. shall keep an original or duplicate record of its proceedings, the original of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws including all amendments, and complete financial records. Unless General Conference Board by resolution designates another place or places, such documents and records shall be kept at the registered office of the Corporation or at its principal place of business, open to inspection by members of General Conference Board.

13.3 Checks and Payments

All orders in writing (including, but not limited to, checks, notes, and bills of exchange) and other forms of payment transactions (such as online bill payment, debit card use, and PayPal transactions), shall be signed by or, if an electronic payment, authorized by, such person or persons as General Conference Board may from time to time designate.

13.4 Deposits

All funds of the BIC U.S. shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the BIC U.S. in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as General Conference

Board may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon checks signed by, or electronic transactions authorized by, such one or more officers or employees as General Conference Board shall from time to time determine.

13.5 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the BIC U.S. shall end on December 31.

13.6 Appeals

A person who alleges brotherhood infractions or other misconduct that has not been resolved at the personal, congregational, or Regional Conference level may appeal to General Conference Board according to a process prescribed and overseen by the Board to resolve the matter.

13.7 Distribution of Assets upon Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the BIC U.S. or the winding up of its affairs, General Conference Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the BIC U.S., dispose of all the assets of the BIC U.S. in such manner, or to organization(s) organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes, as further described in the Articles of Incorporation of the BIC U.S.

Article 14: Amendments

14.1 These Bylaws may be amended or repealed only by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly.

14.2 However, by a two-thirds majority vote at any General Assembly, selected articles of the Bylaws may be suspended until the next General Assembly.

CONGREGATIONAL HANDBOOK

Article 1: Organization

1.1 Congregational Purpose

The congregation is the local expression of the Church and the focused place where the larger purpose of the Brethren in Christ U.S.: “...to foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God, and to proclaim the gospel to all people” is accomplished. It carries the responsibility to develop its own missional presence in its community and beyond in cooperation with the larger Church. The growth of the Church should be the concern of each congregation and pastor.

1.2 Legal Membership

The legal membership of the congregation consists of people received into the congregation on the basis of their personal knowledge and testimony of God’s saving grace and their acceptance of the membership covenant stated in Article 2.1.5.

1.3 Congregational Business Meeting

A congregational business meeting will be held at least once a year. Functions of the congregational business meeting are stated in Article 7.4 of the Bylaws of the BIC U.S.

1.4 Governing Board

Each congregation will be organized with a governing board. The duty of the governing board is to provide for the administration of the congregation in all its phases consistent with the congregational business meeting and with Regional Conference and General Assembly rulings. All group activities carried on within the congregation are subject to the approval of the pastor and the governing board.

Article 2: Church Membership

2.1 Requirements for Membership

- 2.1.1 Applicants considered for membership will testify to a personal experience of God’s saving grace in their hearts, confess faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and give evidence of the new life in Christ.
- 2.1.2 Applicants will 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.

- 2.1.3 Applicants will 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 times forward in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in humble submission to Christ and the Church. Where baptism by immersion is not possible, another mode of believer's baptism may be used at the pastor's discretion. Re-baptism is not required for those who have been baptized by another mode of believer's baptism subsequent to their rebirth.
- 2.1.4 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 BIC U.S.
- 2.1.5 Applicants will affirm their acceptance of the foregoing through the following 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 this Brethren in Christ Church to be loyal to the 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.*
- 2.1.6 Congregations may make further rulings related to membership such as, but not limited to, renewable terms for membership with a process to accomplish the same, youth membership, dual membership, and specific classes required of persons joining the congregation.

2.2 Reception of Members

- 2.2.1 Pastors will conduct or provide for membership classes for applicants.
- 2.2.2 Candidates for membership will be approved by the governing board at the recommendation of the pastor. Their names shall be publicized in advance of the reception service.
- 2.2.3 At or before the reception service, candidates will give public testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ and pledge their allegiance to God's Word and their loyalty to the congregation.

2.3 Transfer of Members

- 2.3.1 Members who change their places of residence or plan to worship in a congregation other than the one in which membership is held are encouraged to request letters of transfer from the former congregation.

- 2.3.2 Letters of transfer will be issued by the governing board, duly signed by the pastor and secretary of the board.
- 2.3.3 Persons transferring membership from one congregation to another will be asked to participate in the regular membership procedures of the local receiving congregation.
- 2.3.4 No membership may be transferred from one congregation to another without personal contact between receiving and sending congregations to ascertain the status of the candidate. Persons under discipline in one BIC U.S. congregation shall not be received into membership in another BIC U.S. congregation.

2.4 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.

2.5 Discipline

Abuse and neglect shall be reported to governmental authorities as required by law. Subject to that requirement, in case of variance between members, the following process is recommended, but variations from this disciplinary process may be implemented at the discretion of the pastor and governing board.

- 2.5.1 Private reconciliation shall be sought (Matthew 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, but may be subject to discipline.
- 2.5.2 When repentance is not evident in disciplinary matters, the pastor shall seek the counsel of the governing board and be in consultation with the Bishop. Discipline may include suspension and/or termination of membership. The final decision regarding discipline or membership rests primarily with the joint action of the pastor and governing board.
- 2.5.3 Implementation of discipline decisions by the board shall be facilitated through the pastor or board chair along with one or more persons not compensated by the congregation.

Article 3: Congregational Business Meeting

3.1 Personnel

- 3.1.1 The Chair of the governing board presides at the congregational business meeting unless other provision is made in consultation with the Bishop.
- 3.1.2 Members in fellowship with the congregation, at least 16 years of age and older, are expected to vote in the business meeting on legal matters.

3.2 Process

- 3.2.1 Items for the congregational business meeting are presented to the governing board, who are responsible to prepare the agenda for release prior to the congregational business meeting.
- 3.2.2 Should the governing board choose not to place a matter of business presented to them on the agenda for the congregational business meeting, the item may still be placed on the agenda in the following manner:
 - 3.2.2.1 If unwilling to accept the decision of the governing board, the person who presented the request may prepare a petition that includes the signatures of ten percent of the members in good standing who are 16 years of age or above, with a minimum of five signatures.
 - 3.2.2.2 The petition must be presented to the Chair of the governing board at least three days in advance of the congregational business meeting.
 - 3.2.2.3 The governing board will add the petitioned item to the congregational business meeting agenda.
- 3.2.3 No special congregational business meeting may be called without the consent of the governing board and a public notice being given ahead of time through normal communication channels.

Article 4: Congregational Governing Board

4.1 Organization

- 4.1.1 The governing board will organize annually. The board will elect officers from among its members as mutually agreed upon to carry out the functions of the board and congregation; such officers may include but are not limited to a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer.
- 4.1.2 The governing board is not to meet without the pastor or Bishop. Exceptions must be cleared with the Bishop, with the knowledge of the pastor.

- 4.1.3 The governing board shall make ongoing provision for designated officers or staff to do the following:
 - 4.1.3.1 Record all actions of congregational business meetings.
 - 4.1.3.2 Forward all material intended for Regional Conference or General Assembly.
 - 4.1.3.3 Provide statistical data required by the Bishop and General Conference Board.
 - 4.1.3.4 Keep an accurate record of the congregational membership showing net gain or loss in number as well as baptisms, elections, ordinations, and other valuable information of interest to the congregation.
 - 4.1.3.5 Discharge the duties connected with handling the congregation's finances, keeping accurate records using a bookkeeping system approved by the board, and report annually to the congregation and to the governing board as directed.
- 4.1.4 Officers of the governing board will also serve as officers of the congregation.

4.2 Personnel

- 4.2.1 All members of the board are to give a personal testimony of salvation, manifest a concern for congregational growth, and should demonstrate responsibility with evidence of being in agreement with the purposes and goals of the BIC U.S., the congregation, and the pastor. Men and women are eligible to serve, with membership in the congregation being a prerequisite for membership on the governing board.
- 4.2.2 The board ordinarily consists of the pastor and a minimum of five and a maximum of twelve members.
- 4.2.3 Members elected to the board by the congregation serve terms in the range of three to four years as determined by the governing board. Their consecutive service should not exceed nine years. They can be eligible for re-election after one year off. Variations from this pattern are to be made in consultation with the Bishop.
- 4.2.4 The governing board is composed of the officers and other congregational members as selected by the congregational business meeting following a nomination process. Ex officio representation from specific ministries is deemed appropriate as processed by the governing board.
- 4.2.5 When a conflict of interest may exist, a board member will declare the conflict, withdraw from discussion, and abstain from voting.

4.3 Functions

The functions of the governing board shall include:

- 4.3.1 To serve as a support and counseling group for the pastor.
- 4.3.2 To determine matters of policy within the scope of congregational business meeting authorization and to assist the pastor in the planning of the congregational life.
- 4.3.3 To receive and review questions for the annual congregational business meeting and, when advisable, to make recommendations to the congregational business meeting.
- 4.3.4 To call special congregational business meetings as needed.
- 4.3.5 To oversee congregational finances and make provision for the annual congregational budget.
- 4.3.6 To make provision for the nomination of designated personnel.
- 4.3.7 To maintain communication with the congregation.
- 4.3.8 To be responsible, in consultation with the pastor, for questions of membership and discipline. Any decision relative to the disciplinary termination of membership will be made only with approval of the Bishop.
- 4.3.9 To insure that no one will preach or present any cause or interest in the congregation without the consent of the duly assigned pastor.
- 4.3.10 To provide the agreed upon contribution for their pastoral staff retirement plans.
- 4.3.11 To process background and credit checks as they deem appropriate in the hiring of staff unless otherwise required.

Article 5: Pastoral Committee

5.1 Steps in Pastoral 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 plant, the pastoral assignment will be made by the Bishop and the National Director in consultation with Leadership Council.

5.2 Personnel

- 5.2.1 The governing board (except the pastor and staff) and the Bishop constitute the Pastoral Committee, with the Bishop, or the Bishop's designee serving as chair.

- 5.2.2 When functioning as a pastoral search committee, other persons may be added as agreed upon by the Bishop and governing board.
- 5.2.3 The pastoral search process is initiated by the Bishop.
- 5.2.4 Interim leadership in a congregation is assigned by the Bishop in consultation with the Pastoral Committee.

5.3 Duties

- 5.3.1 The Pastoral Committee represents the congregation in the pastoral search process, the pastor's end of term evaluation, and securing the pastor's continued service.
- 5.3.2 The Regional Conference Bishop, 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 will be provided. The Pastoral Committee negotiates the terms of the agreement. If the compensation amount is larger than budgeted, this variance will be processed by the governing board.
- 5.3.3 The Pastoral Committee will negotiate the term of service with the pastor. The initial term of service may be five years, unless the parties involved agree for a shorter term of service.
- 5.3.4 The continuance of a pastor's service following the initial term of service will become a joint consideration of the Pastoral Committee, the Bishop, and the pastor. Further terms of service will be for five years unless a shorter term is mutually agreed upon. A five-year term is considered the maximum for any one period of assignment.
- 5.3.5 The Pastoral Committee and Bishop will seek to provide for the pastor's welfare, including remuneration.

5.4 Pastoral Interviews

In the event a Pastoral Committee desires a pastoral interview, the congregation shall pay travel costs for the candidate and spouse. It is suggested that pastoral committees avoid trial sermons.

Article 6: Pastors

6.1 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 governing board.

6.2 Accountability

- 6.2.1 The pastor is accountable administratively to the regional Bishop and shall keep in communication as often as desired by either the pastor or the Bishop.
- 6.2.2 The pastor is accountable functionally to the congregation by way of the governing board.

6.3 Conditions of Service

- 6.3.1 There should be a clear job description written with approval of both the Pastoral Committee and the pastor with consideration of personality and gifts of the pastor and congregation.
- 6.3.2 The pastor shall become a member of the congregation being served.
- 6.3.3 Pastors should receive remuneration on the basis of service rendered and in accordance with the guidelines provided by Leadership Council.
- 6.3.4 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.
- 6.3.5 The congregation should make provision for traveling and moving expenses necessitated by the bringing of the pastor to the congregation.

6.4 Duties of Pastors

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

- 6.4.8 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 governing board and congregational business meeting (Financial obligations for the congregation shall be duly authorized by the pastor and governing board or congregational business meeting)
- 6.4.9 To give monthly reports to the governing board and annual reports to the congregation
- 6.4.10 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 Assembly actions and the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of the BIC U.S.)
- 6.4.11 To submit all reports required by the regional Bishop and General Assembly
- 6.4.12 To work with the congregation to mobilize funding for the support of denominational ministry and to send those funds to the denominational office

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 Disagreement or Removal of Pastor

In case of serious disagreement between the governing board and pastor, the matter shall be submitted to the Bishop having jurisdiction. If the situation is not resolved, Leadership Council shall make disposition of the matter.

Article 7: Pastoral Staff Relationships

7.1 Steps in Selection

- 7.1.1 The process of selecting additional pastoral staff (hereafter referred to as “staff”) shall involve the senior pastor, the governing board, and the Bishop. The adding of a new staff position requires affirmation by the appropriate congregational group.
- 7.1.2 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.
- 7.1.3 If the person being considered is new to the denomination, the Bishop shall interview the applicant regarding identification with the BIC U.S. and the process of credentialing.
- 7.1.4 The senior pastor and the governing board make provision for a selection committee which conducts 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 governing board, and the person’s involvement in the congregation.

7.2 Accountability and Responsibility

- 7.2.1 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.
- 7.2.2 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.
- 7.2.3 Associate pastors and other staff may be members of the governing board upon recommendation of the pastor except when the governing board is functioning as the Pastoral Committee.
- 7.2.4 It is recommended that for spiritual and social growth, the pastor should plan for sessions with staff members and spouses at least quarterly.
- 7.2.5 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.

7.3 Conditions of Service

- 7.3.1 **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 governing 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.
- 7.3.2 **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.
- 7.3.3 **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.

7.4 Evaluation and Congregational Involvement

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

7.5 Associate Pastoral Interviews

In the event a selection committee desires an associate pastoral interview, the congregation shall pay travel costs for the candidate and spouse.

Article 8: Deacons

8.1 Qualifications

The scriptural qualifications for a deacon are outlined in 1 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 and Doctrine adopted by the BIC U.S. Deacons must be members of the congregation being served.

8.2 Election

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

8.3 Term of Service

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

8.4 Installation

8.4.1 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.

8.4.2 Spouses of deacons may share in the consecration service, for they share with the deacon in the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs within the congregation.

8.5 Duties

8.5.1 Ordinarily there shall be a maximum of two deacons serving on the governing board and Pastoral Committee.

8.5.2 They shall share in the ministries of the congregation as directed by the pastor.

8.5.3 They shall carry a vital concern for the needy of the congregation and report findings to the governing board.

8.5.4 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.

8.5.5 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.

8.5.6 In the absence of the pastor, they may officiate at the public services as directed by the governing board or by the person responsible for filling the vacancy caused by the pastor's absence.

Article 9: Delegates

9.1 General Assembly Delegates

Delegates are elected biennially to the General Assembly in accord with Article 2.4 of the BIC U.S. Bylaws. No congregation may exempt itself from delegate representation to General Assembly without the consent of the Bishop. Travel and other authorized costs become a part of the congregational budget. Pastors and delegates are responsible to report back on actions of General Assembly to the governing board of the congregation.

9.2 Regional Conference Delegates

Delegates are elected to represent the congregation at regular and special meetings of the Regional Conference in accordance with Regional Conference directives. No congregation may exempt itself from delegate representation to Regional Conference without the consent of the Bishop. Expenses for these delegates are the responsibility of the congregation. Pastors and delegates are responsible to report back on actions of Regional Conference to the governing board of the congregation.

Article 10: Review Board

In instances of congregational distress that, in the judgment of the Bishop, compromise the ability of the pastor and/or governing board to serve the congregation, the Bishop in consultation with the National Director may select and convene a review board consisting of the Bishop and four persons from outside the congregation. The review board will apply biblical principles in its resolution of the situation and has authority to appoint a mediation team, mandate arbitration, prescribe changes in congregational life and practice, suspend or remove a pastor, governing board member(s) or other member(s), and make provision for interim leadership. Any action will be reported to Leadership Council.

MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING

Article 1: Ministers

1.1 Qualifications

Scriptural qualifications for ministers are given in 1 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 BIC U.S., and be willing to be directed by the decisions of General Assembly.

1.2 Duties and Privileges

- 1.2.1 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.
- 1.2.2 They are eligible to perform official duties within the limits of their credentials.
- 1.2.3 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 BIC U.S. 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 governing board of the local congregation.

1.3 Credentialing for Ministry

1.3.1 Doctrinal Examination

- 1.3.1.1 The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine will process all applications for credentialing in the BIC U.S.

- 1.3.1.2 The Commission will formulate all examination forms and establish procedures to be used in their work
- 1.3.1.3 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
- 1.3.1.4 The Commission will conduct a doctrinal examination of all persons to be credentialed by them.
- 1.3.2 **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.
- 1.3.3 **Ministerial Licenses.** A ministerial license will be issued by the National Director to all persons of the BIC U.S. who are properly recommended, have filed the forms required by the Commission, and have passed the doctrinal examination.
- 1.3.4 **Ordination.** Ordination is the church's endorsement of a person to specific ministry in the life of the BIC U.S. and the setting apart for particular service. The Commission shall establish requirements and procedures for ordination and administer the same.

Article 2: Assigned Ministers

An Assigned Minister has been assigned by action of Leadership Council to serve in one of these categories:

2.1 Minister serving as pastor

2.2 Minister serving as associate or assistant pastor

2.3 Minister under assignment as missionary

2.4 Minister on leave to pursue further study

2.5 Minister serving an inter-church organization

2.6 Minister under a special designation recognized by Leadership Council (e.g., evangelist, counselor, chaplain)

Questions covering eligibility shall be decided by Leadership Council, including the authority to deny or revoke licensing or other credentials as it determines appropriate.

Article 3: *Ordained Ministers*

3.1 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.

3.2 Ordination Process

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 Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. When the application is approved, the Bishop plans a public occasion for ordination.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 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 BIC U.S., exemplifies godly living, and is faithful in one's commitment to the church. It is regarded as continuous even upon attaining retirement status.

3.6 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 Leadership Council.

Article 4: Licensed Ministers

4.1 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.

4.2 Licensing Process

Applicants for ministerial license shall make application to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine through their Bishops and governing 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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 governing board of the local congregation under which they minister.

4.5 Term of License

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

4.6 Ordination

Licensed ministers become candidates for ordination when they meet the criteria established in Ministerial Credentialing Article 3 and may enter the ordination process as described in that article.

Article 5: *Commissioned Ministers*

5.1 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.

5.2 Commissioning Process

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 governing 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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 6: Ministers Under Special Assignment

6.1 Descriptions

Ministers under special assignment are those serving in specialized ministries that are recognized by Leadership Council. Such ministries include but are not limited to: missionaries, assigned evangelists, institutional chaplains, licensed counselors, and those teaching in religion departments of colleges and universities.

6.2 Qualifications

Those serving as credentialed ministers under special assignment shall meet the ministerial qualifications and the expectations of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine for credentialing in the BIC U.S.

6.3 Accountability

Ministers serving under special assignment shall maintain active membership with a BIC U.S. congregation and shall be recognized as a minister of the Regional Conference in which that congregation is located. In the exercise of their ministry they shall be accountable to the appropriate member of Leadership Council.

GENERAL CONFERENCE/ ASSEMBLY DIRECTORY

General Conferences

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
1902	Belle Springs, Kansas	S.R. Smith	M.H. Oberholser H. Davidson Aaron Martin

General Conference/Assembly Directory

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
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
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

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YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
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
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	Air Hill Chambersburg, Pennsylvania	O.B. Ulery	C.N. Hostetter M.G. Engle L.O. Musser

General Conference/Assembly Directory

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
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. Pleasant Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania	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	Cross Roads Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania	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 Bible 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
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

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
1945	Messiah Bible College Grantham, Pennsylvania	H.G. Brubaker	R.I. Witter Charlie B. Byers J.T. Ginder
1946	Mt. Pleasant 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
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

General Conference/Assembly Directory

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
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.
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

YEAR	PLACE	SECRETARY	MODERATORS
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
2012	Ontario Convention Center Ontario, California	Donald F. McNiven	Warren L. Hoffman Perry Engle
2014	Lancaster Mennonite School Lancaster, Pennsylvania		W. Alan Robinson Kenneth O. Hoke
2016	Stetson University DeLand, Florida		W. Alan Robinson Rob Patterson

General Assemblies

Beginning in 2018, the General Conference event was renamed to General Assembly.

YEAR	PLACE	CHAIRPERSONS	NATIONAL DIRECTOR
2018	Messiah College Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania	Rachel Diaz Emerson Leshner	W. Alan Robinson
2020	Online event hosted by: The Meeting House Carlisle, PA	Cathy Musser W. Alan Robinson	W. Alan Robinson

