

Part 2:

Recommendations of General Conference Board (GCB)

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2020 General Assembly

Whereas General Conference Board is authorized by General Conference to approve the minutes of General Assembly, and

Whereas General Conference Board, at its meeting on Friday, September 18, 2020, approved the minutes of the 2020 General Assembly held online on July 11, 2020, and the approved minutes were printed and distributed,

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly confirms the action of the General Conference Board in approving the minutes of the 2020 General Assembly.

<https://bicus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/GA-2020-Minutes2.pdf>

ACTION:

Notes

2. Amendments to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) that contains the doctrine and government of the Church, and

Whereas it is necessary from time to time to update the MDG so that it continues to be current and relevant for Brethren in Christ U.S. congregations, and

Whereas it is considered helpful to amend Article II and Article V of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine so that they more clearly state the view of the Church, and

Whereas Article 1.3.1.1 of the BIC MDG states that “The Articles of Faith and Doctrine may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds majority vote at two successive biennial meetings of the General Assembly of the BIC U.S.”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of Article II and Article V of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of BIC U.S. and that, if the amendments are approved by the 2022 General Assembly, they will be brought for a second reading and vote to the 2024 General Assembly.

Changes tracked with ~~strikeouts~~, **bolds for proposed revision**, and **blue print for new revision**

Article II: God and Creation

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.

(proposed revision to page 6, paragraph 6, 2020 MDG)

Article V: The Holy Spirit and the Church

The Holy Spirit, **who has been poured out on all people**, 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. **Followers of Jesus Both women and men are gifted, empowered, and called by the Holy Spirit to serve in leadership at all levels of church life, and** ~~t~~The Holy Spirit guides the church in setting apart persons, **both women and men**, for leadership. The church is responsible to discern and encourage the use of the gifts of the Spirit in its life and ministry.

(proposed revision to page 11, paragraph 2, 2020 MDG)

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(proposed revision to page 11, paragraph 2, 2020 MDG)

ACTION:

Notes

3. Amendment to the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has Bylaws that guide the governance of the Church, and

Whereas it is considered helpful to have Bylaws that address expectations for congregations that may be interested in being adopted into the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas Article 14.1 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws states “These Bylaws may be amended or repealed only by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly,”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S. by the addition of **Article 7.7 Adopted Congregations**.

7.7 Adopted Congregations

- 7.7.1 Congregations that are not affiliated with the BIC U.S. and desire to join the BIC U.S. shall complete a congregational adoption process outlined by Leadership Council.
- 7.7.2 Before an unaffiliated congregation may join the BIC U.S., the congregation’s lead pastor shall meet the qualifications of a credentialed BIC U.S. minister.
- 7.7.3 Requirements for BIC U.S. congregations stated in the MDG, other than the foregoing Articles 7.7.1 and 7.7.2, may be temporarily waived for adopted congregations for a specified time period. This waiver is only in effect upon the recommendation of Leadership Council and approval by GCB and the BOD of the Regional Conference in which the congregation is located.

proposed addition to the end of Article 7, pages 47-48, 2020 MDG)

ACTION:

Notes

4. Replacement of the Congregational Handbook in the 2020 Manual of Doctrine and Government (pages 57-69) with the Congregational Governance Articles

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) that contains the doctrine and government of the Church, and

Whereas it is necessary from time to time to update the MDG so that it continues to be current and relevant for Brethren in Christ U.S. congregations, and

Whereas the current MDG of the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a section titled Congregational Handbook that has been completely reviewed with proposed amendments, and

Whereas Article 1.3.2.3 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws states that “Other sections related to the governance of 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.”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of BIC U.S. by replacing the section titled **Congregational Handbook** with **Congregational Governance**.

Changes tracked with ~~strikeouts~~, **bolds for proposed revision**, and **blue print for new revision**

CONGREGATIONAL HANDBOOK GOVERNANCE

The articles in this section are intended to provide practices and policies to advance faithful and healthy BIC U.S. congregations. While congregations may have distinct and diverse leadership and structures, these articles contain common standards of governance expected of every BIC U.S. congregation. In addition, a congregation shall function in a manner consistent with the other sections of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG); subject to the authority, oversight, and direction of the regional bishop; and under the direction of the congregation’s lead pastor and governing board.

The BIC U.S. Leadership Council may from time to time provide further guidelines or resources based on these articles to assist and advise congregations.

To add to, revise, or delete these articles, such changes must be recommended by the General Conference Board and approved by a two-thirds vote of the

General Assembly.

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.~~

1.2 Congregational Business Meeting

A congregational business meeting ~~will~~ **shall** 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., **and further information is contained in Congregational Governance Article 3.**

1.3 Governing Board

Each congregation ~~will~~ **shall** 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 actions of the congregational business meeting, and with Regional Conference Annual Meeting, and General Assembly rulings. All group activities carried on within the congregation are subject to the approval of the pastor and the governing board.~~ **Further information on congregational governing boards is contained in Article 4.**

1.4 Congregational Staff

1.4.1 Lead Pastor

The lead pastor is the BIC U.S. minister assigned by Leadership Council to direct the congregation in a manner consistent with the MDG and subject to the authority, oversight, and direction of the regional conference bishop.

- 1.4.1.1 Other titles, such as “pastor,” “solo pastor,” or “senior pastor,” may be used for this role.
- 1.4.1.2 If a congregation is led by credentialed co-pastors or team pastors, one or, at most, two of these individuals will be designated as lead pastor(s).
- 1.4.2 **Pastoral Staff**
Pastoral Staff serve as associate/assistant pastors or pastors giving oversight to specific areas of ministry.
- 1.4.3 **Ministry Leadership Staff**
Ministry leadership staff serve as directors or coordinators giving oversight to specific areas of ministry.
- 1.4.4 **Support Staff**
Support staff serve in auxiliary roles, including but not limited to administrative and maintenance personnel.

Article 2: Congregational Health

Amidst other goals and objectives of BIC U.S. congregations, a central aim for each congregation should be to experience health and vitality in its ministries and relationships. Indicators of health such as the following will be pursued and strengthened by congregational leaders and participants:

2.1 Loving God

Individuals in the congregation are committed to the Great Commandment and are passionate in worship of and obedience to Christ. An environment of love is evident when congregants gather. Faith is nurtured by preaching and teaching that are Jesus-centered, biblically-based, and relevant to the times.

2.2 Loving Others

Persons in the congregation are mutually accountable to one another in matters of faith and life. Individuals love, care, and pray for each other, share each other’s joys and burdens, and admonish and correct one another.

2.3 Compelling Mission

The congregation is focused on the Great Commission and is devoted to reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, discipling them toward spiritual maturity, and serving the community and world.

2.4 Inspiring Leadership

Congregational leaders are **viewed with trust and respect** trusted and

respected for their integrity, humility, and commitment. and There is an open invitation to participate in the life of the church, People in the congregation are motivated to use their gifts to serve, and new leaders are developed and engaged.

2.5 Joyful Generosity

There is a generous spirit within the congregation. Giving of time, talent, and treasure is viewed as worship, and financial decisions are guided by an abundance mindset. Tithing and sacrificial giving are discussed regularly and are seen as a privilege rather than an obligation.

2.6 Effective Approaches

The congregation has adequate systems in place to assure smooth operations. Leaders are affirmed and provided with the resources to advance the ministries of the church. The purpose and mission of the church are clearly stated and widely embraced.

Article 3: Church Membership

Members of a congregation shall be those who have met the membership requirements of the BIC U.S. and of that congregation. The list of members should be reviewed and updated regularly.

3.1 BIC U.S. Requirements for Membership

Each member will have:

- 3.1.1 Expressed a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and a desire to live as an obedient disciple, and evidenced new life in Christ.

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.

- 3.1.2 Subsequent to a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ, been baptized in keeping with the BIC U.S. practice of believer's baptism. (The historic Brethren in Christ practice of immersing baptizees three times forward in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in humble submission to Christ and the Church, is encouraged though not required.)

Applicants will be baptized as a witness of faith and discipleship. We affirm our practice 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.

- 3.1.3 **Expressed a commitment to the local BIC U.S. congregation and a willingness to support the leadership of the congregation.**
- 3.1.4 **Affirmed openness to the teachings of Scripture as expressed in the Doctrine of the BIC U.S., found in the MDG, and to the practices and polity of the denomination.**

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.

- 3.1.5 **Demonstrated a readiness to engage fully in the life of the congregation through prayers, serving with gifts and abilities, and giving of finances; and a commitment to further the mission of the church in a spirit of humility and unity.**

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.

- 3.1.6 **Been approved by the governing board at the recommendation of the lead pastor.**

3.2 **Congregational Requirements for Membership**

The congregation may determine membership policies and practices relative to, but not limited to, the following:

- 3.2.1 **The term of membership, whether continuous as long as a member remains in good standing or for a fixed period of time with a renewal process.**
- 3.2.2 **Teaching and training for prospective members.**
- 3.2.3 **Recognition and affirmation of new members by the congregation. The practice of inviting new members to covenant with the congregation by means of the following membership covenant is encouraged though not required:**

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.

3.2.4 Special categories of membership, such as youth membership or dual membership with another congregation.

3.2.5 Transfer of membership from one congregation to another. No membership **should** may be transferred from one congregation to another without personal contact between receiving and sending congregations.

3.2.6 Withdrawal, suspension, or termination of membership.

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.~~

3.3 Accountability and Discipline

BIC U.S. congregations are covenant communities in which members encourage and support each other, so that each person may be faithful to Christ and become more like Christ. Ideally, mutual accountability will take place in relational settings of trust and open sharing prayer. However, situations of conflict or misconduct may arise which require the awareness and intervention of congregational staff, the governing board, and the Regional Conference bishop; such intervention may include, but not be limited to, prayer, encouragement, counsel, and discipline.

3.3.1 Purpose of discipline

Discipline is intended to bring those who are in error to repentance, helping them to receive the forgiveness, grace, and love that are available in Jesus, and to maintain the integrity and witness of the church.

3.3.2 Situations requiring discipline may include the following:

3.3.2.1 Conflict between persons in the congregation

It is expected that persons in conflict will first attempt personally to resolve the conflict and achieve reconciliation, in the spirit of Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15. If resolution is not achieved, the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee may provide counsel and facilitate reconciliation by communicating directly with parties involved (Matthew 18:16-17).

3.3.2.2 Conduct that is inconsistent with the faith and practice of the congregation

In such cases, the erring individual will typically be confronted in keeping with the principles of

Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-2, with follow up by the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee if the individual is unreceptive. This response does not apply to allegations of or actual conduct in violation of applicable law, which will be addressed according to Article 3.3.4.

3.3.3 Implementation of discipline

3.3.3.1 Discipline may involve implementation of a restoration plan with stated expectations, conditions, or restrictions on participation in congregational activities, or suspension or termination of church membership. It is to be carried out with a spirit of gentleness and humility, with full knowledge that those implementing the discipline may themselves be easily tempted into sin.

3.3.3.2 The lead pastor shall confer with the governing board and may consult the bishop before the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee implements discipline.

3.3.4 Allegations of or actual conduct in violation of applicable law

3.3.4.1 A congregation should consult its own legal counsel in handling such alleged or actual conduct, and must report, as required by law, any such allegation or conduct to the applicable governmental agencies including, but not limited to, law enforcement.

3.3.4.2 A congregation should provide compassionate care and ongoing support for each party involved consistent with guidance provided by the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee. Any such care or support should be provided in respectful consideration of the privacy and dignity of the affected parties, and without impediment to any ongoing internal or external investigation. Accountability structures, such as conditions or restrictions on participation in congregational activities, are important in walking with the accused and particularly so if the accused is found guilty.

3.3.4.3 Given the complexity of each situation, implementation of discipline and efforts to facilitate reconciliation will be evaluated and determined

by the lead pastor or lead pastor's designee, in consultation with the governing board, on a case-by-case basis.

- 3.3.4.4** Without regard to whether a criminal charge is brought or whether a conviction is obtained, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may nevertheless determine after an investigation that misconduct has occurred and take appropriate disciplinary action against the erring party.

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 4: Congregational Business Meeting

- 4.1 Personnel
- 4.1.1 **The lead pastor is expected to be present and involved in all congregational business meetings.**
- 4.1.2 The chair of the governing board presides at the congregational business meetings unless other provision is made in consultation with the bishop.
- 4.1.3 Members of in fellowship with the congregation, at least 16 years of age and older, are expected **eligible** to vote **on any recommen-**

dations brought to in the business meetings on legal matters. **Persons involved in the life of the congregation who are not members may also be invited to attend and participate as determined by the governing board.**

4.2 Process Notice

- 4.2.1 Items for the congregational business meeting are presented to ~~t~~**The governing board, who are is** responsible to prepare the agenda for **the congregational business meeting, and individuals may suggest agenda items to the governing board for consideration.** The agenda should be released prior to the congregational business meeting **allowing time for persons in the congregation to review the agenda beforehand; it is desirable for the agenda to be released at least a week in advance.**
- 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.~~
- 4.2.2 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.
- 4.2.3 **Notice of the place, time, and purpose of each regular or special congregational business meeting shall be given to persons in the congregation at least ten days before the meeting through normal communication media. In lieu of any other notice, however, notice may be given by announcement at any two regular church services within 30 days before the meeting.**

Article 5: Congregational Governing Board

5.1 Organization

5.1.1 The governing board will organize annually **and meet at least quarterly. Officers will be elected according to a process determined by the board** ~~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.~~ **If the board elects the lead pastor to serve as chair, the bishop shall approve such action.**

5.1.2 The governing board is not to meet without the **lead** pastor or bishop, ~~unless an E~~ **exceptions must be is** cleared with **the lead pastor; or with** the bishop, **and** with the knowledge of the **lead** 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:

5.1.3 Officers of the governing board will also serve as officers of the congregation.

5.2 Personnel

5.2.1 ~~All~~ **Prospective** members of the board **shall**:

5.2.1.1 **Provide** ~~are to give~~ a personal testimony of salvation,

5.2.1.2 **Affirm** ~~manifest~~ a concern for congregational growth,

- 5.2.1.3 Affirm support for and should demonstrate responsibility with evidence of being in agreement with the purposes and doctrine goals of the BIC U.S.,
- 5.2.1.4 **Confirm their commitment to** the congregation, with membership in the congregation being a prerequisite for membership on the governing board, and **their support for the lead pastor.**
- 5.2.2 The board **shall** ordinarily consist of the **lead** pastor and a minimum of five and a maximum of twelve members, **with** Mmen and women **both being** eligible to serve.
- 5.2.3 **Members of the governing board typically serve staggered, multi-year terms, with consecutive service not to exceed twelve years. Specific policies on board member service and terms are to be set by the governing board, with reporting to the bishop.**
 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.
- 5.2.4 The governing board is composed of the officers and **of other individuals in the congregation** congregational members **who are appointed** as selected by the congregational business meeting following a nomination process. **Additional persons, such as specific ministry representatives, may be invited to attend and serve on the governing board in a nonvoting, advisory capacity, as deemed appropriate by the governing board.** Ex officio representation from specific ministries is deemed appropriate as processed by the governing board.
- 5.2.5 When a conflict of interest may exist, a board member ~~will~~ **shall** declare the conflict, withdraw from discussion, and abstain from voting. **At the discretion of the board chair, the conflicted board member may be asked to leave the meeting during the time in which the item in conflict is being discussed and voted on.**
- 5.3 Functions
- 5.3.1 **The governing board is the board of directors of the congregation. It functions as a support and advisory group for the lead pastor and also provides for structure and accountability within the congregation.**
- 5.3.2 **In addition to other functions listed elsewhere in these articles**

of Congregational Governance, the governing board shall ensure that the following congregational governance standards are met:

5.3.2.1 Variances

If the congregation wishes to vary its operational and governing patterns in a manner inconsistent with these Congregational Governance articles, written approval shall be secured from the bishop.

5.3.2.2 Budgeting

The congregation shall have a procedure for the preparation, adoption, and control of the annual budget. Budgets should include contributions to the Common Ministry of the BIC U.S.

5.3.2.3 Accounting Records

The congregation shall maintain records of the general ledger and supporting journals, detailed records of pledges, investments, loans, yearly budget reports, and annual financial reports including record of annual audit or review. Giving statements shall regularly be provided to donors, and copies of requested records or reports shall be sent to the BIC U.S. yearly.

5.3.2.4 Administrative Records

The congregation shall securely maintain records which will include governing board minutes, congregational business meeting minutes, personnel files, employment records, and governance and/or legal documents, including any records required by federal, state, or local government regulation.

5.3.2.5 Policies and Procedures

The congregation shall create, implement, and publish any necessary policies and procedures such as job descriptions, staff hiring procedures, staff evaluations and compensation, child and youth protection, and risk management. These shall comply with and not contravene policies and procedures established by the BIC U.S.

5.3.2.6 Property and Facilities

All congregational facilities shall be well-

maintained and in accordance with local building and fire codes. Adequate risk and liability insurance shall be secured and periodically reviewed.

5.3.2.7 Publicity and Development

Congregational development efforts shall demonstrate biblical values, ethical standards, and donor responsibility. All initiatives should engender good public relations and confidence in the organization of the BIC U.S., its regional conferences, and its congregations.

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 6: Lead Pastor Search Committee

6.1 Purpose

6.1.1 **The lead pastor search committee is responsible for securing a lead pastor's employment and setting compensation and terms of service.**

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.

6.1.2 **Exceptions to the use of this committee occur:**

6.1.2.1 in the event of a new church plant, **in which case** the **lead** pastoral assignment will be made by the bishop and the National Director in consultation with Leadership Council.

6.1.2.2 **when interim leadership is needed in a congregation; in such cases, the assignment is made** Interim leadership in a congregation is assigned by the bishop in consultation with the **governing board**. Pastoral Committee.

6.2 Personnel

6.2.1 The governing board (except the **lead pastor and any pastoral or other staff who typically meet with the board**) and the bishop constitute the Pastoral **lead pastor search** Committee, with the bishop, or the bishop's designee **initiating the search process and** serving as chair.

6.2.2 When functioning as a pastoral search committee, ~~o~~Other persons may be added as agreed upon by the bishop and governing board.

6.2.3 **The outgoing lead pastor and other staff may be invited to participate in the search process at the direction of the bishop.**

5.2.3 — The pastoral search process is initiated by the Bishop.

6.3 Duties

6.3.1 **The lead pastor search committee solicits pastoral candidates through the bishop, conducts interviews, and facilitates any necessary background or reference checks.** 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.

6.3.2 The Regional Conference bishop, the Pastoral **lead pastor search** Committee, and the pastor **individual** under consideration negotiate the assignment of a **lead pastor**, who is to be credentialed through the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine prior to installation. A written agreement **will must** be provided, **including the following:** 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.

6.3.2.1 **A job description.**

6.3.2.2 **Compensation, including such benefits, where appropriate, as health insurance, retirement plan contributions, and vacation.**

6.3.2.3 5.3.3—The Pastoral Committee will negotiate the Terms of service, **typically including a term length of five years or less.** with the pastor. The initial term of service may be five years, unless the parties involved agree for a shorter term of service:

5.3.5—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 7: Lead Pastor Review Committee

7.1 The governing board (except the lead pastor and any pastoral or other staff who typically meet with the board) and the bishop constitute the **lead pastor review committee, with the bishop, or the bishop's designee serving as chair.**

7.2 5.3.4 The continuance of a **lead pastor's service following the initial term of service shall be will become extended for an additional term of service only upon the joint consideration agreement** of the Pastoral Committee **lead pastor review committee, the bishop, and the lead pastor.**

7.3 **A new term of service will not be initiated without an end-of-term review process guided by the lead pastor review committee. The committee will determine in what manner to incorporate congregational feedback in the review.**

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:

- 7.4 **In the event of a disagreement over a further term of service for the lead pastor, the bishop will evaluate the disagreement and will make a determination in the matter.**

Article 8: Lead Pastors

8.1 Purpose

The **lead** 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.

8.2 Accountability

8.2.1 The **lead** pastor is accountable administratively to the regional bishop **on issues of theology, polity, and compliance with the MDG** and shall keep in communication as often as desired by either the **lead** pastor or the bishop; **contact with the bishop should occur when the lead pastor is facing significant points of personal or congregational decision, tension, or crisis.**

8.2.2 The **lead** pastor is accountable functionally to the congregation by way of the governing board **for the ongoing work of the congregation.** In case of serious disagreement between the governing board and lead 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.

8.3 Conditions of Service Membership

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 **lead** pastor shall become a member of the congregation being served **upon commencement of his or her service.**

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.

8.4 Duties of Pastors

- 8.4.1 **To serve as the primary spiritual overseer of the congregation, promoting the health and vitality of the congregation's life, ministry, and mission**
- 8.4.2 **To clarify and champion the vision and values of the congregation and facilitate unified movement toward their fulfillment, within the broader scope of the ministry and mission of the BIC U.S.**
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
- 8.4.3 **To ensure** give priority to the equipping training and deployment of congregational leadership, **including pastoral and other staff where applicable**, for ministry within and beyond the congregation
- 8.4.4 **To foster the congregation's missional presence in their local community** To establish and oversee a system of evangelism, discipleship, and caregiving for an effective ministry
- 8.4.5 **To be a lifelong learner, pursuing personal and professional development through opportunities offered by the BIC U.S. and other agencies** 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)
- 8.4.6 To give monthly **regular** reports to the governing board, and annual reports to the congregation **and denomination as requested**

8.4.7 To **support, promote, and participate in** the total ministry and programs of the denomination, **and to encourage the congregation to do the same** 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.~~)

8.4.8 To **abide by all congregational, regional, and denominational commitments affirmed in the BIC U.S. Statement of Agreement for Pastoral Service**

8.4.9 To **fulfill other duties specific to the congregation being served as included in the provided job description** ~~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~~

8.5 Resignations or Unavailability

Lead pastor Pastoral resignations should be submitted to the bishop, **who coordinates the subsequent announcements to the governing board and congregation.** ~~The Bishops shall inform the Pastoral Committee and arrange for an appropriate announcement to the congregation. After a resignation is submitted, the **outgoing lead** pastor shall avoid involvement in the search process 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.~~

8.6 Disagreement or Discipline 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.

8.6.1 Misconduct

8.6.1.1 **If allegations of sexual or moral misconduct are made against the lead pastor, the governing board shall ensure that the bishop is promptly notified of the allegations. To the extent that such misconduct is reasonably determined to be in violation**

of applicable law, the congregation should consult its own legal counsel in handling the allegations, and must report the alleged misconduct to the applicable governmental agency including, but not limited to, law enforcement as required by law. In all instances of such allegations, the bishop may suspend the lead pastor, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the lead pastor's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation. In instances where the law does not mandate reporting of allegations to and investigation by governmental agencies (including law enforcement), the bishop shall direct the investigation.

8.6.1.2 During and after the investigation, the bishop will work with congregational staff and governing board members not under investigation to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry and compassionate care and ongoing support for each party involved.

8.6.1.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the bishop may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the lead pastor from his or her position.

8.6.2 Unsound doctrine and work performance concerns

8.6.2.1 When allegations of unsound doctrine or work performance concerns are made against the lead pastor, the governing board shall ensure that the bishop is promptly notified. The bishop may suspend the lead pastor, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the lead pastor's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation.

8.6.2.2 During and after the investigation, the bishop will work with congregational staff and governing board members to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry.

8.6.2.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the bishop may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the lead pastor from his or her position.

Article 9: Pastoral Other Staff Relationships

9.1 Steps in Selection and Oversight

9.1.1 Pastoral or Ministry Leadership Staff

The lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, shall determine and implement processes for the selection, oversight, and accountability of pastoral or ministry leadership staff. The selection process should include:

9.1.1.1 Consultation between the lead pastor and the bishop to assure the prospective staff member's compatibility with the doctrine and government of BIC U.S.

9.1.1.2 The use of a search committee or another means of involving persons in the congregation who will work with the new staff member.

9.1.2 Support Staff

The lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee shall determine and implement a process for the selection, oversight, and accountability of support staff.

9.1.3 Regular performance reviews should be conducted for congregational staff, including, when appropriate, feedback from those who work directly with individual staff members.

9.1.4 Any staff member with concerns regarding a lead pastor's moral conduct, doctrinal soundness, or work performance shall bring these concerns to the governing board and/or the bishop or the bishop's designee.

9.1.5 A congregation's governing board should develop and implement hiring policies and procedures that include the process to be followed in the hiring of a family member or members of a person currently on staff. Such policies or procedures should ensure the hiring process and reporting and accountability structures are equitable and transparent.

9.1.6 A former lead pastor may serve in a staff role in the same congregation he/she retired or resigned from only at the invitation of the current lead pastor with the approval of the governing board and the bishop.

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 af-

firmation 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.

9.2 Conditions of Service

9.2.1 The lead pastor or the lead pastor’s designee shall provide a written agreement to other staff upon their hiring, including the following:

9.2.1.1 A job description.

9.2.1.2 Compensation, including such benefits, where

appropriate, as health insurance, retirement plan contributions, and vacation.

9.2.1.3 Terms of service.

9.2.2 Upon the assignment of a new lead pastor, terms of service for other staff may be reviewed by the lead pastor in consultation with the bishop.

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.

9.3 Discipline or Removal

9.3.1 Misconduct

9.3.1.1 Any allegations of sexual or moral misconduct made against a staff member shall be addressed as follows. To the extent that such misconduct is reasonably determined to be in violation of applicable law, the congregation should consult its own legal counsel in handling the allegations, and must report the alleged misconduct to the applicable governmental agency including, but not limited to, law enforcement as required by law. In all instances of such allegations, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may suspend the staff member, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the staff member's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation. In instances where the law does not mandate reporting of allegations to and investigation by governmental agencies (including law enforcement), the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee shall direct the investigation.

9.3.1.2 During and after the investigation, the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee will work with other

staff and governing board members not under investigation to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry and compassionate care and ongoing support for each party involved.

9.3.1.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the staff member from his or her position.

9.3.2 Unsound doctrine and work performance concerns

9.3.2.1 When allegations of unsound doctrine or work performance concerns are made against a staff member, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may suspend the staff member, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the staff member's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation.

9.3.2.2 During and after the investigation, the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee will work with congregational staff not under investigation and governing board members to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry.

9.3.2.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the staff member from his or her position.

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 10: Ministry Teams

~~The congregation may have ministry teams to carry out programs, activities, and initiatives of the congregation under the leadership of the lead pastor and staff. The number, types, and composition of teams will vary based on the needs of the congregation at a given time.~~

Article 10: Congregational Ministry

All followers of Jesus are gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve in ministry. This ministry may be within the programs, activities, and initiatives of the congregation as it seeks to accomplish its purpose and mission or within the local or global community. Each congregation, under the leadership of the lead pastor, should organize its ministries in whatever ways are best suited to its particular context. This organization may include individuals serving in specific roles, such as deacons, or teams of individuals working together to meet ministry needs. The roles filled and teams created will vary in number, type, and composition based on the needs of the congregation at a given time.

Article 11: Delegates

11.1 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.

11.2 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 12: Review Board Bishop Authority, Oversight, and Direction

All BIC U.S. congregations are to “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 lead pastor and governing board” (BIC U.S. Bylaws 7.1).

12.1 In instances where, in the bishop’s judgment, these expectations are not

being met, he or she has authority to intervene, mandating changes in congregational life, practice, and personnel, or implementing discipline.

- 12.2** The bishop, in consultation with the National Director, may choose to convene a review board consisting of the bishop and a minimum of three persons from outside the congregation. The review board will apply biblical principles in its review of the situation and shall make recommendations to the Leadership Council. Recommendations may include, but are not limited to, appointing a mediation team, mandating arbitration, prescribing changes in congregational life and practice, suspending or removing a lead pastor or other pastor(s) or staff member(s), governing board member(s) or other member(s).

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.

ACTION:

Notes
