UB 6. Amendments to the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren Inc.

Origin of the Study

The delegate body of the 2017 Annual Conference adopted the recommendation of the Review and Evaluation Committee that three amendments to the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren which had been proposed by the Review and Evaluation Committee would "be recommended to the Mission and Ministry Board for bringing a recommendation to Annual Conference to amend the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren." This was necessary because the bylaws themselves require that any amendments to the bylaws must be made by a congregation via a query or by the Mission and Ministry Board. The Review and Evaluation Committee was not authorized to present proposed amendments to the bylaws directly to Annual Conference.

2018 Report of the Mission and Ministry Board in Response to this Assignment

The executive committee of the Mission and Ministry Board studied the bylaws amendments proposed by the Review and Evaluation Committee and came to some different conclusions as to the best way to work at some concerns that the review and evaluation process had identified. The executive committee also decided to propose some additional amendments to other parts of the bylaws beyond what the Review and Evaluation Committee had recommended. At its October 2017 meeting, the Mission and Ministry Board approved the amendments proposed by its executive committee.

(1) The 2017 Review and Evaluation report had recommended that the Leadership Team be assigned further responsibility to ensure the implementation of denominational vision:

Recommendation #2: The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the Mission and Ministry Board that Article V., Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren be amended to include further responsibility for ensuring the implementation of denominational vision, as follows:

- Coordinate denominational envisioning and assume responsibility for how denominational vision shall be implemented giving consideration to emphasizing a unified vision among denomination, districts, and congregations.

The Mission and Ministry Board believes that the Leadership Team should continue to be assigned the task of coordinating denominational visioning as well as to have the new assignment of implementation, as recommended by the Review and Evaluation Committee. Therefore,

the Mission and Ministry Board recommends to the 2018 Annual Conference:

that the first phrase not be stricken while adopting the Review and Evaluation Committee recommendation that Article V., Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren be amended to include further responsibility for ensuring the implementation of denomination vision, as follows:

- Coordinate denominational envisioning and assume responsibility for how denominational vision shall be implemented giving consideration to
emphasizing a unified vision among denomination, districts, and congregations;

(2) The 2017 Review and Evaluation report had recommended that the Leadership Team be assigned responsibility for overseeing the Annual Conference budget and for employing and evaluating the Conference director:

Recommendation #3: The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the Mission and Ministry Board that the functions of the Leadership Team as described in Article V., Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren be amended as follows:

- general oversight for Annual Conference and its budget, in consultation with the Annual Conference program and arrangements committee, the Conference director, and the Corporation treasurer;
- employ the Conference director and provide for his or her periodic evaluation.

The Mission and Ministry Board noted that the intent of the recommendation from the Review and Evaluation Committee was to give Leadership Team more oversight of the Annual Conference budget and the Conference director. The Board agreed in principle, but disagreed with the wording of the recommendation because the Leadership Team is not a corporate body that can enter into contracts to hire employees or to manage bank and investment accounts; that is the function of the denominational board. In order to accomplish the purpose of the proposed amendments in the context of the corporate authority of the denominational board, the board recommends creating a new bullet point regarding oversight of the budget and rewording the recommendation regarding oversight of the Conference director. In addition, the board recommends that reference to consultation with the Corporation treasurer be deleted from the first bullet point in this recommendation, because the treasurer no longer participates in general oversight of Annual Conference, as had been true in previous corporate structure.

The Mission and Ministry Board recommends to the 2018 Annual Conference:

that the functions of the Leadership Team as described in Article V., Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren be amended as follows:

- general oversight for Annual Conference, in consultation with the Annual Conference program and arrangements committee, and the Conference director, and the Corporation treasurer;
- general oversight of Annual Conference budget in consultation with the board of directors;
- serve as executive committee for Annual Conference;
- participate in the hiring and periodic review of the Conference director at the invitation of the general secretary;

(3) The 2017 Review and Evaluation report had recommended that the membership of the Leadership Team be amended with the addition of a district executive.

Recommendation #4: The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the Mission and Ministry Board that the membership of the Leadership Team as described in Article V., Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren be amended with the addition
of a district executive. The district executive would be recommended by the Council of District Executives and affirmed by Annual Conference, serving a three-year term.

Section 2. Membership
The leadership team consists of the current moderator, moderator-elect, Conference secretary, a district executive, and the general secretary. The district executive will be appointed by the Council of District Executives, approved by Annual Conference, and will serve a three-year term.

The Mission and Ministry Board agrees with the Review and Evaluation Committee's recommendation.

The Mission and Ministry Board recommends to the 2018 Annual Conference:

that the membership of the Leadership Team as described in Article V., Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren be amended with the addition of a district executive. The district executive would be recommended by the Council of District Executives and affirmed by Annual Conference, serving a three-year term.

Section 2. Membership
The leadership team consists of the current moderator, moderator-elect, Conference secretary, a district executive, and the general secretary. The district executive will be appointed by the Council of District Executives, approved by Annual Conference, and will serve a three-year term.

Other Amendments proposed by the Mission and Ministry Board

In addition to the bylaws amendments that the Mission and Ministry Board is proposing in response to the recommendations from the Review and Evaluation Committee, the Mission and Ministry Board also recommends to the 2018 Annual Conference:

(a) that the new name of the "Southern Ohio-Kentucky" District replace its former "Southern Ohio" name in Article VI., Section 2.A.3.

(b) that "closed sessions" terminology replace "executive sessions" terminology in Article VI., Section 3.K.

(c) that the term "at large" not be used in Article VI., Section 4.A. to describe board members who are called to serve with the chair and chair-elect on the executive committee, but rather to simply identify them as "voting members"

All of the above proposed amendments are shown in context in the following excerpts from the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren, Inc.

Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren, Inc.
(the “Corporation”)

...
Section 1. Purpose

There shall be a leadership team to provide executive leadership for the committees and general oversight of Annual Conference and to be a liaison between Annual Conference and the Corporation. Specific functions of the leadership team shall include:

- coordinate denominational envisioning and assume responsibility for how denominational vision shall be implemented, giving consideration to emphasizing a unified vision among denomination, districts, and congregations;
- delegate tasks from the actions of Annual Conference;
- interpret Annual Conference decisions and denominational polity;
- review recommended changes to Annual Conference policies and guidelines;
- general oversight for Annual Conference, in consultation with the Annual Conference program and arrangements committee, and the Conference director, and the Corporation treasurer;
- general oversight of Annual Conference budget in consultation with the board of directors;
- serve as executive committee for Annual Conference;
- participate in the hiring and periodic review of the Conference director at the invitation of the general secretary;
- propose and review bylaw changes for the Corporation to Standing Committee, in consultation with the board of directors.

Section 2. Membership

The leadership team consists of the current moderator, moderator-elect, Conference secretary, a district executive, and the general secretary. The district executive will be appointed by the Council of District Executives, approved by Annual Conference, and will serve a three-year term.

Article Six: Board of Directors

...
• Area Five: Idaho, Pacific Northwest, Pacific Southwest.

Section 3. Meetings of the Board of Directors

... K. Open Meetings
The board meetings are open to the public, except for executive sessions that deal with personnel issues, litigation, or sensitive matters.

Section 4. Organization of the Board of Directors

A. Executive Committee
The executive committee shall be composed of the chair and the chair-elect of the board; three voting members at large called by of the board; and the general secretary who shall serve without vote. The Annual Conference moderator shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee without vote. The functions of the executive committee are to:

... Action of the Mission and Ministry Board: At its meeting on October 22, 2017, the Mission and Ministry Board approved the proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Church of the Brethren, Inc. and recommended them for adoption by the 2018 Annual Conference.

Connie Burk Davis, chair
Patrick Starkey, chair-elect

James M. Beckwith, secretary
David A. Steele, general secretary