

New Business

1. The Review and Evaluation Committee

A New Mandate

Background

The Review and Evaluation Committee was created by the 1971 Annual Conference as a part of the reorganization of the General Board in that same year. The function of the committee, a.k.a. the “Rev & Ev Committee,” was “to evaluate the work of the General Board in terms of its mandate from Annual Conference and to report on the evaluation both to the Board and to the next Annual Conference.” That first committee, consisting of Carl E. Myers, chairman, Walter D. Bowman, Norman L. Harsh, DeWitt L. Miller, and Earl M. Mitchell, made its report, a very thorough one, to the 1972 Conference. Adopted along with its report was a recommendation from the committee that subsequent review and evaluations be conducted every five years and that the committee be elected two years in advance of the date of reporting. That pattern continued until the 1989 Conference when the frequency of Review and Evaluation Committee reports was changed to ten year intervals. Specifically, the Rev and Ev Committee was to be elected in the fifth year of each decade to “apprise the work of the General Board” and report to Annual Conference in the seventh year of the decade.

With the approval of a new design for the General Board in 1997, Annual Conference authorized the creation of a specially scheduled Review and Evaluation Committee to be elected in the year 2000 and to present its final report to Annual Conference one year later. That interim limited report, focusing primarily on the new design, was then to be followed by a full review and evaluation in the normal 10-year cycle with election of the new Rev and Ev Committee in 2005 and the report scheduled for 2007.

After hearing reports in 1999 which revealed that the new design for the General Board had created a ripple effect raising questions about long-held understandings about polity, practices, and procedures in our denomination, Standing Committee broadened the assignment by recommending that the task of the Review and Evaluation Committee “become one of reviewing the comprehensive effect of redesign of the General Board of the Church of the Brethren.”

The 2001 Rev and Ev Committee therefore examined and responded to such questions as:

- Who is the official representative in ecumenical relationships?*
- Who should maintain and distribute the denomination's polity manual?*
- Who should provide clarification on questions of denominational polity?*
- How should Annual Conference agencies and the Council of District Executives relate to each other?*

1 *What should be the role and composition of the Interagency Forum?*
2 *What role should the Annual Conference office play in the denomination's orga-*
3 *nizational structure?*
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5 The 2001 Review and Evaluation Committee clearly conceived its task as that of
6 looking beyond one church agency to the interplay between five reportable/account-
7 able church agencies and to the organization to which they are accountable: Annual
8 Conference. It also believed that the task included the relationship between Annual
9 Conference and its accountable agencies and the Council of District Executives.
10 The report of the 2001 Rev and Ev Committee therefore included recommenda-
11 tions for several innovative procedures, including the creation of the Annual
12 Conference Council, an executive committee for Standing Committee. The report
13 was received by Conference delegates in its entirety.
14

15 As Annual Conference prepares to elect a regularly scheduled Review and Evaluation
16 Committee in 2005, it would be reasonable to believe that such a committee should
17 have an expanded scope, just as that given the specially scheduled Rev and Ev
18 Committee in 2000. In fact, it will be timely to evaluate the effect of the redesign
19 of denominational organization with the passing of another five years of operation.
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21 **The Recommendation**

22 Standing Committee recommends to the 2005 Conference that the scope of the
23 Review & Evaluation Committee be expanded to include total denominational
24 structure and program, including all agencies reportable to the Annual Conference.
25 The Committee will continue to be elected every ten years, with the election
26 occurring in the fifth year of each decade and the final report of the committee to
27 Annual Conference in the seventh year of the decade.
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29 The Review and Evaluation Task

- 30 1. A study of the existing organization and structure of the denomination and
31 their effectiveness for accomplishing the goals and purpose of the church.
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- 33 2. A study of the thoroughness and comprehension of denominational
34 programs of the General Board, the Association of Brethren Caregivers, and
35 On Earth Peace Assembly.
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- 37 3. A consideration of the balance and unity of denominational witness and
38 ministry as directed and implemented by Annual Conference agencies.
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- 40 4. An evaluation of the collaboration, collegiality and cooperation between
41 Annual Conference agencies and the goals and programming of the districts.
42
- 43 5. An assessment of the interest and involvement of the general membership of
44 the Church of the Brethren in denominational programs and missions.
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- 6. The study of other matters of current relevance to the physical and spiritual effectiveness of the denomination. 1
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- 7. The committee shall make no recommendations that violate agency bylaws. 4
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The committee shall develop the criteria for conducting its study. 6
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Tools, Methods, and Procedures 8

While the committee will determine the techniques that are most appropriate for its task, the following may be helpful: 9
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- 1. Self-evaluation by individual agencies. 11
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- 2. Interviews with key denominational leaders. 13
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- 3. Questionnaires for Annual Conference delegates. 15
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- 4. Hearings and drop-in center at Annual Conference. 17
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- 5. Examination of documents related to Annual Conference component groups and accountable agencies. 19
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Guidelines 23

To promote cooperation between the Review and Evaluation Committee and denominational groups and agencies, several guidelines are suggested: 24
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- 1. The Annual Conference Council shall ensure that the committee members have an opportunity to be introduced to the leadership and staff of each of the agencies and their role interpreted. 26
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- 2. Initial inquiries about the programs and activity of the Annual Conference agencies will be channeled through the respective executives of each agency. 30
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- 3. Committee members are welcome and encouraged to conduct spontaneous interviews of agency employees and denominational members. 33
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- 4. The committee must observe confidentiality at all times. 36
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- 5. The committee will keep the Annual Conference executive and the executives of the Annual Conference agencies apprised of its progress. 38
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- 6. The committee may make an interim report to Annual Conference after the first year of its study. 41
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2. General Board Revisions to Polity

Church of the Brethren General Board Revisions to Polity October 2004

Notes

1 The General Board approved revisions to Section III.D. of Chapter I and all of
2 Chapter II of the *Manual of Organization and Polity*. The relatively minor changes
3 bring this document into conformity with recent polity changes and with current
4 General Board practice. Revised endnotes will be included when the document is
5 brought in to final form. Below is a summary of the changes.

- 6
- 7 1. In Chapter I, III.D., the first paragraph draws on language from the 2001 report
8 of the Review and Evaluation Committee.
9
- 10 2. Throughout Chapter II, “executive director” has been changed to “general sec-
11 retary” (per 2001 Annual Conference) and “staff director” has been changed to
12 “executive director” (following internal changes in nomenclature made in
13 2003).
14
- 15 3. **Purposes and Functions.** The preamble from 1997 has been removed to make
16 this chapter more consistent with the style of the rest of the manual. The board
17 also changed the wording of B.1 and C.1.
18
- 19 4. **II. Composition of the Board.** A new paragraph addresses a mathematical glitch
20 in the rotation of members elected from districts. References to those members
21 have also been changed from “representatives” (see explanation below in note 6).
22 The reference to the American Baptist observer/consultant has been removed,
23 based on the board’s recent decision to move the point of connection to the
24 Committee on Interchurch Relations.
25
- 26 5. **IV. Eligibility of Board Members.** Minor editing was done here for conciseness.
27
- 28 6. **V. Organization of the Board.** For accuracy, references to the board acting on
29 personnel matters has been removed from the first paragraph and in the
30 subsequent list (item d.). The term of the district executive member of MMPC
31 has been changed to three years, at the request of the Council of District
32 Executives.
33
- 34 7. **VII. Method of Calling** This section has been replaced by the minute from the
35 2001 Annual Conference. Reference is also made to the General Board’s prac-
36 tice of using a member development committee to recommend the at-large
37 member. Wording has been revised to clarify that Annual Conference must

approve, not simply affirm, all board members and to remove references to some members as “district representatives.” These changes are based on the advice of the General Board’s attorney after his review of 2001 Annual Conference polity changes relative to Illinois State law.

- 8. **VIII. Staffing** For accuracy, the sentence about the Leadership Team hiring staff has been replaced by a sentence about individual executive directors hiring staff.
- 9. **IX. Ecumenical Relationships** Previously this section was an abbreviated version of a similar section in Chapter I and did not include a statement of purpose for the Committee on Interchurch Relations. This section now duplicates the parallel section in Chapter I.
- 10. **X. The Review and Evaluation Committee** Based on a recommendation from the Annual Conference Secretary, this section has been deleted here. It will continue to appear in the chapter on Annual Conference, after being updated.

**Revisions to General Board polity
Approved by the General Board October 2004**

CHAPTER I

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

III. Conference Structures and Relationships

D. THE GENERAL BOARD

Created by Annual Conference and responsible to it, the General Board is the principal administrative body for program development and implementation for the global mission of the denomination. In keeping with the general policies determined by Annual Conference, the General Board administers and evaluates all phases of the denominational program, except for programs specifically within the designated purview of other Annual Conference agencies. As the administrative arm of Annual Conference, it carries out, correlates, and unifies the work assigned to it, and reports its stewardship to Annual Conference. In keeping with the General Board’s responsibility, the general secretary is recognized as the principal staff executive reporting to Annual Conference. The relationship of the General Board to Annual Conference will be strengthened as regular consultation and open communication takes place.

The sessions of Conference should always provide ample time for the Board to report to the church on the work we are doing cooperatively in America and

1 overseas, and to share experiences and observations concerning the witness and
2 mission of the church in these times.

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4 The General Board is a corporation organized under the General Not-for-Profit
5 Corporation Act of the State of Illinois, organized originally on April 16, 1894.
6 The members of the corporation are the delegates to the Annual Conference.

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8 **CHAPTER II**

9
10 **THE GENERAL BOARD**

11
12 **Preamble**

13
14 **I. Purposes and Functions**

- 15
16 A. Participate with Annual Conference in the discernment of God's leading
17 and assist the Church of the Brethren with the implementation of the will
18 of the body.
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20 1. Build and nurture a two-way relationship with Annual Conference by
21 reporting to each Annual Conference and by seeking guidance and
22 direction from Annual Conference on total church program.
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24 2. Propose initiatives for change as a result of General Board discernment
25 processes.
26
27 3. Share with Annual Conference insights and recommendations
28 concerning the ministry and mission of the church.
29
30 4. Faithfully implement the will of the delegate body.
31
32 B. Equip the church, under the guidance of Annual Conference, to make
33 faithful disciples to continue the work of Jesus —peacefully, simply, togeth-
34 er—locally and around the world.
35
36 1. Provide resources to congregations, recognizing that they are core
37 communities of faith in the denomination.
38
39 2. Provide service ministries to enable Christ's presence in the world,
40 actively involving individuals and congregations wherever possible.
41
42 3. Coordinate mission opportunities through which individuals and
43 congregations may live out the Great Commission, with special
44 attention given to counseling with districts and congregations in the
45 establishing of new congregations.
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4. Facilitate a leadership development system that calls, equips, and qualifies people for church and ministerial leadership. 1
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5. Incorporate the unique Brethren witness in the ministry, mission, and service of the church. 4
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6. Model a process of fundraising based on the biblical teaching of stewardship. 7
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7. Help build community through networking and communications. 10
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- C. Administer the General Board as Christian stewards of human and physical resources in keeping with the general policies determined by the Annual Conference. 12
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1. Facilitate a circular, interactive process in order to ensure that staff and relevant constituencies are involved. 16
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2. Maintain a balance between the needs of the organization and the needs of employees and volunteers. 19
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3. Act in partnership with districts, denominational agencies, and ecumenical partners. 22
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4. Pursue simplicity, clarity, and focus in order that we have structures and functions appropriate to our resources. 25
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5. Act as fiduciaries who empower staff as stewards of the mission of the church. 28
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II. Composition of the Board

The General Board shall be composed of twenty members called by Annual Conference. These members shall be representative of the various interest and areas of the Church of the Brethren. Fifteen members of the Board shall be called from geographical areas (interpreted as districts) of the church; five members shall be called from the church at large.

Of the fifteen members called from geographical areas, no more than one shall come from any one district at a given time. The five members at large may come from anywhere in the church. No more than one board member shall come from one congregation nor more than two from one district at a given time. However, when a member moves from one district to another, he or she shall not be replaced on the Board until his or her term expires even though the transfer creates a situation where there are more than two members of the Board from one district or more than one member from one congregation. At the conclusion of the term for a member called

1 from a district, the district will not be eligible to elect another member for another
2 three years.

3

4 Every eight years there is a vacancy in the rotation for district selection. This vacancy
5 will be considered as another at-large position for those specific years. The term shall
6 be five years and the person shall be selected by the General Board and submitted to
7 the Nominating Committee, who will in turn pass it to Annual Conference for
8 approval. Eligibility shall be subject to district quota restrictions. In the event that
9 there occurs a change in the number of districts, the formula and at-large member-
10 ship are to be reviewed and evaluated.

11

12 In addition to the twenty called members, there shall be five ex-officio members of
13 the Board. These shall include the president and the dean of Bethany Theological
14 Seminary, the moderator and moderator-elect of Annual Conference, and the
15 president of the Brethren Benefit Trust, each of whom shall serve in a consultative,
16 nonvoting capacity on the General Board. Any individual who becomes moderator
17 while serving as a member of the General Board shall resign from the Board and be
18 replaced by another who will serve the remainder of the unexpired term. If the mod-
19 erator-elect is already a member of the Board at the time of election, regular Board
20 membership continues until the moderator's role is assumed.

21

22 **III. Qualifications of Board Members**

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24 People considered for membership on the General Board shall exhibit qualities of
25 consecrated Christian living in the home, the Church and the community. They shall
26 be people who are committed to the mission of the church and conversant with issues
27 of the day. They shall possess competencies needed in the work of the Board and be
28 willing to give the major time and effort required for active participation in dealing
29 with the concerns before the Board and the church.

30

31 **IV. Eligibility of Board Members**

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33 Any member of the Church of the Brethren who fulfills the qualifications herein set
34 forth may serve on the General Board except people employed by the Board or
35 administrative personnel employed by the Brethren Benefit Trust, Bethany
36 Theological Seminary, the Association of Brethren Caregivers, On Earth Peace
37 Assembly, and the district boards.

38

39 **V. Organization of the Board**

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41 The entire Board shall be the responsible decision making body on all major program,
42 policy, and budget issues, with the functional activity of the Board facilitated through
43 committees appointed as needed. The Board may organize itself into whatever
44 committees or task forces would most effectively utilize the expertise of the Board
45 member and meet needs and functions as they arise.

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A. OFFICERS	1
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The Board shall call a chair and vice chair from among the voting membership of the Board. The Board shall also call a secretary, who shall be the general secretary, and a treasurer.	3 4 5
	6
B. STANDING COMMITTEES	7
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1. Executive Committee	9
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The Executive Committee shall be composed of the chair and the vice chair of the Board; four members at large called by the Board; and the general secretary who shall serve ex-officio without vote. The Annual Conference moderator, excepting when items of personnel are being considered, shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee without vote. The functions of the Executive Committee are to . . .	11 12 13 14 15 16
	17
a. facilitate the Board's goal-setting and long-range planning, taking into consideration the counsel of the Mission and Ministries Planning Council;	18 19 20
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b. consider recommendations from the Mission and Ministries Planning Council;	22 23
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c. develop budget proposals and long-range financial projections for the consideration of the Board;	25 26
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d. serve as a counseling agency for the general secretary;	28
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e. carry responsibility for the fiscal operations of the Board;	30
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f. act for the Board between regular Board meetings on matters that cannot be deferred until the next meeting.	32 33
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2. Mission and Ministries Planning Council	35
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The Mission and Ministries Planning Council will be composed of the chair of the General Board, one General Board member called by the General Board, the general secretary of the General Board, one executive director named by the General Board Leadership Team, the Annual Conference moderator and moderator-elect, and two district executives/ministers named by the Council of District Executives (CODE). The district executives/ministers will serve alternating three-year terms. The general secretary of the General Board will chair this council.	37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

1 The primary function of the Mission and Ministries Planning Council
2 is to provide a continuous interface between the members, congrega-
3 tions, and districts with the ministries of the Annual Conference
4 through the General Board. The Council shall receive and review ideas
5 for new ministries and missions from congregations, districts, and
6 Standing Committee. Through a process of discernment, the Council
7 will then make recommendations to the Board. Discernment is to be
8 through prayerfully studying the scriptures, listening for the voice of
9 the Holy Spirit, and facilitating a means for listening to the voices of
10 sisters and brothers in Christ.

11 **C. OTHER COMMITTEES**

12 To facilitate the ability of the Board to handle effectively its wide-ranging
13 responsibilities, it shall be authorized to enlist the services of task teams and
14 specialists. These ad hoc appointments shall be directly responsible to the
15 Board through the Executive Committee.
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18 **VI. Tenure of Office**

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21 The normal term of office shall be five years. Board members shall not be eligible
22 for a second term until two years after completion of a prior term of office, except
23 that any person serving a part of a term of three years or less shall be eligible to be
24 called for a second term.

25 **VII. Method of Calling**

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28 Fifteen members of the General Board shall be called by districts (three districts per
29 year). These members shall be chosen for a five-year term by the districts' selection
30 processes and then shall be presented by the Nominating Committee for approval
31 by the Annual Conference.

32
33 There shall be two categories of at-large General Board members, each selected for
34 a five-year term. Three shall be chosen by Annual Conference and two chosen by
35 the General Board and approved by Annual Conference delegates.

36
37 The General Board's member development committee recommends the at-large
38 member, who is then affirmed by the full board and approved by the Annual
39 Conference. If a General Board-appointed board member is unable to complete a
40 term, the General Board shall fill the vacancy using the same process.

41 **VIII. Staffing**

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44 The General Board shall employ a general secretary as its chief executive officer, a
45 treasurer, and such other people as are necessary to carry forward the program of the
46 Board. For administrative purposes, staff will be assigned to functional groupings

with common purposes or goals led by an executive director. The number and functions of these staff groupings will be determined by the Board.

The general secretary and the executive directors will constitute a Leadership Team for the purpose of coordination of program planning, consideration of major program policy matters, clearance on staff operation, program administration, and evaluation of the organization. The individual executive directors shall secure, determine tenure of, and terminate employment of staff personnel, subject to confirmation by the general secretary. Such action shall be reported to the General Board by the general secretary.

IX. Ecumenical Relationships

A. COMMITTEE ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

A Committee on Interchurch Relations shall be jointly constituted by Annual Conference and the General Board. This follows a pattern similar to the existing policy of naming representatives to the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. The Committee on Interchurch Relations is to carry forward current conversations and such other activities with other communions as will further the purpose of mutual understanding and the exploration of the question of church union. Competence, balance of viewpoint, and continuity for effective service are important values in the makeup of this committee.

Three members will be appointed by the General Board. They may be Board members, staff personnel, or other individuals. Three members of the committee will be elected from the church at large by Annual Conference upon nomination of the Standing Committee. The general secretary of the Board will be an ex-officio member without vote. Whenever a member of the Church of the Brethren is a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, that person becomes an ex-officio member of the Committee on Interchurch Relations. In addition, a representative from the American Baptist Churches USA will be invited to participate in meetings of the committee.

The tenure of the appointed and elected committee members shall be three years, with the possibility of serving for a second term.

The committee is responsible both to the Annual Conference and to the General Board. There will be regular reporting to Conference and to the Board regarding the ongoing activities of the committee. In case of a specific proposal for union of the Church of the Brethren with one or more Christian groups, the committee has the freedom to approach Annual Conference directly.

1 The committee will have the services of a staff executive who will be
2 employed by the Board.

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4 The full membership of the Committee on Interchurch Relations shall be
5 recorded in the Annual Conference minutes.

6 **B. ROLE OF THE GENERAL BOARD**

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8 The General Board shall give careful attention to basic coordination and
9 integration of ecumenical concerns in the normal course of the work of the
10 Board.

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12 The General Board shall assign other ecumenical concerns, especially
13 efforts to further local cooperation, to ongoing program areas as integral
14 aspects of these efforts, using all the reliable channels of communication
15 and implementation, such as . . .

- 16
17 1. counseling with districts and congregations on their relationships to
18 councils of churches;
- 19
20 2. ecumenical education;
- 21
22 3. interchurch involvements of designated program areas on behalf of
23 cooperative ministries;
- 24
25 4. coordination by the general secretary of all ecumenical staff relation-
26 ships;
- 27
28 5. Faith and Order studies and relationships to be related to the
29 Committee on Interchurch Relations or other committees or staff,
30 according to their nature.

31
32 The General Board shall initiate steps to develop a budget as part of the
33 denominational fund for the program of ecumenical concerns and espe-
34 cially for the work of the Committee on Interchurch Relations and staff.

35
36 The general secretary of the General Board represents the Church of the
37 Brethren ecumenically in positions customarily served by denominational
38 executive staff. To enable the moderator to fill his or her role, the general
39 secretary will seek opportunities in ecumenical circles for the moderator to
40 give strategic visibility to Annual Conference as the highest authority of the
41 Church of the Brethren. In some circumstances (i.e., the visits of heads of
42 state, major media events, and ceremonial functions), the moderator will
43 represent the denomination.

C. NATIONAL AND WORLD COUNCILS OF CHURCHES	1
	2
Representation of the Church of the Brethren to the National and World	3
Councils of Churches shall continue according to present Annual	4
Conference policy. (See Chapter I, section III.J.3)	5
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3. Updates to Annual Conference Polity

1 **Background**

2 Annual Conference 2001, in accepting the Review and Evaluation Committee's rec-
3 ommendations, assigned to the Annual Conference Council the responsibility for
4 updating the denomination's Manual of Organization and Polity. The Council is
5 currently working on that project, carefully reviewing the current document, as well
6 as encouraging Annual Conference agencies to bring their organizational structure
7 and by-laws up to date. It is the hope of the Council that a draft of the Manual with
8 all current updated information will be available on the Annual Conference web site
9 by September 2005. Further plans include printing a new hard copy version of the
10 Manual after the Review and Evaluation Committee's report to Annual Conference
11 in 2007.

12

13 **Recommendations to Annual Conference 2005**

14 The Annual Conference Council has found a few places in the current polity of
15 Annual Conference that are obsolete, at least in relation to current practice. The
16 Council recommends the following to supersede previous Conference actions.

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18 *(1) Frequency, Timing, Location (of Annual Conference)*

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20 B. The Annual Conference is to be scheduled usually sometime during the lat-
21 ter part of June to the early part of July, pending favorable conditions of
22 location and cost. When Conference is located in the Western Plains
23 District, Annual Conference will be held around the first week in August.

24

25 **Recommendation:** Delete the underlined sentence.

26

27 C. Since Annual Conference involves all districts and churches, it is held as
28 close to the population concentrations of Brethren as available facilities per-
29 mit, rotating by three areas: (1) Eastern-Southeastern, (2) Central, and (3)
30 Western-Pacific. The exact location of Conference is left to the Annual
31 Conference Program and Arrangements Committee.

32

33 **Recommendation:** Change the underlined portion of the paragraph to read:
34 rotating every six years to the following geographic areas: (1) *East* - e.g., Ohio,
35 Pennsylvania, West Virginia; (2) *Midwest (east of the Mississippi)* e.g., Indiana,
36 Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, Tennessee; (3) *Midwest (west of the Mississippi)* e.g.,
37 Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado; (4) *Southeast* - e.g., Virginia, Carolinas,
38 Florida; (5) *Midwest (east of the Mississippi)* e.g., Indiana, Illinois, Michigan,
39 Kentucky, Tennessee; (6) *Far West* - e.g., Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California,
40 Arizona (*alternate every six years between northwest and southwest*).

<i>(2) Duties (of the Annual Conference Moderator)</i>	1
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1. To preside over all sessions of Standing Committee and of Annual Conference, and to act as the official representative of the church. The moderator may appoint a parliamentarian.	3
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2. To contact district and other Brethren conferences.	7
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3. To serve ex-officio as a member of the General Board in a consultative, nonvoting capacity.	9
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4. <u>To convene at least annually a meeting of the officers of Annual Conference and the executive committee of the General Board, including the executive director, to review program development and implementation.</u>	12
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5. <u>To convene a biennial Consultation of Denominational Agencies and Institutions, with the executive director of the General Board as secretary of the Consultation, to promote greater cooperation among major Brethren agencies and institutions and to serve as a clearing house for scheduling, programming, and major fundraising.</u>	17
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6. To represent the church at strategic interchurch conferences.	23
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7. To serve as the chairperson of the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee.	25
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8. To give a “state of the church” address at Annual Conference.	28
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Recommendation: Delete the underlined items 4. and 5. from the moderator’s duties. Reasons: Re: Item 4. - There are more than one program agency now and the agencies are conducting their own reviews, as well as the periodic review of the Review and Evaluation Committee. Re: Item 5 - The Inter-Agency Forum (IAF) was established in 2001 and is serving this function. The immediate past moderator convenes the IAF.	30
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