

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference QUERY SUBMISSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire based on the procedures outlined in polity for preparing a query (p. 21 of the polity manual, ch. 1 at brethren.org/ac/ppg/). This questionnaire will serve as “the letter of explanation of the origin of the query and actions taken on the query” that is required by polity.

The purpose of this query questionnaire is to help the congregation and the district engage in serious study of the concern and consider whether they can answer some aspects of the concern for themselves or find answers already established by the church.

Query Procedures: in the local church

1. Define and state clearly the question or concern as you understand it at the outset of your work on the query.
 - a. What is the problem or issue you are trying to address?
 - b. How did you discover this issue or problem?
 - c. Is the issue of the query central to the life of the church? Why?
 - d. How will this proposed query invite delegates and their congregations to search the Scriptures in the light of our Anabaptist-Pietist heritage and to prayerfully discuss our understandings of God’s guidance?
 - e. Briefly outline the process by which you developed your responses to the above questions.

2. Evaluate and try to answer the concern through research and inquiry.

This should include Bible study, reviewing and studying previous Annual Conference statements, reviewing Brethren history, holding conversations with district and denominational staff as noted below.

 - a. Confer with the district executive, the General Secretary, and other Church of the Brethren staff these individuals might recommend to get information as to what has been done or is being planned in regard to this particular matter.
 - 1) With whom and when did you engage in discovery about the issue or problem?
 - 2) What did you learn? How did your understanding of the problem change based on these conversations?

 - b. If it is a new concern, the district executive, General Secretary, and other Church of the Brethren staff they might recommend should be consulted regarding what immediate action might be taken or whether Conference legislation would be helpful or necessary.
 - 1) With whom did you consult and when (if different than above)?
 - 2) What possible responses were considered?

3. Briefly outline your process of research and inquiry, including any follow-up research recommended by those you talked with.
 - a. What methods did you use to engage in the discovery and refinement of your problem statement and your proposed solution to the problem?
 - b. Did your question or concern change as a result of your research? If so, how?
 - c. Based on your research, do you still believe the issue of the query is central to the life of the church? Why? Did your perspective change in any way? If so, how?
 - d. Based on your research, what is the Biblical basis of the problem you researched?
 - e. How does your understanding of the Biblical basis reflect an Anabaptist-Pietist perspective?
4. If the matter does seem to need legislative action, the local church council should prepare a query to send to the district conference. ***Please submit to your district a copy this completed questionnaire along with the final query. The query should record the date it was approved and the names of the congregation, the moderator, and the clerk.***

Query Procedures: in the district

1. The query should be reviewed by the district board, or the district can appoint a committee to investigate the merits of a query, hold hearings to evaluate different sides of the question, and seek to find a satisfactory answer. *The district board should consult with the Annual Conference Officers for guidance as part of this process.*
 - a. Briefly outline your process of research and inquiry. What methods did you use to evaluate the merits of this query, evaluate different sides of the question, and seek a satisfactory answer?
 - b. What new information did you learn or what new perspectives emerged, that was/were not discovered and articulated during the research done by the local church?
 - c. Is the issue of the query central to the life of the church? Why?
 - f. Based on the district's research, will this proposed query help delegates and their congregations search the Scriptures in the light of our Anabaptist-Pietist heritage and prayerfully discuss our understandings of God's guidance?
 - d. Even if the query might merit a response by Annual Conference, in what ways does the district need to work on this question first?
 - e. What possible answers were considered?
2. If a satisfactory answer is not found, and the district conference feels that the query merits legislative action by Annual Conference, or if the concern or question of the query relates to denominational or general church matters directly, the district may send the query on to the Annual Conference.
 - a. Why does the district believe this query requires a response by Annual Conference?

When a district board or district conference initiates a query, steps should be taken to assure that the concerns expressed in the preceding procedures are observed. *Please respond to all of the questions found under both "in the local church" and "in the district".*

If the district conference adopts the query: The date of the district conference, along with the names of the moderator and clerk should be added to the query. The district executive should send copies of the query and the completed questionnaire (including both the congregational and district sections) to the Annual Conference Secretary and to the Director of Annual Conference as soon as possible after your district conference, so the Annual Conference Officers can begin to review them. These documents **must** be submitted **by December 1** in order to be considered by the Officers for possible deliberation at the following Annual Conference.