

Unfinished Business

UB 1. Update to Polity Regarding Annual Conference Agencies

Origin of the Study

In response to a recommendation from On Earth Peace entitled “Polity for Agencies,” which the 2017 Annual Conference returned, while accepting its concern regarding lack of applicable polity, the 2017 Annual Conference adopted the recommendation of Standing Committee:

that the Leadership Team be tasked to update current polity. The update shall include:

- the definition of an Annual Conference Agency
- the process to become an Annual Conference Agency
- the process by which issues of conflict or dispute between the policies and/or practices of the Annual Conference Agencies and the polity, policies, and positions of Annual Conference can be resolved
- the process to review Agency status if conflicts cannot be resolved.

The Leadership Team shall consult with each Annual Conference Agency in making this update.

2018 Interim Report of the Leadership Team on this Assignment

The Leadership Team has been working in its several meetings this past year to update the “Annual Conference Agencies” section of chapter 2 of the *Manual of Organization and Polity* in response to the assignment given by the 2017 Annual Conference. At the January 2018 Inter-Agency Forum meetings, the Leadership Team consulted with the executives and the board chairs of the Annual Conference Agencies regarding a possible framework for defining and reviewing Agency status and for resolving conflicts or disputes that involve an Agency. Further conversation is needed to more fully consider how updated polity might reflect a covenantal basis for our life together as a church. The role of the Review and Evaluation Committee in reviewing the status of the Agencies every decade will also be a part of further conversations with the Agencies and their boards. The Leadership Team respectfully requests additional time to work on this assignment.

Leadership Team

- David A. Steele, General Secretary, chair
- Samuel Kefas Sarpiya, Moderator
- Donita J. Keister, Moderator-elect
- James M. Beckwith, Secretary
- David D. Shetler, Council of District Executives Representative
- Chris Douglas, Conference Director, staff support

1 **Action of the 2018 Annual Conference:** General Secretary David A. Steele, as
2 chair of the Leadership Team, presented the report. *Annual Conference received*
3 *Leadership Team's interim report and granted additional time to work on the as-*
4 *signment.*

5

6 **2019 Interim Report of the Leadership Team on this Assignment**

7

8 The Leadership Team has worked on updating the "Annual Conference Agencies"
9 section of chapter 2 of the *Manual of Organization and Polity* in response to the
10 assignment given by the 2017 Annual Conference. At the 2018 and again at the
11 2019 Inter-Agency Forum meetings, the Leadership Team consulted with the An-
12 nual Conference Agencies about the proposed polity and further consultation is
13 anticipated. The Leadership Team plans to have a revision of polity ready to pro-
14 pose as an item of unfinished business for the 2020 Annual Conference.

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16 Leadership Team

17 David A. Steele, General Secretary, chair

18 Donita J. Keister, Moderator

19 Paul Munday, Moderator-elect

20 James M. Beckwith, Secretary

21 Cynthia S. Sanders, Council of District Executives Representative

22

23 **Action of the 2019 Annual Conference:** General Secretary David A. Steele, as
24 chair of the Leadership Team, presented the report. *Annual Conference received*
25 *the Leadership Team's interim report and granted an additional year to work on*
26 *the assignment.*

27

28 **2020-2021 Interim Report of the Leadership Team on this Assignment**

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30 The Leadership Team was working to finalize its proposal for updating our polity
31 regarding Annual Conference Agencies when the Conference Officers decided
32 to postpone any polity change proposals until after the Compelling Vision
33 process is completed. That decision will allow any proposed polity change to
34 be considered in light of the Compelling Vision. The Leadership Team will there-
35 fore reconsider its recommendation, in consultation with the Annual Confer-
36 ence Agencies, after the work on Compelling Vision is completed. We will plan
37 to propose a revision of polity to the 2022 Conference.

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39 Leadership Team

40 David A. Steele, General Secretary, chair

41 Paul Munday, Moderator

42 David Sollenberger, Moderator-elect

43 James M. Beckwith, Secretary

44 Cynthia S. Sanders, Council of District Executives Representative

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Action of the 2021 Annual Conference: General Secretary David A. Steele, as chair of the Leadership Team, presented the report. *Annual Conference received the Leadership Team’s interim report and granted an additional year to work on the assignment.*

2022 Report of the Leadership Team on this Assignment

The Leadership Team’s work this past year to finalize our proposal for updating polity regarding Annual Conference Agencies included several consultations with leadership of the Annual Conference Agencies.

Each aspect of the assignment has been addressed: this proposed update to polity provides the definition of an Annual Conference Agency; it specifies the process to become an Annual Conference Agency; it identifies the process for resolving issues of conflict or dispute between the policies and/or practices of an Annual Conference Agency and the polity, policies, and positions of Annual Conference; it identifies the process for reviewing Agency status if conflicts cannot be resolved; and the Leadership Team consulted with each Annual Conference Agency in making this update.

The Leadership Team believes this polity update for Annual Conference Agencies will help navigate the reality that each organization is a separately incorporated but genuinely engaged partner in providing a ministry on behalf of the Church of the Brethren that Annual Conference cannot or does not chose to provide or accomplish itself.

The following proposed update to Agency polity was approved in its final form at a meeting of the Leadership Team on February 11, 2022, to be presented to Annual Conference for approval.

- The Leadership Team
- General Secretary David A. Steele, chair
 - Moderator David Sollenberger
 - Moderator-elect Tim McElwee
 - Council of District Executives Representative Torin S. Eikler
 - Annual Conference Secretary James M. Beckwith, secretary

Proposed Update Regarding Polity for Annual Conference Agencies

II. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENCIES

An Agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference is defined as an organization recognized by Annual Conference that provides a ministry on behalf of the Church of the Brethren that Annual Conference cannot or does not choose to provide or accomplish itself. Recognized Annual Conference Agencies are authorized to use the name “Church of the Brethren” and be an active pres-

1 ence at Annual Conference through reporting, equipping sessions, and exhibits.
2 Each recognized Annual Conference Agency will have an ex-officio representa-
3 tive on the Mission and Ministry Board and will provide for an ex-officio repre-
4 sentative from the Mission and Ministry Board on their organizational board.
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6 Current Annual Conference Agencies and any organizations seeking to become
7 an Annual Conference Agency shall meet the following criteria:
8

- 9 1. Establish a covenant of agreement with Standing Committee that is approved
10 by Annual Conference,¹ which acknowledges the Agency's organizational
11 structure² and clarifies the expectations that the Standing Committee and
12 the Agency have regarding the Agency's role in the life of the Church of the
13 Brethren. This covenant of agreement can be revisited at the request of an
14 Agency or Standing Committee and shall serve as written authorization to
15 use the Church of the Brethren name.
16
- 17 2. Provide an annual report to Annual Conference regarding the areas in which
18 the Agency's work is related to the Church of the Brethren. The report will
19 provide an opportunity for engagement with the delegate body in a format
20 specified by Program & Arrangements Committee and the Annual Confer-
21 ence Officers.
22
- 23 3. Maintain a Church of the Brethren presence in their organizational structure
24 by providing that at least 1/3 of the members of their board are members
25 of the denomination. Board members may be elected by Annual Conference
26 if so specified in an Agency's covenant with Standing Committee. At a min-
27 imum, the members of the Agency's board will be reported to the delegates
28 at Annual Conference for the purpose of awareness and accountability. The
29 Agency board shall fill any unexpired terms of Church of the Brethren mem-
30 bers promptly, in accordance with the Agency's governing documents, in
31 order to maintain this denominational presence. Those chosen to fill unex-
32 pired terms on Agency boards shall begin to serve immediately, subject to
33 the processes of the Agency, and shall be announced to the delegate body
34 at the next Annual Conference.
35
- 36 4. Negotiate with Annual Conference through Standing Committee any
37 changes in the Agency's governing documents which would affect its
38 covenant of agreement with Annual Conference.
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40 1. Covenant agreements are negotiated between Standing Committee and Agency leadership. The
41 Annual Conference delegate body may accept the covenant as written or reject it, giving
42 guidance for further refinement of the agreement. Standing Committee will take that guidance
43 back into further negotiations with a current Agency or a new organization seeking Agency status.
44 An adjusted covenant will be presented to Annual Conference delegates the following year for
45 approval.

46 2. Each Annual Conference Agency is incorporated with its own governing documents, which
specify its organizational structure.

5. Work in partnership with denominational leadership and other Annual
Conference Agencies to serve the members of the Church of the Brethren.

When an organization wishes to become an Agency of Annual Conference, the request shall be submitted to the Standing Committee. The request shall include the basis for seeking Agency status, proposed organizational structure, and a statement of vision and purpose with regard to the organization's proposed role in the life of the Church of the Brethren. The Standing Committee will carefully review the request. If it is affirmed by a two-thirds vote, Standing Committee and the organization will develop a covenant before recommending Agency status to the Annual Conference delegate body. The organization shall receive Agency status if the recommendation is approved by a two-thirds vote of Annual Conference.

An annual report from each Annual Conference Agency to Standing Committee shall provide an opportunity to hear about the working relationship between the Agency and the denomination and to celebrate together the ministries that the Agency is providing in partnership with Annual Conference in service to Christ and the church. It shall also provide an opportunity to pray together in support and encouragement of the Agency and its staff.

Standing Committee shall develop a process for conversation with an Annual Conference Agency for the purpose of renewing a good working relationship should a concern emerge. If a significant issue cannot be resolved, Standing Committee could, with a two-thirds vote, recommend to the Annual Conference delegate body that the organization's Agency status be discontinued. Such a recommendation would be presented as an item of new business to the following year's Standing Committee, providing for a period of prayerful discernment by the denomination and the Agency as well as further opportunity for the Standing Committee and the Agency to reestablish a mutually satisfactory relationship. During its meetings the second year, Standing Committee would make a recommendation for how the Annual Conference delegate body might best respond to this item of new business regarding the discontinuation of Agency status. That recommendation should include a report of Standing Committee's efforts to maintain the covenant of agreement between the Agency and Standing Committee.

Upon the recommendation of Standing Committee, Annual Conference may discontinue Agency status by a two-thirds vote of the delegate body. A motion from the floor of Annual Conference to discontinue Agency status would become an item of new business addressed by Annual Conference in the following year.

An Agency may decide at any time that its Agency status be discontinued and report this to Standing Committee.

1 **Recommendations from the Leadership Team for Implementation:**

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1. This polity will take effect no later than the conclusion of the second Annual Conference after its approval and will supersede any previous polity or agreements with current Agencies.
2. Updated covenant agreements must be created by Standing Committee with each current Agency by the end of two years after the institution of this polity. An additional year will be granted at the request of Standing Committee with the support of the Agency. Current Agencies will continue under their current agreements until the new covenant agreements are finalized. They will continue to serve as an Agency of Annual Conference until a separation action by the Agency or by Standing Committee and Annual Conference discontinuing Agency status in accordance with this polity. If, after three years, an agreement cannot be reached, Standing Committee will seek the will of the Annual Conference delegate body, asking if continued negotiation should be pursued. With a majority vote, Annual Conference will direct Standing Committee to continue work on a covenant to be presented the following year. Failing a majority vote, Annual Conference will entertain the question of whether Agency status should continue. That vote to discontinue status will follow the guidelines of this polity.
3. Standing Committee shall develop the process for addressing concerns in Agency relationships within two years, reporting back to Annual Conference on progress after one year.

**Appendix: Current Polity that would be superseded
(replaced) by the updated polity**

Current Chapter 2, Section II. in the
Manual of Organization and Polity, January 2021 edition

(not a part of the proposed polity; simply provided for the
delegate body's information)

II. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENCIES¹³

Annual Conference has authorized certain organizations to serve as Annual Conference agencies. These approved agencies carry out specialized ministries on behalf of the Church of the Brethren, while maintaining their own incorporations and ministries. Each has its own agreement with Annual Conference regarding its status as an official Annual Conference agency and is authorized to use the name "Church of the Brethren."¹⁴

Annual Conference receives an annual report and audited financial statements from each official Annual Conference agency.¹⁵ Annual Conference elects or confirms agency board members in accordance with each agency's governing documents. Each agency will negotiate with Annual Conference any changes in its governing documents which would affect its agreement with Annual Conference or which would affect Annual Conference's responsibility to elect or confirm directors/trustees for its board.¹⁶

13. A revision of this section is underway, in accordance with the assignment to the Leadership Team stated in the 2017 Minutes, "Polity for Agencies," 294.

14. This paragraph is an explanatory note describing our organization; it is not polity because this wording has not been adopted as polity by Annual Conference - see endnote 2 above. Current understanding is that an organization which has been authorized by Annual Conference to serve as an Annual Conference agency is thereby authorized to use the name "Church of the Brethren." See 1987 Minutes (1985-1989), "Revisions of Brethren Polity," 486; see also chapter 1 of this manual, section III.G.

15. The Annual Conference agencies are not required to present audited financial statements in delegate packets, however, as long as that information is available in printed form during the Conference. See 2015 Minutes, "Interpretation of Polity Regarding Agency Financial Reports," 249. The Annual Conference Secretary requests that each Annual Conference agency submit an official printed copy of its audited financial statement to the Annual Conference Office to be included with Annual Conference records in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives.

16. This paragraph is not polity adopted by Annual Conference; it is an explanatory note describing our organization, recognizing that each Annual Conference agency is incorporated with its own governing documents.

1 **A. BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

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3 **1. Background¹⁷**

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5 Bethany Theological Seminary is the graduate school of theology for the
6 Church of the Brethren. It was established in 1905 and recognized by An-
7 nual Conference as a Brethren school in 1909. The 1925 Annual Conference
8 adopted a plan to transfer ownership of the school to the denomination
9 and established the electorate for the board of directors of the corporation
10 that governs the seminary, with trustees chosen by the denomination,
11 Brethren colleges, alumni, and faculty. Over the years Annual Conference
12 has approved guidelines for electing trustees, relating to other seminaries,
13 and raising funds for the seminary budget.¹⁸ The 1972 Annual Conference
14 adopted a report identifying the seminary as an agency of the church, a crea-
15 ture of and directly responsible to the Annual Conference. The 1974 Annual
16 Conference adopted a report recognizing that the seminary has its own char-
17 ter and is directly related to the Annual Conference.¹⁹

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19 **2. Basis for Annual Conference Agency Status**

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21 Since 1925 Bethany Theological Seminary has been “owned” by the denom-
22 ination, but has been governed by its incorporation. The seminary has its
23 own charter. At the same time, it is directly related to Annual Conference as
24 the only graduate school of theology for the Church of the Brethren.²⁰

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26 17. This section is not a quotation of Annual Conference polity decisions; rather, it is the editor’s
27 summary of information gleaned from Annual Conference minutes.

28 18. 1909 Minutes, “Bethany Bible School petitions Annual Meeting to be recognized as a Brethren
29 school,” 6; 1922 Minutes, “General Education Board,” Request #2, 5-6; 1923 Minutes, “Transfer
30 of Bethany Bible School,” 3-6 (page 4 states that the school was established in 1906, but on that
31 same page is listed the enrollment for the fall of 1905, so 1905 is understood to be the year when
32 the school was established); 1925 Minutes (1920-1930), “Commission on Educational Prob-
33 lems,” 5-6; 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), “Brotherhood Organization,” 79; 1972 Minutes (1970-
34 1964), “Bethany Seminary Study Committee,” 232-236; 1974 Minutes (1970-1974), “A Plan to
35 Establish a Bethany Seminary Fund in Support of Theological Education in the Church of the
36 Brethren,” 443-444; 1974 Minutes (1970-1974), “Bethany Theological Seminary Recommenda-
37 tions,” 444-445; 1977 Minutes (1975-1979), “Revision of the Member-at-Large Category of the
38 Bethany Board of Directors,” 356; 1979 Minutes (1975-1979), “Annual Conference Elections,”
39 572-573. The 1979 decision urged Standing Committee in its nominations and Bethany Board
40 in its at large appointments to “significantly increase the membership of women and minority
41 group members on the board.”

42 19. 1972 Minutes (1970-1964), “Bethany Seminary Study Committee,” 235; 1974 Minutes (1970-
43 1974), “A Plan to Establish a Bethany Seminary Fund in Support of Theological Education in
44 the Church of the Brethren,” 443.

45 20. This paragraph is the editor’s summary of the seminary’s current status as an Annual Conference
46 agency, based on 1925 Minutes (1920-1930), “Commission on Educational Problems,” 5-6, and
1974 Minutes (1970-1974), “A Plan to Establish a Bethany Seminary Fund in Support of Theo-
logical Education in the Church of the Brethren,” 443; it is not a polity statement approved by
Annual Conference.

Nine members of the seminary's board of trustees shall be nominated by Standing Committee and elected by Annual Conference: three members representing the Church of the Brethren colleges, three members representing the ministry, three members from the laity of the church. One member shall be elected by the alumni association and confirmed by Annual Conference.²¹ Ten at large trustees are elected by the seminary's board of trustees and confirmed by Annual Conference.²² All members of the board serve a five-year term with tenure of two successive terms. Trustees may not serve on a board of another agency reportable to Annual Conference.²³

B. CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN BENEFIT TRUST

1. Background²⁴

Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust began as the Pension Board in 1943 when Annual Conference adopted the Ministerial and Missionary Pension Plan. The 1968 Annual Conference approved having the members of the denominational board serve as the members of the pension board responsible for the operation of the pension plan. In 1986 Annual Conference approved plans to create a pension board separate from the denominational board. Articles of Organization were approved by the 1987 Annual Conference, and the 1988 Annual Conference authorized the reorganization of the Church of the Brethren Pension Board into the Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust, with a separately constituted board of directors.²⁵

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21. 1947 Minutes (1945-1954), "Brotherhood Organization," 79; the Bylaws of Bethany Theological Seminary, Inc., as amended October 27, 2012, specify that the trustees representing the colleges shall represent Church of the Brethren colleges.
22. 1966 Minutes (1965-1969), "Report of Bethany Theological Seminary," 154, approved three board members-at-large to be nominated by the board itself and confirmed by Annual Conference to serve a five-year term; the report noted that the board may legally enlarge its membership within the terms of their charter. 1977 Minutes (1975-1979), "Revision of the Member-at-Large Category of the Bethany Board of Directors," 356, records Annual Conference's confirmation of the board's decision to increase the member-at-large category by one person to a total of four. The 1992 Minutes (1990-1994), "Electors of Bethany Theological Seminary," 356, lists five additional at large members, making the total of ten trustees currently elected by the board and confirmed by Annual Conference.
23. Bylaws of Bethany Theological Seminary, Inc., as amended October 27, 2012.
24. This section is not a quotation of Annual Conference polity decisions; rather, it is the editor's summary of information gleaned from the Annual Conference minutes cited in endnote 22.
25. 1943 Minutes (1941-1950), "Retirement Plan for Ministers and Missionaries," 4-10; 1968 Minutes (1965-1969), "Reorganization of the General Brotherhood Board," 343; 1982 Minutes (1980-1984), "Church of the Brethren Pension Plan Restated," 424-434; 1986 Minutes (1985-1989), "General Board/Pension Board Relationship," 319-320; 1987 Minutes (1985-1989), "Pension Board Restructure Committee Report," 476-478; 1989 Minutes (1985-1989), "Brethren Benefit Trust Document Revisions," 906-907; 1990 Minutes (1990-1994), "Ratification of Brethren Benefit Trust Actions," 131-133; 1991 Minutes (1990-1994), "Ratification of Brethren Benefit Trust Actions," 342; 1993 Minutes (1990-1994), "Proposed Change to Brethren Benefit Trust Articles of Organization," 630; 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), "Changes to the Brethren Benefit Trust," 791-794; 2006 Minutes, "Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust Articles of Organization, Proposed Revisions," 541-544; 2015 Minutes, "Amendments to Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust Articles of Organization," 241-246; 2015 Minutes, "Polity Change Proposal from Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust," 247-248.

1 **2. Basis for Annual Conference Agency Status**

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3 The agreement by which Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust operates as
4 an agency of Annual Conference is established by means of the following
5 *Articles of Organization*:²⁶

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7 a. Purpose

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9 The purpose of Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust is to support a mu-
10 tual ministry of financial services among members, employees, and affil-
11 iated agencies of the Church of the Brethren, and other people and
12 groups that share the values of the Church of the Brethren.

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14 b. Function

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16 The function of Brethren Benefit Trust is to provide financial programs
17 and services through Brethren Benefit Trust Inc., Brethren Foundation
18 Inc., and Brethren Foundation Funds Inc., which focus on fiduciary re-
19 sponsibility, mutual support, and Christian stewardship.

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21 Brethren Benefit Trust promotes Church of the Brethren values through
22 Brethren Values investing.²⁷ Brethren Benefit Trust invests money under
23 its management in companies in a manner that conforms to Church of
24 the Brethren Annual Conference Statements, where practicable, as an
25 asset management firm with fiduciary responsibilities to its members and
26 clients.

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28 c. Governance and Reportability

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30 Brethren Benefit Trust is an official agency of the Church of the Brethren
31 as authorized by Annual Conference and shall report to Annual Confer-
32 ence on matters of organization and function. An electronic financial re-
33 port and a printed annual report shall be made to Conference and be
34 received by Conference.

35

36 d. Authority

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38 Brethren Benefit Trust shall have the authority to (i) establish, modify,
39 interpret, and maintain programs, products, and services that it may elect
40 to develop and implement, (ii) develop alliances and subsidiary organi-

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42 26. This sentence is the editor's summary of Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust's current status as
43 an Annual Conference agency; the remainder of this section consists of the *Articles of Organization*,
44 which are polity from 2015 Minutes, "Amendments to Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust Ar-
45 ticles of Organization," 241-246, and 2015 Minutes, "Polity Change Proposal from Church of
46 the Brethren Benefit Trust," 247-248.

27. 2018 Minutes, "Brethren Values Investing," 295.

zations (either not-for-profit or for-profit corporations, partnerships, or limited liability companies) to which it may assign authority and responsibility for programs, products, and services, and (iii) act in any lawful manner to fulfill the purpose of Brethren Benefit Trust.	1 2 3 4
e. Bylaws	5 6 7
Brethren Benefit Trust shall have authority to develop and implement bylaws for the proper and efficient operation of its organization and sub-organizations. The bylaws shall address all pertinent subjects including, but not limited to, the Board of Directors, officers, tenure, frequency of meetings, coverage of expenses, and employment of staff.	8 9 10 11 12 13
f. Funding for Services	14 15
The principal source of funding shall be fees for services as established by Brethren Benefit Trust and related organizational entities.	16 17 18
g. Ex Officio Relationships	19 20
The president of Brethren Benefit Trust shall serve as an ex officio member of the Brethren Benefit Trust Board without vote and as an ex officio member of the Mission and Ministry Board without vote. The General Secretary of Church of the Brethren, Inc. shall serve as an ex officio member of the Brethren Benefit Trust Board without vote. Similar relationships may be developed with other agencies reportable to Annual Conference.	21 22 23 24 25 26 27
h. Board Membership and Terms	28 29
The Board of Directors of Brethren Benefit Trust shall consist of twelve members. Each term shall be for a period of four years. Directors may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. There shall be a lapse of at least one year following the completion of two consecutive terms before a director is eligible for election to additional terms. The directors of Brethren Benefit Trust may elect a successor director to fill the unexpired term of any director in the event of a vacancy due to the resignation or death of a director before the end of a term. Partial terms of two years or less shall not be counted in considering eligibility for re-election.	30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39
The Board may appoint advisory people who serve as non-voting members on the Board and/or Board committees.	40 41 42
i. Election	43 44
1) Four directors are to be elected by Annual Conference from a ballot submitted by Standing Committee. The Officers of Annual Conference	45 46

1 shall be responsible for this election. A minimum of two nominees
2 are to be identified by Standing Committee's Nominating Committee
3 for the Brethren Benefit Trust Board position elected by Annual Con-
4 ference delegates. If only two are identified, those two will be the nom-
5 inees on the Annual Conference ballot. If there are more than two
6 nominees for the Brethren Benefit Trust Board position, the Nominat-
7 ing Committee will present a ballot of no more than four nominees
8 to Standing Committee, which shall vote and reduce the initial ballot
9 to its tentative final form.²⁸

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11 2) Four directors are to be elected by a majority vote of the members of
12 Church of the Brethren Pension Plan under procedures established by
13 the directors of Brethren Benefit Trust. Nominees shall represent the
14 employees of user groups, including, but not limited to, local churches,
15 districts and district-related agencies, denominational agencies re-
16 portable to Annual Conference, and retirement communities related
17 to the Church of the Brethren. (If an employer group participates in
18 the Brethren Medical Plan, but not Brethren Pension Plan, its employ-
19 ees shall be entitled to vote on the director nominated under the pro-
20 visions of Implementation B. representing their employer group.)

21

22 3) Four directors are to be elected by the Board of Directors of Brethren
23 Benefit Trust under procedures set forth in its bylaws.

24

25 Brethren Benefit Trust shall be responsible for conducting the elections
26 in 2) and 3).

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28 j. Eligibility

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30 1) People eligible for election as a director by Annual Conference and by
31 the directors of Brethren Benefit Trust shall be members of the Church
32 of the Brethren and shall meet one or more of the following qualifi-
33 cations —

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35 - Have some expertise in the field of finance, banking, employee
36 benefits, insurance, accounting, law, information technology and
37 systems, investments, human resources, asset management, de-
38 ferred gifts, charitable gifts, or health care.

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39 - Be a member of one of the user groups that have representation
40 on the Brethren Benefit Trust Board.

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41 2) All nominees should have sensitivity to the concerns of the Church of
42 the Brethren and to the people and agencies they represent.

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44 3) Officers of Annual Conference, members of Standing Committee, and

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28. 2018 Minutes, "Polity for Electing Brethren Benefit Trust Board Directors," 297.

members of the boards of other agencies reportable to Annual Conference shall be ineligible to serve concurrently as directors of the Brethren Benefit Trust Board. District Executives shall be ineligible to serve concurrently as directors of the Brethren Benefit Trust Board, except when elected as representatives of the districts.

k. Implementation

1) Four directors shall be elected by Annual Conference —

One director shall be elected each year for a four-year term by Annual Conference in accordance with Annual Conference election procedures.

An incumbent Brethren Benefit Trust Board director who was elected by Annual Conference and who is eligible for and willing to be considered for a second term of service will, upon the recommendation of the Brethren Benefit Trust Governance Committee and approval by the Brethren Benefit Trust Board, automatically become one of the two nominees that Standing Committee recommends for Annual Conference election.²⁹

2) Four directors shall be elected by members of Brethren Pension Plan —

One director shall be elected each year for a four-year term by members of Brethren Pension Plan (see Election B. for an exception). Each vacancy shall have nominees as indicated below. All active and retired employees of user groups (excluding active employees of Brethren Benefit Trust) or former employees with a vested interest in Brethren Pension Plan shall be eligible to serve as a director. The user groups, number of directors, and nominating agencies shall be as follows —

USER GROUP	DIRECTORS	NOMINATING AGENCY OR GROUP
Local Churches and Districts	2	Ministers Association and Council of District Executives (1 nominee from each entity)
Annual Conference Agencies	1	Agency Executives (up to 4 nominees – one from each AC agency)
Retirement Communities	1	Fellowship of Brethren Homes (2 nominees)

29. 2015 Minutes, "Polity Change Proposal from Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust," 247-248.

1 3) Four directors shall be elected by the Brethren Benefit Trust Board —

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3 One director shall be elected each year for a four-year term by the
4 Brethren Benefit Trust Board.

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6
7 **C. ON EARTH PEACE**

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9 **1. Background**

10 On Earth Peace Assembly was founded in 1974 and began as a consultative
11 body to denominational staff. It was incorporated on August 1, 1981, and
12 in 1982 requested to be recognized by Annual Conference as an organiza-
13 tion related to the Church of the Brethren with permission to solicit funds
14 among churches and church members and with the privilege of reporting
15 each year to Annual Conference. After a year of study, the denominational
16 board and On Earth Peace Assembly developed and ratified an agreement
17 which was adopted by the 1983 Annual Conference to grant that On Earth
18 Peace Assembly, Incorporated, functioning within its Articles of Incorpora-
19 tion and Bylaws, be reportable and accountable to the denominational
20 board, which would include On Earth Peace in its report to Annual Con-
21 ference. On Earth Peace became a recognized body of the Church of the
22 Brethren, contributing to the peace program of the denominational board.
23 Then in 1998 On Earth Peace requested affiliation with the Church of the
24 Brethren, through the Annual Conference of the denomination, as an An-
25 nual Conference-affiliated agency. The request of the On Earth Peace As-
26 sembly was adopted.³⁰

27
28
29 **2. Basis for Annual Conference Agency Status³¹**

30 The 1998 Annual Conference adopted the request of On Earth Peace As-
31 sembly for affiliation with the Church of the Brethren, through the Annual
32 Conference of the denomination, as an Annual Conference-affiliated
33 agency. The request included a plan to implement the election of the On
34 Earth Peace Assembly, Inc. Board of Directors by the Annual Conference
35 and the following commitments:³²

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38 30. This paragraph is a summary of information gleaned from 1983 Minutes (1980-1984), "Request
39 of the On Earth Peace Assembly for Recognition by the Annual Conference of the Church of the
40 Brethren," 587-591, and 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), "On Earth Peace Assembly Request for Re-
41 portability/Accountability to Annual Conference," 805-806.

42 31. This section begins with a two-sentence summary of the action taken by the 1998 Annual Con-
43 ference to adopt On Earth Peace's request for Annual Conference agency status. The commit-
44 ments of the agreement between On Earth Peace and Annual Conference are then quoted directly
45 from 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), "On Earth Peace Assembly Request for Reportability/Account-
46 ability to Annual Conference," 805-806.

46 32. 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), "On Earth Peace Assembly Request for Reportability/Accountability
to Annual Conference," 805-806.

- prepare and present to each Annual Conference an independently audited financial statement.³³ 1
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- prepare and present to each Annual Conference a full report of the organization's activities 3
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- have 1/3 of its board of directors elected by the Annual Conference 6
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- have the Annual Conference confirm the remainder of the On Earth Peace Assembly member-elected board of directors members 8
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- accept requests from Annual Conference, within budgetary and staff limitations and within OEPA's designated realm of mission for the denomination, for program initiatives 12
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- commit itself to providing ministry that is within the scope of Annual Conference directives and congruent with articulated values of the Church of the Brethren 16
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- work faithfully in partnership with the Annual Conference and other Annual Conference affiliated agencies to serve the entire denomination. 20
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Annual Conference currently elects five of the fifteen directors on the On Earth Peace Board and confirms the ten directors that are elected by the membership of On Earth Peace. All of the directors are elected to a five-year term, serving from the beginning of the next fiscal year following their election until the close of the fiscal year in which their term expires. A person who has served as director for two consecutive terms is not eligible for re-election until one full year has expired after completion of serving two consecutive terms. At least 4/5ths (80%) of the total number of elected and confirmed directors are to be members of the Church of the Brethren. A director on the On Earth Peace Board cannot be employed by or serve on the board of another agency reportable to Annual Conference.³⁴ 22
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33. The Annual Conference agencies, however, are not required to present audited financial statements in delegate packets as long as that information is available in printed form during the Conference. See 2015 Minutes, "Interpretation of Polity Regarding Agency Financial Reports," 249. The Annual Conference Secretary requests that each Annual Conference agency submit an official printed copy of its audited financial statement to the Annual Conference Office to be included with Annual Conference records in the Brethren Historical Library and Archives. 34
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34. This is current practice, based on the agreement made by On Earth Peace with Annual Conference that one-third of its directors will be elected by Annual Conference and that its On Earth Peace member-elected directors will be confirmed by Annual Conference; see 1998 Minutes (1995-1999), "On Earth Peace Assembly Request for Reportability/Accountability to Annual Conference," 805-806. Other information in this paragraph is from On Earth Peace Assembly, Inc. By-laws approved 20 March 2010. 40
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