

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF THE  
UNITY OF THE BRETHREN**



**2017**

**Incorporating all revisions up to and including  
those passed by the 67<sup>th</sup> Convention  
of the Unity of the Brethren  
held in Temple, Texas  
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# **THE CONSTITUTION**

## **PREAMBLE**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We, members of the body of Christ, desiring to manifest the inner unity which we have in the common confession, maintenance and defense of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, do ordain this Constitution to be our fundamental law and declare the same to have authority over all our members, congregations, pastors, and judicatories.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this religious communion is: The Unity of the Brethren. It is a continuing body of the Ancient Unitas Fratrum or Jednota Bratrská, originally organized in 1457 and dispersed by the persecution and war after 1620. As happened elsewhere also, fragments of the original communion were reconstituted in Texas in 1903 as the Evangelical Union of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren in North America. It merged in 1919 with the Independent Unity of the Brethren of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren (1915) into the Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren in North America, and is now desirous to be known only by the original name.

## **ARTICLE II. CONFESSION**

The Unity of the Brethren accepts all the canonical books of the Holy Bible in both the Old Testament and New Testament as the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of learning of faith and of life. The Confession and Catechism of the Unity of the Brethren are set forth as the summary of the teachings of the Word of God. Wherever they fail to fulfill their intent, the Word of God must be the sole arbiter according to the historic protestant principle — freedom of conscience. The Christian Life, the only true evidence of doctrinal perfection, has been, from the earliest beginnings, the object of the Unity of the Brethren.

## **ARTICLE III. PURPOSE**

- A. The Unity of the Brethren lives to bear witness to the risen Christ and the Kingdom of God, by word and deed, to all people.
- B. That witness includes:
  - 1. Proclaiming the good news of Christ through preaching and teaching the Word of God, and in celebrating the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and in welcoming believers into the fellowship of faith, the church;
  - 2. Encouraging each member to strive for a pure, Christian life;

3. Affirming the presence of Christ in fellowship;
  4. Challenging each member to consider the call of Christ to various areas of Christian service; and
  5. Equipping each member for obedient, responsible Christian growth and ministry; and providing, as appropriate, training, commissioning, and/or ordination.
- C. In summary: Our purpose is to share the Gospel of Christ, locally and worldwide, and to build up believers in faith and obedience.

## **ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP**

- A. The Unity of the Brethren is made up of congregations and their pastors adhering to the same principle of faith and doctrine as outlined in Article II above, and are formally joined to it.
- B. A congregation of the Unity of the Brethren is a body of Christians who meet regularly for divine worship, where the word of God is preached and the sacraments are duly administered, as given by the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, and who are united for the ongoing work of Christian witness.
1. A congregation is organized and governed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Unity of the Brethren.
  2. A congregation is considered to be organized when:
    - a. It establishes an accurate roll of its membership. Local congregations have sole authority to develop the criteria for determining its active communicant members.
    - b. It adopts its own Constitution and By-laws, which shall be in accord with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Unity of the Brethren;
    - c. It elects a Board of Elders or other suitable Governing body.
  3. All congregations belonging to the Unity of the Brethren shall be responsible for an annual payment to the Brethren Fund.
  4. A congregation which belongs to the Unity of the Brethren shall be served only by a pastor who is properly associated with the Unity of the Brethren.
  5. The management of local congregational affairs as well as the election of its pastor and the ownership of property shall be under the jurisdiction of each individual congregation.
  6. If one member is afflicted, the whole body suffers; therefore, every congregation and pastor in the Unity of the Brethren should diligently labor for the welfare of the Unity of the Brethren, abide by its Constitution and By-Laws, fulfill the decisions of the Convention, materially support its work, and concern themselves with the discipline and spiritual growth of all members, so that

congregations and pastors may become a blessing to their membership and a light to the whole community.

7. Persons who are members of a local congregation of the Unity of the Brethren in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Unity of the Brethren and of the local congregation are members of the Unity of the Brethren. (By-Laws Article XXII.)
  8. Members of the Unity of the Brethren shall live sober, righteous and godly lives and labor faithfully to bring others to Christ. They shall take an active part in the life and work of the Unity of the Brethren. This shall include regular attendance at divine worship; devout use of the sacraments; diligent observance of private devotions; liberal financial and moral support toward Unity of the Brethren maintenance and its benevolent undertakings; obedience to the Unity's established law and authorities; untiring zeal in bringing the unchurched under the influence of the church; and sincere endeavor to apply the teachings of Jesus to all human relationships. Parents shall provide adequate Christian training for their entire household.
  9. Only active communicant members shall be selected to represent the congregation at Unity of the Brethren conventions and functions, subject to the Constitution and By-Laws of the congregation.
- C. Pastors are members of the body of Christ who have been called and gifted by God to serve the church in this capacity. (See Romans 12:4-5 and Ephesians 4:11-16.)
1. The pastors shall accept their office with joy from their Heavenly Master Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:15) and from the will of the people, not to have special privileges (1 Peter 5:1-4), but to serve in preaching the Gospel and sharing the mysteries of the Grace of God, as the apostle Paul writes: 'Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.' (1 Cor. 4:1)
  2. As true servants of their Lord they shall conscientiously endeavor to preach to the congregation entrusted to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its purity and simplicity; to fulfill the responsibility of teacher, pastor and counselor; and to live an honorable and devout life as the Word of God repeatedly exhorts.
  3. The Unity of the Brethren discourages its pastors from being members of any secret organization.
  4. If a pastor desires to sever his or her relations with the Unity of the Brethren, that pastor shall receive an appropriate letter of dismissal. The president shall furnish the pastor with a letter of dismissal duly provided with the seal of the Unity of the Brethren on it.

## **ARTICLE V. ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. CONVENTION**

1. The administration and management of the Unity of the Brethren rest in the hands of all the brethren on the basis of the equality of all believers, according to the words of Jesus: "For one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:8)

2. For that reason the administration of the Unity of the Brethren originates in and is based on the decisions of the Convention, which represents the entire Unity of the Brethren. The decisions of the Convention, however, become valid only after they have been accepted by the appropriate referendum vote of the brethren in the local congregations. (Constitution Article VII, Section F and By-Laws Article XXIV.)
3. The Unity of the Brethren shall have two kinds of Conventions: regular and special or called.

#### B. EXECUTIVE

1. The Unity of the Brethren entrusts administrative and executive power for a period of two years, or the period between regular biennial Conventions, to a Synodical Committee whose composition is defined in By-Laws Article VI. (Effective 1995 Convention)
2. To execute its decisions and for the purpose of administering current matters of the Unity of the Brethren between regular biennial Conventions, the Convention shall elect: (1) the Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee (By-Laws Article VI, Section A); (2) a Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education; (3) a Chairperson of the Board of Home Missions; (4) a Chairperson of the Board of Foreign Missions; (5) a Chairperson of the Pastoral Relations Committee; (6) a Chairperson of the Hus School Encampment Board of Trustees; (7) a Chairperson of the Board of Grants and Bequests; (8) an Editor and a Business Manager of *The Brethren Journal*; (9) a Board for Grants and Bequests as outlined in the By-Laws; (10) a Pastoral Relations Committee as outlined in the By-Laws; and (11) Lay and Ministerial Alternates. The officers of the Synodical Committee and other personnel may be elected from the membership of the Convention or from the membership of the denomination at large. (By-Laws Article VI, Section B.) (Effective 1995 Convention)
3. The Synodical Committee, as the need arises, may be authorized by the Convention to appoint or hire needed personnel in carrying out its duties.
4. All official reports and announcements shall be published in the official publication of the Unity of the Brethren, *The Brethren Journal*.

### ARTICLE VI. ORGANIZATIONS

- A. The Mutual Aid Society is an independent, benevolent organization within the Church to which all members may belong.
- B. The Board of Christian Education exists for purposes of Christian education in the congregations.
- C. The Christian Sisters' Union is a recognized organization of the Unity of the Brethren comprised primarily of women who have joined together to share their faith through fellowship, prayer, and acts of charity.



- D. The Brethren Youth Fellowship is the officially recognized organization of youth throughout the denomination who join together for the purpose of worship, service, study, and fellowship.

## ARTICLE VII. CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS

- A. The office of the Unity of the Brethren shall be the residence of the president.
- B. The official motto of the Unity of the Brethren shall be “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, love.” The official seal of the Unity of the Brethren shall be the old Brethren emblem — a lamb with the banner — with an appropriate inscription. The official emblem of the Unity of the Brethren shall be an open Bible, chalice, and cross, as shown below.



- C. The Brethren Fund shall be the general administrative fund of the Church to which members shall be obligated to contribute annually.
- D. Positions in the denomination (Pastor, Officer, Chairperson, and Committee Member) may be held by either gender.
- E. The Sunday nearest to July 6 shall be set aside as a perpetual memorial to the martyrdom of John Hus, burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.
- F. If there is a need to change or amend this Constitution of the Unity of the Brethren, the Synodical Committee or a special committee appointed by them for that purpose, shall propose such changes to the Convention, publish the proposals in the official publication of the Unity of the Brethren, *The Brethren Journal*, at least two (2) months before the Convention, and present them to that Convention for approval. In the event that the above mentioned criteria are not fulfilled, the Convention may not take action on the changes or amendments. If the Convention accepts the proposed changes by a two-thirds (2/3) majority, the Secretary of the Synodical Committee shall send these proposals to the local

congregations within thirty (30) days after the Convention for referendum vote. The referendum vote shall be held and the results reported to the Secretary of the Synodical Committee by the deadline stated on the referendum. If two-thirds (2/3) of the congregations approve the proposals by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of their vote (not a simple majority) such changes and/or additions shall become a part of the Constitution. If the congregation does not send the results of its referendum vote to the Secretary of the Synodical Committee by the deadline, that congregation shall be counted as favoring all the proposals.

# THE BY-LAWS

## ARTICLE I. SACRAMENTS AND RITES

### A. SACRAMENTS

1. The baptism of infants and adults shall be administered publicly in the House of God when possible, according to the Trinitarian form. The Unity of the Brethren embraces both infant and adult baptism by sprinkling, immersion, and laving (pouring). It is the meaning of baptism rather than the means that is the most important.
2. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in every congregation a minimum of four times a year. A service should be held preparatory to it. The elements used shall be bread and wine or grape juice. Bread shall be both, or either, leavened or unleavened. All who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ, including members of other denominations, shall be invited to participate.
3. Administration of the sacraments and rites
  - a. Ordained clergy who are pastors of the Unity of the Brethren may administer any and all sacraments and rites of the church.
  - b. Persons who are licensed in accordance with the By-Laws, (Article III, Section C) may administer the sacraments and officiate the rites (with the exception of the rite of ordination) but only in the special ministry for which the license was issued.

### B. RITES

1. Confirmation, ordination, consecration, marriage and burial shall be conducted in reverence and with due solemnity, according to an order expressive of our evangelical tradition.
2. The rite of confirmation admits persons into communicant membership (By-Laws Article XXII) through public confirmation of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Before admitting applicants for confirmation into full communion with the Church, the Governing body shall be satisfied that the candidates understand the fundamental truths of the Christian religion and are governed by them in their life and conduct.
3. Only ordained pastors shall officiate during acts of ordination or consecration.
4. Marriage is an ordinance of God between a man and a woman and shall be solemnized in accordance with the doctrine of the Unity of the Brethren.

5. Christian burial is a religious rite that should be conducted in accordance with the customs and usages of the church. Funeral services shall not be conducted on Sundays except in very exceptional instances.

## **ARTICLE II. CONGREGATIONS**

- A. A congregation of the Unity of the Brethren is a body of Christians as identified and organized under the provisions of Constitution Article IV, Section A–B.
- B. A congregation shall choose its own name. Such name, however, must be approved by the Synodical Committee. The congregation must include the statement “A congregation of the Unity of the Brethren” following its name in the congregation’s Constitution, By-Laws, signage, and official correspondence documents.
- C. A congregation desiring to affiliate with the Unity of the Brethren:
  1. Shall make the proper application through the Synodical Committee for acceptance by the Convention.
  2. Along with the application, shall also include its local Constitution and By-Laws and a statement verifying its approval of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Unity of the Brethren and its promise to abide by them.
  3. The Synodical Committee shall study such an application and, guided by its findings, shall recommend either the acceptance or rejection of the congregation. The final decision as to whether or not the congregation will be accepted shall be made by the Convention.
  4. The newly accepted congregation shall approve the existing Constitution and By-Laws in an official congregational meeting and shall confirm them by the signature of its Governing body. One such signed copy of the Constitution and By-Laws, properly confirmed, shall be returned to the Secretary of the Unity of the Brethren as proof that the congregation has legally announced and confirmed its membership with the Unity of the Brethren. A second duly signed copy shall be preserved for the same purpose in the record book of the congregation.
- D. Unorganized preaching stations and church plants shall become full members of the Unity of the Brethren after they become organized (Constitution Article IV, Section B). They shall be provisional members of the Unity of the Brethren until such time as they formally organize. This status shall empower them to send a representative (with voice privileges only) to the Synodical Committee as well as representatives to the Convention (with voice privileges only) in equal number to the delegates they would possess if they were an organized congregation.
  1. The Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee shall provide spiritual guidance to provisional churches.

2. Financial support for provisional churches shall be determined by the Synodical Committee.

E. If a congregation wishes to sever its connection with the Unity of the Brethren:

1. It shall notify the President of the Unity of the Brethren of its intentions. It should not make a complete and final severance until it receives counsel of the Convention. The final decision shall, however, be made by the congregation itself.

2. If two-thirds (2/3) of the active communicant members vote for severing connections with the Unity of the Brethren, and if a notification of severance signed by two-thirds (2/3) of the eligible members is sent to the Secretary of the Unity of the Brethren, such a congregation is considered no longer a member of the Unity of the Brethren. If the congregation should wish to sever its relations with the Unity of the Brethren by any other method, it shall remain a member of the Unity of the Brethren so long as it does not exclude itself by failure to fulfill its membership responsibilities.

3. If a congregation severs its connections with the Unity of the Brethren, it shall take along its property. However, the two-thirds of members withdrawing shall be responsible for giving compensation to the one-third remaining loyal to the Unity of the Brethren, the amount being computed on the basis of the total property values divided by the number of eligible members. This compensation will serve as a basis for the purchase of new property by the loyal members.

F. The property of the congregation is indivisibly administered by the church's governing body. To prevent an imprudent disposition of congregational property, two-thirds (2/3) of ALL members (not only those present) who are eligible to vote, according to congregational records, shall approve the decision concerning any disposition of property.

G. Restructuring of congregations:

1. If a congregation is able to adequately provide for the spiritual needs of its membership and continue to meet the obligations for membership described in these By-Laws, it shall be allowed to continue conducting services and will be granted all rights and privileges of membership in the Unity of the Brethren, regardless of its size. Restructuring for churches meeting their membership obligations shall only be considered by written request from a congregation's governing body.

2. If a congregation is unable to meet its obligations for membership as described in these By-Laws, or if it is receiving financial support from the Unity of the Brethren and its membership falls below 30, the Executive Committee is instructed to negotiate with the congregation's governing body to implement one of the following options:

a. Probationary status for a mutually agreeable period of time and development of a course of action designed to return the congregation to full membership status without financial support. Probationary status means the congregation does not have voting privileges on the Synodical Committee or at Convention.

b. The merger of the congregation with another Brethren congregation.

- c. The discontinuance of the congregation.
3. If the Executive Committee and the congregation's governing body do not reach an agreement on one of the options listed above then the Executive Committee shall report to the Synodical Committee the status of the congregation. The Synodical Committee shall have the authority to terminate financial support to the congregation and/or withhold voting privileges at Synodical Committee meetings. The Synodical Committee has the discretion to continue financial support for a period not to exceed one year. Once financial support ceases, the congregation will no longer have the rights or responsibilities of a Unity of the Brethren congregation. If the congregation makes no voluntary actions to retain its membership in the Unity of the Brethren, the Synodical Committee may declare the congregation to be discontinued.
- H. When a congregation is discontinued or disbands, the Synodical Committee shall immediately assume legal title and possession of its property and assets for the Unity of the Brethren. If the property includes a cemetery, the Unity of the Brethren shall arrange for the future maintenance and care of that cemetery.
  - I. If a congregation is left without a pastor for any reason, it shall consult with the Pastoral Relations Committee and request aid in filling the vacancy. The congregation may initiate efforts on its own behalf to identify candidates who may be suitable for the pastor position and invite those individuals to visit with the governing body or their search committee. The congregation shall not issue a call to their selected candidate except through the Pastoral Relations Committee. If the selected candidate has not been previously approved for ministry within the Unity of the Brethren, he or she must first appear before the Ministerial Credentials Board and be approved by the Synodical Committee before any call can be issued. In these situations, close coordination is required between the congregation, the Pastoral Relations Committee and the President of the Unity of the Brethren.
  - J. Congregations shall establish a salary for their pastors in a congregational meeting. A pastor shall not be required to pay for pulpit supply for a service which has not been held due to inclement weather or when the pastor misses a service while serving in an official capacity for the denomination such as conventions, meetings, ordinations, camp programs or travel.
  - K. The congregation which is in official standing with the Unity of the Brethren shall have the privilege and the responsibility to send as many delegates to the Convention of the Unity of the Brethren as Article IV, Section G of these By-Laws allows. If a congregation is not represented for three Conventions in succession and sends no official excuse, its status as a member congregation in the Unity of the Brethren shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee and a report given to the next Convention, where its membership in the denomination shall be considered by the Convention.
  - L. Each congregation shall give an exact account of its active communicant members. (Constitution Article IV, Section B, Paragraph 2a). The annual Brethren Fund assessment shall be based on the membership as determined above and reported in the annual questionnaire (See Article IV, Section W). Congregations may pay the assessment quarterly or at any time during the current year so long as funds are received by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. The annual assessment for the Brethren Fund is \$35.00 for each active communicant member, divided among the following ministries:
    - 21% to the Hus School Encampment;

- 17% to *The Brethren Journal*;
- 30% to be placed in a Contingency Fund with the Synodical Committee having the authority to use the Contingency Fund where needed most in the work of the Unity of the Brethren;
- 13% to Educational Ministries;
- 9% to the Administrative Fund; and
- 10% to the Executive Assistant position.

- M. The number of delegates a congregation is entitled to send to a Convention of the Unity of the Brethren shall be determined on the basis of these annual membership payments the congregation has made to the Brethren Fund. (By-Laws Article IV, Section G)
- N. All congregations shall provide prayerful and monetary support for Home and Foreign Missions, the Ministerial Student Fund, the Bible Fund, and all other official funds established by the Unity of the Brethren.
- O. The congregation shall elect a zealous agent for *The Brethren Journal*, who shall work diligently to gain more subscribers for *The Brethren Journal*.
- P. If a congregation and/or pastor disregard the intent and meaning of Article IV, Section B, Par. 6 of the Constitution, the Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee shall first meet with the congregation and/or pastor and advise them of their error. If either does not heed the counsel and admonition of the executive officers, the executive officers shall report to the Synodical Committee the appropriate party's continued willful disregard of the Constitution. The Synodical Committee shall have the authority to bring a grievance against any or all parties to the next Convention. The Convention shall deliberate upon the grievance according to By-Laws Article IV, Sections Q and R.

### **ARTICLE III. OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY**

#### A. GENERAL STATEMENT

- 1. The authority for licensure and ordination shall be vested in the Synodical Committee. Installation shall be the concern of the congregation.

#### B. PASTORS

- 1. An active pastor in the Unity of the Brethren shall be considered a member of the Unity of the Brethren at large. As such, a pastor will fill the role of spiritual advisor and not as a regular member of any local congregation. The pastor has the authority to (a) preach the Word of God, (b) administer the sacraments and officiate the rites, and (c) bear rule in the church in accordance with Article IV, Section C of the Constitution. Only ordained pastors may officiate the rite of ordination. The pastor shall not vote or hold office in any congregation.
- 2. No pastor shall perform official functions in a congregation or among members of a fellow pastor without that pastor's permission (according to 1 Peter 4:15), nor shall a pastor have the right to meddle in the affairs of other Brethren congregations.

3. The pastor shall endeavor to be present at all meetings of the congregation and governing body. (However, in matters relating to the call of the pastor, the evaluation of a pastor, or the salary compensation of a pastor, the pastor may be requested not to attend.)
4. Each pastor may be requested to present a report to the Convention on the spiritual status of the congregations in which he or she serves.
5. Pastors may be requested to send to the President of the Unity of the Brethren an annual report of the work they have accomplished.
6. The pastors shall participate with the laity in engaging in community outreach ministry whenever possible.
7. Every pastor in the Unity of the Brethren is permitted to request a change of charge according to the procedure outlined in Article XII. In certain circumstances pastors shall be instructed by the Synodical Committee to do so.
8. A pastor may seek the counsel of the president at any time concerning a possible change of charge. If a congregation cannot be served effectively, that pastor shall consult the Pastoral Relations Committee about a possible change of charge.
9. A pastor receives a call from a Brethren congregation through the Pastoral Relations Committee. A pastor shall not accept a call that does not come through the Pastoral Relations Committee. Newly-elected pastors shall be installed into their new charge, whenever possible, by the President of the Unity of the Brethren or by the pastor's predecessor in that charge.
10. Following each convention, a Ministerial Credentials Board will be convened. The Ministerial Credentials Board is composed of the Pastor to the Pastors and three ordained pastors elected by the convention. This committee shall be charged with reviewing the credentials of candidates who are seeking a pastoral role within the denomination, interviewing the candidates, and making recommendations to the Synodical Committee regarding the worthiness of the candidates to serve in the role they are seeking.
11. A person from another denomination who desires to be admitted into the Unity of the Brethren as a pastor shall present the following to the Ministerial Credentials Board: (a) his/her ordination certificate, (b) satisfactory proof that the educational requirements for ordination in the Unity of the Brethren have been successfully completed, (c) a short sketch of his/her life, and (d) a letter of recommendation from prior church connections stating satisfactory proof that he or she enjoyed a good reputation in the moral sense. The candidate shall also submit to a colloquy with the Ministerial Credentials Board to prove that he/she agrees with the Confession and the order of the Unity of the Brethren and sign the Constitution and By-Laws of the Unity of the Brethren as proof that he/she wishes to abide by them.
12. The pastor desiring to be admitted into the Unity of the Brethren from another denomination shall serve a six-month period of mutual acquaintance and appraisal before officially being accepted. During this six-month period, the candidate shall undergo mentorship by one or more Unity of the Brethren pastors as recommended by the Ministerial Credentials Board. The focus of study in this



period should be on the history, worship, and practice of the Unity of the Brethren including its Constitution and By-Laws and organizational structure. The six-month period would give both the pastor and the congregation/denomination the opportunity to reaffirm their initial decision before making any firm commitments. The pastor would be received as a full pastor of the Unity of the Brethren only after this six-month period of acquaintance and appraisal and upon subsequent two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the Synodical Committee as defined in Article III, Section D, Paragraphs 3, 4, and 5.

13. Pastors from other denominations and lay persons may be licensed to serve as long-term pulpit supply in congregations without a pastor for a period not to exceed 12 months according to the provisions of this Article. If the pastor or lay person serves as pulpit supply for more than 8 weeks in aggregate for the same congregation, he or she must submit their credentials to the Pastor to the Pastors and appear before the Ministerial Credentials Board for review of their qualifications to serve in this role.

Within one month following the meeting with the Ministerial Credentials Board, the supply pastor or lay person must declare his/her intention to formally associate with the Unity of the Brethren by contacting the President of the Unity of the Brethren and initiating the prescribed process for such approval. Pastors from other denominations may choose either to enter into a full pastoral relationship with the Unity of the Brethren or to accept a position as an Associate Pastor of the Unity of the Brethren. Associate Pastors may accept a call from a local congregation or serve as pulpit supply. Formal association with the Unity of the Brethren shall be considered at the next scheduled Synodical Committee Meeting.

14. An active pastor in full standing in the Unity of the Brethren may elect to retire from full-time ministry in a local congregation.
  - a. A pastor wishing to retire shall submit written notification of this intention to the Pastoral Relations Committee at least six months prior to the anticipated retirement date. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall immediately forward the pastor's request to the President of the Unity of the Brethren, who shall bring that request before the next scheduled Synodical Committee meeting.
  - b. A pastor shall be considered officially retired when the announced retirement date has been approved by a simple majority of the Synodical Committee and when that date has been reached.
  - c. Even though a pastor may retire from full-time ministry, that pastor shall still retain the right to perform priestly functions, being careful to observe proper protocol with pastors of local congregations (Article III, Section B, Paragraph 2).
  - d. A retired pastor shall be considered a member of the Unity of the Brethren at large. The pastor is encouraged to become active in the life of a local Unity of the Brethren congregation, being careful to defer the spiritual counsel of that congregation to the official pastor. The retired pastor shall not vote or hold office in the local congregation, but will retain the full rights and privileges of a member at large in the Unity of the Brethren (including Convention membership, membership on the Synodical Committee, and the right to hold executive office).

- e. Should a retired pastor desire to formally join a local congregation, this may be done at any time, but the pastor shall immediately notify the Pastoral Relations Committee and shall forfeit his or her at-large membership in the Unity of the Brethren (including his or her automatic memberships on the Synodical Committee and in the Church Convention).

### C. PASTORAL LICENSE

1. The Synodical Committee shall have the authority to issue a one year renewable pastoral license to a person who possesses theological training and is otherwise qualified for the ministry, but may not have completed educational requirements at an accredited and approved seminary.
  - a. The candidate's examination for a license will be conducted in a manner consistent with Unity of the Brethren By-Laws, Article III, Section D, Paragraphs 2–6.
  - b. A license shall convey the authority to conduct funerals, weddings, and to administer the sacraments. These rights and privileges shall be limited to the ministry for which the Synodical Committee issues the license. (Article III, Section B-1b.)
  - c. A license will be renewed only if the licensee demonstrates proof of suitable continuing education as well as current involvement and satisfactory progress in the specific ministry for which the license was first issued. Each person holding this license shall be required to submit a written report to the Fall Meeting of the Synodical Committee that outlines their continuing education and progress in ministry. It shall include a request from the licensee and the local governing board that the license be renewed. At that same meeting, the Synodical Committee shall vote on renewal of each license for the upcoming calendar year. If no action is taken by the Synodical Committee, the license shall automatically expire and all associated privileges in the local church or Synodical Committee shall be revoked.
  - d. A person holding this license is considered to be a member of the Synodical Committee and shall be eligible to hold office in the Unity of the Brethren after a period of five years of service. Licensees who were a member of a congregation of the Unity of the Brethren for at least five (5) years may hold denominational office. Licensees who were not previously members of a congregation in the Unity for the required five (5) year period may not hold any denominational office until their aggregate membership (as a lay member and as a licensed pastor) is equivalent to five (5) years.
  - e. Licensees serving as a pastor in the Unity of the Brethren for 5 years consecutively shall be eligible to petition the Synodical Committee for a 5 year renewable license. The Synodical Committee may issue a 5 year renewable license in this situation by a simple majority vote.

### D. CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY

1. Every candidate for the ministry who asks to be ordained by the Unity of the Brethren must:

- a. Have attended an institution of higher learning and a theological seminary, graduating and receiving a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, in fulfillment of Track A, or possess a Bachelor's Degree and have fulfilled Track B. (Section E Paragraph 9-b.);
  - b. Present to the Synodical Committee a written summary of the candidate's background, including education, experience, reasons for entering the ministry, and any other relevant information that should be considered;
  - c. Present to the Synodical Committee a satisfactory testimony concerning the candidate's moral behavior and Christian character; and
  - d. Be a member of a congregation in the Unity of the Brethren.
2. The examination must be requested at least four (4) weeks before the examination is given.
  3. The examination shall be conducted before an Examining Board which shall be composed of all of the Synodical Committee present at a meeting called for this purpose. The examination shall be directed by a committee of three ordained pastors appointed by the president from the membership of the Examining Board.
  4. The examination shall cover the following subjects: Dogmatics, Ethics, Symbolics, Homiletics, Church History, Pastoral Theology, Catechism, Exegesis, and a written sermon. The Examining Board may choose not to require knowledge of the original Biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek).
  5. The results of the examination and the acceptance for ordination shall be decided by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority vote of the Examining Board as defined in paragraph 3.
  6. The candidate who does not consider the canonical books (Article II of the Constitution) as the true interpretation of the Word of God and does not promise to teach accordingly shall not be ordained.
  7. Before a candidate may be ordained, he or she shall have received a call to some congregation of the Unity of the Brethren or shall be under call of the Synodical Committee for specialized ministry.
  8. The ordination should be conducted in the home congregation of the candidate, in the congregation which has called the candidate, in another Unity of the Brethren congregation, or at a regular Convention of the Unity of the Brethren.
  9. The rite of ordination shall be performed by ordained pastors of the Unity of the Brethren according to the wishes of the one being ordained and in accordance with the Rite of Ordination as prescribed in the Minister's Guidebook. The ordained pastor who performs the ordination act shall prepare an ordination certificate for the newly ordained and shall present it to the President and Secretary of the Unity of the Brethren for their official verification.
  10. In all instances of ordination (and installation) the Brethren order shall be maintained as prescribed in the Minister's Guidebook.

#### E. REQUIREMENTS FOR PASTORAL OR SPECIALIZED MINISTRY

1. Anyone seeking to serve a congregation and/or the denomination in roles that require ordination or licensing in the Unity of the Brethren must make application to the Pastor to the Pastors and meet with the Ministerial Credentials Board. This also includes those individuals being asked to serve

congregations on a regular supply basis and individuals who sense a call to and are gifted for pulpit supply. (Article III, Section B, Paragraph 13.)

2. An initial interview meeting will then be set up with the Ministerial Credentials Board. (Article III, Section B).
3. For someone coming from another denomination or independent congregation, the candidate must likewise apply and submit the above materials. (Article III, Section D, Paragraphs 1-b and 1-c) Such an individual must have read the Unity of the Brethren Constitution, By-Laws, and Catechism and agree with the theology and practices of the Unity of the Brethren, especially infant baptism, open communion, and the ordination of women.
4. The Ministerial Credentials Board, in conversation with the candidate for ministry, will recommend a track of study (Article III, Section E, Paragraph 9) appropriate to the sense of call, education level, and life experience of that candidate. The Pastor to the Pastors shall report this to the Synodical Committee.
5. After the initial interview, a decision is made to recommend or not recommend the individual to come under the care of the Unity and be received as a student for the ministry. The Synodical Committee shall act on this recommendation at its next meeting.
6. A recommendation for license may be made at the same time to the Synodical Committee for pastoral ministry to a congregation or specialized ministry. The Synodical Committee shall act on this recommendation at its next meeting.
7. After satisfactory completion of all requirements, the Ministerial Credentials Board may recommend the candidate for pastoral ministry to the Synodical Committee; however, it is the responsibility of the candidate to petition the Synodical Committee for ordination or licensing.
8. A congregation may not enter into any agreement with any candidate until approved by the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Synodical Committee.
9. Tracks of Study
  - a. Track A – College and Accredited Seminary: for individuals who have completed high school and have received a spiritual call to ministry. This is a 3- to 7-year process depending on the candidate's academic status. The Synodical Committee, or its designee, is responsible for approving each candidate's choice of seminary and reviewing and approving each student's coursework throughout their seminary training. The Ministerial Credentials Board is responsible for the oversight of students and will report to the Synodical Committee annually on their progress.
  - b. Track B – Individuals with a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college who find it impractical to attend traditional seminary may petition the Synodical Committee, to enroll as a ministerial student in an alternative course of study to Track A. Candidates who are granted permission to utilize Track B should complete this track of study within a 5-year period. Under unusual circumstances, this track of study may be extended if satisfactory progress is being made. Failure to complete the study within 5 years without an extension of the Synodical

Committee revokes the ministerial student status. The Ministerial Credentials Board is responsible for the oversight of students and will report to the Synodical Committee annually on their progress.

All courses and instructors must be pre-approved by the Synodical Committee for inclusion in the curriculum offered to the students. The Synodical Committee may organize the school itself or contract with a pastor, group of pastors, or outside entity, who are prepared to offer the coursework.

10. A mentor shall be assigned to the candidate for the duration of study. The candidate and mentor shall be in communication at least monthly. The mentor shall be in conversation with the Pastor to the Pastors on the status of the candidate. The Pastor to the Pastors will also converse with candidates on a quarterly basis. Candidates and their mentors will meet with the Ministerial Credentials Board to assess their progress once a year.
11. While their insight is valued and should be considered, in no case shall the instructors who provide training, mentorship or oversight to the students also be responsible for final recommendations to the Synodical Committee for ordination or licensing.
12. The Synodical Committee has the authority and responsibility to offer financial assistance to ministerial students who are under its care and who apply for this assistance in writing and have a co-signer. The Ministerial Student Loans offered as financial assistance are available upon the student's enrollment in accordance to Track A or B of study (Article III, Section E, Paragraph 9).
  - a. Ministerial Student loans are limited to monies for tuition, fees and books at approved institutions. These ministerial student loans are to be repaid by monetary conveyance, years of service to the Unity of the Brethren, or a combination of both.
  - b. For each \$4,000.00 of student loan (including tuition, fees and books) the student shall be obligated to fulfill a full-time vocational ministry in the Unity of the Brethren for one year, or render an equivalent part-time service as designated by the Synodical Committee, or repay the money with interest. Rates of interest and terms of repayment shall be set by the Synodical Committee at the time of execution of the loan.

## F. MINISTRY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### 1. General Statement

The purpose of the Ministry Internship Program is to facilitate a means of mentorship between pastors and prospective pastors, to promote and educate lay members of the Unity who have an interest in a pastoral vocation, and to ensure the successful continuation of the doctrinal integrity of the Unity of the Brethren for future generations.

### 2. Ministry Internships

- a. Any member of the Unity of the Brethren who feels called to investigate a Christian ministry is eligible to apply for acceptance into the Ministry Internship Program. Application can be made to the pastor of the local congregation, who shall inform the Executive Committee and the Pastor to the Pastors.
- b. The Pastor to the Pastors and the individual's local pastor shall establish appropriate guidelines and qualifications related to the acceptance of the Intern. Upon acceptance into the Ministry Internship Program, the individual shall meet with the Executive Board of the Synodical Committee and discuss the selection of a Mentoring Pastor. The individual shall be introduced to the Synodical Committee at its next scheduled meeting.
- c. The Ministry Internship Program shall consist of a negotiated four to eight (4-8) week period of time in which the Intern is immersed into the daily activities of the ministry and is counseled on pastoral duties under the supervision of his or her mentoring pastor.
- d. Mentoring pastors shall meet the following minimum requirements:
  - Have graduated from an accredited seminary approved by the Unity of the Brethren with at least a Master's of Divinity degree;
  - Be an ordained pastor actively serving in the Unity of the Brethren;
  - Be able to initiate and sustain a long-term relationship with the Intern; and
  - Shall be serving a congregation that is different from the home church of the Intern.
- e. The program shall be financed from the Ministerial Student Fund. The Synodical Committee shall be authorized to offer an appropriate remuneration to the Intern, mentor pastor, and host family.
- f. Evaluations of the program from both the mentoring pastor and Intern shall be made to the Synodical Committee no later than one month following the conclusion of the internship.

## **ARTICLE IV. CONVENTIONS**

- A. The following general rules apply to the conduct of Conventions. In all other cases Robert's Rules of Order shall apply.
- B. The Official Membership of the Convention shall be composed of the following:
  1. The delegates of local congregations in regular standing with the Unity of the Brethren who have presented proper credentials.
  2. Members of the Synodical Committee as the administrative officials of the Unity of the Brethren:
    - a. The executive officers, lay and pastoral, who are also the officers of the Convention;
    - b. The other lay members as elected officials (Article VI, Section A); and

- c. The other pastors of the Unity of the Brethren as spiritual advisors and representatives of the spiritual work of the Unity of the Brethren (Article VI, Section A).
3. Chairs of the convention approved standing committees/boards including, but not limited to: Pastoral Relations Committee, Board of Christian Education, Hus School Encampment Board of Trustees, Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, and Board for Grants and Bequests.
4. Ministerial students under the care of the Synodical Committee.
5. Those called, commissioned, and actively engaged in specialized ministries through the Unity of the Brethren.

Anyone thus regarded as an official member of the Convention has the full privilege of deliberation and voting. All non-official members may address the Convention by permission of the majority of the official members of the Convention on specific items. The proceedings at the Convention shall be open to the public, unless the Convention rules otherwise.

- C. The regular Convention shall be held the first half of July in accordance with the wishes of the host congregation after consultation with the Synodical Committee. The Convention shall be biennial, held in a place designated by the latest Convention. In an emergency situation the Synodical Committee shall have the right to change the time or place (or both) designated for the Convention.
- D. The regular Convention shall be opened with a Worship Service with the administration of Holy Communion for the official membership of the Convention, as well as for those guests desiring the solace of the Lord's Supper.
- E. The time and place of Convention shall be announced in the official publication of the Unity of the Brethren at least four weeks prior to the opening of the Convention.
- F. If one-half (1/2) of the congregations in the Unity of the Brethren or the Executive Committee, as confirmed by a majority of the Synodical Committee at a meeting or by mail, shall desire to have a special Convention, it shall be the president's responsibility to call such a Convention through the official channels. In announcing a special Convention, and at the convening of that Convention, the purpose(s) of the Convention shall be clearly stated. Proper notice of such a Convention must be given to the Unity of the Brethren at least four (4) weeks prior to that special Convention. In a special Convention only the stated purposes and directly-related items can be considered and acted upon.
- G. Representation at the Convention is based on one delegate per 50 members or greater fraction thereof in each congregation entitled to be represented. Congregations with less than 76 members are entitled to one delegate, from 76 to 125 members to two delegates, etc.
- H. Delegates and alternates to the Convention should be elected by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the Convention year. The secretary of the congregation shall notify the Secretary of the Unity of the Brethren of the election of the delegates. The minimum age of delegates and alternates shall be 18.

- I. At the Convention the delegates of the individual congregations shall deliver proof of their election by official certificate. This certificate shall be signed by the pastor and two members of the governing body of the congregation.
- J. The Convention shall remain in session until all matters under consideration shall have been settled; however, it shall never remain in session longer than three days.
- K. The officers of the Synodical Committee shall serve as officers of the Convention.
- L. The President of the Unity of the Brethren presides over the Convention, appoints the Convention committees (the president names two-thirds of the Convention committee members, and the first vice-president one-third, provided the Convention does not object), and endeavors to keep all proceedings proper and orderly, signs all approved Convention minutes, casts his or her vote in case of a tie, etc. If the president wishes to participate in the deliberation, he or she shall ask the first vice-president to take the chair.
- M. The Secretary of the Synodical Committee shall be the recording secretary of the Convention and shall keep accurate minutes of each session of the Convention to be read at the beginning of each new session. Before adjournment the secretary shall have read all the minutes and shall co-sign them with the president.
- N. A roll call of all members of the Convention shall be taken and recorded in the minutes at the beginning of each session.
- O. A simple majority of the members of the Convention shall constitute a quorum, i.e. a body empowered with deliberation and decision.
- P. Mileage expenses and meals of the delegates, officials, pastors and ministerial students shall be prorated among the delegates and will be paid by the congregations according to their representation. The host congregation shall not pay any mileage expenses for its delegates; however they will be assessed for their meal expenses. Members of the Executive Committee shall have meals, mileage and lodging expenses paid by the Convention Expense Fund. Pastors of the Unity of the Brethren and members of the Convention shall have their Convention expenses (excluding lodging) and mileage expenses paid.
  - 1. The mileage expenses of the members of the Convention shall be determined on the basis of the distance between the host congregation and the home congregation.
  - 2. A Convention Expense Fund is established. The Synodical Committee shall compute an estimated average Convention delegate expense. Each congregation shall send in an amount equal to the average delegate expense times the number of delegates it sends to the Convention.
  - 3. Mileage expenses calculated on a per mile basis shall be paid according to the current amount approved by the Synodical Committee. The Synodical Committee shall determine the mileage rate at the Fall Synodical Committee meeting of the year preceding the Convention. If the Synodical Committee fails to set a mileage rate, the default rate will be paid on the basis of twenty-five (25) cents per mile round trip.



- Q. The Convention shall have the right to investigate any accusations or grievances against congregations and individuals and make decisions concerning them. If it should prove necessary, the Convention may call in members of the congregations as witnesses.
- R. If such congregations, members or pastors should stubbornly resist the directives of the Convention and continue without making an effort to change, the Convention shall have the authority to exclude them from its supervision and fellowship.
- S. The following Convention decisions shall become valid only after a simple majority of the congregations of the Unity of the Brethren have approved them in a referendum by a simple majority vote in a meeting called for this purpose: (a) decisions concerning financial matters, (b) any decisions receiving a simple majority vote, but failing to receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by the Convention's membership, and (c) Constitution and By-Laws revisions (which must be approved by the appropriate referendum vote given in Article VII, Section F of the Constitution and Article XXIV of the By-Laws, respectively).
  - 1. Rules of procedure, directing of the deliberations, other matters pertaining to the Convention and election of officers need not be referred to the congregations for a referendum vote.
- T. The results of the congregational referendum voting concerning the decisions of the Convention shall be sent by the secretaries of the local congregations to the Secretary of the Synodical Committee by the deadline stated in the referendum.
- U. If a congregation does not return its referendum votes by the deadline stated in the referendum it shall be counted as favoring all the decisions.
- V. In the period between the conclusion of the Convention and the subsequent Fall Synodical Committee meeting the outgoing (incumbent) Synodical Committee officers shall continue to function in their responsibilities in order to conclude their work and examine the voting results of the congregations concerning the decisions of the Convention. During this period newly elected officers shall meet with incumbent officers in a time of training and familiarization. The newly elected officers shall be installed at the conclusion of the old business portion of the Fall Synodical Committee Meeting Agenda in accordance with Article VI, Section B, Paragraph 1.
- W. Questionnaires (of the Unity of the Brethren) shall be sent to the secretaries of the individual congregations annually in the month of January and shall be returned to the Secretary of the Unity of the Brethren by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- X. All printed Convention reports shall be completed with no further comments made at the Convention, except to answer questions concerning reports by consent of the Convention.
- Y. Beginning with the actions of the 52nd Convention of the Unity of the Brethren, the decisions of Conventions, except Constitution and By-Laws decisions, are valid until the next regular Convention and will automatically expire unless renewed or designated as continuing actions.

## **ARTICLE V. OFFICERS**

- A. All communicant members of the Unity of the Brethren, with the exception of associate and licensed pastors who have not yet served for the required five (5) years and ministerial students, shall be eligible for election into the individual offices listed in the Constitution. (cf. Article V of the Constitution).
- B. The officers shall be elected for a term of two years (exceptions: the officers of the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Board for Grants and Bequests are elected to terms defined in By-Laws Article XII and Article XXI, respectively) and shall perform the duties of that office during the confirmed period. They shall be responsible to the next Convention for their official acts.
- C. In order to be elected, a candidate must receive a simple majority of the total number of votes cast. If no candidate receives a majority vote on the first ballot, then the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be voted on in a second ballot.
- D. A record of the number of votes received by the candidate elected and the one with the next highest number of votes shall be entered into the minutes.

## **ARTICLE VI. SYNODICAL COMMITTEE**

- A. The Synodical Committee shall consist of:
  - 1. All pastors of the Unity of the Brethren (including licensed and associate pastors);
  - 2. Seven executive officers (at least three laypeople) elected by the Convention. In selection of the laypeople, not more than one layperson shall be chosen from one congregation. This shall include the lay alternate so that no congregation is represented more than once when considering the lay executive officers and the lay alternate;
  - 3. One lay representative elected from each congregation at a meeting called for the referendum vote following each Convention. Lay committee/board chairs may be elected by their congregations as their lay representatives.
- B. The executive officers of the Synodical Committee shall consist of the president, first vice-president, second vice-president, third vice-president, secretary, financial secretary, and treasurer elected by the Convention from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren through the work of a nominating committee appointed to function before the Convention. (According to usual parliamentary procedure, nominations shall also be received from the floor.)
  - 1. Newly elected officers shall be installed into their respective offices at the Fall Synodical Committee meeting following the convention. This installation shall be conducted by the outgoing (incumbent)

officers of the Synodical Committee. The newly elected officers shall be installed at the conclusion of the old business portion of the Fall Synodical Committee Meeting Agenda. The newly elected officers shall assume their offices immediately following the installation.

In the period between the conclusion of the Church Convention and the subsequent Fall Synodical Committee meeting the outgoing (incumbent) officers shall continue to preside. They shall continue in their elected responsibilities through the canvassing of the referendum vote. During this period the newly elected officers shall meet with the incumbent officers in a time of training and familiarization with their newly elected responsibilities.

2. Tenure of office of the executive officers shall be limited to two consecutive terms (four years) in the same office, and four consecutive terms (eight years) as Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee.
  3. Of the seven members, at least three shall be laypeople and at least three shall be pastors.
- C. The Synodical Committee will normally meet twice a year, in the spring and fall, and serve as the general policy-making entity. The seven duly-elected executive officers will execute the policies of the Committee and handle matters between the spring and fall meetings. These executive officers will meet as often as necessary to do their work.
- D. If a vacancy occurs among the executive officers of the Synodical Committee, the Synodical Committee shall choose the appropriate alternate (lay or ministerial) to correspond with By-Laws Article VI, Section B, Paragraph 2. The office that such an alternate might hold will be determined by the Synodical Committee according to the following paragraphs:
1. Should a vacancy occur in the office of the president, then the first vice-president shall become the president and the resulting vacancy shall be filled according to By-Laws Article VIII, Section B.
  2. Should a vacancy occur in any of the other offices, the Synodical Committee has the right to designate the office for which the alternate is most capable of filling, and then shall fill such other vacant office from among the officers.
- E. The Synodical Committee shall be the officiating body of the Unity of the Brethren between Conventions and shall administer and manage all its current affairs.
- F. The Synodical Committee shall have the right and the responsibility to conduct as many meetings between Conventions as the welfare of the Unity of the Brethren requires (Article III, Section A).
- G. The Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee shall keep accurate records and copies of all correspondence.
- H. The Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee shall be a clearing house for programs, dedications, rallies, etc. All events shall be announced beforehand so there will be limited conflicts with other events of the Unity of the Brethren.

- I. The minutes of the Synodical Committee meetings and executive officers' meetings shall be published in *The Brethren Journal* only insofar as their content is a concern of the denomination.
- J. The Convention of the Unity of the Brethren may choose to establish a maximum sum by which the Synodical Committee may be directed in its expenditures on any particular project which it undertakes for the welfare of the church.
- K. Any vacancy in any Convention-elected office, other than the President of the Synodical Committee, in the period between Conventions shall be filled by appointment of the Synodical Committee. Vacancies in the lay representative positions will be filled by appointment of the Synodical Committee in accordance with the wishes of the affected congregations.
- L. Mailing and other miscellaneous expenses (mileage, etc.) shall be reimbursed to the members of the Synodical Committee from the Brethren Administrative Fund.
- M. The fiscal year of the Unity of the Brethren shall be the calendar year.

## **ARTICLE VII. PRESIDENT**

- A. The president is the spiritual advisor and the overseer of the whole Unity of the Brethren. As such the president should be respected and his or her counsel attended to.
- B. The president shall preside over the meetings of the Synodical Committee and other denominational functions. The president is accountable to the following Convention for the achievement of previous Convention decisions and has the authority to make assignments to appropriate individual(s) and/or committee(s) in order to execute these decisions.
- C. In case of a tie vote in the Synodical Committee meetings and meetings of the executive officers, the president shall cast the decisive vote.
- D. The president shall sign all ordination certificates and all matters pertaining to the Unity of the Brethren as an incorporated body.
- E. If the president is unable to perform the duties of the office, the first vice-president shall take over the privileges and responsibilities of the president.
- F. The president, as far as circumstances permit, may personally visit the congregations of the Unity of the Brethren. The congregations which the president visits may defray any expenses incurred. When the president is invited to dedications and other similar functions, it is expected that the congregation issuing the invitation shall reimburse all expenses related to supply and travel. The secretary of the

Synodical Committee shall notify the congregation desiring the president's services that they should provide reimbursement.

- G. The president shall have the authority, in fact the responsibility, to examine the books of the treasurer and the financial secretary whenever appropriate.
- H. The president shall open the Conventions of the Unity of the Brethren and shall preside at each such Convention.
- I. The president, if a pastor, shall preach the Convention sermon and only in case of an urgent situation shall another pastor be asked to substitute. Should the president be a layperson, a pastor may be appointed to perform that task.
- J. All official documents and letters to be presented to the Convention should be in the hands of the president fourteen (14) days before the Convention opens.
- K. If any accusations or grievances against pastors or members of the Convention should reach the president, or if the president knows that some pastor or member of the Convention has not fulfilled his or her responsibilities, the president shall admonish such an individual privately. If such admonition does not have the desired effect, the president shall call a witness and repeat the admonition (Matt. 18); but if the individual still pays no heed, the president shall call the individual to answer the charges before the whole Convention.
- L. Together with the Synodical Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee (By-Laws Article XII, Section B, Paragraph 1) the president shall endeavor to straighten out any misunderstandings within congregations or between congregations and their pastors, if he or she should be called upon as an arbiter by one or the other side.
- M. If pastors are charged with and accused of teaching a false doctrine or offensive behavior, the president shall have the authority, in fact, responsibility, to investigate the case immediately, and, on convincing evidence presented by trustworthy witnesses, shall suspend such an accused person from his or her position. The president shall then present the case to a Convention, either regular or called, within 60 days, for further consideration and final decision.
- N. The president of the Synodical Committee is to co-sign all signature cards for funds in trust by the financial secretary and treasurer of the Unity of the Brethren. The president shall also be a co-signer of signature cards for funds in care of the treasurers of the Ministers' Benefits Program and any other treasurers appointed by the Synodical Committee.
- O. In addition to fulfilling general administrative duties, the president shall serve as Synodical Committee liaison with the Pastoral Relations Committee. The president shall also coordinate interdenominational relations. The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.

## ARTICLE VIII. THE VICE-PRESIDENTS

- A. The vice-presidents shall assist the president in the carrying out of his or her executive duties, as requested by the president.
- B. The first vice-president shall become the president if a vacancy occurs in the office of the president. Filling any other vacancies on the executive committee is at the discretion of the Synodical Committee based on the qualifications of prospective replacements.
- C. The first vice-president shall assist the president in the appointment of Convention Committees as found in Article IV, Section L.
- D. The first vice-president shall serve as Outreach Coordinator, that is, as Synodical Committee liaison with such outreach programs of the Unity of the Brethren as Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, etc.
- E. The second vice-president shall serve as Stewardship Coordinator, that is, as Synodical Committee liaison with stewardship programs of the Unity of the Brethren such as Mutual Aid Society, and Ministers' Benefits Program etc. The second Vice-president shall also serve as Chairperson of *The Brethren Journal* Business Committee.
- F. The third vice-president shall:
  - 1. Serve as Denominational Life Coordinator, that is, as Synodical Committee liaison with those programs and functions that promote a practical expression of the Christian faith and Brethren doctrine such as Christian Sisters Union, Brethren Youth Fellowship, Board of Christian Education, and Hus School Encampment Board of Trustees;
  - 2. Keep abreast of possible Constitution and By-Laws changes, and shall serve as the Chairperson of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee; and
  - 3. Act as the supervisor for the Youth Coordinator (in accordance with By-Laws Article XXIII, Section C, Paragraph 2). The third vice-president shall conduct an annual survey of all congregations by evaluating their experiences with, expectations of, and support for the Youth Coordinator position, and report the results to the Executive Officers of the Synodical Committee.

The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.

## **ARTICLE IX. SECRETARY**

- A. The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Synodical Committee and the executive officers and read them at the beginning of the next meeting.
- B. The secretary keeps minutes of the Convention with such assistants as Synodical Committee or Convention designates.
- C. At the order of the president, the secretary shall prepare all official documents provided the Convention has not ordered otherwise.
- D. The secretary shall diligently care for the Unity of the Brethren's official documents, books, etc. When requested, the secretary shall be obligated to present them to the pastors and officers of the Unity of the Brethren for unhindered study; however, he or she shall make certain that nothing will get lost.
- E. The secretary shall notify any congregation which desires the president's services for dedications and similar functions that it should pay for the president's supply and travel expenses. (Article VII, Sec F)
- F. The secretary shall have the responsibility of keeping:
  - 1. A proper role of the pastors of the Unity of the Brethren arranged according to their length of service in the ministry, showing the year, the month, and the day they joined the Unity of the Brethren.
  - 2. A record of all congregations and preaching stations belonging to the Unity of the Brethren and served by its pastors, including all necessary records and statistics.
- G. The secretary shall give a written report to the Convention of the official acts which were undertaken since the last Convention. This report shall include the following: (a) the present state of the Unity of the Brethren; (b) new congregations; (c) new churches built; (d) change of pastors; (e) other important matters which have occurred during the past official term; (f) recommendations of appropriate motions which would advance the welfare of the Unity of the Brethren; and (g) naming of subjects which the Convention shall deliberate upon.
- H. The secretary prepares a schedule of expenses for the Convention as found in Article IV, Section P.
- I. If a vacancy is created in the office of the secretary before the official term is over, the president shall be obligated to receive all the property formerly cared for by the secretary and safely guard the same. The president shall appoint one of the other Synodical Committee members as the pro tem secretary, who shall immediately take over the office until the next Synodical Committee meeting, at which time the office will be filled according to By-Laws Article VI, Section D, Paragraph 2.

- J. All proposed changes to the Unity website shall be submitted to the Unity Secretary who will forward approved changes to the Unity Webmaster.

## **ARTICLE X. FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

- A. The financial secretary shall receive all offerings for benevolences and funds designated for the Unity of the Brethren and keep accurate records of the same.
- B. Once a month the financial secretary shall transfer the funds of the Unity of the Brethren to the treasurer, against proper receipts.
- C. The financial secretary (as well as the treasurer) shall balance his or her books for the preceding calendar year on January 31<sup>st</sup>, submitting a report to the Synodical Committee and/or Convention accordingly.
- D. The financial secretary shall give a detailed financial report to the Convention. Following the close of the fiscal year, the financial secretary shall be obligated to present the books for an audit. The financial records will fall under the direct supervision of the president.
- E. During the financial secretary's official term, he or she shall be obligated to furnish the president of the Unity of the Brethren a bond for the sum of \$50,000.00 paid for by the Unity of the Brethren.
- F. If a vacancy is created in the office of the financial secretary, the president shall take over all the Unity of the Brethren's documents and funds and with the approval of the treasurer, shall appoint a pro tem financial secretary, who shall immediately assume the responsibilities and privileges of the office until the next Synodical Committee meeting. (Article VI, Section C)

## **ARTICLE XI. TREASURER**

- A. The treasurer shall receive from the financial secretary all of the Unity of the Brethren's funds, shall care for them diligently and shall pay out from them current expenses of the Unity of the Brethren, but only on the written order of the president. During the auditing of the books the treasurer must present legal receipts for all items paid out.
- B. The treasurer (as well as the financial secretary) shall balance his or her books for the preceding calendar year on January 31<sup>st</sup>, submitting a report to the Synodical Committee and/or Convention accordingly.
- C. The treasurer shall send at the most convenient times the benevolence offerings to their proper destination; official receipts will show this during the auditing of the books.



- D. Checks and/or electronic transfers issued for \$500.00 and under will be signed by the treasurer. Checks and/or electronic transfers issued for over \$500.00 will be approved or signed by the treasurer and countersigned/approved by the president.
- E. The treasurer shall be obligated to furnish a bond, as large as the sum of money he or she is responsible for, to the president of the Unity of the Brethren. The secretary shall care for this bond along with the other documents of the Unity of the Brethren. The bond of the treasurer shall be paid by the Unity of the Brethren.
- F. The treasurer shall be the liaison to the Board for Grants and Bequests and shall receive all investment reports from the respective investment firms entrusted with funds administered by the Board for Grants and Bequests. The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.
- G. The treasurer shall give to the Convention a detailed report on the status of the treasury. Following the close of the fiscal year, the treasurer shall be obligated to present the books for an audit. His or her books and notes fall under the direct supervision of the president.
- H. If a vacancy is created in the office of the treasurer, the president shall immediately take over the Unity of the Brethren's documents and funds and shall appoint, with the approval of the financial secretary, the pro tem treasurer who shall immediately assume the responsibilities and privileges of this office until the next Synodical Committee meeting, at which time the office will be filled according to By-Laws Article VI, Section D, Paragraph 2.

## **ARTICLE XII. PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

- A. The Convention elects a Pastoral Relations Committee to coordinate the calling and placing of pastors in the Unity of the Brethren.
  - 1. The Committee shall consist of four (4) lay members of the Unity of the Brethren and one (1) Pastor to the Pastors of the Unity of the Brethren to serve as an advisor.
    - a. Lay members shall be elected by the Convention from nominees submitted by a nominating committee. The Pastor to the Pastors shall be elected by the clergy during the course of the Convention through a series of votes until one pastor receives the majority of votes.
    - b. Following the election of the members, the Convention shall elect a chairperson from among the four lay committee members.
    - c. The term of office shall be for four (4) years subject to re-election for one additional consecutive term after completion of one full four-year term.

- d. The Pastor to the Pastors shall be a member of the Ministerial Credentials Board and serve as a pastor to all categories of pastors and students for the ministry.
2. If a vacancy is created between Conventions the Synodical Committee shall appoint a replacement until the next Convention.
  3. Operating expenses of the committee shall be paid by the Unity of the Brethren according to usual practice.
  4. Between Conventions, the committee shall report to and seek the guidance of the President of the Synodical Committee.
  5. The President shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this committee. (By-Laws Article VII, Section O) The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.
- B. The Committee shall:
1. Visit each congregation at least biennially to maintain a good rapport. When there is evidence that problems have developed between the members of a congregation and their pastor, the committee shall take the initiative to work with the governing body and the pastor in seeking to resolve such problems. If the problems persist, the committee shall bring the matter to the attention of the President of the Synodical Committee. (By-Laws Article VII, Section L)
  2. Have the responsibility to seek pastoral help from outside the Unity of the Brethren when and if necessary.
  3. Have the responsibility to place the current pastors as need arises. The tenure of the pastors in their respective parishes shall be the Committee's responsibility in consultation with the pastors involved. Tenure, however, should not be a major consideration to move a pastor when good relations exist between the congregation and pastor.
  4. Have the responsibility to propose necessary salary considerations.
- C. Local congregations shall petition the committee in writing, at any time, when they have a pastoral vacancy or when they desire to have a pastoral change and to suggest a preference(s) for a new pastor.
- D. Each pastor shall petition the committee in writing when they desire to have a change of charge. All preliminary discussion of a change shall be held in strict confidence.
- E. Pastoral and Parish Changes
1. Any change of pastors shall have the final approval of the congregations or parish issuing the call.

2. Any change in parish arrangement shall have the final approval of the congregations involved.
3. Calls are for an indefinite duration and are terminated by the pastor or congregation with one month notice or by mutual agreement.

### **ARTICLE XIII. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

- A. A Board of Christian Education shall be established by the Unity of the Brethren to further develop and promote programs of Christian education, such as the Sunday School, the State Youth Program, the Hus Encampment Program, and others aligned with the purposes of Christian education within the Unity of the Brethren.
- B. The Board shall:
  1. Coordinate and share information among the Unity's educational groups and between congregations toward common and more effective work for the Lord;
  2. Develop goals and objectives for approval and evaluation by the Synodical Committee;
  3. Strengthen church members' knowledge of the Christian faith by recommending and/or developing educational resources (e.g., a bibliography of resources for Christian education, confirmation materials, Sunday School teaching materials, and devotional materials) and events (e.g., confirmation retreats, Sunday School training opportunities, and lay leader training opportunities);
  4. Counsel and encourage the local Sunday Schools in their ministry;
  5. Work so that members would be brought into the best possible knowledge of the Word of God, using pure teaching of the Word of God, Christian songs, and prayers;
  6. Publicize events and meetings through *The Brethren Journal* and the Unity of the Brethren website so as to encourage a broad base of participation; and
  7. Publish and distribute the Catechism, certificates, and other denominational literature.
- C. The Convention of the Unity of the Brethren shall elect a Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education, which shall be comprised of seven (7) qualified members interested in this responsibility of the Unity of the Brethren.
  1. Five (5) members shall be appointed by the Synodical Committee from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren, recognizing interest as well as demographic and geographic distribution.

2. One member shall be the Youth Coordinator.
  3. The term of office for all members except the Youth Coordinator shall be 2 years, subject to re-election or re-appointment with a maximum of 4 consecutive terms.
  4. If a vacancy is created on the Board, the executive officers of the Synodical Committee shall appoint a new member to fill the term of the vacant position.
  5. The third vice-president shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this board. (By-Laws Article VIII, Section F, Paragraph 1).
- D. Operating expenses of the Board of Christian Education shall be paid through the Unity in the usual manner.

### **ARTICLE XIV. HUS SCHOOL ENCAMPMENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS**

- A. The Unity of the Brethren and its affiliate organizations shall maintain an encampment known as the Hus School Encampment, five miles east of Caldwell, Texas.
- B. The Hus School Encampment shall be incorporated under the law of the State of Texas as an organized service of the Unity of the Brethren.
- C. The Encampment shall be governed by a Board of Trustees of eight (8) members to ensure proper administration:
1. A chairperson elected by the Convention. This chairperson may be a member of the Synodical Committee
  2. The treasurer of the Board of Trustees and six (6) other members shall be appointed by the Synodical Committee from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren, recognizing interest, as well as demographic and geographic distribution.
  3. Terms: two years; may be reelected/re-appointed for a maximum of four terms or eight years.
- D. The Board of Trustees elect, from the qualified personnel of the Unity of the Brethren:
1. A Staffing and Training Coordinator of the Hus School Encampment; and
  2. A Facilities Manager of the Hus School Encampment.

These positions are considered nonvoting members and their elections are subject to approval by the Synodical Committee. The terms of office shall be two (2) years subject to re-election.

- E. The Board of Trustees shall formulate rules and regulations by which it and the Hus School Encampment shall be governed, which are subject to approval by the Synodical Committee. (See Appendix A)
- F. The Hus School Encampment receives a portion of the Brethren Fund on or before the beginning of the year (By-Laws Article II, Section L) and all other moneys designated for it.
- G. The Board of Trustees is responsible to the Synodical Committee. The third vice-president shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this board. (By-Laws Art. VIII, Sec. F, p.1) The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.
- H. If a vacancy is created on the Board of Trustees, the appropriate body shall appoint a new member to the position vacant, through the office of its executive board or committee.

## **ARTICLE XV. BOARDS OF MISSIONS**

- A. A Board of Foreign Missions is established by the Unity of the Brethren for the supervision of its program of World Missions. It shall be responsible to the Convention and under the supervision of the Synodical Committee.
  - 1. The Convention of the Unity of the Brethren shall elect a Chairperson of the Board of Foreign Missions, which shall be comprised of seven (7) qualified members interested in this responsibility of the Unity of the Brethren.
    - a. The chairperson may be, but need not be, a member of the Synodical Committee.
    - b. Six (6) other members shall be appointed by the Synodical Committee from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren, recognizing interest, as well as demographic and geographic distribution.
    - c. The term of office for all members shall be two years, subject to re-election or re-appointment for a maximum of four terms or eight years.
    - d. The first vice-president shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this board. (By-Laws Article VIII, Section D) The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.
  - 2. The Board of Foreign Missions shall recommend expenditures through an annual budget of the funds contributed for foreign missions. These funds shall be paid out by the Synodical Committee Treasurer upon authorization by the Synodical Committee.

3. If a vacancy is created on the Board, the appropriate body shall appoint a new member to the position vacant, through the office of its executive board or committee.
- B. A Board of Home Missions is established by the Unity of the Brethren for the supervision of its program of Home Missions. It shall be responsible to the Convention and under the supervision of the Synodical Committee.
1. The Convention of the Unity of the Brethren shall elect a Chairperson of the Board of Home Missions, which shall be comprised of seven (7) qualified members interested in this responsibility of the Unity of the Brethren.
    - a. The chairperson may be, but need not be, a member of the Synodical Committee.
    - b. Six (6) other members shall be appointed by the Synodical Committee from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren, recognizing interest as well as demographic and geographic distribution.
    - c. The term of office for all members shall be two years, subject to re-election or re-appointment for a maximum of four terms or eight years.
    - d. The first vice-president shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this board. (By-Laws Article VIII, Section D) The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.
  2. The Board of Home Missions shall recommend expenditures through an annual budget of the funds contributed for home missions. These funds shall be paid out by the Synodical Committee Treasurer upon authorization by the Synodical Committee.
  3. If a vacancy is created on the Board, the Synodical Committee shall appoint a new member to fill the term of the vacant position.
- C. All contributions for mission work shall be sent to the Unity of the Brethren Financial Secretary. Funds shall be designated for foreign or home missions; if not indicated, the funds will be equally divided between both boards.

## **ARTICLE XVI. THE PUBLICATION OF THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN: *THE BRETHREN JOURNAL***

- A. The publication of the Unity of the Brethren is *The Brethren Journal*.
- B. The editorial policy of *The Brethren Journal* shall be determined by the editor, who shall be responsible to the Convention of the Unity of the Brethren and is under the supervision of the Synodical Committee.

- C. Business policies shall be determined by a business committee.
- D. The Convention of the Unity of the Brethren shall elect from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren a qualified editor and business manager. Both offices may be filled by the same person. The term(s) of office shall be two (2) years subject to re-election. The Synodical Committee shall set the salary of both offices.
- E. The business committee of *The Brethren Journal* shall be composed of the second vice-president of the Synodical Committee as chairperson, a secretary/reporter, and a treasurer. The secretary/reporter and the treasurer shall be appointed by the Synodical Committee, which shall also set the remuneration of the treasurer. Their term of office shall be two (2) years subject to re-appointment.
- F. The editor, the business manager, and the business committee of *The Brethren Journal* shall be governed by the Publication Rules established by the Synodical Committee. (Appendix B: *The Brethren Journal*.)
- G. If a vacancy is created in the office of the editor, business manager, or in the membership of the business committee, the Synodical Committee shall appoint someone to fill the vacancy.
- H. The second vice-president shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this committee.

## **ARTICLE XVII. INTERDENOMINATIONAL RELATIONS**

- A. The Unity of the Brethren shall, through the Synodical Committee appointments, take part in and be represented at Unity of the Brethren-approved interdenominational fellowships.
- B. Every congregation of the Unity of the Brethren should give an annual contribution for the support of Unity of the Brethren-approved interdenominational work.

## **ARTICLE XVIII. ARCHIVIST**

- A. In order that the more important historical items and a record of events of the church might not be forgotten but be preserved for the future generations as historical treasures inherited from their forebears, an Archivist of the Unity of the Brethren shall be appointed by the Synodical Committee. The term of office shall be two (2) years subject to re-appointment.
- B. It shall be the duty of the archivist to care for these historical treasures of the Unity of the Brethren and to promote an interest in their preservation.
- C. The archivist shall prepare for display these historical items in appropriate fashion and at appropriate times.

- D. The archivist shall publish interesting facts and make appropriate appeals to the membership of the Unity of the Brethren and the general public to promote interest in the value of the Unity of the Brethren in history and the present.
- E. The Synodical Committee shall determine the amount of funds necessary for the work.
- F. In case of a vacancy, the President of the Synodical Committee shall receive all of the archives and a qualified person shall be named to the vacancy by the Synodical Committee, after which this new archivist shall be charged with the care of the archives.
- G. The local congregations also are urged to maintain their own collections of history.

## **ARTICLE XIX. BOOK STORE**

- A. Recognizing that education of its membership is based on reading the Holy Bible and appropriate Christian literature, the Synodical Committee shall appoint from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren a diligent and qualified manager of the Brethren Book Store. The term of office shall be two (2) years subject to re-appointment.
- B. The Synodical Committee shall furnish a revolving fund of sufficient amount to underwrite the financial needs of the Book Store.
- C. Rules and regulations governing the business practices of the Book Store shall be subject to the approval of the Synodical Committee.
- D. In case of a vacancy, the President of the Synodical Committee shall take over the records and stock of the Book Store, and after a qualified successor is named by the Synodical Committee, such records and stock shall be given to the new manager to maintain.

## **ARTICLE XX. BENEFITS PROGRAMS FOR PASTORS**

- A. The Unity of the Brethren, being conscious of its responsibility to its pastors, has established two programs for pastors serving this denomination.
  - 1. A retirement program for full-time Unity pastors and part-time Unity pastors as defined by the Synodical Committee.



2. An income protection program.
- B. These programs are financed by the congregations of the Unity of the Brethren.
  - C. The Synodical Committee appoints a Minister's Benefits Committee composed of laypeople and pastors, along with other needed personnel, to administer both programs. This committee formulates all rules and regulations (including assessments) for both programs with the approval of the Synodical Committee.
  - D. The second vice-president shall serve as the Synodical Committee liaison with this committee. (By-Laws Article VIII, Section E) The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.

## **ARTICLE XXI. BOARD FOR GRANTS AND BEQUESTS**

- A. A Board for Grants and Bequests is established by the Unity of the Brethren.
- B. The purpose of the Board is to encourage, receive, and manage special gifts and bequests for the benefit of specified agencies or undertakings of the Unity of the Brethren.
- C. The Board shall formulate rules and regulations under which it will function. (Appendix C.)
- D. The Board will be responsible to the Church Convention and under general supervision of the Synodical Committee. The Unity treasurer shall be the liaison to this board and shall receive all investment reports from the respective investment firms entrusted with funds administered by this board. (By-Laws Article XI, Section F) The liaison shall maintain contact by communication between the board and the Synodical Committee in order to ensure concerted action, cooperation, and to relay information at the executive level. The liaison position is a non-voting position for boards on which the liaison serves.
- E. The Board may be incorporated under the State of Texas as an organized service of the Unity of the Brethren.
- F. The Board will be composed of a Chairperson and four (4) members elected by the Convention from the membership of the Unity of the Brethren who are qualified and interested in handling financial matters. (The members should have broad experiences in fields such as banking, finance, or real estate as well as being dedicated Christians.)
  1. A nominating committee appointed by the Synodical Committee shall present nominees to each Convention.

2. The term of office shall be four (4) years subject to re-election for one additional consecutive term.
  3. A chairperson shall be elected by the Convention from among the five committee members. This chairperson may be a member of the Synodical Committee.
  4. A secretary, treasurer, and other needed officers of the Board, will be elected by its members after election by the Church Convention.
    - a. The treasurer will be obligated to furnish a bond, the amount determined by the Synodical Committee and paid for by the Unity of the Brethren.
  5. If a vacancy occurs on the Board, the Synodical Committee will fill the unexpired term. (This appointment will not be for a specific position on the Board.)
- G. The Board will encourage Christian Stewardship through appropriate publicity by seeking to introduce itself to those with the desire and means to contribute to the long-range benefit of the Unity of the Brethren. Its program will not be intended to replace or reduce giving to Hus School, Missions, or to the local congregations, but rather will seek long-range contributions to permanent-type funds, through grants and bequests made in wills and/or memorial gifts set up as a revolving fund for the benefit of Unity of the Brethren causes. The Board will encourage Christian Stewardship by pointing out special needs and benevolent opportunities existing in the Unity of the Brethren.
- H. In addition to managing its own funds, the Board for Grants and Bequests shall also administer the (Frank) Skrivanek Memorial Fund. This fund shall remain a rotating loan fund for facilities for new church plants.
- I. Operating expenses of the Board will be paid from the Unity of the Brethren Administrative Fund according to usual practice, unless other funds are received for this specific purpose.
- J. All special gifts, grants and bequests received by the Board for Grants and Bequests of the Unity of the Brethren for the benefit of specified agencies or undertakings of the Unity of the Brethren shall be acknowledged by a letter of acceptance and appreciation to the donor(s) and if a memorial, a letter also to the family of one(s) being honored, in behalf of the Unity of the Brethren and signed by the Chairperson of this Board with a copy to the President of the Unity of the Brethren.

## **ARTICLE XXII. MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION**

- A. Persons received into full communion with the Unity of the Brethren by confirmation, profession or reaffirmation of faith or letter of transfer shall be full communicant members and they shall have the right to vote according to the local congregation's Constitution and By-Laws (See Article XXII, Section B) and the right to receive Communion. Children, baptized and having professed their faith in Jesus Christ shall be: enrolled as unconfirmed members; allowed to receive communion; and instructed in the

Christian way of life and the standards of faith and doctrine of the church. Adults desiring to be admitted into the church shall also receive instruction.

- B. The congregation itself grants voting rights to its members, and shall maintain an accurate roll of its members.
- C. Members who have permanently changed their places of residence shall be urged by their pastors to obtain letters of transfer and, as soon as possible, shall unite with a local congregation of the Unity of the Brethren. If there is no Unity of the Brethren congregation nearby, then members are urged to become active in another church.
- D. Members guilty of misconduct, which brings reproach upon the church, shall be disciplined in accordance with the rules of discipline of the Constitution and By-Laws of the local congregation.

### **ARTICLE XXIII. YOUTH COORDINATOR**

- A. The Youth Coordinator of the Unity of the Brethren shall generally be responsible for providing assistance and support to youth groups on a local, regional, and statewide basis. This assistance may include a variety of duties, including but not limited to:
  - 1. Developing and updating a list of children and youth so they can be contacted when events are scheduled;
  - 2. Providing an avenue for communications and information-sharing between local youth groups (i.e., newsletters, websites, phone calls, etc.);
  - 3. Provide input in the planning process for summer camps;
  - 4. Assist local and state Brethren Youth Fellowship (BYF) sponsors in their efforts by providing database information, advice on group leadership, etc.;
  - 5. Holding meetings with youth groups and sponsors for determining local needs; and
  - 6. Recruiting adult supervision for youth activities.
- B. The Youth Coordinator shall focus regional energies primarily on smaller churches with limited youth resources.
- C. Supervision and Authority

1. The budget for this position will be evaluated and approved at each Unity Convention. The Synodical Committee shall have the authority to approve additional expenditures if needed.
2. The position will be supervised by the third vice-president of the Synodical Committee. This supervision will include:
  - a. Biannual review of time and effort logs and expense accounts; and
  - b. Annual performance evaluation of the Youth Coordinator.
3. The Youth Coordinator shall serve as a member of the Board of Christian Education.

## **ARTICLE XXIV. METHOD OF AMENDMENT**

As these By-Laws are an interpretation of the Constitution of the Unity of the Brethren and become the administrative rules for guidance of officials and members of the Unity of the Brethren, they are subject to change through deletion or expansion at any Convention of the Unity of the Brethren. If the Convention approves the changes by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Convention, such changes shall be sent to the local congregations within 30 days after the convention for referendum vote. The referendum vote shall be held and the results reported to the Secretary of the Synodical Committee by the deadline stated in the referendum ballot. If a simple majority of the congregations approve the proposals by a simple majority of their votes such proposals shall become part of these By-Laws. If the congregation does not send the results of its referendum vote to the Secretary of the Synodical Committee by the stated deadline that congregation shall be counted as favoring all proposals.

# **Appendix A**

## **BY-LAWS OF THE HUS SCHOOL ENCAMPMENT**

### **ARTICLE I — NAME**

- A. The official name of this Church Encampment is: “THE HUS SCHOOL ENCAMPMENT OF THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN.”
- B. It is located four miles east of Caldwell, Burleson County, Texas, and its address is 3635 CR 225, Caldwell, Texas 77836.
- C. The Encampment is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas, Charter No. 149795, dated May 4, 1962.

### **ARTICLE II — PURPOSE**

- A. The Hus School Encampment is an agency of the church, and as such has its primary and ultimate purpose the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth according to the commandment of its Heavenly Bishop, Jesus Christ.
- B. In general, the Encampment seeks to accomplish this by means of Christian education, mission’s emphasis, and evangelism.
- C. In particular, the Encampment seeks to teach and encourage leadership of young people in church activities; to teach and encourage the youth to be good Christian leaders; to teach and encourage young people to become pastors of the church; to teach young people the administration of the church; and to provide a place of wholesome Christian recreation for the young people.
- D. The Encampment serves as a common meeting place for all agencies, committees, and boards of the church.

### **ARTICLE III — ADMINISTRATION**

- A. Responsibility for supervision and maintenance of the Encampment is vested in a Board of Trustees. (Article XIV of Unity of the Brethren By-Laws is the basis for some of the following administrative details.)
- B. Membership on the Board of Trustees is as follows: a Chairperson elected by the Convention, a Treasurer and six (6) other members appointed by the Synodical Committee.
- C. The Board of Trustees shall elect, from the qualified members of the Unity of the Brethren, a Staffing and Training Coordinator of the Hus School Encampment and a Facilities Manager of the Hus School Encampment, who will be members without voting privileges. These appointments are subject to approval by the Synodical Committee. The terms of office shall be two (2) years subject to re-election.

- D. The Treasurer of the Board shall be named by the Synodical Committee from among its two appointees. The vice-chairman, secretary, and other necessary officers are to be elected by the Board itself from within its own membership. Duties shall be those customarily carried out by such officers.
- E. The Board members shall be elected/appointed for a two-year term, and may be re-elected/re-appointed (cf. Unity of the Brethren By-Laws, Article XIV, Section C, Paragraph 4). Vacancies are to be filled by the agency of the church concerned.
- F. Basic duties of the Board are outlined as follows: (a) responsibility for the safety, maintenance, and improvement of all physical properties of the Hus School Encampment; (b) custody of Operating Fund and Building Fund, with sole authority to approve all disbursements; (c) responsibility to plan, publish and enact the yearly program of Hus School and conferences; (d) responsibility for administering the Encampment, with authority to act as a clearing and approving agency for all activities taking place on the Encampment grounds.
- G. The Board shall have both the authority and responsibility of setting all salaries involved in the operation of the Encampment.
- H. The scheduling of meetings of the Board shall be left to the discretion of the chairperson, or when requested by at least three members of the Board.
- I. Final responsibility of the Board is to the Synodical Committee.

## **ARTICLE IV — FINANCES**

- A. All funds for the operation and maintenance of the Encampment shall be retained in the Operating Fund. All funds for the purpose of building, remodeling, or major repair to physical properties shall be retained in the Building Fund.
- B. The Operating Fund and the Building Fund shall be in the custody of the treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and the Board shall have final authority involving any disbursements from these funds.
- C. The Operating Fund shall be supported in the following ways: (a) A portion of the Brethren Fund (By-Laws Article II, Section L) shall be placed in this fund on or before the beginning of each calendar year; and (b) by freewill offerings, donations, bequests, etc.
- D. The Building Fund shall be supported by voluntary contributions specifically designated for that purpose.
- E. The treasurer of the Operating Fund shall be prepared to give a financial report at each meeting of the Board of Trustees, at each Church Convention, and at such other times as the Synodical Committee may require.
- F. Campers' fees and special donations are retained in the Food and Activities Account. The treasurer of the account is the Facilities Manager.

## **ARTICLE V — PROGRAM**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Staffing and Training Coordinator of the Hus School Encampment to formulate a plan for the Hus School session and the conferences each year at the Encampment, and to submit this plan to the Board of Trustees. The Board makes any necessary changes and authorizes the Staffing and Training Coordinator to publish and enact the approved plan.

- B. Yearly activities for which the Board is responsible at the Encampment shall include Hus School and conferences.
- C. The Staffing and Training Coordinator of the Hus School Encampment shall select all staff necessary to administrate the yearly program, subject to the advice and approval of the Board of Trustees.

## **ARTICLE VI — SUPERVISION OF PROPERTY**

- A. The Facilities Manager is responsible for year-round oversight of the property and supervision of the caretaker(s).
- B. Maintenance of the Encampment facilities and grounds shall be the responsibility of the caretaker, who shall reside on the Encampment grounds under terms and conditions determined by the Board of Trustees.
- C. The caretaker shall have the authority to refuse use of any of the Encampment facilities and grounds to unauthorized or undesirable persons.
- D. It shall be the duty of the caretaker to make periodic inspections of the Encampment facilities and grounds, and report the results of such inspections to the Facilities Manager and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- E. Other responsibilities of the caretaker shall be determined by the Board.

## **ARTICLE VII — RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **A. USE OF THE ENCAMPMENT**

- 1. The facilities and grounds of the Encampment are available for use to any agency or group of the church at any time, provided the following requirements are met: (a) written or verbal permission from the caretaker(s) and/or Facilities Manager; (b) adherence to all rules and regulations hereunto set forth.
- 2. Use of the Encampment by agencies and groups outside the church shall be permitted only by consent of the Board of Trustees.
- 3. Persons using the Encampment shall assume full responsibility for the care and preservation of all physical properties including electricity and water.
- 4. Persons using the Encampment shall leave it in a clean and orderly condition, with special emphasis given to securing all electrical and water outlets, doors, and windows.

### **B. SAFETY**

- 1. Every precaution shall be exercised at all times to insure the protection and safety of human life and property.
- 2. Every precautionary rule to prevent fire must be strictly observed.
- 3. Reasonable measures shall be taken to insure protection against snake and insect bites, poison ivy, and other natural hazards.

4. The use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, firearms, or explosives of any kind is strictly forbidden. In addition, pets and animals, with the exception of service animals, are also restricted.
5. Basic sanitation rules regarding food, clothing, and sewage shall be strictly observed at all times.

#### C. PERSONAL CONDUCT

1. The Encampment is an agency of the church, and as such reserves the right to demand satisfactory Christian conduct from its users at all times.
2. The use or possession of intoxicating beverages and/or illegal drugs under any conditions is strictly prohibited. Failure to observe this rule will result in the withdrawal of all rights of use of the Encampment.
3. Property damage as a result of willful destruction or negligence shall be the responsibility of the person or persons concerned, and will result in the withdrawal of all rights of use of the Encampment.
4. Enforcement of these rules and regulations shall be a matter of concern of all camp directors, counselors, and teachers.

#### D. LIABILITY

In scheduling Hus School, conferences, and retreats, those responsible shall see that proper medical and accident insurance is secured. The Encampment will not be held responsible or liable for illness or accidents occurring on the property by visitors during scheduled annual activities sponsored by the Board, nor will the Encampment be responsible or liable for accidents occurring at other times of the year.



# Appendix B

## **PUBLICATION RULES FOR *THE BRETHREN JOURNAL* — THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN**

### **I. NAME**

The publication of the Unity of the Brethren is *The Brethren Journal*.

### **II. PURPOSE**

As the publication of the Unity of the Brethren, it is the medium through which all official information and pronouncements of the offices and organizations of the Church are published.

### **III. OFFICES**

- A. Editor
- B. Business Manager
- C. Business Committee

### **IV. DUTIES OF THE EDITOR**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Editor:
  - 1. To plan and supervise the publication of *The Brethren Journal*.
  - 2. To prepare and approve articles for publication.
- B. It shall be the further responsibility of the Editor to maintain amicable relations with other Christian publications and offices of information.
- C. The Editor shall be responsible to the Convention and under the Synodical Committee and shall make a report to the Convention as per Article XVI, Section B.

## **V. DUTIES OF THE BUSINESS MANAGER**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Business Manager:
  - 1. To keep an accurate record of all business transactions.
  - 2. To maintain a current subscription list.
  - 3. To solicit advertising, subscriptions, and donations.
  - 4. To transfer all funds to the treasurer of the business committee.
- B. It shall be the further responsibility of the Business Manager to cooperate with the business committee in formulating and carrying out the business policies of the publication.
- C. It shall further be the responsibility of the Business Manager to assure distributions of *The Brethren Journal* in accordance with the schedule determined by the Synodical Committee.
- D. The Business Manager shall be responsible to the Convention and under the supervision of the Synodical Committee and shall make a report to the Convention.

## **VI. DUTIES OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Business Committee:
  - 1. To formulate the business policy governing the publication.
  - 2. To make an annual review of
    - a. subscription rates,
    - b. advertising rates,
    - c. printing costs and contracts,
    - d. subscription lists,
    - e. advertisers,
    - f. donation lists, and
    - g. gratis and exchange lists.

## **VII. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

- A. The Chairperson.
  - 1. It shall be the duty of the Chairperson:
    - a. To call meetings of the committee and preside;
    - b. To assure completion of the annual review before the Fall Synodical Committee meeting.

B. The Secretary/Reporter.

1. It shall be the duty of the Secretary/Reporter:

- a. To keep the minutes of all meetings;
- b. To conduct all necessary correspondence.

C. The Treasurer.

1. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer:

- a. To keep custody of all funds and to make all disbursements;
- b. To submit books for audit by the auditing committee prior to each Convention;
- c. To make a report at each Convention.

# Appendix C

## BY-LAWS OF THE BOARD FOR GRANTS AND BEQUESTS

### ARTICLE I — NAME

The Unity of the Brethren Board for Grants and Bequests.

### ARTICLE II — PURPOSE

- A. As an agency of the Unity of the Brethren, the Board will encourage Christian Stewardship through appropriate publicity by seeking to point out special needs and benevolent opportunities existing in the Unity of the Brethren, and also point out tax breaks allowed for giving to worthy causes.
- B. The Board will receive and manage special grants and bequests for the benefit of agencies and undertakings of the Unity of the Brethren in coordination with the Synodical Committee and responsible to Unity of the Brethren Conventions.

### ARTICLE III — ADMINISTRATION

- A. The purpose of the Board will be carried out through appropriate publicity in *The Brethren Journal* and through mailings of special letters, forms, brochures, etc. to organizations and individuals of the Unity of the Brethren.
  - 1. Appeals to be made showing desirability of specifying certain amounts for Unity of the Brethren causes through:
    - a. Making of wills
    - b. Provision in insurance policies
    - c. Other means
- B. Grants and bequests may be designated for a particular cause or may be undesignated.
  - 1. Donors will be encouraged to give toward establishment of funds for specific worthy causes.
- C. Grants and bequests may be made in the form of cash, securities, real estate, or other property, and may be for a specific amount, a percentage of an estate or the residue after other specified bequests are deducted.
  - 1. Property other than cash will be leased, rented, or sold according to the wishes of donor if specified; and, if not specified, will be put to most feasible use.
- D. Unexpended funds, when feasible, will be deposited at highest insured interest rates.

- E. Records will be kept of all donors and all amounts of grants and bequests; these will be made available to the public unless donor requests anonymity.
  - 1. These records will be subject to audit by each Unity of the Brethren Convention.
- F. The Chairperson will report on activities to each Synodical Committee meeting and Unity of the Brethren Convention.
- G. Meetings can be conducted with only three members present; however, no decision will be valid at any time with fewer than three affirmative votes.
- H. Forms and letters to be used (illustrations of these forms below):
  - 1. Gift-of-money letter
  - 2. Memorial-gift letter
  - 3. Gift letter for personal property
  - 4. Deed to real property
  - 5. Acknowledgement letters
    - a. To Donor
    - b. To family of one honored

# MEMORIAL GIFTS

Gentlemen:

Please use my enclosed gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name    Address

Please send a Memorial Gift Letter to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

# GIFT LETTER FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY

The Unity of the Brethren Board for Grants and Bequests

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Gentlemen:

I hereby irrevocably give, transfer, assign, and convey all my rights, title, and interest in and to the below described property to The Unity of the Brethren Board for Grants and Bequests; the principal and interest to be used for

SPECIFY CHOICE

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Or, the principal of this gift to be invested and the income or interest on it to be used for

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The property referred to above is as follows:

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Sincerely,

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# DEED TO REAL PROPERTY

THE STATE OF TEXAS, COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ KNOWS ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That \_\_\_\_\_, of the County of \_\_\_\_\_, State of \_\_\_\_\_ hereinafter proration having its principal office in consideration of Ten Dollars (\$10) paid by the Unity of the Brethren Board for Grants and Bequests, a Texas Corporation having its principal office in \_\_\_\_\_ (city), Texas, hereinafter referred to as Grantee, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and for which no lien, expressed or implied, is retained or shall exist, has SOLD, GRANTED, and CONVEYED, and by these presents does SELL, GRANT, and CONVEY unto the above named GRANTEE, the following described property:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above described premises, together with all and singular the rights and appurtenances thereto in any-wise belonging unto the above named GRANTEE and its assigns forever. And said above GRANTOR, does hereby bind himself, his heirs, executors and administrators to WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND, all and singular the said premises unto the above named GRANTEE and its assigns, against every person whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same or any part thereof.

WITNESS my hand, this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. 20\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
GRANTOR

THE STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_, COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ BEFORE ME, the under-signed authority, on this day personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

Given under my hand and seal of office, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Notary Public)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\* Insert the following for reservation of a life estate: SAVE AND EXCEPT, however, that the GRANTOR herein expressly reserves, and it is hereby expressly agreed and understood, that he shall have, for himself and his assigns, the full possession, use and benefit of the above described land and premises, as well as the rents, revenues, and profits thereof for and during his natural life.