

Constitution of Conservative Mennonite Conference

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CONSTITUTION CONSERVATIVE MENNONITE CONFERENCE

PREAMBLE

We, the ministers of the Conservative Mennonite Conference, adopt this Constitution as an aid in the orderly conduct of business and as a framework for the expression of God-given gifts. We acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the mandates of the Word of God as superior to any organization or method of work.

We seek to maintain a conservative theology in faith, a committed discipleship in practice, and a re-demptive discipline in brotherhood.

As ministers, serving and representing a group of churches who experience mutual fellowship and understanding in Christ, we recognize responsible ties to each other as a conference body and to the larger Anabaptist-Mennonite family. We view the church universal as that vast company of people in the world to whom Jesus is Lord.

We respect our Anabaptist heritage dating from 1525, but believe that loyalty to that heritage requires full and faithful obedience to the principles and the specific teachings of the Bible in every culture and in each generation.

If any part of this constitution appears to fail in its purpose, it may be amended after careful deliberation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the Scriptures. Such guidance was sought in formulating this Constitution.

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:11

ARTICLE I. NAME

This Conference shall be known as the Conservative Mennonite Conference.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND POSITION

Section 1 - Purpose

The object of this body shall be to consider questions relative to the work of the church, to disseminate and maintain a full gospel in doctrine, spirituality and life. Our goal is unity in Christ so that fellowship may be maintained between our congregations, our people safeguarded from evil influences and the cause of Christ advanced.

Section 2 - Position

The Conservative Mennonite Conference . . .

- A. Accepts the Holy Scriptures as the inspired, authoritative Word of God and as its directive in faith and conduct.
- B. Is committed to the faithful study and proclamation of and obedience to the Scriptures.
- C. Subscribes to the *Conservative Mennonite Statement of Theology* of 1991 and to the *Conservative Mennonite Statement of Practice* of 2007.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Ministerial Membership

The ministerial membership of the Conference shall consist of ordained ministers, defined as ministers or deacons, who have been officially recognized as ministerial members and recorded in the minutes of the business meetings. Ministerial members are given one vote each in business meetings. Except when restricted meetings are announced, non-members are welcome to attend and may have floor privileges. Non-members may not vote. Ministerial membership involves an accountability which is primary to any other conference, denominational, or organizational affiliation or membership which the

minister may hold. The membership is also referred to throughout this document as the Conference or as Conference.

Ordained ministers may be received as members by action in the business meeting by procedures approved by the Conference and stated in the policies of the Conference. Ministerial credentials are included in, validated by, and contingent on ministerial membership in Conference.

Removal from membership may occur by voluntary request of a member, by action of the Conference, or by death. Causes for removal by Conference action may include inactivity, incompetency, heresy, and moral violation as discerned by the Conference under the leadership of the Executive Board and according to approved procedures.

Section 2 - Congregational Membership

The congregational membership shall consist of congregations which are recognized by the Conference as affiliated with the Conservative Mennonite Conference and recorded as such in the minutes of the business meetings. Congregational membership involves an accountability which is primary to any other conference, denominational, or organizational affiliation which a congregation may hold.

Congregations or emerging groups which have met the requirements stipulated in the policies of the Conference may be received into membership by action of the Conference. Procedures for application and action include the following steps:

- 1) The congregation or group shall make application to the Executive Board. The application shall be signed by members of the prospective congregation or an official delegation thereof and may be sent to the executive director at the central office.
- 2) The Executive Board shall evaluate the application and they, or a delegation designated by them, shall visit the congregation or group and evaluate the effect membership in the Conference may have on neighboring congregations and shall seek to clear the matter with such congregations.

- 3) The application shall be brought to the business meeting approximately six months before further action is taken.

In the case of application for membership from a church originating from a church planting ministry of a member congregation, the provision of the six-month waiting period may be waived at the discretion of the business meeting.

In the case of congregations in North America under the administration of Rosedale Mennonite Missions, membership shall be established on the basis of notification and recommendation of Rosedale Mennonite Missions to the Executive Board and announcement by the Executive Board in the business meeting. Such congregations, even while under the administration of RMM, shall be considered as congregational members.

Congregations and fellowships under the administration of Rosedale Mennonite Missions shall relate to Rosedale Mennonite Missions on matters of administration, leadership, and other areas of church life. When such congregations become autonomous, RMM shall inform the Executive Board through the Conference office of that status and such congregations are then free to relate autonomously with the CMC office.

Removal of membership of congregations may occur by voluntary withdrawal of the member congregation or by action of the Conference. Request for withdrawal shall be addressed to the Executive Board. After adequate communication with the requesting body, the Executive Board shall present the request to the business session approximately six months in advance of action on the request, thus providing a time for discussion of related questions.

ARTICLE IV. THE MINISTRY

Section 1 - Ministerial Offices and Ordination Procedure

- A. Ministerial offices recognized and commissioned by ordination are minister and deacon.
- B. Ministers and deacons shall be chosen by vote or approval of the congregation and shall be ordained by overseers or the senior pastor of the local congregation where the ordination occurs as provided in Article IV, section 9 of this Constitution. The lot may be used when more than one qualified candidate is presented.
- C. Authorization for ordination shall be received in advance of proceeding with the ordination in accordance with CMC policy approved by the CMC business meeting.
- D. Congregations anticipating an ordination shall give themselves to intense prayer, meditation and study of the New Testament qualifications for the ministry.
- E. Those responsible for authorizing ordinations and the officiating minister shall use a Conference approved questionnaire in examination of candidates and shall be responsible to interpret the responses of the candidate in determining his qualifications.

Section 2 - Ministerial Assignments & Functions

- A. The senior pastor of a congregation is the pastor in charge, responsible for primary leadership in the congregation and, where applicable, of the pastoral team. The senior pastor shall shepherd the flock of God, receiving into the fellowship of believers those who come to faith and penitence, and excommunicating impenitent sinners and those who persist in heresy. He shall preach the Word and do the general work of the ministry including officiating at marriages, administering baptism and communion, anointing with oil and giving overall direction to the program of the church. When authorized by the overseer and the Executive Board to do so, the senior pastor may officiate at licensures and ordinations.
- B. The associate pastor is a part of the pastoral team of a congregation. He assists and works under the leadership of the senior pastor. He may focus on a particular area of ministry such as administration, preaching, visitation, worship or youth ministry, or he may assist the senior pastor in general with shepherding the flock and doing the work of the ministry. When authorized by the senior pastor or overseer to do so, the associate pastor may administer the ordinances of the church.
- C. The licensed or ordained deacon is a part of the pastoral team of a congregation. He assists and works under the leadership of the senior pastor. The deacon shall receive the alms of the church and distribute them to the needy in consultation with the ministry and/or the congregation. He shall help reconcile estranged members and, because of his unique position, safeguard the reputation of the minister, using his utmost influence to maintain peace and unity. He shall assist the senior pastor in administering the ordinances and preaching the Word in the absence of or at the request of the senior pastor.
- D. An overseer may be assigned to serve a congregation by decision of the congregation in consultation with the Executive Board of the Conference. The assignment is of specified term not exceeding five years, but with the possibility of successive terms. The overseer's service shall be reviewed periodically at

the initiative of the senior pastor or the appointing board or committee with appropriate congregational involvement. The overseer shall be an experienced ordained minister who is a member of the Conference. He shall serve the assigned congregation(s) in a ministry of giving vision to the congregation's life and ministry, as an advisor to the pastor(s) and the congregation, as a pastor to the pastor, and in developing wholesome relationships within the congregation and with the Conference. He shall be attentive to the leadership needs of the assigned congregation(s) and officiate at licensures and ordinations.

- E. CMC recognizes other ministerial assignments and functions that are not a part of the pastoral team of a congregation. This includes but is not limited to serving in a leadership role in a CMC agency or institution, serving as a chaplain, or serving in an active evangelistic or teaching ministry compatible with CMC.

Section 3 - Ministerial License

Ministerial license may be issued by an overseer or a senior pastor as provided in Article IV, section 9 of this Constitution in consultation with the congregation and with CMC authorization per CMC policy, and may be renewed within four years of the initial license by the Executive Board. A license shall be given in writing and reported to the business meeting. The function of a licensed minister or deacon shall be the same as the function of an ordained minister or deacon during the term of his license. When a license is issued for ministry in congregational settings, it shall be valid for up to two years and may be renewed, usually with a limit of a total of four years in succession. When a license is issued for ministry in a setting such as missionary, prison, and other para--church ministries, license may be issued for duration of term of assignment, not exceeding five years without new authorization by the Executive Board. Licensed ministers may have floor privileges in the business meeting. However, voting privileges for licensed ministers shall be reserved only for those who serve as senior pastor in CMC congregations.

Section 4 - Ministerial Qualifications

An interpretation of New Testament qualifications for the ministry shall be followed which includes limitation of ordination and licensure to men and which disqualifies cases of divorce and remarriage of either spouse with a former spouse still living.

Section 5 - Ministerial Transfers

Ordained brethren may transfer their ministry from one congregation to another upon a call from the latter, upon release from the home congregation and upon approval of the Executive Board. Transfer of membership into or out of the Conference may be made by letter.

Section 6 - Removal from Ministerial Office

If a minister is unsound in his teaching or becomes disqualified or incapable of performing the duties of his office, he shall be relieved from active duty in his office by the congregation and the Executive Board, and, depending on the case, may be removed from ministerial office by action of the Conference.

Section 7 - Retirement from Ministerial Duty

Because of possible declining efficiency, at the approximate age of sixty-five or seventy, ordained brethren are requested to arrange for their pastoral responsibilities to be given to younger men who are faithful to the Scriptures and are able to carry on the work.

Section 8 - Officiating In Ordination and Licensure

An ordination or ministerial license shall be officiated by a bishop, an overseer, or a senior pastor in the congregation which he pastors, provided he meets these qualifications: (1) he is a CMC minister and (2) he can be regarded as experienced in the ministry. Officiation by an overseer or a bishop is not restricted to the congregations which he serves as overseer or bishop.

In the event of question or debate about the experiential qualification of a senior pastor, the question shall be resolved by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE V. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES AND OFFICES

Section 1 - Executive Board

A. Membership and Organization

The Executive Board shall consist of six members with terms of six years each, with one termination each year. Members of the Executive Board shall not succeed themselves in office. They shall be ordained ministers (bishops, ministers, or deacons) and shall be ministerial members of CMC. The offices of the Executive Board shall be moderator, moderator-elect, recording secretary, and assistant recording secretary. A moderator-elect shall be elected every three years to serve a term of three years as moderator-elect followed by a term of three years as moderator. An assistant recording secretary shall be elected every three years to serve a term of three years as assistant recording secretary followed by a term of three years as recording secretary. An additional member (who is not elected to serve as moderator or recording secretary) is elected every three years to serve a term of six years in that capacity.

B. Duties

1. The moderator shall be responsible to preside at business meetings, Executive Board meetings, and other work generally belonging to his office and as detailed in the job description. He, with the general secretary, shall sign legal papers.
2. The moderator-elect shall give counsel and assistance to the moderator and shall serve as moderator by the moderator's appointment or in his absence.
3. The recording secretary shall serve as recording secretary for the Executive Board and shall perform other duties specified in his job description. At the end of his term of office, he shall turn over to his successor or to the central office the official papers in his possession.

4. The assistant recording secretary performs the work of the recording secretary in his absence or when otherwise called upon by the recording secretary or the Executive Board.
5. The Executive Board shall take care of matters arising between business meetings, arrange for and assign speakers for a program with focus on the church as part of the annual conference, decide place to hold the annual conference, decide time and place of ministers' business meetings, provide general leadership to the Conference and see that Conference decisions and functions are carried out.

Section 2 - Executive Director

The executive director serves in an administrative ministry as the chief executive officer of Conservative Mennonite Conference. He serves in the work of the Executive Board and the various committees of Conference, other than committees of Rosedale Bible College and Rosedale Mennonite Missions, in the development, coordination and implementation of programs and projects, according to a job description approved by Conference and interpreted by the Executive Board. His responsibilities include but are not limited to managing the central office and properties of Conference, recording and presenting the minutes of the business meetings, supervising the preparation of the annual reports, receiving and sending correspondence and other communications for the Executive Board, attending Executive Board meetings (without vote) except when otherwise designated by the moderator, and signing legal papers. The executive director is appointed by the Executive Board subject to approval of the Conference for a term of five years, and may succeed himself in office. The executive director is accountable to the Executive Board through the moderator.

Section 3 - Conference Pastor

The conference pastor serves in a pastoral ministry as the executive pastor of Conservative Mennonite Conference. He serves in a ministry of support, resourcing, and networking of conference overseers, pastors, and congregations of the Conference according to a job description approved by Conference and interpreted by the Executive Board. His responsibilities include but are not limited to working in development, coordination, and implementation of supports for conference ministers and their families, articulating CMC's vision through appropriate events, media, communication, and personal contacts, and serving as a liaison between CMC and the congregations and ministers. The conference pastor is appointed by the Executive Board subject to approval of the Conference for a term of five years, and may succeed himself in office. The conference pastor is accountable to the Executive Board through the moderator.

Section 4 - Treasure

The treasurer is responsible to manage the Conference finances and investments; to supervise the financial receipts, expenditures, and records; and to arrange for an annual review of the financial records by a public accountant who is approved by the moderator of Conservative Mennonite Conference. The treasurer is appointed by the Executive Board subject to approval of the Conference. Length of term is three years, beginning in August of years divisible by three. The treasurer is accountable to the Executive Board through the moderator. He performs his duties in consultation with and under the leadership of the executive director according to a job description approved by the Conference and interpreted by the Executive Board.

Section 5 - Nominating Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Nominating Committee shall consist of five brethren, four of whom shall be elected in the business meeting from nominations presented by the Nominating Committee, two each year to serve two-year terms. The fifth member shall be the immediate former moderator of Conservative Mennonite Conference,

who shall serve three years immediately following his incumbency as moderator and shall be responsible to supervise the annual reorganization of the committee. One of the four elected members shall serve as chairman.

B. Duties

The Nominating Committee shall provide guidance in electing individuals to the various committees, boards, and offices as provided in the approved guidelines, policies, and job descriptions.

Section 6 – Ministerial Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Ministerial Committee shall consist of five ordained CMC ministers, with terms of five years each, and one being elected each year from a slate presented by the Nominating Committee. The officers of the committee shall be chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. The Ministerial Committee is accountable to the Conservative Mennonite Conference through the CMC Executive Board with point of communication being the CMC general secretary or, if deemed necessary by either party, the CMC moderator.

B. Duties

The Ministerial Committee shall provide a ministry of evaluation in regard to doctrinal and spiritual qualifications of current and potential CMC ministers, of reference in regard to congregational pastoral vacancies and potential pastoral availabilities, and of resourcing CMC ministers individually and collectively in regard to ministerial assignments, functions, and relationships.

ARTICLE VI. EVANGELISM COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Mission Board

A. Membership and Organization

1. The Mission Board shall be the board of directors of Conservative Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities Inc. (also known as Rosedale Mennonite Missions and as RMM) and shall serve as the arm of the Conservative Mennonite Conference in the ministry of evangelistic witness and material aid.
2. Membership of the Board shall consist of two categories: (1) Conference-elected members and (2) board-appointed members. The Conference-elected category shall consist of six members, elected one each year in the CMC business meeting from a slate presented by the Nominating Committee. Each of the Conference-elected members shall be ordained ministers of a CMC congregation.

The board-appointed category shall consist of up to three members nominated by the RMM board, approved by the Executive Board, and ratified by the CMC business meeting. Board-appointed members shall be members of a CMC or other Mennonite congregation, may be ministers or laymen, and shall sign a statement of affirmation and commitment to uphold the theological and doctrinal positions of CMC. The RMM board is responsible to initiate and implement nominations of the board-appointed members and shall clear the name of a potential nominee with the Executive Board before communicating with a potential nominee on the matter.

Members of the board-appointed category shall serve for a term of not less than three years and not more than six years, at the discretion of the mission board.

3. Each conference-elected member shall serve for a six-year term and shall not succeed himself upon completion of a six-year term.

4. The officers of the board of directors shall consist of chairman, vice chairman, and recording secretary.
5. The officers of the board shall be elected annually in a regularly scheduled meeting of the board, with the executive director of Conference or someone designated by him presiding.

B. Duties

The mission board shall be responsible to the Conference for the policies, directives and functions of the missions and service programs of the Conference; shall interpret its program to the constituency of the Conference; shall represent the constituency to those involved in the program and its administration; shall arrange a program as part of the annual conference with focus on missions, which program is subject to the approval of the Executive Board and shall be submitted to the general secretary at least four months prior to the annual conference. The mission board shall be guided by its constitution and articles of incorporation as approved by the Conference.

Section 2 - Administration

The president (CEO) of CMBMC shall be appointed by the Mission Board and the CMC Executive Board in joint or separate action and shall be ratified by the Conference by action in its business meeting. The initial process of nomination (such as a search committee) or re-nomination shall include the involvement of the CMC Executive Board. The term of office shall be five years. Appointment shall be made and ratified by the business meeting at least five months in advance of beginning of term to provide for continuity.

Section 3 - Local Congregations

The Conference encourages each congregation to be evangelistic in its community and is ready to assist as needed.

ARTICLE VII - NURTURE COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Rosedale Bible College Board

A. Membership and Organization

The membership of the Board of Trustees of Rosedale Bible College shall consist of two categories: (1) Conference elected members and (2) board-appointed members. The Conference elected category shall consist of seven members, elected one each year in the CMC business meeting from a slate presented by the Nominating Committee. Each of the Conference-elected members shall be a member of a CMC congregation and at least five shall be ordained ministers with CMC credentials.

The board-appointed category shall consist of up to three members nominated by the RBC board, approved by the Executive Board, and ratified by the CMC business meeting. Board-appointed members shall be members of a CMC or other congregation, may be ministers or laymen, and shall sign a statement of affirmation and commitment to uphold the theological and doctrinal positions of CMC. The RBC board is responsible to initiate and implement nominations of the board-appointed members and shall clear the name of a potential nominee with the Executive Board before communicating with a potential nominee on the matter.

Members of the board (both categories) shall serve in terms of seven years and may not succeed themselves on the board.

The offices of the board shall be chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer. These offices shall be held by members (of either category) who hold membership in a CMC congregation. The officers shall be elected annually by the board in a regularly scheduled meeting with the CMC executive director, or someone designated by him, presiding.

B. Duties

The Rosedale Bible College Board shall be responsible to the Conference for the operation of the school, shall recommend for approval appointments to the Administrative Council, shall approve faculty selection, shall establish guidelines and policies for the administration, shall approve school standards, and shall serve as contact between the Conference and the educational interests of other Mennonite entities, including inter-Mennonite representation as indicated in this constitution and in policy as approved by the Conference.

The board shall appoint a committee, which includes at least one CMC pastor or associate pastor, which shall plan a program for the annual conference with focus on Christian education and nurture. The planning committee shall consider focus on both congregational and institutional education. The content, length, placement, and number of sessions of Christian Education program and the schedule of submitting it to the CMC office shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Board.

C. Administration

The president of Rosedale Bible College shall be appointed by the Rosedale Bible College Board and the Executive Board in joint or separate action and shall be ratified by the Conference by action in its business meeting. The initial process of nomination (such as a search committee) or re-nomination shall include the involvement of the CMC Executive Board. The term of office shall be four years. Appointments shall be made and ratified by the business meeting at least five months in advance of beginning of term to provide for continuity

Section 2 - Publication and Literature Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Publication and Literature Committee shall consist of five members with terms of five years each, one being elected each year.

B. Duties

The Publication and Literature Committee shall provide leadership in publication and literature concerns and projects, including the official Conference organ and appointment of its general editor with the approval of the CMC Executive Board and business meeting; shall keep in contact with publishers relative to Conference concerns and needs; and shall serve as contact relative to inter-Mennonite publication interests.

Section 3 – Pastors’ Conference Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Pastors’ Conference Committee shall consist of three members, one to be elected each year. Duration of term is three and one-half years, including an extension from August to February after the third year, thus providing for the senior member of the committee to serve until the close of the Pastors’ Conference meeting in February after the third year.

B. Duties

The Pastors’ Conference Committee is responsible for the arrangements of the annual Pastors Conference.

Section 4 - Senior High Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Senior High Committee shall consist of seven members, including five young people and two ministers. The youth members of the committee shall serve in two-year terms and shall be elected, two or three each year, at the young people’s meeting in July/August, from nominations made by the faculty of Rosedale Bible College. The two ministers shall serve in four-year terms and shall be elected, one every two years, on the annual conference slate. The organization of the committee shall include the positions of chairperson and vice-chairperson

and shall be effected under the leadership of the ministerial member of the committee who holds seniority on the committee or someone designated by him.

B. Duties

The Senior High Committee shall be sensitive to youth needs and promote youth activities sanctioned by the Conference in cooperation with congregations in the areas where the activities are held; shall promote youth interests through the conference organ and through other literature; shall arrange for the annual conference youth program, which shall be submitted to the Conference executive director at least six months prior to the annual conference and shall be approved by the Executive Board; and shall be responsible to see that arrangements for social youth activities at the time of annual conference sessions are made and approved by the local ministry.

Section 5 – Café Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Café Committee shall consist of three single members, three couples, and one minister with overlapping three-year terms. The committee will nominate candidates, who, after being approved by the Executive Board, will be elected by attendees at the annual meetings. The organization of the committee shall include the positions of chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary.

B. Duties

The Café Committee shall be sensitive to college and career aged persons; shall promote post-high interests through the conference organ and through other literature; shall promote inter-generational interaction and understanding; and shall arrange for the annual Café program, which shall be submitted to the Conference executive director at least six months prior to the annual conference and shall be approved by the Executive Board.

Section 6 - Men's Fellowship Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Men's Fellowship Committee shall consist of three members with terms of three years, one being elected each year by the laymen assembled in their session at the annual conference of CMC, by voting on nominations presented by the Men's Fellowship Committee.

B. Duties

The Men's Fellowship Committee shall arrange the laymen's meeting which is held as a part of the annual meeting of Conservative Mennonite Conference. The program is subject to Executive Committee approval and shall be submitted to the Conference executive director in advance of the annual conference by a schedule approved by the Executive Committee. The Men's Fellowship Committee shall bring nominations to the annual meeting each year for election of one member to its committee.

ARTICLE VIII. OTHER COMMITTEES AND OFFICES

Section 1 - Historical Committee

A. Membership and Organization

The Historical Committee shall consist of three elected members, one being elected each year, and the historian, who shall serve as secretary of the committee and as the committee's executive officer. One of the three elected members shall serve as chairman of the committee.

B. Duties

The Historical Committee shall promote and encourage interest in historical matters and in the gathering and preserving of records and items of historical interest, shall encourage historical research and writing and shall be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of Conference archives.

Section 2 - Historian

The historian gives leadership in historical matters of the Conference. He serves as secretary to the Historical Committee and as its executive officer. The historian shall be appointed by the Executive Board and the elected members of the Historical Committee in a meeting absented by the historian. The appointment may be by joint or separate action of the Executive Board and the Historical Committee and shall be subject to the approval of the Conference business meeting. Term of office shall be five years. The historian may succeed himself in office.

Section 3 - Women's Fellowship Committee

A. Organization

The Women's Fellowship of Conservative Mennonite Conference shall be organized and shall function by its own constitution which is subject to Conference approval at the discretion of the Executive Board.

B. Duties

The Women's Fellowship Committee shall plan and promote women's activities for edification and service, including an annual meeting in conjunction with the annual meeting of Conference. The annual program of the Women's Fellowship shall be approved by the Executive Board. It shall be presented to the Conference executive director at least four months prior to the August conference.

Section 4 - Inter-Mennonite Representation

Representation to other Mennonite groups, boards, and agencies may be appointed or elected according to a list and policy approved by the Conference.

Section 5 - Other Committees and Appointees

Any committees or appointees not provided for otherwise may be appointed directly by the Conference or by Conference officers as the Conference directs.

ARTICLE IX. POLICY

Section 1 - Congregational Responsibilities

- A. Congregations and pastors who are members of Conservative Mennonite Conference are encouraged to diligently support the programs of the Conference and to participate in its functions and are responsible to cooperate with its leadership in supplying information related to congregational status and statistics.
- B. Congregations shall have the freedom to carry out their own discipline as long as they are scriptural and peace and unity are maintained.
- C. Congregations desiring a continued membership in the Conference and groups wishing to affiliate with the Conference are expected to maintain a scriptural discipline in line with accepted Conference position and interpretation of Scripture.
- D. Persistent violation by a member or members of any congregation shall be dealt with by the local ministry and congregation
- E. When, in the judgment of the Executive Board, any congregation fails to maintain a scriptural discipline in line with the accepted Conference position and interpretation of the Scriptures, it shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board to initiate action in consultation with the local ministry and then, at the discretion of the committee, to bring to the Conference such cases for Conference consideration.

Section 2 - Conciliation in Congregations

- A. When difficulties which require conciliation arise in a congregation, an earnest effort shall be made to effect reconciliation within the congregation itself. If this fails, a mediation committee, mutually agreed upon by all concerned, shall be called in to investigate and give counsel.
- B. A congregation may appeal to the Executive Board for conciliatory ministry by contacting the moderator or the executive director for help in resolving internal difficulties. When such requests are communicated by the leadership of the congregation, the Executive Board shall work with the leadership in forming and appointing a mediating committee which may consist of members of the Executive Board or others or both.
- C. The Executive Board is free to entertain inquiries and petitions from dissident groups from within a congregation, but shall consider the spiritual life and conduct of the petitioners and shall communicate with the pastoral leadership of the congregation before taking further steps of action.
- D. The mediating committee shall be authorized to exercise discipline within and in behalf of the congregation within the provisions of the constitution of the congregation (written or unwritten), with sensitivity to the concerns of the membership and leadership, and in consultation with congregational leadership.
- E. In situations where the leadership and the recommendations of the Executive Board or the mediating committee are rejected by the local church or group, the matter may be brought to the business meeting of the Conference where all concerned may speak.
- F. If the Executive Board does not respond to an appeal from pastoral leadership for help, those making the appeal may bring it directly to the business meeting of the Conference for consideration.

Section 3 - Membership and Organization of Committees and Boards

A. Elections and Appointments

Elections to the boards, committees, and offices specified in this Constitution are made by vote in the business meeting in August of each year by use of a slate of nominations prepared and presented by the Nominating Committee and approved in the business meeting, unless otherwise specified in this constitution or unless an untimely vacancy requires a different procedure in the judgment of the Executive Board. A member of a committee or board shall not succeed himself in office upon completion of a full term unless other provision is made in this Constitution or by special action in the business meeting.

B. Terms of Committee Members

Unless otherwise provided by this constitution or by Conference policy, terms of committee members shall extend from the close of the annual conference in August in the year of election to the close of the annual conference in the year of termination. However, newly elected committee members may be involved with the committee during the days of the annual conference, especially for purposes of reorganization.

C. Annual Reorganization

Unless otherwise provided by this Constitution or by Conference policy, each of the committees shall reorganize annually by August 31. If available, the outgoing member of the respective committee shall preside over the reorganization process and shall report the results to the executive director or his office by Sept. 1. The executive director shall be responsible to receive the information on the organization of each of the committees and shall take initiative to contact appropriate persons, if necessary, for that purpose. In the event of any committee failing to reorganize and to inform the executive director by September 1, he shall, in consultation with the moderator, designate and record the organization of such committee.

D. Removal from Committee Membership or Office

Any committee or board member or any officer who is considered disqualified by the electing or appointing body may be removed from office or committee or board membership prior to completion of term by action of the electing or appointing body.

E. Reporting

Reports shall be submitted by the boards and committees to the business meeting annually or semi-annually as determined by the Executive Board. Such reports shall include a financial report where applicable and information on operations and programs.

F. Job Descriptions

Each committee, board, officer, and representative to other church bodies shall perform the duties listed in this Constitution and shall follow the job description and procedures of meeting and quorum provided in Conference polity.

G. Congregational Membership of Committee Members

Each member of a CMC board (except for board-appointed members of RBC or RMM) or committee or CMC representative shall be a member in good standing in a CMC congregation as a qualification for election to and continuation on any CMC board or committee or as a CMC representative listed in the official directory. The Executive Board may make exceptions to the above policy at their discretion.

ARTICLE X. DECISIONS

Section 1 - Quorum

A majority of the ministerial members of the Conference in a business meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business, except that in the event of low attendance, business may be officially transacted if deemed feasible by the Executive Board.

Section 2 - Decisions

A decision shall require a two-thirds majority of all votes cast, except that a decision may be declared invalid if, in the judgment of the moderator with the Executive Board, too few votes are cast. The provision of this section does not apply to elections by use of nominations presented by the Nominating Committee and approved in the business meeting.

ARTICLE XI. MEETINGS

Section 1 - Annual Conference

A conference with public sessions, a Conference business meeting, and other possible meetings shall be held on the weekend of the first Sunday of August with the option of the weekend of the last Sunday of July or the weekend of the second Sunday of August if necessary because of local conditions. The Executive Board, through the services of the executive director, shall determine the time and place of the annual conference in consultation with the hosting congregation(s) and shall

attempt to arrange and announce the time and place at least two years in advance.

Section 2 - Business Meetings

Business meetings shall be held each year during the annual conference in July/August and during the Pastors Conference Meeting in February. Ordained ministers and deacons officially recognized by the Conservative Mennonite Conference shall be considered members and shall have one vote each. Except when restricted meetings are announced, non-members are welcome to attend and may have floor privileges, but may not vote.

Section 3 - Special Meetings

Special business meetings may be called by the Executive Board on notification to all Conference members at least thirty days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of those present, provided the amendment proposal was announced at a previous business meeting, or the proposed amendment was presented to each member of Conference at least thirty days, but not more than six and one-half months, prior to the time of action, except that amendments may be made without prior notice if there is no dissenting vote.

