

6. Revision to Unfunded Mandates

Annual Conference Polity Regarding Unfunded Annual Conference Mandates

2008 Revision

- Whereas:* Annual Conference is the highest human authority in Church of the Brethren polity, and
- Whereas:* there are various program and administrative arms of the Church of the Brethren, and
- Whereas:* program decisions made by Annual Conference should be systematically worked into the program and budget processes of the various agencies reportable to Annual Conference, and
- Whereas:* careful stewardship of God-given resources is an historic value of the Church of the Brethren,

Therefore, Standing Committee asks Annual Conference to adopt the following:

1. As Standing Committee each year examines all new and unfinished business to be presented to Annual Conference, it shall assess each item for implications of *new* programming or other mandates entailing costs by an agency or agencies that are not included in current budgets. If Standing Committee determines there are such implications mandated by the item, it shall have the option to recommend to Annual Conference that a decision on the business item be delayed for one year in order for a study to be made of the feasibility and costs that may be required of the agency or agencies and any other collateral impacts, such as closure or substitution of other programming that may need to occur in order to implement the program.

2. That the task of preparing this report be completed by the Program Feasibility Committee consisting of two persons who are members of Standing Committee at the time of their appointments and one person representing each of the agencies who are staff or members of their respective agency boards at the time of their appointment.

The committee shall be appointed in the following way:

- a. Standing Committee representatives will be selected by Standing Committee. Expiration of a term of service on Standing Committee will not require termination of service on the Program Feasibility Committee.
- b. Agency representatives will be appointed by their respective agencies using procedures of their own choosing.

- c. Tenure shall be for one term of four years. The committee members shall have staggered terms in order to keep continuity on the committee.

3. The Program Feasibility Committee will be chaired by the Standing Committee representative with the greater length of service on the Program Feasibility Committee.

4. This committee will conduct a thorough study including consultation with the affected agency or agencies and contact with the group that brought the query or item for further clarification and dialogue, and will bring this report directly back to Annual Conference which authorized the study.

5. When an unfunded mandate involving agency programming *arises from the floor of Annual Conference without having been processed through normal channels*, the action of Annual Conference will not be implemented until the Program Feasibility Committee has conducted a feasibility study and cost analysis of the proposed program. The Program Feasibility Committee will report the results of its study to the next Annual Conference through the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee will consider the item as *new business* and make a recommendation for action to Annual Conference including the study of the Program Feasibility Study.

6. Exception: When an immediate response is imperative, the Program Feasibility Committee, upon completion of the feasibility study and cost estimates, will report to the Annual Conference officers and the officers of the affected agency or agencies. Upon approval by these groups, the program will be implemented without additional action by Annual Conference. A report of actions taken under these circumstances will be made to the next Annual Conference by the Conference officers. In the event the officers and affected agencies cannot agree on the implementation of the program, the dispensation of the item will follow the appropriate process in # 4 or # 5 above.

7. The expenses of the Program Feasibility Committee will be reimbursed out of the Annual Conference budget.

Action of the 2007 Standing Committee: Standing Committee approves the above revision to the Unfunded Mandates process and recommends approval by the 2008 Annual Conference.

Action of the 2008 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted, by a two-thirds vote, the Revision to the Polity Regarding Unfunded Annual Conference Mandates.