

## **700 NATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMISSIONS AND AFFILIATES**

### **CHAPTER I – NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

#### **701 CABINET**

##### **701.1 Purpose**

The Cabinet is an organizational unit within the denominational framework that is designed to provide counsel and encouragement to the employed Evangelical Congregational leaders and to assure that our church's ministries and institutions are working together in unity to realize our denominational vision.

The Cabinet is not an official policy-making body. It does not vote on denominational initiatives, make formal recommendations to denominational bodies or regularly report to denominational bodies. It exists primarily to render encouragement to the persons the denomination has employed to give day-to-day leadership to Evangelical Congregational ministries and institutions.

##### **701.2 Cabinet Leadership and Membership**

The Cabinet shall be organized and led by the Bishop. Membership in the Cabinet will be limited to the full time employed leaders of Evangelical Congregational ministries and institutions, namely, the Bishop, Conference Ministers, Director of Global Ministries, ECCRV CEO, ETS President, and Twin Pines Executive Director.

##### **701.3 Cabinet Meetings**

The Cabinet will determine the frequency and location of the meetings.

##### **701.4 Cabinet Agenda**

A typical Cabinet meeting will include the following: Prayer requests, praises and prayer for one another including families and ministries, updates on each ministry/institution designed to equip Cabinet members to communicate what God is doing in the Evangelical Congregational Church as a whole, leadership development programs, for the employed leaders of the church, program development for the National Conference sessions. The program development items require reports to the National Ministry Team. These reports shall be submitted by the Bishop.

##### **701.5 Cabinet Finances**

Cabinet members will pay Cabinet expenses from their respective expense accounts.

#### **702 COMMISSIONS**

##### **702.1 Commissions in General**

A commission shall be an organizational unit charged with the implementation and oversight of one aspect of the purpose, mission, values, and vision of the church. There shall be five commissions:

- a. Church Health
- b. Church Planting
- c. Evangelism and Discipleship
- d. Global Ministries
- e. Leadership.

All commissions are under the authority of the National Ministry Team.

##### **702.2 Commission Leadership and Membership**

The Bishop shall chair the Church Planting Commission, Evangelism and Discipleship Commission, and the Leadership Commission. A Conference Minister, appointed by the Bishop, shall chair the Church Health Commission. The Director of Global Ministries shall chair the Global Ministries Commission. The Bishop and the chairpersons will appoint members, not to exceed twelve (12) including the commission chairpersons, to the commissions. The membership shall reflect the demographics of the denomination (e.g. age, gender, culture, geography). Demonstrated commitment to a commission's purpose shall be the most important qualification for commission membership. They shall also appoint the vice chairpersons and secretaries, and may appoint a member to convene and lead meetings, from among the members of the commission. Advisory members may be added as needed.

##### **702.3 Commission Meetings**

Commissions shall determine the frequency and location of their meetings and shall share this information with the Bishop. Commissions shall meet at least once a year. The *Standing Business Rules* of the National Conference will apply to the commission meetings.

##### **702.4 Commission Agenda**

The agenda of a commission shall be shaped by the tasks that are assigned to it by the National Conference and/or the National Ministry Team. There shall be five general tasks that are assigned to every commission:

- a. To carry out the denomination's purpose, mission, values, and vision, as they relate to the commission's area of ministry;

- b. To appoint committees, networks, task forces, and/or teams that are needed to accomplish the work of the commission, and to maintain contact with those committees, networks, task forces, and/or teams, and serve as a resource for them;
- c. To establish a budget and policies related to the commission's area of ministry;
- d. To continually evaluate denominational progress in the commission's area of ministry;
- e. To be an available resource for districts and local churches which are pursuing work in the commission's area of ministry.

### **702.5 Commission Finances**

Each commission shall prepare a budget, which, with the exception of the Global Ministries Commission and the Church Planting Commission, will be submitted to the Finance Committee (see *Discipline*, par. 404) for inclusion in the denomination's general budget. The Global Ministries and Church Planting budgets will be submitted to the National Ministry Team for approval at its fall meeting.

### **703 Church Health Commission**

**703.1** The Church Health Commission serves the local church that is in decline and in need of renewal and redevelopment.

**703.2** The commission shall give direction and oversight to a variety of programs:

- a. Vision 20/20 Ministry Teams are designed to assist a local church in conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis identifying core values and developing purpose, mission and vision statements;
- b. *Natural Church Development Surveys/Consultations* which serve as "health screenings" for local churches;
- c. Conflict Mediation, which is used when congregational conflict cannot be resolved by the congregation's leadership;
- d. Urban Network is designed to network and resource urban Evangelical Congregational churches that are committed to making disciples in the urban neighborhoods where God has planted them;
- e. Yoked Ministry is defined as two or three congregations yoked together in a charge relationship and sharing one pastor.

**703.3** The commission shall also develop a plan for congregational mentoring whereby healthy congregations provide encouragement, counsel, resources and personnel to mentor congregations which desire to become healthy

### **704 Church Planting Commission**

**704.1** The Church Planting Commission serves the local church by implementing a philosophy and strategy of multiplication church planting. Multiplication church planting is defined as local churches planting local churches that plant local churches. Church plants multiply when local churches lead the way.

The denomination will continue to initiate plants during a time of transition, until such time that districts and local churches assume responsibility for planting. (See items 704.2.f, 704.2.g)

**704.2** The commission shall provide promotional and teaching resources and events that will help every Evangelical Congregational Church identify its role in Evangelical Congregational Church Planting:

- a. Prayer Mobilization: The church must be mobilized to pray specifically and fervently for the needs of church plants and planters. The commission shall provide resources that facilitate prayer for church planting.
- b. Planter Assessment and Training: The commission will design and conduct centers to provide a constant supply of potential planters. The commission will identify excellent training resources for church planters.
- c. Parent Church Development: The commission shall work with potential parent churches to equip them to plant a church. It will also work with existing parent churches in supporting their work.
- d. Planter Coaching and Care: The commission will provide for the physical, emotional and spiritual well being of Evangelical Congregational church planters and their families. It will also train and assign coaches who will be the "first line" of encouragement and counsel for church planters.
- e. Financing and Promotion: The commission will launch a development strategy designed to raise awareness of and financial support for Evangelical Congregational church planting.
- f. Strategic Planning: The commission shall maintain and periodically update a master plan for Evangelical Congregational church planting that targets least reached communities where an Evangelical Congregational church could be planted.
- g. Policy Development: The commission shall establish the policies governing the work of Evangelical Congregational church planting.

## **705 Evangelism and Discipleship Commission**

**705.1** The Evangelism and Discipleship Commission aids the local church by providing direction, training and resources that will enable the local church to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The primary emphases of the commission will be:

**705.1.1. Prayer:** The Prayer Ministry Committee of the Mobilization Team shall be assigned to this commission and shall develop the corporate prayer life of the Evangelical Congregational Church by:

- a. Emphasizing worldwide, denominational and local church prayer movements
- b. Coordinating prayer initiatives and events
- c. Providing prayer training and resources.

The denomination's Prayer Coordinator shall chair this committee and shall represent the Evangelical Congregational Church on the National Denominational Prayer Leader's Network.

**705.1.2 Biblical Teaching:** A committee shall be formed to emphasize and apply the Evangelical Congregational Church's commitment to Biblical teaching. This committee shall provide resources that will help pastors and laity to teach Evangelical Congregational doctrine and its application to culture as expressed in our *Discipline's* spiritual, moral and social standards. The committee will review and, as needed, revise catechetical resources, doctrinal tracts and position papers. The committee will also review proposed amendments to "Creed" section of our *Discipline* to ensure compatibility with Evangelical Congregational doctrine before these amendments are presented to the National Conference.

**705.1.3 Evangelism:** A committee will be formed to give direction and oversight to the evangelistic initiatives of the Evangelical Congregational Church. The committee shall resource and train pastors and lay leaders for effective evangelism in their churches and communities. It will also network our denomination with other denominations and para-church ministries whose purpose is the evangelization of the nation and world, e.g. Mission America, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and other like ministries.

The focus of this committee will be evangelism in the context of established local churches in the United States. Evangelism through church planting and in world missions will be emphasized by other commissions.

**705.1.4 Social Action:** This committee will resource and train pastors and lay leaders to recognize and respond to "cultural crises" with Christ-like concern and action. It will also network our denomination with para-church ministries that are effectively responding to these "cultural crises," e.g., Focus on the Family, local crisis pregnancy centers, the NAE Social Action Commission, and other like ministries.

**705.1.5 Christian Education:** This committee will resource and train pastors and lay leaders to teach and equip children, youth and adults to live as fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. Several established ministries and networks shall be assigned to this committee including: the Evangelical Congregational Youth Network, Women's Ministry Network, resources and other educational ministries.

## **706 Global Ministries Commission**

**706.1** This commission serves the local church by providing a means of fulfilling the Great Commission to the ends of the earth.

**706.2** The commission will accomplish its purpose by focusing on the following areas of ministry:

- a. **Missionary Recruitment, Assessment, and Training:** Assist in identifying those whom God is calling to this specialized form of ministry, examining their giftedness for this ministry, guiding them through adequate preparation, and enabling their appointment to areas of needed ministry.
- b. **Missionary Care** includes: spiritual, emotional and financial support and assisting approved missionary candidates and missionaries to raise necessary funding to serve on their approved fields.
- c. Providing a prayer support network to help missionaries maintain effectiveness in missionary service.
- d. Maintaining close contact through personal and office communications.

**706.3 Mission Conferences:** Partnering with and assisting in the development of national (self-governing, self-directing, self-supporting, and self-propagating) churches, with the goal of working together to reach those areas of the world which are the least evangelized and where there is not a viable and culturally appropriate witness of the gospel.

**706.4 Global Ministries Resources:**

- a. Providing curriculum and educational material to inform churches about Evangelical Congregational missionaries, their work and their needs;

- b. Preparing monthly prayer letters, quarterly newsletters, annual program materials in conjunction with the annual missions projects;
- c. Conducting rallies, workshops, training sessions, and conventions throughout the year.

**706.5 Missions Networking:** Cooperating with other denominations, para-church ministries and inter-denominational mission boards, so as to develop channels, through the provision of personnel and resources, toward the effective communication of the gospel, without necessarily exporting the name of the Evangelical Congregational Church, nor its form of government. Through such avenues of cooperation we may also provide necessary services including: aviation, broadcasting, medicine, relief, and education, etc. to enhance the effectiveness of the mission effort.

**706.6 Committees:** Field and Function Committees shall be formed to provide input, support, and accountability for the global ministries of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

### **707 Leadership Commission**

**707.1** The Leadership Commission serves the local church by recruiting, assessing, and training pastoral leaders within the Evangelical Congregational Church.

**707.2** The commission shall also provide leadership resources and training for local church lay leaders.

**707.3** The Leadership Commission may serve as a resource to the Conference Relations Committee and its respective teams and the Stationing Committee. These are Standing Committees of the National Conference and report directly to the Conference. This commission may also serve as a resource to the Nominating Committee but it, too, is a Standing Committee of the National Conference.

**707.4** The Leadership Commission will have direct oversight and responsibility for the following programs:

- a. Leadership Training: The commission will oversee the Local Preacher's Course of Study, the Evangelical Leadership Academy, pastor's reading programs and other leadership training programs;
- b. Transitional Ministry: The commission shall implement and oversee the transitional ministry program of the church by providing for the recruitment and training of transitional pastors. (See Conference Special Rules, 905)

**707.5** The commission will review and, as needed, revise and expand this brochure series "So You're A..." which explains various Evangelical Congregational leadership roles and "Steps to Ministry" which explains the steps to licensed and ordained ministry.

**707.6 Chaplaincy:** The commission will appoint a Chaplaincy Committee to develop the chaplaincy ministry of the church (military and other types of chaplaincy). The Bishop will continue to serve as the denominational endorser for military chaplaincy.

**707.7 Seminary-Church Partnership:** The Leadership Commission will develop the partnership of the Evangelical Congregational Church with its seminary, Evangelical Theological Seminary, through regular dialogues focusing on curriculum development, financial support and trustee recruitment. This commission will provide Evangelical Congregational personnel to assist in faculty/administrative search committees and educational task forces.

**707.8 Lay Education:** The Leadership Commission will also seek to meet the longstanding need for lay education and training.

## **710 CHAPTER II - BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

### **710.1 Purpose**

The Evangelical Theological Seminary enjoys a rich heritage and a historic relationship of sponsorship and partnership with the Evangelical Congregational Church in training candidates for the ministry and the mission field and providing instruction in the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith.

### **710.2 Leadership**

The mission and work of the Evangelical Theological Seminary shall be overseen by a Board of Trustees which is empowered to establish by-laws for the governance of the seminary.

### **710.3 Relationship**

The ongoing relationship between the Evangelical Congregational church and the Evangelical Theological Seminary shall be described by a covenant approved by both the National Conference and the Seminary Board of Trustees.

## **720 CHAPTER III – NEW DAWN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.**

### **720.1 Purpose**

New Dawn Christian Community Services, Inc. is committed to a holistic program of care for the aged and infirm. The objective of this organization is to provide for the spiritual, social, emotional, mental, and physical well being of all its residents. It is the intent of New Dawn Christian Community Services, Inc. to fulfill the commission of the Bible by meeting the needs of the aging population. Founded by the Evangelical Congregational Church, New Dawn Christian Community Services, Inc. shall undertake such activities as are permitted to be undertaken by a nonprofit corporation under Pennsylvania law. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Corporation shall relieve the burden of the aged and infirm regardless of race, color, creed, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, handicap or disability and plan, construct, operate, maintain and improve housing and medical care for the elderly or handicapped individuals. Furthermore New Dawn Christian Community Services, Inc. is committed to the promotion of awareness programs for the needs of senior citizens. Scripture references include: Leviticus 19:32; Psalm 71:9; Proverbs 23:22; Ecclesiastes 12.

And further, to apply for and obtain in contract with such State and Federal agencies for such loan or loans or financial aid as may be desirable or necessary for the providing of housing and care for the elderly and handicapped.

Further, to engage in any kind of activities, enter into and perform any contracts, as provided under the non-profit corporation law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### **720.2 Management**

The property and business of the corporation shall be managed by a Board of Trustees, the members of which constitute the corporation. The Board of Trustees shall consist of people of legal age who are evangelical Christians and have Christian integrity and executive and administrative ability. The Board of Trustees shall establish by-laws for the governance of the corporation which includes the membership of said Board of Trustees.

### **720.3 Relationship**

The ongoing relationship between the Evangelical Congregational Church and New Dawn Christian Community Services, Inc. shall be described by a covenant approved by both the National Conference and the New Dawn Board of Trustees.

## **730 CHAPTER IV – BENEFITS CORPORATION**

### **730.1 Purpose**

The provision for retirement, health, accident, and disability benefits for ministers and career missionaries of the Evangelical Congregational Church and their families shall be made by the Benefits Corporation of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

### **730.2 Membership of Corporation**

The membership of the Benefits Corporation is composed of the ministerial and lay delegates to the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church. The regular meeting of the membership Corporation shall be held at the annual session of the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

### **730.3 Membership of Board of Trustees**

The business affairs of the Corporation shall be entrusted to a Board of Trustees composed of fifteen (15) members, six (6) of whom shall be ministers and nine (9) to be lay people, provided that all are members of the Evangelical Congregational Church. Three trustees are to be elected annually by the National Conference for terms of five (5) years. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees, including vacancies resulting from an increase in the number of authorized Trustees, shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining trustees, and the trustee so chosen shall hold office until an election is held at the next National Conference.

### **730.4 Adoption of Regulations**

Regulations governing the amount of contribution to be made by the participating members and congregations of the Evangelical Congregational Church to the funds of the Corporation, and regulations governing payment to claimants of the funds, shall be adopted by the Board of Trustees and be ratified by a majority vote of the National Conference.

## **740 CHAPTER V - BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **740.1 Membership**

The business, maintenance of property, and other affairs of the Historical Society of the Evangelical Congregational Church shall be administered by a Board of Trustees elected in the following ways: seven (7) members of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by the National Conference, at least three (3) of whom shall be lay people, for a period of five (5) years. The following shall be additional members of the Board of Trustees: the incumbent Bishop, the Bishops Emeriti, the Archivist of the central archives, and the Historian of the National Conference. Each of these trustees shall be a member of the Evangelical Congregational Church and shall hold office until his successor is elected. Any vacancy occurring among the trustees elected by the National Conference shall be filled by the remaining members of the Board for the unexpired term.

### **740.2 Purpose**

The purpose of the Society shall be to gather, preserve and organize historical data, records, books, literature, and other property related to the origin and development of the Evangelical Congregational Church; to own real estate; to receive and administer gifts of money or other property; and to stimulate and encourage historical research and appreciation.