

**REGIONAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES OF  
THE MISSIONARY CHURCH EAST CENTRAL REGION, INC.**

[Revised 03/2021]

**I. REGIONAL BOARD**

**A. Resolution Regarding Signing Official Documents**

- Whereas there are a number of legal documents that must be signed for the Missionary Church East Central Region, Inc., and,
- Whereas we, as a Regional Board, meet only every other month, and
- Whereas we want to enable our officers to do business in a timely fashion,
- Be it resolved, on this, the 13th day of August, 2002, that both our Regional Director and our Regional Board Secretary, are authorized to sign all official documents for the corporation.

(DEB, 8/13/2002)

**B. National Conference Presentation**

The East Central Region will send to National Conference the Regional Director, the Regional Ministries Coordinator, and their spouses. Expenses will be paid by the region.

**II. REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

**A. Time of Meeting -** Regional Conference shall meet in April to allow resolutions from the Region to meet the National Conference deadline that requires 30 days prior notice. (1977 DC p. 39)

**B. Reporting Period -** All reports made at Regional Conference shall cover the calendar year 01/01-12/31 and shall include goals and future projections. (DEB, 10/30/1980)

**III. REGIONAL CHURCHES**

**A. Policy Regarding Notification of Financial Difficulty**

1. In the event that a church enters a period of financial difficulty {defined as a fifteen (15) percent loss of income within ninety (90) consecutive days}, it will be the responsibility of the pastor and/or the church board to notify the Regional office of that difficulty within the following month. (RB, 03/23/2021)
2. If a church is 90 days behind in its regional apportionments or is 60 days behind in any other financial obligations, it is mandatory that the Regional Director be notified. (DEB, 11/21/2003)

**B. Budget & Finance - Non-payment of “Fair Share” (Apportionments)**

1. Churches that do not stay current with their Fair Share (apportionments) will receive a request from the Regional Office for a meeting with the pastor, the local church leadership team, and regional representatives to discuss the reasons for non-payment. (REB, 05/26/2015)
2. Churches may submit a “hardship application” for temporary Fair Share (apportionment) adjustment consideration by the Regional Board; that application is received by request from the Regional Office. (REB, 05/26/2015)
3. Churches that do not qualify for “hardship” consideration will be asked to submit a plan for payment of their Fair Share (apportionments) within three months of request for such a plan. (REB, 05/26/2015)
4. Churches that continue non-payment may face sanctions, including removal of voting status at Regional Conference and possible loss of charter. (REB, 05/26/2015)
5. Past Due Fair Share (Apportionment): Any church that faithfully pays its Fair Share (apportionment) for six (6) consecutive months (full amount) will have an equivalent dollar amount forgiven for any past due amounts. (DEB, 05/16/1986)

**C. Policy Regarding A Pastor’s Resignation with the Church Owing Wages**

In the event that a pastor terminates ministry at a church being owed back compensation, it will be the obligation of the church to pay the compensation owed him within 30 days as it would any other financial liability. If that is not possible, the Regional Director shall be notified. (DEB, 11/21/2003)

D. Request for Subsidy (to the Regional Board)

Churches may request subsidy from the Regional Board should a church find itself under severe financial hardship which is hampering its ministry. To be considered for subsidy, a church must submit a request to the Regional Board.

Upon authorization by the Regional Board:

1. Funds will be allocated on a quarterly basis as needed at a rate appropriate to the local church situation as determined by the Regional Board.
2. If the local church has any unrestricted funds in the bank, subsidy will be granted only when resources get below a certain amount to be determined by the local church situation as determined by the Regional Board.
3. Willingness to accept subsidy is an invitation to East Central Region involvement in the leadership of the subsidized church.

E. Regional Involvement in a Local Church

While it is the intent for regional leadership to support local church governance, working side by side to create a strong reciprocating friendship, at times it becomes necessary for the region to take a more proactive stance in bringing about resolution and reconciliation to an unusual situation. The following are warning triggers that may justify regional involvement, if deemed so by the Regional Board

- Church fails to file a monthly statistical report for four straight months.
- Church fails to file a yearly report with the denomination by the pre-determined deadline.
- Church declines in attendance by 10% (percent) over the course of a year.
- Church fails to meet its apportionment obligations to the region and/or fails to pay their pastor in a timely fashion.
- Pastor/Church Leadership withdraw from regional involvement and do not encourage their congregation to become involved as well.
- The regional office receives numerous contacts regarding issues in the church

(Article III, E. - DEB, 01/15/2011)

F. Same Sex Building Restriction

Whereas the Missionary Church USA's Constitution recognizes marriage as only between one man (born male) and one woman (born female), and whereas pastors in our denomination are forbidden from encouraging, blessing, or officiating same sex marriages or unions, be it resolved that the East Central Region not permit buildings or property belonging to any local Missionary Church or the Region to be used as a venue for such ceremonies. (DEB, 05/28/2013)

IV. REGIONAL PASTORS

A. Pastoral Call

1. Manner of Pastoral Call

- a. By March 1st of each year the local church board or appropriate committee shall conduct a pastoral evaluation provided by the region. This evaluation shall include overall ministry, relationship with congregation, and compensation.
- b. By March 15th of each year, each pastor shall express in writing to the Regional Director his intentions regarding ministry for the next Conference term. If, after consultation with the Regional Director, the pastor feels that a change is advisable, he shall inform the vice chairman (or chairman if the pastor is not) of his church board. The period of time between when a resignation is announced and the pastor's last Sunday at the church shall not exceed 90 days, unless permission is granted by the Regional Director. (DEB, 01/15/2011)
- c. If requested by the pastor or the church board, a vote of the congregation pertaining to the present ministry status of the pastor shall be taken between January 1 and March 15. The pastor or vice chairman of the church board shall announce the time of this vote for two (2) Sundays prior to the event.

2. Method of the Pastor's Call

- a. The Regional Director shall provide a list of approved, available pastors to each church desiring a change.

- b. The church board, exclusive of the pastor, after due consideration of the approved list, may interview as many candidates as they wish and then recommend only one candidate for pastor to the congregation for their approval. All arrangements for this pastoral candidating experience shall be handled by the church board.
  - c. No church board shall contact a pastoral candidate without the previous knowledge of the Regional Director. See Missionary Church Constitution Article XII E-1.
  - d. The Regional Board, working in cooperation with the church board, shall appoint the pastor of those churches where either the Region or the Denomination subsidizes the church or the pastor.
  - e. Each church receiving a pastor shall be responsible to pay the moving expenses of the pastor it has called. Churches needing financial aid in moving their pastor must secure the advice and approval of the Regional Board for such assistance.
3. Tenure of the Pastor's Call
- a. The tenure of the pastor's call shall be considered indefinite with the understanding that the pastor, church board, or Regional Director may call for a vote of continuance if deemed necessary. A 75% vote of the active church membership in attendance, sixteen (16) years of age and older shall be required to call a pastor. No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted. The local Church Secretary shall immediately notify the pastor and the Regional Director of the results of the vote.
  - b. If a vote of continuance is requested according to the above policy and a pastor receives less than 75% of the votes cast, the advisability of the pastor remaining on the field shall be determined by the Regional Director, the pastor and the church board in consultation. When a vote of continuance is requested, it shall occur between January 1 and March 15 unless the Regional Director permits a different date.
  - c. Pastoral moves shall normally be made during the summer months of June, July & August.
4. Guidelines for Retiring/Resigning Pastor
- a. Retired Ministers are encouraged to hold membership in a Missionary Church in the locality in which they reside. When credentialed ministers in the Missionary Church retire, having completed at least 25 years of approved ministry, they shall retain their credentials. In circumstances where an individual entered ministry later in life and was unable to complete 25 years of active ministry and was serving continuously until retirement, special consideration may be given by the Regional Board. Ministers who are both retired and inactive may attend Regional Conference and submit an annual report but are not required to do so.
  - b. The Regional Director or his representative will meet with all outgoing pastors and church leadership to discuss interactions that pastor will have with his former church, taking into account the following guidelines.
    - 1) The former pastor will not attend or be involved in the local church of which he was a part for a minimum of six months after the hiring of the new pastor, unless special permission is given by the Regional Director and the local pastor.
    - 2) In the case of a wedding planned before leaving, a former pastor may officiate during that six month period of time, with proper notification being given to the current pastor and regional office.
    - 3) In the case of a funeral, a former pastor may participate during that six month period of time, provided permission is granted by the local pastor and the Regional Director.
    - 4) The former pastor is to have no communication with members of his former congregation regarding church-related issues during that six month period.
    - 5) After that six month period, a pastor may return to his former church provided he is supportive of the current pastor and leadership of the church. He is to voluntarily submit to the leadership of the local church.
    - 6) In the case of a church having interest in a former pastor continuing on staff as Pastor Emeritus, no arrangement may be entered into without the approval of the Regional Director, the local church board and the current pastor.
    - 7) A former pastor may not serve on any governing board or committee of his former church unless special permission is given by the current pastor and the Regional Director.

(DEB, 03/26/2013)

## B. Pastor/Church Relations

### 1. Compensation

#### a. Salary

- 1) Each church board shall consider and evaluate the pastor's salary annually. Elements of such an evaluation should include the average income of the congregation, median income levels in the community, years of service, merit, education, etc.
- 2) In order to assist a church in this process, a Pastor's Salary Scale is available upon request to the regional office. It is to be understood that these compensation figures will be adjusted annually to reflect current income levels and also include benefits, i.e. health insurance, additional retirement plan, housing allowance, etc.
- 3) Every full time pastor shall be provided with Long Term Disability and Pension (if licensed) as part of their salary package. (DEB, 01/15/2011)
- 4) Realizing that this may be a hardship for some churches, pastors of a church unable to meet the goal for salaries, benefits and reimbursements shall be allowed to seek supplemental income. A guide to help in this regard is the following, which meets the insurance and district salary recommendations:
  - a full-time pastor is one who works 30 or more hours per week.
  - a part-time pastor is one who works less than 30 hours per week.
  - a retired pastor is 62 years of age or older and is officially withdrawn from active full-time ministry. (DEB, 03/04/1982)

#### b. Vacation

- 1) Pastors who have served 0-3 years in full-time pastoral work shall be entitled to two (2) weeks vacation with pay, including two (2) Sundays. (DEB, 01/15/2011)
- 2) Senior Pastors having served between 4-12 years in ministry, an additional week of vacation shall be granted, including a third Sunday. Whenever possible, the pastor is encouraged not to take his third week consecutively with the other two (2) weeks. Additional vacation time may be granted at the discretion of the local church board. Staff Pastors having served between 4-15 years of ministry shall receive three (3) weeks of vacation, including a third Sunday. (DEB, 01/15/2011)
- 3) Senior Pastors serving between 13-30 years in ministry shall receive four weeks of vacation four (4) Sundays. Staff Pastors serving over fifteen years will receive four (4) weeks of vacation, including four (4) Sundays. All pastors serving over 30 years in ministry shall receive five (5) weeks of vacation. (DEB, 01/15/2011)
- 4) The pastor's vacation time is to be exclusive of denominational and regional conferences, or regional camp programs. Pastors shall be responsible for arranging the time of their vacation and selection of pulpit replacement for the Sundays, subject to the approval of the church board. The honorariums for the guest speakers during the pastor's vacation period shall be cared for by the church treasury.

#### c. Severance/Transition Policy

There is no requirement in the Fair Labor Standards Act [FLSA] for severance pay. Severance pay is often granted to employees upon termination of employment. It is usually based on length of employment for which an employee is eligible upon termination. Severance pay is a matter of agreement between an employer and an employee. Churches should avoid any communication, written or verbal, that would lead employees to reasonably expect severance pay upon termination.

Pastors who could be considered for a severance/transition package:

- Pastors who are terminated by their church or "pressured" to resign
- Pastors of churches that close their doors for ministry
- Pastors who resign without another ministry position in place
- Pastors who resign to take another ministry position
- Pastors who retire

Severance should not be offered to a pastor who loses his credentials due to discipline or moral failure.

#### d. Miscellaneous

##### 1) Personal/Family

Since the pastor's family is such an important element of support in the ministry of the local church, the church shall strongly encourage its pastor to take a regular day off each week, thus providing more personal time for the pastor to spend with his family.

- 2) Reimbursements  
Each church board shall consider reimbursements for the pastor's travel expenses, library and conference/seminar expenses.
- 3) Sabbaticals
  - a) Senior Pastors shall be granted a sabbatical after seven (7) years in ministry at the same church.
  - b) The Sabbatical should be for a minimum of six (6) weeks, but may be extended if there is sufficient reason.
  - c) Sabbaticals are not to be considered vacation time and should be used as a time for spiritual renewal and exposure to further ministries or education studies which will in turn benefit the home church upon their pastor's return to ministry.  
(Article IV, B. 1. c. 3 - DEB, 01/15/2011)

### C. Ministerial Credentialing

#### 1. Requirements for Maintaining Credentials

- a. The minister shall attend Regional Conference annually unless given permission not to attend by the Regional Director.
- b. The minister shall complete the denomination's annual ministerial report as well as the region's pastor's intent form and annual evaluation form.
- c. The minister is strongly encouraged to attend all regional events to build rapport with all regional ministers, leaders and churches.  
(Article IV, B. 3. - DEB, 01/15/2011)

#### 2. Procedures for Reinstatement of Credentials

When the credentials (license or ordination) of a minister in the Missionary Church East Central Region have been revoked due to disciplinary action, and the minister desires to have them reinstated, the following procedures must be followed:

- a. The minister must be attending a Missionary Church, if at all possible.
- b. The minister must submit in writing a request for reinstatement of his/her credentials, along with a recommendation from the local church board which he/she is attending.
- c. The minister must give proof that the problem(s) which caused the revoking of the credentials is (are) satisfactorily resolved.
- d. The minister must meet with the Committee on Ordination and Licensing for consultation.
- e. If the COOL approves the reinstatement of the credentials, a recommendation will be made to the Regional Board to reinstate the credentials on a one year probationary period.
- f. If the RB approves, COOL or their representative(s), will follow-up regularly during the probation period {defined as at least quarterly}. An extensive evaluation session will then be held at the end of the probation period.
- g. After the extensive evaluation and the year of probation, if the COOL approves, they will make a recommendation to the RB to give full credentials.
- h. Upon the action of the RB, the credentials will either be reinstated or the RB will inform the COOL what further action needs to be taken by the committee. (Adopted, March 10, 1989)

## V. DISSOLUTION AND DISASSOCIATION

- A. In the event that it becomes necessary to dissolve any Missionary Church East Central Region church, either a simple majority vote of the remaining membership of the church or a two-thirds majority vote of the Regional Board is required. Upon said dissolution, all assets and liabilities of the church shall automatically be transferred to the MCECR, which would qualify under Section 1-501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984 or amendments thereto. The officers of the MCECR shall automatically become the officers of the church and shall have all power and authority to execute documents to transfer assets and liabilities of the church to the MCECR.

In the event that it becomes necessary to dissolve any Missionary Church East Central Region church, the following process shall be followed:

1. Before officially closing a church.
  - a) Every church is to have a dissolution provision in their local bylaws that turns everything over to the region upon closure. Every church's bylaws are not to conflict with regional bylaws.
  - b) The RB has the authority to assume governance of a local church whose adult membership falls below 15 members. [Constitution: Article XVIIIA1c.]
  - c) Work with current pastor and/or board to set up a congregational meeting to have appropriate actions taken related to closing the church and allocating assets, including the setting the official closing.
    - 1) Designate a church liaison to represent the church to the region.
    - 2) Obtain contact information from those most knowledgeable about the ministry, relationships, finances and facility.
    - 3) Conduct a financial audit or review.
    - 4) Check records for any designated gifts still held.
    - 5) Obtain and hold membership roster for future transfers, etc.
    - 6) Obtain all historical and financial records.
2. After officially closing a church.
  - a) Determine who the statutory agent for the church is.
  - b) Have the church title signed over to the region at the point of closure.
  - c) The RB is to take action regarding the closure at their next meeting or by email vote and the denomination is to be notified.
  - d) Add regional representatives to all standing accounts (bank, utilities, etc.), as deemed necessary, making sure all outstanding debts are paid in full.
  - e) The region will take responsibility for the marketing and/or allocating of all assets.
  - f) The state of Ohio must also be notified, but only after all titles have been transferred to the region or the property sold.

(DEB, 03/26/2013)

B. In the event that any Missionary Church East Central Regional church chooses to disassociate from the MCECR, the following process shall be followed:

1. At least one face to face meeting between the combined church board and/or elder team and the Regional Director and/or his designated representatives shall be held to discuss issues and possible alternatives.
2. At least one subsequent meeting between the church membership (including the leadership) and the Regional Director and/or his designated representatives shall be held to discuss issues and possible alternatives.
3. After 1 and 2 above are completed, should the church leadership continue to feel that a vote for disassociation is justified, a two-week (two Sundays previous to the vote) notice to the congregation shall be made informing them of a vote to disassociate, and a letter shall be sent to each member informing them of this vote. Since the Missionary Church Constitution (Article XIII Section A Number 2) requires a 75% vote of members [members or members present] to allow a church to become a Missionary Church, a 75% vote of members shall be required to disassociate from the Missionary Church.
4. The Regional Director shall have the right to distribute a letter to the membership as well, outlining the region's positions and comments concerning the issues surrounding the desire to disassociate.
5. In the event this process is followed and the vote is 75% or above to disassociate, the local church will be released from the MCECR and the property and assets of local church will remain with the local church body.
6. In the event this process is followed and the vote is below 75%, the local church shall remain a part of the MCECR and the Regional Director shall appoint an interim leadership team from existing church membership and district representatives to oversee reconciliation and make appropriate arrangements for the future of the church.
7. Should any MCECR church disassociate from the MCECR without following said due process procedures, all assets and liabilities of the church shall automatically be transferred to the MCECR, which

would qualify under Section 1-501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984 or amendments thereto. The officers of the MCECR shall automatically become the officers of the church and shall have all power and authority to execute documents to transfer assets and liabilities of the church to the MCECR.

- C. In the event that it becomes necessary to dissolve any organization or subsidiary of the Missionary Church East Central Region, a two-thirds majority vote of the Regional Board is required. Upon said dissolution, all assets and liabilities of the organization or subsidiary shall automatically be transferred to the MCECR, which would qualify under Section 1-501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984 or amendments thereto. The officers of the MCECR shall automatically become the officers of the organization or subsidiary and shall have all power and authority to execute documents to transfer assets and liabilities of the organization or subsidiary to the MCECR.
  
- D. In the event that it becomes necessary to dissolve the Missionary Church East Central Region, a two-thirds majority vote of the Regional Conference is required. Upon said dissolution, all assets and liabilities of the MCECR shall automatically be transferred to the Missionary Church, Inc., which would qualify under Section 1-501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1984 or amendments thereto. The officers of the Missionary Church, Inc., shall automatically become the officers of the MCECR and shall have all power and authority to execute documents to transfer assets and liabilities of the organization or subsidiary to the Missionary Church, Inc.

## APPENDIX A Information Regarding Severance/Transition Packages

### A. What is a severance package or severance agreement?

A severance agreement is a contract entered into between a departing employee and his or her employer. In a typical severance agreement, the outgoing employee agrees not to sue the employer for wrongful termination or related legal claims, while the employer agrees to give the employee some form of additional compensation, often called a “severance package.”

### B. Who should be considered for a severance package?

Severance pay should be considered whenever a church employee is laid off, terminated with or without “cause,” or resigns from church employment. Many employers routinely give severance packages to long-term employees who are fired for reasons other than serious misconduct, even if they are not legally required to do so.

Why? To soften the blow of being fired and to buy a little insurance against lawsuits. Severance pay may be an appropriate risk management tool for avoiding potential litigation, adverse publicity, and other claims against the church.

### C. The Compensation Package

1. The amount and type of compensation in any given severance agreement will vary according to specific circumstances, but the amount of severance pay is usually based on a number of factors, including:
  - a. Length of the employee’s tenure with the employer
  - b. Circumstances under which the employment relationship ended
  - c. Risk management considerations such as the likelihood of later litigation or bad publicity
  - d. Employer’s financial condition
2. If you decide to pay severance, the most important rule is to be consistent. The amount of severance can vary depending on how long the employee has worked for you and the employee’s job category. But be sure to treat your employees equally. If you are evenhanded and uniform in paying severance, you are less likely to face claims of discrimination, (for example, that men received higher severance pay than women).
  - a. Severance pay should always be put in a written agreement, with assistance of legal counsel.
  - b. Severance pay is not to be seen as a gift or benefit.
  - c. It should be remembered when determining severance pay that the pastoral profession is unlike many other occupations. Pastors are ineligible for unemployment benefits, they are often not considered immediately for other pastoral openings, and often go through a period of depression and stress.
  - d. Severance pay should never be paid out in one lump sum but in installments.
  - e. Severance pay should be tied to agreed-upon stipulations regarding conduct, confidentiality, and a waiver of claims provision

### D. What should be written into a severance agreement?

1. Correct identification of the parties involved.
2. Severance Pay: Specific amounts to be paid according to the set timetable for paying installments, subject to applicable withholding taxes and the employee’s continued compliance with the agreement.
3. Health Insurance Benefits: How long the church will continue to cover health care premiums for the pastor. Acknowledgement that the employee has been notified of his or her rights to continued health insurance under COBRA or state law.
4. Confirmation that all already earned compensation has been paid, including paid leave such as vacation.
5. Express waiver of the employee’s potential discrimination, contract, wage, and tort claims against the church and its directors, volunteers, employees, and other agents, at all times. Employee will respect and express support for the church leadership and the members of the church.
6. Confidentiality of the agreement’s terms as well as confidential matters related to the church.



7. For the sake of the church's witness in and to the community, confirmation that the pastor will not plant a church or pastor another existing church in the same vicinity of the church without consulting first with the Regional Director. If this action is not taken, the termination of the pastor's credentials will be determined by the Regional Director and the Regional Board.
8. Statement that failure to comply with the terms of the agreement may result in the immediate discontinuance of this severance package.

E. How much severance pay should be offered to a pastor?

1. Pastors who are terminated by their church or "pressured" to resign
  - a. The general guideline is one to two weeks of severance pay for each year served.
  - b. Most severance packages will fall between 2-4 months of pay.
  - c. A minimum of at least one month's severance pay should be offered.
  - d. A maximum of no more than six months pay should be offered.
  - e. Health care coverage should be provided for 1-3 months.
2. Pastors who lose their credentials due to discipline or moral failure
  - a. The general guideline is that they should not receive severance pay.
  - b. Depending on the circumstances, health care coverage may be provided for 1-2 months.
3. Pastors who resign from ministry for non-church related issues and have served faithfully
  - a. The general guideline is one to two weeks of severance pay for each year served.
  - b. Most severance packages will fall between 2-4 months of pay.
  - c. A minimum of at least one month's severance pay should be offered.
  - d. A maximum of no more than six months pay should be offered.
  - e. Health care coverage should be provided for 1-3 months.
  - f. Should the pastor accept and begin another call to ministry, the severance agreement shall be considered void.
4. Pastors who retire
  - a. The general guideline is to bless the pastor with a special monetary gift to show the church's appreciation. A good financial target would be at least one month's pay.
  - b. If health care coverage is an issue, the church should consider paying 1-2 months of premiums.