Membership Review Process Elements: Actual Actions and Clean-Up Exercise

Local churches, Conferences, and Unions will follow the church policies, practices, and procedures in reviewing their membership registers. This includes but is not limited to such practices as follows:

1. Using Baptismal slip and ACMS forms.
a. At the point of baptism and entry into membership, these forms shall be used.
  i. Unions and Conferences shall print and, churches shall use these forms as a standard procedure for recording any baptism.
  ii. Every number reported shall have names appended to it. We are moving away from reporting numbers. Our basis of reporting is no longer numbers but Members (names).
  iii. Conferences shall not report any figure until the churches provide backup information.
b. At the point of transfer, profession of faith, or adjustment in and out, the forms shall be used. Church clerks shall be diligent to effect changes after names have been actioned by the church board and business meeting.

2. Deceased Members.
a. This is the low-hanging fruit of our review process. No other circumstance can allow the board or church clerk just remove a member without a vote of the business meeting "except in the case of the death of members" (Church Manual 2015 ed. Pg. 65).
b. Once the board has recorded the death, the church clerk can go ahead and designate the name as deceased. This category does not need to wait for any period but from quarter to quarter the deceased members should be reported constantly and timely.

3. Register vs Statistical Report Variances.
a. In a situation where there is a discrepancy between the numbers on the register and the statistical report, each church or conference shall take an action to adjust the discrepancy.
b. Depending on the size of the variance and the factors that must have led to this variance great care shall be exercised to establish if the statistical figure is not the one that is the correct and that there was an error of omission in recording names as there are numerous instances where indeed people were baptised and correctly reported but the names were mistakenly not recorded by the clerk on the register or ACMS.
c. This section too does not need a specific time frame but once a verification process that has been set by the local church or conference/field has been followed variances can be corrected and subsequently reported at the end of the quarter.

4. Duplication of Members.
a. There are cases where names are recorded more than once in one church or more than once in different churches. This may be a result of human error or differences in spellings of the same name.
b. Another error is at church organization when names of members are reported by both the new church and the parent church. In this case, the concerned churches can review the statistics accordingly by adjustment.

5. Correctly Tracking and Designating Members as Missing.
a. The procedure is that members may be designated as missing after a two-year process of searching for them.
b. Depending on privacy laws from country to country, some of the methods that could be used are roll calls, church roll inspection, bulletin/notice boards, church, conference, or Union publications. Other non-conventional methods that could be used, depending on their acceptability and effectiveness in each setting are secure social media platforms such as church WhatsApp and Facebook platforms.

> *If, however, members move without leaving a forwarding address and make no effort to contact or report to the church, and the church cannot locate them for at least two years, then the church may certify that it has tried without success to locate the members and the members may be removed by the vote of the church. The clerk should record in the membership record: "Whereabouts not known. Voted to designate as missing" Church Manual 2022 ed. pg. 72.*

c. If members resurface after being withdrawn as missing, they shall be accepted back by profession of faith. Ibid. pg. 50.
d. Depending on when each church began their review cycle, they shall continue to vote names in or out. Even if these numbers may be huge each local church shall resolve and not be afraid to clean up their register by designating members as missing after two years of searching, and the church shall formally include this report in their quarterly statistical report.

6. ACMS, 2nd and 7th Sabbath Count.
Over and above count processes, the ACMS register will keep track of all the above changes so that we remain with member-based statistics and not number-based statistics.

By Sabbath, December 31, 2024, all churches will be done with their membership audit and all names of known members uploaded on the ACMS register, so that our Quarterly Statistical Report will match the ACMS register.